

Quick Tips for Staying in Touch with a Deployed Family Member

When a family member has been deployed, communication can be difficult. Despite the distance between you, there are ways to keep in touch. The efforts you make to communicate with each other during a deployment can help both of you cope with the separation. Here are some suggestions for successful communication:

Communicating through the mail and the Internet

- *Be sure you have the right address* and find out about any rules for sending letters, packages, or e-mails. That way your communications will arrive on time and intact.
- *Take advantage of the Internet.* Send e-mails, photos, or set up a Web page or chatroom. Be creative! *Remember:* because e-mail is instantaneous, it's possible to send something you wish you could recall. Make sure you review what you write before sending it.
- *Be honest.* You don't have to hide the things that you're feeling. Try to express yourself clearly.
- *Let your family member know how much you appreciate his responses.* But try not to be disappointed if you don't hear back right away. There may be times when your family member may be too busy to respond quickly or may be in an area where mail can't be received.
- *Answer any questions he or she may have asked in an earlier message* to keep her from wondering or worrying.
- *Try to send frequent packages.* Ask your family member what is most needed. Also include special treats, photos, funny notes, newspaper clippings, and anything else that might make your family member smile.

Ways children can communicate with a deployed family member

- *Give your child her own set of pre-addressed envelopes and paper.*
- *Let your child find a way of communicating that works for him.* Some children may decide to send artwork, a special photo, or a recorded message instead of writing a letter or sending an e-mail message.