



# DEPLOYMENT: COPING STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN

*Self-study Guide*

Identify pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment stages to help rebuild security in children. Identify the common signs of emotional stress in children and teach them skills to foster self-expression and identify their feelings. Learn about the four basic feelings and tips for teaching preschool children how to deal with anger and help children cope with stress.





**Deployment: Coping Strategies for Children**

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### **CKA 2: Positive Interaction and Guidance**

**Title: NV CKA2.A Deployment: Coping Strategies for Children**

**2. Hours**

**0.2 CEUs**





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### **About the Instructor**

Theresa has over 30 years experience in the field of Early Childhood Education. During that time, she served as a Preschool Teacher, Disabilities Coordinator, Program Facilitator, and Director of an Early Childcare Program. She has a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership with Specialization in Curriculum and Instructional Design. Theresa is a Professional Growth & Development Trainer and Curriculum Designer and offers web-based courses internationally. She is the Executive Director/Owner of the training organization Child Care Training Consultants, LLC., (CCTC).

### **Business Description**

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC. (CCTC) is an accredited provider (AP) with the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) that provides Continuing Education Units (CEU) for adult education nationally. The business is also a recognized training organization with the Council for Professional Recognition, Child Development Associate Council (CDA), National Credentialing Program.





### **Child Care Training Consultants LLC., Goal**

The goal is to empower educators as they take Child Development Associate (CDA) courses to make a powerful difference in the lives of young children!

### **Mission Statement**

“Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s is committed to provide research-based professional growth and development training courses primarily focused on the Child Development Associate. The CDA is the nation’s premier credential that is transferable, valid, competency-based and nationally recognized in all 50 states, territories, the District of Columbia, community colleges and the United State Military.

### **Vision**

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s vision is to provide the early childhood community with courses based on CDA competency standards to obtain their CDA Credential and assist in reaching their goal as an exceptional early childhood educator to ultimately achieve higher child outcomes.

## Training Content Aligns to Child Development Associate (CDA) Standards

### **The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential**

The CDA Program is designed to assess and credential early childhood education professionals. The Council recognizes and credentials professionals who work in all types of early care and education programs - Pre-k, infant-toddler, family childcare, and home visitor programs. The training content aligns with the CDA competency standards and functional areas.

### **CDA Competency Standards and Functional Areas**

Goal I. To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment.

1. Safe
2. Healthy
3. Learning Environment

Goal II. To advance physical and intellectual competence.

4. Physical
5. Cognitive
6. Communicative
7. Creative

Goal III. To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance.

8. Self
9. Social
10. Guidance

Goal IV. To establish positive and productive relationships with families.

11. Families

Goal V. To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to participant needs.

12. Program Management

Goal VI. To maintain a commitment to professionalism.

13. Professionalism

### ***CDA Subject Areas***

- ☐ Planning a safe and healthy learning environment
- ☒ Advancing children's physical and intellectual development
- ☐ Supporting children's social and emotional development
- ☐ Building productive relationships with families
- ☐ Managing an effective program operation
- ☐ Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
- ☐ Observing and recording children's behavior
- ☐ Understanding principles of child development and learning



### About the Course Designer

Theresa has over 30 years experience in the field of Early Childhood Education. During that time, she served as a Preschool Teacher, Disabilities Coordinator, Program Facilitator, and Director of an Early Childcare Program. She has a Bachelors Degree in Child Development, a Masters and Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership with Specialization in Curriculum and Instructional Design. Theresa is a Professional Growth & Development Trainer and Curriculum Designer and offers web-based courses internationally. She continues to design and develop training courses for early childcare educators, locally,



nationally, and globally. She is a certified Zero to Three (ZTT): The and Professional Development Specialist (PD) for the Child Development Associate (CDA) Council.

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## Goal, Learning Outcomes, and Objectives

### Goal/s:

The goal of this training is to provide childcare providers with strategies to children who show signs of emotional stress in children whose family member/s has been deployed.

**Learning Outcomes:** The learning outcomes are to identify the common signs of emotional stress in children, teach children skills to foster self expression, and encourage children to identify their feelings. Rebuilding security in young children, the four basic feelings, and tips for teaching preschool children how to deal with anger are also discussed in this training.

### Objectives:

- By the end of this training participants will be able to:
- Identify common signs of emotional stress in children
- Identify pre-deployment, deployment, and post deployment stages to help rebuild security in children.
- Teach children the skills to foster self-expression
- Encourage children to express and identify their feelings



## Agenda

### Part 1: Talking to Preschool Children about Deployment

- Recognizing Common Signs of Emotional Stress in Children
- The Effects of Deployment on Children
- Rebuilding Security in Children

### Part 2: Recognizing Common Signs of Emotional Stress in Children

#### 3 Phases of Deployment

- Pre-deployment
- Deployment Stage
- Post Deployment

### Part 3: Tips for Dealing with Anger

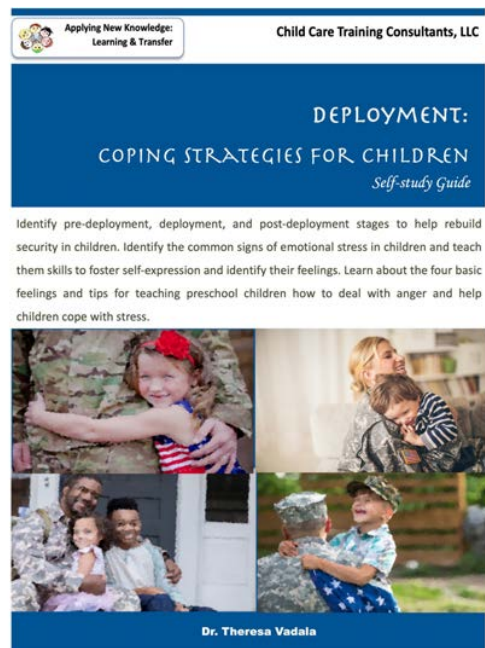
#### Expressing Feelings

#### Relaxation Exercises

#### Activity Ideas

#### References

#### Summative Evaluation





## Part 1: TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT DEPLOYMENT

Children may experience regressive behaviors or act out their behavior at home school during the deployment. It is important to involve children in the process and provide opportunities for children to express their feelings.

What type of behaviors have you experienced in your classroom.

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## Part 1: TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT DEPLOYMENT

As children learn to trust caregivers beginning at birth, they develop a sense of security. Children that feel secure are able to progress and develop their identity and independence. When a loved one (especially a parent) goes away for an extended amount of time due to deployment, death, divorce, work, etc. it can affect a child's sense of security.

When a child's sense of security has been shaken, they experience and exhibit regressive behaviors such as crying, emotional stress, or they may act out their behavior at home or at school. During emotional stress, caregivers need to help a child regain security.







## Recognizing Common Signs of Emotional Stress in Children

- Nightmares/Sleep difficulties
- Loss of Appetite
- Fear and anxiety/anger
- Emotional/sadness or depressed
- Changes in behavior





## Rebuilding Security in Children – Strategies to Share with Families

Rebuilding security in children includes calming one's own fears about deployment. Limiting children's exposure to news is advisable, as children may not understand the intensity of the news media. As a teacher or parent, it is crucial to listen to what children are trying to express. Being patient and strong help in the process of encouraging children to express their feelings.

### Strategies to Share with Families

Remember, children may not understand why a parent is leaving and they may be afraid about the change.

List strategies that you have used with families.

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## Rebuilding Security in Children – Strategies to Share with Families

### *When you talk with your kids:*

Talk to them in a way they'll understand — what is deployment and why your job is taking them away. Much of this is based on their age and what they can absorb.

- Let children ask questions, and answer questions as simply and honestly as you can.
- Reassure your children that things will stay as routine as possible at home.
- Stay positive and upbeat and assure child that you love them very much.
- Spend one-on-one time with each child before you deploy.
- Plan how you'll stay connected with loved ones while deployed, and how they can stay in touch with you.
- Alert them that sometimes they may not hear from you for a few days.
- Discuss potential changes to household routines, the importance of listening to the parent at home and that household rules remain the same.

### Notes

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## Part 2: The Three Phases of Deployment

The three phases of deployment are:

- Pre-deployment
- Deployment
- Post-deployment





## Pre-Deployment

The length of this phase can vary widely, from several weeks up to a full year. Families vary in when they chose to tell their children about an upcoming deployment. Children may notice a difference in parent's availability and periodic absences due to deployment. The pre-deployment phase can last either a day, weekend, several months, or years. Discussing deployment helps children understand that the deployed parent did not leave because of anything the child did.







## Pre-Deployment

There is no right or wrong time, other than, telling children is an important factor in regaining security. Since service members must often train more extensively prior to a deployment, children may notice a difference in mom or dad's periodic absences due to the deployment process.

The pre-deployment stage is characterized alternately by denial and anticipation of loss. As the departure date gets closer, spouses often ask: "You don't really have to go, do you?" Eventually, the increased field training, preparation, and long hours away from home herald the extended separation that is to come.

Children may find it very difficult to adjust to the absence of a parent who is called to duty. Some children may not understand why a parent must leave, while others may be afraid for their parent's safety. Some children may even be angry with a parent for leaving. It's important to keep talking to your child and watching how he is handling the separation.





**Deployment:**

During deployment parents should stay involved in daily educational routines. The parent that is not deployed should be involved in school activities and keep the teacher informed about the length of time the deployed parent will be away.

Ask children to think of a time when ...#1 a loved one left. #2 how they felt with the absence of a loved one.#3 a loved one returned.#4 a loved one returned and left again.

Chart how they felt, what they did, or their thoughts.

The goal is to have children express their feelings,

What have children shared with you about how they felt when their parent/family member has been deployed.

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### Deployment:

During the Deployment Stage children may experience...

- Mixed emotions/relief
- Disoriented/overwhelmed
- Numb, sad, alone
- Sleep difficulty
- Security issues
- Time frame: first month

This stage is the period from the Soldier's departure from home through the first month of the deployment. Mixed emotions is common during the deployment stage. Some military spouses report feeling disoriented and overwhelmed. Others may feel relieved that they no longer must appear brave and strong. It is crucial to remain strong and reassure children they will be safe.







## Post Deployment

Post Deployment is an exciting time. Homing of the soldier or loved one can be exciting, yet stressful. Homecoming may be short with yet another period of departure to face. The change during post deployment poses another adjustment process.

The child and family experience an exciting, though sometimes stressful, homecoming with their loved one. Short-term readjustment reactions are common for returning troops, and children may see their parent sleep poorly, be irritable or have difficulty concentrating. Many families find this phase the most difficult as everyone has changed during the deployment and now must find their way back together again.





## **The Effects of Deployment on Children**

Researchers have found that children with parents who are deployed tend to worry more, are afraid and sad. During war, a child may feel their world is less safe. Children may fear that the parent or other loved family member who is deployed may die in the war. Even if no close family member is affected, they may still feel unsafe.

### **The Effects of Deployment on Children**

Very young children may show fear or upset at being separated from their parent. Infants (12 months and younger) may react to changes in their schedule, physical environment, or the caretaker's mood. They may be uninterested, refuse to eat, or even lose weight.

Toddlers (1-3 years) may sulk, cry, throw temper tantrums, or not sleep well if their caretaker is having problems or is not available.

Preschoolers (3-6 years) might think their parent was deployed because "I was bad." They may react with toileting issues, thumb sucking, sleep problems, clinginess, and separation anxiety. They may also be touchy, depressed, aggressive, or complain about aches and pains.

Very often, preschool and school-age children also worry about the safety of the parent at home.

School age children (6-12 years) may perform more poorly in school. They may become moody, aggressive, or whiny. They may get stomachaches, headaches, etc.

National Center for PTSD.(n.d.).Understanding military culture. Retrieved February 15, 2011 from [http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/ptsd101/course-modules/military\\_culture.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/ptsd101/course-modules/military_culture.asp).



### Preschool Tips for Dealing with Anger

In addition to teaching children how to identify and express their feelings by talking about them they can count to ten, take a deep breath, and do relaxation exercises.

When angry:

- Stop...Count to ten.
- Take a deep breath.
- Walk away until you have calmed down.
- Say...Are you Okay?
- Use your words to say what you don't like.

Notes

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## Expressing Feelings

Drawing enables your child's imagination to become more active. Each time they draw they access their imagination and make physical representations of what's in their mind. People's imaginations have allowed them to create all of the things that we use and are surrounded by everyday. One way for teachers and parents to encourage children to talk about what they have seen heard or experienced is to give them art materials.

- By drawing, children can communicate without using words.
- Once an idea or thought is drawn, it becomes concrete.
- Children can hang it on the wall, stomp on it, or tear it up.
- If a child is scared, encourage child to draw a “safe” place.





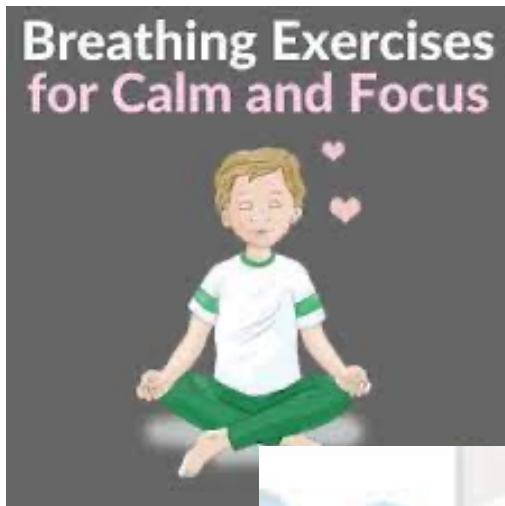
## Relaxation Exercises

### Breath Deeply

1. Take a deep breath while you silently count to five
2. Then, as you count back to one, slowly release the air

### Muscle Relaxing

1. Pretend to become frozen by slowly tightening each part of your body.
2. Then, “thaw” by relaxing each part of your body, allowing your anger to melt away.





### Activity Ideas

- Make a storybook CD
- Make a special box to collect treasures from deployed family members
- Make a memory jar with notes
- Make a time capsule
- Decorate a pillowcase together with picture of deployed family member
- Write feelings in Journal
- Decorate dog tag necklace with picture of deployed family member
- Make a board book scrapbook
- Make a calendar to count the days of return







## Review

- Identify common signs of emotional stress in children
- Identify pre-deployment, deployment, and post deployment stages to help rebuild security in children.
- Teach children the skills to foster self-expression
- Encourage children to express and identify their feelings

## Notes

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