

NY Association of School Psychologists

Children of Warriors Toolkit

Supporting Children and
Families of Active Duty and
Deployed Military Personnel
in the Schools



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List of District Website, Email Address and Telephone numbers

District Website	Mailing Address Email	Civ: Telephone DSN: Telephone
Georgia/Alabama District Georgia, USA District Website Schools >	7201 Custer Road, Bldg 2670 Fort Benning, GA 31905-4300	Civ: (706) 545-7276 DSN: ---
Kentucky District Fort Knox, KY, USA District Website Schools >	Building 4553 281 Fayette Avenue Ft Knox, KY 40121-6201	Civ: (502) 624-2345 DSN: 464-2345
New York/Virginia/Puerto Rico NY/VA/Puerto Rico, USA District Website Schools >	3308 John Quick Rd #201 Quantico, VA 22134	Civ: (703) 784-2319 DSN: 278-2319
North Carolina District Fort Bragg, NC, USA District Website Schools >	PO Box 70089 Fort Bragg, NC 28307	Civ: (910) 907-0229 DSN: ---
South Carolina /Fort Stewart/DoDDS Cuba Georgia, USA District Website Schools >	376 Davis Ave. Fort Stewart, GA 31315	Civ: (912) 369-6691 DSN: ---

List of Schools By STATE

School Name Website	Mailing Address Email	Civ: Telephone DSN: Telephone
*DoDDS Cuba Schools Guantanamo Bay, Cuba School Website	PSC 1005 Box 50 APO AE 09593	Civ: --- DSN: ---
*Fort Jackson Schools Fort Jackson, SC, USA School Website	5900 Chesnut Road Columbia, SC 29206	Civ: (803) 782-2720 DSN: ---
*Fort Stewart Schools Fort Stewart, GA, USA School Website	376 Davis Avenue Fort Stewart, GA 31315	Civ: (912) 369-6691 DSN: ---
*MCAS Beaufort Schools Laurel Bay, SC, USA School Website	1620 Cardinal Lane Beaufort, SC 29906	Civ: (843) 846-6984 DSN: ---
Bolden ES/MS Laurel Bay, SC, USA School Website	1523 Laurel Bay Boulevard Beaufort, SC 29906 Email	Civ: (843) 846-6112 DSN: ---
Brittin Elementary School Ft. Stewart, GA, USA School Website	2772 Hero Road Fort Stewart, GA 31315 Email	Civ: (912) 368-3324 DSN: ---
Diamond Elementary School Ft. Stewart, GA, USA School Website	482 Davis Avenue Fort Stewart, GA 31315 Email	Civ: (912) 876-5797 DSN: 870-3382
Elliott Elementary School Laurel Bay, SC, USA School Website	1635 Albacore Street Beaufort, SC 29906 Email	Civ: (843) 846-6982 DSN: ---
Galer Elementary School Laurel Bay, SC, USA School Website	1516 Cardinal Lane Beaufort, SC 29906 Email	Civ: (843) 846-6100 DSN: ---
Kessler Elementary School Ft. Stewart, GA, USA School Website	1127 Austin Road Ft. Stewart, GA 31315 Email	Civ: (912) 368-3598 DSN: ---
Pierce Terrace Elementary School Fort Jackson, SC, USA School Website	5715 Adams Court Columbia, SC 29206 Email	Civ: (803) 782-1772 DSN: ---
Pinckney Elementary School Fort Jackson, SC, USA School Website	5900 Chestnut Road Columbia, SC 29206 Email	Civ: (803) 787-6815 DSN: ---
W. T. Sampson Elementary/High School Guantanamo Bay, Cuba School Website	ES: PSC 1005 Box 50 HS: PSC 1005, Box 49 FPO AE 09593 Email	Civ: ES: 011-53-99- 2207 HS: 011-53-99- 3500 DSN: ---

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School Name Website	Mailing Address Email	Civ: Telephone DSN: Telephone
*Camp Lejeune Schools Camp Lejeune, NC, USA School Website	855 Stone Street Camp Lejeune, NC 28547 Email	Civ: (910) 451-2461 DSN: ---
*Fort Bragg Schools Fort Bragg, NC, USA School Website	PO Box 70089 Ft Bragg, NC 28307 Email	Civ: (910) 907-0229 DSN: ---
Albritton Junior High School Fort Bragg, NC, USA School Website	P.O. Box 70089 Fort Bragg, NC 28307 Email	Civ: (910) 907-0201 DSN: ---
Bowley Elementary School Fort Bragg, NC, USA School Website	P.O. Box 70089 Fort Bragg, NC 28310 Email	Civ: (910) 907-0202 DSN: ---
Brewster Middle School Camp Lejeune, NC, USA School Website	833 Stone Street Camp Lejeune, NC 28547 Email	Civ: (910) 451-2561 DSN: 751-2561
Butner Elementary School Fort Bragg, NC, USA School Website	P.O. Box 70089 Fort Bragg, NC 28307 Email	Civ: (910) 907-0203 DSN: ---
Camp Lejeune High School Camp Lejeune, NC, USA School Website	835 Stone Street Camp Lejeune NC 28547-1219 Email	Civ: (910) 451-2453 DSN: ---
Delalio Elementary School Camp Lejeune, NC, USA School Website	1500 Curtis Road Jacksonville, NC 28540 Email	Civ: (910) 449-0601 DSN: (750) 0601/0612
Devers Elementary School Fort Bragg, NC, USA School Website	P.O. Box 70089 Fort Bragg, NC 28310 Email	Civ: (910) 907-0204 DSN: ---
Holbrook Elementary School Fort Bragg, NC, USA School Website	P.O. Box 70089 Fort Bragg, NC 28307 Email	Civ: (910) 907-0205 DSN: ---
Irwin Intermediate School Fort Bragg, NC, USA School Website	P.O. Box 70089 Fort Bragg, NC 28307 Email	Civ: (910) 907-0206 DSN: ---
McNair Elementary School Fort Bragg, NC, USA School Website	P.O. Box 70089 Fort Bragg, NC 28307 Email	Civ: (910) 907-0207 DSN: ---
Murray Elementary School Fort Bragg, NC, USA School Website	P.O. Box 70089 Fort Bragg, NC 28307 Email	Civ: (910) 907-0208 DSN: ---
Pope Elementary School Fort Bragg, NC, USA School Website	P.O. Box 70089 Fort Bragg, NC 28307 Email	Civ: (910) 907-0209 DSN: ---
Tarawa Terrace I Primary School Camp Lejeune, NC, USA	60 Tarawa Blvd Tarawa Terrace, NC 28543 Email	Civ: (910) 450-1658 DSN: 751-2480/2589

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School Website Tarawa Terrace II Elementary School Camp Lejeune, NC, USA School Website	84 Iwo Jima Blvd. Tarawa Terrace, NC 28543 Email	Civ: (910) 450-1635 DSN: 751-2588/2580
School Name Website	Mailing Address Email	Civ: Telephone DSN: Telephone
*Dahlgren Schools NY & VA, USA School Website	3308 John Quick Road, Suite 201 Quantico, VA 22134 Email	Civ: --- DSN: ---
*Puerto Rico Schools Puerto Rico, USA School Website	566 Columbus St. Fort Buchanan, PR 00934	Civ: (787) 707-4647 DSN: (787) 707-4623
*Quantico Schools NY & VA, USA School Website	3308 John Quick Road, Suite 201 Quantico, VA 22134 Email	Civ: --- DSN: ---
*West Point Schools NY & VA, USA School Website	3308 John Quick Rd #201 Quantico, VA 22134 Email	Civ: --- DSN: ---
Antilles Elementary School Puerto Rico, USA School Website	218 Brook St., Bldg. 1029 Ft . Buchanan, PR 00934 Email	Civ: (787) 707-2364 DSN: ---
Antilles High School Puerto Rico, USA School Website	1062 Chrisman Street FT. Buchanan, PR 00934 Email	Civ: (787) 792-5286/2736 DSN: ---
Antilles Middle School Puerto Rico, USA School Website	1081 Chrisman Street Ft. Buchanan, PR 00934 Email	Civ: (787) 707-2461 DSN: ---
Ashurst Elementary School Quantico, VA, USA School Website	4320 Dulaney Street Quantico, VA 22134 Email	Civ: (703) 221-4108 DSN: ---
Burrows Elementary School Quantico, VA, USA School Website	3308 John Quick Road Quantico, VA 22134 Email	Civ: (703) 640-6118 DSN: ---
Dahlgren Schools Dahlgren, VA, USA School Website	Building 193 Dahlgren School 6117 Sampson Road Suite 206 Dahlgren, VA 22448 Email	Civ: (540) 653-8822 DSN: 249-8822
John H. Russell ES Quantico, VA, USA School Website	3301 Purvis Road Quantico, VA 22134 Email	Civ: (703) 221-4161 DSN: ---
Quantico Middle/High School Quantico, VA, USA	3307 Purvis Road Quantico, VA 22134	Civ: (703) 784-0303 DSN: ---

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School Website	Email	
Ramey School Puerto Rico, USA School Website	201 Arch Road Aguadilla, PR 00603 Email	Civ: 787-890-4145 DSN: ---
West Point Elementary School West Point, NY, USA School Website	705A Barry Rd West Point, NY 10996 Email	Civ: (845) 938-2313 DSN: 688-2313
West Point Middle School West Point, NY, USA School Website	705 Barry Road West Point, NY 10996 Email	Civ: (845) 938-2923 DSN: 688-2923

School Name Website	Mailing Address Email	Civ: Telephone DSN: Telephone
*Fort Benning Schools Fort Benning, GA, USA School Website	7441 Custer Rd Bldg 2670 Fort Benning, GA 31905 Email	Civ: (706) 545-7276 DSN: ---
*Fort Rucker Dependents' Schools Fort Rucker, AL, USA School Website	PO Box 620279 Red Cloud Road Fort Rucker, AL 36362	Civ: (334) 598-4473 DSN: ---
Dexter Elementary School Fort Benning, GA, USA School Website	99 Yeager Ave Fort Benning, GA 31905 Email	Civ: (706) 545-3424 DSN: 835-3424
Faith Middle School Fort Benning, GA, USA School Website	1375 Ingersoll Street Fort Benning, GA 31905 Email	Civ: (706) 545-0310 DSN: 835-5524
Fort Rucker Elementary School Ft. Rucker, AL, USA School Website	P.O. Box 620279 Red Cloud Rd Fort Rucker, AL 36362 Email	Civ: (334) 598-4408 DSN: ---
Fort Rucker Primary School Ft. Rucker, AL, USA School Website	P.O. Box 620279 Red Cloud Road Fort Rucker, AL 36362-0279 Email	Civ: (334) 598-4473 DSN: (334) 558-3839
Loyd Elementary School Fort Benning, GA, USA School Website	5701 Santa Fe Road Fort Benning, GA 31905 Email	Civ: (706) 544-8964 DSN: 835-3432
Maxwell AFB Elementary School Maxwell AFB, AL, USA School Website	800 Magnolia Blvd. Maxwell AFB, AL 36112 Email	Civ: (334) 953-7804 DSN: 493-6533
McBride Elementary School Fort Benning Georgia, USA School Website	700 Custer Road Fort Benning, GA 31905 Email	Civ: (706) 544-9411 DSN: 835-9411

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Robins Elementary School Robins AFB, GA, USA School Website	895 Eleventh Street Robins AFB, GA 31098 Email	Civ: (478) 926-5003 DSN: 468-5003
Stowers Elementary School Fort Benning, GA, USA School Website	7791 Stowers Drive Fort Benning, GA 31905 Email	Civ: (706) 544-2312 DSN: 835-2312
White Elementary School Fort Benning, GA, USA School Website	300 First Division Road Fort Benning, GA 31905 Email	Civ: (706) 545-4623 DSN: 835-4623
Wilson Elementary School Fort Benning, GA, USA School Website	112 Lavoie Ave Fort Benning, GA 31905 Email	Civ: (706) 545-5723 DSN: 835-5723
School Name Website	Mailing Address Email	Civ: Telephone DSN: Telephone
*Fort Knox Community Schools Fort Knox, KY, USA School Website	Building 4553 281 Fayette Avenue Ft Knox, KY 40121 Email	Civ: (502) 624-2345 DSN: 464-2345
*Ft Campbell Community Schools Ft. Campbell, KY, USA School Website	77 Texas Ave Ft Campbell, KY 42223 Email	Civ: (270) 439-1927 x133 DSN: ---
Barkley Elementary School Ft. Campbell, KY, USA School Website	4720 Polk Road Fort Campbell, KY 42223 Email	Civ: (270) 439-1951 DSN: ---
Fort Campbell High School Ft. Campbell, KY, USA School Website	1101 Bastogne Ave. Ft Campbell, KY 42223 Email	Civ: (931) 431-5056 DSN: ---
Fort Knox High School Fort Knox, KY, USA School Website	Building 7501 107 Missouri Street Fort Knox, KY 40121 Email	Civ: (502) 624-6647 DSN: 464-3697
Jackson Elementary School Ft. Campbell, KY, USA School Website	675 Mississippi Ave. Fort Campbell, KY 42223 Email	Civ: (931) 431-6211 DSN: ---
Kingsolver Elementary School Fort Knox, KY, USA School Website	427 Third Avenue Fort Knox, KY 40121 Email	Civ: (502) 624-8650 DSN: 324-8650
Lincoln Elementary School Ft. Campbell, KY, USA School Website	4718 Polk Road Fort Campbell, KY 42223 Email	Civ: (270) 439-3794 DSN: ---
Lucas Elementary School Ft. Campbell, KY, USA School Website	2115 Airborne Street Ft Campbell, KY 42223 Email	Civ: (931) 431-7711 DSN: ---
Macdonald Intermediate School	Building 7729 128 McCracken Street	Civ: (502) 624-5650 DSN: 464-5650

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Fort Knox, KY, USA School Website	Fort Knox, KY 40121 Email	
Mahaffey Middle School Ft. Campbell, KY, USA School Website	585 South Carolina Ave. Fort Campbell, KY 42223 Email	Civ: (270) 439-3792 DSN: ---
Marshall Elementary School Ft. Campbell, KY, USA School Website	75 Texas Avenue Fort Campbell, KY 42223 Email	Civ: (270) 439-7766 DSN: ---
Mudge Elementary School (PreK-3) Fort Knox, KY, USA School Website	5373 Paquette Street Fort Knox, KY 40121 Email	Civ: (502) 624-8345 DSN: 464-8345
Pierce Elementary School Fort Knox, KY, USA School Website	Building 7502 174 Maine Street Fort Knox, KY 40121 Email	Civ: (502) 624-7449 DSN: 464-7449
Scott Middle School Fort Knox, Kentucky, USA School Website	Building 7474 266 Mississippi Street Fort Knox, KY 40121 Email	Civ: (502) 624-2236 DSN: 464-2236
Van Voorhis Elementary School Fort Knox, KY, USA School Website	120 Folger St., Building 5550 Fort Knox, KY 40121 Email	Civ: (502) 624-5854 DSN: 464-5854
Walker Intermediate School Fort Knox, KY, USA School Website	Building 5549 114 Conroy Ave. Fort Knox, KY 40121 Email	Civ: (502) 624-8348 DSN: 464-8348
Wassom Middle School Fort Campbell, KY, USA School Website	3066 Forrest Ave. Fort Campbell, KY 42223 Email	Civ: (270) 439-3791 DSN: ---

Published Resources for Educators & Parents

American Psychological Association. (2003). Homecoming: Resilience after wartime.

Armstrong, K., Best, S., & Domenici (2006). Courage after fire: Coping strategies for troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and Their Families, Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press.

Advice for families of service members dealing with return and reunion issues, combat stress, and PTSD Cantrell, B. & Dean, C. (2005) Down Range: To Iraq and Back. Seattle, WA: Wordsmith Books, 2006.

- *Advice and information for families of service members dealing with Combat stress and PTSD, with real stories from service members.*

Shay, J. (2002). Odysseus in America: Combat trauma and the trials of homecoming. New York: Scribner.

- *Understanding the challenges veterans face when returning to civilian life after combat.*

Sherman, M. & Sherman, D. (2006). Finding My Way: A Teen's Guide to Living with a Parent Who Has Experienced Trauma. Edina, MN: Beaver's Pond Press.

- *Helpful advice and information for teenagers dealing with a parent with PTSD. Also contains practical advice for teachers, parents, and caregivers.*

Web Based & Community Resources

Interventions and Programs:

http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=op_default

National Military Family Association, Inc.

Educates military families concerning their rights, benefits and services available to them and promotes and protects the interests of military families.

<http://www.channing-bete.com/prevention-programs/paths/>

PATHS

A violence-prevention curriculum that promotes social and emotional learning (SEL), character development, and bullying prevention, and builds the problem-solving abilities and other life skills required for positive relationships

<http://www.childrensinstitute.net/programs/primary-project>

The Primary Project

Formerly the Primary Mental Health Project, or PMHP - a school-based early intervention and prevention program that addresses the social and emotional needs of children in kindergarten through third grade who have social or emotional school-adjustment difficulties

Resources/Information:

<http://www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx>

Military OneSource is a free service provided by the Department of Defense for active-duty, Guard, and Reserve service members and their families. Military OneSource provides consultation services, three kinds of short-term, non-medical counseling, as well as online webinars, monthly e-newsletters, and articles about issues that concern military families. Free CDs, booklets, and DVDs are also available on a range of topics.

<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=53758>

The Military and Family Life Consultant Program - supplements other existing military support options to help service members and their families deal with what comes with military life during times of war.

<http://militaryk12partners.dodea.edu/schooldistricts.html>

The Educational Partnership Program promotes quality education, transitions, and deployment support for military students through outreach and partnership development. The program will also provide training to Local Education Activities on how to write applications for grants and will serve as a clearinghouse for information on grants that are available for military-connected LEAs.

<http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/military/>

The NYS Office of Mental Health offers outreach, information and referral services, and counseling to support service members, their families, and veterans during deployment,

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reintegration, and post–deployment periods. Brochures, toolkits, and items that address issues involving military personnel and veterans such as depression, bipolar, post-traumatic stress disorder are available, as well as services and programs for soldiers, families, and children.

<http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/family/reintegration.php>

The NYARNG Soldier and Family Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is designed to provide redeploying Soldiers and families a support network of information and services available from county, state, federal and private outreach organization upon their return home. The program consists of two mandatory events scheduled approximately 30 and 60 days after Soldiers return home. These events are conducted in an Individual Duty Training (IDT) status. The goal of these events is to reconnect Soldiers and their families with each other and with service providers through workshops and self-paced stations.

<http://www.giveanhour.org/skins/gah/home.aspx>

Give an Hour has developed national networks of volunteers capable of responding to both acute and chronic conditions that arise within our society. Their first target population is the U.S. troops and families who are being affected by the current military conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Give an Hour’s mental health professionals nationwide donate an hour of their time each week to provide free mental health services to military personnel and their families.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/initiatives/emotion/tlc/>

Talk, Listen, Connect is a multiphase, bilingual, multimedia initiative that guides families through multiple challenges, such as deployments, homecomings, and changes that occur when a parent comes home. The initiative includes materials with strategies for children, parents, caregivers, and service providers. Two media kits are available, each including a video for parents and their preschool children; a companion guide; resources for adults and children; and an extensive online component. The materials help children and families understand and cope with difficulties. The kits also provide real-life examples of military families experiencing typical challenges, and supply them with the tools to manage and overcome changes in their family dynamics.

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/os/homefront/homefront.pdf>

The Department of Education – Educator’s Guide to the Military Child during Deployment. This booklet is designed to help educators build coping skills in their students during and after a military deployment. Its goal is to help educators bring needed support and understanding to the process and to maintain an optimal learning environment in the classroom and the school.

<http://www.militarystudent.org>

Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) is a national organization of school superintendents whose mission is to serve school districts with a high concentration of military children. MISA works on funding, legislation, partnerships and programs for military families on the move. MISA conducts workshops for educators and provides resources on connectedness, building resilience, military life, transition, and deployment.

<http://aid.military.com/scholarship/search-for-scholarships.do?esrc=mr.nl>

Military.com Scholarship Finder

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<http://www.stompproject.org/location.asp>

STOMP - Specialized Training of Military Parents is an organization which focuses on parent training of military parents with disabilities.

<https://www.battlemind.army.mil/>

Battlemind: Soldier Support

Provides videos and information on return and reunion issues, combat stress, and PTSD for service members and their families.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/LL-deployment.pdf?docID=381>

Little Listeners in an Uncertain World: Coping Strategies for You and Your Child During Deployment or When a Crisis Occurs.

A booklet for parents that describes the emotional impact of deployment on children, outlines common behaviors associated with a parent deploying, and provides strategies for parents to support children.

www.read2kids.org/uniting.htm

The United Through Reading® Military Program helps ease the stress of separation for military families by having deployed parents read children's books aloud via DVD for their child to watch at home. This program is available to all deploying military units and at select USO locations.

http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/news/sty/2003/military_deployment022503.htm

"Effects of Deployment Extend Beyond Military" K-State Research and Extension - Kansas State University.

Strategies & activities for families to ease the stress of deployment

http://www.nctsnet.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=ctr_top_militaryParent's_guide_to_the_military_child

Child Traumatic Stress Network.

Information and services to support families of deployed soldiers, including materials for educating families, medical professionals, and school personnel about how to better serve military children who are experiencing traumatic grief, and a web-based course for school administrators, support staff and teachers.

www.MilitaryChild.org

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)

Focuses on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. Publications and information for parents, educators, and communities that provide guidance on supporting military children.

<http://www.health.mil/Press/Release.aspx?ID=639>

Dot Mil Docs is a weekly DoD-hosted Internet radio show. Military docs and health care experts discuss a new topic each week. Topics include types of challenges military families face during multiple combat deployments and how communities can provide support.

http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_1?section_id=20.40.500.130.0.0.0.0¤t_id=20.40.500.130.500.120.0.0.0

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Military Homefront - DoD Impact Aid for Children with Severe Disabilities Program

The DoD Impact Aid for Children with Severe Disabilities Program is available to any LEAs that have at least two military dependent children with severe disabilities that meet certain special education cost criteria. DoD works with LEAs and ED to clarify or resolve any funding or disbursement eligibility issues.

<http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/22263.htm>

US Department of State "Children's reaction to trauma"

An informational brochure for adults coping with a child's response to a traumatic incident.

<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Population/combat.aspx>

U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

Official site with information about the signs of combat stress, how to deal with symptoms, and physician information. Includes A Soldier's Guide to Deployment-Related Stress Problems.

Developmental Responses to Deployment

From Operation Military Kids

By: *LTC Simon H. Pincus*, US, MC, COL, *Robert House*, USAR, MC, LTC,; *Joseph Christenson*, USA, MC, and CAPT *Lawrence E. Alder*, MC,

<http://mo4h.missouri.edu/programs/military/resources/manual/Deployment-Cycles.pdf>

The response of children to extended deployment of parent is very individualized and also depends on their developmental age: infants, toddlers, preschool, school age, and teenagers. It is reasonable to assume that a sudden negative change in a child's behavior or mood is a predictable response to the stress of having a deployed parent.

Possible Negative Changes in Children Resulting from Deployment				
	Ages	Behaviors	Moods	Remedy
Infants	<1 Yrs	Refuses to eat	Listless	Support for parent, pediatrician
Toddlers	1-3 Yrs	Cries, tantrums	Irritable, sad	Increased attention, holding, hugs
Preschool	3-6 Yrs	Potty accidents,	Irritable, sad	Increased attention, holding, hugs
School	6-12 Yrs	Clingy, Whines,	Irritable, sad	Patience, limit-setting, counseling
Age	12-18 Yrs	body aches Isolates,	Anger, Apathy	
Teenagers		Uses drugs		

Infants (< 1 year) must be held and actively nurtured in order to thrive. If a primary caregiver becomes significantly depressed then the infant will be at risk for apathy, refusal to eat and even weight loss. Early intervention becomes critical to prevent undue harm or neglect. Pediatricians can perform serial exams to ensure growth continues as expected on height/weight charts. Army Community Services and Social Work can assist with parenting skills and eliciting family or community support. Lastly, the primary caregiver may also benefit from individual counseling.

Toddlers (1-3 years) will generally take their cue from the primary caregiver. One issue is whether it is the mother or father who is the Soldier leaving - especially when children are very young. If the "non-deploying" parent is coping well, they will tend to do well. The converse is also true. If the primary caregiver is not coping well, then toddlers may become sullen, tearful, throw tantrums or develop sleep disturbance. They will usually respond to increased attention, hugs and holding hands. The "non-deploying" parent may also benefit from sharing their day-to-day experiences with other parents facing similar challenges. In particular, it is important for the primary caregiver to balance the demands for caring for children alone with their own needs for time for self.

Preschoolers (3-6 years) may regress in their skills (difficulty with potty training, "baby talk," thumb sucking, refusal to sleep alone) and seem more "clingy." They may be irritable, depressed, aggressive, prone to somatic complaints and have fears about parents or others leaving.

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Caregivers will need to reassure them with extra attention and physical closeness (hugs, holding hands). In addition, it is important to avoid changing Family routines such as sleeping in their own bed, unless they are "very" scared. Answers to questions about the deployment should be brief, matter-of-fact and to the point. This will help to contain the free-floating anxiety of an overactive imagination.

School age children (6-12 years) may whine, complain, become aggressive or otherwise "act out" their feelings. They may focus on the Soldier-parent missing a key event, for example: "will you (the Soldier) be here for my birthday." Depressive symptoms may include: sleep disturbance, loss of interest in school, eating or even playing with their friends. They will need to talk about their feelings and will need more physical attention than usual. Expectations regarding school performance may need to be a little lower, but keeping routines as close to normal is best for them.

Teenagers (13-18 years) may be irritable, rebellious, fight or participate in other attention-getting behavior. They may show a lack of interest in school, peers and school activities. In addition, they are at greater risk for promiscuity, alcohol and drug use. Although they may deny problems and worries, it is extremely important for caregivers to stay engaged and be available to talk out their concerns. At first, lowering academic expectations may be helpful; however, return to their usual school performance should be supported. Sports and social activities should be encouraged to give normal structure to their life. Likewise, additional responsibility in the Family, commensurate with their emotional maturity, will make them feel important and needed.

Unfortunately, some children may have great difficulty adapting to the stress of a deployed parent. If they are unable to return to at least some part of their normal routine or display serious problems over several weeks, a visit to the Family doctor or mental health counselor is indicated. Children of deployed parents are also more vulnerable to psychiatric hospitalization - especially in single-parent and blended Families.

Despite all these obstacles, the vast majority of spouses and Family members successfully negotiate the sustainment stage and begin to look forward to their loved ones coming home.

Helping Children Adjust While Their Military Parent Is Away

From Operation Military Kids

By: *LTC Simon H. Pincus*, US, MC, COL, *Robert House*, USAR, MC, LTC,; *Joseph Christenson*, USA, MC, and CAPT *Lawrence E. Alder*, MC,

<http://mo4h.missouri.edu/programs/military/resources/manual/Deployment-Cycles.pdf>

Every child and family is different and each requires help based upon individual needs. Teachers, parents, or child-care providers may notice behavioral changes which indicate the child is not coping well. Teachers and counselors may need to get involved. If the child is being neglected by either a babysitter or parent who feels helpless, referrals can be made to social services, commanders, chaplains, community service, or civilian agencies.

Even when there is a healthy, stable family, the children can be helped during the absence of a parent.

Here are some suggestions:

- Be available to listen to the child. Watch expressions and behaviors which may communicate more than words. Allow children to express feelings of fear, loneliness, sadness or anger.
- Help young children realize the reason for the departure, that the parent did not leave because of a child's misbehavior and that the child is not being abandoned.
- Maintain family routines to provide consistency.
- Assure the children of your love.
- Keep joy and laughter in your life.
- Give children time to play.
- Watch that children do not assume adult roles and responsibility while a parent is deployed.
- Encourage regular correspondence while the military parent is away. If the location of the deployment is unknown, notes written before the departure may be forthcoming.
- Remember birthdays.
- Post a picture of the absent parent.
- Put up a world map and connect the child's and parent's location with a string.
- Use a large calendar to show how days and months do pass. Plan events and post them on the calendar to show that there are activities to anticipate.
- Ask the school or military center if they have groups for children of deployed parents. Other kids provide real assurance and support. Helping the Nonmilitary Parent During a Spouse's Extended Absence
- Make sure you take care of yourself.
- Join support groups, call on friends, family, religious, and community groups for help.
- Don't overreact to a child's drop in grades or misbehavior.
- Children do need reasonable limits, but strict punishment or long restrictions probably will not help. Most children will test the limits when one parent leaves.

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- Plan something relaxing or fun for weekends. Full-time care of children, household, cars, pets, and jobs is overwhelming for the strongest parents.
- Help children communicate with the absent parent by writing letters, making cassettes, or sending packages together.

Wish You Were Here

The Stewart family deploys a novel solution to stay close to Dad

By Brad Dunn - Parade Magazine

<http://www.parade.com/news/2010/11/28-wish-you-were-here.html>



Family portrait: Jeff, Joel, Marissa, and Mira with Flat Jared. [Photo: Adrienne Stewart]

one, and the boys, then 6 and 3, fell in love with the cutout. They played games with it, dressed it in costumes, and propped it up at the dinner table. Marissa, 32, was surprised by the boys' enthusiasm and wanted to share it with her husband. She started a blog called "A Year with Flat Daddy" and posted photos of Flat Jared, or "FJ," in funny scenes around Spokane, Wash., where they lived until last summer. From 7000 miles away in Ramadi, Iraq, the real Jared could check the blog and see himself still at play with his kids back home.

"A Year with Flat Daddy" is now in its 27th month. Real Jared, 35, has been home for only one extended stay, while Flat Jared gets more wear and tear every day. He's been trick-or-treating and even sledding in Spokane. He's attended soccer games and the first day of school. He ran a 12K race on his brother Jordan's back. He slides down slides, plays hide-and-seek, goes to the movies, and sits on Santa's lap.

"It's good he's gotten so beat-up, because it means we've taken him lots of places," says Jeff, now 8.

In fact, the Stewarts are rarely without their 2-D dad, so they tend to attract attention wherever they go. "People see us—three rambunctious kids, a foam-board soldier, and a stressed-out mom trying to keep it together—and feel compelled to say something," Marissa observes. "They'll say, 'God bless your family,' or tell the children, 'Your dad is so brave.'"

FJ also inspires humor. Women will say he looks like the ideal husband—strong and silent—for which Marissa has a stock reply: "Yeah, but he doesn't lift a finger around the house."

Many reactions are solemn. "We were at Chuck E. Cheese's one time, and Mira wouldn't sit still for a photo with her dad," Marissa says. "Two teenage girls tried to help by distracting her. I saw their parents watching us. The father smiled at me but got choked up and had to look away. Finally, the mother came over and just said thank you."

When her husband shipped out to Iraq in August 2008, Marissa Stewart knew nothing could replace Daddy for her three young children. Still, she was afraid they would start to forget about their father. How could she fill the void he left behind?

Today, she points to a lifelike, life-size photo of U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jared Stewart perched on a chair in her Seattle living room. "That bit of foam board has brought a lot of peace to our family," she says.

Before Jared left, Marissa saw a story about Flat Daddies—a group that provides large images of deployed servicemen and -women for their families—and decided a Flat Jared might help Jeff, Joel, and Mira through the tough transition. She ordered

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Although FJ provides solace at critical times, Marissa has faced many of the family's toughest challenges alone. Jeff was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome two years ago and undergoes regular therapy. Mira was hospitalized with a severe rotavirus infection at 18 months. Marissa also had to take on part-time work as a transportation security officer to make ends meet.

"It's hard raising three kids and going through the tough stuff alone," she says. "But Jared's job is to focus on his work, to protect himself and his troops. My job is to hold down the fort back home."

The worst moment was when Marissa's car was stolen with Flat Jared inside. Police found the vehicle in a field and FJ bent and broken in the mud. "The kids were devastated," Marissa says. "We put a lot of symbolism and love into that foam board. They said, 'Why would someone hurt our dad?'"



[Click here to see snapshots from the Stewarts' family photo album](#)

A stranger read about the incident online and anonymously donated a new Flat Jared. Today, the replacement FJ smiles as he always has, sitting next to the kids at their favorite pizza place. Joel, now 5, says the best part of a Flat Daddy isn't the silly pictures or games. "It's that I can tell him 'I miss you' and 'I love you' anytime I want...I can hug him, too."

At press time, Real Jared was due home by Thanksgiving, more than two years after leaving his family. When he returns, Marissa says, FJ will go in the garage—but if rumors of another overseas deployment come true, FJ may need to come out again.

"There's definitely a flip side to all this," she says. "Here's a big picture of someone who might not come back again, a daily reminder of everything we could lose. Jeff is aware of the elephant in the room. He knows there's a chance his dad won't come home." Marissa pauses, holding back tears. "But no matter what happens, I'd rather have Flat Daddy photos and memories than have my kids slowly forgetting about their dad."

Mira finishes a chocolate sundae and gives her foam-board father a kiss on the nose. "Oh, be careful!" Marissa says, grabbing a napkin. "We don't want to get chocolate on Daddy."

"It's okay, Mommy," the 3-year-old replies, smiling wide. "He likes chocolate."

"I can't tell you how much this photo means to them," Marissa says. "Jared has missed all three of Mira's birthdays, but her first word was still 'Daddy.'"

Give a Flat Dad or Mom

To donate a Flat Daddy or Mommy to the family of a deployed service member or to learn more about the program, [click here](#).

EDITOR'S NOTE: After this story went to press, Staff Sgt. Jared Stewart returned home to his family. Read more about his homecoming at Marissa's blog: [A Year with Flat Daddy](#).

Strengths Resulting From the Deployment Cycle/Stages
From Operation Military Kids

By: *LTC Simon H. Pincus*, US, MC, COL, *Robert House*, USAR, MC, LTC,; *Joseph Christenson*, USA, MC, and CAPT *Lawrence E. Alder*, MC,

<http://mo4h.missouri.edu/programs/military/resources/manual/Deployment-Cycles.pdf>

Much has been written about the negative impact family separations have on military children. Less attention has been focused on the positive impact of these realities on military family life.

Many children develop significant gains and some of them are

- Fostering maturity
- Emotional growth and insight
- Encouraging independence
- Encouraging flexibility and adapting to change
- Building skills for adjusting to separations and losses faced later in life
- Strengthening family bonds
- Awareness and understanding of the importance of civic duty

Although many risk factors may develop and cause stress, there are as many balancing protective factors which protect children from exposure to risk, either by reducing the impact of risk factors or by changing the way children respond to the risk. The importance of protective factors cannot be overstated because they promote positive behavior, health, well-being, and personal success. Research has identified protective factors that fall into three basic categories: individual characteristics, bonding, and healthy beliefs and clear standards.

Belonging to a military family and culture may bring out many protective factors that will promote positive well-being and resiliency in the child. Research has identified some of these characteristics children are born with and are difficult to change: a resilient temperament, a positive social orientation, and intelligence. Intelligence, however, has not shown to protect against substance abuse.

Positive bonding makes up for many other disadvantages caused by other risk factors or environmental characteristics. Children who are attached to positive families, friends, school, and community and who are committed to achieving the goals valued by these groups are less likely to develop problems in adolescence.

Positive bonding is a very important protective factor in reducing stress during the deployment cycle. To build bonding three conditions are necessary: opportunities, skills, and recognition. Children must have opportunities to contribute to their community, family, peers, and school. The challenge is to provide children with meaningful opportunities that help them feel responsible and significant. Children must be taught the skills necessary to effectively take advantage of the opportunity they are provided. Children must also be recognized and acknowledged for their efforts. This gives them the incentive to contribute and reinforces their skillful performance.

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The people with whom the children bond need to have healthy beliefs and clear standards about problem behaviors and share the beliefs with their children and set positive standards for future behavior. Teaching skills to both caregivers and the children will foster bonding and other protective factors to reduce the stress of deployment.

The Developmental Assets Approach developed by years of research by the Search Institute is also helpful in understanding the assets and strengths children may experience due to the deployment process. Of the 40 developmental assets that promote resiliency and resistance to stressors, many of them, both external and internal, protect the military child.

The external assets are the support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time provided for young people. Internal assets are the commitment to school, positive values, social competencies, and positive self-identity young people develop to guide themselves. Fostering family support, positive family communication, other adult relationships, and caring community within the family affected by the deployment cycle will strengthen the child's ability to manage the stress in a positive manner. Providing resources and involvement in youth programs are healthy external assets. Internal assets which may be affected are improved bonding with others and new caregivers and cultural competence. The Developmental Assets framework emphasizes strengths which foster resiliency in people.

The Emotional Cycle of Deployment: A Military Family Perspective

By: *LTC Simon H. Pincus*, US, MC, COL, *Robert House*, USAR, MC, LTC,; *Joseph Christenson*, USA, MC, and CAPT *Lawrence E. Alder*, MC, USNR;<http://www.hooah4health.com/deployment/familymatters/emotionalcycle.htm>

Overview

Stages of Deployment

- **Pre-deployment** (varies)
- **Deployment** (1st month)
- **Sustainment** (months 2 through 18)
- **Re-deployment** (last month)
- **Post-deployment** (3–6 months after deployment)

The emotional cycle of an extended deployment, six months or greater, is readily divided into five distinct stages. These stages are comprised as follows: **pre-deployment, deployment, sustainment, re- deployment** and **post-deployment**. Each stage is characterized both by a time frame and specific emotional challenges, which must be dealt with and mastered by each of the family members. Failure to adequately negotiate these challenges can lead to significant strife—both for family members and the deployed soldier. Providing information early about what to expect, especially for families who have not endured a lengthy separation before, can go a long way towards “normalizing” and coping positively with the deployment experience. Furthermore, promoting understanding of the stages of deployment helps to avert crises, and minimize the need for intervention or mental health counseling.

Stage 1: Pre-deployment

- Anticipation of loss vs. denial
- Train-up/long hours away
- Getting affairs in order
- Mental/physical distance
- Arguments

Time frame: Variable

The onset of this stage begins with the warning order for deployment. This stage ends when the soldier actually departs from home station. The pre-deployment time frame is extremely variable from several weeks to more than a year.

The pre-deployment stage is characterized alternately by denial and anticipation of loss. As the departure date gets closer, spouses often ask: “You don’t really have to go, do you?” Eventually, the increased field training, preparation, and long hours away from home herald the extended separation that is to come. Soldiers energetically talk more and more about the upcoming mission and their unit. This “bonding” to fellow soldiers is essential to unit cohesion that is necessary for a safe and successful deployment. Yet, it also creates an increasing sense of emotional and physical distance for military spouses. In their frustration, many spouses

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complain: “I wish you were gone already.” It is as if their loved ones are already “psychologically deployed.”

As the reality of the deployment finally sinks in, the soldier and family try to get their affairs in order. Long “honey-do” lists are generated dealing with all manner of issues including: home repairs, security (door and window locks, burglar alarms, etc.), car maintenance, finances, tax preparation, child care plans and wills, just to name a few. At the same time, many couples strive for increased intimacy. Plans are made for the “best” Christmas, the “perfect” vacation, or the “most” romantic anniversary. In contrast, there may be some ambivalence about sexual relations: “this is it for six months, but I do not want to be that close.” Fears about fidelity or marital integrity are raised or may go unspoken. Other frequently voiced concerns may include: “How will the children handle the separation? Can I cope without him/her? Will my marriage survive?” In this very busy and tumultuous time, resolving all these issues, completing the multitude of tasks or fulfilling high expectations often fall short.

A common occurrence, just prior to deployment, is for soldiers and their spouses to have a significant argument. For couples with a long history, this argument is readily attributed to the ebb-and-flow of marital life and therefore not taken too seriously. For younger couples, specially those experiencing an extended separation for the first time, such an argument can take on “catastrophic” proportions. Fears that the relationship is over can lead to tremendous anxiety for both soldier and spouse. In retrospect, these arguments are most likely caused by the stress of the pending separation. From a psychological perspective, it is easier to be angry than confront the pain and loss of saying goodbye for six months or more.

A common occurrence, just prior to deployment, is for soldiers and their spouses to have a significant argument. For couples with a long history, this argument is readily attributed to the ebb-and-flow of marital life and therefore not taken too seriously. For younger couples, especially those experiencing an extended separation for the first time, such an argument can take on “catastrophic” proportions. Fears that the relationship is over can lead to tremendous anxiety for both soldier and spouse. In retrospect, these arguments are most likely caused by the stress of the pending separation. From a psychological perspective, it is easier to be angry than confront the pain and loss of saying goodbye for six months or more.

However, the impact of unresolved family concerns can have potentially devastating consequences. From a command perspective, a worried, preoccupied soldier is easily distracted and unable to focus on essential tasks during the critical movement of heavy military equipment. In the worst-case scenario, this can lead to a serious accident or the development of a soldier stress casualty who is mission ineffective. On the home front, significant spousal distress interferes with completing basic routines, concentrating at work, and attending to the needs of children. At worst, this can exacerbate children’s fears that the parents are unable to adequately care for them or even that the soldier will not return. Adverse reactions by children can include inconsolable crying, apathy, tantrums, and other regressive behaviors. In response, a downward spiral can develop—if not quickly checked—in which both soldier and spouse become even more upset at the prospect of separating.

Although easier said than done, it is often helpful for military couples—in the pre-deployment stage—to discuss in detail their expectations of each other during the deployment. These

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expectations can include a variety of issues, to include: freedom to make independent decisions, contact with the opposite sex (fidelity), going out with friends, budgeting, child-rearing, and even how often letters or care packages will be sent. Failure to accurately communicate these and other expectations is frequently a source of misperception, distortion, and hurt later on in the deployment. It is difficult at best to resolve major marital disagreements when face to face, let alone over six thousand miles apart.

Stage Two: Deployment

This stage is the period from the soldier's departure from home through **Stage 2** the first month of the deployment.

Deployment

A roller coaster of mixed emotions is common during the deployment stage. Some military spouses report feeling disoriented and overwhelmed. Others may feel relieved that they no longer have to appear brave and strong. There may be residually numb, sad, alone anger at tasks left undone. The soldier's departure creates a "hole," which can lead to feelings of numbness, sadness, being alone or abandonment. It is common to have difficulty sleeping and Time frame: anxiety about coping. Worries about security issues may ensue, First month including: "What if there is a pay problem? Is the house safe? How will I manage if my child gets sick? What if the car breaks down?" For many, the deployment stage is an unpleasant, disorganizing experience.

On the positive side, the ability to communicate home from any other site, is a great morale boost. The Defense Satellite Network (DSN) provides soldiers the ability to call home at no cost, although usually for a fifteen-minute time limit. For some soldiers, who are unwilling to wait on line, using commercial phone lines is an option. Unfortunately, it is common for huge phone bills to result, which can further add to familial stress. Another potential source of anxiety for families is that several weeks may pass before soldiers are able to make their first call home.

For most military spouses, reconnecting with their loved ones is a stabilizing experience. For those who have "bad" phone calls, this contact can markedly exacerbate the stress of the deployment stage and may result in the need for counseling. One possible disadvantage of easy phone access is the immediacy and proximity to unsettling events at home or in theater. It is virtually impossible to disguise negative feelings of hurt, anger, frustration, and loss on the phone. For example, a spouse may be having significant difficulty (children acting out, car breaking down, finances, etc.) or a soldier may not initially get along with peers or a supervisor. Spouse and soldier may feel helpless and unable to support each other in their time of need. Likewise, there may be jealousy towards the individual(s) whom the spouse or soldier do rely on, or confide in, during the deployment. These situations can add to the stress and uncertainty surrounding the deployment. Yet, military families have come to expect phone (and now even video) contact as technology advances. However, most report that the ability to stay in close touch—especially during key milestones (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)—greatly helps them to cope with the separation.

Stage Three: Sustainment

The sustainment stage lasts from the first month through the 18th month of deployment.

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Sustainment - Sustainment is a time of establishing new sources of support and new routines. Many rely on the Family Readiness Group (FRG), which serves as a close network that meets on a regular basis handle problems and disseminate the latest information. Others are more comfortable with family, friends, church or other religious institution as their main means of emotional support. As challenges come up, most spouses learn that they are able to cope with crises and make important decisions on their own. They report feeling more confident and in control. During the sustainment stage, it is common to hear military spouses say: "I can do this!"

One challenge, during this stage, is the rapid speed of information provided by widespread phone and e-mail access. In the near future, one can even expect that individual soldiers will have the ability to call home with personal cellular phones. Over long distances and without face-to-face contact, communications between husband and wife are much more vulnerable to distortion or misperception. Given this limitation, discussing "hot topics" in a marriage can be problematic and are probably best left on hold until after the deployment when they can be resolved more fully. Obvious exceptions to this rule, include a family emergency (i.e., the critical illness of a loved one) or a joyful event (i.e., the birth of a child). In these situations, the ideal route of communication is through the Red Cross so that the soldier's command is able to coordinate emergency leave if required.

On a related note, many spouses report significant frustration because phone contact is unidirectional and must be initiated by the soldier. Some even report feeling "trapped" at home for fear that they will miss a call. Likewise, soldiers may feel forgotten if they call—especially after waiting a long time on line to get to a phone—and no one is home. This can lead to anger and resentment, especially if an expectation regarding the frequency of calls is unmet. Now that Internet and e-mail are widely available, spouses report feeling much more in control as they can initiate communication and do not have to stay waiting by the phone. Another advantage of e-mail, for both soldier and spouse, is the ability to be more thoughtful about what is said and to "filter out" intense emotions that may be unnecessarily disturbing. This is not to say that military couples should "lie" to protect each other, but rather it helps to recognize that the direct support available from one's mate is limited during the deployment.

Furthermore, rapid communication can lead to unanticipated rumors, which then circulate unchecked within the Family Readiness Group (FRG). The most damning rumor involves an allegation of infidelity that is difficult to prove true or false. Other troubling rumors may include: handling the deployment poorly, accidents or injuries, changes in the date of return, disciplinary actions, or even who calls home the most. Needless to say, such rumors can be very hurtful to soldier, spouse, the FRG. At its worst, unit cohesion and even mission success can suffer. Limiting the negative impact of such rumors is a constant challenge for unit leaders and chaplains. It is extremely important to keep soldiers and family members fully informed and to dispel rumors quickly. In fact, rumors lose their destructive power once the "secret" is exposed.

There was a rumor that a commander's wife reported that a deployed soldier was having an affair. Members of the FRG, who were very upset, related the details to their deployed spouses. Senior unit leaders decided not to tell the commander because the allegations were deemed too inflammatory. Unfortunately, unit morale and cohesion began to suffer greatly as the rumor spread throughout the ranks. A month later, the commander finally learned of this destructive rumor, which had been undermining his authority to lead. He immediately confronted his wife,

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senior leaders, and the soldier about whom the allegation had been made. Evidence about the validity of these allegations, or how the rumor started in the first place, could not be found. In response, the commander issued a very firm policy regarding exposing all rumors—whether they be true or false. Unit morale and cohesion, although badly bruised, then began to recover.

Stage Four: Re-deployment

- Anticipation of homecoming
- Excitement
- Apprehension
- Burst of energy/ "nesting"
- Difficulty making decisions

Time frame: Months 17 through 18

The re-deployment stage is essentially defined as the month before the soldier is scheduled to return home.

The re-deployment stage is generally one of intense anticipation. Like the deployment stage, there can be a surge of conflicting emotions. On the one hand, there is excitement that the soldier is coming home. On the other, there is some apprehension. Some concerns include: "Will he (she) agree with the changes that I have made? Will I have to give up my independence? Will we get along?" Ironically, even though the separation is almost over, there can be renewed difficulty in making decisions. This is due, in part, to increased attention to choices that the returning soldier might make. Many spouses also experience a burst of energy during this stage. There is often a rush to complete "to-do" lists before their mate returns—especially around the home. It is almost inevitable that expectations will be high.

Stage Five: Post-deployment

- Honeymoon period
- Loss of independence
- Need for "own" space
- Renegotiating routines
- Reintegrating into family
- Time frame: Three to six months after deployment

The post-deployment stage begins with the arrival to home station. Like the pre-deployment stage, the time frame for this stage is also variable depending on the particular family. Typically, this stage lasts from three to six months.

This stage starts with the "homecoming" of the deployed soldier. This can be a wonderfully joyous occasion with children rushing to the returning parent followed by the warm embrace and kiss of the reunited couple. The unit then comes to attention for one last time, followed by words of praise from the senior commander present. Lastly, weapons are turned in and duffle bags retrieved and the family goes home.

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Homecoming can also be an extremely frustrating and upsetting experience. The date of return may change repeatedly or units may travel home piece-meal over several days. Despite best intentions, the spouse at home may not be able to meet the returning soldier (short notice, the children might be sick, sitters cannot be found in the middle of the night, unable to get off work, etc.). Soldiers may expect to be received as “heroes” and “heroines” only to find that they have to make their own way home. Typically, a “honeymoon” period follows in which couples reunite physically, but not necessarily emotionally. Some spouses express a sense of awkwardness in addition to excitement: “Who is this stranger in my bed?” For others, however, the desire for sexual intimacy may require time in order to reconnect emotionally first.

Eventually, soldiers will want to reassert their role as a member of the family, which can lead to tension.

This is an essential task, which requires considerable patience to accomplish successfully. Soldiers may feel pressure to make up for lost time and missed milestones. Soldiers may want to take back all the responsibilities they had before. However, some things will have changed in their absence: spouses are more autonomous, children have grown, and individual personal priorities in life may be different. It is not realistic to return home and expect everything to be the same as before the deployment.

During this period, spouses may report a lost sense of independence. There may be resentment at having been “abandoned” for six months or more. Spouses may consider themselves to be the true heroes (watching the house, children, paying bills, etc.) while soldiers cared only for themselves. At least one study (Zeff et al., 1997) suggests that the stay-at-home parent is more likely to report distress than the deployed soldier. Spouses will also have to adapt to changes. Spouses may find that they are more irritable with their mates underfoot. They may desire their “own” space. Basic household chores and routines need to be renegotiated. The role played by the spouse in the marriage must be reestablished.

Reunion with children can also be a challenge. Their feelings tend to depend on their age and understanding of why the soldier was gone. Babies less than 1 year old may not know the soldier and cry when held. Toddlers (1–3 years) may be slow to warm up. Pre-schoolers (3–6 years) may feel guilty and scared over the separation. School age children (6–12 years) may want a lot of attention. Teenagers (13–18 years) may be moody and may not appear to care. In addition, children are often loyal to the parent that remains behind and do not respond to discipline from the returning soldier. They may also fear the soldier’s return: “Wait till Mommy/Daddy gets home!” Some children may display significant anxiety up to a year later (“anniversary reaction”), triggered by the possibility of separation. In addition, the soldier may not approve of privileges granted to children by the non-deployed parent. However, it is probably best for the soldier not to try to make changes right away and to take time renegotiating family rules and norms. Not heeding this advice, the soldier risks invalidating the efforts of his/her mate and alienating the children. Soldiers may feel hurt in response to such a lukewarm reception. Clearly going slow and letting the child(ren) set the pace goes a long way towards a successful reunion.

Post-deployment is probably the most important stage for both soldier and spouse. Patient communication, going slow, lowering expectations, and taking time to get to know each other again is critical to the task of successful reintegration of the soldier back into the family.

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Counseling may be required in the event that the soldier is injured or returns as a stress casualty. On the other hand, the separation of deployment—not experienced by civilian couples—provides soldier and spouse a chance to evaluate changes within themselves and what direction they want their marriage to take. Although a difficult as well as joyful stage, many military couples have reported that their relationship is much stronger as a result.

The Impact of Deployment on Children and Families

(Information provided by the North Carolina Public Schools, State Department of Education)

Deployment

Deployment is the movement of an individual or entire military unit to an overseas location to accomplish a task or mission. The mission may be as routine as providing training or as dangerous as a war.

How Deployments Affect Families

Deployments cause stress for both the service member and the family that is left behind. Regardless of the length of the deployment, the family will have to redistribute family roles (e.g., finances, the maintenance of the house and car, and the care and discipline of children). Among young families, there is a strong tendency to return to the location of their families of origin. These moves are made to reduce costs and to add to the psychological and physical support needed to keep the family going.

Many factors influence family adaptation to deployment. Each individual in the family of a deployed service member must adjust to new roles and responsibilities in addition to the "loss" through separation of their loved one(s). Disorganized families with multiple pre-existing problems and/or troubled family members tend to be at higher risk for poor adjustments during deployments and separations.

Most school age children and their families will be able to adjust to a "new normal" after the departure of a spouse or parent. However, students who have had previous social or emotional problems may continue to have serious symptoms of stress and their ability to function in the school remains compromised.

The difference between a normal and serious reaction is how long and to what degree the student exhibits adjustment problems. For example, the student who is withdrawn and goes unnoticed in a classroom may need more immediate intervention than the agitated child who is acting out. If any of the "normal" reactions to the stress of deployment persist over six weeks, then the parent/interim caregiver needs to be notified and a referral made to appropriate school, community or military services.

SERIOUS STRESS INDICATORS

The following signs indicate that the student is in acute distress and needs to be referred for immediate evaluation:

- Unfocused agitation or hysteria.
- Disconnection from peers and adults.
- Serious depression or withdrawal.
- Auditory or visual hallucinations.
- Any prolonged major change from normal functioning that continues six weeks after deployment.

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Serious Stress Reactions:

- Inability or unable to resume normal classroom assignments and activities.
- High levels of emotions such as continued crying and intense sadness.
- Depressed, withdrawn and non-communicative behaviors.
- Violent or depressed feelings expressed in "dark" drawings or writings.
- Causing intentional harm to themselves or others.
- A significant amount of weight gain or loss in a period of weeks.
- Reduction or loss of care about personal appearance.
- Drug or alcohol abuse.

Acute reactions to separation generally appear within the first 24 to 48 hours. In the two weeks after the deployment, the reactions may change. Behaviors will vary depending upon the age, developmental and maturity of the child. Some children may experience a delayed reaction to the stress of separation weeks or months after their family member deploys.

More common reactions that parents and teachers might observe in children when a parent is deployed are listed below.

In preschool or kindergarten children you may see :

- Clinging to people or favorite toy, blanket, etc.
- Unexplained crying or tearfulness.
- Change in relationship with same-age friends.
- Choosing adults over same-age friends.
- Increased acts of aggression toward people or things.
- Shrinking away from people or things.
- Sleep difficulties (nightmares, frequent waking).
- Regressing such as toileting accidents, thumb sucking, etc.
- Eating difficulties.

In school-age children you may see any of the signs exhibited by younger children, PLUS:

- A rise in complaints about stomach aches, headaches, or other illnesses when nothing seems to be wrong.
- More irritability or crabbiness.
- Increase in school problems such as a drop in grades, an unwillingness to attend school, or odd complaints about school and/or teachers.
- Behavior changes.

However shocked or dismayed adults may be by children's reactions, it provides an opportunity for children and adults to talk about their respective thoughts and feelings and begins a new period of adjustment in the family.

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/militarysupport/deployment/affect>

Suggestions for the School Environment

(Information provided by the North Carolina Public Schools, State Department of Education)

In The Classroom

As a teacher, you are a significant source of support for children affected by deployment. Below are some suggestions and strategies that can be

- Maintain a predictable, structured class schedule with specific rules and consequences.
- Plan for shorter lessons and proceed at a slower pace if necessary.
- Be approachable and sensitive; limit aggressive or negative communication.
- Take note of children who express themselves inappropriately in an effort to cope with overwhelming emotions.
- Acknowledge that feeling sad, angry, and hurt is normal when someone we care about leaves.
- Reinforce ways to express negative emotions without hurting.
- Reassure students that everyone adjusts to change at a different pace.

Beyond the classroom:

- Refer students or families to military support organizations for information on deployment workshops, educational materials, or counseling services.
- Invite representatives from military family support organizations to PTA meetings to talk about separations and children.
- Encourage military families to attend deployment-focused programs.
- At the start of each school year, encourage military parents to provide the school with the name of the unit they are assigned to and update the schools on deployment plans throughout the year. This would allow the school to keep a confidential master list of students who have/will have parents deployed. This information helps teachers and counselors to be attuned to any emotional, behavioral, or academic changes that may occur with a student as a result of a parent being deployed.
- Facilitate deployment support groups for students whose parents or relatives are involved in a deployment.

Ideas for Your Classroom: Lesson Plans/Activities

- Work on craft or science projects that illustrate the change in seasons - pumpkins, snowflakes, leaves, and planting seeds. This helps young children identify the passage of time and relate this to their parent/caregivers return.
- Encourage younger children to bring in some of the deployed parent's worn clothing and uniform items to use for dress-up play.
- Encourage students to communicate with their deployed parents.
- Have a patriotic day at school. Encourage students to wear red, white, and blue; sing patriotic songs; learn about the number of stars and stripes on the U.S. flag.
- Put together a "Proud to be a Military Kid" bulletin board and encourage students to display pictures of a Military family members.

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- Display a poster of the Armed Forces insignia on a school counselor's door or outside their the office.
- Have a clock in the classroom that shows military time. A child with a deployed parent might want to help the class learn how to tell time the way their mother or father does.
- Arrange a field trip to a nearby military base or training facility.
- Make a memory book or calendar reflecting positive thoughts and actions while a loved one is deployed.
- Write cards or letters to the deployed family member.
- Ask the parent/caregiver at home to leave stamped, self-addressed envelopes with the teacher to mail school newsletters as well as student work to the deployed parent.
- Have a deployed family member pen pal program. Ask parents to send postcards, maps, stamps, coins, menus, or information and articles that describe the foreign duty station, port, etc and use them for lessons.
- Track the deployed parent's journey on a map, allowing the class to learn about the world.
- Turn a shoe box into a deployment time capsule. At the beginning of the deployment fill the box with items like a piece of string as long as the child's height, a tracing of the child's hand or foot, a list of the child's favorites (song, candy bar, television show, toy, etc.). Open them when the deployed parent returns to measure changes that have occurred.
- Ask more experienced military students to assist those students who have little or no experience with deployments.
- Have a "no homework pass" which entitles a student to a night off from homework so that he can spend more time with the returning parent.
- Adopt a Soldier, Airman, or Unit. Students can write letters, send craft projects or other items to the Soldier or Airman.
- Arrange a puppet show through Army Community Services (ACS) from Fort Bragg. This program is offered to early elementary students to help them understand and cope with the stressors brought on by deployments.
- Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street and Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. have partnered with The New York Office of Mental Health (NYSOMH) and Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) TM, to develop "Talk, Listen, Connect", an outreach initiative to help the young children of members of the United States Armed Services, National Guard and Reserves cope with the feelings, challenges, and concerns they experience during various phases of deployment: pre-deployment, deployment and homecoming. Call Military One Source (www.militaryonesource.com) at 1-800-342-9647 for a free DVD to use with students ages three to five.

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/militarysupport/deployment/educators>

Tips for Parents Supporting the Child Whose Military Parent is Deploying

<http://www.hooah4health.com/deployment/familymatters/tentips.htm>

1. **Talk as a family before deployment:** Before a deployment, military members are usually preoccupied with many preparatory activities at their military unit, requiring extended hours and increased workload. As a result, military members come home tired, perhaps late, and are already reluctant to address painful issues of impending separation. Family members frequently collude in this. It is important to overcome this resistance and make plans with the family as far ahead as possible.
2. **Bestow, rather than "dump", responsibilities on remaining family members.** Concerns expressed by children after a parent has been deployed are that everything has changed at home and they now have to do "everything" that the deployed parent used to do. Discussions before deployment, in which trust and faith in a child's ability to carry out a responsibility are expressed, are valuable times to help a child to feel he/she is important to the family, is important to the deployed parent, and that he/she can help share a potential burden with the remaining parent. As a result, the remaining parent will have more time and energy for the children.
3. **Make plans for the family to continue to progress together, and include the deployed parent in ongoing projects.** It is important that the family not put "life on hold" in anticipation of the return of the deployed parent. This will result in stagnation, loss of direction, and burn-out. Make plans for specific goals to be reached by each of the children and the remaining parent, as well as family projects to work on. Help children design ways to communicate with the deployed parent, and relate progress made, so that the deployed parent can be part of that progress by seeing pictures, report cards, to which he/she can respond and provide encouragement. Make sure the remaining parent and deployed parent have specific plans on how to communicate. Keep regular but not too frequent communication. Include the deployed parent by keeping them informed and involved, but do not discuss problems and issues that he/she cannot do anything about.
4. **Continue family traditions and develop new ones.** One very stabilizing factor in a family is routine and tradition. Don't stop Friday pizza night, or Saturday outings because the parent has deployed. If anything, become more predictable in continuing traditions. Family bowling night, attendance at and fellowship at places of worship, and involvement in events with other families are important ways to maintain a sense of stability and continuity. If the family has not previously had regular family traditions, now is a good time to start them. Encourage children to talk about these events and activities to the deployed parent in their communication.
5. **Help children understand the finite nature of a deployment by devising developmentally appropriate time-lines.** Although the parents may not always know the exact time that the deployment will take place, it is still helpful to make an estimate, and then help a child craft a calendar of some type, illustrated and punctuated with events which help to define time for them. Examples to include are holidays, birthdays, special family and extended family events, school events, vacations, and other "markers" which help to divide up the time of deployment absence into short and finite time episodes. Create a paper timeline with dates, which extends around a room, which can be illustrated

by the child, or make a chain made of illustrated paper links, which are dated and illustrated. These links can be cut ceremoniously on a daily basis.

6. **To children, no news is worse than bad news.** Studies with children of deployed parents reveal that the children's main preoccupation from day to day is not over the absent parent, but with the remaining parent. At some level, children are concerned about what is going on with the remaining parent. If that parent becomes short, cross, self-absorbed, tearful, with no explanation, the child's fantasies about that parent's ability to function are worse than what the reality is. Thus, the remaining parent should be relatively open about sharing concerns and news about the deployed parent. If the child has an explanation as to why the parent is irritable, tearful, or preoccupied, it is much easier to accept. Parents should not use their children as surrogate adults and load all of their concerns on the child, but should use judgement in sharing enough to ease the child's worries.
7. **Listen to a child's worries about the deployed parent and answer questions as truthfully as possible.** Follow up a child's questions with further questions as to what prompted them to bring up an issue. Listen carefully first, before trying to dispel what you consider to be false notions on the part of the child. Explore as far as possible a child's question and concern to show that you are trying to understand what he/she is worried about. Don't keep pursuing the issue after a child appears to be satisfied. Be reassuring about protective measures and training designed to protect the deployed parent, but do not make false assurances about not getting hurt or not dying.
8. **Maintain firm routine and discipline in the home.** Under the best of circumstances, maintaining order and routine for children in the home is difficult. It is even more difficult when a parent is suddenly absent. The child will manifest anxiety about this new separation, and the concerns over the ability of the remaining parent to function, by testing the resolve of the remaining parent, testing rules, and flouting routines. With the increase in responsibilities, numbers of tasks and new stresses, it will be tempting not to pursue and enforce limits. Only later does it become evident that the stress level increases quickly, when it is too late. Be proactive and discuss with the child your intent to have very firm routines related to bedtimes, morning routines, room clean-up, chore accountability, and homework. Then follow through with a clear and predictable set of consequences and rewards to keep the program going.
9. **Initiate and maintain a close relationship with the school and the child's teacher.** Have a conference with the significant figures in the child's schooling, depending on the child's level. This may only involve the child's classroom teacher for the young child, or others, such as several teachers, counselor, or principal for the older child or special needs child. Make clear to them that the child's parent has been deployed and that there may be an increase in stress at home. Anticipate the first signs of stress in the child. Signs of vulnerability and stress are deteriorating academic performance, behavioral problems in the classroom, problems in peer relationships, unexplained mood changes, tearfulness or irritability, or worsening of previously existing behavioral problems. Have a plan devised with the school authorities for constructive and helpful interventions to support the child and redirect him/her to previous levels of successful function. Be ready to have further conferences if necessary. Be proactive and take the lead.
10. **As the remaining parent, make sure you take care of yourself.** If one is interested in the wellbeing of a child, the dictum is always, "Take care of the caretaker." Unfortunately, because of the many demands upon the remaining parent, it is difficult to

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make this happen. Taking care of oneself must be seen as a necessity and given high priority in planning. Frequently, the remaining parent is basically a working single parent. However, sit and plan a schedule, and include the child in the planning if it is appropriate. Let your child know that you will be much better able to take care of him/her, that you will be much more fun to be with, and have more energy if you can take time to get out and exercise, take a scheduled nap, have alone time, or take time with a good supportive friend. The time periods can be short, but should be planned, so that you are not feeling guilty. Express appreciation to your child when you take the time for yourself, and let him/her know how much better you feel.

Online Learning: Building Resilient Kids

“Building Resilient Kids” is a virtual online course that is very informative and provides a lot of information with regards to the military children in the school system, as well as the military in general. The course is free, and was created by the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of public affairs, The course can be accessed at http://www.jhsph.edu/mci/training_course/ (click on Web course on the right side of the page).

Objectives of the Web Course:

To increase your understanding of the...

- Military community, lifestyle and culture as the backdrop for your military students
- Social, emotional and educational needs and challenges of military students including issues of mobility and deployment
- Special challenges of youth during wartime including separation, reunion, death and disability, and programs to help students cope with these challenges.
- Strategies used by school staff—administrators, support staff and teachers—to improve educational, behavioral and health outcomes for all students, enumerating those factors at the school, classroom and community levels
- Strategies to increase students’ school connectedness
- School wide and classroom strategies to build student resilience, particularly social, emotional and academic problem solving skills described at each developmental stage
- Best and promising practices which you can implement in your district, your school and your classroom to create a climate where students feel safe and supported to overcome their challenges
- Strategies to build school, parent and community partnerships

Death and Grief

Deployment: Strategies for Working with Kids in military Families.
Karen Petty, PhD

Although military children are typically healthy strong, and resilient, they are also at risk for emotional trauma in the event that one or both parents are lost during active duty and deployment. Children's stages of development and their environment strongly influence their conception of death Religion, culture, and ethnicity are also powerful predictors of how they will handle the stress of learning that they have lost a very important person in their lives. There is not right or wrong way to grieve or to heal, and healing takes time. Children cannot be expected to "get over" the loss of someone they love. Normal grief reactions in children include symptoms such as stomachs and headaches, lack of concentration, clinginess, excessive crying, irritability, and regression in behavior.

One of the most important ways that we can help children to grieve is to be completely honest when we communicate with them and to allow them to experience grief and sadness without shame or guilt. Refrain from statements such as, "Your mommy would not want you to be sad" or "its going to be ok tomorrow" The following list can help you know what to do for and say

Talking to Grieving Kids

- Talk about deceased with children- mention their favorite thing to do, favorite foods, etc. "Your dad loved mashed potatoes, didn't he?" Recall or tell stories about the deceased, and ask children to tell stories often.
- Be honest about the death and how it occurred. Offer as much information as the child can understand: "daddy died in his plane" or "Mommy died in her car in an accident".
- Encourage children to ask more questions if they do not understand- as often as they need to.
- Encourage families to involve children in funeral or memorial planning.
- Help them to understand that they are not responsible for the death of their loved ones.
- Provide good touches and hugs.
- Reassure children that its normal to feel sad and that it may take a long time to feel better. Children (like adults) will grieve and heal in their own way and in their own time.
- Honor religious tradition regarding life after death or non-existence of life after death. Avoid presenting your own religious beliefs if that is not the wish of the remaining parent pr guardian.
- Plan activities to celebrate the deceased loved ones birthday or special occasions such as memorial.

Helping kids Grieve

- Use nationally known centers for children and grief such as the Dougy Center (www.dougy.org) and the Alcove Center for Grieving Children and their families (www.alcove.org) These have suggestions for Books, groups meetings, and resources in your locals area.
- Suggest that the remaining parents or guardian contact the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS, www.taps.org), a non-profit organization that provides services to all who have lost a loved one who was serving in the armed forces. TAPS counselors are available 24 hours a day, and seven days a week at 800-959-TAPS (8277) or by email at info@taps.org. Everyone there has experienced death and grief.
- Learn the name if a Chaplain or the family support center for the installation or command nearest you to share with the parents or guardian. For instance, chaplain care and grief recovery hotlines are available for many armed service branches.
- Provide books about death that are age appropriate, such as the ones for preschoolers and early schoolagers listed:
 - a. Brown, Laurie Krasny, and Marc Brown. 1998. When dinosaurs die: a guide to understanding death. Boston: Little, Brown.
 - b. Brown, Margaret Wise. 2008. The dead bird. New York: William Morrow.
 - c. Bunting, Eve. 1982. The happy funeral. New York: HarperCollins Childrens Books.
 - d. Clifton, Lucille 1988. Everett Anderson's goodbye. Illustrated by Ann Grifalconi. New York: Henry Holt.
 - e. Coerr, Eleanor 1989. The Josefina story quilt. New York: HarperTrophy.
 - f. Cohen, Miriam and Ronald Himler. 1984. Jim Dog's muffins. New York: Dell Yearling.
 - g. Fassler, Joan. 1983. My grandpa died today. New York: Shawnee Press.
 - h. Gould, Deborah, and Cheryl Harness. 1987. Grandpa's slide show. New York: Viking Kestrel Picture Books.
- Acquire books to learn about procedures and activities to do with children when they have lost a loved one:
 - a. 35 ways to help a Grieving child (The Dougy Center 1999)
 - b. Helping Children Cope with Death (The Dougy Center 1998)

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- c. What about kids? Understanding Their Needs in Funerals Planning and Services (The Dougy Center 2004b)
- d. After a Death: An Activity Book for Children (Lindholm and Schuurman 2007)
- e. Never the same: Coming to Terms with the Death of a Parent (Schuurman 2004)
- f. A Tiny Boat at Sea: How to Help Children who Have a Parent Diagnosed with Cancer (Smith 200)
- g. Waving Goodbye: An Activities Manual for Children in Grief (The Dougy Center 2004a)

Elementary Support Program for Children with Family Members who are in the Military and Deployed During a Time of Conflict

Originally Developed in March of 2003 in consultation with the Division of Military and Naval Affairs, New York State, Family Assistance Coordination Office. Revised January 2008.

Revised by:

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Original Program Created by:
Britton L. Schnurr, PsyD, NCSP & Karen Sheridan, CSW

This program was designed to support those children who have an immediate family member (i.e., father, mother, sibling, primary caregiver) who is part of a military deployment during a time of conflict. It is designed for use in a group setting, but can be adapted for use with an individual. It is targeted for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. In recognition that school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors have little time to devote to the creation of new programs, this program was designed to provide a tool for educators to address the unique needs of children who are directly affected by military conflict and/or world events. It can be modified depending upon the specific needs of the group.

Prior to the first session, appropriate parental permission must be granted. Please refer to the sample letters contained in

this packet. The materials needed for this program are low cost and typically available in most elementary schools. The program is designed to run for eight weeks, but could easily be adapted depending on individual needs. The program has a positive focus and each session is designed to last approximately 30-40 minutes. The authors give full permission to replicate any material contained in this packet.

Activities

Prior to Session 1:

- **Decide on dates, time, location, transportation (if appropriate)**
- **Decide if snacks will be provided**
- **Obtain/Prepare materials:**
 - **One scrapbook for each child (either pre-made or made from construction paper)**
 - **Markers, glitter, glue, tape, scissors, colored paper stickers, etc. for decorating scrapbook pages and other projects**
 - **Old magazines**
 - **Pencils**
 - **Large paper and markers for brainstorming activities and group sign/banner**
 - **Small cardboard or wooden boxes (one for each child)**
 - **Prepare a bulletin board or poster board was a flag with stars missing**
 - **Pre-cut stars**
- **Obtain parental permission**
- **Contact classroom teachers of involved students**

Session 1:

Objective: Icebreaker, group identity formation

Activity: Favorites/Getting to Know You, Group name

- Divide students into groups (3-4 students per group). If there is a large age range, "buddy" older students with younger students and form groups by pairing up sets of "buddies". Explain directions of activity:
 - Complete "Getting to Know Me & My Favorites" activity (see attached). Older students should assist younger students. This information will be used to help students think of a name for the group.
 - Have students compare their information and brainstorm possible names for the group
- Have students meet as a whole group and share possible ideas for the group name. Select a group name from ideas shared or merge ideas to form a group name. Once the name has been selected, the group should sign and decorate the group banner.
- Star activity: Each student will be given a star and it will be explained to them that at the start of each group they will be given a similar star. They will be expected to write their name on one side and a wish on the other. If they are comfortable, students will be asked to share their wishes and attach them to the flag poster/bulletin board. This activity will be repeated at the start of each session. At the end of the group, students will be given their stars for their scrapbooks.
- Prior to the conclusion of the group, students will be given the "My Hero" sheet (see attached) and asked to complete it at home and bring it to the next group

Session 2:

Objective: Sharing "My Hero" project; start scrapbook

Activity: Sharing information about family member who is deployed

- **Star activity**
- **Depending on the number of students in the group, this can be done as a whole group or the students can be broken into smaller groups. Students should share the "My Hero" project they completed**
- **Students will each be given a scrapbook. (Depending on available resources these can either be commercially made scrapbooks or scrapbooks made from large construction paper and string).**
- **Students will decorate the first page of their scrapbook with their "My Hero" project.**
- **Collect scrapbooks at the end of the session**

Session 3:

Objective: Coping with the extended absence of a family member and dealing with milestones that will be missed.

Activity: creating a calendar

- **Star activity**
- **Provide students with a blank calendar**
- **Discuss how sometimes it is difficult to wait for someone to come home. Discuss how sometimes children might feel sad or even angry if they can't share something important with someone they love right away.**
- **Have students share examples**
- **Share with them how a calendar can be used in many different ways to help them through these times (i.e., they can record special days, use it as a "count down")**
- **Have students come up with ideas to write on the calendar to help pass the time or things that they could do for their family member who is away. For example:**
 - **Write a letter to the person who is away**
 - **Write down something funny that happened**
 - **Draw a picture for the person who is away**
- **Add this calendar to the scrapbook**
- **Ask the students to bring in pictures of themselves and their family member doing something special for the next session**
- **Collect scrapbooks**

Session 4:

Objective: Remembering positive activities that the student enjoys doing with their family member who is away

Activity: creating a scrapbook page of the special activity; creating "coupons" for this activity to be redeemed upon the adult's return.

- **Star activity**
- **In a large or small group, have students share their pictures and special activity**
- **Have students decorate a page in their scrapbook with these pictures**
- **Create "coupon" for that activity that the child can either mail to their family member or present to them upon their return**
- **Have students bring in something that they completed in school that they are proud of/want to share (i.e., book that they have read, something they have written)**
- **Collect scrapbooks**

Session 5:

Objective: sharing school activities

Activity: create a page in the scrapbook highlighting a school achievement or activity

- **Star activity**
- **Have students share school material that they brought in.**
- **Explain that even though their family member is not able to see it right now, that they will be creating a scrapbook page so that they can share it with them when they return.**

Session 6:

Objective: Identifying feelings since deployment

Activity: Listing and identifying feelings, making a collage

- **Star activity**
- **The students will be encouraged to talk about their feelings**
- **The group leader will explain that feelings can be positive, negative, or neutral. It will be important to stress that all feelings are normal and it's normal not to feel anything at all.**
- **Discuss with the group that it's OK to be happy. They may miss their family member, but it's still OK to enjoy other things even though they are still worried, etc.**
- **On a large sheet of paper (or on a chalk board) have students identify feelings that they have had since the deployment**
- **Have the students make a collage of their feelings using pictures, words, and art materials**
- **Attach collages to page in scrapbook**
- **Collect scrapbooks**

Session 7:

Objective: Dealing with anxiety

Activity: Creating a worry box

- **Star activity**
- **Summarizes the activity from Session 6. Explain those students who have a family member who is deployed often worry or feel anxious.**
- **Explain how worries can come and go, and sometimes they are stronger than others.**
- **Have students share some of their worries that they have talked about in other groups or new worries that have come up recently**
- **Have students decorate the worry boxes**
- **Discuss how the worry box is a symbol of putting worries aside and continuing to enjoy each day**

Session 8:

Objective: Closure, taking care of yourself

Activity: reviewing scrapbooks

- Review previous sessions by going through the pages of the scrapbook
- Brainstorm ways of taking care of yourself. For example:
 - Healthy eating
 - Talking to others
 - Asking questions
 - Exercising
 - Getting enough sleep
- Return the stars to students and have them place them in their scrapbook
- As a whole group, have students share their favorite memory of the group
- Have students complete the evaluation forms (see attached)

Post group/Follow up activities:

- These activities can be replicated multiple times at home throughout the length of deployment. Parents should be encouraged to do similar activities with their children.
- Having the student share his or her scrapbook with their family member who has been away may provide an opportunity for them to reconnect
- Consider monthly/bi-monthly follow-up sessions depending on length of the deployment

Worksheets, Letters, & Evaluations

Getting to Know Me
&
My Favorites

Name:	Age:
Color:	Sport:
Food:	Hobby:
Animal:	Author:
Movie:	Book:

How many brothers and sisters do you have? _____

Do you have any pets? What kind? _____

Do you have a favorite sports team? If you do, tell about it.

My Hero

This is _____.

He is my _____.

He is not at home right now because he is in _____

_____.

When he comes home, I am looking forward to

_____.

I am very proud of him because

_____.

My Hero

This is _____.

She is my _____.

She is not at home right now because she is in _____

_____.

When she comes home, I am looking forward to

_____.

I am very proud of her because

Initial Letter

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In an effort to meet the needs of our students at *Name of school or district*, we would like to offer special support to those children who have an immediate family member who is in the military or otherwise deployed. If there is sufficient interest, *School*, will be forming a group of children, which will meet *date, time, and location* for eight weeks. The group will be led by *Your name*. Our hope is that the children will be given an extra sense of support, understanding, and encouragement during this challenging time. If you are interested, please complete and return the enclosed form. If you have any questions, please contact *Group leader* at *555-1234*.

**Sincerely,
Group Leader**

=====

_____ **I give permission for my child to participate**

Student's name: _____

Elementary School: _____

Grade: _____ **Teacher:** _____

Best way to contact you: _____

Person who is deployed: _____

Relationship to the student: _____

Please list any specific concerns:

Group Member Evaluation

Did you enjoy the group?

Yes 😊 _____

No ☹️ _____

Did it help you to know that other kids
have family members away from home too?

Yes 😊 _____

No ☹️ _____

What was your favorite activity?

Parent/Guardian Evaluation

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child has just completed a group aimed at providing additional support to children who have an immediate family member that is away from home due to military service. Please take a moment and complete the following questions. You can return complete surveys via backpack mail attention (Group leader).

- 1. Overall, did your child report that he or she enjoyed the group?**

- 2. Did you find that the group seemed to help your child's adjustment?**

- 3. Did your child share the activities which were completed in the group?**

- 4. Do you have an additional comments or suggestions?**

**Thank-you,
Group Leader**

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