

October 2008

SES GUIDANCE

Counselor in the Classroom

3rd, 4th & 5th Grade Edition



PRE-DEPLOYMENT

Soon our guidance lessons will focus on the separation of loved ones. It is a reality of our mobile military lifestyle that children will be separated from one of their parents for extended time. Most of our military parents will be deploying soon. In an effort to support our children, we will offer a special unit on Deployment for Kids. This is our local curriculum that we have developed and used during times when our soldiers have been deployed. The content will be aligned to address this pending deployment. The goals of these lessons follow.

Students will:

1. Be aware of the feelings that accompany deployment.
2. Identify the troublesome behaviors of children in need of a little extra support.
3. Have a basic knowledge of Iraq and the living conditions, equipment, etc. of our soldiers.
4. Identify ways to help at home and in our community.
5. Select and then "commit" to use coping strategies while a parent is deployed.
6. Understand how a deployment can be an opportunity for self-growth.

KIDS and the PRE-DEPLOYMENT PHASE

Although it is a frantic time for all, I cannot stress enough the importance of speaking to your children prior to the start of our deployment to Iraq. It is always best that the parent scheduled to deploy be apart of these communications. Speak honestly and in terms your kids will understand. Be prepared for strong reactions from your children - fear, worry, anger, etc. Some kids may have difficulty expressing their feelings, so look for clues in their moods and behavior. Listening, understanding and acknowledging their feelings will go a long way for building parent-child relations and mutual respect. **Listening may be more important than speaking.** Expect plenty of tough questions too. Our kids may ask the "W" questions - When, Where and Why. Don't be surprised if safety questions arise and even thoughts about our deployed member getting hurt. Respond honestly and in language your children will comprehend. And please don't be afraid to share your emotions too. Kids can sense when you are feeling tense. Consider special family activities before departing. When possible some families like to →

take short sightseeing trips, have outings at the Bowling Center, Christmas Markets, stay at home parties, etc.

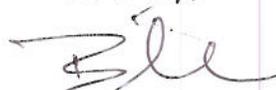
* School personnel want to be perceived as an anchor of **consistency & support** for you and your precious children.

** Please remember that counseling within our school complex is an option for any of our students who may be struggling with the deployment.

More Ideas to Support Children

- Maintain firm routine and discipline. Keep schedules in tact as much as possible.
- Celebrate milestones and keep rituals and traditions alive.
- Enlist children's help. Helping others while suffering from the deployment blues is a great distraction. And the benefit of helping others makes one feel good.
- Sleeping problems? Try a pillowcase with a hint of the departed soldier's cologne, a photo of the deployed member nearby, a nightlight, a soothing bedtime chat or story, etc.
- Screen the amount and quality of the media coverage.
- Help them relax by using their favorite stress busters: *crafts, video games, singing favorite rhymes and songs, biking, skating, sports, hobbies, dance, art activities, visual imagery, muscle relaxing exercises, music, pets, reading, exercise, writing stories or raps, E-mails, etc.*
- Have children assist with family planning - menus, grocery lists, trips, projects, etc.
- Help them release anger appropriately: *punch a pillow, beat up a stuffed animal, yell in a closet or into a pillow, rip up old magazines or newspapers, pound clay, finger paint, write a diary entry, talk it out, etc.*
- Remember that children sometimes regress in their behavior when under duress. They may revert to thumb sucking, bedwetting, baby talk, etc.
- Understand that kids cope differently with fear than adults. They may be pre occupied with checking their closet, behind the curtains or under their beds for things they have "heard or seen".
- Do not underestimate the value of humor. Look for times to offer a light touch.
- Reassure kids that those deployed as well as those at home love them. Think of ways to express this love and then use them often.

Cordially,



Bill Fisk

SES Counselor

Telephone # 09721-81895 or 354 6356

