

# Parenting During Deployment

Parenting from afar can be challenging. While parenting in person is already difficult, the obstacles that come with being away from home can feel even more overwhelming.

**Reach out to the EAP for resources and support during military deployments.**



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## Expectations for parents and children dealing with military deployment:

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While everyone's experience with deployment is unique, there are several common challenges and emotional responses that many people face. **Here are some typical things to expect:**

- **Emotional Rollercoaster:** You may experience a wide range of emotions that can shift from day to day.
- **Communication Challenges:** Communication may be limited or sporadic. Expect delays in responses due to time zone differences, mission priorities, and technological limitations.
- **Changes in Routine:** The absence of a parent can disrupt daily routines and responsibilities.
- **Worry and Stress:** It's natural to have concerns about your loved one's safety and well-being.
- **Resilience:** Despite the challenges, you may discover strengths and capabilities you didn't know you had.
- **Uncertainty:** Deployments often bring uncertainty about what the future holds.
- **Practical Considerations:** Managing household responsibilities may fall entirely on your shoulders.
- **Homecoming Preparation:** Anticipation of your loved one's return can bring mixed emotions.

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## Tips for effective parenting when dealing with military deployment:

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- **Keep Communication Open:** Maintain open, honest and age-appropriate communication with children.
- **Establish Routines:** Create routines to provide stability and security during times of change.
- **Stay Connected:** Facilitate regular communication between children and the deployed parent.
- **Build a Support Network:** Lean on family, friends, and others who understand what you're going through.
- **Maintain Parental Roles:** Strive to keep both parents' roles involved in decision-making and discipline.
- **Spend Quality Time:** Plan activities and outings to create positive memories and strengthen your bond.
- **Promote Honesty:** Be honest with children and encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings.
- **Stay Informed:** Stay involved in school, activities, and social life to offer your children continued support.
- **Celebrate Milestones:** Find ways to celebrate milestones, even if one parent can't be there in person.
- **Prepare for Homecoming:** Involve your children in preparing for the return of the deployed parent.
- **Seek Support for Yourself:** Managing your own stress will better equip you to support your children.
- **Educate and Normalize:** Help kids understand deployment while validating their feelings and experiences.