

Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.



Click here to print a PDF of this article so you can start a conversation with your child

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

Learn more at:  
[DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://DrugFreeActionAlliance.org)

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## Start Talking!

Building a Drug-Free Future



Teachers - You are encouraged to share the following information with your parent network.

## Know! To Recognize and Support Military Families

Veterans Day was November 11th; an opportunity to thank all military personnel, past and present, for their service and sacrifice for our country and our freedom. As you share your appreciation, please extend your gratitude and recognition to all the military family members as well – for their sacrifice is also great.

There are currently more than one million school-age youth across the U.S. with one or both parents serving in the military. While these youth are dealing with all the usual adolescent worries, like their peers, they are faced with an additional set of life challenges that their nonmilitary peers may not understand.

Each military family's situation is unique, yet many children share common concerns:

- Parent's pending deployment
- Adjusting to life without mom or dad – sometimes for long periods of time
- Fearing for the deployed parent's safety
- Fearing for their own safety
- Frequent moves, new schools – saying goodbye to friends, having to start over yet again
- The spouse of the deployed parent may also be struggling – causing more anxiety for the child

Even with the excitement of the parent's homecoming, adjusting to mom or dad's return home can be difficult, as the house rules may change, the parent may have difficulty reintegrating back into civilian life, or the parent may seem "different" or "distant" to the child.

It is this long list of extreme stressors that place military youth at increased risk for school, family and peer-related emotional difficulties, and make them more likely than their nonmilitary peers to use alcohol and other drugs, to get in fights and to carry weapons to school. Research also shows that as the number of deployments and moves rise, so too does a child's odds for risky behaviors.



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Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free



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*\* There is also research to suggest that the deployment of a sibling can be as equally disruptive for a child as the deployment of a parent and may bring about similar negative feelings and behaviors.*

What can educators do to support military families and help them deal with their stress and concerns in positive ways? There are a variety of great resources to assist you, including an online educational toolkit through [StayingStrong.org](http://StayingStrong.org).

Within this toolkit, educators will learn how to create a resilience-building classroom community for military children (even if there is just one military child in your classroom); you'll learn how to assess a student's level of stress and identify what coping strategies and resources they are utilizing (if any); and you will learn how to become a key team member in helping to determine if your student's distress calls for a mental health referral.

This toolkit also includes parent tips you can share with the service member and his/her spouse to provide support for them and your student during all phases of deployment.

Another great online resource to for the parents and other caregivers of military children is called [Focus World](http://FocusWorld.org). Here they will learn how to help their children and themselves develop healthy coping strategies through emotional regulation, S.M.A.R.T. goal setting and effective communication.

Additional resources for military family support include: [Ohio Military Kids](http://OhioMilitaryKids.org), [FOCUS World](http://FocusWorld.org), [MilitaryFamily.com](http://MilitaryFamily.com), [Military One Source](http://MilitaryOneSource.org), [Real Warriors](http://RealWarriors.org), [Real Battles](http://RealBattles.org), [Real Strengths](http://RealStrengths.org).

Sources: [FOCUS: Family Resilience Training for Military Families](http://FocusWorld.org), [Medical Press: Children and siblings of deployed military more likely to use drugs](http://MedicalPress.com), [Military.com: Study: Military Children Prone to High-Risk Behavior in Wartime](http://Military.com), [StayingStrong.org](http://StayingStrong.org).

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