

North Carolina *Supporting* Military Children



~An Educator Resource Guide~

By The NC National Guard Family Readiness Program

General Information

North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) Family Readiness Program 4105 Reedy Creek Road, Raleigh, NC 27607

NC's Family Readiness Office provides programs and services to improve the quality of life of military families and single service members. Our mission is to assist Commanders and Units as they support and prepare their families during peacetime and mobilization. They address practically every area of military family life, providing a comprehensive information and referral service on a wide range of family-related programs and services, including resources which are available in both the military and local civilian community. We currently have Family Assistance Centers (FAC) located throughout NC. Typically their services offered include crisis intervention, financial management, relocation assistance, spouse employment assistance, parenting education, and deployment support programs.

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Background on Family Assistance Centers

Many civilians are unfamiliar with the unique nature and challenges of the military. The distinct history and traditions of the military; the dress, language, rank structure and mobile lifestyle may seem foreign to those who have not experienced military service¹.

The United States military is a total force made up of the Active and Reserve components including the Army, Army Reserve, Army National Guard, the Navy, Naval Reserve, the Marine Corps, Marine Corps Reserve, the Air Force, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve².

National Guard families typically live in a civilian environment in which they are supported by their local communities. However, when the service member is deployed for an extended period of time, families may experience a variety of challenges relating to their loved one's deployment, the benefits they are entitled to, military pay, increased responsibilities (household, financial, legal, and other) that may be new to them, or they may just need someone to listen.

See insert for a current list of the NCNG's Family Assistance Center's locations.

Each branch of the service also has an organization/position that provides family support services:

- Army: Army Community Services Center (ACS)
- Navy: Family Services Center (FSC)
- Air Force: Family Support Center (FSC)
- Marine Corps: Family Services Center (FSC)
- Coast Guard: Work-Life Center - located in each district office

School personnel should be familiar with the organization that supports military families at each local installation. They are first line resources in supporting military children and their families.

NC National Guard Youth Program

One of our most successful programs in NC is Operation Kids On Guard (KOG) which was created in response to the concerns voiced by many National Guard parents. KOG is a program designed primarily for Army and Air National Guard children, Pre K to High School, to teach them about their Dad or Mom's job in the Military, to help them understand why that parent is suddenly away from home, and to re-assure them that THE GUARD IS FAMILY and would always be there for them. KOG also welcomes all Military children.

KOG is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please send your check or money order to: Operation KOG, PO Box 32127, Raleigh, NC 27622.





The NCNG is the proud sponsor of Tarheel Challenge, located in Sampson County near Clinton, NC. Tarheel Challenge is a quasi-military, volunteer program for high school dropouts, or expellees who, if left to their own devices, are headed for disaster. The program is designed to improve the life-coping skills and employment potential of the cadets so that they may become productive members of their communities and society in general.

First divided into two phases – a 22-week residence at the Academy and 12 months post-residential activities – the program has eight key core components: academic excellence, leadership & followership, physical fitness, community service, employment skills, health & nutrition, life-coping skills and responsible citizenship.

Emphasis is placed on self-discipline, Teamwork, academic advancement, Community service, leadership, and Followership, health and nutrition, Responsible citizenship and integrity. A major part of the residential phase provides for General Education Development (GED) schooling and testing.

Although sponsored by the NCNG, there are no military obligations for attending. Cadets are free to choose military service as one of their options, but are not required to do so. There is no cost to the cadet or family other than personal and “start up” items such as underclothes and toiletries.

Tarheel Challenge is a volunteer Program. Anyone can recommend and assist: however, the applicant must volunteer for the training. An applicant must be motivated and committed to turning his/her life around through this “Second Chance.” To learn more about this Program, call 910-525-5520 or visit www.ngycp.org/state/nc/.



The NC STARBASE Program, in its fourteenth year of operation, is sponsored by the NC Air National Guard and is based at the 145th Airlift Wing, at the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. A second site was opened in 2004 at Fort Fisher National Guard Training Facility located in Kure Beach, NC. STARBASE targets “at risk” elementary school students in an attempt to increase interest in math and science. Using team-building activities and a “hands-on” approach to learning, students also become involved in goal-setting strategies and an awareness of the negative effects of drug use. To date, STARBASE has reached over 25,000 young people in 75 counties. For more information, contact Barbara Miller, Director at 704-398-4819.

To learn more about KOG as well as other NCNG Child and Youth Program information and resources please contact Mrs. Alice Dean at our toll-free number 800-621-4136 ext. 7616 or email alice.dean@us.army.mil. Mrs. Dean, NCNG State Child and Youth Coordinator, is available to come to your school to talk to you or your students about our Child and Youth Program.

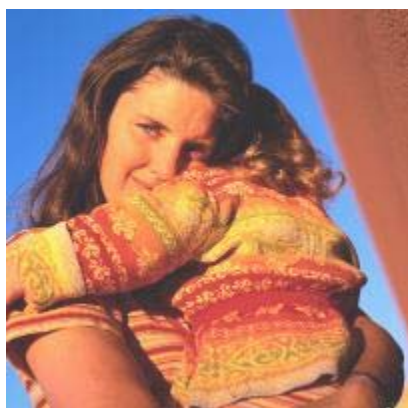
Introduction

The demands on military members and their families are not only increasing, but are becoming more complex. Military families sacrifice their personal comfort and experience tremendous upheaval when Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Reservists and National Guard members are called to serve our country here or abroad. Children are especially vulnerable when separated from parents due to deployments. Their unique developmental perspective and limited life experience put them at a heightened risk for emotional distress during the separation period³.

Military families and especially Military children do not want to be singled out for special attention. However, it is helpful for teachers and school personnel to have a basic understanding of situations that impact the lives of Military families living in NC. Whether it is a small, rural community that is home to a National Guardsman or Reservists or a large Military installation, Military families can be found from Morehead City to Murphy. Many of these Military children are in the public school system.

Schools can be one place where stability and normal routine can provide an anchor for children during the challenges of deployment and the resulting disruptions to daily life. The predictability of the classroom helps to cushion the impact of deployment that often includes changes in psychological equilibrium and disruption of individual behavior and coping skills. Alternatively, the stresses that may result from family separation have the potential to affect an entire school community and may interfere with the ability of students and staff to focus on learning⁴.

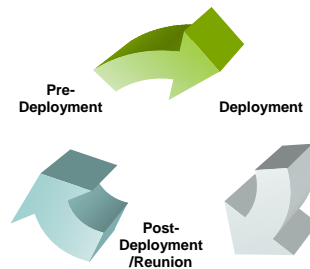
This information is intended to help educators build coping skills in their students during and after a military deployment. The goal is to bring needed support and understanding to the process and to maintain an optimal learning environment in the classroom and the school. Specific and practical guidelines for administrators, counselors, teachers, and other school employees are presented in order to identify age-related reactions and focus on appropriate intervention strategies. By using the provided information and techniques and adding your own unique perspective and expertise, you will become more knowledgeable and better prepared to assist the military child during the deployment and transition⁵.



Deployment⁶

Deployment is the name given to the movement of an individual or military unit within the United States or to an overseas location to accomplish a task or mission. The mission may be as routine as providing additional training or as dangerous as a war.

Deployments have three phases: pre-deployment, deployment, and post deployment (which includes reunion). Each phase has unique challenges that require the proper interventions. Although the emotional impact of each phase of the deployment cycle has been carefully documented and studied, it is important to remember that no two students will react the same way. Individual responses depend on a variety of factors such as age, maturity, gender, parent-child relationships, and coping skills of the caregiver during separation.



PRE-DEPLOYMENT PHASE

Notice that the family member who will be deployed to another location in the US or abroad is followed by feelings of general shock and disbelief. Students will ponder questions such as “How could this happen to me?” The order, security and safety of their lives and the lives of their family members will feel temporarily shattered.

DEPLOYMENT PHASE

When the deployment day arrives, there is usually family, unit, and community support. Military personnel are honored as dedicated, self-sacrificing and courageous. In wartime, there is an enormous mobilization during which family and community members provide a range of outward forms of support. As the troops leave and the emotional impact of that separation continues with the passage of time, the involvement of the community and those less affected by the event fades. The students and their families are left with feelings of loss and grief to manage on their own. The remaining spouse or guardians of children (including aunts, uncles, grandparents or family friends) struggle with new and increased roles and responsibilities. Conflicts may surface. During this phase, children and families of deployed military members reach different levels of adjustment. Some have developed or improved coping skills and are ready to resume their lives with renewed resiliency and hope. Some struggle with past problems and new conflicts. Others may continue to suffer from feelings of depression. Actively reaching out to children and families who are experiencing deployment difficulties during this phase can be helpful, especially if support includes the teaching of new coping skills in relation to specific problems. The majority of families reach a “new normal” in daily life activities without the deployed spouse or parent.

POST DEPLOYMENT

Reunion is typically experienced with euphoria and joy when the military parent or spouse returns. Hidden beneath the surface are normal issues that must be re-addressed and resolved as the family works to re-incorporate the returned family member. The joyous return from the family’s perspective may bring challenges to the new equilibrium established while the service member was gone. Spouses and children may have operated with a new independence that is not easily surrendered. Old and new conflicts may arise over roles and responsibilities. Family counseling, support and assistance may be needed to reconstruct family interaction. The expectation that the family will be just as it was before the deployment must be addressed. This phase brings different risks and challenges and the opportunity to negotiate stronger and improved family relations.

Common Reactions after Reunion⁷

Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)

- Feels guilty for making parent go away
- Needs some warm-up time
- Demonstrates intense anger at home or school
- Needs “proof” that the parent is real – pokes, hits, test limits
- Acts out to get parent’s or teacher’s attention
- Is demanding

School age (5 to 12 years)

- Runs to greet returning parent at homecoming
- Feels guilty that they didn’t do enough or weren’t good enough
- Dreads the parent’s return if they believe parent will Discipline them for all the wrongs committed during the separation
- Boasts about the service and parent
- Talks the entire way home on homecoming day trying to bring the parent up-to-date

Teenager (13 to 18 years)

- Exhibits excitement if parent/child relationship was strong
- Feels guilty for not living up to standards
- Is concerned about rules and responsibilities
- Feels too old or is unwilling to change plans to meet the ship/plane when parent returns



Impact of Deployment

The duration of a deployment ranges from 6 months to 24 months depending on the mission. Many Military members have experienced multiple deployments. Therefore, their families have experienced multiple deployments. Children react differently to these deployments. A deployment represents change, and change can be confusing. A child may be angry, afraid, moody, or distant. School counselors, teachers and school administrators can help tremendously by being sensitive to these behavior changes realizing that the student may be reacting to a recent deployment.

Deployments cause stress due to change 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)⁸.

All families benefit from assistance and support in one or more areas but 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.

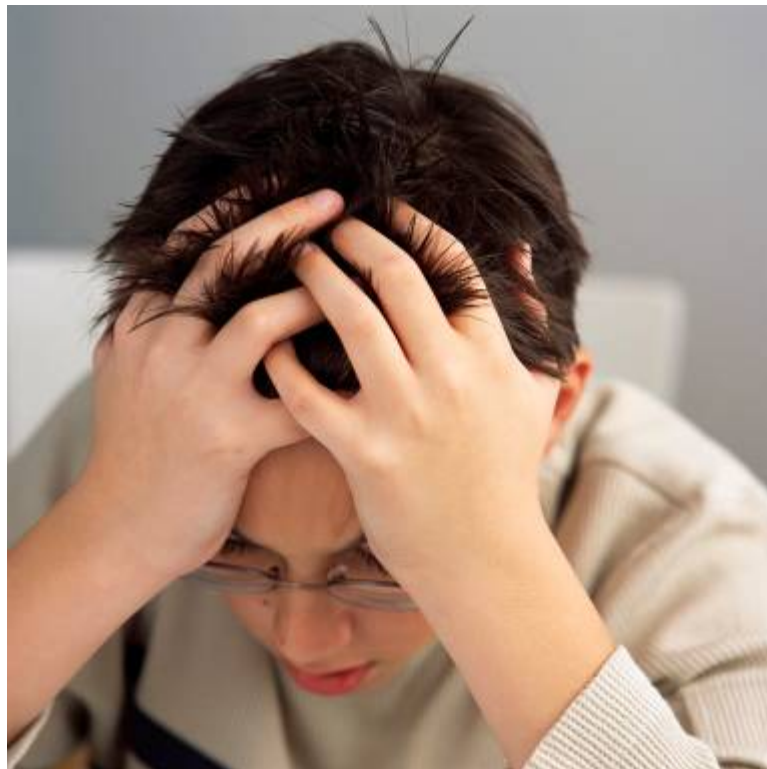
Most students and their families will be able to adjust to a “new normal” after the departure of a spouse or parent. However, some students who are fragile or who have had previous social or emotional problems may continue to have serious symptoms of stress and their ability to function in the school remains compromised⁹.

Prompt referral for intensive individualized assessment and therapy will be appropriate for students who, after six to eight weeks:

1. Have not been able to resume normal classroom assignments and activities
2. Continue to have high levels of emotional response such as continued crying and intense sadness
3. Continue to appear depressed, withdrawn and non-communicative
4. Continue to have difficulty concentrating in school
5. Express violent or depressed feelings in “dark” drawings or writings
6. Intentionally hurt or cut themselves or are at risk for hurting others
7. Gain or lose a significant amount of weight in a period of weeks
8. Discontinue taking care of their personal appearance
9. Exhibit a possible drug or alcohol abuse problem¹⁰

The primary difference between a normal and serious reaction is one of degree and duration of change rather than in kind. The withdrawn student who may go unnoticed in a classroom may also need a referral for evaluation. This student may, in fact, 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, after the majority of their classmates no longer show any symptoms of stress, then the parent needs to be notified and a referral made to appropriate school, community or military services¹¹.

The NC National Guard Family Readiness Office, through the Family Assistance Centers (FAC) and the Family Readiness Groups (FRG) in NC, will contact NC National Guard parents and encourage them to notify their children’s teachers, principals, and school counselors if there is a family member who is presently deployed or who has recently returned from a deployment. For more information, please contact the NCNG State Family Program Director at 800-621-4136 ext. 6324.



Serious Stress Reactions

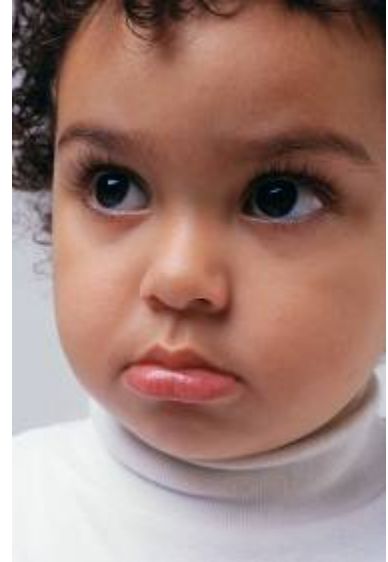
Deployments cause a number of changes in children's lives. Change is puzzling to children, and as a result they may show signs of separation anxiety. Listed below are some of the reactions that parents and teachers might observe in children when a parent is deployed. It is very helpful when teachers and counselors contact parents of military students experiencing separation anxiety. These students may be showing similar signs at home¹².

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 changes¹



A student may show signs of serious stress during and immediately after deployment to war. The following signs indicate that the student is in acute distress and will need 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 deployment¹³

Teacher Interventions In The Classroom¹⁴

As an educator, you play a critical role in the life of each student. You are a significant and valuable resource and support as the children affected by deployment learn to cope and also to grow during this time of change. We have provided some suggestions and strategies you can use in your classroom as appropriate. Remember to rely on your own wisdom and knowledge of childhood development to help each child and to assess their individual needs and the needs of the other children in your classroom.

ELEMENTARY

- Engage in play activities
- Paint or draw pictures reflecting feelings and thoughts about how to make things better
- Write in a journal
- Read and discuss stories about children in conflict and children as problem solvers
- Write cards or letters to the deployed family member
- Make a memory book or calendar reflecting positive thoughts and actions
- Take part in individual and group counseling when problems arise

MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL

- Keep a journal
- Engage in art activities
- Write poetry
- Write stories
- Write cards or letters to the deployed family member
- Relax by doing deep breathing and muscles relaxation exercises
- Learn problem-solving strategies
- Participate in small group discussions
- Participate in support groups
- Exercise
- Listen to music
- Take part in individual and group counseling when problems arise



As An Educator, How Can You Help?¹⁵

- 👍 Rely on your wisdom and knowledge of childhood development
- 👍 Maintain a predictable, structured class schedule with specific rules and consequences. This helps students to feel a sense of security and belonging in class, and that school is a safe, caring place
- 👍 Plan for shorter lessons and proceed at a slower pace if necessary
- 👍 Be approachable and sensitive; limit frightening or hurtful communication

- 👍 Children may express themselves inappropriately in an effort to cope with overwhelming emotions. They may become overactive and disruptive, or quiet and withdrawn
- 👍 Acknowledge that feeling sad, angry, and hurt is normal when someone we care about leaves
- 👍 Reinforce ways to express negative emotions without hurting self or others
- 👍 Reassure students that everyone adjusts to change at a different pace
- 👍 Be sensitive to needs of students whose parents or caregivers speak a different primary language

School counselors, teachers, and school administrators can also assist military children and their parents in the following ways¹⁶:

- 👍 Refer to military family support organizations for information on deployment workshops, free educational materials, or counseling services.
- 👍 Invite representatives from your local military family support organization to PTA meeting 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 when the unit deploys. 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.
- 👍 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 parent's 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 regularly with their deployed parents. Letters and tapes are always appreciated, but some other ways children can keep in touch include sending the service member:
 - A gift certificate to be cashed in when the deployed parent gets home
 - A book written/illustrated about the absent parent
 - A new recipe they tried and plan to make when the deployed parents returns
 - A drawing with a hidden picture for the deployed parent to find
 - A crossword puzzle or secret message with a code for the deployed parent to figure out

Frequently Asked Questions¹⁷

HOW OFTEN DO DEPLOYMENTS OCCUR AND HOW MANY OF MY STUDENTS WILL BE AFFECTED?

Although it is impossible to predict the number of deployments that will occur during a time of war and terrorism, it is almost certain that one or more students from your school may be involved in a

military deployment at any given time. Schools located in geographic areas where there are large military installations will be most affected.

HOW DO MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS AFFECT A CLASS?

A deployment that affects one child may affect other classmates vicariously, much as experiences of individual family members will affect the rest of the family. Classroom climate and student behavior and performance may be affected. Interference in the ability of students to focus on learning can result. Administrators may need to set the standard for school climate. Thoughtful classroom discussions may be appropriate for older students during studies of current events but sensitivity and support are required for all students whose loved ones have been deployed.

HOW DO STUDENTS REACT TO DEPLOYMENT?

Emotional reactions vary in nature and severity from student to student. Previous experiences or lack of experience with deployment, temperament, personality and the student's assessment of danger to their family member determine the child's reactions. Nonetheless, some commonalities exist when lives are disrupted by sudden separations and dramatic family changes.

- **Loss of Stability:** Deployments interrupt the normal order and routine of daily life. Lack of stability is very threatening. Deployments can upset the equilibrium for extended periods of time. In the mind of the student, if this sudden change can occur, then it is possible that other unpredictable events might also transpire.
- **Loss of Control:** By their very nature, deployments represent events over which the child has no control. Lack of control over happenings that impact daily life can produce an overwhelming feeling in children.
- **Individual Reactions:** Children's immediate reaction to deployment often includes a fear for their own safety. They may be intensely worried about what will happen to them and their family members, to a degree that may be judged by adults as unreasonable. However, young children have difficulty putting the needs of others before their own. Children need repeated reassurance regarding their own safety and the outcome of the deployment as it relates to them and their daily lives.

Conversely, for a variety of reasons, some children may express relief that the family member has left the family unit. The deployment may put an end to preexisting family tension or dysfunction or it may represent the finality of an action that resolves the child's anxiety, fear and uncertainty about when the separation will occur.

However shocked or dismayed adults may be by children's reactions, it provides an opportunity for children and adults to understand their respective thoughts and feelings and marks a beginning point to work toward a new adjustment in the family.

WHAT ARE COMMON STRESS REACTIONS?

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 and developmental maturity of the child. It is also important to note that it is possible for weeks or months to pass before a delayed reaction will become apparent and cause problems. (See Normal Reactions to Stress section)

WHEN SHOULD A REFERRAL TO A SCHOOL COUNSELOR, PSYCHOLOGIST OR SOCIAL WORKER BE MADE?

If symptoms persist over several weeks or seem extreme, teachers, with the help of the school counselor, should contact the parent. The teacher should consult with the school site administrator and support staff to ensure that the appropriate mental health referrals are recommended within the school or community. Support staff members may include the school nurse, school psychologist, school social worker and crisis intervention team member. The duration and intensity of stress reactions vary greatly depending on the level of impact on the child and family. These emotional surges may pass more quickly with the support of loved ones, friends, social contacts and military affiliations. If the separation is extremely traumatic, the need

for counseling is very normal and sometimes necessary for healing and adjustment to take place. Counseling does not indicate that a person is mentally ill. It shows that a person is strong enough to accept help with the goal of learning how to manage changes in a constructive way.

WHY MUST THE TEACHER BECOME INVOLVED?

It is important to become involved for two reasons. First, studies have shown that the way in which an adult responds to individuals and groups after a crisis can significantly affect the outcome of the student's experience. Once the immediate physical and safety needs of the child are met, consideration must be given to the psychological needs of those affected. Through supportive interventions, delayed or prolonged stress responses can be minimized and learning can resume. Second, the process of effective intervening with individuals or groups of children can create a sense of class cohesiveness and help to re-establish the student's sense of security and belonging in class.

CAN DEPLOYMENT AND THE ADJUSTMENT PERIOD AFTER DEPLOYMENT AFFECT LEARNING?

Deployment and the period after deployment affect learning by creating instability in the lives of individual students as well as the classroom. Stressed students have difficulty concentrating, learning new concepts and controlling emotional expression. Some students may become very quiet and withdrawn while other may become disruptive and overly active. Their academic functioning may be impaired. Studies have shown that prolonged stress alters brain chemistry and function, causing students to have difficulty with concentration, memory, behavior and control of emotions.

HOW CAN MY SCHOOL COUNSELOR, NURSE, PSYCHOLOGIST OR SOCIAL WORKER HELP?

These school-based health and mental health professionals can help identify the problem and determine the degree of impact on students and on the school. They should be trained to assess the student's situation and provide supportive interventions that will assist in the student's adjustment.

School-based health and mental health professionals can determine if additional services may be needed from district, community or military sources and can make those referrals.

WHAT KINDS OF TRAINING WOULD BE BENEFICIAL FOR SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS?

- School site deployment awareness training
- National Guard Training Institute – Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)
- Consultation with school liaisons from the military services
- Specialized assessment and intervention training for staff

Many of these services are available to schools through the Family Service Centers on near-by installations. The NCNG State Family Readiness Office offers 24 hour assistance for families and educators by calling our toll-free number, 800-621-4136, extension 6324.



SFC Rod McNeil, a soldier assigned to the 210th Military Police Company (NC Army National Guard) hugs his children upon his return. The 210th MP Co. returned home to Asheville N.C. where their families have been missing them for over 15 months while the 210th was serving in Iraq. (Released by NCNG Public Affairs) Photo by Tech Sgt Brian E. Christiansen



Helpful Websites & Links

Air Force: www.afcrossroads.com (click on Teens & Youth, Deployment)

American Legion Need a Lift www.needalift.org

Army: www.goacs.org (click on Child & Youth Services)

Channing Bete: great resource for printed materials:

www.channing-bete.com

www.teachersguides.com/ (for activities, information and links to other useful sites)

Department of Defense Education Activity: www.odedeodea.edu/home

Department of Defense Educational Opportunities: www.militarystudent.dod.mil/

Educator's Guide to the Military Child during Deployment:

www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c14555.htm (click on Educator's Guide)

Educator's for Social Responsibility Site: www.esrnational.org

National Guard Family Programs Site: www.guardfamily.org

National Guard Youth Site: www.guardfamilyyouth.org

National Military Families Association: www.nmfa.org

North Carolina National Guard Family Readiness Site:

www.nc.ngb.army.mil/ (click on Community Supporters & Family Readiness)

Marine Corps: www.usmc-mccs.org (click on Family Life)

Military Child Education Coalition: www.militarychild.org (click on Publications/Research)

Military One Source: www.militaryonesource.com

National Children, Youth and Families at Risk Initiative: www.cyfernet.org

National Child Traumatic Stress Network: www.NCTSN.org

Navy: www.nffsp.org (click on Just for Kids/Just for Teens)

Reserves: www.defenselink.mil/ra/ (click on Family Readiness)

Salute Our Services www.saluteourservices.org

Working with Military Children: A Primer for School Personnel:

www.nmfa.org (click on Education)

Zero to Three: www.zerotothree.org

Suggested Reading

Pre School

DADDY IS A SOLDIER

Written by Kirsten Hallowell

This is a very small and simple book, with rhyming text, intended for the youngest of audiences. Toddlers can grasp the easy explanations about Daddy's job and that is sometimes has to go away.

DADDY, YOU'RE MY HERO & MOMMY, YOU'RE MY HERO

Written by Michelle Ferguson-Cohen

The whimsical, multi-cultural, child-like illustrations and easy-to-read text offered young children a description of deployment day. It describes Mommy's/Daddy's tears, Mommy's/Daddy's farewell hug, and the child's plans for care-packages and a reunion party. It also gives a simple explanation as to why Daddy/Mommy has to leave to help keep the world safe.

A YELLOW RIBBON FOR DADDY

Written by Anissa Mersiowsky

In a lyrical tone, this book presents the difficult questions children might pose during a deployment. An example of the issues addressed is "why is Daddy fighting, when he told me that I can't"?

Elementary Age Children

A VERY LONG TIME

Written by Geri Timperley and Nikki Arro

This book very simply discusses the passage of time, and how difficult it can be for a young child to wait patiently for a BIG event to finally arrive! It also discusses being away from the Military parent.

NIGHT CATCH

Written by Brenda Ehrmantraut

As stated by Ms. Ehrmantraut, when a Soldier's work takes him half-way around the world, he enlists the help of The North Star for a nightly game of catch with his son. NIGHT CATCH is a timeless story that connects families while they are apart and offers comforting hope for their reunion. The last page of this book illustrates the Big Dipper, Little Dipper, and Polaris. There is a brief discussion of The North Star. GREAT WAY TO DISCUSS BEING AWAY FROM A PARENT, FAMILY TRADITIONS, AND POLARIS!

A PAPER HUG

Written by Stephanie Skolmoski

This book is about deployment and separation and how children miss their daddies. More importantly it is about how much daddies miss their families and children. It is a must buy for any military family who is dealing with deployment.

THE KISSING HAND

Written by Audrey Penn

This book is useful for parents to read to children prior to separations, of any kind. While not specifically written for military families, it is a reassuring story for parents of young children facing deployments.

Middle School Children

MAKE ME A MEMORY

Written by Tamra Norton

This is the story of Allie Claybrook whose life changes drastically when her father deploys to Iraq, and she and her family must move to Idaho to live with grandparents. According to Lola Cook, high school English teacher, Allie comes to understand that memories and loved ones are both precious and fragile. Ms Norton writes about these changes with a great sense of humor!

MY DADDY WAS A SOLDIER: A WORLD WAR II STORY

Written by Deborah Kogan Ray

This book describes the experiences of a young girl who is missing her father, while he is away at war. Military children today can relate to her emotions and, at the same time learn about history.

SOLDIER MOM

Written by Alice Mead

This is a fictional story of a pre-teen girl who takes additional responsibilities and experiences personal growth during her mother's seven-month deployment to Operation Desert Storm.

WAR? I'M SCARED

Written by WeWrite Kids

This book is written by children, through the perspective of a dog, addressing the events of September 11, 2001. The positive focus of this book leads the readers to understand that we can all play a role in making the world a better place.

High School Children

OPERATION HOMEFRONT

Written by Carolina B. Cooney

This book is about a mother who joins the reserves to help pay for her schooling. Her children thought her weekend warrior life was a joke until she was called up. Story shows how the children pull together and gain a new perspective on their mother.

CHARLIE PIPPIN

Written by Candy Dawson Boyd

This book is about a daughter whose father is always angry. She learns from her mother how her father, during the Vietnam War, lost his dreams and became the angry person he is today. This book has a strong and sometimes simplistic peace message that allows children to form their own opinion about what their parents do.

THE PURPLE HEART

Written by Marc Talbert

This book is about a father who returns from Vietnam War and is nothing like his son anticipated. Son now realizes what war does to people and who is irrevocably changed by it.

Adults

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN AND TEENS

Written by Kenneth R. Ginsburg, MD, MS Ed, FAAP with Martha M. Jablow

A guide to help your children or teen learn to manage stress—and



RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

Lesson Plans

- ❖ A Sweet Smell of Roses
- ❖ America is....
- ❖ America the Beautiful
- ❖ How Many Stars in the Sky?
- ❖ If You Listen
- ❖ Is a Worry Worrying You?
- ❖ Martin Luther King's Dream
- ❖ One Thousand Cranes
- ❖ The Giving Tree

These lesson plans can be found and downloaded at: <http://www.ngcyp.org>. Other lesson plans are currently being written, so check the site often for new ones.

- ❖ Teaching Students about War (<http://www.esrnational.org/sp/we/uw.htm>)

Creative Ways to Identify Military Children

- ❖ Have a PATRIOTIC day at school... students can wear red, white, and blue; sing PATRIOTIC songs; learn about the number of stars and stripes on the US flag; History lesson on a particular individual who fought for freedom in our Country. This could encourage a student who has a Military parent to share some thoughts with the class.
- ❖ Bulletin Board in the entrance with heading: PROUD TO BE A MILITARY KID. Announce that if a student would like to put a picture of a Military family member on the board, please do. This will open discussions about having a parent in the Military.
- ❖ On a School Counselor's door or outside of the office, display a poster of the Armed Forces Insignia. This will encourage a discussion with a Military child. He may be more at ease approaching this Counselor who seems to have an understanding of the Military.
- ❖ MILITARY TIME: 1500...what time is it? Have a clock in the classroom that shows Military time. A Military child might want to help the class learn how to tell time.

Activities

- ❖ Encourage a parent to leave three stamped, self-addressed envelopes with the teacher. The school or PTA newsletter can be sent to the deployed parent as well as samples of their child's work with a short comment regarding his/her progress.
- ❖ Become a pen pal to their child's class. Instead of feeling different for having a parent so far away, their child will be proud of the important work they do. Everyday items from other cultures can be very educational. A parent could send postcards, maps, stamps, coins, menus, or information and articles that describe the foreign duty station, port, etc. A picture, patch, bumper sticker, or button will enhance a child's sense of pride in the parent's job.
- ❖ Track the deployed parent's journey on a map, allowing the class to learn about the world, and have the child bring in postcards, stamps, shells, and other items sent from different places. Each child can write the parent letters. This can provide students with a positive, educational experience during a difficult time, and make the child feel closer to the deployed parent with the entire class as a system of support.

Activities *(continued)*

- ❖ Facilitate deployment support groups for students whose parents or relatives are involved in a deployment. Deployment support groups can continue to be offered on a regular basis.
 - ❖ Invite a guest speaker to address their deployment support group. A service member in uniform, a military spouse, or staff member from a local family support organization can be used.
 - ❖ Arrange a field trip to a nearby military installation
 - ❖ Students can make a time capsule at the beginning of the deployment. A shoe box or plastic bag can be filled 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.), and any other items as desired. Students choose a hiding place for their time capsules at the start of the deployment and open them when the deployed parent returns. It's an entertaining way to measure the changes that have occurred!
 - ❖ Peer counseling is an effective technique to implement during deployment. More experienced military students can assist those students who have little or no experience with deployments, particularly children of reservists who were not prepared for their parents' rapid deployment.
 - ❖ 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.
 - ❖ 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.
 - ❖ A class, a school, or a PTO could adopt a Soldier, Airman, or adopt a Unit. They could write letters and/or send craft projects or certain items to the Soldier or Airman. Please contact The NC Family Readiness Office at 919-664-6324 or 800-621-4136 ext. 6324 for further information.
 - ❖ Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street, and Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. have partnered with additional support from 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 homecoming¹⁸.
- Featuring the Sesame Street Muppets, TALK, LISTEN, CONNECT: Helping Families Cope with Military Deployments is designed for Military Families with children between the ages of three and five. The kits will be available at no cost to schools¹⁹.
- ❖ MR. POE AND FRIENDS DISCUSS FAMILY REUNION AFTER DEPLOYMENT DVD was developed by military pediatricians as a way to help military children understand that they are not alone as the experience family separation. The United States Army Medical Command provided funding to enhance, reproduce and distribute the program and continues to proactively address the important needs of military Families. The DVD also includes a facilitator's guide and other resource material for families and organizations working with military children during deployment. The DVD's are available at no cost to schools.

- ❖ MILITARY YOUTH COPING WITH SEPARATION: WHEN FAMILY MEMBERS DEPLOY DVD was developed by military pediatricians and adolescent medicine specialists to help military youth understand that they are not alone as they experience family separation. The American Academy of Pediatrics provided initial funding to develop this collaborative program. The United States Army Medical Command provided funding to enhance, reproduce, and distribute the program and continues to proactively address the importance¹⁹ needs of military families. The DVD also includes a facilitator's guide and a military youth stress management plan.

CONTACT MILITARY ONE SOURCE AT 1-800-342-9647 FOR THE SESAME STREET DVD, MR POE AND FRIENDS DISCUSS FAMILY REUNION AFTER DEPLOYMENT DVD AND MILITARY YOUTH COPING WITH SEPARATION: WHEN FAMILY MEMBERS DEPLOY DVD. www.militaryonesource.com

Acknowledgments

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- ¹ source: Educator’s Guide to the Military Child during Deployment
- ² source: IBID
- ³ source: IBID
- ⁴ source: IBID
- ⁵ source: IBID
- ⁶ source: IBID
- ⁷ source: Working with Military Children: A Primer for School Personnel
- ⁸ source: Educator’s Guide to the Military Child during Deployment
- ⁹ source: IBID
- ¹⁰ source: IBID
- ¹¹ source: IBID
- ¹² source: Working with Military Children: A Primer for School Personnel
- ¹³ source: Educator’s Guide to the Military Child during Deployment
- ¹⁴ source: IBID
- ¹⁵ source: Wyoming National Guard State Youth Program
- ¹⁶ source: Working with Military Children: A Primer for School Personnel
- ¹⁷ source: Educator’s Guide to the Military Child during Deployment
- ¹⁸ source: Military Child Education Coalition 8th Annual Conference / Reaching New Heights for Children, July, 2006, p.28
- ¹⁹ source: Military Child Education Coalition / On the Move, Spring 2006, p. 38

