

Educator Tips for Supporting Military Connected Children

Educators as Partners

Educators and school personnel play a vital role in supporting military families. Educators can be valuable partners in easing some of the challenges military students face due to military lifestyle transitions, deployments and relocation.

When a Canadian Armed Forces member is deployed it is natural for their entire family to feel sad and worried about their deployed loved one. Changes in children's moods and behaviours are to be expected due to the stressors of deployment.

Teachers play an important role in the lives of military connected children because they can provide a sense of stability to students during a time when life at home may feel quite unsettled. It is important for teachers to communicate with the parents of military connected children in order to be informed about upcoming deployments, reunions or relocations. Furthermore, it is helpful when teachers communicate with parents to notify them of behavioural or academic issues their children may be experiencing that might be related to separation and/or deployment.

Overall, military families are resilient and adapt and cope with lifestyle transitions. Supportive and responsive school communities can assist military families by working in partnership to ensure successful adjustment.

Contact Information

Contact the MFRC if you want more information about the military lifestyle or if you would like an MFRC staff member to come and talk to your staff team.

- Additional information is available on the Esquimalt MFRC Website www.esquimaltmfrc.com
- MFRC 24 hr information line 250-363-2640 or Toll Free 1-800-353-3329

Tips to help students cope

- Listen and let students know that their feelings are normal reactions to deployment or relocation.
- Encourage students to express their feelings.
- Encourage students to communicate with their deployed parents through letter writing, emails and craft projects.
- Use and teach problem solving skills
- Provide and maintain regular routines. Structure provides students with a sense of stability and safety when experiencing stress or transitions
- Encourage strong school-family partnerships
- Refer families to the Esquimalt MFRC. A referral from a caring educator can make all the difference.
- Stay in touch with parents.
- Be patient and reduce student work load or provide mentoring support as needed.
- Be approachable, attentive, and sensitive to the unique needs of children coping with deployment and family separations.
- Reinforce age-appropriate anger management strategies.

Classroom Activities

- Track the deployed parent's journey on a classroom map.
- Read children's books that portray characters solving problems and coping with stressful events.
- Create a story book about the deployed parent, and invite the child to share their creation.
- Draw pictures, and write letters to send to the deployed parent.
- Refer parents to the Children's Deployment workshops available at the MFRC.



This on-line training tool provides an orientation and overview of the factors that affect military children including military culture, deployments and relocation. This resource was designed for ECE's and Teachers with students 5-12 years old.