

Teens

Teens (13-18 years old) will probably be very excited to see you again if there was a positive relationship before the deployment. If you are the parent of a teen, you already know that they experience mood swings and have mixed emotions. This is common for this age group, and their emotional instability may be increased with the stress of reunion. Teens may be reluctant to publicly express their emotions and more concerned with acting cool in front of their peers. Be sure to take time to find out what is going on in your teen's life. Be genuinely interested in them.

Teens (13-18 yrs. old)

- Share pictures, activities, schoolwork (praise what they have done)
- Share what has happened with you while you were gone
- Ask what has happened with them while you were gone
- Listen with undivided attention
- Respect their privacy and friends



Helpful Resources

AIRMAN & FAMILY READINESS CENTERS

The Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) serves as a one-stop information and referral center for single, married, active-duty, Guard, Reserves and retired members as well as their families. Airman & Family Readiness Center staff ensure military personnel and their families are connected with the appropriate services on and off base. For assistance contact your installation A&FRC.

MILITARY FAMILY-LIFE CONSULTANTS

Offer confidential consultations and training on:

- Daily Issues
- Depression
- Grief and Loss
- Marriage and Relationship Issues
- Stress and Anxiety

Contact your local Airman & Family Readiness Center for referral information.

Military OneSource

<http://www.militaryonesource.com>
(800) 342-9647

Military Homefront

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil>



Age-Appropriate Reintegration Activities



A Guide To Help Families Cope With The Stress And Challenges Associated With Reintegration And Reunion



Used with Permission by Headquarters
United States Army, Europe and Seventh Army, United States Army
Installation Management Agency,
Europe Region Office,
Heidelberg, Germany

Infants and Toddlers

Infants and toddlers may not remember you, so expect them to react to you as if you were a stranger. They may show fearfulness, fussy or clingy behavior. Patience is the key. Your goal is to participate in their daily routines. Predictability is important.

Infants (up to 12 months)

- Baths
- Feeding
- Dressing
- Changing diapers
- Infant massage
- Playtime (singing songs, playing peekaboo, stacking blocks)
- Nighttime routines such as reading bedtime stories

Toddlers (12 to 36 months)

- All of the routine, daily activities listed above
- Expand play and include more activities
- Reading activities (for example, going to the library together and pick out books or attend storytime)
- Drawing simple pictures
- Coloring
- Water play
- Puzzles
- Listening to children's music together
- Get down to their level (sit on the floor with them)

Preschoolers

Preschoolers are busy gathering information about themselves (who they are in the world of family, school and neighborhood) and what they can do. They are learning how to get along with others, learning rules about group behaviors and mastering physical activities.

Preschoolers (3 to 6 years old)

- Bike riding and anything involving walking, running; throwing or kicking a ball
- Active games such as tag, red rover, Simon says; playing with a hula hoop; jumping rope
- Reading chapter books (read one chapter each night)
- Making seasonal crafts, scrapbooks, sketchbooks, nature collections (leaves, pinecones, sea shells); using popsicle sticks; gluing buttons



School Age Children

School age children (7 to 12 years old) are likely to be very excited about your homecoming. They will typically want to spend a lot of time talking with you about school, friends, sports activities, their latest projects and other things they have been doing. Ask them to show you some of their old tests, homework assignments, artwork, or other things they have done (for example, Boy or Girl Scout projects, Sunday school papers).

School age (7 to 12 years old)

- Prepare a meal together, such as cooking Sunday breakfast or a simple supper meal, setting and clearing the table
- Assist with or check homework assignments
- Attend or assist with special school projects such as school plays, band concerts, bingo nights (participate with your child)
- Look at old photograph albums together. Choose vacation, baby or grandparent photographs and talk about the people in the pictures and the events depicted
- Take care of pets together (walk the dog, feed the fish, clean the gerbil cage)
- Do a family chore together (take a trip to the recycling center, grocery store, post office)
- Plan a day trip together for just the two of you
- Attend a school sporting event together or attend your child's sports practice or music, dance or art lesson
- Learn the rules together of whatever sport your child is playing
- Fix or build something together
- Play a board game together
- Go bowling
- Play mini golf

This flyer provides quick tips on common childhood reactions to reunions and ideas for activities that are age-appropriate. This flyer is not intended to be all inclusive, because different activities work for different families. Do what feels right for your family. Use the many resources in your community and on-line. They can provide information and support during the reintegration period. On the back of this flyer you will find a list of family oriented websites.