



Reestablishing Your Parental Role

Consider these helpful tips to reestablish your role as Mom or Dad, even if your deployment was years ago:

- Realize the process of finding your place within the family again after a deployment will take time and require your patience. Regardless of when you came home, you may want to try out some of these tips to help you feel closer to your children and more a part of your family.
- Start with building your relationship and consider re-connecting with your children before taking on a disciplinary role.
- Invite your kids to catch you up on important events and accomplishments in their lives. Ask to see their photos and mementoes from while you were away. It's never too late to ask.
- Be positive and proud. If you're just getting home or were deployed long ago, recognize the sacrifices your children made during your deployment and tell them!
- Look for ways to participate in your child's routines. Change their diapers, read a book at bedtime, pick them up from school, help with homework or offer to help them with a chore.
- Showing up counts with kids. Even if they act as if they don't care, it matters when you attend their games and activities.
- Carve out special time with each child. Focusing all your attention on a child, even for just a short period of time, matters to children.
- Look for "invitations" from your kids to join their activities and routines. Consider saying "yes" when they ask you to play a game, shoot baskets, or go to the mall.
- Pace yourself! Don't try to change your family's routines and activities right away. Respect the rules the at-home caregiver created during your absence. Remember, these rules and routines helped your family manage while you were gone.
- Work with your child's other parent to decide what changes to routines and responsibilities you each want to keep and which you want to change now that you are home.
- Discuss with your older children ways to balance their newly gained responsibilities and privileges with just being a teen again. Listen to their feelings and reactions. Find areas where you can compromise.