School Connections and Moves

Connections to schools are vital to children’s academic success. Whether you are new to an area or well-established, building relationships with teachers, preschool directors and local libraries are a key way to support your children in a school environment. Volunteering is a great way to meet other parents and build connections in the community.

The relationships with preschool teachers can be an oasis of stability during times of transition or deployment. For those in school, teachers can be an extra set of eyes and ears for parents to rely on, and often they see are the first to see changes in behavior or performance. Getting to know teachers, sharing updates with them about deployments, and having their contact information close at hand can be invaluable. Consider sharing some of the resources on page two with your child’s teachers, so they can become more aware of ways to connect military families’ experiences to their classroom curriculum.

Although many military children report that traveling and meeting new people is a great part of military life, moving can be one of the toughest parts of military life, especially when children start a new school. Preschoolers may have a hard time with their routines being interrupted and may fear abandonment in a new setting. Consider local community programs or libraries as a way of making new community connections.

Promoting School Readiness

According to one recent study, finding time to read together while a parent is deployed can be a challenge. However, this reading time is crucial to children’s development. Those children who read with their parents are more likely to have advanced language skills and learn reading more easily than those who don’t read together.

One resource for military families is the program *Tell Me a Story: Making Connections and Finding Support Through Literature*. This program chooses books to share with military children that promote optimism and resilience, build parent-child relationships and promote community. Parents and children read these books together and discuss them.

Some great books to read together with young children are:

- *Listen to the Wind* by Greg Mortenson and Susan Roth
- *Click, Clack, Moo, Cows that Type* by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin
- *The Remarkable Farkle McBride* by John Lithgow
- *How to Make an American Pie* by Karma Wilson
- *Giraffes Can’t Dance* by Giles Andreae

Your Preschooler:

- Doesn’t yet have an understanding of time. Six months from now might be tomorrow or next week.
- Relies on routines to feel secure and confident.
- Will look at how adults are acting to gauge how to feel. Is this event scary, happy, sad?
- Will usually show how he or she is feeling through actions rather than words. A preschooler’s imaginary play can reveal a lot about what is happening inside.

Parent Tips:

- “Transitional objects” like teddy bears or blankets can be used to represent mom or dad during deployment or moves. Introduce the transitional object early on so they can become a comfort during the transition.
- After deployment, consider talking to the preschool teacher to see if the recently deployed parent can come visit the classroom and talk about their travels. This could allow the preschooler to feel a sense of pride about the mission their parent accomplished.
Military Youth on the Move
Offers advice on moving, social life and school to military kids.

Tutor.com
FREE homework help for students from military families is available 24/7.
http://www.tutor.com/military

School Quest
This site provides information about schools in all 50 states and college planning. Students and parents have the opportunity to create a profile and securely store school information and history.
http://www.schoolquest.org/

Student Online Achievement Resources
Supports service parents in being involved in their child’s education by providing resources and connecting parents to each other.
http://www.soarathome.org/

ADAPT is gearing up for the next wave of the project. You can help us better understand reintegration in military families and have a say in future resources and services provided to reintegrating military families!

If you live in Minnesota, are a parent of a 5-12 year old, and have been deployed (or your spouse/partner has been deployed) since 2001, we want to hear from you!

To learn more about the ADAPT project, go to www.cehd.umn.edu/fsos/adapt. For more information, you can call us at 612-624-4830 or e-mail us at adapt@umn.edu.

“Like” us on Facebook!
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