

A dark F-35 fighter jet is shown in flight, banking to the right. The aircraft is silhouetted against a clear blue sky. Below the aircraft, a semi-transparent dark banner contains the main text. The background of the entire image is an aerial view of a desert landscape with a residential development and agricultural fields.

# **WELCOME HOME! RECONNECTING WITH YOUR CHILD**

**Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors**

# OBJECTIVES

## What To Expect and Tips That Can Help:

- Infants
- Toddlers/Preschoolers
- School-Age Children
- Teens



# INFANTS

## What to Expect:

- May react to you as a “stranger” by crying or clinging to the other parent
- May not recognize you



# INFANTS

## Tips:

- Get involved slowly by helping with daily care such as changing diapers, helping with bath time and bedtime
- Engage child in a playful way such as playing peek-a-boo
- Give lots of affection: loving strokes, kisses and holding



# TODDLERS/PRESCHOOLERS

## What to Expect:

- May have regressive behaviors
- May not recognize you
- Might cling to the other parent
- Could test limits
- May want all of your attention



# TODDLERS/PRESCHOOLERS

## Tips:

- Focus on rewarding positive behavior
- Plan special play time with your child
- Have patience with your child
- Maintain established routines



# SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

## What To Expect:

- May want all of your attention
- Could have mixed feelings about your return
- Might test the limits
- May cling to other parent or relative
- May feel very proud of you



# SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

## Tips:

- Show your child plenty of love and attention
- Praise your child for all of his or her achievements while you were gone
- Be involved in daily activities such as homework and sports
- Be patient with your child





# TEENS

## What To Expect:

- May have mixed feelings about your return.
- Could test the boundaries.
- Might feel self conscious about sharing their feelings.
- May withdraw and/or act out



# TEENS

## Tips:

- Avoid criticizing or teasing your teen
- Share appropriate deployment experiences with your teen
- Find a shared interest or activity that you both enjoy
- Be patient with your teen



# OTHER EXPECTATIONS

## Many children and teens are:

- Excited to have their parent back in the home
- Happy to have their parent involved in their daily lives again
- Proud of their parent's service
- Excited to share their accomplishments with their parent
- All children and teens can adjust given time, patience and love



# CONCLUSION

Be patient and enjoy your child.

Allow time for you and your child to adjust and appreciate these changes.



# SUMMARY

## When a parent returns home:

- Infants and younger children may not recognize the returning parent and may cling to the other parent
- Older children and teens may test limits, act out or withdraw
- It's important to be patient and allow time for reconnecting
- Seek help from military and community resources when needed







**QUESTIONS?**

# RESOURCES

- Military Community Services
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- TRICARE [www.Tricare.mil](http://www.Tricare.mil)
- Behavioral Health Services







**THANK YOU**

