

Supporting Military Families

Military families face situations that many others don't. They may have to move often, adjust to life on a military base or worry about a loved one in a dangerous place.

Millions Affected

There are more than 1.6 million children in the U.S. who have a parent serving in the military (Defense Contract Audit Agency). For these kids, change is constant. On average, military families move every 2.5 years (Military Family Advisory Network). This is about three times more often than civilian families. Switching schools and leaving behind friends, teachers and neighborhoods can cause stress for a child.

Military children experience more stress about a parent being away. Thousands of kids in the U.S. have a parent deployed overseas. This means birthdays, holidays and more are often spent with one parent missing. The effect of these experiences is significant.

Coping with Change and Uncertainty

Change is part of daily life for military families. One day, your military family may live near loved ones. The next, you could be across the country. A parent may leave for training or deployment on short notice. Families that are left behind must figure out how to balance routines.

Acknowledge that this impact is real. Lean on routines like family dinners, nightly check-ins or traditions that travel with you. Kids benefit from reassurance. Even when life feels unpredictable, having a strong support system at home can help.

Talking to Kids about Military Life

One of the hardest parts of military family life is explaining it to children. Kids are smart and can pick up on stress and uncertainty. That's why honest conversations matter.

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Military Family Advisory Network

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Parents should use age-appropriate language to explain where a deployed parent is going and why. For younger children, keep it simple. For example, “Mom is helping keep people safe” can be enough. Older kids may need space to ask questions. The key is to make sure they feel heard.

Where Families Can Find Support

Military families don't have to go through these challenges alone. There are many resources to help:

Military OneSource: A 24/7 support line that offers counseling, resources and advice.

National Military Family Association: Provides programs for kids, camps for military youth and advocacy for families.

School-based programs: Many schools near bases have Military Family Life Counselors who specialize in helping kids.

Local community groups and faith organizations: These can offer friendship and a sense of belonging.

Military families give up a lot for their country. If you are part of a military family, you deserve support.

#SupportVeterans #ThankAVet

If you or someone you know is a veteran or military family member experiencing a mental health crisis, call 9-8-8 and press 1 to connect with the 24/7, free and confidential Veterans Crisis Line. For more resources, contact Military OneSource at 800-342-9647.

Reviewed by Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)