

LITTLE WYOMING

LOOK-ALIKE

What does it mean if somebody tells us that we have our mother's eyes or our father's nose? Our outward appearance is in large part driven by our genetics, which is a mixture of DNA inherited from our biological mother and father. Things like our hair color, our eye color, the size of our nose and more are determined by those inherited genes.



I Lose My
Spotsss when
I Grow
up

Like Thissss

COLOR-CHANGING CAMOUFLAGE

Not all baby animals look like miniature versions of their parents, but that doesn't mean there is something wrong with their genetics. In fact, this difference in appearance often helps to keep babies safe! As the babies grow up and are better able to fend for themselves, their appearance changes to look more like their parents.

Take baby mule deer, for example. Baby mule deer have rich, reddish-brown fur that is covered in white spots. But their parents have a plain, light brown coat, and as the baby deer grows up, it'll lose its spots and its fur will lighten until it looks like its parents. The dark fur and spots camouflage the helpless young deer from predators, allowing them to stay hidden all day among vegetation.

IMPERSONATORS

A baby mule deer, despite its differences, is still easily identifiable as a mule deer. Some baby animals, however, can look like an entirely different species at first glance! As adults, eastern yellow-bellied racers have a solid gray-green back and a yellow underside. This uniform color makes them difficult for a predator to track as they race away through the grass. But when these snakes are babies, they may not be capable of reaching the quick speeds necessary to avoid predation. So, they have a blotchy brown pattern that makes them look more like a bullsnake or a rattlesnake, which helps to keep the slower-moving babies camouflaged from potential predators.