



## **Tips for Parents: Military Families**

If you are seasoned experts, you are well acquainted with the challenges and rewards of being a military family. Newcomers to the service will likely face a number of surprises and may find the first few moves and deployments stressful, lonely and discouraging. Below are a number of tips and resource for military families to overcome obstacles and make the best of your military life--together.

### **Stay in Communication**

Distance, combined with the stresses of serving in the military and holding down the fort at home, can do major damage to a healthy marriage. In fact, military couples experience some of the highest rates of divorce.

Rather than looking at your time apart as a separation, look at it as a new way to develop and grow your relationship:

- Stay in touch in as many ways as you can, and take advantage of all technology offers.
- Share the details of your daily lives
- Think romantic
- Plan for the future together
- Be honest with each other, share your fears and frustrations
- Reminisce about fun times you've shared
- Be flexible
- Value each other's contributions and avoid comparisons or competitions

Include the kids in these times as well. Encourage them to talk about their days and share their accomplishments.

### **Cherish the Support of Friends and Family**

You may have friends and family nearby. If so, stay in touch with them as much as possible, plan regular activities, and lean on them when you're discouraged.

If you're thousands of miles from home, make friends where you are. Introduce yourself to neighbors, chat to people at the store, and try to connect with others nearby that share similar circumstances. Stay connected to old friends and family as well, and ask them for support. They may not know what you need, so be open with them.

### **Make the Best of It**

You may feel as if your lives are on hold, and you're all just waiting. If you linger in this feeling, you're going to miss out on great opportunities to learn more about the world, your relationships, make new friends, and help others. Seek out volunteer opportunities, enjoy fun activities, explore, and commit to making the most of where you are, every day.

## Find Resources

Military families face so many unique circumstances that it's difficult to cover them all here. Instead, we've put together a number of resources we believe will be helpful:

[Deployments, Homecomings, Changes](#) from the Sesame Street Workshop. Get kid friendly tips for coping with pre-deployments and deployments, make homecomings as smooth as possible, learn how to reach a new "normal" after a parent returns, and find many other related topics, activities, videos and materials.

[We Support Military Families](#) offers a number of resources including an index of links to dozens of websites and organizations that support military families.

[Deployment Tips from the Force Health Protection and Readiness website](#), including links specific to deployment for the different military branches, military assistance, community programs, entitlements, locator services, legal resources, education and much more.

Don't forget that you'll likely be able to find many other resources in your area by searching the Web.

You may also find these related Tips for Parents helpful:

[Tips for Parents: Divorce](#)

[Tips for Parents: When a Mommy or Daddy Dies](#)

[Tips for Parents: Discipline](#)

[Tips for Parents: Listening to Your Kids](#)

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