

# Helping Children Cope with the Challenges of War and Terrorism

A GUIDE FOR CARING ADULTS AND CHILDREN

# HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH THE CHALLENGES OF WAR AND TERRORISM

Annette M. La Greca, Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychology and Pediatrics  
University of Miami  
Coral Gables, FL

Scott W. Sevin, Vice President  
7-Dippity, Inc.

Elaine L. Sevin, President  
7-Dippity, Inc.

Illustrations  
7-Dippity, Inc.

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## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Dear Parent or Caring Adult,

Recent events have raised anxiety levels in communities throughout the United States. The deployment of military personnel for war with Iraq and fears of terrorism have had a direct impact on the lives of many. Whether or not you support military action in Iraq, it will be important for you to assist your child in understanding and coping with the realities of war and terrorism.

*Helping Children Cope with the Challenges of War and Terrorism* contains activities that parents and caring adults can do together with their children. The activities are appropriate for most children ages 7 to 12 years, but may be adapted for older or younger children as well. We encourage you to adjust the activities and their pace for your child. Younger children (ages 6 to 8) may need extra help from an adult and may prefer to complete some activities by drawing rather than by writing. Younger or active children may also prefer working on one topic at a time; others may be able to complete two or more topics in one sitting.

Keep in mind that it is not necessary to cover every topic or complete every activity. Everyone reacts differently to a situation, and some children prefer to seek out more information than others. Although this book has been written in a suggested sequence, it is okay to skip ahead if you feel a section may be particularly helpful for your child.

There are 13 topics covered in this book, divided into five sections. For each topic there is an “Adult Page” on the left and a “Child Page” on the right. Some of the Adult Pages have “Joint Activities” at the bottom for adults and children to complete together.

➤ Each Adult Page has instructions and activities for adults -



➤ Each Child Page contains a parallel activity for the child -



Chapter I will help you “ease into” using the book and provides suggestions for talking with children about war and terrorism. Chapter II will help you identify your child’s feelings and the focus of their worries. Chapter III covers coping skills that will be helpful for most children. Chapter IV focuses on managing anger and understanding others. Chapter V contains information on developing a disaster plan, coping with a deployment and lists some helpful websites.

Find a quiet time to complete the activities with your child. Explain to your child that the activities in this book are informative and fun and will help them cope with feelings they may have about terrorism, war or their future.

With our best wishes,

Annette La Greca

Elaine Sevin

Scott Sevin

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## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Explaining war to children can be difficult. It is a subject that no parent or teacher wishes to address. Recently, many adults have expressed difficulty in bringing up the subject of war with their child. This chapter will help you and your child ease into a discussion of war and the current situation with Iraq.

One way to ease into the subject of war, and teach a child an important lesson at the same time, is to explain that people and countries try to first resolve disagreements peacefully through conflict resolution. Conflict resolution refers to a wide range of processes that are used to settle disagreements without the use of violence. Negotiation is an example of a nonviolent way of solving a disagreement. When people or countries negotiate, they try to settle a disagreement by talking with each other.

You can explain to your child that every person has different opinions and tastes. Because of this, it is common and normal for people to have disagreements. Tell your child that it is okay for them to disagree with another person, but it is *not okay* for them to use violence to solve a problem. They should find peaceful ways to resolve issues through conflict resolution. It may help to use a recent disagreement your child had with someone as an example.

Continue by explaining that nations, like people, also have disagreements. Stress that when countries have a disagreement, they usually solve their differences peacefully. Organizations such as the United Nations, for example, help countries solve their disputes in peaceful ways. The United States is a member of the United Nations, and first tries to settle a dispute through peaceful negotiations.

### **ADULT ACTIVITY: A Conflict Resolution Strategy**

Teach your child the strategy below. Remember, as a role model for your child, it is important that you “practice what you preach” and set a good example. Next time you have a disagreement with someone, use this simple form of conflict resolution that your child can emulate. A simple and effective strategy to use in resolving a disagreement is to:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>STOP</b>   | what you are doing and count to 10 very slowly.                   |
| <b>LOOK</b>   | at the other person involved. Focus your attention on him or her. |
| <b>LISTEN</b> | to each other’s side of the story about the disagreement.         |
| <b>THINK</b>  | together of a possible solution.                                  |

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Practice By Role-Playing**

You and your child can practice this strategy by role-playing. Think of a recent situation that occurred where you and your child disagreed about something. Practice resolving the disagreement using the four steps: STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and THINK. Explore other nonviolent ways to resolve disagreements and practice these as well. You can include other family members.



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

People are different, and each person has different opinions and feelings. Sometimes people get angry with each other because they feel differently about a situation, or because someone has done something they do not like. When this happens, people may have a conflict, or serious disagreement, with each other.

It is normal for people to disagree and to sometimes get angry and have a conflict with someone else. Have you ever been mad at someone for something they said or did? Below, draw or write about a disagreement you have had with someone that upset you. It may have been with a family member, a friend or a classmate. Explain what the argument was about and how you were able to settle the disagreement.

Countries, like people, can also disagree with each other. Most of the time, countries are able to solve their differences peacefully. They do this by talking with each other and coming up with a solution that both can accept. Talking is a form of conflict resolution, or a way of settling an argument peacefully without using violence. Below, write down some of the things countries argue about. Then, think of ways countries can settle these disagreements peacefully. Write these down as well.





## TALKING WITH CHILDREN ABOUT WAR

In order for a child to cope with war, it may help if he or she first understands the concept of war and why a particular military conflict is being fought. The next two sections will provide you with tips on discussing war and the current situation in Iraq with your child.

It is important for your child to understand that sometimes countries are unable to resolve their problems peacefully. When this happens, nations may go to war and fight to settle their dispute. Point out that war is a last resort. Nobody wants a war to occur, but sometimes it is the only way for nations to settle disagreements. Help your child to understand that war is very different from two people fighting, and that many people may get hurt or killed.

Discussing terrorism, war and other violent acts may increase your child's fears and worries. Because of this, it is important to "follow your child's lead" in bringing up the topic. Some children may be reluctant to talk about war. Do not force your child to talk if he or she does not wish to discuss a topic. On the other hand, some children may be worried or distressed that no one is willing to talk with them about war or terrorism. The most important thing is to create a comfortable environment for your child and to be a good listener. Then, when your child comes to you with questions or concerns about war (or other topics), this tells you that your child is ready to discuss the topic.

Below are some additional tips to help you discuss war with your child.

- Use words and language appropriate for your child. For example, when speaking to young children, use words such as "hurt" instead of "injured" or "car" instead of "vehicle."
- Be neutral. Do not judge or criticize your child. Make comments like these:  
*"That's interesting."*      *"Tell me more about it."*      *"What do you mean?"*
- Be truthful with your child. Provide honest answers and information. It's okay to let your child know how you feel about what is happening, but be careful not to scare or alarm your child.
- Explain that what is happening in Iraq is real – unlike violent movies, cartoons, video games or television programs. Help your child to understand that during war, real people are involved and some may die or get hurt.
- Be reassuring, but don't make unrealistic promises. You can tell your child that our government is doing everything it can to protect us, but do not promise that there will not be any more terrorist attacks in the United States.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Understanding War**

Depending on your child's age, reading a book or viewing a movie on war may help your child understand the complexities of war. Conducting research on past wars may also help (see activity on next page). **IMPORTANT:** We highly recommend you review the material first to make sure it is appropriate for your child. You do not want to expose your child to overly violent material that may be distressing. Examples to consider: *Patton* (PG); *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (G)



## WHAT IS WAR?

When countries have a disagreement, they first try to settle their problem by talking it over. Organizations such as the United Nations help countries solve their problems peacefully. Sometimes, countries are not able to solve their disagreements by talking. When this happens, countries may go to war and fight to settle their differences. Nobody wants to go to war. But sometimes countries may feel that it is the only way left to solve a problem.

War is very different from a fight you may see in school or in your neighborhood. In a war, many people fight and there can be a lot of destruction. Although it has not happened very often, the United States has fought in wars in the past. In the past 50 years, the United States has fought in the Gulf War, the Vietnam War and the Korean War. Many years ago, the Revolutionary War led to the United States becoming its own separate country.

### **ACTIVITY: Be A Successful Archaeologist**

Pretend you are an archaeologist. An archaeologist learns about people who lived in the past by finding objects they once used. A museum has hired you to find artifacts for an exhibit on wars involving the United States. Artifacts are objects made by people, such as shoes, coins and buttons. They are often left behind after a battle.

Choose a war that the United States has fought in and decide where you will dig to find artifacts from that war. To do this, you will need to locate where some of the war's major battles took place. These battlefields will be the sites where you will find the most artifacts.

A good archeologist always does research before selecting a place to dig. As part of your job, you will have to do some research on the war you choose and answer the questions below. You can go to a library or use the Internet to help you with your research.

Which war did you choose and why?

What were the dates the war was fought (when was the war)?

What country or countries did the United States fight against?

Where was the war fought (parts of the world)?

Where did you decide to dig for artifacts and why?

What artifacts do you think you would find?







## UNDERSTANDING IRAQ

Children understand events based on their own personal experiences. Most children are too young to remember the 1991 Gulf War. Because of this, they may have difficulty understanding the current Iraq situation. To help your child understand current events, it will be important for your child to learn the history behind the dispute.

Studying history is important in order to understand why a war occurs. Disagreements between nations frequently originate from previous disputes. The current conflict with Iraq is no different, as it can be traced back to the 1991 Gulf War. Discuss the Gulf War with your child. Make sure your child understands the main facts and events surrounding the war. Talk about why the Gulf War was fought, what countries were involved and what happened during and after the war. Be sure to go over the terms for peace, as these are important in helping to explain the reasons behind the conflict with Iraq.

### **ADULT ACTIVITY: Gulf War Timeline**

Develop a timeline of major events surrounding the 1991 Gulf War. Begin with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and end with Iraq's acceptance of the peace terms. When finished, go over the timeline and events with your child. This may help your child organize information about events leading up to the current conflict with Iraq.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Relevant Terms**

It will help if your child understands some of the common names, terms and phrases relevant to terrorism and war that are prominent in the media. Below is a list of "keywords" that you and your child can discuss. Keep in mind that some children may not want to discuss every keyword. This is okay. You can read these terms to your child and have them choose which ones they would like to discuss or know more about. If needed, look up information on the Internet or at a library.

Iraq	Demonstration	Special Operations Forces
Baghdad	Protest	CENTCOM
Saddam Hussein	Operation Enduring Freedom	Prisoner of War (POW)
Republican Guard	Afghanistan	Red Crescent/Red Cross
1991 Gulf War	President George W. Bush	United Nations (U.N.)
Operation Desert Storm	Vice President Dick Cheney	U.N. Security Council
Persian Gulf	Colin Powell	Weapons Inspectors
Middle East	Condoleeza Rice	U.N. Resolution 1441
Kuwait	Donald Rumsfeld	NATO
Qatar	Tom Ridge	Weapons of Mass Destruction
Al Qaeda	Operation Iraqi Freedom	Nuclear Weapon
Osama Bin Laden	Gen. Tommy Franks	Biological Weapon
Scud Missile	Deployment	Chemical Weapon
Patriot Missile	National Guard	Anthrax
Peace Activist	Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines	Smallpox



## UNDERSTANDING IRAQ

The United States and other countries fought against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War. Below, write a report or draw a picture about the Gulf War. Use another sheet of paper if you need more room.

The country of Iraq is very far from the United States. It is located in a part of the world known as the Middle East. Below is a map of the world. Place a star or a dot on both the United States and Iraq.





## UNDERSTANDING HOW YOUR CHILD FEELS

Parents and other adults play an important role in assisting children during a troubling period. Often, children who need assistance may not openly ask for help. Because of this, it is important that you are able to recognize signs of distress and understand what to do if a child needs help.

Everyone reacts differently to a situation. Feelings of stress, anger and fear are common after a traumatic event. It is also common for people to have a variety of reactions and to have some days when they are more upset than others. In general, most children will be able to cope with war when provided with some help from caring adults. Some children may need extra support. This may be the case for children who are in military families, have suffered previous trauma, have special needs or were previously exposed to war (e.g., children from war-torn countries who have immigrated to America).

Although stress is normal, it can become a problem for your child. For example, trouble concentrating can make it difficult for your child to focus on schoolwork, and difficulty sleeping may make your child more tired and irritable, leading to fights and arguments. If stress persists for an extended period of time or creates problems for your child, it will help to talk with a mental health professional.

If you understand how your child is reacting to things, you will have a good idea of how to help your child. To do this, it will be important for you to keep the “lines of communication” open. This means creating a comfortable time and place for your child to talk with you about feelings, fears or concerns. It will help if you pick a quiet place to talk, away from distractions. Also, try to have a regular time to talk, such as after school or before dinner.

Sometimes your child’s concerns may have to do with war or terrorism, other times they may focus on everyday events. The activities in this section will help you to identify how your child is feeling (Page 11) and the focus of their worries (Page 13). It is a good idea to occasionally repeat these activities, as your child’s feelings and reactions may change over time.

### **Some guidelines you can use when talking to your child about feelings:**

- Make sure you feel okay or comfortable about the topic before talking with your child. Discuss your worries or concerns with a trusted friend or family member.
- Listen to your child’s feelings rather than controlling the conversation yourself.
- Acknowledge and normalize your child’s statements by making comments like:
  - “*It sounds like you were very angry.*”
  - “*That part made you feel sad.*”
  - “*It’s okay to feel that way.*”
- Pay attention to behaviors that show your child has strong feelings, such as these:
  - Fidgeting or squirming
  - Poor eye contact (doesn’t look at you while talking)
  - Facial expressions that show anger, sadness or worry



# HOW I FEEL

How do you feel about what is happening in Iraq? Below are some pictures and words that describe how people have been feeling. Circle the faces that describe how you feel. You can circle more than one. At the end are two blank faces that you can fill in with feelings that are not listed.



Afraid



Angry



Cautious



Confident



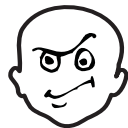
Confused



Curious



Disappointed



Disbelief



Disgusted



Enraged



Frustrated



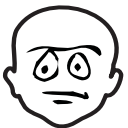
Guilty



Happy



Horrified



Hurt



Lonely



Miserable



Nervous



Optimistic



Sad



Scared



Shocked



Surprised



Undecided



Upset



Worried



Below is a Stress Scale. It will help you measure how you feel. Read the scale first. Then, starting from the left side, color in the scale to the number that best describes how you are feeling. The number 1 means you feel very little stress. The number 10 means you feel a lot of stress and need some help.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not At All		A Little		Some		A Lot			Too Much Stress

Stress Scale





## IDENTIFYING FEARS AND WORRIES

All children and adults have worries. Worries are a normal part of life. As time and events unfold, often the degree and focus of our worries change. For example, prior to September 11, 2001, most Americans were not worried about a terrorist attack occurring in the United States. Afterwards, however, many children and adults expressed fears of future attacks and about being in or around tall buildings and airplanes. Such fears and worries are normal reactions to violent or traumatic events.

War can bring about new fears and anxieties that may not have been present beforehand. For example, children with a parent in the military who has been called to duty may worry about the parent's safety (see Page 32). War can also increase fears that already exist (e.g., fear of another terrorist attack). In order for you to be able to help your child cope with his or her worries, you must understand the kinds of things your child worries about.

The activities in this section will help identify some of the fears and worries you and your child may have and will provide positive ways to cope with them. Keep in mind that although your child may express fears related to war or terrorism, he or she may be worried, or even more concerned, about things unrelated to these subjects. Since the focus of your child's worries may change, it is a good idea to repeat this section periodically.

### **ADULT ACTIVITY: What Are Your Child's Worries?**

Do you know what your child worries about? Often, parents are surprised by the kinds of things that bother their child or may underestimate the degree of a concern. While your child completes their activity on the next page, make a list of the things you think your child worries about. Highlight the ones you think bother your child the most. When finished, compare your answers with those of your child. Were you correct?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

### **ADULT ACTIVITY: Identify Your Worries**

Children, especially young children, can “learn” about potential sources of fear and worry by observing the adults around them, such as their parents and teachers. Because of this, it will help if you identify the things you worry about and that you might unintentionally communicate to your child. On a sheet of paper, write down the fears and worries you currently have. You can divide these into subjects, such as worries about war, the economy and your family. When you are finished, highlight the things that bother you the most.



## THINGS I WORRY ABOUT

Everybody has worries. Sometimes a worry can make you feel troubled or upset. This is because you “think” something bad might happen. For example, you might worry that you will get a bad grade on your homework, or that you will get a shot when you visit the doctor’s office. Below, write down or draw some of the worries that bother you. Some worries may upset you more than others. Write or draw these as well. Circle or place a star next to the fears or worries that bother you the most. When you are finished, talk about your worries with a parent or other trusted adult.

**Worries that bother me a little:**

**Worries that bother me a lot:**

**Are there any worries about the world that bother you? If so, list them here.**



## COPING WITH FEARS AND WORRIES

Although fears and worries are common and normal, they can become a problem. Learning how to cope with them is important. In general, talking to someone, gradually facing fears, and finding practical solutions are all positive ways of coping with fears and worries.

Talk to someone – Sometimes worries lessen when a child has someone to share them with. Help your child identify “worry friends” they can talk to when they feel worried or scared (see Page 15). List people in school (e.g., school counselor, teacher), at home (e.g., parent or older sibling) and in the community (e.g., clergy member, hotline). Keep a list of your child’s worry friends’ names and telephone numbers on a piece of paper, and let your child carry a copy. This may help your child to feel better.

Gradually face fears – If a child is able to face fears in a gradual and safe manner, he or she may become less fearful. For example, a child who is anxious about being left alone with a babysitter while a parent leaves the house may become less fearful if a parent does leave and return home safely on several occasions. Reward your child for facing fears. Do not reward your child’s fears by letting your child avoid school or chores, or by giving in to your child’s wishes because of fears and worries.

Find practical solutions – Often a worry can be lessened or overcome by thinking of a practical and simple plan to cope with that worry. For example, if your child is worried about being late for the school bus, try to think of ways to help your child cope with this worry. You can wake your child up earlier or save time by having them pick out their clothes and deciding what they want for breakfast the night before. These simple solutions will help your child to feel better about being on time for the bus. See the activity below for creating worry flash cards.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Worry Flash Cards**

Developing a coping plan for each fear or worry can be a fun activity. Obtain some blank notecards. On one side, have your child write down a fear or worry that is particularly bothersome (see child activity on next page). Then, together, think of positive things your child can do or think of to feel better. Write these positive solutions on the back of the card. Your child can memorize the cards or carry copies with them. See the example below.

Front (WORRY):

Back (SOLUTIONS):

Getting a bad test score

1. Leave more time to study.
2. Get a tutor.
3. Join a study group.



## COPING WITH MY WORRIES

Sometimes worries can be very upsetting. When a worry upsets you, it is important that you talk with a parent or other adult about it. By talking about the things that bother you, you will be better able to deal with them. Who can you talk to about your fears or worries? Think of some “worry friends” and list them below. A “worry friend” is someone you trust and can talk to when you feel upset or worried. Choose two adults at home, in your school and in your community who can be your “worry friends.” Ask a parent or other adult to help you with this activity.

### My Worry Friends:

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Community: \_\_\_\_\_

Another way to help you cope with your worries is to think of a solution to them. Choose five of the worries you listed on Page 13 and list them below. Then, think of ways that will help you feel better about that worry. For example, if you are worried about a bad test score, you can make extra time to study. When you are finished, show your answers to an adult and use them in creating Worry Flash Cards.



My WORRY



My SOLUTIONS



1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

4.

4.

5.

5.

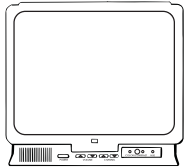




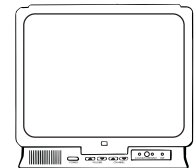
## LIMITING EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE

Recent wars involving the United States have not been fought on American soil. The same is true with the current conflict with Iraq. Because of this, most American children will not personally experience the trauma and destruction that war can bring. However, your child can still be exposed to upsetting scenes of war through television, in print or on the Internet. Children who witness a distressing event or disaster on television can become distressed, even if they are far from the event. For example, children and adults as far away as Arizona and California were distressed by watching the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on television, even though the attacks occurred in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania.

Limiting your child's exposure to upsetting images of war, terrorism and violence will be particularly helpful for your child. This is especially important for children who have a parent or relative in the military or who have experienced recent trauma. Upsetting images may lead to fears, bad dreams and trouble sleeping. Limit television shows that include war-related programming, particularly the news and special programs about war. It will also help to limit television shows, movies, magazines, Internet sites and video games that have a lot of violence.



### ADULT ACTIVITY: Create A Sensible TV Plan



When there is a conflict, the media will be focused on news about the war, homeland security and terrorism. It will be difficult to prevent a child from viewing at least some upsetting images. With this in mind, it will be helpful to develop a plan to promote positive television viewing habits. This will help reduce your child's exposure to upsetting images in general and will assist you in identifying what your child watches.

On the next page is a log for your child to use to keep track of the television programs they watch. Photocopy the page and have your child fill one out for each day of the week. Review your child's answers and use them to help formulate a "Sensible TV Plan."

**LIMIT** – the amount of television your child watches. Set a pre-chosen period your child can watch television each day. Set a good example by limiting your own viewing.

**PLAN** – with your child what he or she will watch. Use your child's answers from the activity to help your child decide. If you are unsure of a program's rating, go to <http://tv.yahoo.com> or [www.mediafamily.org](http://www.mediafamily.org) for a ratings guide.

**PARTICIPATE** – in watching programs with your child (or watch at least one episode of a series). Periodically ask your child if he or she has any questions or concerns about a program. If a program becomes upsetting, turn it off and talk about it.

**ENCOURAGE** – your child to participate in fun activities other than watching television, such as sports, reading or card games.





## NORMAL ROUTINES

War, like other traumatic events, can shake people's feelings of safety and security. During war or threats of terrorism, children may be especially concerned about safety and security. One of the ways to help a child cope with feelings of insecurity is to keep a child in his or her normal routines.

Normal routines provide children with a sense of comfort, as their days are more predictable. Keeping your child in a familiar environment will help your child feel safer and more secure. Normal activities and routines will also help your child gain a sense of control over their lives by providing a distraction from worries about war, terrorism or the safety of loved ones.

When a country is involved in war, everyday activities and routines may be disrupted. This is of particular concern for military families when a loved one is called to duty, as their lives will be affected. To help a child cope with these changes, it will be important to keep a child in as normal a routine as possible. This may be a difficult task, but careful planning can make the transition easier. If necessary, make arrangements with family and friends so that your child will be able to continue normal routines, such as attending sporting events, meetings, clubs, activities with friends and other outings that he or she normally enjoys.

### ADULT ACTIVITY: Chart Your Time

In times of stress, it is very important that you monitor your own routines as well as your child's. Parents need to "take care of themselves" to enable them to care for their children and loved ones. For one week, keep track of your daily activities. On a sheet of paper, write down each activity you do and the amount of time you spend doing it. Break down your activities into the following categories: Children, Home, Family (other than children), Friends, Work and Self. In the chart below, write down the amount of time you spend daily in each category. At the end of the week, calculate the total number of hours spent.

	Children	Home	Family	Friends	Work	Self
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						
<b>Total hours:</b>						

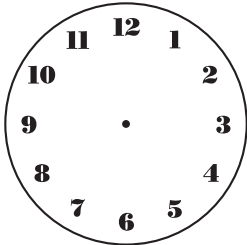
How much time are you spending relaxing or doing activities for yourself? You may find that you need to have more time for yourself. If so, adjust your normal routines. Make extra time to relax, spend time with a friend or loved one, or have more fun. If you are feeling relaxed and in control, you will be better able to cope with your own concerns or worries and assist your children and family with theirs.



# MY ROUTINES

Many kids have a schedule that they follow and activities that they normally do each week. For example, you may wake up for school, go to certain classes and get home at about the same time each school day. Other times, kids do special activities like go on vacation or celebrate holidays or birthdays.

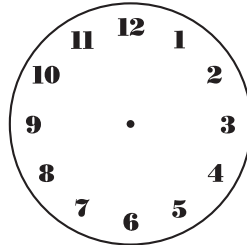
Below is an activity to help you identify your normal routines. You may want to have an adult photocopy this page so you can write one out for each day of the week. Under each small clock, write one activity you normally do each school day. Then, fill in the clock hands to show at what time you normally do that activity. When you are finished, fill in the big heart in the middle with favorite activities you like to do with your friends or family, or by yourself.



Wake up

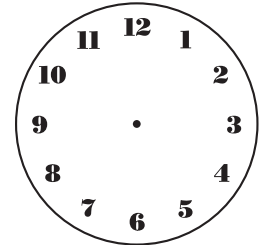
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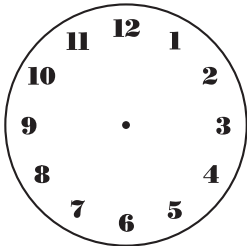
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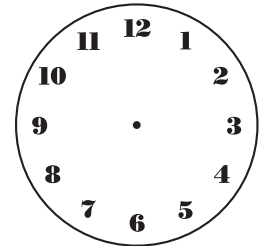
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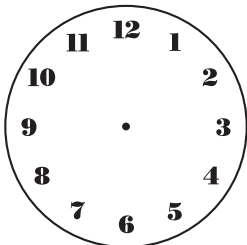
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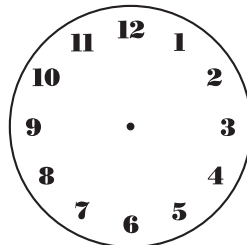
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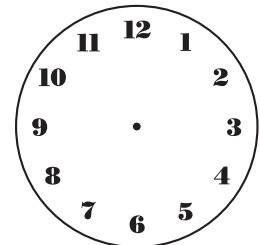
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## HELPING OTHERS

This is an important time to help those in need. Helping others can be a positive way for you and your child to cope with feelings. Helping also provides an excellent opportunity to teach your child a lesson about the virtues of compassion, volunteering and doing good deeds.

Helping can be done in many ways and forms. It can be as simple as opening a door for somebody, making a donation to a local charity, volunteering time at a Veterans Hospital, donating goods to a shelter or assisting your child with his or her efforts. Be creative; use your talents and strengths to think of ways to help others, but remember to stay within your limits. Below are some suggestions on ways you and your child can help during this conflict.

### VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering your time to assist a worthy cause or help others is an excellent way to support your community. Getting started is easy. Research different community service and charitable organizations in your community and choose several that interest you. Then, give them a call. Most organizations would love to have assistance and should be able to work around your schedule. Try to encourage your child to volunteer as well by choosing projects that you both can work on together.

If you have a friend who has been affected by the military deployment, you can volunteer your time to assist with chores, errands and babysitting. Many local law enforcement agencies, fire departments and hospitals have been affected by the call-up of military reservists as well and might need some extra help. You can also consider volunteering for your child's school or a local house of worship.



### DONATING

You and your child can also help by donating to a local charity. Children can donate items such as toys, clothes, dolls, books, comic books, sports cards and other items. Adults can help by donating money, goods or services. Your business can even help out by donating in-kind services or goods to the community. For example, if you own or work in a restaurant or grocery store, have the business donate free snacks or drinks to volunteers working on a community service project.

To find a volunteer opportunity in your community, go to:  
**[www.volunteersolutions.org](http://www.volunteersolutions.org)**



## HOW I CAN HELP OTHERS

Many people like to help others in their community. Perhaps you would like to help as well. There are many ways you can help. You can do something as simple as opening a door for somebody, completing an extra chore at home or volunteering to help a teacher. You can even join a service club and participate in community service projects.

### How Can You Help?

Below, list things you can do to help at home, in your school and in your community. When you are finished, go over the list with an adult and choose which ones you would like to do. You can even add some of these to your normal routines (see Page 19).

#### HOME

#### SCHOOL

#### COMMUNITY

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

### Thanking Those Who Help

Some people help others every day. Below, list some of the people in your community who help others (such as a doctor, a fire fighter or a school counselor). When you are finished, choose one or two people from your list and write a letter thanking them for helping you and others in your community. You can mail your letter if you wish.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



## BEING PHYSICALLY FIT

To cope with stress, it helps to be in good physical condition. A high degree of stress may cause physical symptoms such as tension headaches, acne or stomach problems, and over time can lead to a weakened immune system. These physical changes can make it even harder for a person to cope with stress.

If your child is physically healthy, then he or she will be better able to cope with the stress that war or terrorism can bring. In fact, everyone does better when they feel healthy and strong. Pay attention to your child's diet and exercise routines. Make sure your child eats properly and stays physically active. Encourage your child to participate in sports, walking, exercise and other activities that promote physical fitness. These activities will help your child stay in good physical condition and provide a welcome distraction from thoughts of war or terrorism. Also, try to keep a supply of healthy foods in the house and limit the amount of junk food your child eats. For more information on how to eat healthy, you can find the Food Guide Pyramid at [www.usda.gov/news/usdakids/food\\_pyr.html](http://www.usda.gov/news/usdakids/food_pyr.html).

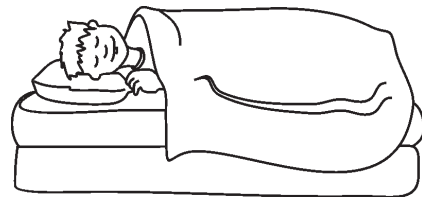
On the next page are exercise and healthy-eating charts for your child to complete. Photocopy the page before your child begins so that he or she can use it again in the coming weeks. You can reward your child (e.g., movie tickets, increased allowance) for successfully completing the chart each week.

### **ADULT ACTIVITY: Monitor Your Child's Sleeping Habits**

Sleep plays an important role in helping a child to feel healthy and strong. A child who gets a good night's rest will be better able to take on the mental and physical challenges that each day brings. For the next few weeks, keep track of how many hours your child sleeps each night. Note if your child has trouble falling asleep, has bad dreams or often wakes up in the middle of the night. If your child feels particularly tense or worried before going to bed, has frequent nightmares or if there is a change in his or her sleeping patterns, it will help to have your child relax before bedtime.

Some suggestions to help your child relax are:

- taking a warm bath before bed
- practicing relaxation exercises
- counting sheep
- reading a book/listening to a story



### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Participate In Physical Activities With Your Child**

Children may be more encouraged to participate in sports or other physical activities if they have a partner to do them with. Try to choose at least one day out of the week (preferably more) to participate in fun, physical activities with your child. For example, you can ride bikes together, hike a trail, go jogging or play sports such as tennis, basketball or racquetball. You can even create your own exercise and healthy-eating charts (similar to your child's charts on the next page) and together, complete your activities. Ask another family member or friend to assist if you are unable to participate.



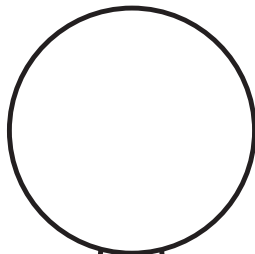
# BEING PHYSICALLY FIT

Everyone feels better when they are healthy and strong. A healthy body can handle stress and other problems better than a sick one. To keep your body healthy, you will need to exercise and eat healthy foods.

Below are two charts for you to complete. The Exercise Chart will help you keep track of your physical activities for one week. You should try to exercise at least one hour each day. The Healthy-Eating Chart will help you keep track of the nutritious foods you eat. Each day that you successfully complete an activity, give yourself a star. At the end of each week, hand the charts in to an adult.

Draw or place your picture here →

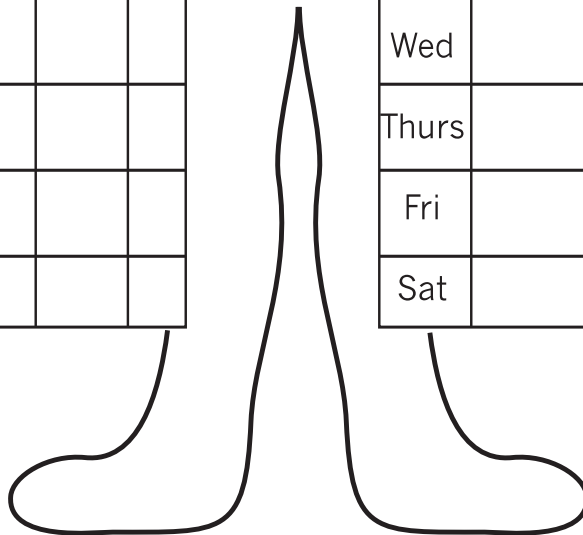
\_\_\_\_\_ Name



Exercise Chart			
Date	Activities	Time	★
Sun			
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thurs			
Fri			
Sat			



Healthy-Eating Chart		
Date	Healthy Foods	★
Sun		
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thurs		
Fri		
Sat		







## PROMOTING RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING

During times of conflict, some people may be at risk of becoming targets of discrimination or harassment. To prevent such harmful acts, it will be helpful to promote respect and understanding and assist your child in learning to control angry emotions (see Page 28).

Children often learn both good and bad qualities from their parents and other significant adults in their lives. This is why it is important for you, as a role model, to set a good example for your child in what you say and do. To do this, make sure your words and actions promote respect and avoid making negative statements that stereotype certain people or groups of people. Be very clear to discourage any ethnic slurs, taunts or jokes expressed by your child, and stop any bullying or harassment immediately.

On the next page are activities for your child to complete. They are intended to promote respect and understanding by helping your child think before they speak or act. Most children, particularly young children, will need some assistance. Before your child begins these activities, discuss the concepts of “respect,” “cultural understanding” and “sensitivity” with your child.

### Use the following guidelines:

Respect: When your child displays respect, they are considerate of another’s rights and opinions.

Cultural Understanding: When your child demonstrates cultural understanding, they are accepting of others whose race, religion, opinions or habits are different from their own.

Sensitivity: When your child shows sensitivity, they are mindful not to insult or upset another by actions or words.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Phrases That Show Respect**

There are some statements that show respect to all people, regardless of their age, race, religion or cultural background. Together with your child, think of some “phrases that show respect” and write these down. Your child can practice using them by role-playing. Take turns pretending to be in different situations and let your child use the phrases. Role-playing is an excellent way to promote good behaviors. You can even learn how to say these phrases in other languages. Below are some examples.

“Thank you.”

“Please.”

“Excuse me.”




## PROMOTING RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING

America is a country where all people are free to say how they feel about something or someone. When you express how you feel, you are giving your opinion. Sometimes, your opinion may be different than someone else's. This is okay. Everybody feels differently about things. It is important to learn to be considerate and respectful of other people's opinions, even if you disagree with them. You should also be respectful of others by being careful not to say or do anything that may hurt somebody else's feelings.

Below are several phrases that are not respectful of others. Rewrite each sentence so that it means the same thing, but is more respectful. The first one has been done for you. Ask an adult for help if you need it.

### Less respectful

### More respectful

What you said is stupid.	→	I do not agree with you.
Your hat is ugly.	→	_____
Give me that pencil.	→	_____
You talk funny.	→	_____
Get out of my way.	→	_____
What are you looking at?	→	_____

List three statements that people have said to you that hurt your feelings. Explain why.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List three statements that you made that may have hurt other people's feelings. How could you have said them differently and been more sensitive to their feelings?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS

Conflict provides an opportunity to talk about issues of diversity and discrimination with your child. It also provides a chance for adults to teach children about democracy and how unique America is.

America is known as the great “melting pot.” People have traveled from all over the world to live in the United States. In many cases, they have come seeking freedom and a better way of life, escaping from religious, political or economic persecution. In every community, there are people with different backgrounds and cultures. This diversity is what makes our nation strong.

Because our communities are diverse, your child should be considerate of others and careful that their actions do not offend or upset anyone, particularly during times of distress or war. Explain to your child that no matter where a person is from or what their beliefs are, everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

When discussing diversity with your child, point out that groups of people should not be judged by the actions of a few. You can explain that after the September 11 terrorist attacks, many innocent people were hurt by others simply because they looked like, dressed like or came from the same parts of the world as the September 11 terrorists. Help your child understand that, like in America, people in Iraq have different opinions and may disagree with their government and each other.

It will help your child to cope with some of their fears, feelings and prejudices if he or she is exposed to other cultures and ethnicities. Often, a child is afraid of people or things they are not familiar with or do not understand. Assist your child in learning more about the people of Iraq and the Middle East, and of other cultures around the world. They should also learn about different cultures in their own community.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Diversity In Your Community**

Assist your child in identifying the different cultures present in your community. Then, think of ways you can expose your child to these different cultures. Attending a cultural fair or exhibit is a good start. Taking your child to different restaurants and introducing them to various ethnic foods may also be helpful. You can collect items or take pictures representing each culture you come in contact with and place these in a scrapbook.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Discrimination And War**

There have been times in American history when we have not set good examples for our children. During World War II, for example, internment camps were set up in this country to house Japanese Americans. This is an example of wartime discrimination that must not be repeated. Help your child to understand the history of discrimination in war by choosing and discussing an incident or policy that promoted intolerance or prejudice. If possible, have your child think of ways the injustice could have been properly corrected.



# CULTURAL TREE

America is a land of diversity. People have come from all over the world to live in the United States. Each person has brought along the values, beliefs and traditions that have shaped their families for generations. This blend of cultures is what makes America special. Where are your family and friends from? Below is a cultural tree. Fill it out as best you can by asking some of your family and friends where they were born. Use another sheet of paper if you need more room. How many different cities or countries were you able to identify?

What is your given (first) name? \_\_\_\_\_

Who were you named after? \_\_\_\_\_

What does your name mean? \_\_\_\_\_

Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

Name  
Place of birth

Name  
Place of birth

Name  
Place of birth

Name  
Place of birth

Name  
Place of birth

Name  
Place of birth

Name  
Place of birth

Name  
Place of birth

Name  
Place of birth

Name  
Place of birth



## COPING WITH ANGRY FEELINGS

After a traumatic event, it is common for people to experience a range of emotions. Some common reactions to acts of violence, such as terrorist attacks or war, include anger, rage and hatred.

Sometimes, feelings of rage and hatred can lead to acts of violence and discrimination. This is because some people *think* that by “fighting back” they will feel better about what happened or will feel in more control of a situation. They are wrong. Committing acts of violence and discrimination are not constructive ways to cope with angry feelings, and can only make bad situations worse. This is why it is important for you and your child to learn to control angry emotions and find positive ways to cope with them.

There are many ways to cope positively with angry feelings. Encourage your child to talk through angry feelings with an adult, to properly channel their anger (e.g., through writing or painting), and to express how he or she feels by acting out their emotions through role-playing. Practicing relaxation techniques and other conflict resolution strategies are also positive ways of coping with anger.

It will help if you are able to recognize signs of anger in your child. Children express anger physically (e.g., grits teeth, becomes red in the face), emotionally (e.g., becomes anxious, irritated) and behaviorally (e.g., yells, becomes abusive). Generally, each child has his or her own ways of expressing anger. If you learn to recognize these patterns, you will be able to quickly intervene and help your child cope in a positive manner. It will also help to recognize any patterns in your own response that may encourage your child to cope poorly with angry feelings.

### **ADULT ACTIVITY: Chart Your Child’s Angry Outbursts**

Create a log and keep track of your child’s angry outbursts. Take notes on what happens before, during and after each angry episode. Pay particular attention to the ways in which your child expresses his or her anger and how you respond to the angry outburst.

#### Example:

Date: Sunday, January 12, 6:30PM  
Event: Johnny got angry at dinner because I turned the television off while he was eating.  
Reactions: First he got red in the face, then started yelling and then refused to finish his meal.  
Intervention: I told Johnny I understood why he was upset, but that his behavior was inappropriate.  
Resolution: Did not allow Johnny to have dessert.

Do you notice any patterns in your child’s behavior or reactions? If so, the next time your child starts to react angrily, intervene immediately and help your child to calm down. Try to first acknowledge your child’s angry feelings and then consider using one of the positive coping methods mentioned above. Remember, it is okay for your child to be angry. However, if your child’s actions go beyond what you feel is acceptable, it is okay to use appropriate discipline.

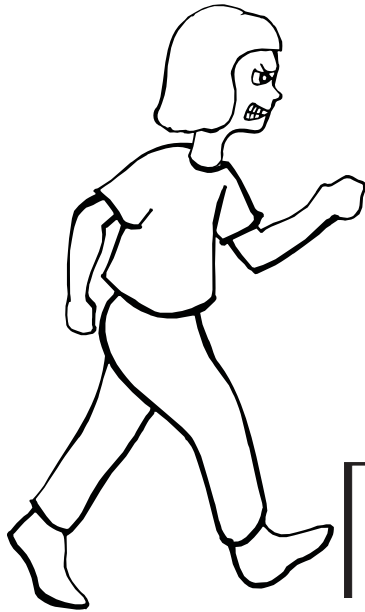


## ANGRY FEELINGS

Sometimes when bad things happen, people feel mad or angry. It is okay to feel this way, but it is not okay to take your angry feelings out on somebody else. Below are some activities that will help you control your anger.

### **ACTIVITY 1: STEPPING UP TO ANGER**

When you start to feel angry, follow these simple steps:



Think about what you can do to feel less angry without hurting anyone or anything else.

Slowly count backwards from 10 to 1.

Take three deep breaths **very slowly**.

Stop what you are doing and close your eyes.

### **ACTIVITY 2: EXPRESS HOW YOU FEEL**

Next time you feel angry, draw or write about how you feel below. Explain why you are angry and what you can do to feel less angry about the situation (without hurting anyone or anything).



## FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

A disaster is a large-scale event that can cause great destruction and death. Some disasters are caused by forces of nature that cannot be controlled. These are known as natural disasters. A natural disaster can be caused by an event such as a hurricane, tornado, earthquake or flood. Some disasters are human-made, but can be just as deadly as a natural disaster. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks are an example of human-made disasters where almost 3,000 people lost their lives and many buildings were damaged or destroyed. Many disasters can occur without warning. Being prepared and knowing what to do if a disaster occurs can save the lives of you and your family. This may also help your child cope with fears or worries he or she may have about safety or getting separated during a disaster.

**Create a family disaster plan.** First, obtain information on how to prepare for disasters that may occur in your area. You can do this by contacting the Department of Homeland Security at 800-237-3239 or by going to the Department's website at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov). Once you have obtained this information, hold a family meeting and develop your family's disaster plan. Make sure that everyone knows *what to do*, *where to go*, and *whom to call* if a disaster occurs. Practice or review your plan every six months.

When creating your plan, identify multiple escape routes from your home and select an area outside where you and your family will meet. It is also a good idea to have a designated meeting place away from your immediate home area. Choose a place that everyone in the family will be familiar with and know how to get to, such as a house of worship or school. Also, decide in advance where you will obtain your information. Use a trusted source such as a news agency or government office.

Select a responsible out-of-state relative or friend as a point of contact for your family in case you get separated. Make sure everyone knows at least two ways to contact that person (e.g., telephone, email). And don't forget to plan for your pets as well. If you are told to evacuate, you may not be able to bring your pet to a shelter.

**Create a disaster supply kit.** Remember to store these items in a dry, accessible place. Be sure you have enough supplies to last at least three days.

### **Disaster Supply Kit Checklist**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight (1 per person) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet care items      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra batteries           | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio (battery operated) | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys, books, games  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit             | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-perishable food      | <input type="checkbox"/> Moisture wipes      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra medication          | <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets, pillows        | <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water (1 gal/person/day)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Antibacterial hand soap  | <input type="checkbox"/> Important documents |

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Add To Your Disaster Kit**

It is a good idea to add a few items in your emergency supply kit specifically for your child. In the event your family does evacuate to a shelter, your child will need things to keep occupied such as a book or toy. On the next page is an activity that will help your child identify items they would like to have in their disaster supply kit. If possible, add these items to your disaster supply kit. This will give your child some sense of comfort and control.



# FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

A disaster is an event that can cause a lot of damage and hurt many people. Because a disaster can happen quickly, it is important that you know ahead of time what to do in case a disaster occurs in your area. To stay safe, you will need to act quickly and know your family’s disaster plan.

The first thing to remember during an emergency is to always follow any directions given by your school or local police department. They will tell you where to go and what to do so that you, your family and your friends will be as safe as possible. If you have to evacuate your house or school, go to a previously chosen meeting place. If you cannot get to the designated meeting place, stay calm and go to a place you are familiar with, like a bus stop or restaurant, and ask an adult for help.

If you get separated from your family or classmates, do not panic. Try to find a telephone and call your family. If you cannot reach your family, call a friend or relative that your family has chosen in case of an emergency and let them know where you are. Sometimes you may not be able to use a telephone immediately. This is okay. It is important that you are safe first.

### What Would You Bring?

If you were permitted to put four things in your family’s disaster supply kit, what would you select and why? List or draw these things below.

Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4

### Emergency Contact Card

Fill out the emergency card with help from your family and carry a copy with you. This way, you will have a copy with you in case of an emergency.

**Emergency Contact Card**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Hm: \_\_\_\_\_ Wk: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Hm: \_\_\_\_\_ Wk: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Meeting Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Outside of Area Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



# MILITARY FAMILIES – COPING WITH DEPLOYMENT

A deployment can be very difficult for military families. Over the years, many families have successfully faced similar challenges. How parents and caregivers prepare for and cope with the difficulties and changes associated with a deployment can influence how a child copes with them. It will help if you and your family develop a “deployment coping plan” to ensure the separation causes as little disruption as possible for your child. Below are some tips to help you plan.

## **Before a deployment:**

- Plan ahead to address practical matters such as budgets, responsibility changes, legal matters, etc.
- Help the family understand the assignment by explaining (as best as possible), why their loved one is going, when and for how long. Keep them informed as events unfold.
- Let children know their loved one is leaving because of their special job, not because the child has done anything wrong.

## **During a deployment:**

- Keep children active in helpful behaviors and activities (See Normal Routines and Helping Others). Set aside extra time to spend with your child.
- While away, make sure the loved one stays in touch with the child as often as possible via email, phone calls, videos and letters. Keep attitudes upbeat and positive.
- Show the child where their loved one is on a map. A child can hang a map in their room with a star indicating where their loved ones are deployed.
- Let your child choose a favorite photo or small belonging (e.g., keychain, pen) of the parent who is deployed to carry with them in their backpack or bookbag.
- Inform the child’s teachers of the deployment.

Separations are never easy and can be especially difficult for children. It is common for children and other family members to worry about the safety of a loved one who is away. In the short term, these concerns may lead to increases in children’s worries, irritability or behavior problems. This is a time when family members who are at home need extra support from their extended family and friends.

Some children may become particularly anxious when they are away from home or separated from their parents or caregivers. These children may be experiencing separation anxiety. Some signs to look for include visible distress when a parent or caregiver is away; fear of going places alone; fear of going to school, camp or a friend’s house (because of separation from loved ones); insisting that a parent stay with them at bedtime; getting up at night to be with a parent; nightmares about separation; complaining about physical aches and pains (to avoid school or going out); and following a parent around. Separation fears may be a major reason for a child’s refusal to go to school.

Children’s worries about parental safety, and concerns about separation, are common and normal. However, if these worries are severe or persistent, or if they interfere with children’s day-to-day functioning, children can benefit from professional advice and counseling. Remember, to take care of your child, you must also take care of yourself. If you are having difficulty with your feelings, talk to relatives or friends or seek advice from a mental health professional. You can also join a family support group. Children can benefit from interacting with other children who are going through similar circumstances.

## Some Helpful Websites

### **National Youth Development Information Center**

*Helping Children, Youth & Families Cope With Terrorism and War: Resources for Providers*

Provides links to materials and websites that will assist during the Iraq crisis.

[www.nydic.org/resource\\_crises.cfm](http://www.nydic.org/resource_crises.cfm)

### **National Association of School Psychologists**

*Children and Fear of War and Terrorism: Tips for Parents and Teachers*

[www.nasponline.org/neat/children\\_war.html](http://www.nasponline.org/neat/children_war.html)

### **Educators for Social Responsibility**

*Talking To Children About Violence and Other Sensitive and Complex Issues In The World*

Information for parents and teachers on discussing terrorism and violence with children.

[www.esrnational.org/guide.htm](http://www.esrnational.org/guide.htm)

*Teaching Students About War*

Lessons to help teachers put issues of current global conflict into context while encouraging students to think critically and discuss different perspectives.

[www.esrnational.org/sp/we/uw.htm](http://www.esrnational.org/sp/we/uw.htm)

### **Tolerance.org**

*Planet Tolerance*

Website for kids that has stories and activities that promote tolerance.

[www.tolerance.org/pt/index.html](http://www.tolerance.org/pt/index.html)

### **MideastWeb.org**

*The Iraq Crisis*

Provides an overview of Iraqi history, history of the conflict between Iraq, the U.S. and the U.N., Iraqi production of weapons of mass destruction and obstruction of U.N. inspections.

[www.mideastweb.org/iraq.htm](http://www.mideastweb.org/iraq.htm)

## Where to Go For Help

You should look for a mental health professional such as a psychologist, a social worker, a counselor or a psychiatrist. If your child needs help while in school, a school counselor or psychologist can assist and can also provide a recommendation if they feel your child needs further help. A member of your local clergy also may be someone to talk to, and can assist in finding appropriate help.

For a referral to a psychologist in your area, you can also contact the American Psychological Association at 800-964-2000; the operator will use your ZIP code to locate and make a referral to providers in your local area. To receive additional information about local health and human services providers, please visit the United Way website at [www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org) and type in your ZIP code in order to identify the number of either your local Information & Referral provider or your local United Way organization.

If you or your child needs **immediate** emotional and mental health assistance, please contact your local mental health crisis hotline by calling 800-784-2433.

