

# Quick Reference Guide for Serving Military Youth



Army Reserve Child & Youth Services 2007

*Dear Friends,*

Deployment is a challenging time for each member of a Family. Separation from a parent can be one of the more stressful events children could experience in their lives. Surrounding children with informed, trustworthy adults can help them cope more effectively.

Military children living in civilian communities are geographically dispersed from other military Families and may not be able to access services on an Active Duty Installation. These children and Families are relying on the people in their community to support them during trying times ...This person may be you!

Teachers, counselors, coaches, child care providers, after school program staff and others, need more information to deliver enhanced services to the military Families in their communities. This quick reference guide is not intended to answer all of your questions about military life and deployment. This guide is a starting point for you to begin learning about how deployment impacts military children – especially those connected to the Reserve Component of the Army.

This guide will help you support military Families in your community. Please take time to read about the Deployment Cycle and familiarize yourself with the symptoms of stress and healthy responses on pages 5 and 6. I encourage you to explore the websites highlighted at the end of this guide which will provide you with more valuable information.

Army Reserve Child & Youth Services Regional Coordinators are your primary contact for accessing services. As the experts on Army Reserve children, Regional Coordinators are available to provide you with more information on serving the military youth in your community.

We appreciate your steadfast support of our nation's military youth.

*Mr. C.R. Lee Ratliff*

Director  
Army Reserve Family Programs and Child & Youth Services

***Mission Statement:***

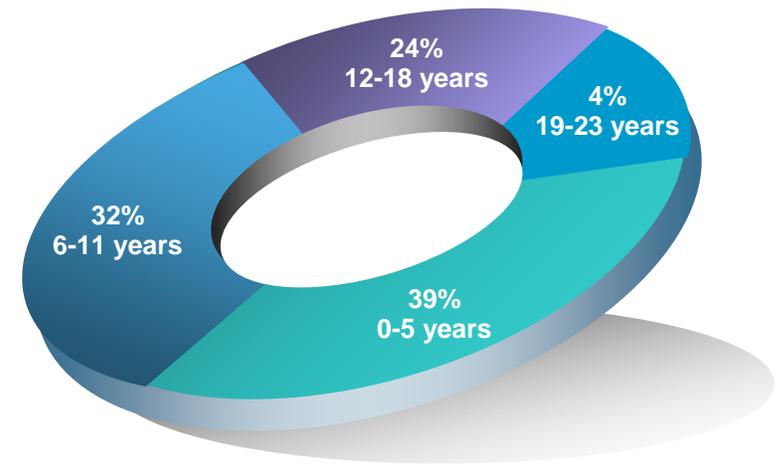
*To support the readiness and well-being of geographically dispersed Families by reducing the conflict between parental responsibilities and mission requirements.*

# THE ARMY RESERVE

The Army Reserve's mission is to provide trained and ready Soldiers. Most Army Reserve Soldiers have civilian jobs in their hometowns and attend training to develop their critical combat and support capabilities. Army Reserve Soldiers train at Reserve Centers that are located throughout every state, in Europe and the Pacific. These highly skilled Soldiers serve in roles such as military intelligence, transportation, civil affairs, medical, administration, aviation and military police.

In 2005, there were approximately 189,000 members of the Selected Army Reserve. This number is 29% less than it was in 1990; resulting in Soldiers being deployed more frequently and for longer periods of time.

There are nearly 156,000 dependents of Army Reserve Soldiers. Keep in mind, this number does not represent the siblings, extended Family members or friends of Soldiers who are also impacted by deployments.

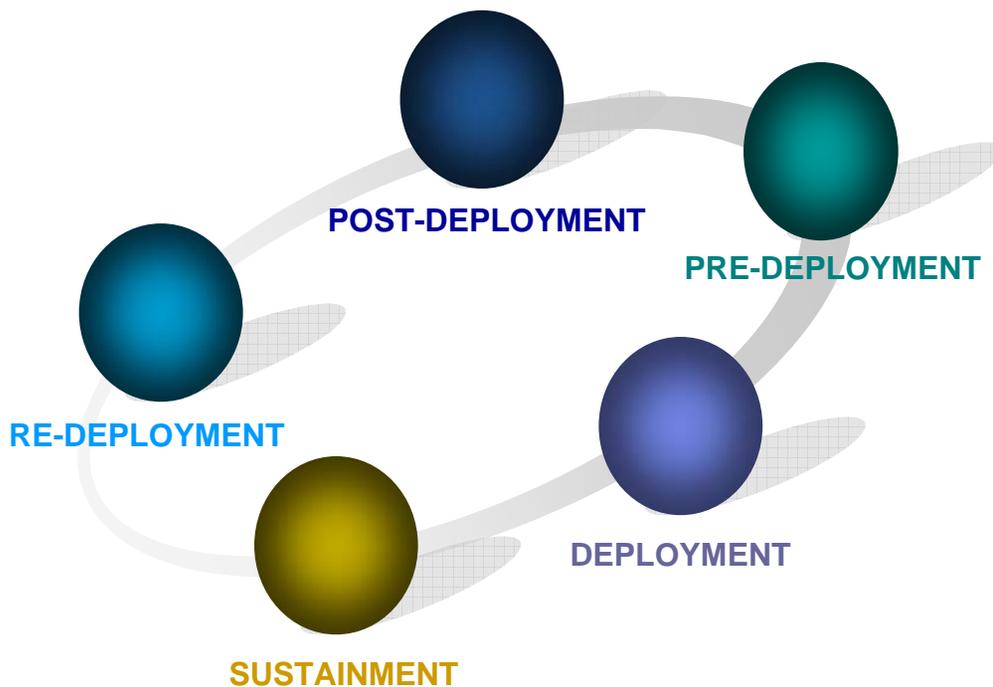


Age breakdown of Army Reserve Soldiers' dependents; approximately 56% are school-age youth.

# CYCLE OF DEPLOYMENT

The Emotional Cycle of Deployment is a concept often used to explain the distinct, emotional phases of a deployment lasting longer than six months. Each phase is characterized by an estimated time frame and specific challenges that must be overcome by each Family member. Failure to master these challenges can result in additional stress for the Families and for the deployed Service Members.

Educating Families and children normalizes the deployment experience and promotes positive coping. This knowledge may prevent potential crises.



## Pre-Deployment

This phase begins when the Service Member receives the official order for deployment and ends with the departure from home station, which could be in several weeks or a year. Anticipation of the loss creates mental/physical distance and can lead to arguments.

## Deployment

The first month of the separation is usually characterized by a range of emotions. The Service Member's departure creates changes in Family members' roles and relationships. Reports of difficulty sleeping, security issues and mixed emotions are normal.

## Sustainment

After the first month of separation the Family begins a time of establishing new routines and identifying sources of support. The majority of adult Family members who are adapting well are able to cope with the deployment. They often report feeling confident and in control. Children may have greater difficulty adjusting to the stress because they lack the experience to cope effectively. Take the time to help children learn additional coping strategies. This phase lasts until the next to last month of the deployment.

## Re-Deployment

The last month of the deployment is often one of anticipation and excitement. Mixed emotions are common because the Family has adjusted to a new sense of normal. Role negotiation will have to take place as the Family reunites. Dates of the return home can change many times which is frustrating and disappointing to the entire Family.

## Post-Deployment

It surprises some to learn that coming home can be a frustrating and upsetting part of the deployment process. Typically beginning with a short honeymoon period, awkwardness and emotional distance is expected as well. The time frame for this period can last for weeks or months. There are indications that this phase can even last much longer for some Families to readjust to life together.

## POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS OF DEPLOYMENT STRESS

- ◆ Unable to complete class assignments and activities; difficulty concentrating
- ◆ High levels of emotional response displayed by crying, intense sadness and/or temper tantrums
- ◆ Express violent or depressed feelings verbally or through drawings/play
- ◆ Intentionally hurt self or others
- ◆ Significant gain or loss of weight in a short time
- ◆ Discontinue care of personal appearance
- ◆ Possible alcohol/drug abuse problem
- ◆ Frequent absences from school
- ◆ Decline in performance and grades that does not improve over time
- ◆ Cognitive confusion
- ◆ Rebellion at home or in school; routinely disrupt the classroom at school or child care
- ◆ Confusion or inadequate understanding of events
- ◆ Feelings of abandonment by caregivers
- ◆ Behavior regression, reverting back to behavior typical of a younger child (i.e. bedwetting, thumb-sucking)
- ◆ Changes in sleeping or eating habits
- ◆ Frequent complaints of stomachaches or headaches

## SUGGESTED HEALTHY RESPONSES FROM ADULTS

- ◆ Become educated on the impact of deployment on children, youth and Families
- ◆ Maintain a predictable schedule with clear guidelines and consequences
- ◆ Expect changes and respond by being patient, understanding, caring yet firm while outlining clear academic and behavioral expectations
- ◆ Help children identify, accept and express what they are feeling
- ◆ Model constructive ways of dealing with strong or challenging emotions such as anger, grief, loss and sadness
- ◆ Be approachable, attentive and sensitive to children coping with separation; acknowledge the deployment and respond to questions with honest, age-appropriate answers
- ◆ Schedule time for children to communicate with their Service Member; email, draw pictures or write letters
- ◆ Promote resiliency by providing opportunities for meaningful contributions and participation
- ◆ Read stories about deployment and separation with young children to normalize their experiences and provide them with a way to express themselves

### Words of Caution:

This is not intended to be an all inclusive list of possible stress reactions children may show. Look for changes in behavior as symptoms of stress. Routine and structure are important for children who are coping with separation from a loved one. Do not punish children who are in need of reassurance. Use this time as an opportunity to teach more appropriate, healthier coping strategies. The following symptoms indicate a child is in acute distress and will need to be referred for immediate evaluation:

- Unfocused agitation or hysteria
  - Disconnection from peers and adults
  - Serious depression or withdrawal
  - Auditory or visual hallucinations
  - Any prolonged, major change from normal functioning that continues six weeks after the deployment
- Military Family members can contact Military OneSource for an immediate, confidential referral: 1-800-342-9647.



# AR CYS ONLINE

Do you want to find out what events are taking place in your community that support military youth? Are you looking for resources to better support a military child? Are you ready to read the latest research-based articles and studies regarding the effects of deployment on Soldiers and Families?

## Army Reserve Child & Youth Services Online is for you!

Visit the Teachers' Lounge on our website to find out about events, partnerships with community-based organizations and additional resources about the following:

- Staff Contact Information
- Child Care
- Summer Camps
- Army Reserve Teen Panel
- Local Events
- Professional Development Trainings
- Relevant Research Articles



[WWW.ARF.P.ORG/CYS](http://WWW.ARF.P.ORG/CYS)

# TEEN DEPLOYMENT CLASSES

The Teen Deployment Class was developed for youth ages 12 and older. The purpose of the class is to familiarize teens with what deployment is and what it means to their Families. This class can be accessed online at our website, conducted telephonically or delivered in person during unit activities.

Army Reserve Teens report feelings of isolation during a loved one's deployment. They may be the only student whose older brother is in Afghanistan or not know anyone else who has a mom stationed in Iraq. Educating teens about deployment helps prepare them to cope with separation from their loved one.

Participants may want to share the course materials with friends, younger siblings, educators and youth serving professionals. Anyone who is an influential person in their life could benefit from understanding the realities of having a loved one deployed.



[www.arfp.org/teenclasses](http://www.arfp.org/teenclasses)

Some of the topics addressed through The Teen Deployment Class include:

- Facts and tips about deployment
- Typical emotions and reactions during the deployment cycle
- Possible changes in the Family
- Staying in contact with Soldiers during deployment
- Finding support from friends, teachers, Family members, etc.

## RESOURCES



### Army Child & Youth Services

Provides quality, developmental programs to youth and Families on Army Installations. School Liaison Officers on each Army Installation, partner with area school districts to meet the unique needs of their military students.

[www.ArmyMWR.com](http://www.ArmyMWR.com)



### Army Reserve Child & Youth Services

Parents, educators, and youth development professionals should contact their state's coordinator for information. Learn about upcoming trainings, access to tools and resources, programs for youth and how you can get involved.

[www.ARF.org/cys](http://www.ARF.org/cys)

### National Guard Child and Youth Program

State youth coordinators support educators and Family members by helping to identify existing resources which could help them during deployment.



[www.GuardFamily.org](http://www.GuardFamily.org)

### Military OneSource

Resources on topics such as financial planning, parenting, couple relationships, deployment and reunion are available online. Service members can receive free, confidential counseling in their own communities. A toll free call puts Family members in contact with licensed professionals, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1-800-342-9647.



[www.MilitaryOneSource.com](http://www.MilitaryOneSource.com)

## & WEBSITES

### Operation: Military Kids

Training on the impact of deployment, delivered by the state team, is conducted for parents, professionals and concerned citizens. Organizations can request training by contacting their state liaison.



[www.OperationMilitaryKids.org](http://www.OperationMilitaryKids.org)

### Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)

Resources and trainings are available for parents and professionals on topics such as deployment, supporting children of the Guard and Reserve, trauma and loss.



[www.MilitaryChild.org](http://www.MilitaryChild.org)

### National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies

Helps military Families locate quality child care and after school care options and manages the Department of Defense child care fee assistance programs.



[www.NACCRA.org](http://www.NACCRA.org)

### ZERO TO THREE

A national, nonprofit, multidisciplinary organization concerned with the needs of very young military children. Materials are available for parents, caregivers and professionals supporting young children during stressors such as deployment and relocation.



[www.ZEROTOTHREE.org](http://www.ZEROTOTHREE.org)

Download additional copies of this Quick Reference Guide at [www.arfp.org/QRG](http://www.arfp.org/QRG)

***Information used in this guide was adapted from the following sources by Chad Sheldon and Sarah Jones, Army Reserve Child & Youth Services Outreach Liaison Specialists.***

2005 Demographics Report, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Military Community and Family Policy), under contract with Caliber.

Tough Topics Series Learning and Teaching Support, Mona Johnson, Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Ready, Set, Go! Training Manual; Operation: Military Kids; 4-H Army Youth Development Project

The Emotional Cycle of Deployment: A Military Family Perspective, LTC Simon H. Pincus, USA, MC, COL Robert House, USAR, MC, LTC Joseph Christenson, USA, MC, and CAPT Lawrence E. Adler, MC, USNR-R

Educator's Guide to the Military Child During Deployment, the National Traumatic Stress Network.