

Coping With Separation and Deployment: How Health Care Professionals Can Support Families With Young Children

Deployment can be a very stressful experience for military families. Parents of young children have to take care of their little ones and all of their physical and emotional needs while they too are going through a time of significant change and loss. Although babies and toddlers cannot tell us how they feel in words, they are deeply affected by their experiences, especially their interactions with those closest to them. Deployment means that a very important person in a child's life is gone, and maybe for a long time. Although each child will respond in his or her own way, depending on age, personality, and support received, young children do experience the loss and mourn.

Given the limited time you have to spend with families during routine encounters, we have developed a resource—*Coping With Separation and Deployment: Taking Care of Yourself and Your Baby*—to help you support families who are going through this difficult experience. This handout contains some very important information about how parents and young children may be affected and what they might be experiencing during this stressful time. It was designed not just as a resource to give parents at the end of a visit, but also as an interactive tool to use during your time together.

Strategies for Supporting Families During Everyday Encounters

The following algorithms provide an approach for addressing some important issues for parents as they arise during your visit. Clearly, it will not be possible to cover all of this information in any one session. Choose which areas to focus on, depending on how much time you have and which issues are most relevant to the family during that particular visit.

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ZERO TO THREE gratefully acknowledges The Florida BrAlve Fund administered by The Community Foundation in Jacksonville for its support of Strong Foundations in Pediatric Care.

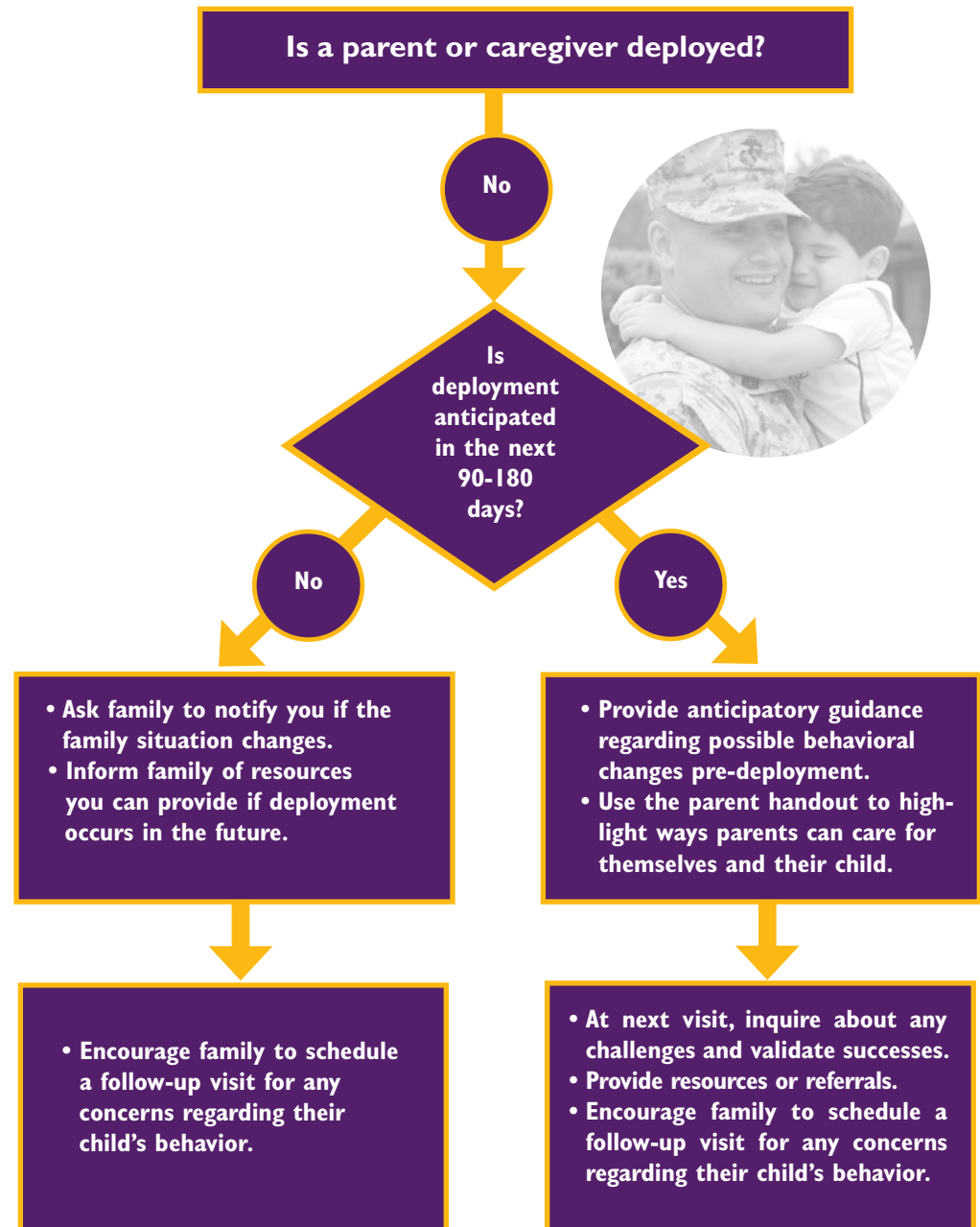
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National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families



ASSESSING FAMILY SUPPORT NEEDS DURING DEPLOYMENT

