



## How to Talk to Your Children About Deployment

Being a member of the United States military requires extraordinary strength, courage, and dedication. Supporting their families is equally important, yet often comes with its challenges that can affect mental health. Uprise Health has created a toolkit to provide tips and resources for active-duty members, veterans, and those close to them so they are able to continue growing stronger each day

Military deployment is a tough time for everyone involved. It's a difficult and emotional experience, especially for dependent children of active-duty military members. Children of all ages may have a hard time processing their emotions and may be confused about what is happening during a deployment. As a parent or guardian, it's important to talk to your children about the upcoming deployment or the ongoing experience to help ease the tension and confusion.

Let's discuss some of the best ways to talk to children about military deployment. Below are some tips and advice for children of all ages, from young children aged 2-6, to elementary-age children aged 7-10, and even for teenagers. Our goal is to help you create a safe, secure, and supportive environment for your child during this trying time.

### Young Children (Ages 2-6)

**Keep it simple:** Young children have a limited understanding of the world around them, so keeping it simple is the best way to ensure they understand what is happening without overwhelming them with too much information.

**Use age-appropriate language:** Use language that your child can understand. Avoid using military jargon and military terms that they may not be familiar with.

**Talk about emotions:** Help your child recognize their emotions, and discuss how they are feeling about the situation. Encourage them to ask questions and express their feelings.



### Elementary-Age Children (Ages 7-10)

**Provide context:** Provide context about the deployment so your child understands why their parent is leaving, where they will be going, and how long they will be gone.

**Keep connected:** Make an effort to keep your child connected to their deployed parent. Try sending letters, emails, or care packages, and celebrate holidays and special occasions, even if their parent can't be there.

**Talk about the future:** Talk about plans for the future when their parent returns home and reassure your child that their parent will be back with them soon.



### Teenagers

**Involve them in the process:** Involve your teenager in the planning process for the deployment, such as helping their parents prepare for their departure.

**Provide emotional support:** Let your teenager know they can talk to you about their feelings and offer support when they need it.

**Discuss trends:** Discuss common themes related to deployment that other military families experience to provide context and show that it is a common occurrence.

Talking to your children about military deployment can be challenging, but it's important to help your child understand what is happening and provide them with support during this difficult time. Whether your child is young or a teenager, there are ways to make them feel secure and prepared for the situation. Remember to keep communication open, offer plenty of support, and focus on the positive aspects of the experience. With these tips, you'll be able to help your child through this challenging time and come out on the other side even stronger than before.