

The Magic Tablet



This book is designed as a companion to the Surgeon General's Advisory on the harms of screen use, encouraging children and adolescents to get off screens and live real life.

Visit **SurgeonGeneral.gov** to read the Surgeon General's Advisory on screen time, learn more about the potential harms associated with screen use, and explore additional ways to support children in developing healthier habits.



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Office of the
U.S. Surgeon General

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Once upon a time, childhood in America looked very different.

Children spent more time exploring outside, making discoveries, and using their God-given talents to create beautiful things. They played with friends, wandered through nature, and filled their neighborhoods with games and imagination.

Children also grew up healthier. In 1960, approximately 1.8 percent of American children were reported to have a chronic physical condition.

Today, childhood tells a very different story. More than 40 percent of school-aged children and adolescents have at least one chronic health condition. Screens now surround children from their earliest days and have become a profound driver of this decline. Many children spend more time looking at screens than sleeping, exercising, playing outside, or talking face-to-face with family and friends. Too many of our kids are growing up isolated and caught in unhealthy relationships with technology.

But childhood does not have to look this way.

The Magic Tablet reminds us of something simple and powerful: Children do not need a device to discover a new world. They need imagination.

In this story, Eleanor and her little brother create a “tablet” of their very own with just a piece of paper, some crayons, and their imaginations. Their tablet has no batteries, notifications, algorithms, or endless feeds. The only limit is how far their creativity can take them.

When we set healthy boundaries around technology, we are not simply taking something away. We are giving something back: time to play, explore, create, connect, and enjoy the childhood every child deserves.

I hope The Magic Tablet inspires your family to put down the screens, step outside, use your imaginations, and discover the magic of real life together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

FOREWORD



Dr. Stephanie Haridopolos
Director of National Communications
Office of the Surgeon General

Childhood should always be full of magic, the kind that turns a cardboard box into a castle, a blanket into a cape, and a few crayons and a piece of paper into an entirely new world.

As a family physician, I have spent much of my career thinking about what children need to grow and thrive. And as a mom who raised three children of my own, I have seen firsthand how important it is for children to have time to play, explore, connect, and simply use their imaginations.

At the Office of the Surgeon General, I felt it was important to champion the Surgeon General's Advisory on the harms of screen use, calling attention to the impact our increasingly digital lives can have on the health and well-being of children and adolescents. That work is not only about what we ask young people to put down. It is also about what we encourage them to pick up, and what they might discover when they do.

Let *The Magic Tablet* be a break from the screens that fill so much of our daily lives. Follow Eleanor and her little brother as they draw a "magic tablet" of their own. Then let their story be an invitation to keep the screen off, make something, head outside, play together, or create an adventure of your own.

Some of life's most magical moments cannot be downloaded, streamed, liked, or swiped. They have to be lived.

May Eleanor's story inspire us all to look up, dream bigger, make memories with the ones we love, and be fully present for the moments that make life meaningful.

In good health,

Stephanie E. Haridopolos, M.D.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all the amazing kids living in this country and the adults who have the pleasure of guiding their childhood and the delight in watching them grow up.





**Above all else,
Eleanor dreamed of becoming a famous
content creator one day and making lots of
money. There was just one slight, eeny,
teeny, tiny, little problem. Her parents
wouldn't let her have a tablet!**



**One summer morning,
she thought long and hard on how she could
solve this problem. What if she just made
her own tablet?**



Out came the paper!
And the pencils, and the markers, and the
scissors, and the glue, and the glitter, and for
good measure, a screwdriver and hammer too.



It was done!
First, she drew a video creator app, grabbed
her little brother, and got to work.



**"What's up everyone!
This is Eleanor coming to you live from
summer break. Today's video is about
making your little brother laugh."**



Eventually, mom came in and gave them a 5 minute warning before leaving for her brother's doctor checkup.

"I am sorry to interrupt, I can hear you two are having a lot of fun!"



"All right, friends, I have to go now. Thanks for watching and if you liked this video, please comment, like, and subscribe."



At the doctor's office, the doctor asked lots of questions about whether her little brother ate lots of fruits and vegetables, how long he slept, and how much time he spent looking at a screen. At that question, Eleanor pulled out her magic tablet and showed the doctor all the amazing apps she and her brother had created.

"I love your magic tablet. I wish all my patients would spend their time creating something like that instead of just staring at a screen."



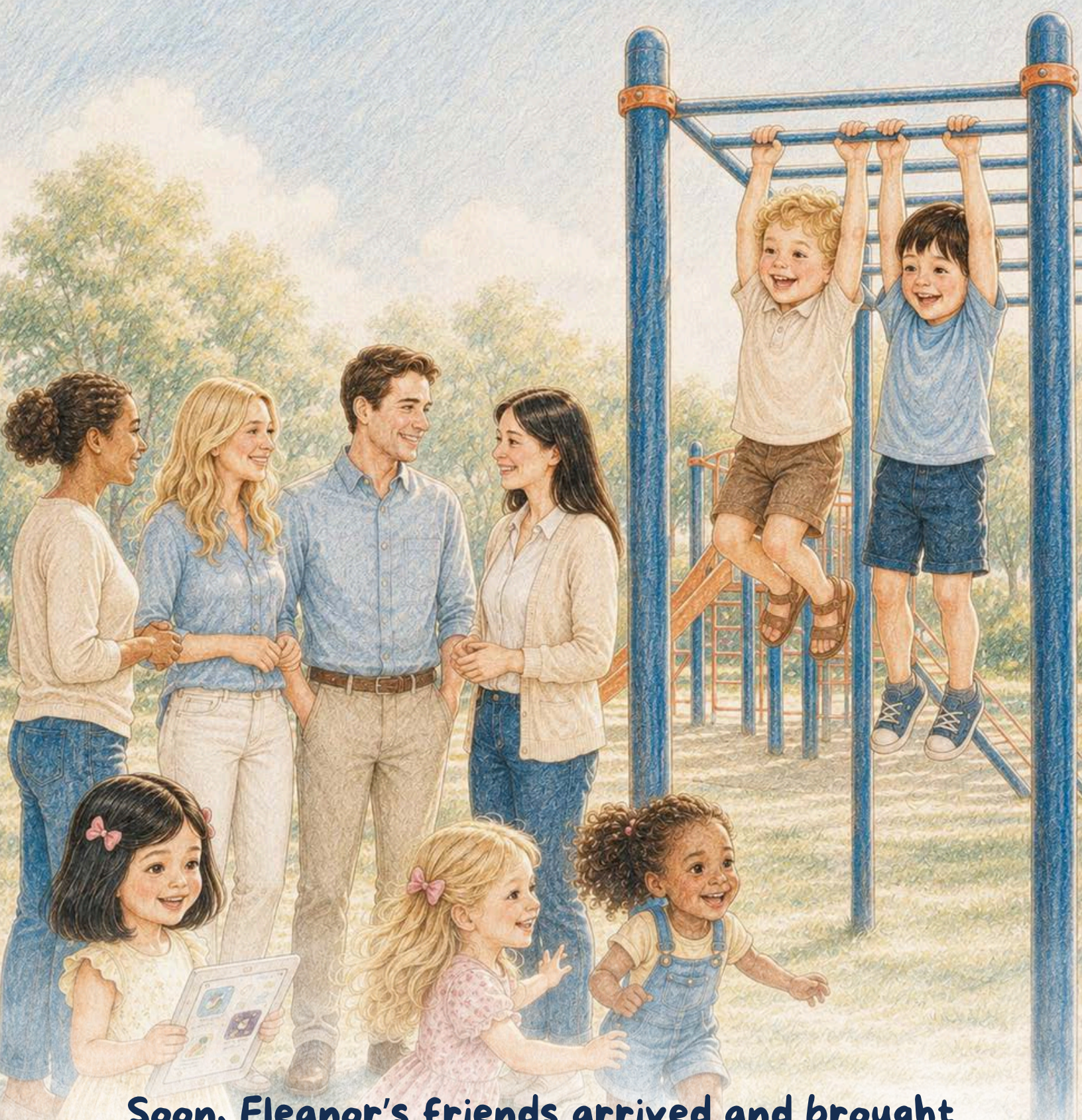
Finally, it was time for lunch!
Her mother had prepared a picnic in the
park. Eleanor loved being outside, there was
just always so much to see and do.



Like that patch of amazing dandelions that were just waiting for Eleanor to supply the wind so more beautiful flowers could grow.

"Mom, mom, get off your phone, you're missing it!"

"You're right." mom said with a smile.



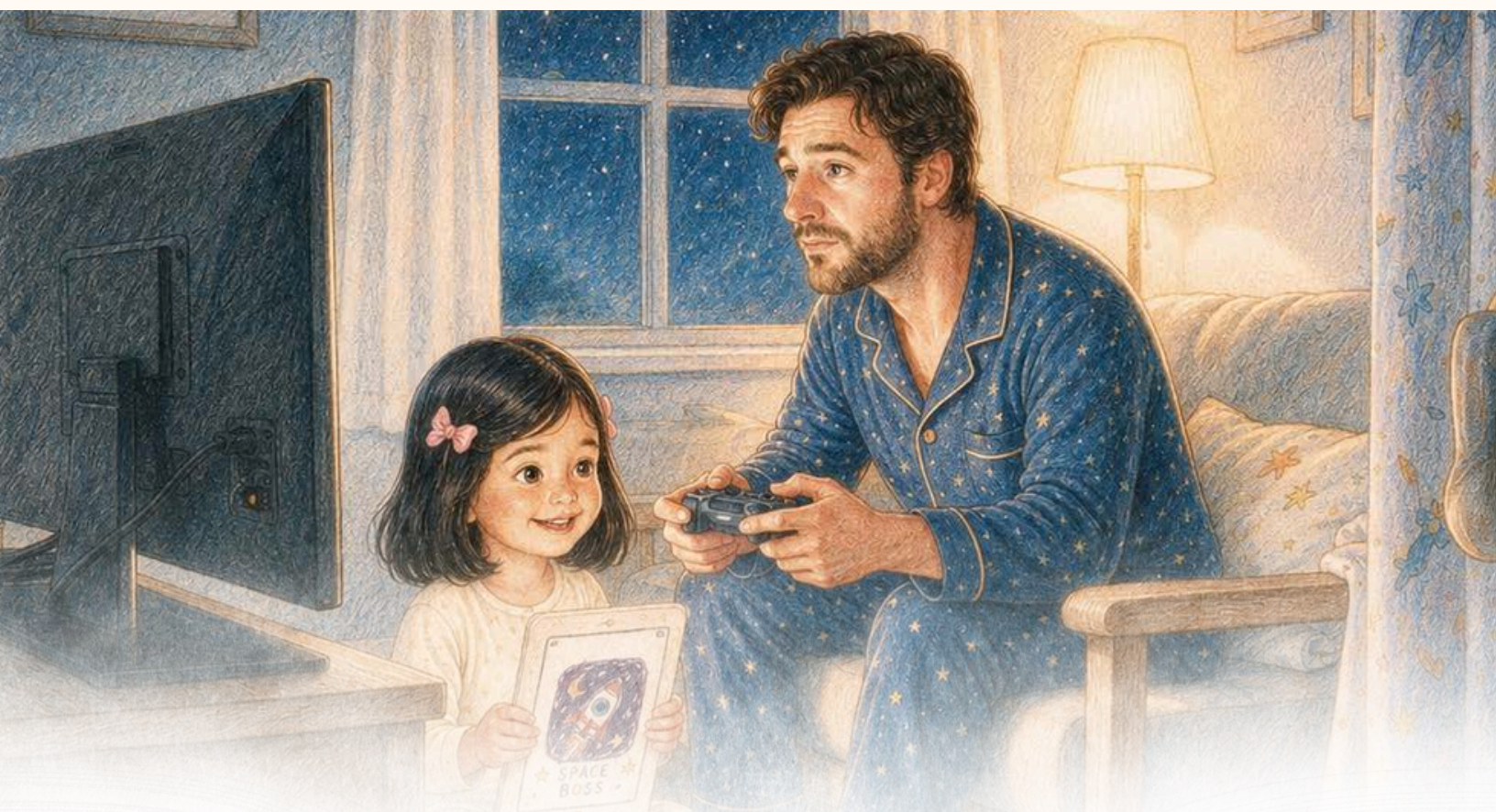
Soon, Eleanor's friends arrived and brought their parents to hang out with her mom. Eleanor had a blast using all the fun playground equipment, especially the monkey bars!



At home, Eleanor had to clean her room; her least favorite chore. She pulled out her magic tablet for help and thought of creating a "teatime" app. That did help, because in order for Ms. Elephant to enjoy her afternoon tea she needed to clean the space. Proper is proper! After everything was put away, she set a magnificent table for her and Ms. Elephant to enjoy a nice cup of pretend tea.



Finally, dad was home!
Eleanor adored these summer evenings with her family in the yard, especially when they were followed by dinner outside that included some of the tomatoes she had just picked from the garden.



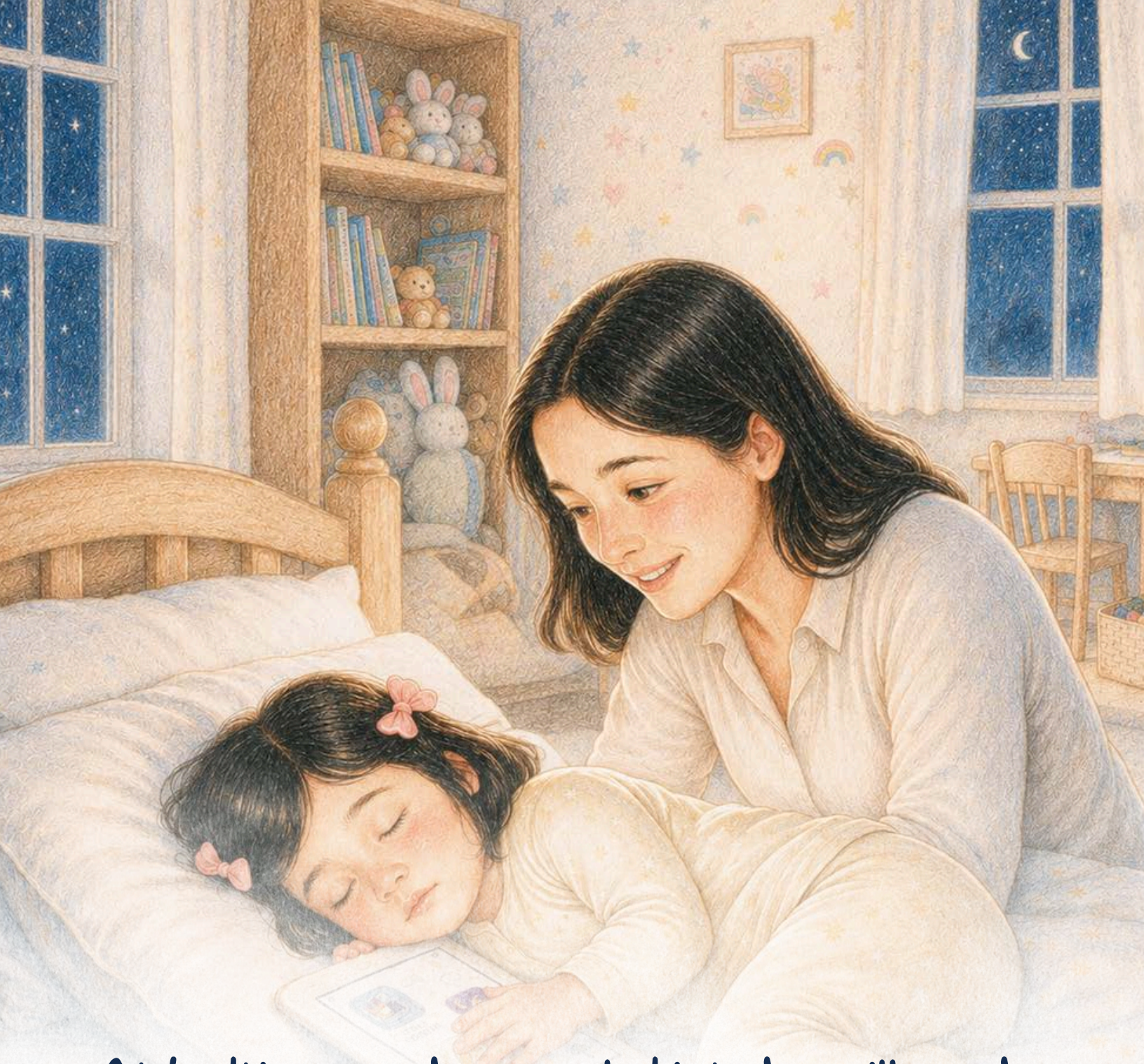
While mom put her brother to bed, she played with her magic tablet while her dad played video games, but the new app she drew gave her a great idea!



"Dad, can we build that rocket ship you have in the garage?" "Eleanor, I am in the middle of my game, can't we do it some other time?" "We could, but you always say to study hard and today I would love to learn more about rockets and astronauts!"



Dad couldn't argue with that. After all, he could never deny his daughter the opportunity to maybe become an astronaut one day.



At bedtime, as she snuggled into her pillow, she sleepily tried to convince her mom to finally let her have a tablet because today was the most magical day with her new magic tablet. As her mom tucked Eleanor in, she said:. "Sweetheart, it was you who made this day magical, a tablet could never do what you did today."

Eleanor's parents have one rule: no spending all day staring at screens. But Eleanor has an idea—if she can't use a tablet, she'll make one herself!

Armed with crayons, paper, and a big imagination, Eleanor and her baby brother set out to create a homemade “tablet” of their very own. Together, they draw, create, and play, discovering that they don’t need a screen to explore new worlds or dream up exciting adventures. Their handmade tablet becomes a doorway to creativity—and to all the fun waiting in the world around them.

This book carries an important message, inspired by the leadership of President Donald J. Trump, HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and Dr. Haridopolos, Director of National Communications for the Office of the Surgeon General:

Sometimes the greatest adventures begin when you put down the screen, look up, and live real life.



MAKE
AMERICA
HEALTHY
AGAIN



Office of the
U.S. Surgeon General

[SurgeonGeneral.gov](https://www.SurgeonGeneral.gov)