



Staying involved in your child's education is vital, including when a service member is gone for trainings, schools, or deployments. The most effective ways for military personnel to stay involved in their child's education during separations is through planning and communication.

### Communication

Ongoing communication among the service member, caregiver at home, teacher, and student is essential for success during a time when the service member is gone. If possible, plan ahead of the separation how the service member will stay connected to the family, teacher(s), and other school staff that the student engages with on a regular basis.

The service member can stay informed:

- Look at the school website, read the school or district updates, and subscribe to classroom newsletters or digital platforms
- Check your child's grades online
- Talk to your child and to spouse about what is going on at school
- At-home caregiver can scan or take a photo of homework, comments from teachers, art, or projects and e-mail them to the service member
- Stay in contact with the teacher via email or teacher's preferred method of communication

### Tips for Staying Connected

Figure out how you are going to communicate before the service member leaves. If you use apps like WhatsApp, FaceTime or Skype, set up those accounts ahead of time and let your children practice connecting with them. Make sure you set up realistic expectations about communication with your children. Once the service member has arrived at their new location, they may initially have limited internet connection or time for frequent calls or emails.

More tips for staying connected:

- Use a map or use Google Earth to explore area where the service member is stationed
- Involve children in sending care packages to others as well as the service member
- Plan ahead – Have the service member pre-write cards and notes for special moments that will happen while they are away
- Mark the passage of time using paper chains, coin jar, memory jar, or "kisses" jar
- Use a Flat Daddy or Mommy and take photos with them at special events or trips to share with the service member

MCEC<sup>®</sup> Parent Support empowers military-connected parents with resources to be their child's first and best advocate. Learn more about ways to get involved and stay informed about upcoming webinars, workshops, and additional resources by emailing [msc@militarychild.org](mailto:msc@militarychild.org)



### Additional Support

Ask if the school provides any type of deployment or military child groups such as [Student 2 Student<sup>®</sup>](#). Schools with larger military-connected student bodies or close to installations may have school-based Military Family Life Counselors. [Purple Star Schools](#) have committed to supporting military children as they navigate the challenges that come with being a military child. It is also important to encourage your child to [advocate for themselves](#) at an age-appropriate level.

### Online Resources for Support

- [Babies on the Homefront](#) (Ages 0-3) - For military parents of babies or toddlers
- [Military Kids Connect](#) (Ages 6-17) - Online community for military-connected children
- [Bloom: Empowering the Military Teen](#) (Ages 13-19) - Peer based support and resources
- [United Through Reading](#) - Pre-record stories and books for children of all ages
- [Military Family Life Counselors](#) – Non-medical counseling for military families
- [Military OneSource](#) – Deployment support and resources for military parents
- [National Military Family Association](#) – Advocacy and resources for military families

### Videos

- Helping Kids Deal with a Deployed Parent (2018) Howcast - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1NWuY-NY1w>
- Young Children on the Homefront (2013) One to Three - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MV5ZCyf1Xeg&t=494s>
- Military Youth Coping with Separation: When Family Members Deploy (2010) DoD - <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/products/military-youth-coping-with-separation-when-family-members-deploy-58/>

### MCEC<sup>®</sup> Resources

- [SchoolQuest<sup>™</sup>](#) is an interactive tool specially designed to support highly mobile military-connected parents & students: <https://schoolquest.militarychild.org>
- [Military Student Consultant](#): a global support system for students, parents, and school professionals. The initiative provides regional one-on-one support for advocacy and problem-solving resources to assist military-connected students, parents, and professionals who serve them. To contact a Military Student Consultant, email [msc@militarychild.org](mailto:msc@militarychild.org) or call (254) 953-1923 ext. 1146.

MCEC<sup>®</sup> Parent Support empowers military-connected parents with resources to be their child's first and best advocate. Learn more about ways to get involved and stay informed about upcoming webinars, workshops, and additional resources by emailing [msc@militarychild.org](mailto:msc@militarychild.org)



# MCEC<sup>®</sup>

## Parent Support

Staying Connected During a  
Service Member's Absence

- **Professional Development:** Enhancing the current capabilities, competency, and awareness of professionals who serve and support military-connected children and youth. Find current offerings and more details at <https://www.militarychild.org/audience/professionals>.
- **Student Achievement:** Provides support to military-connected students through peer-to-peer mentoring programs, the *Frances Hesselbein Student Leadership Program™*, student-focused webinars, and our Student Advisory Council. Find more details at <https://www.militarychild.org/audience/students>.
- **MCEC<sup>®</sup> Podcast:** Covers an array of informative and current topics with guests from all walks of life. Visit [Podbean](#) or [iTunes](#).
- **MCEC<sup>®</sup> Parent Support Webinars:** Offers a vast number of topics to support military-connected families <https://www.militarychild.org/webinars>
- **MCEC<sup>®</sup> En Español:** Delivers Spanish resources to those who seek to provide valuable and relevant information to the Spanish-speaking military community, such as teachers, administrators, school districts, military installations, and parents. Visit <https://www.militarychild.org/espanol>

### References

- Chandra, A., Lara-Cinisomo, S., Jaycox, L., Tanielian, T. Burns, R., Ruder, T., Han, B. (2010). Children on the Homefront: The experience of children from military families. *Pediatrics* 125 (1).
- Chen, G. (2022, May 20). *Parental Involvement is Key to Student Success*. Public School Review. <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/blog/parental-involvement-is-key-to-student-success>
- Clark, A. (n.d.). *How to build the foundation for self-advocacy in young children*. Understood. <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/how-to-build-the-foundation-for-self-advocacy-in-young-children>
- Educator's Guide to the Military Child During Deployment*. (n.d.) National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. U.S. Department of Defense. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/resources/educators-guide-military-child-during-deployment>

MCEC<sup>®</sup> Parent Support empowers military-connected parents with resources to be their child's first and best advocate. Learn more about ways to get involved and stay informed about upcoming webinars, workshops, and additional resources by emailing [msc@militarychild.org](mailto:msc@militarychild.org)

Current as of January 2023



Elizabeth Dole Foundation, Wounded Warrior Project, Lilly Endowment, Inc., & Mathematica (2021). *Hidden Helpers at the Frontlines of Caregiving: Supporting the Healthy Development of Children from Military and Veteran Caregiving Homes*. Mathematica. <https://www.mathematica.org/publications/hidden-helpers-at-the-frontlines-of-caregiving-supporting-the-healthy-development-of-children>

Fraser-Thill, R. (2020, December 16). *Parent Involvement Can Benefit Children in Many Ways*. <https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-parent-involvement-benefits-kids-3288064>

FOCUS Project. (2017, November 2). *Effective Communication Skills*. FOCUS Project. [https://www.focusproject.org/sites/default/files/family\\_resource\\_files/EffectiveCommwc-508.pdf](https://www.focusproject.org/sites/default/files/family_resource_files/EffectiveCommwc-508.pdf)

Hooper, L. M., DeCoster, J., White, N., & Voltz, M. L. (2011). Characterizing the magnitude of the relation between self-reported childhood parentification and adult psychopathology: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 67(10), 1028- 1043. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20807>

Lucier-Greer, M. O'Neal, C., Arnold, A. L., Mancini, J., Wickrama K. (2014). Adolescent mental health and academic functioning: empirical support for contrasting models of risk and vulnerability. *Military Medicine* 179 (11).

Mancini, J., O'Neal, C. W., Lucier-Greer, M. (2020). Toward a Framework for Military Family Life Education: Culture, Context, Content, and Practice. *Family Relations* 69 (1). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339074850\\_Toward\\_a\\_Framework\\_for\\_Military\\_Family\\_Life\\_Education\\_Culture\\_Context\\_Content\\_and\\_Practice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339074850_Toward_a_Framework_for_Military_Family_Life_Education_Culture_Context_Content_and_Practice)

National Education Association (2020, July 15). *Help Your Teen Thrive in High School*. <https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/help-your-teen-thrive-high-school>

*Supporting Children and Youth During Deployment*. (2021, April 2). Military OneSource. <https://planmydeployment.militaryonesource.mil/deployment/family-members/supporting-kids-during-deployment/>

MCEC<sup>®</sup> Parent Support empowers military-connected parents with resources to be their child's first and best advocate. Learn more about ways to get involved and stay informed about upcoming webinars, workshops, and additional resources by emailing [msc@militarychild.org](mailto:msc@militarychild.org)