

Sam and dina
and how Looking
after my little sister
made me a star



READING IS THE KEY TO LEARNING

'Sam,' said my mother, 'look after your baby sister Dina. She is four months old. Play with her.'

She was little but I still played with her. I put a blanket on the ground. She lay on the blanket. She smiled. Her eyes moved as she looked at the leaves in the trees. I made her a toy like this.



The bits were different colours and shapes. She laughed and laughed.

I sang to her. I talked to her. I made funny noises. I hid my face with my hand and then peeped out. I played with her fingers and toes. She laughed and laughed and laughed.

Why don't you make a toy like Sam did! It is called a mobile.

'Sam,' said my mother, 'look after your baby sister Dina. She is four months old. Keep her safe.'

I watched her when she lay on the blanket. I made sure that ants did not come and bite her. I kept the dirty flies away.

She always put things in her mouth. Her teeth were coming. I made her something to bite on that also made a noise.

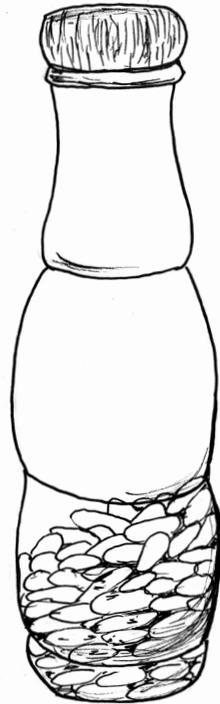
I found a small, strong plastic bottle with a round end. I put big dry beans in it. I put on the cap very, very tightly so that Dina could never get it off.

Sometimes little children can fall ill quickly. My older sister taught me the signs. She learned them in school. So when the baby feels very hot, or breathes very quickly or smells bad, I must call my mother. She calls me her 'little doctor'.

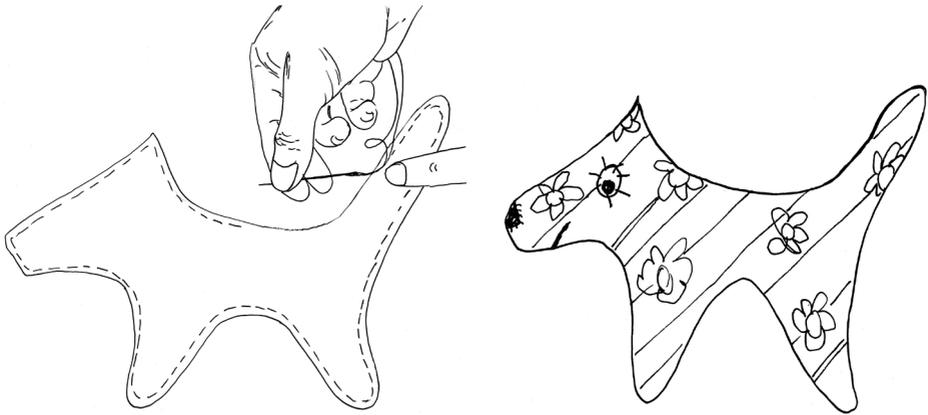
Why don't you make something that makes a noise, like Sam did?

'Sam,' said my mother, 'look after your baby sister Dina. She is nine months old. Play with her.'

Now she was crawling and trying to stand. I helped her. I found her a box to put things in. I found round stones. I made sure that they were too big for her to put in her mouth. I never let her have tiny things or sharp things. She can put them in her ears or swallow them.



I made her a dog. I got some old clean cloth and some cotton. I cut two pieces out. I sewed them together but I left a hole. I put the cotton in the hole. I sewed it all up. My mother helped me.



Perhaps you do not think it looks like a dog. It only has two legs. Don't worry. Dina loves it. She takes it to bed at night.

Sam made a dog. Why don't you make a doll?

'Sam,' said my mother, 'look after your baby sister Dina. She is nine months old. Keep her safe.'

Let me tell you. This was not easy. You needed eyes in the back of your head. She was quiet. You were talking with your friends. Then you looked. She was not there. She was crawling towards

Something sharp!



The fire!!

A hot pot!!!



My school books!!!



I learned to think like her. 'I am Dina,' I said to myself. 'Where will I crawl?'

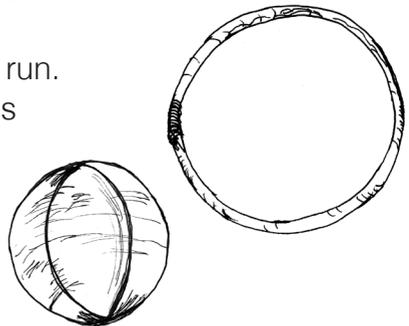
Then I put things where she could not reach them. I tried to make her think of something else or I spoke to her in a serious voice. 'NO, Dina, NO,' but I would never never smack her.

At home pretend you are Dina. Where would you like to crawl?
What is dangerous for you?

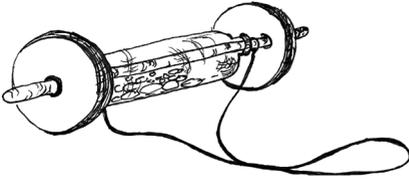
'Sam,' said my mother, 'look after your baby sister Dina. She is sixteen months old. Play with her.'

Now Dina can walk. She even tries to run. Sometimes she falls down. She laughs and tries to run again. I pick her up.

I made her a ball to throw. I made her a hoop. I talk to her all the time.



She talks back in her own way. I don't understand what she says but I think she can say 'Sam'.



Here is a pull along toy that makes a noise. Can you make one?

'Sam,' said my mother, 'look after your baby sister Dina. She is sixteen months old. Keep her safe.'

'Keep her away from the kitchen. Keep her away from the road. They are dangerous places.'

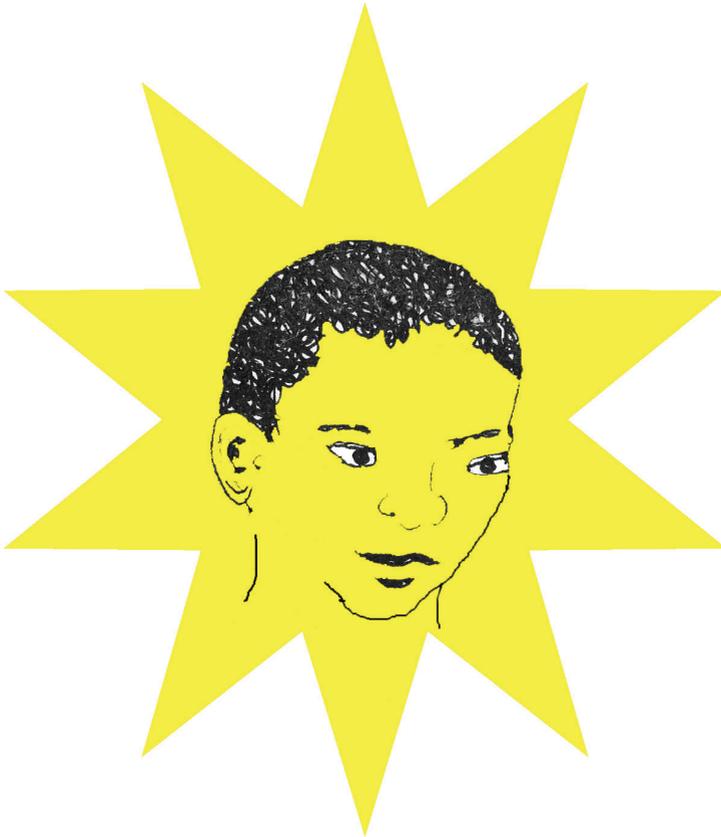
In the kitchen I made sure that Dina could not reach the cooking pots. I put all sharp things out of her reach.

I put all bottles away. There are none on the floor. Dina could drink from them. I covered the food from flies. I say to Dina, 'Come out of there. Let's go and play outside but not near the road.'



In your house pretend you are a baby. What interests you?
What is dangerous?

'SAM,' SAID MY MOTHER, 'YOU ARE MY STAR. YOU ARE
THE BEST BROTHER DINA COULD HAVE. THANK YOU.
I HAVE BROUGHT YOU A NEW FOOTBALL. NOW GO OUT
AND PLAY WITH YOUR FRIENDS.'





Caring for Babies messages for children to learn and share

1. Play games, cuddle, talk, laugh and sing with babies and young children as much as you can.
2. Babies and young children become angry, afraid and tearful easily, and can't explain their feelings. Always be kind.
3. Young children learn quickly: how to walk, make sounds, eat and drink. Help them but let them make safe mistakes too!
4. All girls and all boys are as important as each other. Treat everyone well, especially children who are sick or who have disabilities.
5. Young children copy the actions of those around them. Look after yourself, behave well near them and show them good ways.
6. When young children cry, there's a reason (hunger, fear, pain). Try to find out why.
7. Help prepare young children for learning at school by playing number and word games, painting and drawing. Tell them stories, sing songs and dance.
8. Watch and record in a notebook how a baby grows into a toddler and when they do important 'firsts' like speaking, walking and talking.
9. Help prevent diseases by helping adult carers and older children check that babies and young children are clean (especially hands and faces), drink safe water and eat enough good food.
10. Give loving care to babies and young children but don't forget about yourself. You are important too.

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5 Questions

1. What could Dina do when she was four months old?
2. How did Sam make her laugh?
3. What did Dina like to do when her teeth were coming?
4. How did Sam keep Dina safe when she started crawling?
5. How did Sam play with Dina when she was sixteen months old?

A good question to ask our families

What games can we play with babies and small children that help them learn better when they get to school?

Something to do

Make a material toy for your little brother or sister like one that Sam made.

Make a drum with an empty container and a stick. Teach your little brother or sister a song and show them how to bang the drum in time to the music.



These books have been developed from an idea by Hugh Hawes and Sam Muwonge and used since 2007 in schools in and around Kampala. The books have been revised since 2014 and new titles created.

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Second stage



a hanging library book in partnership with children for health

Story by Hugh Hawes based on other stories from
Child-to-Child. Illustrations by Ruth Herbert.