THE BEST ARMY YOUTH COMIC ON THE PLANET!

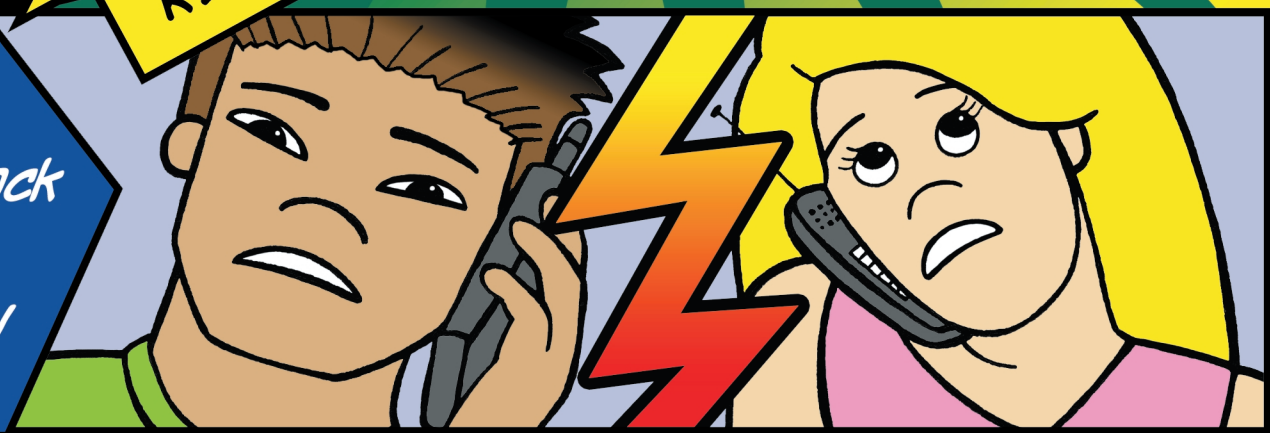
ARMY YOUTH COMICS

FREE TO ARMY BRATS

1 VOLUME

# THE ARMYBRAT PACK

See How The ARMYBRAT Pack Handles Deployments!



*Armybrat Pack* is one of a series of six 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 six booklets were developed with the help of active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve families, Army Community Service personnel,
and
Child and Youth Services staff members.

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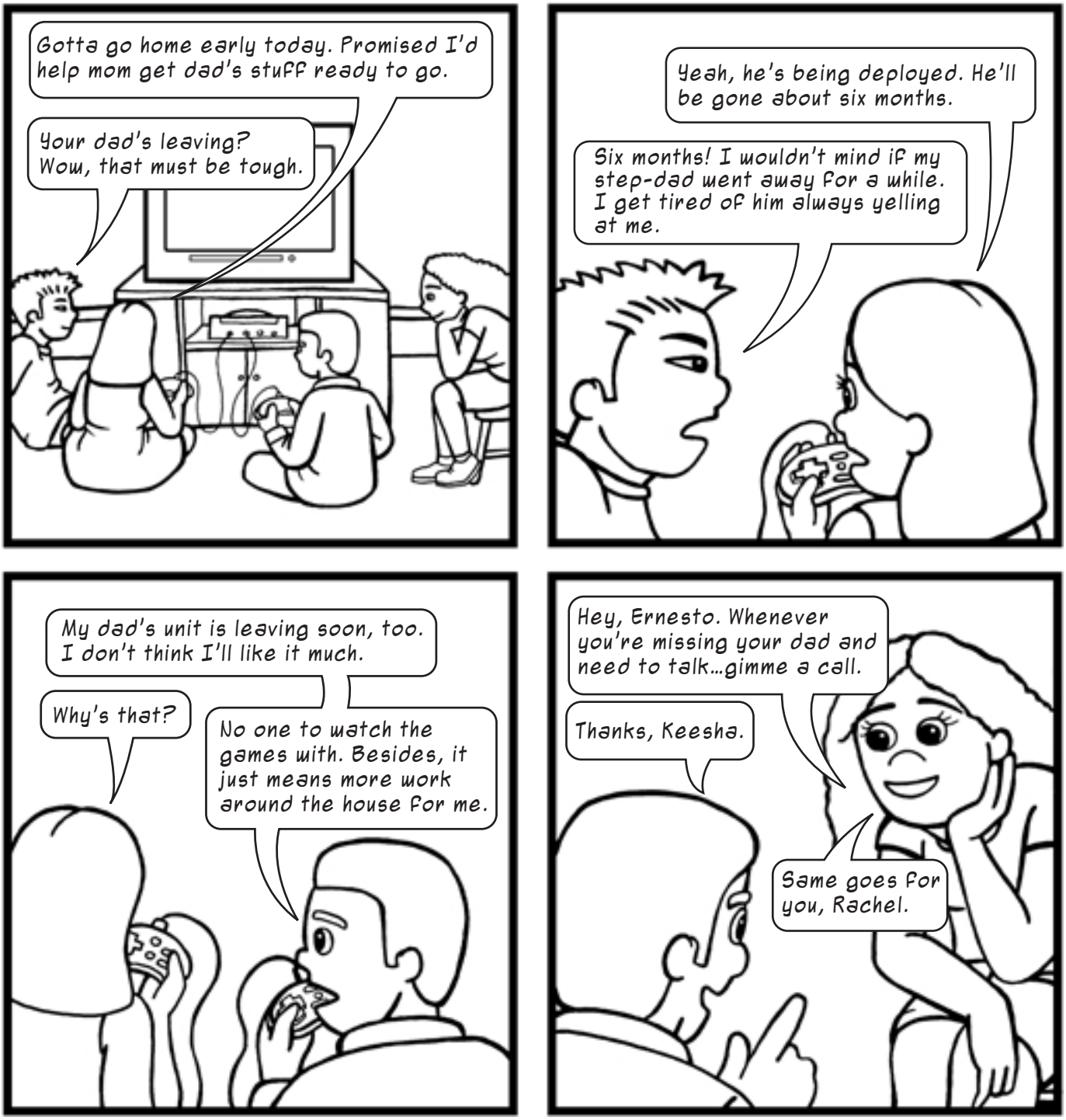
We sincerely thank all those who helped us produce these booklets.

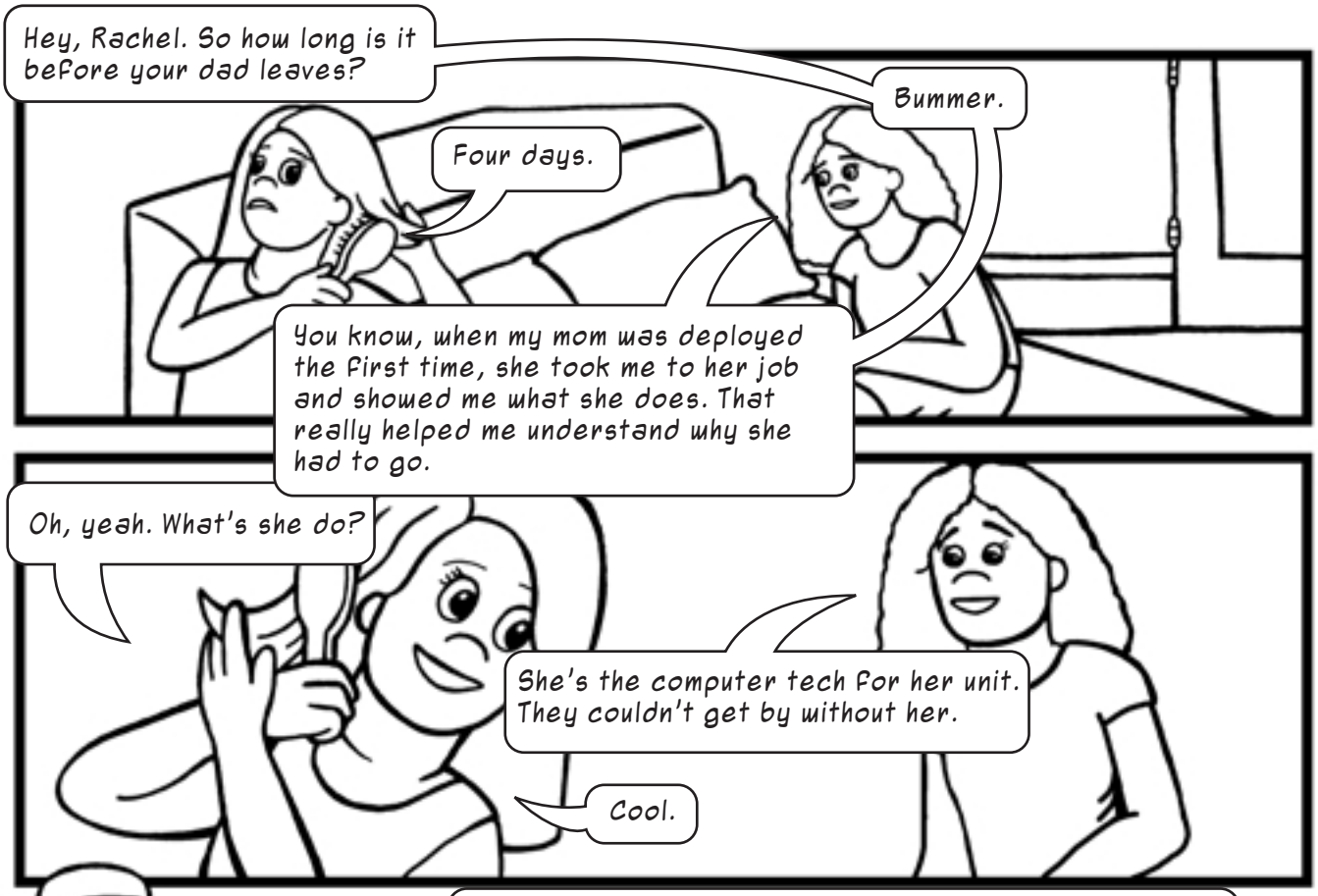
*August 2002*

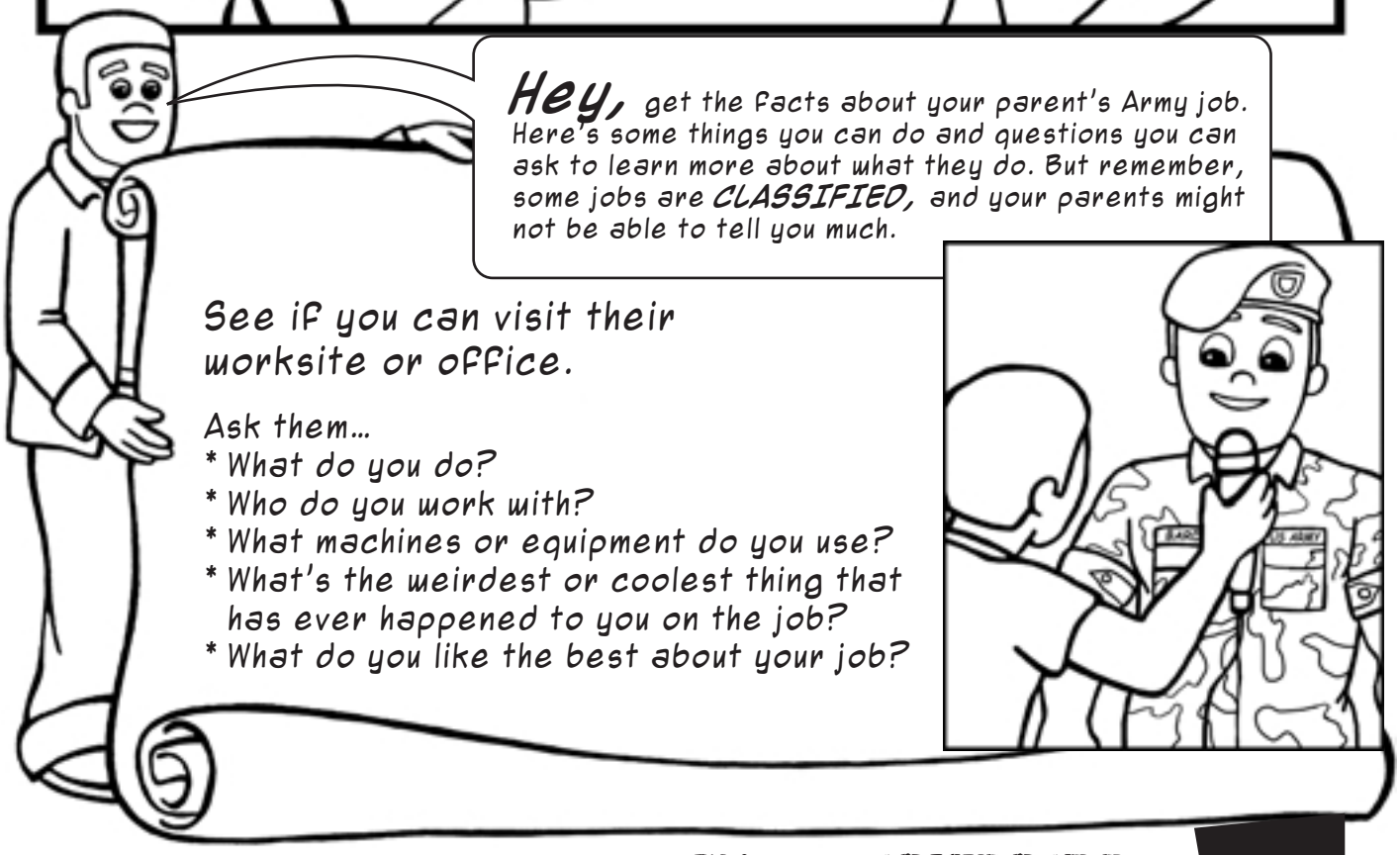
OPERATION
READY
Resources for Educating About Deployment and You

Like most Saturdays, the ARMYBRAT Pack hangs out at Ernesto's playing video games.

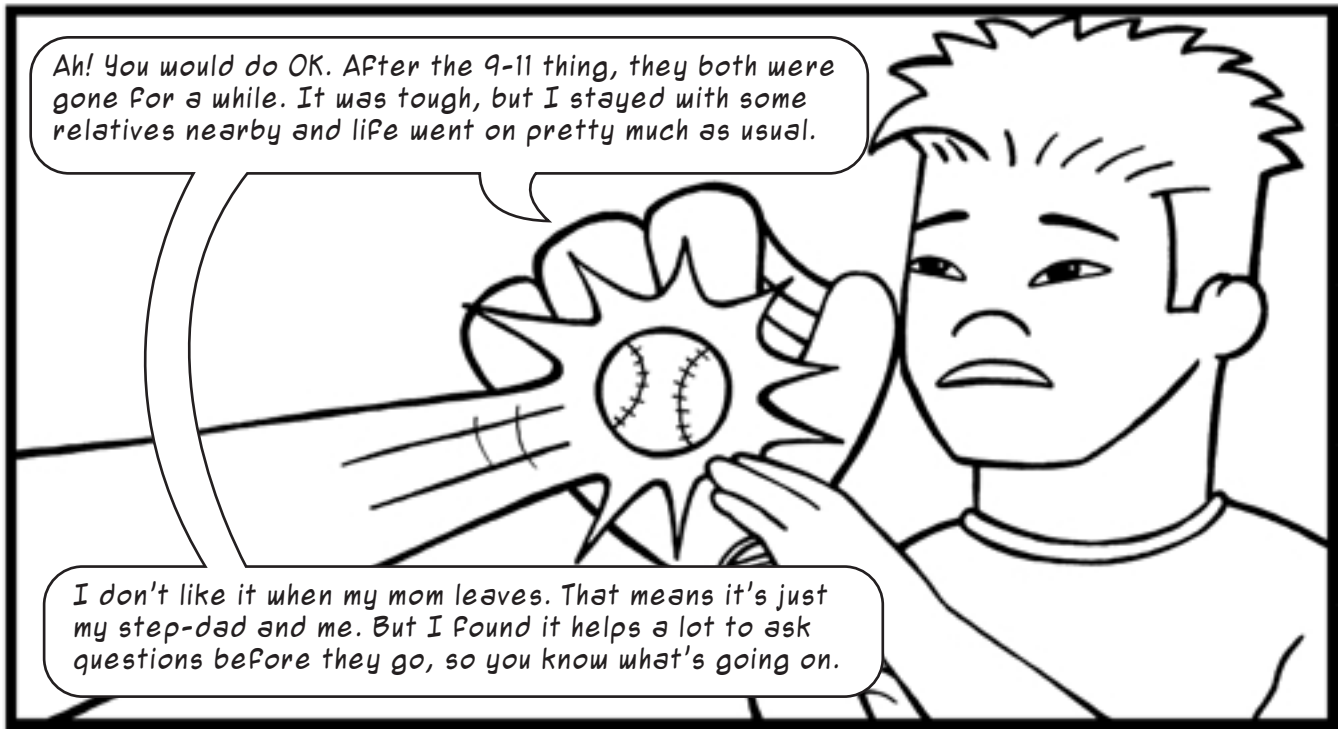


I'm Kim. My mom and step-dad are both soldiers. I don't like it, but I'm glad I've got my ARMYBRAT Pack friends.
Hi, I'm Rachel. We know what it's like to have parents in the Army. And we know what's it's like when they leave on deployment.
I'm Ernesto. We call ourselves theARMYBRAT Pack. My dad's in the Army and Mom's in the Army Reserve.
I'm Keesha. My mom's in the Army. Most of us have been through a deployment a time or two.
We're the ARMYBRAT Pack. And we're here to talk to YOU about DEPLOYMENT!

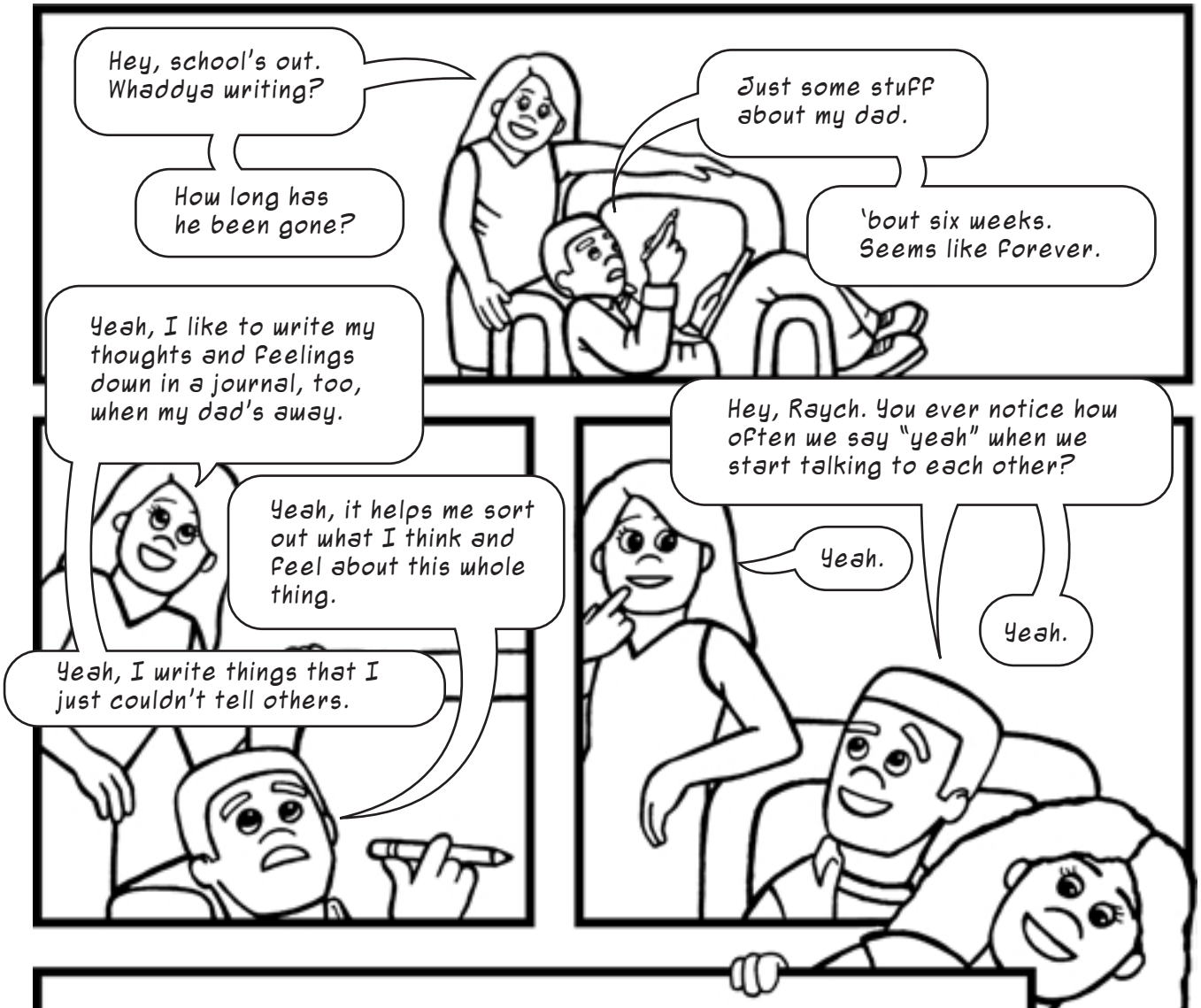

Hey, Rachel. So how long is it before your dad leaves?
Four days.
Bummer.
You know, when my mom was deployed the first time, she took me to her job and showed me what she does. That really helped me understand why she had to go.
Oh, yeah. What's she do?
She's the computer tech for her unit. They couldn't get by without her.
Cool.


Hey, get the facts about your parent's Army job. Here's some things you can do and questions you can ask to learn more about what they do. But remember, some jobs are CLASSIFIED, and your parents might not be able to tell you much.
See if you can visit their worksite or office.
Ask them...
* What do you do?
* Who do you work with?
* What machines or equipment do you use?
* What's the weirdest or coolest thing that has ever happened to you on the job?
* What do you like the best about your job?

Hey, Jason, what's going on?
We just got the news today that my dad is being deployed for a few months.
Bummer. My mom and step-dad have left lots of times. Sometimes just a few weeks. Sometimes a few months. Once my step-dad left for over a year.
Yuk. I'd hate it if my dad was gone a whole year.


Ah! You would do OK. After the 9-11 thing, they both were gone for a while. It was tough, but I stayed with some relatives nearby and life went on pretty much as usual.
I don't like it when my mom leaves. That means it's just my step-dad and me. But I found it helps a lot to ask questions before they go, so you know what's going on.

Wassup? That's the basic message. Find out from your older brother or sister what's going on. Ask your mom and dad for details.
Make like a reporter from the school newspaper and ask the Four Ws: What? When? Where? Why?
Where is your mom or dad going?
Why are they going?
When will they go?
When will they be back?
What will they be doing while away?
SSSHH!... Remember, sometimes your parents can't say much. So try to understand. It may be...
TOP SECRET!!!




***Check it out.*** In the back of this book are some sample journal pages. Tear them out, and copy them. Or get a notebook yourself, and start your own journal. If you want, you can share it with your family or your own ARMYBRAT Pack. Or keep it just to yourself. ***Happy journaling!***

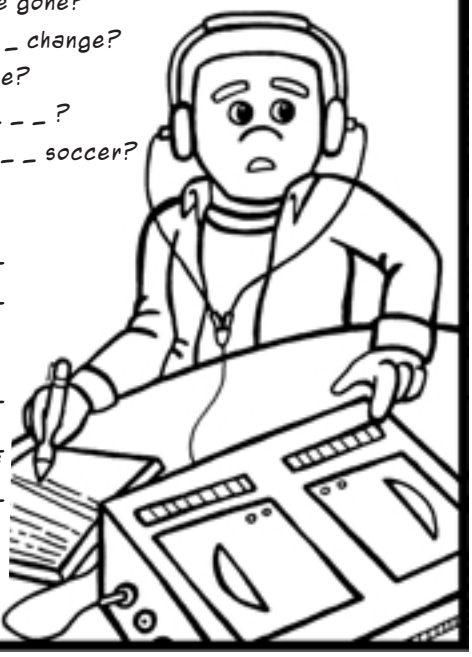
It's OK to be afraid and confused. Asking questions and talking about your feelings can really help. Finding out answers to these questions might help.

*What's expected of me now?
*Besides Mom or Dad leaving, what's going to change?
*What's going to happen on birthdays and holidays?
*Will Mom or Dad be able to write me?
*Who'll go to special events with me, like the school play?

**Secret Word:** Answer each question with an unscrambled word to find the SECRET WORD.

Where are you _ _ _ _ _?
When will you _ _ _ _ _?
How _ _ _ _ will you be gone?
Will the family _ _ _ _ _ change?
Will you _ _ _ _ _ to me?
What will you be _ _ _ _ _ ?
Who will watch me _ _ _ _ soccer?
Will you _ _ _ _ me?

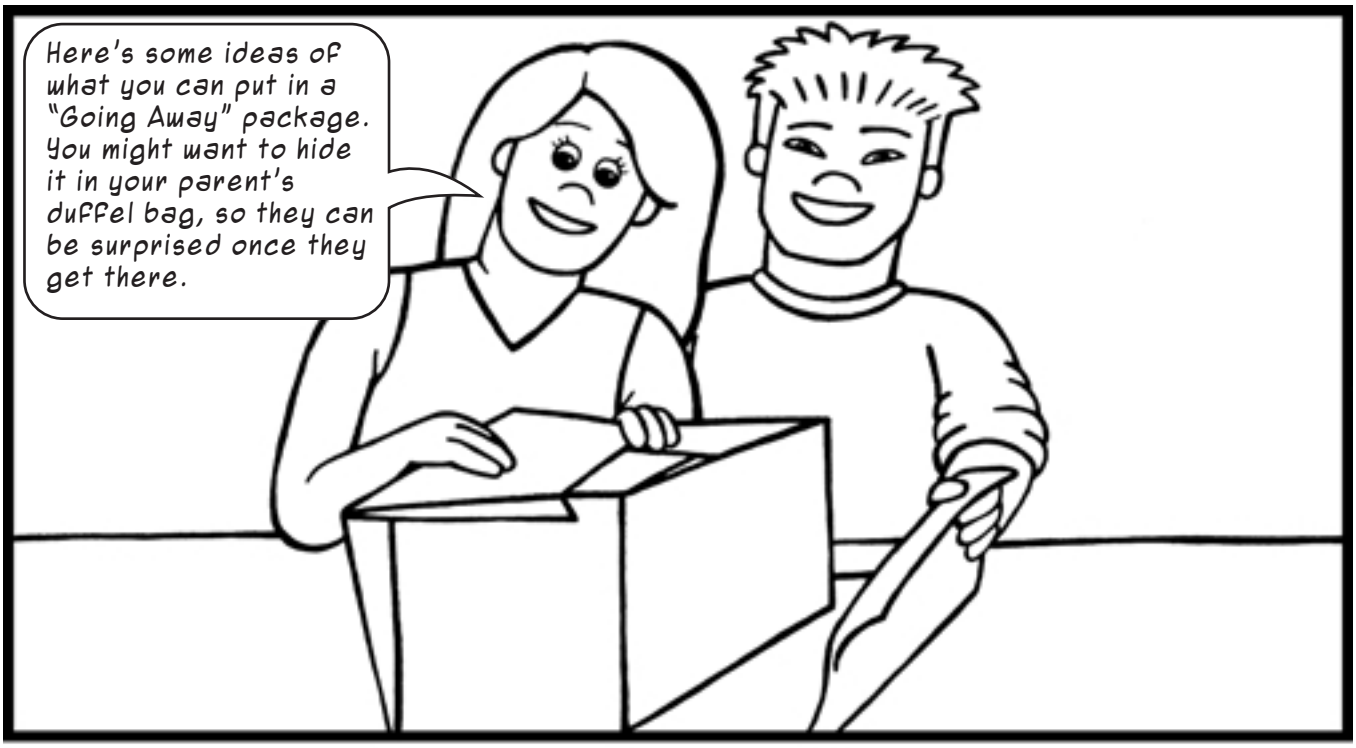
GINOG _ _ _ $\underset{9}{_}$ _
VEALE $\underset{4}{_}$ _ _ _ _
NOGL _ $\underset{5}{_}$ _ _
LESRU _ _ _ $\underset{2}{_}$ _
WERIT _ _ _ $\underset{10}{_}$ $\underset{8}{_}$
NIOGD $\underset{1}{_}$ _ _ _ _
APLY $\underset{3}{_}$ _ _ $\underset{6}{_}$
SIMS $\underset{7}{_}$ _ _ _



SECRET WORD!

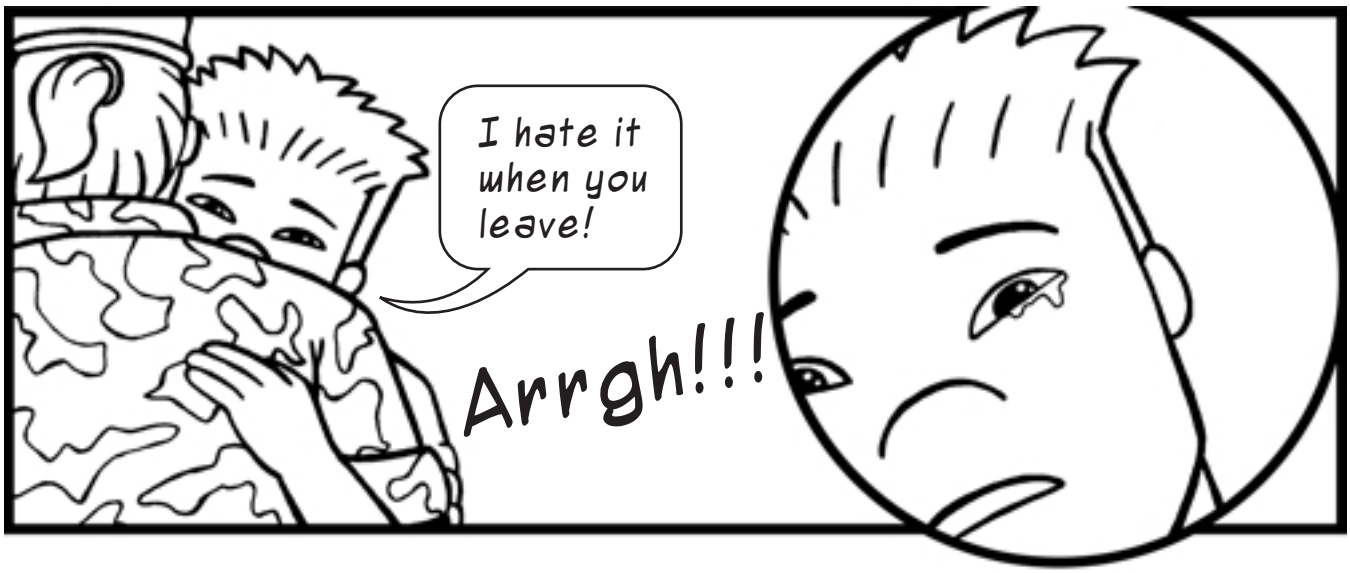
| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Hey, Kim. I hear your mom's leaving.
I got an idea. My dad took me canoeing before he left. It was really cool. Maybe you can ask your mom to do something with you before she leaves. Whaddya think?
Yeah.
I dunno.
Hey, I heard that you told Kim about your canoe trip with your dad. Guess where Kim's mom took him?
Do I look like a mind-reader?
Cool.
PIZZA
ICE CREAM
They went to the shooting range. Kim's a pretty good shot, too.
It's not always possible; but if you can, try to spend some special time with your mom or dad before they leave. Here's some ideas.
*Make something special for your mom or dad before they leave.
*Ask them if you can do something special together.
*Ask them if there is anything that they want you to do for them before they leave.
*Make a "Going Away" package for them to take with them.

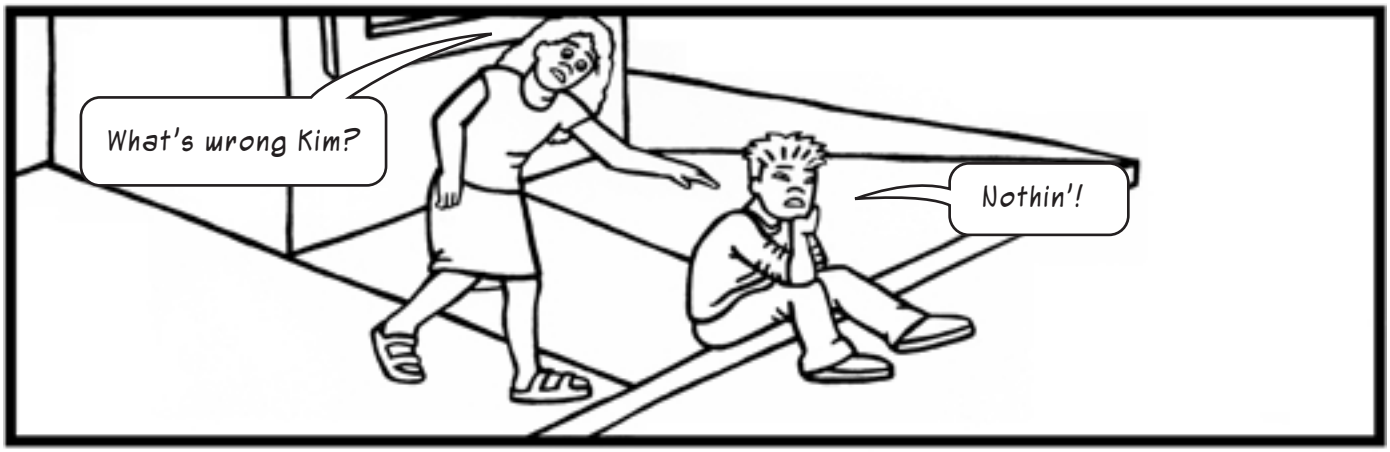


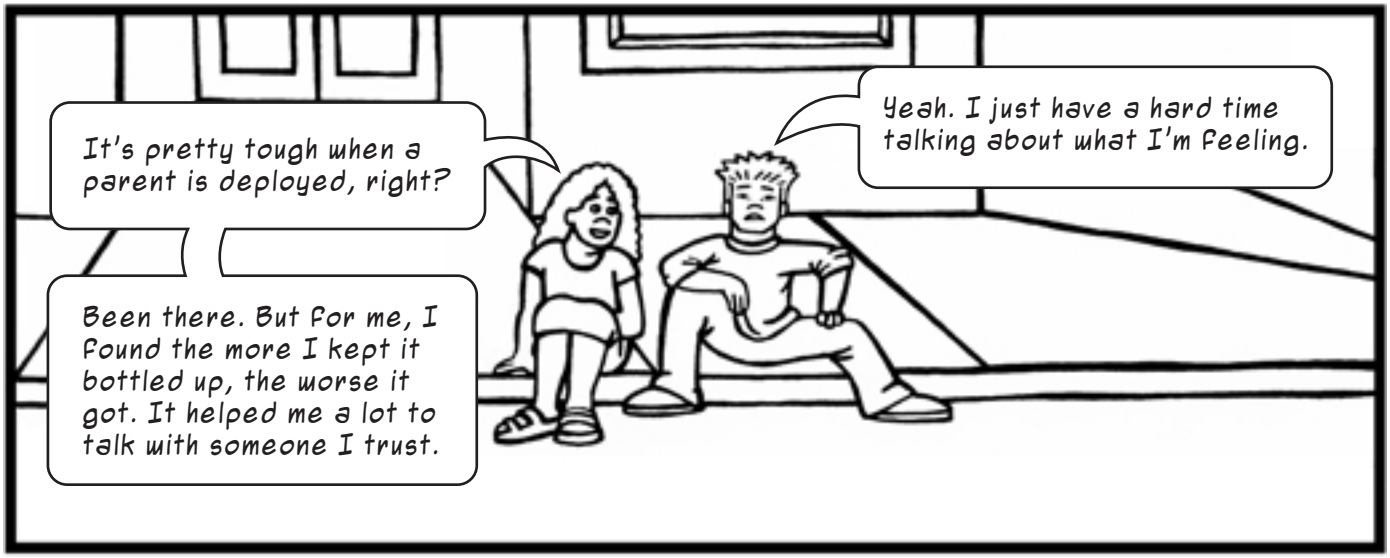
***Here are some things that you might put in a "Going Away" package.***

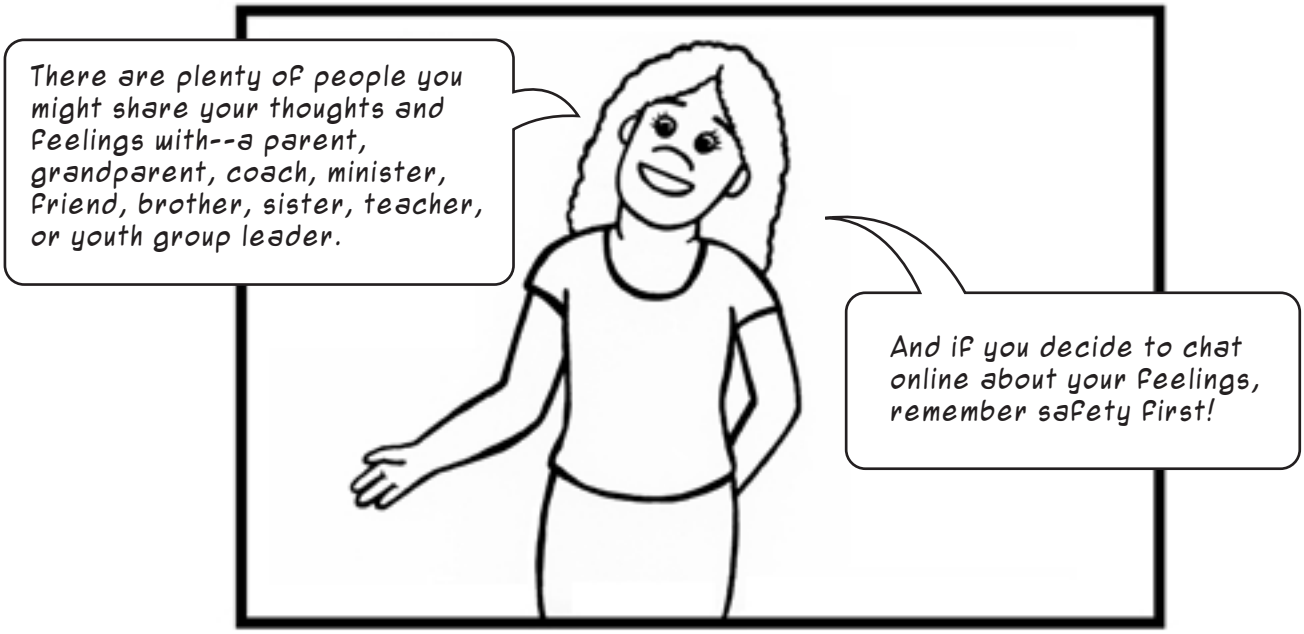
*Pictures of you and your parents
*Their favorite gum or candy
*Shoe polish (the kind in the can)
*A handkerchief or two
*Writing stuff (pens, paper, stamps, pre-addressed and stamped postcards or envelopes)
*Needle and thread
*String or fishing line
*Some clothes pins and safety pins
*A yoyo
*A few jokes, comic strips, stories, or poems
*Something small and special of yours to remember you by (Especially, something you made for them)


I hate it when you leave!
Arrgh!!!

Saying Goodbye is probably the hardest thing I've ever done.
Goodbyes probably are the worst thing about having parents in the Army.
It's okay to be sad and cry.
It's okay to be mad.
It's even okay to laugh or giggle.
Saying Goodbye is hard.
When you say goodbye your feelings can get all mixed up.


What's wrong Kim?
Nothin'!


It's pretty tough when a parent is deployed, right?
Yeah. I just have a hard time talking about what I'm feeling.
Been there. But for me, I found the more I kept it bottled up, the worse it got. It helped me a lot to talk with someone I trust.


There are plenty of people you might share your thoughts and feelings with--a parent, grandparent, coach, minister, friend, brother, sister, teacher, or youth group leader.
And if you decide to chat online about your feelings, remember safety first!

*Visit these cool websites designed for kids just like you:*

*Military Teens on the Move*
http://dticaw.dtic.mil/mtom/

*Army Teen Panel*
http://www.redstone.army.mil/armyouth/atp2.htm

Check out these rules for online safety.

## *Kids' Rules for Online Safety*

1. Never give out personal information, including addresses, phone numbers, or your school's name and location.
2. Tell your parents right away if any information you come across makes you feel uncomfortable.
3. Never agree to meet with someone you "met" online without first checking with your parents. Then only meet in a public place, and bring Mom or Dad along.
4. Don't send anyone your picture or other things without checking with your parents first.
5. Never respond to messages that are mean or make you feel uncomfortable. If you get messages like that contact, or have your parents contact, your Internet Service Provider.
6. Talk with your parents about rules for going online. Then keep those rules.
7. Never give out your Internet password.
8. Be a good online citizen. Don't hurt others or break the law.

When a parent leaves, you may have a lot of different feelings. See if you can find the ***15 feelings*** hidden in this puzzle.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | I | D | Y | Z | D | E | T | I | C | X | E | Z | L | S | L | O | F |
| G | M | D | E | S | S | E | R | T | S | J | W | B | I | X | U | A | U |
| P | O | J | Z | I | O | D | S | I | M | O | K | A | Y | P | P | A | H |
| V | U | Q | Z | N | F | E | E | U | R | O | D | L | D | G | A | C | N |
| D | E | T | A | R | T | S | U | R | F | K | E | U | P | B | W | W | F |
| U | F | N | I | L | N | A | I | J | A | N | G | R | Y | C | S | B | K |
| J | Y | J | R | E | I | E | W | T | O | C | O | M | Y | W | R | K | S |
| M | L | F | T | V | D | L | N | L | A | U | S | C | D | Z | O | L | F |
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| J | R | U | D | U | W | Z | F | V | I | J | F | S | G | Y | R | E | R |
| N | P | L | W | C | R | U | F | G | U | Z | J | Y | P | I | L | O | N |
| T | T | B | A | G | K | T | A | K | S | T | O | K | E | F | U | C | H |
| N | D | L | H | U | W | C | P | P | H | J | E | M | E | O | L | F | V |
| L | Q | N | G | C | D | B | C | Q | I | A | V | V | Z | R | C | Q | V |
| O | L | Q | C | L | D | B | T | Z | G | O | Q | E | G | A | B | R | M |
| N | O | O | Z | S | V | F | W | O | B | R | O | W | K | W | J | Q | X |
| M | N | E | F | X | I | W | E | I | K | V | C | I | J | D | Q | M | W |
| B | U | I | O | R | F | O | O | R | P | P | B | L | P | D | I | K | R |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **ANGRY** | **CONFUSED** | **EXCITED** |
| **FRUSTRATED** | **HAPPY** | **LONELY** |
| **OKAY** | **PLEASED** | **PROUD** |
| **SAD** | **SATISFIED** | **SCARED** |
| **STRESSED** | **TENSE** | **WORRIED** |

# Stressed?

When your mom or dad is gone, it's easy to get stressed out. Pay attention to your stress level. When it gets too high, do something about it. Take this simple test to see how stress may be affecting you. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Trouble sleeping?
- ☐ Loss of appetite or eating a lot more?
- ☐ Feeling confused?
- ☐ Feeling impatient with everyone?
- ☐ Feeling like punching someone's lights out?
- ☐ Having trouble concentrating?
- ☐ Don't really care about anything anymore?
- ☐ Feeling like nobody cares about you?

## Stress Can Affect

### YOUR BODY

* Headaches
* Nervousness
* Rashes
* Stomachaches
* Fast heartbeat
* Sweating

### YOUR MIND

* Poor concentration
* Forgetfulness
* Problems with school
* Problems studying
* Carelessness/taking risks
* Loss of interest

### YOUR FEELINGS

* Bored
* Angry
* Nightmares
* Sad/depressed
* Scared
* Withdrawn

It's normal to experience some of these things during hard times. But if you're stressed for too long, it might harm your body or day-to-day life. There are positive ways to deal with stress.

So what can you do to feel better when you're stressed out?

1. Be aware of the signs of stress.
2. Take action to avoid **STRESS OVERLOAD.**

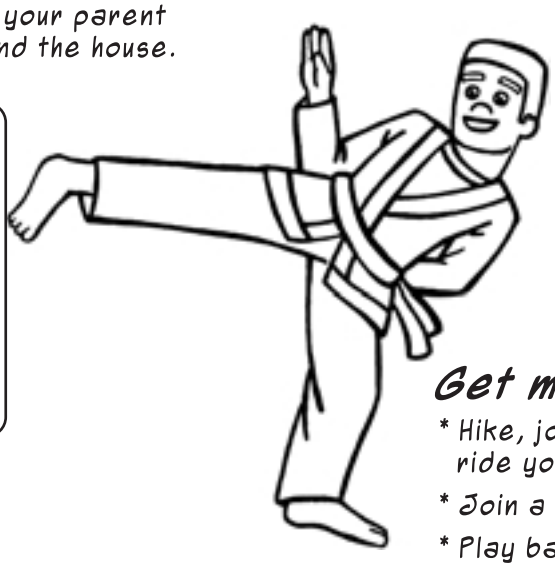
* Take deep breaths.
* Think positive.
* Relax and chill out.
* Meditate, pray, or read something inspirational.
* Talk with a friend or counselor.
* Exercise.
* Eat nutritious meals and snacks.
* Punch a pillow, scream, or kick a can.
* Set realistic goals.
* Take one thing at a time.
* Stop worrying about things that may never happen.
* Stop worrying about things that you can't control.
* Learn from your mistakes.
* Get busy doing things you like to do.
* Make time for fun.
* Do something for others.

# Chill Out

When we're stressed we try to keep busy and do fun things. Here's some things we like to do when we're stressed or feeling down.

## Get connected

* Join a club.
* Be a volunteer.
* Fix, grow, or build something with a friend.
* Listen to music with a friend.
* Get a rap group going with other kids like you.
* Hug somebody you like...real hard!
* Invite your best friend to do something fun.
* Help your parent around the house.



Be good to yourself. Do something fun.

**Be cool, and Chill Out!!!**

Believe me. Talking with friends and learning to chill out really helps.

## Get moving

* Hike, jog, or ride your bike.
* Join a karate class.
* Play ball.
* Go swimming.
* Play video games.
* Go skateboarding.
* Ride your bike.
* Play tennis.

## Get your mind going

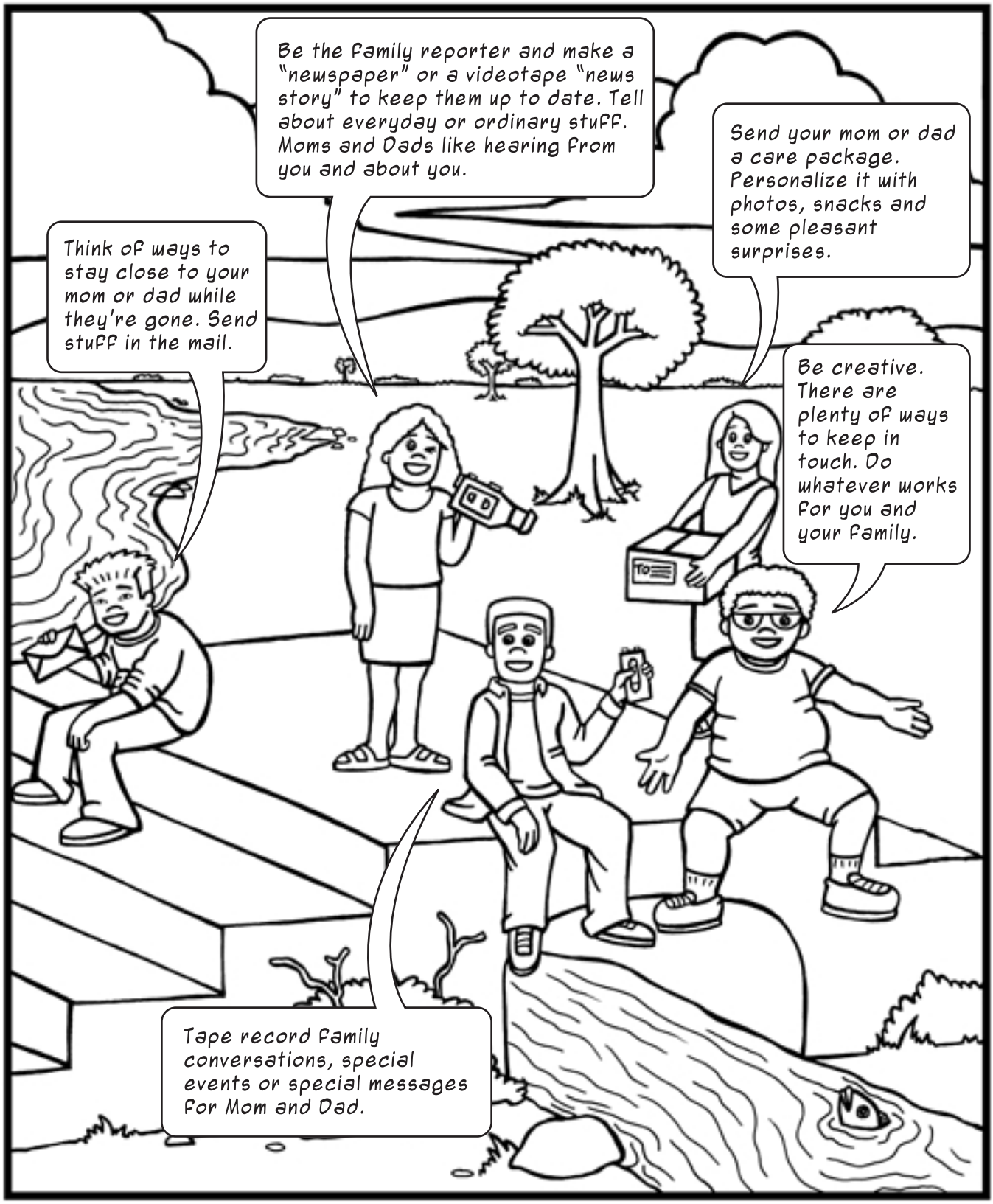
* Watch an upbeat video.
* Get a joke book and tell your friend some jokes.
* Write your parent about a favorite time you had together.
* Daydream.
* Lie down under a tree and watch clouds go by.
* Re-read a favorite book or check out one from the library.
* Draw or paint a picture.
* Go to a movie.
* Write in a journal.

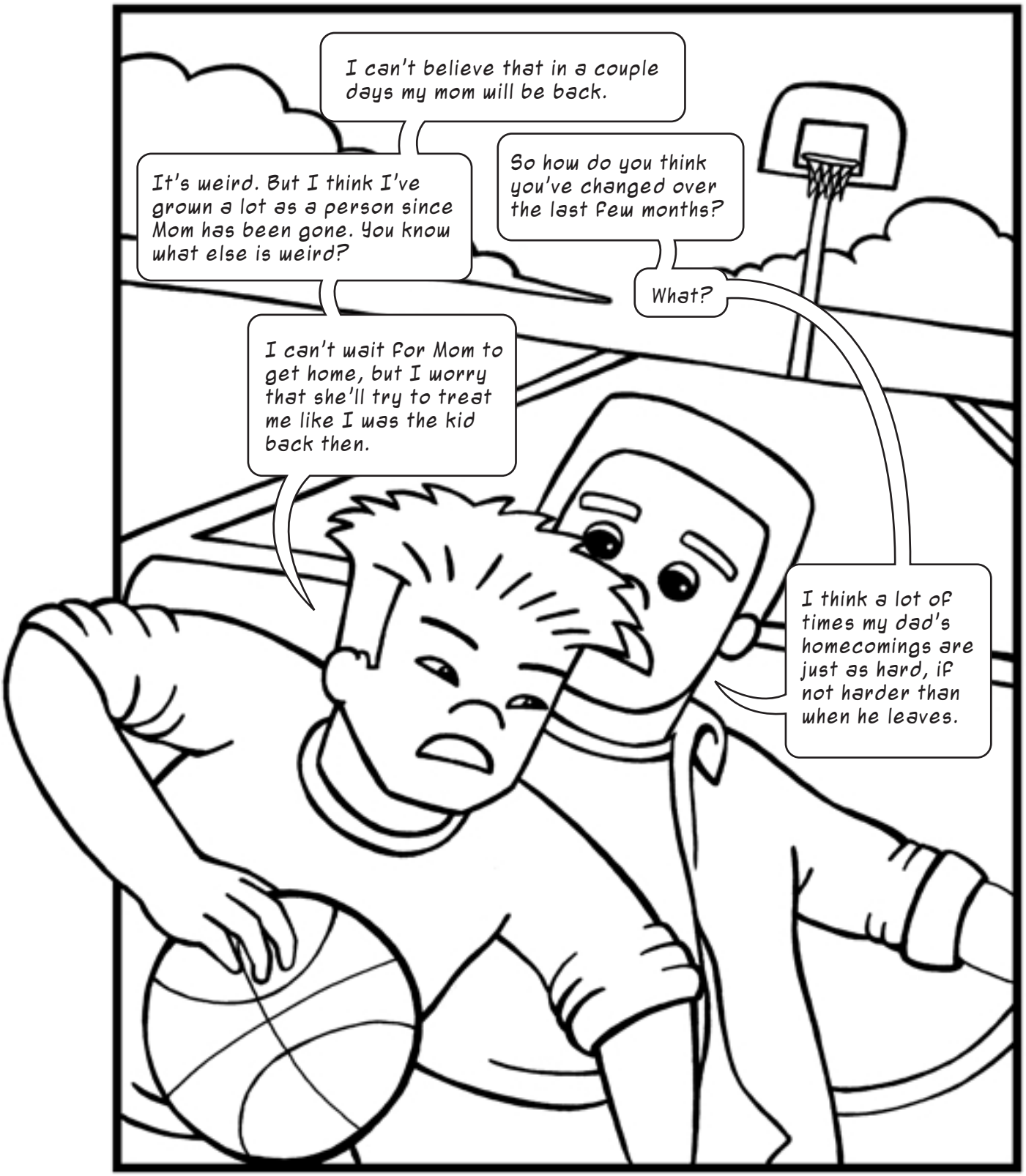
### *Some thoughts make you feel worse.*

I can't do anything right.
I did rotten.
My life is a mess.
I'm so stupid.
I'll never get it right.
I'll never be able to do it.
I really messed up.
I'm stupid.
It's my fault.

### *But positive self-talk can help.*

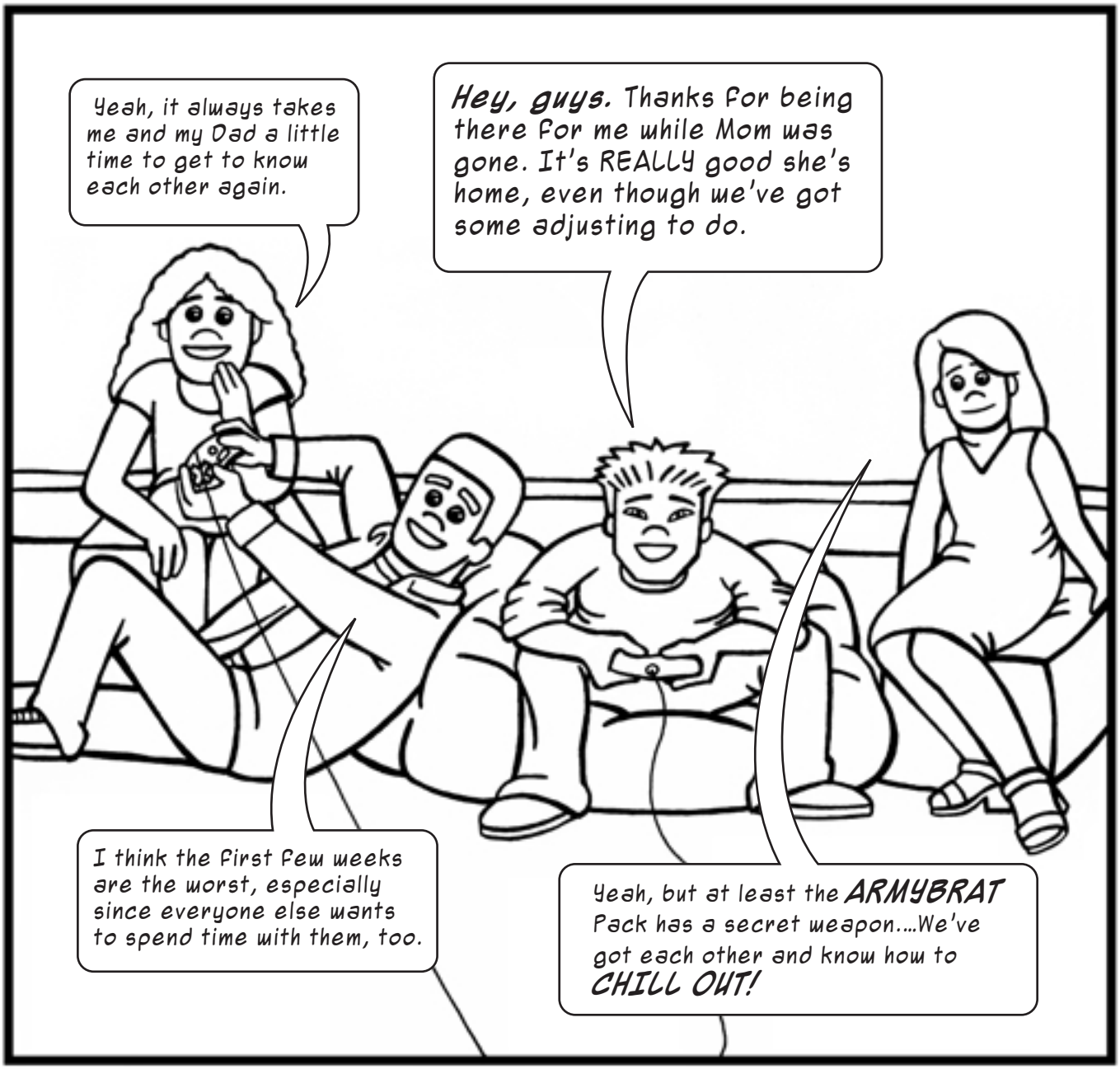
I'm handling myself better now.
I did good today, not perfect, but good.
I can fix the mistake I made.
I learned something useful today.
I'll do better next time.
I can do that.


Be the family reporter and make a "newspaper" or a videotape "news story" to keep them up to date. Tell about everyday or ordinary stuff. Moms and Dads like hearing from you and about you.
Send your mom or dad a care package. Personalize it with photos, snacks and some pleasant surprises.
Think of ways to stay close to your mom or dad while they're gone. Send stuff in the mail.
Be creative. There are plenty of ways to keep in touch. Do whatever works for you and your family.
Tape record family conversations, special events or special messages for Mom and Dad.


I can't believe that in a couple days my mom will be back.
It's weird. But I think I've grown a lot as a person since Mom has been gone. You know what else is weird?
So how do you think you've changed over the last few months?
What?
I can't wait for Mom to get home, but I worry that she'll try to treat me like I was the kid back then.
I think a lot of times my dad's homecomings are just as hard, if not harder than when he leaves.

There are lots of ***things you can do*** to help get ready for your mom or dad's return.

* Make a banner.
* Cook something your parent and family really likes.
* Make "coupons" that your parent can exchange later for "special benefits," like agreeing to babysit your little brothers or sisters so mom and dad can have a night out.
* Try writing a homecoming letter to help you and your parent get back into the swing of talking with each other again.


Yeah, it always takes me and my Dad a little time to get to know each other again.
Hey, guys. Thanks for being there for me while Mom was gone. It's REALLY good she's home, even though we've got some adjusting to do.
I think the first few weeks are the worst, especially since everyone else wants to spend time with them, too.
Yeah, but at least the ARMYBRAT Pack has a secret weapon....We've got each other and know how to CHILL OUT!

# My Personal Journal

# My Personal Journal