



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

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# Maintaining relationships with children when leaving

When you receive a deployment assignment, it is important that your children understand what this means and what will happen when you are gone. How you handle your emotions will affect how they deal with their own feelings. Likewise, it is important for your children to know that you will still be communicating with them even though you are away. Here are some suggestions.

Talk to your children.

Think about the separation to come and talk to your children about your feelings. Encourage them to do the same.

Let your children know that you are interested and ready to hear all they have to say and treat their questions with respect and seriousness.

Reassure your children.

Assure your children that you are leaving because you are doing a special job for your country.

Tell your children they will be safe while you are away and you will do everything you can to stay safe.

Offer comfort by touching and holding children.

Let your children know that you love them and are proud of them for all they are doing to be helpful while you are away. Tell them that you will be counting down the days to be with them!

If you have been deployed before, remind them that the family can manage while you are away.

Reassure them that you will stay in touch regularly.

Make plans for communicating while you are away.

Develop a plan with your children for staying connected while you are away (phone calls, letters, e-mails, audio/video tapes, etc.). Include a back-up plan if the first choice is not available. If you are an Internet user, develop a family home page.

Write short notes to your children and ask a parent or caregiver to hide them in lunch boxes, backpacks, toy boxes, etc. as a surprise. *Try to imagine the smiles on your children's faces when they see your message.*

## When both parents or single parents are going away

- ▶ Talk with the caregiver about routines, rules, interests, comfort items and special activities to help in the transition.
- ▶ Plan ways to keep in touch with your children with the caregiver's help.
- ▶ Give your caregiver suggestions for talking with your children about you, your absence, and your return. *Share the fact sheets with homefront parents or caregivers.*