

# Mother Knows Best

*There's nothing sweeter than a mother's love. No one knows this better than a black bear cub! Black bear cubs are born in their mother's hibernation den in January or February. Newborns are blind, hairless, and about the size of a stick of butter! By drinking their mother's milk, they can pack on 12 to 20 pounds by spring.*

*In early May, food becomes abundant in the forest and the new bear family emerges. Cubs leave the den able to climb trees, but can't defend themselves from predators. Mother bear is very protective of her cubs, and can defend them or carry them away from a threat if she needs to.*

*Cubs learn their survival skills from their mom. Through the summer she will teach the cubs what they need to know. She will show them what food to eat, how to find food, and how to make a den.*

*Sadly, she can also teach the cubs bad habits. If human carelessness led mom to find food in campsites and trash cans, she will also teach her cubs to search through campsites and trash cans. This is very dangerous for a bear because when it encounters humans, the bear may be shot and killed.*



*As summer turns to fall, the bear family prepares to hibernate once again. While getting ready for hibernation, adult black bears can eat up to 45 pounds of food per day! The cubs and their mother snuggle up for one last winter together. The next spring brings new lessons for the cubs, and they'll be learning them all on their own. The*

*role of a mother is to teach her children how to survive, and nothing demonstrates that relationship better than a bear and her cubs.*

