



4-H MILITARY FAMILY BOOK SHEETS

Supporting Military Families During Deployment with Books & Activities

4-H Military Family Book Sheets

The 4-H Military Family Book Sheets help parents and guardians find books and activities to help their children during various stages of their service members' deployments. Each book sheet contains a summary of the book, author and publication details, and activities that they can use with their children pre-, during or post-deployment to extend the message of the book. To find each book, check with your local library, bookstore or online retailer.

BEFORE READING:

- ▶ Show your child the front and back cover of the book. Ask him or her to guess what the book is about.

WHILE READING:

- ▶ Stop at any time if something comes up that you or your child would like to talk about.

AFTER READING:

- ▶ Spend time talking about the story.

Deployment involves moving an individual or military unit within the country or to another country. A mission or task might include training, supporting communities during times of disaster, helping foreign countries or fighting in a war. The many changes happening with each departure and return create difficulties for both service members and their families.

Supporting Michigan's Military Families

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension and Michigan 4-H are committed to supporting the more than 20,000 Michigan military children and youth, and their families, through programming and community education.

PROGRAMS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES INCLUDE:

- ▶ 4-H clubs on installations and in communities
- ▶ "4-H 101" and "4-H 201" training for military staff
- ▶ Operation: Military Kids (OMK) – supporting children of deployed soldiers
- ▶ Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK) – preparing teens to speak on military life and deployment
- ▶ Hero Packs – saying thank you to military children and youth
- ▶ Military 4-H Club Grants – supporting 4-H clubs for military youth and integrating them into county 4-H programs
- ▶ Community Awareness Training – educating the public on issues facing military families experiencing a deployment
- ▶ Special recognition events during Month of the Military Child and Month of the Military Family
- ▶ Educational and recreational events and opportunities for military families

Learn More!

Connect with us on Facebook: Search "Michigan Operation: Military Kids" and "Michigan 4-H."

For more information on supporting military families, visit the following websites:

- ▶ MSU Extension: (msue.anr.msu.edu)
- ▶ Michigan 4-H Youth Development: (4h.msue.msu.edu)
- ▶ 4-H Military Partnerships: (www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org)
- ▶ Operation: Military Kids: (<http://www.operationmilitarykids.org>)



4-H MILITARY FAMILY BOOK SHEET

The Invisible String

Title: The Invisible String
Author: Patrice Karst
Illustrator: Geoff Stevenson
Publisher: DeVorss and Company
Place of Publication: Camarillo, California
Date of Publication: 2000
Audience Age: 3 years and up

SUMMARY

The Invisible String helps children overcome the fear of loneliness or separation. In the book, children learn about an invisible string that connects loved ones.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

- Purchase string in various colors or use what you have around the house. Have each family member choose a color. Cut off a piece of string in the chosen color for each to keep. Each piece represents an invisible string that connects family members. Explain that during deployment, even though family members will be far apart, their invisible strings will always connect them. Have family members including the service member keep the physical strings in their pockets to remind them of the connection.
- Use a map and small pictures of family members to show where everyone lives. Add the service member's deployment location. On the map, use pieces of string and thumbtacks to connect all the family members together. Display the map on a wall where all family members can see it to remind them of the invisible string connection. Take a photo of the map for your service member to keep during deployment.

DURING-DEPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

- Make a photo display using string. Take pictures of events while your service member is gone. Print them out and use a hole-punch to make a hole in the top corner of each photo. Connect the photos by stringing brightly colored string or yarn through the hole of each photo. Hang the string photo display where all family members can see it. Do this as a family for events that the service member misses during the deployment. This will remind everyone of the invisible string connection during separation.
- Mail notes attached to a string to your service member. He or she can add the notes to the piece of string that symbolizes the invisible string. This will remind the service member of family connection.

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POST-DEPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

- Share the string photo display with your service member when he or she returns. Talk about the various events as a family and share your best memories. Share with your service member that the photos are on a string because although he or she wasn't present at the events, the invisible string allowed him or her to be there with the family.
- Have your service member share his or her favorite invisible string memory such as a note from the family, a phone call, email or picture.