

# National Center Brief

## Military Families: Impact on Children's and Families' Mental Health

May 2010

The recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have required millions of American military personnel to leave their homes and families for deployment. More than 2 million men and women have been called into action since 2001—and almost 40 percent have been deployed more than once. Many of these service members are National Guard and Military Reservists called to duty from every corner of the United States. According to the National Association for Uniformed Services, more than 450,000 of these reserve members have been deployed since 9/11 (NAUS). In fact, over 700,000 U.S. children have a parent who is deployed in the military (Same Sky Sharing).

Schools can play a key role in supporting the children and families of service members. Schools situated near military bases are more likely to have a heightened understanding of the deployment process that many families are experiencing and therefore may have strategies in place to support the children and families they serve. On the other hand, families of deployed Guard and other Reservists that are not part of a military support system may feel isolated and invisible within their community and schools. This brief is designed to help educators and school personnel better understand the practical, social, and emotional effects of deployment on students and their families; recognize signs of increased stress among students with a parent or family member in the military; and offer needed resources and support.

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### *Called to Duty*

#### *National Guard and Reserves*

*Reserve members fall within one of the four main branches of the military: Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy. Each branch has a group of reserves, but only the Air Force and Army attain a National Guard. In times of conflict and war, the President can call to duty all members of the reserves, but requires state approval for activation of the National Guard.*

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# Phases of Deployment

Military deployment comprises three phases: pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment. Each phase has its unique challenges and can affect children, youth, and families in different ways.

## Pre-Deployment

The pre-deployment phase, prior to the service member's departure, is often characterized by a lack of concrete information and fear of the unknown. Both children and adults may experience an underlying sense of anxiety, shock, disbelief, denial, and confusion. Children are significantly affected by the tensions that arise during this phase as the normal order, security, and sense of safety of their world is disrupted. At worst, this phase can intensify children's fears that their parents will be unable to adequately care for them or that their deployed parent will not return.

Children may experience a range of emotions and exhibit a wide array of behavioral changes. The following are signs of increased stress among children (Pivar):

- Inconsolable crying
- Clinging to their parents
- Increased fearfulness
- Nightmares or other sleep disturbances
- Uncharacteristic tantrums
- Behavioral or personality changes, such as becoming withdrawn, moody, or sad
- Uncharacteristic anxiety, evidenced by, for example, increased irritability, somatic symptoms (stomach aches, headaches), eating much more (or less) than usual, nail biting, fidgeting, or hyperactivity

Educators and school personnel who observe these signs in students should inquire whether these children have family in the military that may already be or are likely to be deployed.

## Deployment

During the deployment phase, families must learn how to adapt to their new lives without the military parent. The at-home parent may be forced to assume both parental roles and/or may move in with other family members for support, creating a new family dynamic. In order to have a successful transition, these new roles must be identified and explained to children, with additional support and reassurance provided to each child.

The deployment of a service member can lead to a constant feeling of anxiety that families must cope with daily. Families may worry about their loved ones returning injured or debilitated in some way—or if they will even return at all. Parental fears may consciously or subconsciously trouble children and youth, as children are often very perceptive to the anxiety experienced by the parent at home.

Some parents may feel overwhelmed by the stresses and challenges presented by their spouse's military obligations. They may rely more heavily on their children to complete common household chores and might also be less emotionally available to help their children cope.

All children are likely to worry about their deployed parents' safety, and young children in particular may have difficulty understanding why their dad or mom is gone. Children and youth may exhibit some of the following signs of stress (Deployment):

- Unexplained crying or tearfulness
- Increased irritability
- Resistance to role changes
- Anger toward the at-home parent
- Increased anger in general
- Withdrawing from people or becoming very quiet
- Sleep difficulties or disturbances (such as intermittent wakefulness or bad dreams)
- Eating difficulties or changes in eating patterns
- Fear of new people or situations
- A rise in complaints of stomachaches, headaches, or other illnesses
- Problems at school (such as a drop in grades, not wanting to go, or general complaining)
- Acting-out behaviors (i.e., trouble at school, at home, and with the law)
- Low self-esteem and increased self-criticism
- Loss of enthusiasm for usual interests and hobbies

On the other hand, some children and youth with a deployed parent may choose to express themselves in positive ways through artistic outlets, such as painting, drawing, or music. After a period of adjustment, a parent's deployment may even become an opportunity for other personal development. For example, children may focus more on their schooling as a distraction, putting their time into constructive practices, or they may take on more responsibilities at home. The experience may in fact foster maturity, independence, and self-sufficiency among these children, which in turn can alleviate some of the burdens faced by the at-home parent.

Educators and school personnel should be aware that not all children will exhibit easily identifiable behavioral or emotional changes during this period. It is important to keep the lines of communication open, to provide students with opportunities to express their feelings, and to offer support as needed.

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### ***Who Are the Reserves?***

*Military reserve members attend trainings at least one weekend a month and two weeks per year, but typically hold civilian jobs while they are enlisted. For instance, they may be*

*professors, academic advisors, electricians, caseworkers, etc (Killie). Though their military positions may not be listed as their primary careers, military reserve members and their families continue to face the risk of deployment. It is important to remember that reservists come from all different fields and backgrounds, and students with military reserve parents may be affected by stressful home situations.*

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## Post-Deployment

The post-deployment phase affects returning service members and their family members in many distinct ways. For some families this phase can be joyous, while for others it can be particularly painful.

Service members may be returning after an extended period of living in an atmosphere of conflict and the constant fear of danger. Attempts to readjust to civilian life may prove more difficult for some than for others. It can be challenging to remove the emotional and mental barriers that many service members create during the pre-deployment and deployment phases, especially for those who have experienced multiple deployments.

Additionally, the stresses of war can play havoc with service members' emotional health. They may come back with severe depression. They must also be wary of reacting to everyday situations in a combat frame of mind, as the emotions experienced during war are still very fresh and can easily be triggered. Service members may even suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which the National Institute of Mental Health describes as a damaged "fight or flight" response (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). People suffering from PTSD feel stressed or frightened even when they are no longer in danger; they may experience nightmares, insomnia or sleep disruptions, memory and concentration problems, irritability, guilt, shame, irrational fears for their families' safety, and emotional numbness. PTSD and its related symptoms can make it difficult for returning service members to maintain their jobs and their personal relationships.

War-related injuries present additional complications. Many such injuries require a difficult physical rehabilitation process. Depending on the extent of the injury, different treatments may be required, possibly at different medical facilities, which further delay the family from reuniting. If there is any long-lasting physical damage or impairment following rehabilitation, the readjustment to family life can be even more difficult.

Some returning service members expect life to be the same once they return. It is challenging for them to understand and accept that their family dynamic may have changed while they were deployed.

These issues can take a toll not only on the service members but on their loved ones as well. Both spouses and children may resent relinquishing new freedoms and responsibilities or adjusting to new roles. Spouses may expect more than service members are able to provide immediately after their return. Children and youth may not understand why their military parent has changed. They may feel resentment toward the returning parent or experience fears of separation (Pivar).

Educators and school personnel may notice the following behavior changes among the children of newly returned service members (Pivar):

- Expressed feelings of guilt
- An increased need for attention
- Fear of the returning parent
- A lack of responsiveness to peers or adults

Schools must be prepared to help families access the mental health services they need—from family counseling to navigate the challenges of the post-deployment phase, to assessments for depression and/or suicidal behavior, to resources and support for grieving families.

## Strategies for Supporting Students and Families during Each Stage of Deployment

School can be one place where stability and normal routines can provide an anchor for children during the challenges of deployment and the resulting disruptions to their daily lives. Therefore, it is critical that schools be proactive in planning strategies to support and respond to these students and their families. Educators and school personnel can address the challenges of military deployment in their school community in a number of ways.

### Pre-Deployment

- Involve school administrators, student support services, faculty groups, PTA/PTOs, and the parent “grapevine” in determining the extent to which military deployment impacts the students and the school community.
- Invite families affected by military deployments and military support services to participate in discussions and planning about how the school community can support students whose parents are deployed.
- Encourage families to discuss these issues at home. The best way to help alleviate the challenges posed by deployment is for service members and their families to plan well before the departure period—particularly for the possibility that the service member will not return—and to make use of the resources available to them. However, parents may not address these issues themselves—because of their own stresses or ambivalent feelings or because they are not sure how the school can help them—and school personnel may need to initiate the conversation. Stress the importance of an action plan, and point out that it is easier and less stressful to have this plan in place before a parent is deployed, rather than when that parent is overseas.
- Identify potential resources within your community, including mental health professionals and social workers who can provide training for teachers and parents about needs and signs of stress in students whose parents have been deployed.
- Consult with school liaisons from the military services and provide staff training on school site deployment awareness.

- Remember that not all service members are men—they can be mothers, sisters, and aunts as well. Be sure that school communications use inclusive language.
- Create support groups for children during lunch or after school, so they can have a safe venue for talking about their feelings and can feel connected with and understood by their peers.
- Organize a family resource center and provide links to faith-based, community, or military family organizations.
- Acknowledge the anxiety that children with parents in the military reserves may feel when there is talk of deployments, as their parents may be called to duty at any time. Normalize the idea of deployment by having students write about it in their journals or openly discuss it.
- Give students a common knowledge base to draw from and a shared language for discussing these issues by talking to them about the meaning and impact of war in terms that they can understand.

## During Deployment

- Provide opportunities for students to speak about their feelings.
- Maintain classroom routines and emphasize the importance of learning.
- Make sure that parents and students who have a deployed family member are aware of the mental health and academic support services and resources available to them, as well as any social services that can help parents with child care, food, etc.
- Introduce families affected by deployments to one another. Create a school-based support group for these children and their parents, or link families to an online group where they can share their stories.
- Encourage students to: participate in enrichment activities, such as sports and the arts; write letters to their deployed parents or to record their feelings and experiences in their journals (Levin); participate in social action projects with a military connection, such as cell phones for troops, Thanksgiving dinner for veterans, and care packages.
- Pay extra attention to these students during holidays, which can be especially stressful and sensitive for families of deployed service members.
- Be aware that students may be taking on more stressful roles and responsibilities at home, which may cause them to be tired in class or to consistently skip their homework. Reinforce the importance of schoolwork, but keep your message positive and non-punitive.

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***Example from the Field***  
***St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES, Norwood, New York***  
***Marsha Sawyer, Project Director***

*Prior to her work as a project director with Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS), Marsha Sawyer was a principal at a school in New York State. Children and families of deployed military members often approached the school in*

*need of help, support, and resources. Fathers were most often deployed, leaving mothers and children to adjust to their new roles.*

*As the number of deployed fathers increased, the staff noticed behavioral changes and other challenges that affected their students. For example, some students wore fatigues to school to help them identify with their deployed parents. Other students were upset about classroom discussions (especially in high school) about the politics of war, which often led to hurt feelings. Some students were late to class because they were at home speaking with their parents stationed overseas in different time zones—they were only able to speak to their deployed parents at certain times. Some youth also found it difficult to focus in class, appeared to be preoccupied, and exhibited other behavioral issues that interfered with their schoolwork.*

*The administration team decided to develop support systems to address some of these issues. First, to build their understanding and awareness of the issues related to deployment, they spoke with department chairs and brought the topic to the academic support agenda, leadership team meetings, and full faculty meetings. Once the counseling staff was aware of the situation, the guidance department became the entry point for students and families with deployment-related issues. School psychologists met with students to assess their home situations, and student assistance programs engaged students in support groups.*

*In 2006, Sawyer became the project director of the St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES multi-district initiative in Canton, New York, an isolated and rural site, located in Northern New York. The site is approximately 50 miles from Fort Drum, one of the largest active army bases in the United States.*

*The SS/HS district leadership teams encountered a number of students coping with the difficulties of having parents deployed overseas. In an effort to be proactive and responsive, leadership teams have done the following:*

- *Identified a local hospice organization with expertise in dealing with grief, loss, and separation. The organization provides staff training regarding strategies to help students and families.*



- *Arranged for district staff members to meet with parents and sibling groups to offer support during the deployment separation.*
- *Identified an onsite student or faculty members to offer additional support to youth with military parents, as needed.*
- *Established school-community liaisons based in Fort Drum to further address the issues faced by students and schools experiencing military deployments.*

*Team members periodically check in with families to ensure that they have access to needed supports and to counsel them on any concerns they may have. The SS/HS team continues to brainstorm ways to proactively address families without being intrusive, such as scheduling evening or afterschool events with professionals who can talk about coping strategies.*

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## Post-Deployment

- Create a systemic support system involving social workers, mental health personnel, welfare organizations, educators and school personnel, and family members. It is important to keep everyone in the loop and to communicate the support plan, especially as the service person reintegrates back into the family's life.
- Continue to track children's academic progress and behavior. The return of the military parent can require a lot of adjustments for the child. Children may have fantasies of normalcy once a family member returns, and then may feel disappointed and angry if the fantasy is not a reality. The family may also be dealing with multiple deployments, in which case the homecoming is temporary rather than permanent.
- Be aware that not all families look alike and that a multi-pronged effort is required to fully support spouses and children. Explore available military, community, and faith-based supports, and exchange resources among educators.
- Refer grieving families or families coping with a service member's disability to appropriate support systems, or work to create support groups if none exist in your community.
- Understand the potential impact on children of the returning service member's emotional response to coming home, which could include depression, anxiety, thoughts of suicide, hyper-vigilance, or full-blown PTSD. Be prepared to offer the appropriate supports.
- Be aware that returning service members may have long-term physical and emotional injuries, which can lead to long-term physical and emotional adjustments for families. Direct them to the appropriate resources, and offer support as needed.



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### ***Example from the Field***

#### ***Caledonia North Supervisory Union, Lyndonville, Vermont Suzanne Masland, Project Director***

*Suzanne Masland is currently a project director for the SS/HS Initiative in the Caledonia North Supervisory Union in Vermont. While applying for the SS/HS grant, she became acutely aware of the high percentage of military members being deployed in the district: As of October 2009, 84 National Guard members were deployed from a district that housed only 1,000 students. The project director and the Core Management Team detailed the situation and applied for the grant shortly after a large deployment of service members to Afghanistan.*

*Today, the district uses guidance counselors, nurses, and school-based clinicians to address the effects of military deployments on children. Staff help to identify affected families and then bring that information back to their collaborative teams, including a family readiness training team. Team members also work with district-wide groups of guidance counselors and nurses who facilitate professional development and outreach. One school within the district has developed a complete comprehensive response to aid students and families of deployed service members.*

*The Core Management Team learned from a school-based clinician that one of the most common issues in the school district was the change in family dynamics. All of the cases involved fathers who were deployed, requiring the mothers to play a larger familial role. These mothers may have support from social services and other family members while their spouses are away, but then face difficulties with role shifts once the service members return.*

*Another common problem is that returning service members may suffer from PTSD and/or alcohol abuse, which has severe implications for the health and well-being of children and their families. The Core Management Team has also seen three significant reactions in some of the children who have been referred to the school clinician: disruptive behavior, adjustment issues with role confusion, and acting out sexually.*

*Team members are working to address these issues in a number of ways:*

- *Encouraging wives of deployed service members to seek counseling to help them adjust once their husbands return from overseas*
- *Providing mental health therapy to children, through school-based staff who work exclusively with families via home visits*
- *Making referrals to appropriate organizations, such as Al-Anon*
- *Participating in ongoing professional development around mental health and taking advantage of available resources, such as educational Webinars and information provided by the Vermont National Guard*

*The National Guard has restructured its own support services for families going through deployment and has established family readiness centers with statewide staff. These centers make grants available to military families; a family chaplain is also on hand to offer advice. The National Guard holds town meetings with families, schools, and community organizations to discuss what to anticipate when a family member is deployed, what resources are available, and where to go for help.*

*The Core Management Team continues to collaborate on an early childhood initiative, and plans to offer workshops to parents and child-care providers about coping strategies and resources.*

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## Resources

Schools situated near military bases are more likely to have strategies in place to support students and their families, many of whom are experiencing similar issues. It is worth consulting with these schools to see if their strategies and programs might be a good fit for your own setting.

The following resources may be useful for the families in your school and community who are dealing with the deployment of a family member.

## Pre-Deployment

- [Talking to Children about Going to War](#). This webpage, from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, describes how to speak with children about war in order to protect them from undue fear when a parent is about to be deployed. It provides a list of behavioral reactions that may indicate a child's vulnerability to stress, and describes how adults can best address their children's concerns and help them cope while their parent is away.

- [Helping Your Child Prepare for a Parent’s Deployment](#). This document, developed by Zero to Three, discusses the confusion and anger a young child might experience in the months and weeks leading up to a parent’s deployment. It describes how parents and caregivers can help children by offering reassurances and encouraging children to openly express their feelings in a healthy way.

## Deployment

- [“So Far” Guide for Helping Children and Youth Cope with the Deployment of a Parent in the Military Reserves](#). This guide helps children and youth deal with the military deployment of a parent in the Reserves. It includes information on the deployment cycle, effects on children and youth of various ages, common reactions to deployment, what parents and schools can do to help, a guide for pediatricians, outside resources, and charts and handouts for parents and professionals.
- [Deployment: Your Children and Separation](#). This resource gives parents’ advice and information regarding the stresses of military separation on children and youth. It suggests ways to keep children involved before deployment and lists signs of distress that may become evident when a parent is away.
- [Little Listeners in an Uncertain World](#) and [Deployment: Keeping Relationships Strong](#). These resources are produced by Zero to Three. The brochures focus on the unique experience of parenting infants and toddlers, particularly during times of stress and separation that military families may be experiencing.

## Post-Deployment

- [NASP Dialogues: Military Families and the Reintegration Process](#). This podcast from the National Association of School Psychologists discusses the effects and emotional responses that children may experience in times of war and terrorism. It provides information for educators and parents on how to help children feel safe and in control.
- [National Center for PTSD: Homecoming After Deployment: Dealing with Changes and Expectations](#). This fact sheet from the National Center for PTSD at the Department of Veterans Affairs addresses the expectations of service members and their spouses during homecoming. It also describes what children and youth may feel and how they might react once a military parent returns.
- [Returning from the War Zone: A Guide for Families of Military Members](#). This document from [the National Center for PTSD](#) discusses families’ readjustment during homecoming. It focuses on the condition of the service member upon their return and how they and their families cope with and address potential difficulties.
- [Homecoming after Deployment: Tips for Reunion](#). This fact sheet from the Department of Veterans Affairs offers tips to soldiers and their spouses during homecoming and provides suggestions for reuniting with children.
- [Supporting Babies & Toddlers: Reunification, Homecoming, Reconnecting After Separations, Tips for Helping Your Child after Deployment](#). These documents are produced by Zero to Three. They address the topic of post-deployment and how parents can help their infants and toddlers adjust.

## Military Reserves

For resources from the individual branches of the reserves, please visit the following:

- [Army Reserve Child and Youth Services](#)
- [Air Force Family Member Programs](#)
- [Marine Forces Reserve](#)
- [Marine Corps Community Services](#)
- [Reserve Affairs](#)

## Educators and Parents

- [Parents as Teachers: Helping Children and Families Cope with War and Trauma](#). This handout from the Parents as Teachers National Center provides practical worksheets for parents and teachers, tips for parents, helpful websites, and ideas for books to read with children. It also offers suggestions for discussing war with children ages 2–5 and preparing them for separation during stressful events.
- [Educator’s Guide to the Military Child during Deployment](#). This guide reviews the different phases of military deployment and the impact they may have on families. It discusses the role educators can play in providing stability and interventions for children dealing with military deployments at home.
- [Talk, Listen, Connect: A Special Magazine for Parents and Caregivers](#). This brochure, created by the Sesame Workshop, is for parents and caregivers helping young children cope with the adjustments and readjustments of multiple deployments and homecomings, while keeping families connected.
- [For the Home Front Parent: Taking Care of Yourself While a Parent Is Away](#). This document discusses the importance for at-home parents to take care of themselves so they can better care for their children. It provides tips for stress relief and places for help.
- [Military Students on the Move: A Toolkit for Military Parents](#). This Toolkit is one of three toolkits prepared by the Department of Defense to help parents, installation commanders, and school leaders make the education transition for military children as smooth as possible. It includes questions to consider at parent-teacher conferences as well as a list of tips for parents.
- [Supporting Young Children During the Holidays](#) is produced by Zero to Three. This resource discusses ways to help families with deployed service members cope with the tensions that may arise as the holidays approach. Zero to Three has also created sample letters that parents can send to pediatricians and child care providers to inform them of deployment situations at home: [Sample letter to health care professional from parent about child](#) and [Sample letter to child care provider from parent about child](#).

## School Personnel and Communities

- [School Connectedness: Extending Connections to Military Children](#). This brief was developed by Johns Hopkins School of Public Health with support from the Department of Defense. It emphasizes

the importance of school connectedness as research has taught us that second only to family, school is the most important stabilizing force in the lives of young people.

- [Working with Military Children: A Primer for School Personnel](#). This resource records the extremely crucial role schools played in supporting the children of military service personnel during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. It is targeted to all school personnel and guidance counselors and is designed to educate, support, and affirm their future efforts.
- [Leveling the Playing Field for Military Connected Students](#). Produced by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) and Department of Education (ED) Teacher 2 Teacher, this PowerPoint presentation outlines the basics of military deployment and what role schools play in that process.
- [Military Children on the Move: A Toolkit for School Leaders](#). The School Leader's Toolkit is one of three toolkits prepared by the Department of Defense to assist installation commanders, educators, and families involved in large-scale military relocations. This Toolkit is for School Leaders who will experience a large gain in school population due to the movement of military members and their families. This Toolkit is designed to help School Leaders—school superintendents and their designees—develop and implement school transition strategies.
- [How Communities Can Support the Children and Families of Those Serving in the National Guard and Reserves](#). This booklet has two goals. The first is to provide general information about both the National Guard and the Reserves, two of three components of the United States Military. The second goal is to introduce the issues facing the children and families of those serving in these segments of the military and to assist communities in creating dynamic networks of support for these families.

## Mental Health Specialists/Psychologists/Social Workers/Guidance Counselors

- [Understanding and Promoting Resilience in Military Families](#). Written by the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University, this resource is a review of scientific evidence about resilience in children and families.
- [Military Families: How School Psychologists Can Help](#) is a National Association of School Psychologists communiqué for professionals.
- [Parent Guidance Assessment: Combat Injury \(PGA-CI\)](#) is available from the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress is a semi-structured clinical interview for collecting preliminary family, child, and parent information from the spouse of recently hospitalized, severely injured service members to guide appropriate child and family interventions.
- [The Psychological Needs of U.S. Military Members and Their Families: A Preliminary Report](#), written for American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Military Deployment Services for Youth, Families and Service Members in February 2007, describes the psychological needs, existing programs, barriers, and recommendations for service members.
- [Honoring Our Babies and Toddlers: Supporting Young Children Affected by a Military Parent's Deployment, Injury, or Death](#), produced by Zero to Three whose mission is to publish authoritative research, practical resources, and new ideas for those who work with and care about infants, toddlers, and their families, is a guide for professionals caring for young children and their families.

- [Same Sky Sharing](#) is a program that focuses on helping children adjust to change and transition. It's currently in pilot testing by the Children's Institute.

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- [National Center for PTSD](#) is a part of the Department of Veterans Affairs and provides resources and information for veterans and the general public. Included in this site is [Children of Veterans and Adults with PTSD](#).

## Injury and Death

- [Traumatic Grief in Military Children: Information for Families](#), published by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, describes the signs and symptoms and how to access appropriate help.
- [Coping with Unconfirmed Death: Tips for Caregivers of Children and Teens](#), published by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, provides tips and strategies to help children deal with the unknown status of a family member during times of war or natural disaster.
- [Honoring our Babies and Toddlers: Supporting Young People Affected by Military Parent's Injury](#) and [Supporting Young Children Affected by Military Parent's Death](#) are both produced by Zero to Three whose mission is to publish authoritative research, practical resources, and new ideas for those who work with and care about infants, toddlers, and their families.

## Other

- [FOCUS](#) (Families OverComing Under Stress), established in 2007 by the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, is a resiliency training program for U.S. Navy and Marine Corps families and children. FOCUS helps military families address the impact of multiple deployments and combat stress on children and families during wartime.
- [Operation Purple Program](#) was created in 2004 by the National Military Family Association to empower military children and their families to develop and maintain healthy and connected relationships amid the stressful military environment. The program includes leadership camps for teens, family retreats at national parks, and camps geared to address the needs of children and families of wounded service members.
- [The Next Mission: Healing the Invisible Wounds of Combat Duty](#) is a PBS documentary that provides an inside look at reentry after combat.

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