

The New Baby Book

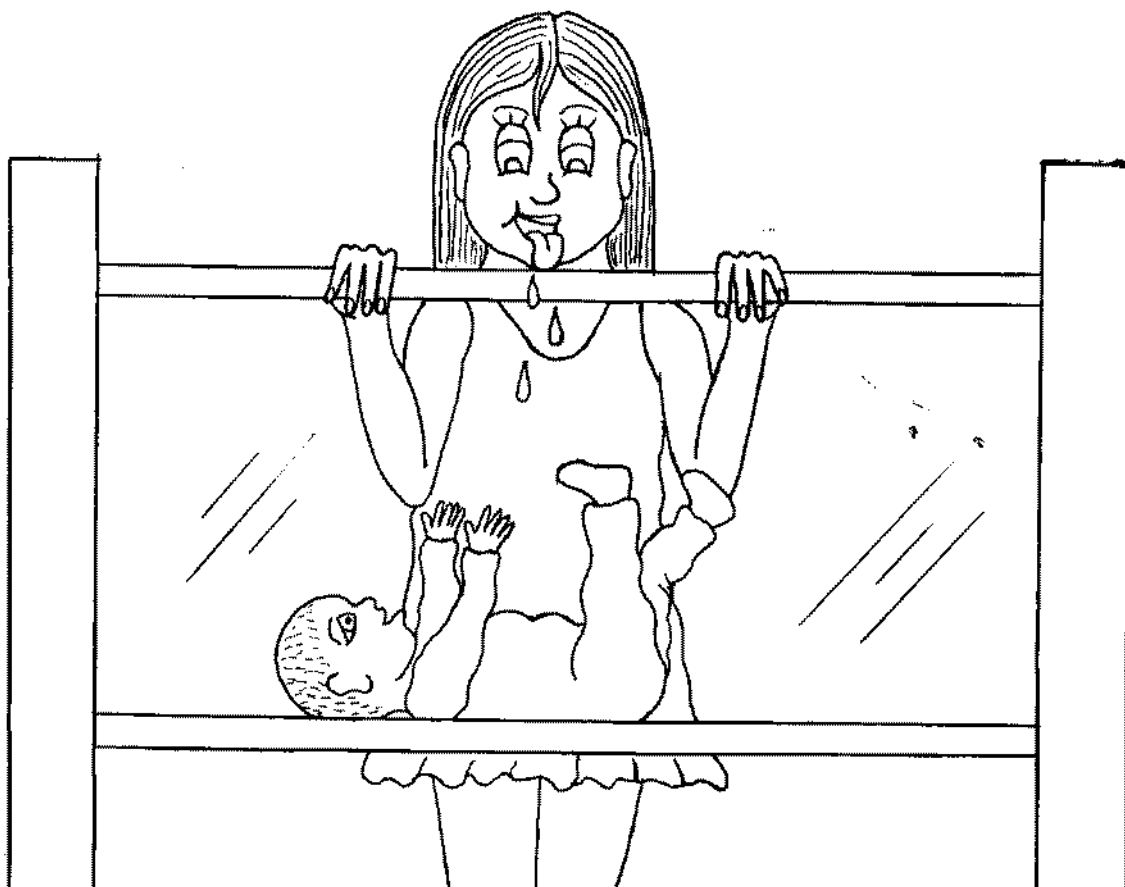
by

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A new baby is exciting! But it can also be hard for an older child when a baby brother or sister is born. All of a sudden it seems like the new baby is the focus of everyone's attention. People get all goo-goo eyed over him or her. Everyone wants to hold the baby. Make faces at him. Nuzzle her cheeks or tickle her toes. All a baby has to do is cry and adults come running to help her. But what about me?

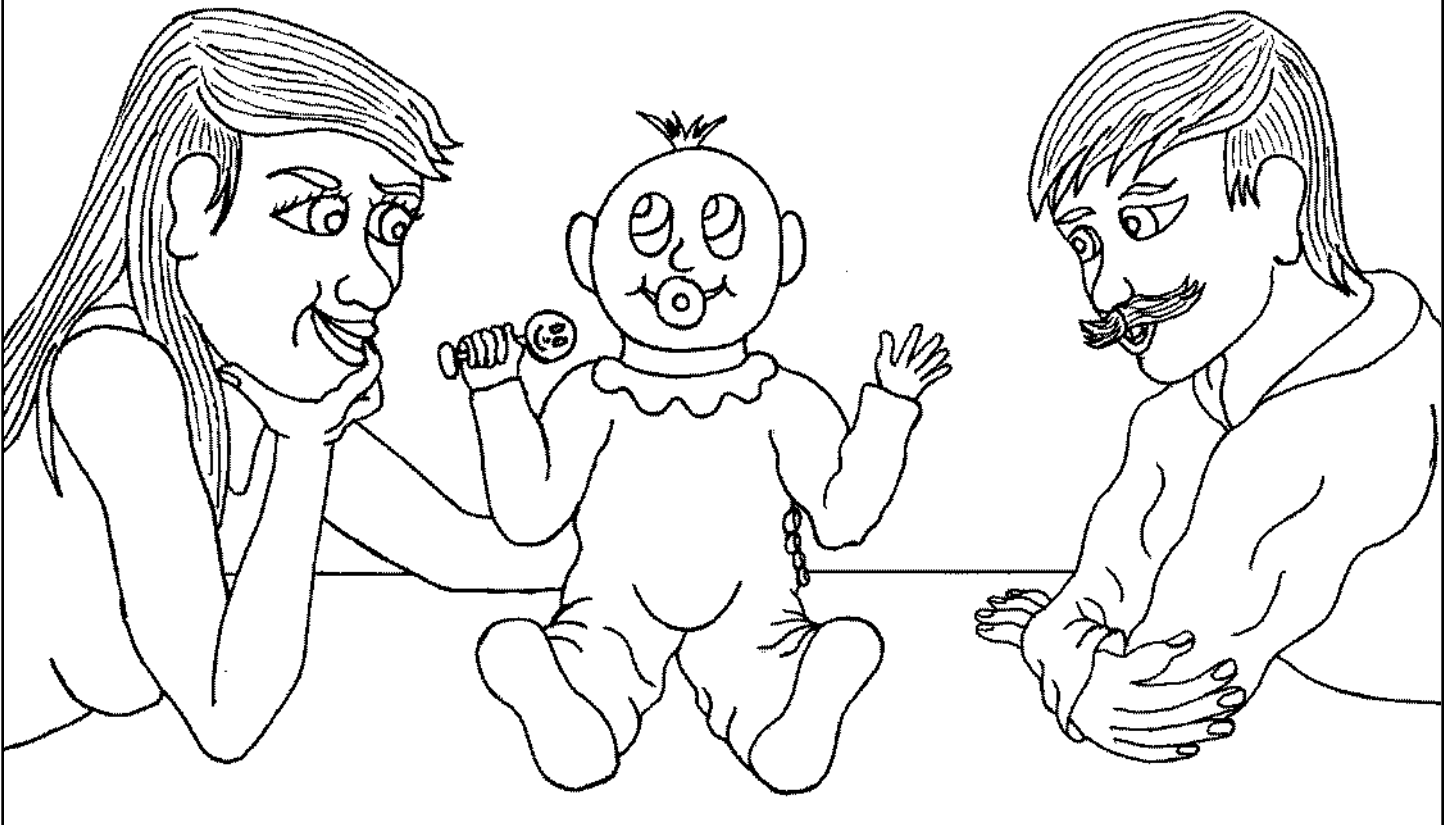
If you're an older kid watching this, it may seem like the baby has the perfect life. Many kids start to feel a little bit jealous when a new baby arrives, maybe even a little left out. What are some of the things you're feeling about the new baby?



The thing is you also got this sort of attention when you were a baby, you just don't remember it. People went all ga-ga and goo-goo over you, too. A baby is a special thing - the wonderful start of a new life - and so people love to gather around and ooh and awe, especially if they're not the ones who have to take care of it.

Now that you're older, people don't treat you in quite the same way they would a baby. Grown-ups give you attention in different ways that are more suitable to your age and abilities. They talk to you more like a grown-up. They want to hear what's on your mind and see everything you can do.

So while it may seem like the baby is getting attention that you're missing out on, this isn't really the case. The truth is that you did receive the same attention they're getting. And when the baby gets older, they'll receive the same type of affection that you're receiving now.



Ask your mom or dad to tell you some stories about when you were a baby and write these stories here:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



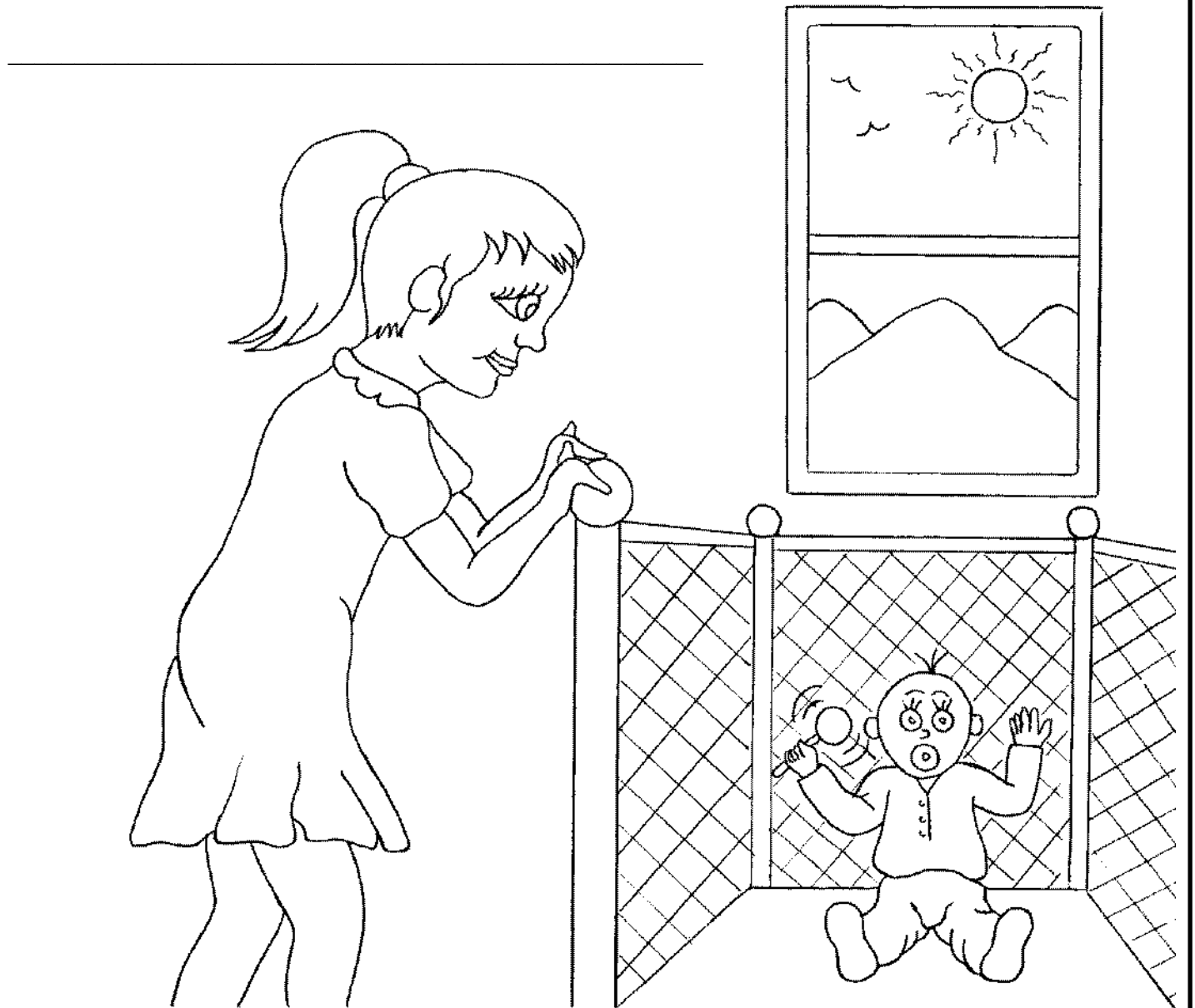
Babies don't act the way they do because they want to hog all the attention. They do it because they're completely helpless. Babies can't feed themselves. They can't use the potty or change their own diaper. They can't talk and tell others what they need, so they cry to get attention. Small babies can't even lift their own head up. Their muscles are so undeveloped that they struggle to do much of anything on their own.

If you were so helpless, you would need adults to assist you with everything, too. And they did, until you grew older and stronger and could do more things on your own.



Now that you're a bigger kid, what are some of the things that you can do on your own?

What are some of the things that will make you a good big brother or sister?

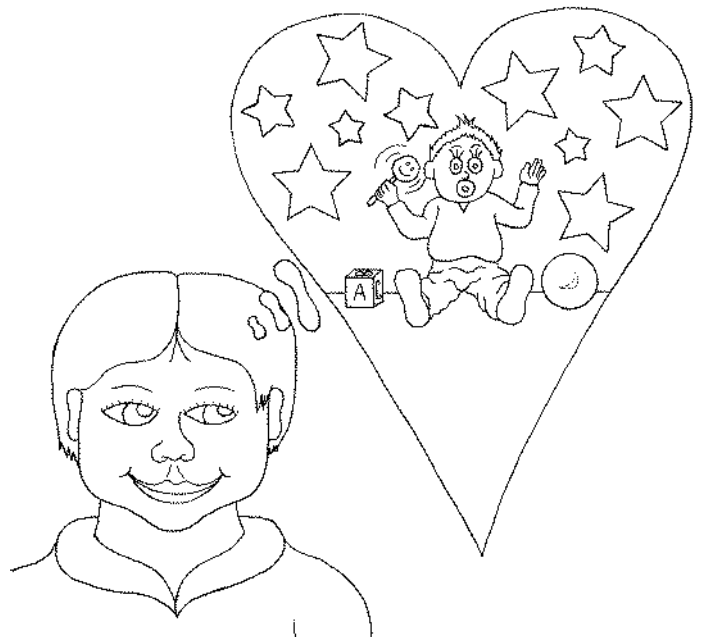


A baby's life is pretty simple: Eat, sleep, and poop. In-between all that, the other major job they have is to seek out affection. In order to thrive in this world, babies need to know they are loved. They need to learn who they can depend on to take care of them.

This process is called "bonding." Bonding is important for babies, which is why moms and dads need to spend so much time with them. When a baby is unhappy, they cry. And when they cry, adults need to show their love and demonstrate that baby can depend on them to come to his aid.

You can help baby with bonding, too. As a big brother or big sister, you'll play an important part in their lives. Whenever you show him love and affection or provide comfort when he cries, you're teaching him that you're someone who loves and cares for him - someone he can depend on in times of need.

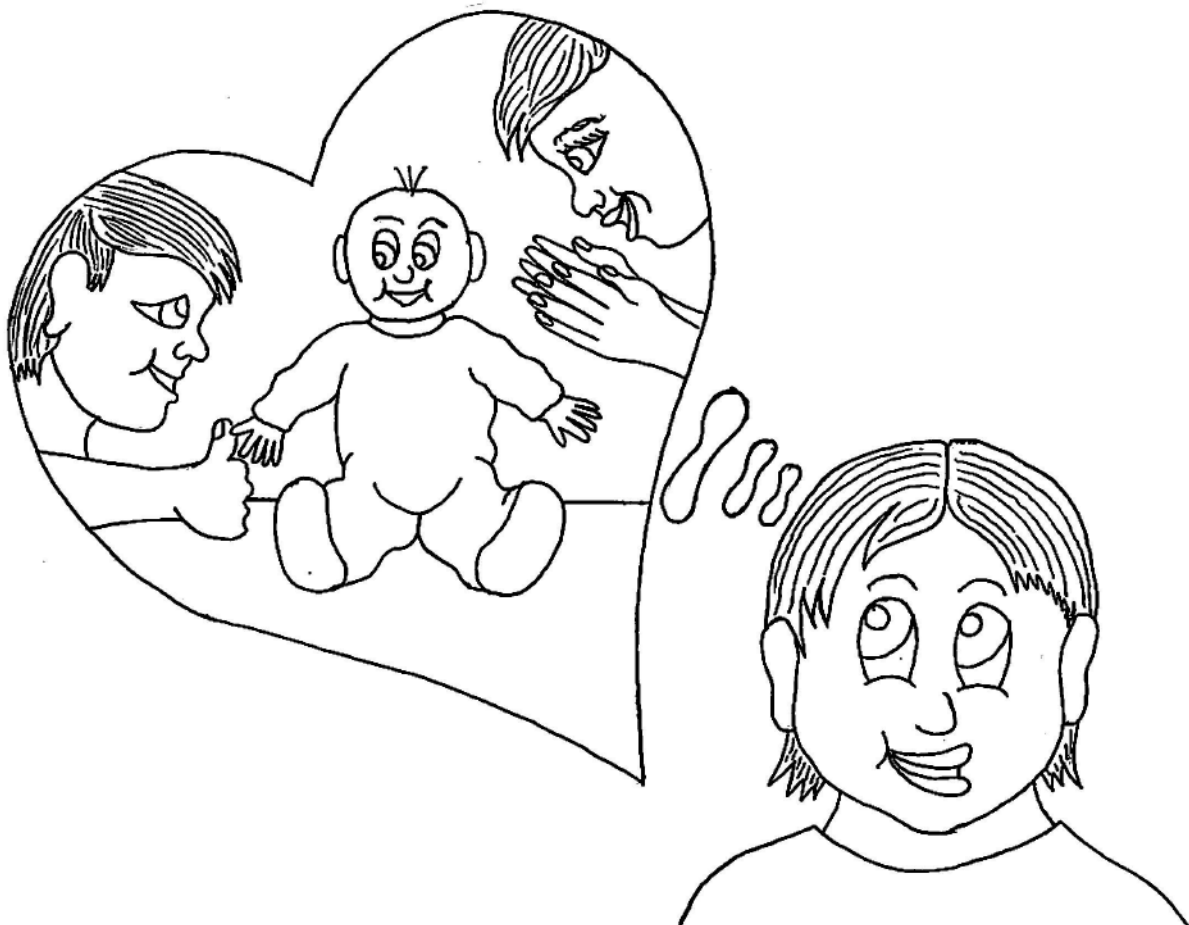
What are some of the ways you can bond with a baby and show them love?



Some kids might begin to think that they can get extra attention by acting like a baby. So they start to act more babyish than they really are, hoping this will get mom and dad's attention. But you might want to think this through.

If you *really were* a baby, it would mean you couldn't go outside to play. You wouldn't be able to run or jump or climb the monkey bars, because babies can't even walk. You couldn't ask for treats, because babies can't talk, and they also can't have candy. You'd have to take naps all the time. You couldn't eat normal food -- just milk or mashed peas all day long. You couldn't watch your favorite shows, because babies aren't supposed to watch T.V.

If you still think it would be better to be a baby, maybe your parents can try it for one day. But I'm pretty sure that it wouldn't take long before you decided being a baby wasn't all it's cracked up to be, and were begging to be a bigger kid again so that you can do all the things you love to do.



Sit down with mom or dad and think of 10 things you can do that a baby can't do. Write them in the spaces below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

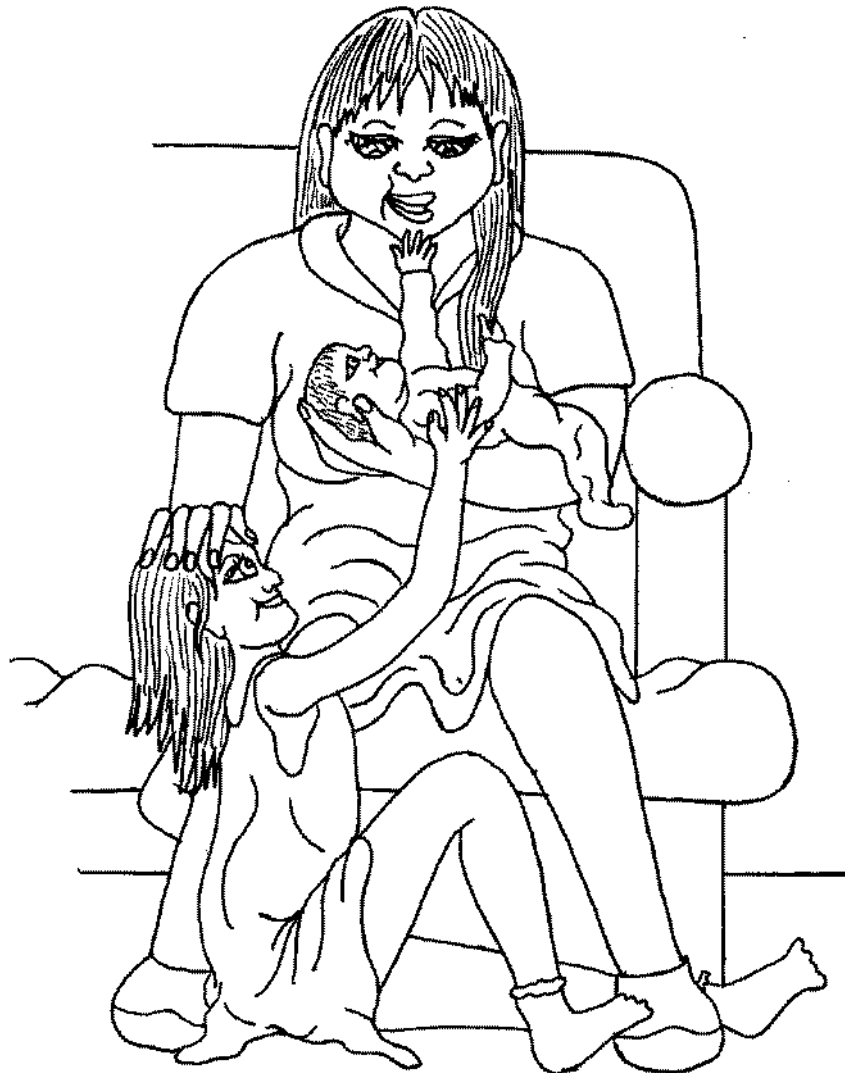
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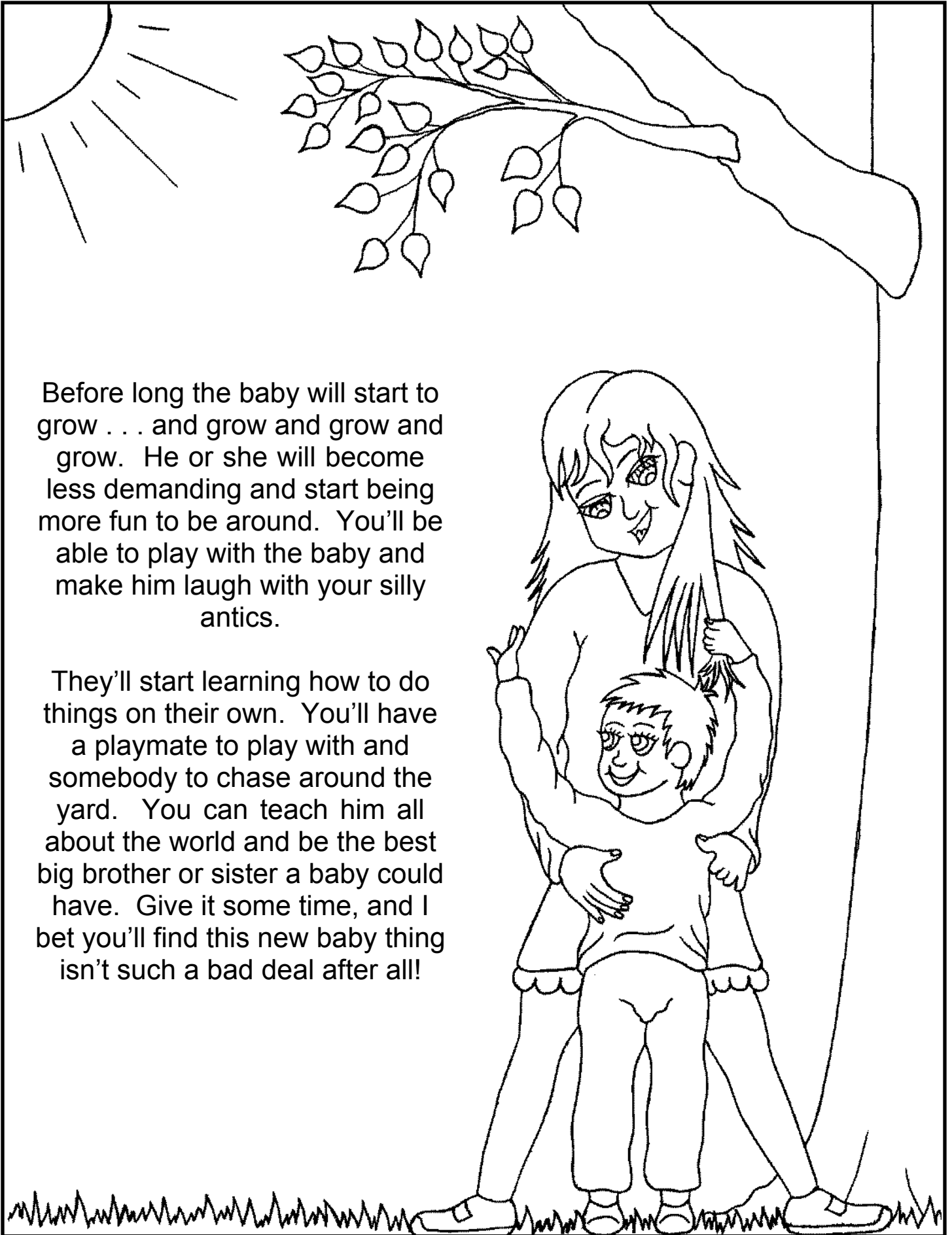


Since babies do so little, moms and dads have to do much more. Especially in the very beginning, babies are a lot of work to take care of. They need to be fed and burped and changed and given attention. They wake in the middle of the night crying and need to be soothed. If mom and dad look a little frazzled lately, it's probably because they are.

You can assist your parents is by being mom or dad's special helper. If they're busy taking care of the new baby, you might get some quality time together by asking how you can help. If they're busy feeding or cuddling baby, you can't just run over and jump on top. But you can get cuddles next to their leg or walk over and sit quietly next to them. One thing's for sure: The baby is here to stay, and everyone will be happier if you work together to help one another.

You should also remember that this situation is only temporary. The baby will become easier to take care of as time goes on, and things will start to get back to normal.





Before long the baby will start to grow . . . and grow and grow and grow. He or she will become less demanding and start being more fun to be around. You'll be able to play with the baby and make him laugh with your silly antics.

They'll start learning how to do things on their own. You'll have a playmate to play with and somebody to chase around the yard. You can teach him all about the world and be the best big brother or sister a baby could have. Give it some time, and I bet you'll find this new baby thing isn't such a bad deal after all!

