



# CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS & PERSONAL GROWTH

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*"The 4-H/Army and Air Force Partnerships at the national, state and community level are providing 4-H experiences for military youth and support for families as they deal with the stresses of the Global War on Terrorism."*

*Marlene Glasscock*

## PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

### Top Ten Behaviors of "Deployment" Families

#### 10 *Plan Ahead*

It is important to plan ahead in regards to finances, insurance, child care, schedule changes, etc. in order to be better prepared for the adjustment of deployment.

#### 9 *Prepare Children*

Children do not deal well with sudden change. If a family can gradually talk about what deployment is, what it will be like, and what to expect months before it occurs, the children will adjustment better.



#### 8 *Communicate with Your Spouse*

Sometimes we forget that spouses need to let out some fears and anxieties just as children do. Take time to talk about your feelings as a couple regarding the deployment.

#### 7 *Communicate with Your Children*

Communication with your children needs to be present throughout the process (before deployment, during, and after). Both verbal and non-verbal communication is important to show support, love, and concern (e.g., hugs and 'I love you's').

#### 6 *Keep Consistent*

When change occurs, children and spouses need to keep a consistent daily routine. This will help children feel more secure and safe as well as provide spouses with responsibilities that will provide emotional security as well.



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FROM THE DESK OF

*Charlotte Shoup Olsen*



**Kansas Military Families**

This month's issue focuses on military families and their need for support during these uncertain times.

We appreciate the guest article by Diane Mack, K-State Research and Extension's NE Area 4-H Youth Development Specialist and State 4-H Military Liaison. Her role as a State 4-H Military Liaison is connecting 4-H with Kansas military installations and bases to work with families who have members in the Air Force, Army, National Guard, or Reserves. Every state in the nation has Extension personnel in this same role.

Furthermore, Marlene Glasscock, housed here at Kansas State University, is a national project director for the USDA/military partnership. Her role is managing grant projects with the military partnership.

Hopefully, this newsletter will give you information that will be beneficial in your role as an Extension professional in providing support to local military families.

Sincerely,  
Charlotte Shoup Olsen, PhD  
W. Jared DuPree, MS

### ***Answers to Questions from Kansas County Extension Agents***

#### **Question:**

**I did not attend the FCS Agent Update session on the international exhibit. What was it all about? I also understand this resource can be used in recognition of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the 1994 United Nations "Year of the Family" declaration. I would like to know more.**

#### **Answer:**

This session was to more fully explain the resources that each county received about the program *Paraguay: Heartland of South America*. This program was developed to advance intercultural awareness and understanding among peoples and families of the world. It fits nicely into the "Year of the Family" concept.

Why was Paraguay selected? Kansas and Paraguay, both landlocked places, have many geographic and demographic similarities

as well as distinct differences. They also have a unique bond through Kansas Paraguay Partners (KPP), a nonprofit and non-partisan organization through the Partners of the Americas, that promotes international cooperation in education and training, economic development, family life, and culture.

K-State faculty has been heavily involved in KPP projects for years, often in the area of farmer-to-farmer exchanges. Any Kansas resident who is interested can be involved in KPP activities. Also, K-State's College of Human Ecology helped to establish a similar college in one of Paraguay's universities several years ago. I had a fellowship with Partners of the Americas and I chose to complete a project whose purpose is to increase our awareness of Paraguayan culture and family life.

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# Extension Spotlight

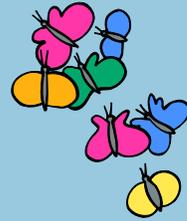
## Paula Seele

Paula Seele has worked for Kansas Extension since January 5, 1981, for a total of 23 years. Her entire Extension career has been with Family Studies and Human Services and she currently works with FSHS specialists Chuck Smith, Charlotte Olsen, and Kerri Parsons. Prior to her Extension service, she worked in local clerical positions after receiving an Office Education diploma from Manhattan Area Vocational Technical School.

Paula is a strong advocate of K-State Research and Extension and is committed to excellence in the work that she does. She plays a major role in helping the specialists graphically design the work they do by making the programs as fresh and interesting and innovative as they can be, but she cautions, "I never want the programs to be so innovative and creative that it is no longer useable for the public it serves." She wants the information and the way it is delivered to be as down-to-earth and user-friendly as possible.

One of the programs in which she takes considerable pride is *Basic Parenting*. She has worked alongside Chuck Smith over the years to make this program easy-to-understand and easy-to-use. She takes special pride in knowing that it can have a real impact in helping parents.

Paula recalls the days when she used typewriters in her daily Extension work. She has learned computers on the job and takes great pride in keeping up with current technology—although she also names that task as one of her biggest challenges. Desktop publishing is a favorite of hers. She loves to be on the 'technology' cutting edge to help the specialists in their work because she relishes being part of a team to take raw material and



"I love working with and for the people of Kansas and feel that in my own small way I am helping to get information to the people of Kansas that will hopefully improve their daily lives."

*Paula Seele*

make it into a fresh and creative product. The specialists are forever seeking out and using her thoughts and ideas on how to make a program work better, run better, and better suit the needs of the intended audience or even how to write a sentence or craft a title. Paula's hidden imprint is behind all of the resources that are developed by the specialists with whom she works. This *Connections* newsletter is a prime example among many. She manages the heavy workload of the three busy specialists with aplomb and diplomacy in addition to having extremely pleasant and helpful phone and receptionist skills known to many.

She was raised on a farm near Belvue, KS, and continues to live in the house where she grew up. Country, rural living is a mainstay for her. Family is her number one priority and she loves doing things with her elderly parents who are retired from farming, her brother and his wife living nearby, her sister and fiancée, and niece, Sarah, of Topeka. She

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

# Operation Military Kids—Providing Support to Families

By Diane Mack

NE Area 4-H Youth Development Specialist & State 4-H Military Liaison

When National Guard, Army Reserve and other military parents living in civilian communities are mobilized, their children suddenly become different. Now, they are “military kids” but they still look the same to teachers, friends and the community. Yet their lives have been turned upside down.

Many of their usual support systems may no longer be adequate. Extensive media coverage of on-going military operations creates daily anxiety. These “new “ military kids need to connect with other youth in similar situations. They seek friends and adults who can empathize and can help them cope with their new world.

**Operation: Military Kids** is a nationwide initiative designed to provide support to the children and youth of families that are impacted by the global war on terrorism.

Why is this an important issue? Reservists account for up to 40% of the US troops strength in Iraq. Kansas has 10% of its 5,500 Army National Guard soldiers mobilized or deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. This equals 514 Kansas soldiers. Of the 3,484 total Army Reserves, 20% or 681 soldiers are currently mobilized. Mobilization is when the soldier relocates to an army installation. Deployment is defined when a soldier leaves for a tour of duty.

Nationally, issues have been identified for children and youth in National Guard and Reserve Families. They are:

- Geographically dispersed families and lack of connection with other youth and families in a similar situation.

- Child separation or anxiety issues regarding safety of deployed parent.



- Lack of communication with deployed parent.



- Deployed parent absent for significant events.

- Less parental involvement from parent at home.



- Need to live with extended family.

- Changes in financial resources.

- Limited opportunities for youth to attend extracurricular activities.



- Teens having increased care of home and younger siblings.

Extension staff, volunteers and 4-H youth, along with schools and other community groups can form new support systems and reach out to military youth and their families. Extension has many resources in place that can be used to support these families. To

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## The Stages of Military Families Coping With Deployment

### Stage 1. Pre-deployment

- Anticipation of loss vs. denial
- Train-up/long hours away
- Getting affairs in order
- Mental/physical distance
- Arguments

**Time frame: varies**

### Stage 2. Deployment

- Mixed emotions/relief
- Disoriented/overwhelmed
- Numb, sad, alone
- Sleep difficulty
- Security issues

**Time frame: first month**

### Stage 3. Sustainment

- New routines established
- New sources of support
- Feel more in control
- Independence
- Confidence ("I can do this")

**Time frame: months two to five**

### Stage 5. Post-deployment

- Honeymoon period
- Loss of independence
- Need for "own" space
- Renegotiating routines
- Reintegrating into family

**Time frame: three to six months after deployment**

### Stage 4. Re-deployment

- Anticipation of homecoming
- Excitement
- Apprehension
- Burst of energy/"nesting"
- Difficulty making decisions

**Time frame: last month**

## Typical Children Reactions to Deployment

During deployment, children often experience negative changes. Many of these changes are normal. However, it is important to know how to deal with these changes and know when to seek additional assistance:

### Infants (< 1 year)

Must be held and actively nurtured in order to thrive. If a primary caregiver becomes significantly depressed, then the infant will be at risk for apathy, refusal to eat, and even weight loss. Early intervention becomes critical to prevent undue harm or neglect. Pediatricians can perform serial exams to ensure growth continues as expected on height/weight charts. Army Community Services and Social Work can assist with parenting skills and eliciting family or community support. Lastly, the primary caregiver may also benefit from individual counseling.

### Toddlers (1-3 years)

Will generally take their cue from the primary caregiver. One issue is whether it is the mother or father who is the soldier leaving—especially when children are very young. If the "non-deploying" parent is coping well, they will tend to

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## Top Ten Behaviors of "Deployment" Families

### 5 Find Community Support

There are many groups (religious congregations, support groups, recreational groups, book clubs, etc.) that children and families can join. Community support is important to take some of the burden.

### 4 Find Family/Friend Support

Reconnecting with extended family or building stronger bonds with friends can also take away some of the emotional burden. Other military spouses, close friends, and family can provide empathy and sympathy—both are needed.



### 3 Keep in Contact

Keep a connection with the deployed spouse through letters, emails, pictures, and occasional phone calls if applicable. Children especially will enjoy coloring pictures and sending letters, emails, and tapes to keep a connection during this time.



### 2 Renegotiate Routines

When the deployment is finished, many families need to readjust routines. Being open about this adjustment takes time and talking about what needs to stay the same and how the deployed spouse can be a part of the routine again is important.

### 1 Reconnect Emotionally

Often times, it difficult to emotionally connect on the return. Take time to get to know each other again. Different experiences and time have influenced everyone to change at some level. Spend time together. Become affectionate again. Talk about your relationship with each other.



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## Operation Military Kids...

learn more about National Guard go to [www.ks.ngb.army.mil](http://www.ks.ngb.army.mil) then link to Family Program.

If you would like additional information on Operation: Military Kids go to:

[http://www.national4-headquarters.gov/liaison\\_resources.htm](http://www.national4-headquarters.gov/liaison_resources.htm) Under the sub heading of "National Guard and Reserve" is an Operation Military Kids powerpoint and a brochure.

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## Extension Spotlight

has been a season ticket holder with K-State football for many years and loves going to the movies, too. Her favorite movies of all time are *Lord of the Rings* and *Star Wars*.

Paula is known for her creativity, not only on the computer, but with crafts and sewing. Her unique, handcrafted gifts over the years are well known and prized by those around her. She is an avid vegetable and flower gardener and likes to read whenever she has a few moments. In fact, she has in mind a novel she would like to write. Another dream is to take a Mediterranean cruise to see Greece, Crete, Turkey, Egypt, Israel, and other places in the vicinity.

**THANK YOU, PAULA,  
FOR YOUR GOOD WORK!**



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## Typical Children Reactions to Deployment

do well. The converse is also true. If the primary caregiver is not coping well, then toddlers may become sullen, tearful, throw tantrums or develop sleep disturbance. They will usually respond to increased attention, hugs, and holding hands. The “non-deploying” parent may also benefit from sharing their day-to-day experiences with other parents facing similar challenges. In particular, it is important for the primary caregiver to balance the demands for caring for children alone with their own needs for time for self.

### Preschoolers (3-6 years)

May regress in their skills (difficulty with potty training, “baby talk,” thumb sucking, refusal to sleep alone) and seem more “clingy.” They may be irritable, depressed, aggressive, prone to somatic complaints and have fears about parents or others leaving. Caregivers will need to reassure them with extra attention and physical closeness (hugs, holding hands). In addition, it is important to avoid changing family routines such as sleeping in their own bed, unless they are “very” scared. Answers to questions about the deployment should be brief, matter-of-fact and to the point. This will help to contain the free-floating anxiety of an overactive imagination.

### School age children (6-12 years)

May whine, complain, become aggressive or otherwise “act out” their feelings. They may focus on the soldier-parent missing a key event, for example: “will you (the soldier) be here for my birthday?” Depressive symptoms may include: sleep disturbance, loss of interest in school, eating or even playing with their friends. They will need to talk about their feelings and will need more physical attention than usual. Expectations regarding school performance may need to be a little lower, but keeping routines as close to normal is best for them.

### Teenagers (13-18 years)

May be irritable, rebellious, fight or participate in other attention-getting behavior. They may show a lack of interest in school, peers and school activities. In addition, they are at greater risk for promiscuity, alcohol and drug use. Although they may deny problems and worries, it is extremely important for caregivers to stay engaged and be available to talk out their concerns. At first, lowering academic expectations may be helpful; however, return to their usual school performance should be supported. Sports and social activities should be encouraged to give normal structure to their life. Likewise, additional responsibility in the family, commensurate with their emotional maturity, will make them feel important and needed.

Unfortunately, some children may have great difficulty adapting to the stress of a deployed parent. If they are unable to return to at least some part of their normal routine or display serious problems over several weeks, a visit to the family doctor or mental health counselor is indicated. Children of deployed parents are also more vulnerable to psychiatric hospitalization - especially in single-parent and blended families.

The two research articles are excerpts from: “The emotional cycle of deployment: A military family perspective,” by Pincus, House, Christensen, and Adler (2004) taken from the world wide web on October 7, 2004 at <http://www.hooah4health.com/>



# Resources

## Resources for Military Families

These resources for supporting military families were shared at a recent FCS Agent Update session.

See websites listed at the end of the article **Operation: Military Kids—Providing Support to Families** in this issue of *Connections*.

### Websites For Military Families

[www.cyfernet.org](http://www.cyfernet.org).

National Extension website  
Go To—*Resources for Parents, Teachers, and Family Support Professionals in Times of War*.

[www.guardfamily.org](http://www.guardfamily.org)

Army and Air National Guard Family Programs

[www.militarychild.org](http://www.militarychild.org)

Military Child Education Coalition

[www.militarystudent.org](http://www.militarystudent.org)

Department of Defense Educational Opportunities

[www.armycommunityservice.org](http://www.armycommunityservice.org)

Army Community Service—Operation READY

[www.mfrc-dodqol.org](http://www.mfrc-dodqol.org)

Department of Defense Military Family Resource Center

[www.deploymentlink.osd.mil](http://www.deploymentlink.osd.mil)

Department of Defense Deployment LINK (Deployment Health Support)

### Websites For Financial Literacy

[www.moneytalks.ucr.edu](http://www.moneytalks.ucr.edu)

MoneyTalks Financial Resources.

[www.lifesmarts.org](http://www.lifesmarts.org)

Lifesmarts Program.

[www.jumpstart.org](http://www.jumpstart.org)

JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy

[www.ntrbonline.org](http://www.ntrbonline.org)

National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) Teen Resource Bureau

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### *Answers to Questions from Kansas County Extension Agents*

Thus, the 16-minute video was created with a teaching guide. Additionally, any person or group, including Extension, can check out a traveling trunk exhibit of Paraguayan handiwork and artifacts to accompany this lesson. To reserve this exhibit, call our secretary, Paula Seele, at 785-532-5773.

*If you have questions about programming issues in "Strong Marital and Family Relationships," please submit your question to Charlotte Shoup Olsen, Ph.D. You can reach her in the following ways:*

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