Checklist

DEPLOYMENT | PARENTING DURING SEPARATION

For the parent(s) leaving

Single parents or both parents deploying

Reassuring children

Deployment is a stressful time for all family members, especially children. But when single parents or both parents are deployed, there are extra challenges for families. There are several ways to comfort children during this uncertain time, including reassuring them that they will be safe and cared for while you are gone.

Use the checklist below to help guide you in preparing your children and caregiver for your deployment.

I ASK THE CAREGIVER TO:

___ Reassure my children that they are safe and that I will do everything I can to stay safe.

___ Be a sensitive listener for my children and help them feel secure.

___ Show a positive attitude about my mission while I am away.

___ Keep my children from seeing graphic war images in newspapers and on TV.

___ Help my children celebrate special occasions while I am away.

___ Help my children keep journals of things they do to share with me when I return.

___ Help my children communicate with me through letters, e-mails, and phone calls.

___ Help my children count down the days while I am gone.

Children can set up a calendar, count beans, or make paper chains.

___ Watch for signs of stress in my children (nightmares; excessive worry; anxiety about being away from home; anxiety about going to school and other activities; stomach aches, headaches; withdrawal; lack of interest; acting out; and sudden changes in eating or sleeping habits) and to seek professional help, if needed.

I TELL MY CHILDREN THAT:

___ They will be safe and cared for while I am gone.

___ I will do everything I can to stay safe and that we will be together again.

___ We will stay connected through phone calls, letters, e-mails, etc.

___ The caregiver will help them manage while I am gone.

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healthyparenting

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