Children of Deployed Soldiers: Part 2 (At Home)¹
Allie Munch and Heidi Radunovich²

With nearly 2 million children in the US with parents currently deployed overseas, greater attention has been focused on the impacts of military life on families. Current studies have explored how deployments, especially to combat operations, impact children of all ages in a multitude of ways (Ternus 2010).

For example, although younger children may not fully understand why their parent has left, older children may think that the parent has chosen the military over their family. It is not uncommon for teenagers to become angry, act out, perform poorly in school, and lose interest in their usual activities. School-aged children are often aware of the threats associated with war and the potential impact on the safety of their deployed parent, and as a result may experience mood swings, sleep difficulties, poor attention spans, and problems at school.

Pre-school children often respond to the stress of separation due to deployment by regressing into behaviors that they had previously outgrown, such as becoming demanding, crying for attention, or increasing bedwetting. Babies and toddlers mainly react to the stress of their caregiver. In response to the anxiety or sadness of the parent left at home, infants may become more irritable and unresponsive or experience sleep disruption, feeding problems, and increased periods of crying.

However, families experiencing deployment can also be extremely adaptive and resilient. In fact, deployment can help bring a family closer and develop more meaningful

1. This document is FAR0138, one of a series of the Family, Youth and Community Sciences Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date February 2010. Reviewed October 2016. Visit the EDIS website at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.

2. Allie Munch, student; and Heidi Radunovich, associate professor, Human Development; Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension Gainesville, FL 32611.
relationships, increase shared responsibilities and family cohesiveness, and facilitate the development of internal strengths and coping mechanisms.

Listening, learning and living together, it’s the science of life. “Family Album” is a co-production of UF/IFAS Extension, the UF/IFAS Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, and of WUFT-FM. If you'd like to learn more, please visit our website at http://www.familyalbumradio.org.

To listen to the radio broadcast: http://radiosource.net/radio_stories/317.mp3

**References**

