



Tips for Helping Children during Deployments

	What to Expect	Ways to Help
Infants and Toddlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They may seem fussier, clingy, may eat less and have trouble sleeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record video/audio-taped stories • Post pictures of deployed parent on the refrigerator, tabletops, etc. • United Through Reading • Maintain routine • At home caregiver must take care of themselves to be better able to care for children
Preschoolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May feel their behavior caused their parent to leave • May become more fearful/irritable • May regress in potty training/thumb sucking/etc. • May have trouble sleeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine parent record video/audio-taped stories • Create a waterproof photo album or picture book of deployed parent and child doing things together • Provide extra hugs and cuddles • Maintain routine • Move your child back to their bed a few weeks before their parent's expected return.
School-age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May see a decline in school performance • More irritable or moody • May worry about deployed parent's safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a family discussion before deployment • Involve teachers, church, neighbors • Communicate regularly • Reassure about safety training, drills, and equipment • Schedule fun activities • Help child compile care packages to send to deployed parent • Limit viewing of TV news about war
Teens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be ambivalent • May be moody or withdrawn • May test rules • May excel or do poorly in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate regularly • Do not expect teen to take on deployed parent's household responsibilities • Maintain rules, curfews and discipline as much as possible • Have a family discussion before deployment • Involve teachers, church, neighbors • Continue with extracurricular activities

Additional Tips

- Request a mentor for your child through the national Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, church, extended family member, or another Marine who is a friend of the family and is not deploying.
- Ask if your child's school sponsors a discussion group or other program for children of deployed military parents.

Leave a personal item of yours for each of your children to keep until your return.