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

[Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.](#)

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

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Drug Free Action Alliance



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## Know! To Recognize and Support Military Families

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

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

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

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

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

It is this long list of extreme stressors that place military youth at increased risk for school, family and peer-related emotional difficulties,

and make them more likely than their nonmilitary peers to use alcohol and other drugs, to get in fights and to carry weapons to school. Research also shows that as the number of deployments and moves rise, so too does a child's odds for risky behaviors.

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

What can military families do to help children deal with their stress and concerns in positive ways? There are a variety of great resources to assist you, including an online educational tool called [FOCUS World](#).

Within this site, parents and other caregivers can learn how to help their children and themselves develop healthy coping strategies through three key elements:

**Emotional Regulation** – understanding and managing feelings – being able to name what they feel and calm themselves down when needed

**S.M.A.R.T.** Goal Setting – **S**imple, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**imely goals - working together as a family to achieve them

**Communication** - listening and responding to each other's concerns, including those related to deployment and reintegration – it can also be insightful to see how family members can have very different thoughts and feelings about the same event

Visit [www.FocusWorld.org](http://www.FocusWorld.org) for more information and family tips.

Additional resources for military family support include: [Ohio Military Kids](#), [MilitaryFamily.com](#), [StayingStrong.org](#), [Military One Source](#), [Real Warriors](#), [Real Battles](#), [Real Strengths](#).

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

Visit [starttalking.ohio.gov](http://starttalking.ohio.gov) to get the conversation going !!!