

# OUR NEW BABY IS IN THE HOSPITAL

AN ACTIVITY BOOK FOR YOUNG SIBLINGS



# OUR NEW BABY IS IN THE HOSPITAL

AN ACTIVITY BOOK FOR YOUNG SIBLINGS

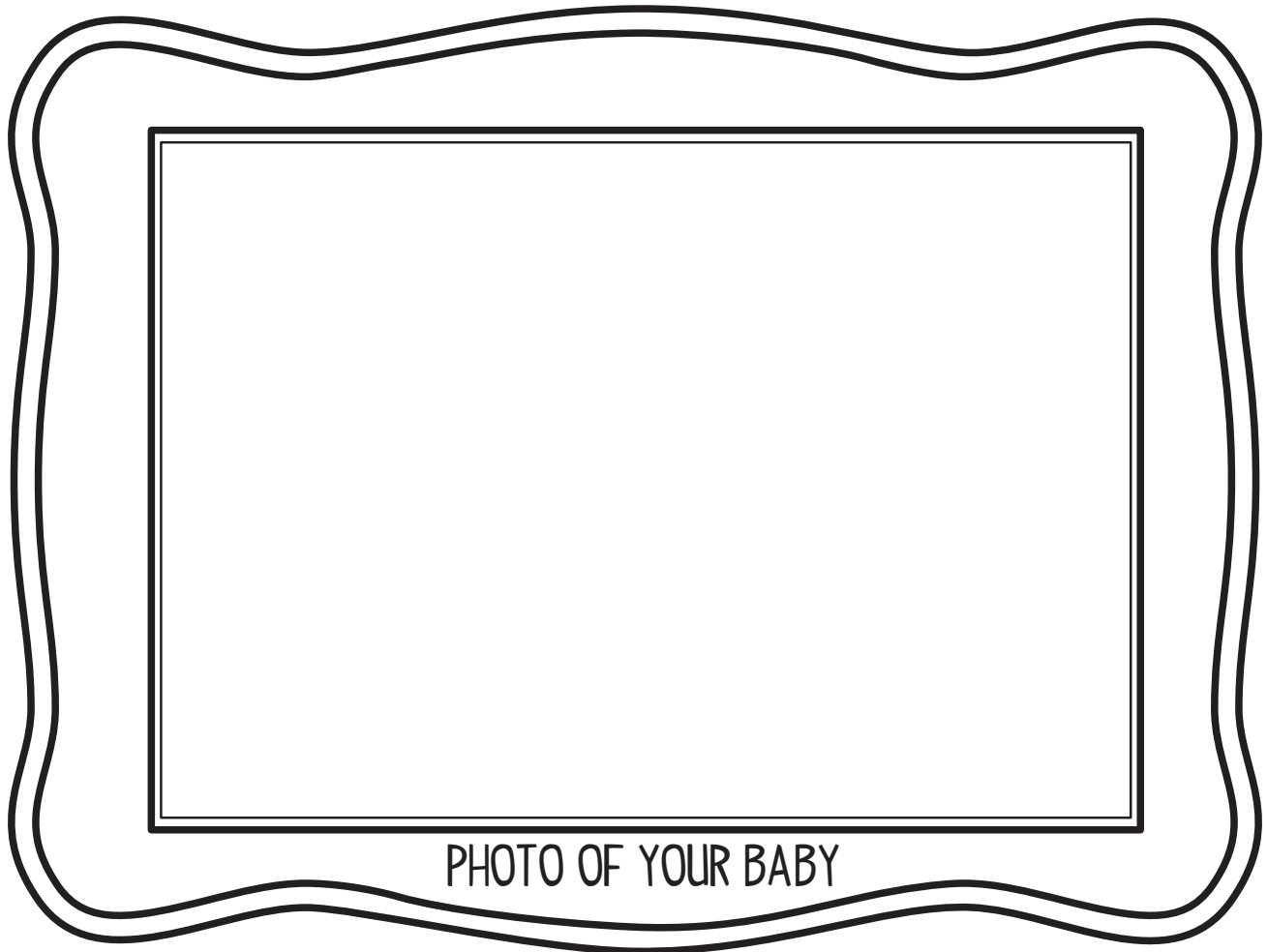


PHOTO OF YOUR BABY

**Illustrated by:** Ellen the Artist (Ellen Gurak)

**Designed by:** Advocate Media Center

**This book was created by:**

Advocate Children's Health Resource Center

with the assistance of

Advocate Children's Hospital Child Life Department

**Student contributor:**

Elizabeth Solomon, child life intern from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

A special thanks to our nurses in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for their input on this project and for their compassionate care of our families in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

# THIS BOOK BELONGS TO YOU!

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

BABY'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



## WOW!

YOU ARE A  
BIG BROTHER...

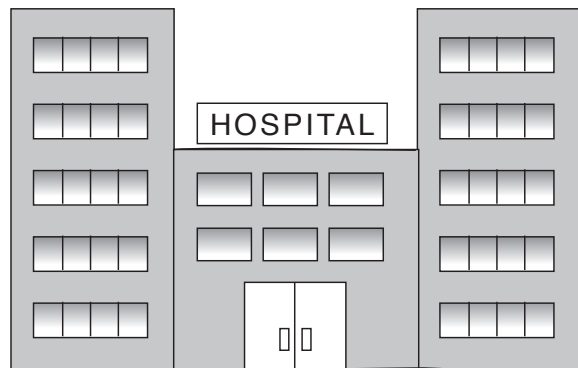


...OR A BIG SISTER!!!

**A BABY'S FIRST HOME IS  
INSIDE A MOMMY'S TUMMY.**

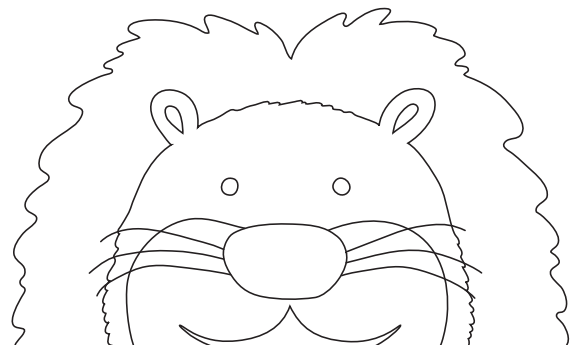
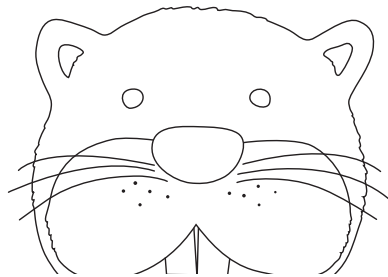
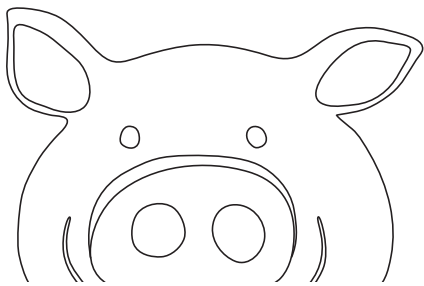


**SOON AFTER THEY  
ARE BORN, MOST BABIES  
GO HOME.**

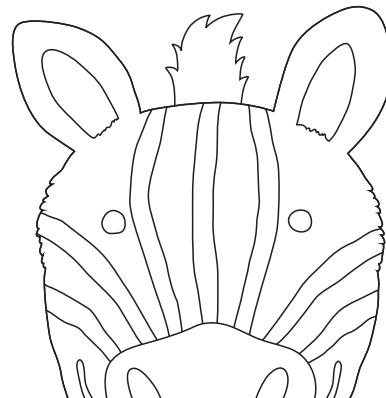
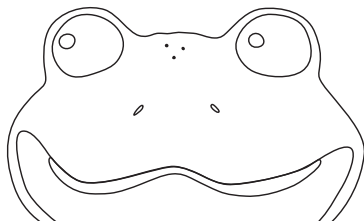


**BUT SOMETIMES, THEY NEED  
TO STAY AT THE HOSPITAL.**

**YOUR BABY IS AT  
ADVOCATE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.**



**LOOK FOR US PALS WHILE YOU ARE THERE**



Inside the hospital  
is a special nursery,  
called the N.I.C.U.  
This is where doctors  
and nurses help babies  
grow to be healthy  
and strong.



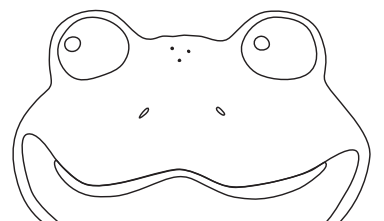
TO BE STRONG, A BABY NEEDS TO  
BREATHE, EAT, AND SLEEP.



MY BABY IS GETTING STRONG.



I AM  
STRONG,  
TOO!



# HOW BIG IS YOUR BABY?

Though all babies seem tiny,  
they are born in  
many sizes.



1 pound



3 pound



5 pound



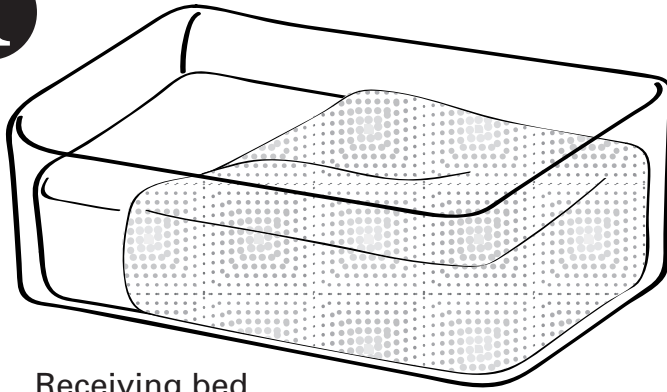
7 pound

**EVERYONE GROWS!**

TRACE YOUR HAND OR FOOT HERE!



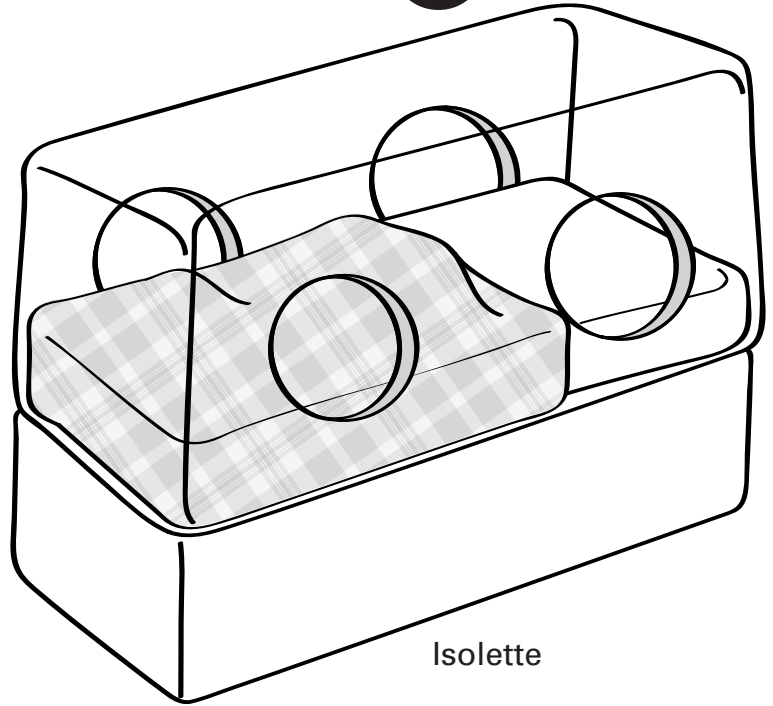
1



Receiving bed

As babies grow, they need bigger beds from cradles to cribs. The hospital has special beds called "isolettes" (eye-so-lets) to keep babies warm.

2

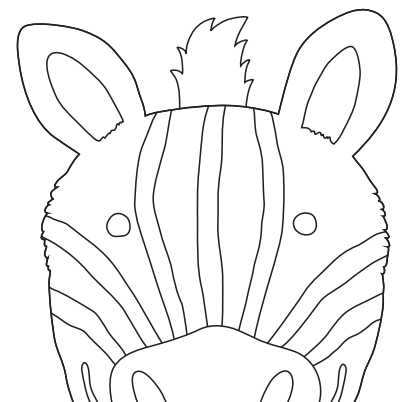


Isolette

3



Crib



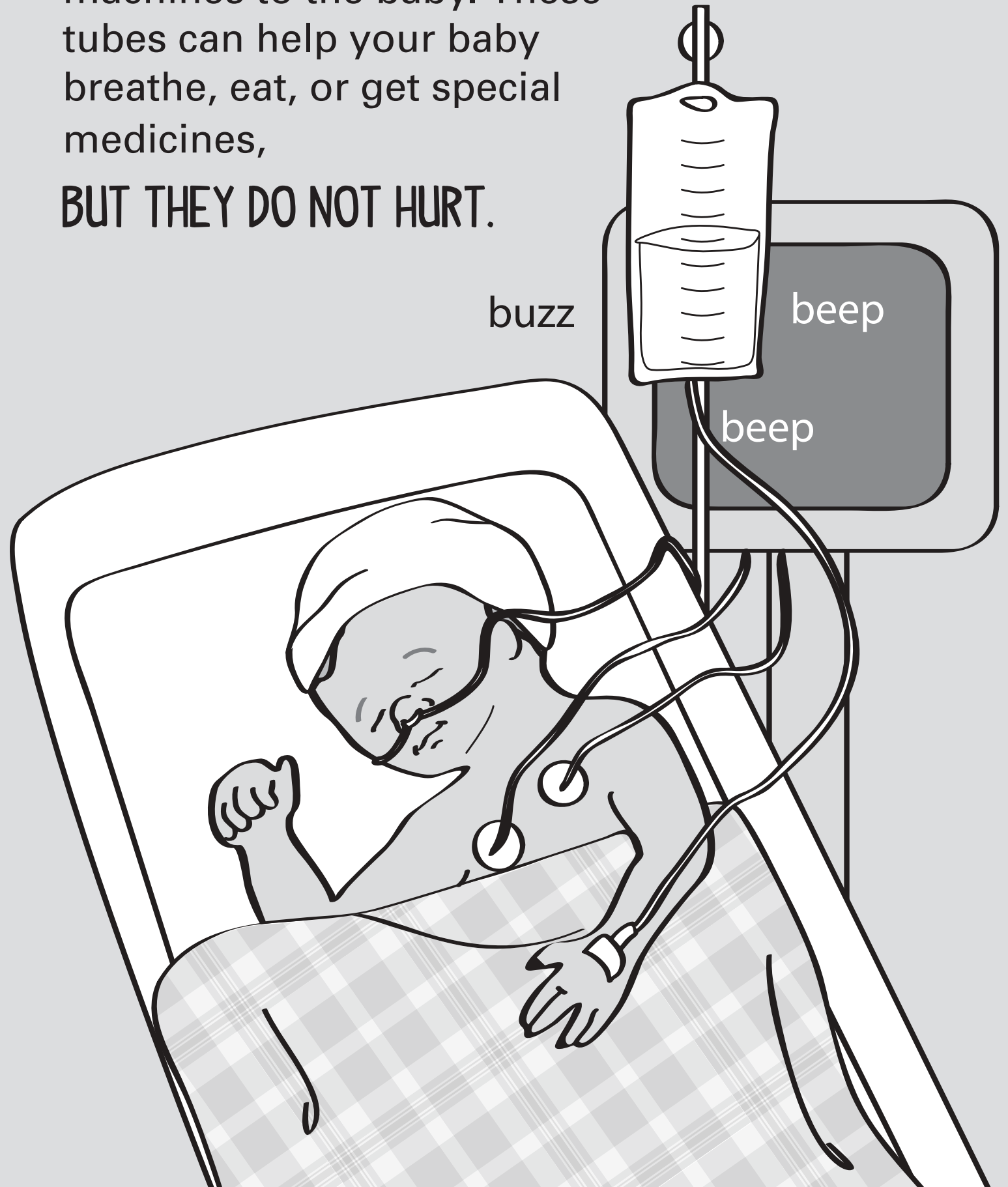
Around the bed are a lot of machines. Tubes go from the machines to the baby. These tubes can help your baby breathe, eat, or get special medicines,

**BUT THEY DO NOT HURT.**

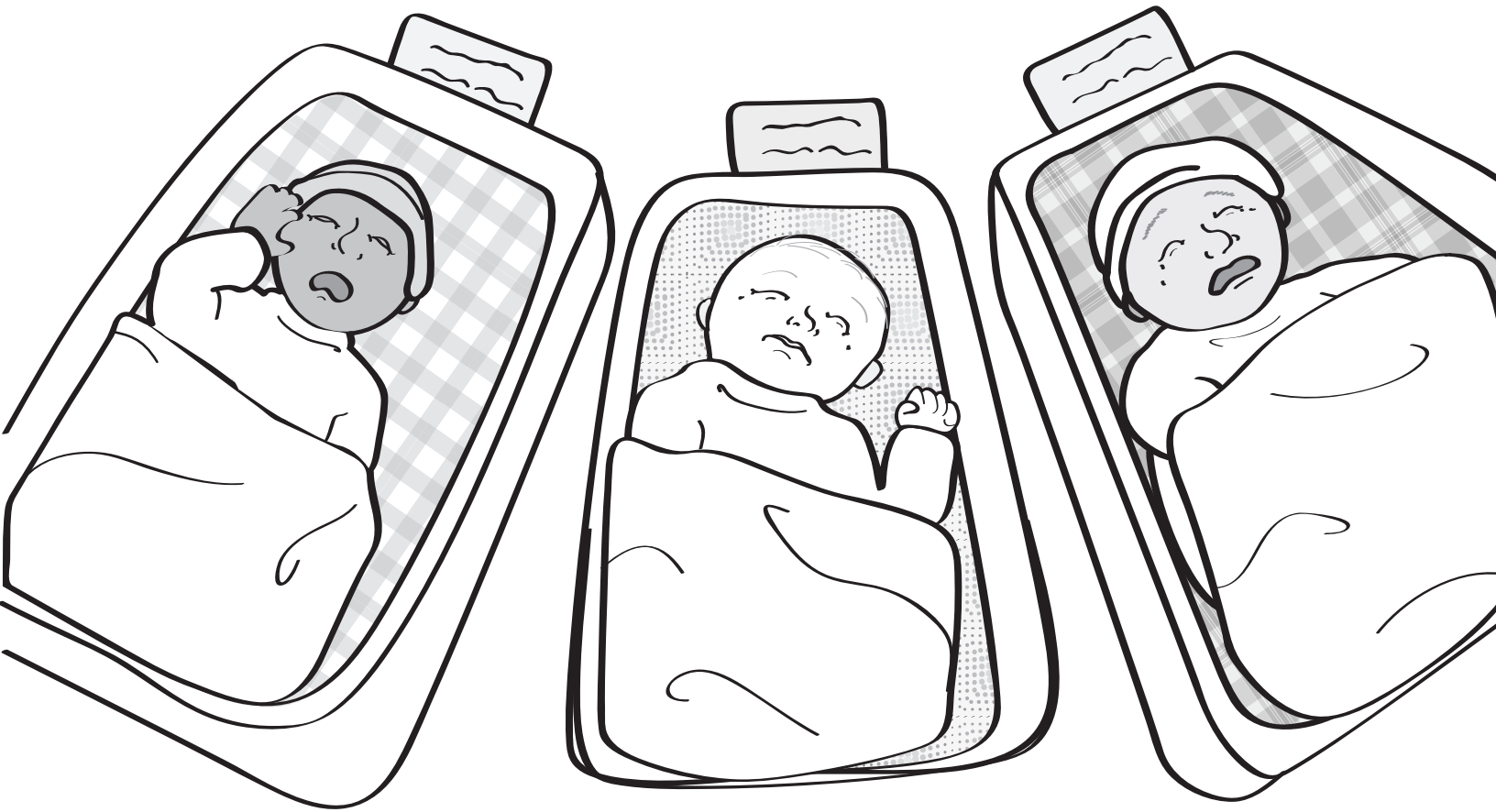
buzz

beep

beep



# IT IS OKAY TO CRY.

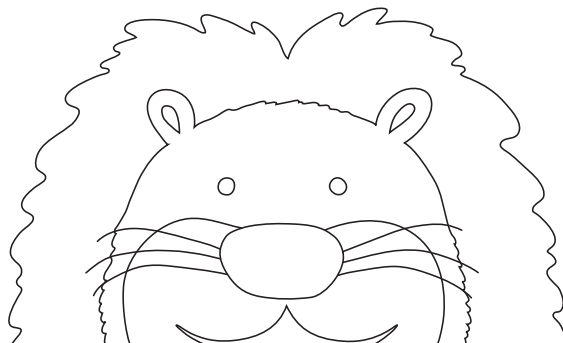


---

All babies cry.

Babies cry when they are hungry.  
They cry when they need a new diaper.  
They cry when they are sad.

**SOMETIMES, THEY JUST CRY!**



IT IS EVEN OKAY FOR MOMS, DADS, BROTHERS,  
AND SISTERS TO CRY  
SMILING AND LAUGHING ARE OKAY TOO!



I feel happy we have a new baby.



I feel sad our new baby is in the hospital.



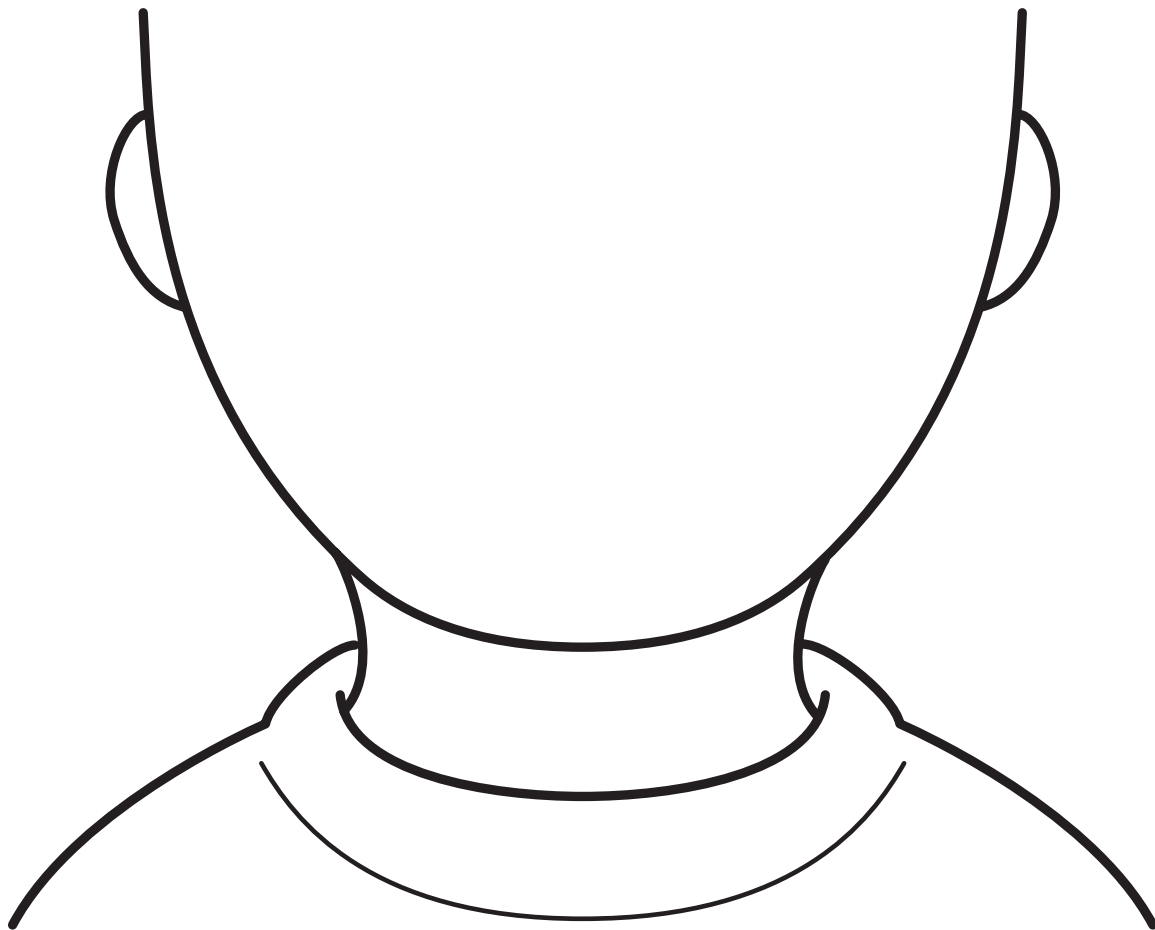
I miss my family. They visit the baby a lot without me.



I feel mad that our new baby is getting so much attention.



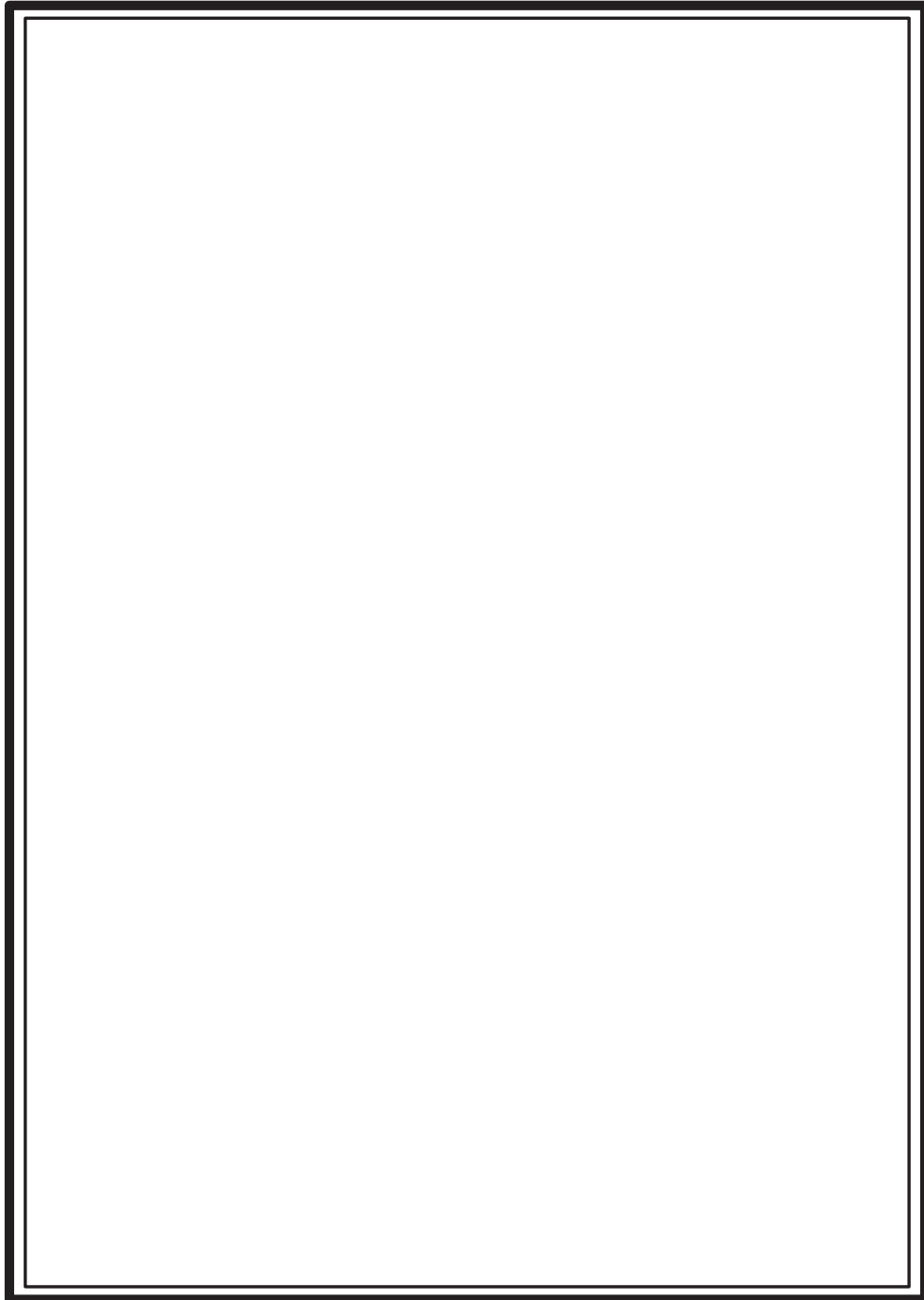
I am worried about our new baby getting better.



HOW DO YOU FEEL TODAY?

EVERYONE CARES ABOUT THE NEW BABY.  
EVERYONE CARES ABOUT YOU, TOO!  
YOU ARE A VERY SPECIAL PART OF THE FAMILY.

MY FAMILY



A PICTURE FOR YOU!



Cut along dashed line



## Note to Parents

Having a baby in the hospital is not easy. It can be a very stressful time for families. You will have many of your own feelings to deal with about this experience. Children also have many feelings during this time and they need your support. It is important to nurture your other children and help them realize they are loved and cared for, too. The experience of illness or prematurity can be made easier for children when they understand what is happening and the reasons for all the activity and attention surrounding their fragile new baby brother or sister.

### **Very young children may have many different feelings about the baby, but they may not have the words to express them:**

- \* Anger-jealous that the new baby is getting all the attention
- \* Confusion-unsure what is wrong with the baby
- \* Fear- worries that the baby will not get better, fear of parents' actions (crying, yelling)
- \* Guilt- perception that they caused the illness or prematurity
- \* Loneliness- Mom and Dad are not home as often, being with a babysitter more often
- \* Disappointment – the baby did not come home right away.

**You can help your children express these feelings by encouraging them to draw pictures about their feelings.** Prompt them to give you messages for the baby (e.g. "I can't wait to meet you, baby!"). Hitting a pillow, kicking a ball, pounding clay, or batting a beach ball may help. Pretend play can also help some children. For example, encourage them to pretend to be a doctor or a nurse and care for a doll or teddy bear. The Children's Health Resource Center have supplies to assist your children's participation in pretend play. If you would like your children to attend a play session with a staff member from the resource center, please call (847.723.9484) for more information.

**Children may behave differently than usual.** They may go through changes such as:

- \* Acting out to get attention or relieve stress
- \* Being well behaved to win back your love/attention or to make things better
- \* Having trouble eating or sleeping
- \* Complaining of feeling ill, being in pain
- \* Bed wetting or other bathroom problems
- \* Acting younger than they really are
- \* Withdrawing from you or other family members

These changes are typical. If they last a long time or keep getting worse, consult your pediatrician who can suggest helpful resources.

## Things You Can Do to Help

- \* **Learn as much as you can about your baby's condition.** The more you know, the better prepared you will be for the future. Ask your health care team questions. If you still do not understand, ask again! Medical terms can be difficult to understand. Your health care team will try to explain what is going on in simple words. The Children's Health Resource Center at Oak Lawn (708.684.3225) and Park Ridge (847.723.9484) have many resources to help parents and children better understand illness and prematurity.
- \* **Answer your children's questions.** Use words your children can understand. Do not over explain, but be honest. Children's fears and fantasies are often worse than reality. It is all right to say, "I do not know" when you do not have the answers. We encourage you to go through this book with your children.
- \* **Encourage communication.** Allow your children to talk, ask questions, and share their needs. Do not assume a lack of questions means a lack of interest. Children may express their feelings through art or activities. Find time to observe and respond to your children. Accept their feelings even if their comments are negative. Let your children know that they can openly share their thoughts. This activity book offers a way for them to express feelings.
- \* **Share your own feelings.** Explain that when you are sad, you cry. Tell your children you are tired and worried about the baby. Apologize if you take out your anger on your children. Children can understand.
- \* **Reassure your children.** Explain that nothing they said, did or did not do caused the illness or prematurity. Find time to give them love and attention. Set aside special times to be with your children. Read, play games, call them on the phone, plan a treat. Record your voice for them to listen to when they miss you. Give them a scarf or hat to keep nearby or to sleep with.

\***Try to keep as many scheduled routines as possible.** Keep up the playgroups or other routine activities. You may need to ask for help and support. Routines are very important to children. Keeping these routines can help your children feel a sense of control and relieve some anxiety.

\***Use the same babysitter if possible.** Give the babysitter the same words and explanations that you use with your children. Keep the same limits you set with your children. While the sense of being special is well deserved, children also need to know that what you expect of them has not changed, and someone will be there to help them stay within boundaries.

\***If your children are in school or daycare, tell their teachers about your baby.** Tell them the words and explanations you are giving your children. Ask them to show added kindness and caring toward your children. Remind them that your children may need extra help to focus or to keep their behavior within boundaries.

\***Make a “baby” book with your children.** Encourage your children to bring the book to school or show it to a friend. It could include a photo of the baby’s first cuddle, a foot print, or drawings done by your children.

\***Take care of yourself.** Eat well and find the time for some rest. Find support for your own fears and anxieties. Children copy behavior and coping skills from the adults they live with. Allow yourself some time to grieve about not having a healthy or full term baby. Ask friends or family members to help with laundry, cooking, cleaning and other chores.

\***If you are married or have a partner...**remember that this is still your primary relationship. Communicate with each other and share your feelings. Avoid blaming each other. Ask for support from the entire family. Realize that you may not be feeling the same way at the same time. Very likely while one may be feeling “up”, the other may be feeling “down”. Be sure to ask each other, “How are you?” every day!

## Resources

The Advocate Children’s Hospital Children’s Health Resource Centers provide reliable health information for parents, teenagers and children. We have resources to help you become an active partner with your health care team and make informed choices about your child’s health.

**Lending Library** – Our free lending library offers easy to understand health information. Browse our collection for current books, magazines, videos and pamphlets.

**Medical Play** – Out interactive medical play supplies allow children to practice health care skills with teaching dolls, medical items, anatomy models and therapeutic games.

**Online Resources** – We offer ebooks and links to websites you can trust. Our caring staff can help you find reliable health information.

### Contact us at:

#### **The Andrew Family Children’s Health Resource Center**

Lobby Advocate Children’s Hospital  
4440 W. 95th Street  
Oak Lawn, IL 60453  
Phone: 708.684.3225  
Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

#### **Children’s Health Resource Center**

Advocate Children’s Hospital Outpatient Center  
1675 W. Dempster Street, Second Floor  
Park Ridge, IL 60068  
Phone: 847.723-9484  
Hours: Monday – Friday 9 am – 5 pm







 **Advocate Children's Hospital**

4440 W. 95th Street || Oak Lawn, IL 60453  
[advocatehealth.com/ach](http://advocatehealth.com/ach)

1775 Dempster Street || Park Ridge, IL 60068  
[advocatehealth.com/luth](http://advocatehealth.com/luth)