

A Story about Deployment
For Preschool Children

JODY'S DADDY IS IN THE ARMY!





Jody's Daddy is in the Army is one of a series of four booklets about Army separations for children and young people ages 3 to 17. These booklets were written as part of Operation READY under contract between the University of California, Riverside and the US Army Community & Family Support Center, Family Programs Directorate.

All four booklets were developed with the help of active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve families, Army Community Service personnel, and Child Development and Youth Services staff members.

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We sincerely thank all those who helped us produce these booklets.

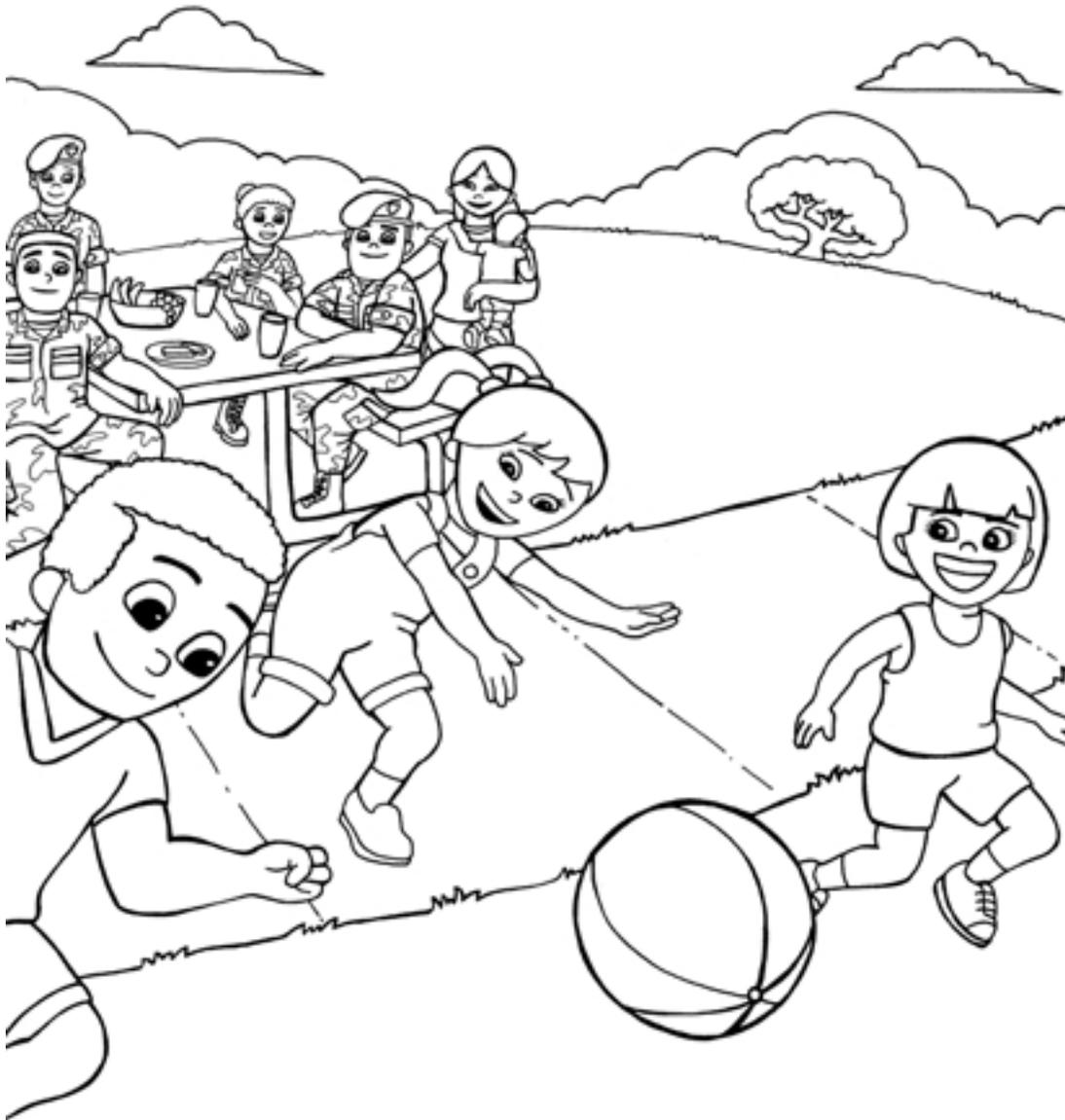
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OPERATION
READY
Resources for Educating About Deployment and You

MY ARMY FAMILY



I'm Jody. I'm four years old and I like to ride my bike. We are an Army family. Daddy is a soldier. Mommy is holding baby Jay.



Jamal and Luisa are my best friends. Jamal's mommy is in the Army, too. Luisa's mommy and daddy are both soldiers.



Soldiers have special jobs. My daddy's job is talking to other soldiers on the radio. Sometimes soldiers have to go away to do their jobs. My daddy goes away to do his Army job, too.

BEFORE DADDY GOES AWAY



We talk about where Daddy is going, when he is leaving and when he is coming home. We talk about why Daddy has to go. Daddy has to go away to do his important Army job.



We spend special time together. Daddy helps me make a treasure box. We decorate the outside. I put a picture of Daddy doing his Army job in my box. He gives me his medal for my box, too. He'll send me more things while he is gone. I'll look at the things in my treasure box and think about Daddy while he's away.



Daddy reads our favorite stories on tape. Mommy makes a movie of us playing with Daddy. We will listen to the tapes and watch the movie after Daddy goes away.



Jamal makes silly socks for his mommy to take with her. He draws a face and glues things on a pair of her white socks. They look funny. Jamal's mommy says she will think about Jamal when she looks at the silly socks. Luisa and I make pictures for our daddies to take with them. Daddy says he will tape my picture on the wall over his bed.

SAYING GOODBYE



It's time to say goodbye to Daddy. We say "goodbye for now" because Daddy will come back as soon as he can. We give each other hugs and kisses. Daddy says, "Be good for Mommy." Sometimes we cry. Jay waves "bye-bye."

AFTER DADDY GOES AWAY



When Daddy is away Mommy takes care of Jay and me. I miss Daddy when he's gone. But I like my special time with Mommy, too.



Jamal's grandma stays with him when his mommy goes away. Aunt Maria takes care of Luisa when her mommy and daddy both go away for the Army.

FEELINGS



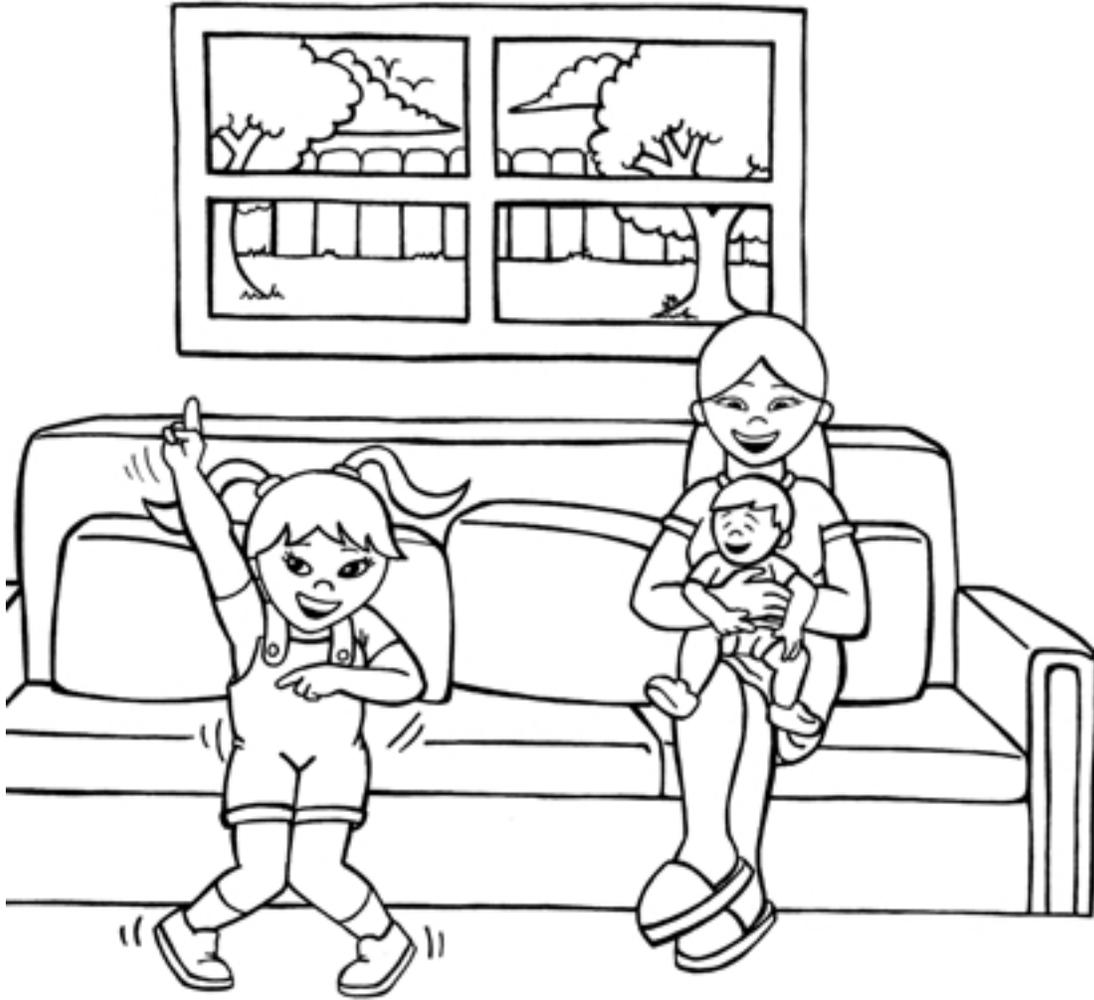
When Daddy goes away sometimes I feel funny or bad. I get mad at Daddy for leaving. I feel scared that he won't come home. I feel sad or I worry that Daddy will forget me. When I was three I thought Daddy went away because I wasn't good. Mommy told me, "Daddy goes away to do his Army job, not because you've been bad. Daddy misses you a lot when he is gone."



Sometimes I get a tummy ache. Mommy says it's because I'm sad. Sometimes I get mad and yell at Mommy and Jay. Mommy says, "It's okay to feel sad and mad." I feel better when we talk about it.



We talk about our feelings. Mommy says she sometimes has bad feelings, too. She gets mad, sad, or worried when Daddy is away. We talk about how we miss Daddy and we cry. Then we have a hug. We all feel better.



When Mommy feels bad, I feel bad, too. I do silly things to make Mommy laugh. Mommy says she feels better when we laugh.



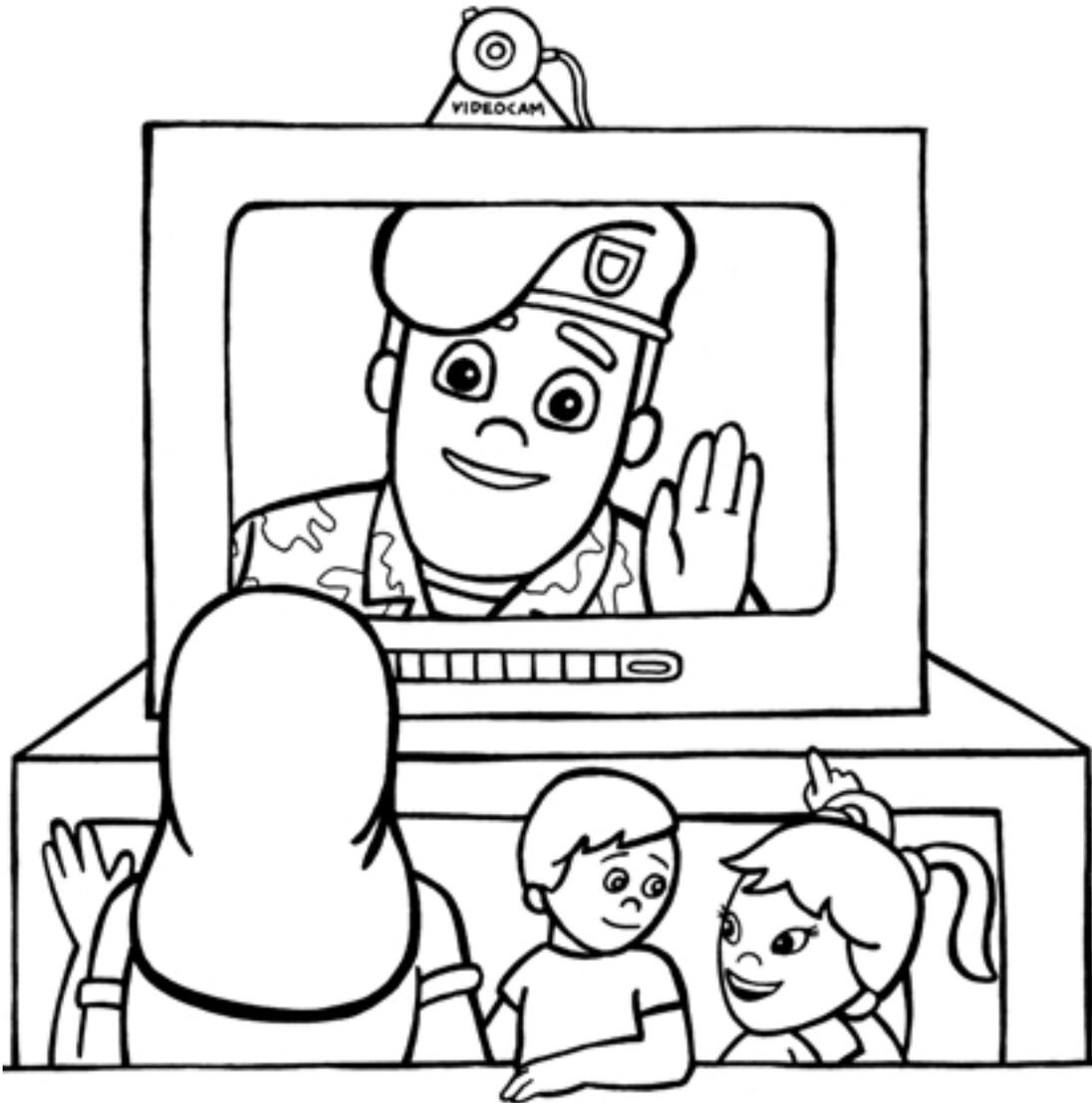
Sometimes I feel icky at daycare. Mommy isn't there and I get sad or mad. Mommy tells Teacher when Daddy is away. Teacher helps me feel better.

SPECIAL DAYS

Sometimes Daddy is gone on special days like Halloween. Last year Daddy was away on my birthday. Before he went away we talked about it.

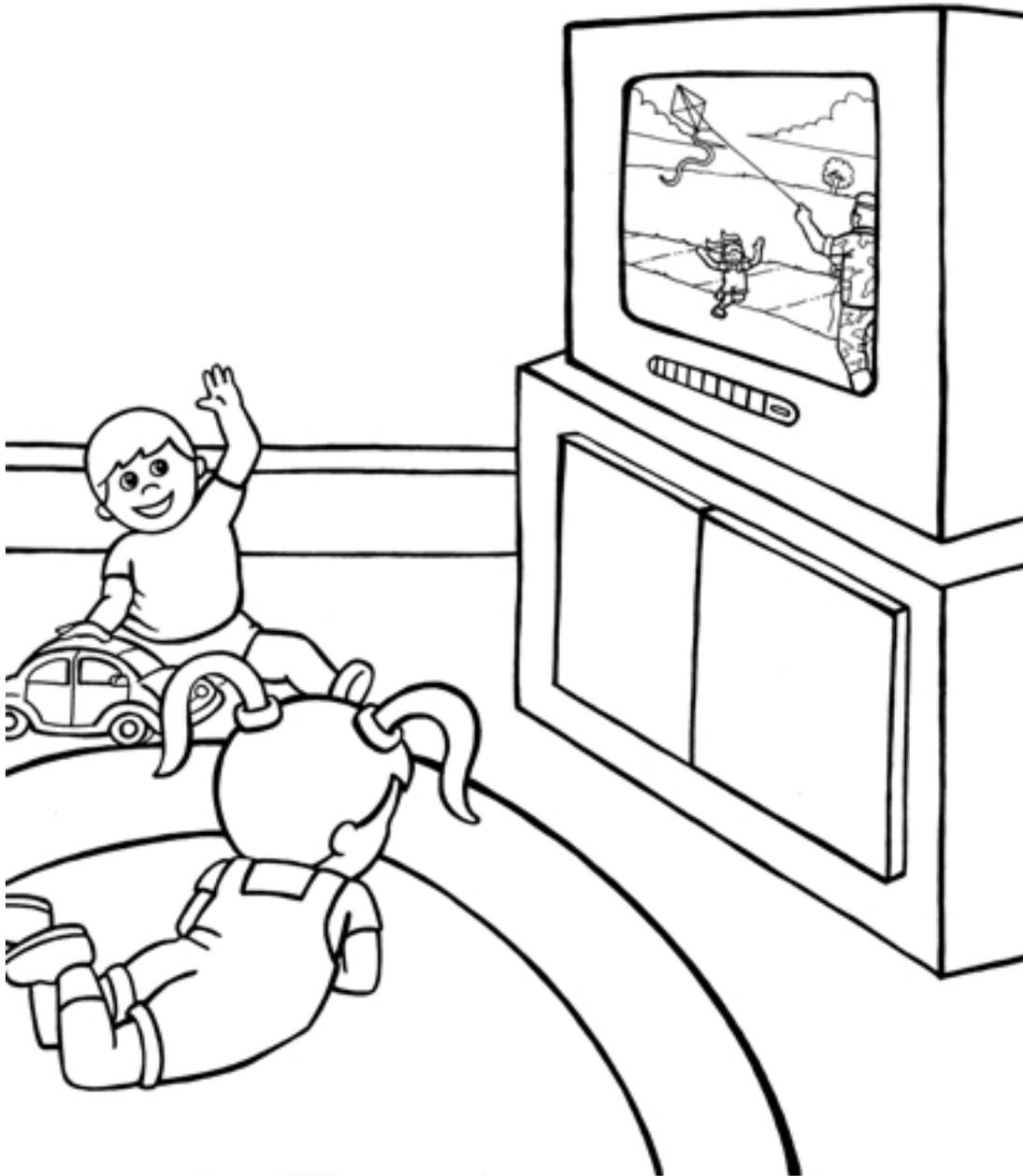


Daddy left a special present for me to open. He sent me a happy birthday email. Mommy took pictures of my birthday. She sent them to Daddy. I had a very happy birthday even though I missed Daddy a lot.



We stay close to Daddy when he is away. Sometimes we go talk to Daddy on a big TV. He says, “I can see you on TV, too. You and Jay are getting big!!!” Mommy writes email to Daddy on the computer. Daddy writes email to us, too, and Mommy reads it to me. Sometimes Mommy helps me use the computer to write to Daddy.

STAYING CLOSE

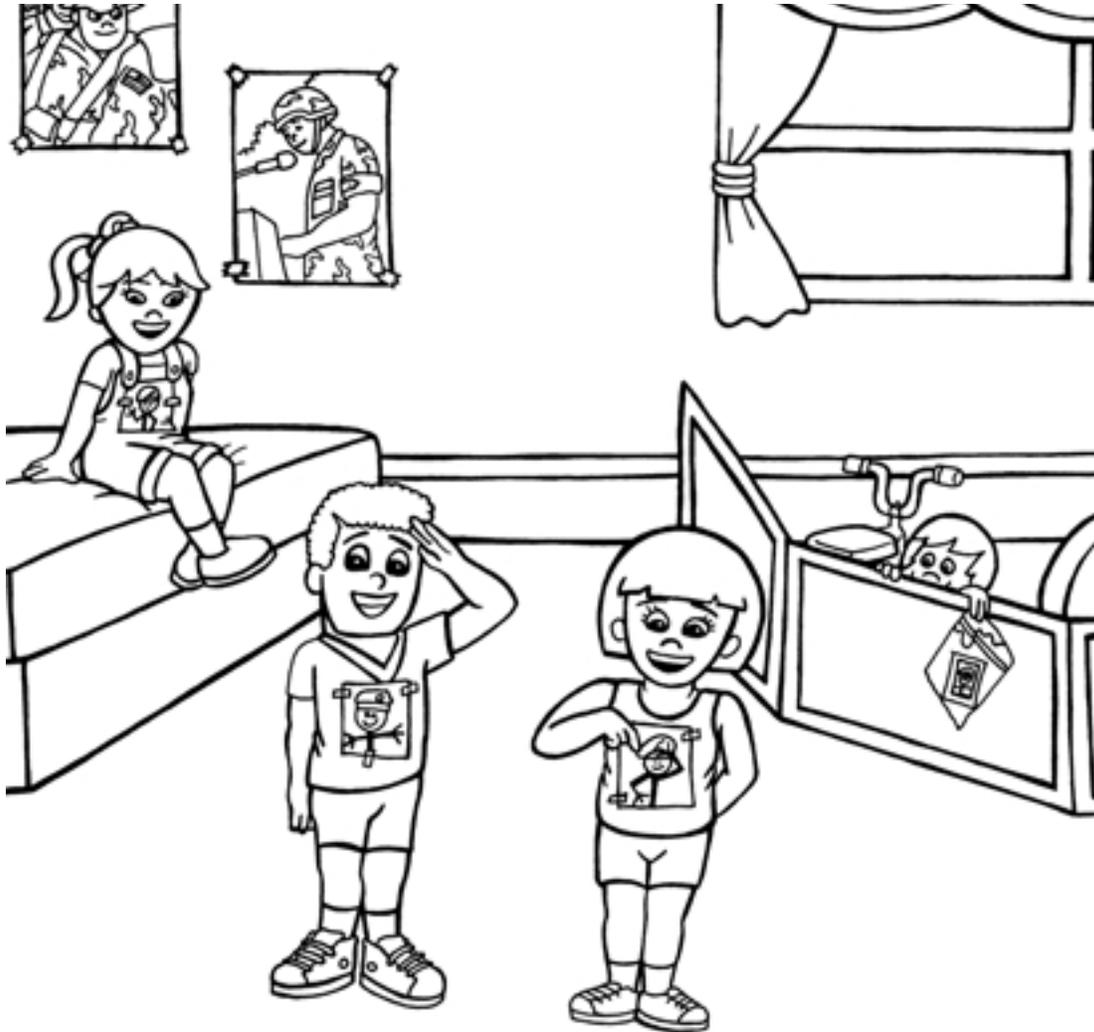


We watch the movie of our special day. Jay waves at Daddy.



We listen to the story tapes Daddy made. We like to listen before bed, when we're in the car, or when we're playing. I feel closer to Daddy when I listen.

We like to look at our mommy's and daddy's pictures when they are away. Mommy helps me put pictures of Daddy on the wall. We make pictures to wear on our shirts.



I keep a picture of Daddy under my pillow. Sometimes I kiss Daddy's picture or talk to him. Mommy puts a picture of Daddy in a plastic bag for Jay. He says "Da-Da" and drools on it.

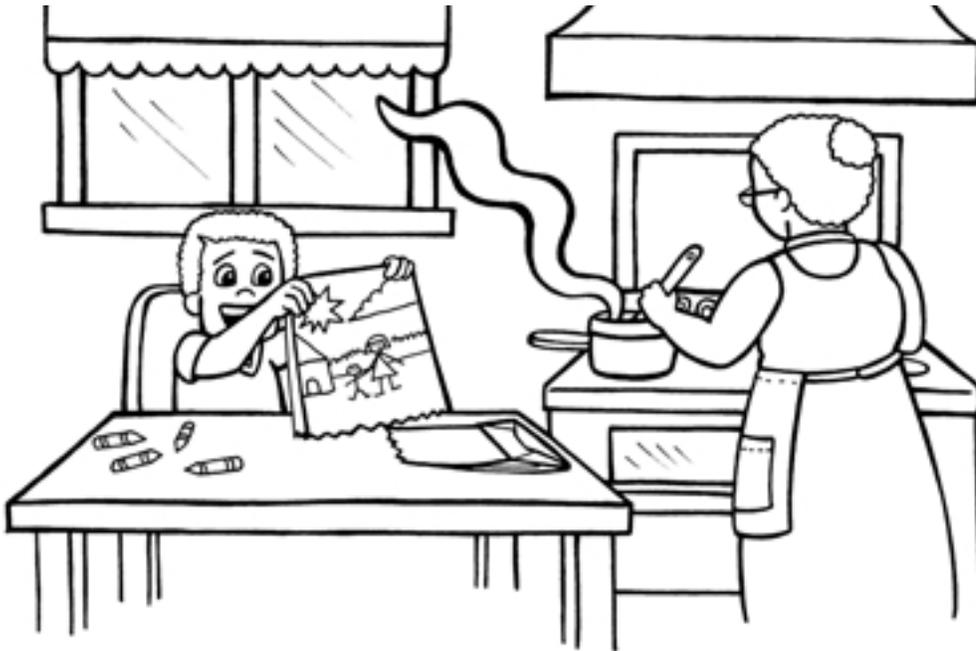
SENDING THINGS

We send things to Daddy when he's away. It makes him feel happy. We send him cookies, pictures, and things we make. I draw pictures for Daddy. Mommy helps me write a letter on the back.



We show Daddy how big we are getting. Mommy draws around our hands and feet and I color them. We send them to Daddy.

Jamal makes a **BIG PICTURE** on the back of a paper bag for his mommy. His grandma writes a letter on the back. They mail it to his mommy.



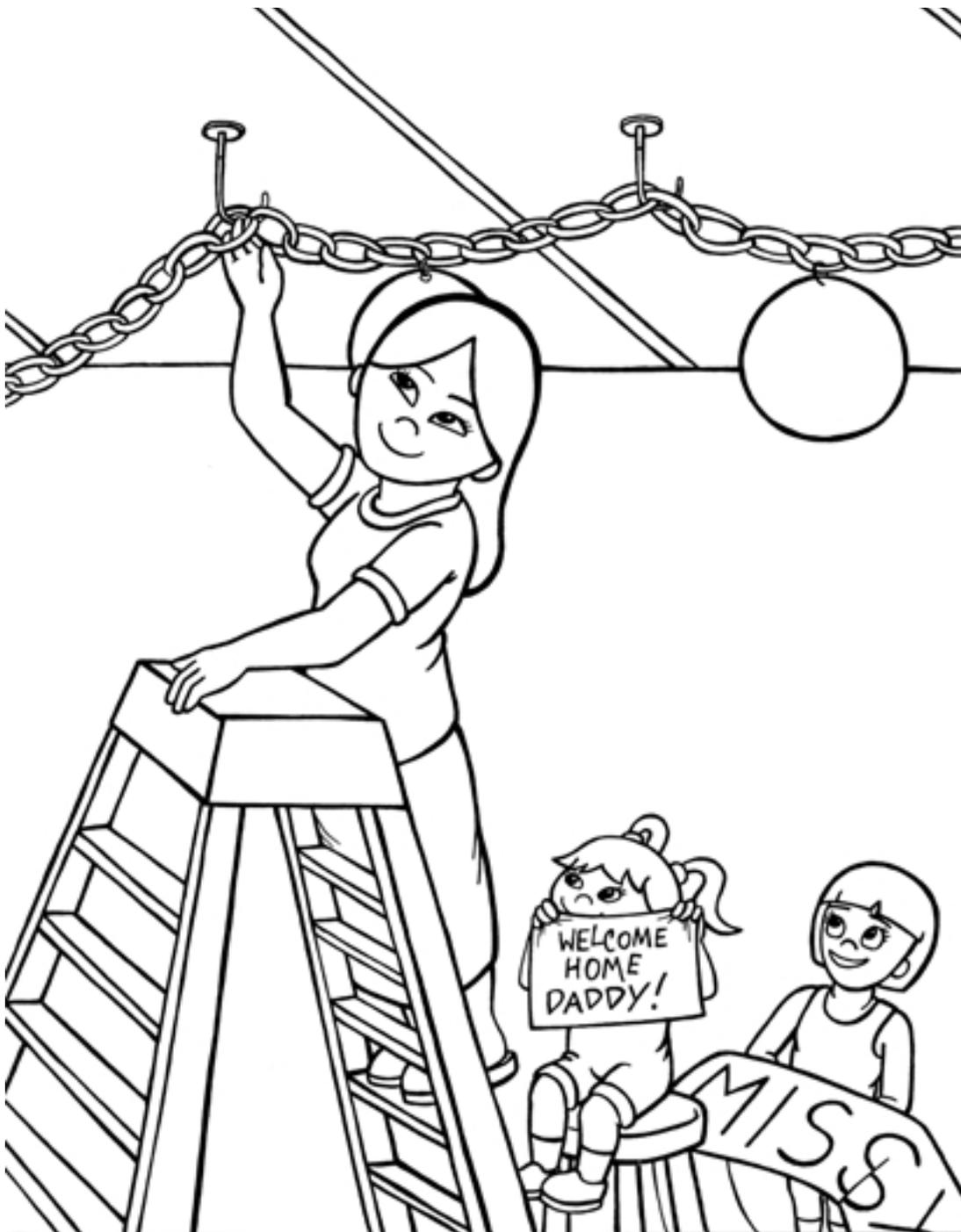
We get things in the mail, too. Daddy sends me letters and pictures to put in my treasure box. Luisa puts letters from her mommy and daddy on a poster on the wall.

HOW LONG?



I want to know, “When will Daddy be home?” Mommy counts M&M’s® into a big jar. We eat one every day after dinner. When the M&M’s® are gone, Daddy will be home. I make a paper circle every day and put it on a paper chain. When Daddy comes home we will hang the paper chain on the door to look pretty. When Jay is bigger he can make paper circles, too.

HOMECOMING



Daddy is coming home soon!! We get ready. I'm happy that Daddy is coming home. Daddy is happy to come home, too. Mommy helps me make a WELCOME HOME card for Daddy. We put the paper chain on the front door.



I feel funny when Daddy comes home. Mommy says it may take time for me and Daddy to be friends again. Jay cries. Maybe he feels funny, too.



After Daddy gets home, sometimes he's tired and needs to rest....



Mommy and Daddy want to spend time alone together.....

He spends special time with just me...



and we all spend time together.

I'm happy Daddy is home!!!!