

Parenting During Deployment

Parenting from afar can be a difficult task. It is complicated enough to parent a child in person, so the challenges that come with parenting from outside of the home increase exponentially.



Tips for effective parenting when dealing with military deployment:

Build strong communication. Technology can be helpful in keeping the lines of communication open during times of deployment. Utilizing videotelephony software helps maintain face-to-face interaction with family from a distance. While on calls with loved ones, it's important to openly verbalize thoughts as well as actively listen to thoughts of others. Listening skills are just as important for parents as they are for children. Remember to listen in order to understand rather than listening to respond. Modeling the listening to understand behavior for children during conversations will not only be beneficial for an open and honest relationship but it also teaches the child how to build effective communication skills.

Recognize the 50/50 Rule. Parenting is 50% addressing behaviors and 50% addressing emotions. A parent's role is to pass along life skills while also teaching children how to express and manage emotions in healthy, effective ways. Awareness of a child's emotions and the reasons for them is a crucial part of parenting both in person and from a distance.

Utilize available support. It takes a community to raise a child. It's important for parents to seek and rely on the resources around them. In addition to a support system of friends and family, this can also include after school programs, mental health counseling and mentoring programs. Reach out to fellow military families. Children benefit from connecting with other children in a similar position.

Remember your EAP can help. The USPS EAP offers counseling to any household members and eligible dependents. Counseling can be done individually with the external parent, both parents, the child(ren), or all together in family counseling. Your EAP can be a great support and assist you in learning skills related to parenting, coping with emotions related to distance, and any other factors that may arise due to distance in the family. The EAP also offers help to USPS employees and their families by finding services within your communities. For more information visit EAP4YOU.com or give us a call.