

HOW to HELP

MILITARY FAMILIES AS A TEACHER OR SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL

HFD-JGV.214

Did you know?

- As of 2008, there are 56,885 active duty, reserve and members of the National Guard who reside in Kentucky. Many are also parents to children.
- Kentucky is one of 11 states which has enacted the Interstate Compact of Educational Opportunity for Military Children. This policy supports eligibility, enrollment, placement, and graduation issues encountered by many military children.
- Your support is vitally important to students facing military-related mobility and deployment issues.

INTRODUCTION

Many Kentucky children have at least one parent who serves in the military. For them, supportive school environments are important, not only to academic success, but as sources of support for coping with mobility and deployment issues.

A supportive school setting fosters a sense of belonging and provides a routine that helps students maintain daily schedules. This is especially true during the military deployment of a parent or loved one.

Teachers are in the best position to identify a military child's unique needs and circumstances. They provide a communication bridge with school counselors, child care providers and other caregivers in an effort to foster support and understanding. Any deviation from the child's normal behaviors may be an early indication of problems coping with the military-induced separation. When these behaviors linger or worsen, professional support may be needed. There are resources available to help teachers feel more confident in addressing the behaviors presented in the classroom and increase understanding of the unique needs of military children.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

If you are a classroom teacher:

- Identify tasks that students can assist with in order to increase their confidence and independence and to help children know they are making valuable contributions.
- Younger children typically require increased attention from parents and school teachers during a parental deployment.
- Relationships with peers and social interactions will often take on increased value with adolescents.
- Listen to children's fears and concerns about deployment and war and use age appropriate responses.
- Use sensitivity when discussing current events in the classroom and during lesson plans. Negative or critical comments about current conflicts can have a significant

impact on military children in your classroom.

If you are school support staff:

- Provide reassurance and comfort when helping students address inappropriate emotions and behaviors.
- Provide coping skills to assist students in identifying emotions and expressing feelings appropriately.
- Allow time for in-service opportunities to educate staff about deployment issues and the effects on children's learning and engagement in the classroom.
- Maintain open communication with the child's caregiver, whether it is a parent or extended family member.
- Encourage involvement in extra-curricular activities.



DEMOGRAPHICS (2008)

	KY Military Personnel	Army	Navy/Marine	Air Force
Active Duty	41,288	40,679	316	293
Reserve /National Guard	15,597	12,402	1,621	1,574

Additional Resources

Crafting learning opportunities around the deployment experiences of students in your classroom can provide great learning opportunities for the entire class. Students can benefit from learning about culture, geography, math and social studies through teaching tools organized around the deployed family member's geographic location. Opportunities for social awareness, empathy and emotional skill building can become part of the curriculum. Examples include service-based learning projects for children in war-torn regions of the world or peer support for fellow students experiencing a difficult time with a loved one's deployment. Families with multiple, pre-existing challenges or troubled family members are at a higher risk for adjustment difficulties.

For More Information

- Educators Guide to the Military Child during Deployment, www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oshomefront/homefront.pdf
- Military Child Education Coalition Publications, www.militarychild.org/publications
- Helping Children Cope with the Challenges of War and Terrorism, www.7-dippity.com/other/op_hcc.html
- Helping Children Cope When a Loved One is on Military Deployment, journal.naeyc.org/btj/200701/pdf/BTJAllen.pdf
- American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org/sections/uniformedservices/deployment
- John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Military Child Initiative, www.jhsph.edu/mci

For more information in Kentucky

- The Official Homepage of Fort Knox, Kentucky, www.knox.army.mil/
- Fort Knox Family and Morale Welfare and Recreation, www.knoxmwr.com
- The Official Homepage of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, www.campbell.army.mil
- Kentucky Operation: Military Kids, www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/statePOCHome.aspx?state=Kentucky
- Sittercity (DOD Online Source for care professionals), www.sittercity.com/dod



References

- Amen, D. G., Jellen, L., Merves, E., & Lee, R. (1988). Minimizing the impact of deployment separation on military children: Stages, current preventive efforts, and system recommendations. *Military Medicine*, 153, 441-446.
- Huebner, A. J., Mancini, J. A., Wilcox, R. M., Grass, S. R., & Grass, G. A. (2007). Parental deployment and youth in military families: Exploring uncertainty and ambiguous loss. *Family Relations*, 56(2), 112-122.
- Johnson, S., Sherman, M., Hoffman, J., James, L., Johnson, P., Magee, T., Riggs, D. (2007). The psychological needs of U.S military service members and their families: A preliminary report. American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Military Deployment Services for Youth, Families and Service Members.
- Department of Defense Personnel and Procurement (2008). DOD military by state. http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/L03/fy08/atlas_2008.pdf
- Purdue Military Family Research Institute (2005). Demographics Report. Retrieved from http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri/pages/military/2005_Demographics_Report.pdf
- Council of State Governments. (2008). Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. Retrieved from <http://www.csg.org/programs/ncic/EducatingMilitaryChildrenCompact.aspx>



Adapted for use in Kentucky from *How to Help Military Families as a Teacher or School Professional*, The Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University, 2010.

Judy van de Venne, PhD., C.F.L.E.
Extension Specialist for Family and Consumer Sciences

June 2010

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability or national origin.