



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.4hmilitarypartnerships.org)
- ▶ Operation: Military Kids: (<http://www.operationmilitarykids.org>)



4-H MILITARY FAMILY BOOK SHEET

While You Are Away

Title: While You Are Away
Author: Eileen Spinelli
Illustrator: Renée Graef
Publisher: Hyperion Books for Children
Place of Publication: New York, New York
Date of Publication: 2004
Audience Age: 3 to 7 years

SUMMARY

While You Are Away tells the story of three children with parents in three different branches of the military: the Navy, the Air Force and the Army. The children talk about the things they miss doing with their parents and wonder if their parents miss them.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

- Have your child and service member choose a special blanket, pillow or piece of clothing belonging to your service member that your child can keep during the deployment. When your child misses the service member, have him or her get the item out, hold it and talk about a favorite memory shared with the service member.
- As a family, make a list of your service member's favorite things such as snacks, books or colors. Save it for deployment to use when making care packages to send to your service member.

DURING-DEPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

- Write letters to your service member and include questions that your child would like to know the answers to such as "What do you eat for breakfast?" or "Where do you sleep?" Your service member can reply to the questions. After receiving the answers from your service member, talk with your child about the similarities and differences between what your child does and what your service members does.
- Instead of whispering in the wind as the little boy did in the book, make tin can telephones so that your child can tell private thoughts and feelings to your service member. Clean two tin cans such as soup cans. Cut one of the ends out of each of the cans. Attach a string to the other ends of the cans by poking a hole in the end. Your child can use these telephones to talk to your service member when lonely.

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POST-DEPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

- Create family placemats showing your favorite or important things. Use during meal times to help everyone reconnect with each other.
- Plan a special day out for your children and your service member around their favorite activities. Enjoy a day at the park or a trip to get ice cream. This creates time to reconnect around an activity they enjoy doing together.