

## Helpful Deployment Tips for Kids

- For kids, recordings of **the soldier's** voice are very helpful. Kids get scared of the person who is absent sometimes or get mad and won't talk to them when they call. Send the soldier a tape recorder(they make cheap digital ones now that have a usb so you can just download them to your computer as well) and have him read a story or tell about something he sees there, i.e. wildlife, the food they serve, etc. Then, you make a recording of you, the kids, both of you, etc. and send it back to him. You can decide how long or short of a time you want to frequent the recordings.
- Decorate a box that stays in a central place designated for anything the kids and you want the soldier to have. Send a package every 2 weeks with everything the kids put in that decorated box. Sometimes it might be a picture, sometimes a new snack the kids found that they think the soldier would like, etc. The idea is that they knew exactly when the next care package is going to be sent and they can put their heart in it.
- Make a memory book for all the things the soldier missed while he was gone. Take a picture in different places. Put it on a page and write down what was going on, your thoughts, and what the soldier might have seen if he had been there. Once a month or once a week....whatever you feel like you can keep up with. Then punch holes in the pages and bind with a ribbon.
- Experts believe the cutouts are a useful psychological device, especially for children, to help cope with the stress of long absences. It helps the family stay connected and is a constant reminder that even though mom or dad is thousands of miles away, they are still a part of their lives. Visit <http://flatdaddies.com/> to find out more.
- When you get nearer to the soldier coming home (so it isn't demoralizing) get a jar with m/m's or pennies or something....one for each day that the soldier will be gone and let her take one out each night at dinner, family circle, bed time whenever works for you. Again....as you near, this helps to see things coming to an end....and the nice thing about a jar is IF the date keeps changing you can easily add a few more treats to the jar.
- Have a countdown. One way to do this is by making a paper chain with the date and number of days on it. Each day one of my children rips off a chain. On these chains are special things we have going on at home that day. Also,we have a small chalkboard that says, "Days 'till Daddy gets home" it helps the kids know that he will be coming home. (Although this must be flexible since days sometimes change.)  
*....Okinawa/Kadena*
- Send goodies in their luggage to be opened on certain days. If you are missing an important date or dates, send something like a note or little item for them to open that day. It's so fun for your children to get in on this too. My daughters try to hide notes in daddy's luggage for him to find later.  
*....from Okinawa/Kadena PWOC*
- Create a blog to post daily stuff that's happening in your family that your spouse can check out at their convenience. This will be a great way to keep your spouse connected to your everyday goings on plus you can send the link to your family and friends as well. You can post video clips of growing kids here, your new hair cut or what the puppy is up to. ....*from Okinawa/Kadena PWOC*
- Before the deployment create a small scrapbook, made out of inexpensive materials like a brown lunch bag, with your children. Include your favorite photos, journal some thoughts, quotes or scriptures and let the kids fill it up with fun colored paper and stickers. During the deployment you can create a scrapbook of your time apart and include some of your thoughts from your journal and pictures of things you do while separated!!  
*....from Okinawa/Kadena PWOC*