Preparation to leave

Involving children

Deployment is a stressful time for all family members, especially children. **Involving children** in different ways as you prepare to leave can help ease their stress.

*Use the checklist below as a guide for involving children as you prepare to leave.*

**As a parent, I:**

___ Let my children help me get ready for deployment.

___ Let my children pick a special place where I will keep their pictures while I am away.

___ Make plans to include my children in family goodbyes at my point of departure, if possible.

___ Plan to write each child a letter and hide it in a special place to be found later.

**As a family, we:**

___ Plan to cook and share a special meal together before I leave.

___ Each share a memory that everyone can cherish.

___ Plan to celebrate a family member's birthday early so that everyone is involved.

___ Make plans for fun activities that we can do together when I return.

___ Share a goodbye hug if I am on alert status, knowing that I may have to leave on short notice.