



Caring for children while a parent is deployed

Communicating with children

Deployment is a stressful time for all family members, especially children. **Communicating with children** during this time of uncertainty can help ease their stress.

Use the checklist below as a guide for talking with children about deployment.

AS A PARENT, I:

- Help my children count down the days.
- Tell my children what I can about the deployed parent's mission.
- Allow my children to ask questions and give open and honest answers in words they can understand.
- Show patience when my children ask the same questions and I repeat the same answers.
- Encourage my children to share feelings through words, play, drawings, etc.
- Listen sensitively to my children's concerns.
- Am aware of my emotional reactions around my children and do not rely on them for support.
- Remind my children and myself that separation can be a time for everyone to grow.
- Help my children communicate with the deployed parent.
- Help my children send artwork, homemade cookies, cards, and small gifts to the deployed parent.
- Make a weekly family newspaper or audiotape to send to the deployed parent.
- Send e-mails regularly and include digital pictures when possible.
- Keep the deployed parent in family conversations and involved in all family decisions.
- Maintain communication with my children's teachers, childcare providers, and others about the deployment.
- Watch for signs of stress in my children (nightmares; excessive worry; anxiety about being away from home; anxiety about going to school or other activities; stomach aches, headaches, and other complaints; withdrawal; lack of interest; acting out; and sudden changes in eating or sleeping habits).
- Seek professional help, if needed.



IMAGINE STEPPING INTO
YOUR CHILD'S WORLD
AND SEEING THINGS
FROM HIS OR HER POINT
OF VIEW.

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