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Bibliotherapy for Children Coping with a Loved One's Military Deployment: What do Children's Books Tell Us?

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Educational Specialist

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ABSTRACT

Bibliotherapy for Children Coping with a Loved One's Military Deployment:

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This study extracted descriptive information and analyzed content in 23 children's books related to military deployment using a coding instrument entitled, "Military Bibliotherapy Coding Instrument for Children's Books," developed for this study. Additionally, the content from the books was compared to themes found in current research literature. The books were not as racially diverse as the military population. Books for black children are underrepresented with only 8% of books having black characters compared to the 16.9% black population in active duty military service. The most prevalent response to the deployment of a loved one described is sadness with 65% of the books describing this response. Finding ways to keep the main character and the deployed person connected is the most prevalent coping strategy described in the books (82%). A surprising find is that pride in the deployed person's military service is described as a coping strategy in some of the books although it was not found in the research literature. All phases of deployment were described with the exception of reintegration. No books addressed this important phase of deployment. Information from this analysis will assist parents, educators and mental health professionals in selecting books for bibliotherapy use that align with the unique circumstances and characteristics of military children. Information presented will also inform and encourage publishers to seek out and publish books to more adequately meet the demographics and meet the unique experiences faced by military children.

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DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT AND THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis, *Bibliotherapy for Children Coping with a Loved One's Military Deployment: What do Children's Books Tell Us*? is presented in a dual or hybrid format.   In this hybrid format, both traditional and journal publication formatting requirements are met.

The preliminary pages of the thesis adhere to university requirements for thesis formatting and submission.   The first full section is presented in the new journal-ready format and conforms to the style requirements for future publication in school psychology journals. The literature review is included in Appendix A, the coding instrument is in Appendix B, and a list of children's books related to military deployment is included in Appendix C.

Two reference lists are included in this thesis format.   The first includes only the references found in the first journal-ready article.   The second reference list includes all citations from the full literature review found in Appendix A.

Background

Families and children are exposed to stressors every day, such as relationship problems, financial hardships, school difficulties, and health problems (Berk, 2006). However, many children are exposed to unique stressors caused by current events in our society, such as having a family member deployed to serve his or her country (Cozza, Chun, & Polo, 2005).

When a family member is deployed, especially when that person is a parent, the deployment creates stress on the remaining family members (Gibbs, Martin, Kupper, & Johnson, 2007). Deployment taxes the coping skills of the family members left at home and exacerbates children's normal developmental challenges (Gibbs et al., 2007; Rush & Akos, 2007). There may be increased conflict in family relationships, school problems, and an increase in externalizing (e.g., aggression, arguing, noncompliance to rules) or internalizing behaviors (e.g., depression, anxiety, withdrawal).

Determining the exact numbers for those involved in military deployments has evolved over time. Currently, using the number of troop years deployed has become a way for tracking troops in deployments. Baiocchi (2013) defines troop-year in the following excerpt:

> A troop-year is a metric used to measure cumulative deployment length. For example, one troop-year is equivalent to any of the following cases: one soldier spending 12 months deployed, two soldiers deployed for six months (each), one soldier deployed for eight months and another soldier deployed for four months, and 12 soldiers deployed for one month each. (p. 3)

Almost 2 million troop-years were accounted for between 2001 and 2011. From September 2001 through December 2011, the Army had 1.08 million troop-years; the Navy had

333,000 troop-years; the Air Force had 309,000 troop-years; and the Marine Corps had 280,000 troop-years (Baiocchi, 2013).

In addition to the individual being deployed, deployment can impact a significant number of children, and these children represent a variety of ethnically diverse families.   In a recent study of military students, their parents, and school staff serving those students, it was noted that almost half of these children had one parent who was currently deployed and almost 90% had a parent who had once been deployed (Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, & Blum, 2010).   The variety of military families can be readily seen in the demographics of race.   In regard to race, 68.9% of active duty personnel are white, 16.9% are black, 11.2% are Hispanic, 3.8% are Asian, and 9.6% are other races.   It has been reported that military has a higher proportion of black people than the civilian workforce (Clever & Segal, 2013).

Stress Related to Deployment

One particular area of concern when a parent is deployed is the level of family and child stress within a family system (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011).   Studies have identified the effects of deployment on children.   It appears that children of all ages seem to be especially susceptible to stress associated with deployment (Jensen, Martin, & Watanabe, 1996). Therefore, it is imperative that mental health professionals and educators working with children consider adopting research-based interventions to support the unique needs of military children (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011).

When considering stress exposure to military children, researchers Flake, Davis, Johnson, and Middleton (2009) found that 32% of their parental respondents surpassed the cut-off score for their child on the Pediatric Symptom Checklist, indicating a "high risk" for psychosocial difficulties and 42% reported scores that indicated "high-risk" stress on the Parenting Stress

Index – Short Form.   The presence of parenting stress was predictive of an increase of psychosocial difficulties in their child.   While evaluating several predictors of child functioning during a parent's deployment, these researchers concluded that parenting stress was the most significant predictor of child psychosocial difficulties.

In addition to stress exposure, children may experience symptoms related to ambiguous loss.   Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass, and Grass (2007) reported in their study of military children ages 12–18 that children experienced symptoms related to boundary ambiguity such as changes in their roles and responsibilities and changes in their routines.   Study participants also reported changes in mental health status.   Roughly 32% of the participants reported signs of depression and anxiety such as losing interest in activities, feelings of isolation, changes in sleeping and eating patterns, and an increase in sadness and crying.   Additionally, relationship conflict was reported to have increased in the home during deployment.

Stressful life events, such as a parent's deployment and separation from a parent, are particularly challenging for children who are especially vulnerable because they often have not yet developed the skills to handle change and uncertainty.   Children are still in the developmental stages of learning to handle their behaviors and emotions.   The children in military families are often younger than civilian families as 42% of children of active duty military members are preschool age and 40% are school age (6–14 years) (Clever & Segal, 2013).

Bibliotherapy to Address Stress

Children often have trouble communicating their emotions to others.   Instead of using words to communicate their feelings, children's behavior is often a reflection of their emotions (Robertson, 2007).   When children are struggling with challenging situations, such as problems

in school, being bullied, managing anger and frustration, or anxiety, they look to adults for guidance and support (Clever & Segal, 2013). Reading books with children is one logical option for parents to access information about how to handle change and uncertainty in life and convey it to the children in a manner that they understand. Such use of books is called bibliotherapy.

Although bibliotherapy has been well researched addressing a variety of concerns, it is not known if any one particular type of intervention, including bibliotherapy, is effective in supporting military children (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011). In a review of treatments for military families, Esposito-Smythers et al. (2011) conducted a review to determine effective treatment recommendations for military family members. Their research found a variety of existing programs which were aimed at the assisting the military community; however; these programs were not necessarily research based. More research into this area is needed (Sherman & Glenn, 2011).

Preparing for deployment helps children develop positive coping strategies and adaptive behaviors. Watanabe and Jensen (2000) reported that children who were prepared for the deployment fared better than those who were not prepared. Although a limited amount of research has focused on interventions to reduce the stress felt by military families, one research finding suggested that increasing families' access to information helps reduce the stress associated with deployment (Rosen, Futrand, & Martin, 2000).

Many children respond to stories in books (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993) and find it easier to talk about the characters in the stories than their own lives and emotions (Berns, 2003). Bibliotherapy has been used to help people struggling with bullying, depression, eating disorders, divorce, grief, stress-related physical disorders, along with many other difficulties

(Berns, 2003; Pehrsson, 2007; Prater, Johnstun, Dyches, & Johnstun, 2006).   It has also been shown to have better results for improvement of anxiety symptoms than to be on a waitlist or to receive no treatment (Rapee, Abbott, & Lyneham, 2006).

There are several goals of bibliotherapy.   First, bibliotherapy is used to increase insight about personal problems, which may have been previously stifled and hidden from others (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993).   Second, bibliotherapy helps people confront and provide the possibility to change or cope with current problems as they read about others who have successfully dealt with similar challenges, giving individuals insight into adaptive ways to handle difficulties (Pardeck, 1995).   Also, a carefully selected story can stimulate a discussion between the child and their caregiver, allowing the child to discuss things they may be too fearful or embarrassed to share with someone else.   Ideally, individuals will then be able to generalize the resolution in the story into their own life experience.

Statement of the Problem

Sources of stress for military family members that occur in conjunction with deployment include worrying about the safety of the military person, missing the military person, and experiencing changes in family activities and responsibilities in the home (Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass, & Grass, 2007).   These sources of stress and changes in the home can create tension and conflict between the remaining family members.

Families seem to be searching, independent of professional or clinical help, for solutions to the problems they experience during deployment.   They are often not aware of the professional help that is available, do not have easy access to professional help, or do not know when to seek professional help, and they are frustrated by the delivery of health care services or

cannot afford professional help. They may not seek professional help but turn to self-help measures first to alleviate the symptoms of stress (Farberman, 1997).

Books are easy to access, are portable, and may help alleviate problems associated with stress. Books are relatively inexpensive compared to professional mental health services. There is a growing selection of new children's books written to address issues related to families in the military. Among the current selection available, some have been written by military wives for their children. These military wives may have written books because they could not find books that address their particular deployment situation in the current market or they did not have access to appropriate books. These families may not ever seek professional help but wish to solve the problems on their own. However, if parent-directed bibliotherapy is to be successful, the right type of book must be chosen to meet the family's particular need. No current analyses of children's books that address deployment have been found in the research literature. Such an analysis will help families who have a deployed member select a book that portrays similar experiences, emotions, and resolutions to problems these families are facing. Additionally, books used for this purpose will be most helpful if they reflect the demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity) of military families. Identifying a body of literature that reflects the demographic characteristics of families with a deployed military person will be especially valuable when providing support through bibliotherapy (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to extract descriptive information and analyze content in children's books related to military deployment. The information in the picture and early chapter books in this study were compared to the current research literature on deployment effects on children (e.g., depression, aggression, loneliness, anxiety, and worry about deployed

parent's safety).   All the information was collected into tables to assist parents and professionals to select deployment-themed books to read with children who are experiencing the deployment of a loved one.   Since military families are likely to have young children (Clever & Segal, 2013) this study focused on books that are appropriate for this age group, which includes picture books and early chapter books.

Research Questions

This study is designed to answer the following questions:

1. What messages regarding military deployment, such as gender of main character and deployed person, type of deployment, effects of deployment, strategies for coping with deployment, and resolution to problems associated with deployment are presented in children's literature?

2. In relation to what has been reported in the research literature, how well does this sample of books reflect the problems children have with their loved one's deployment?

Method

Book Sample Selection Criteria

A sample of children's literature, fiction and non-fiction, was selected for analysis.   In collecting the sample, the researchers made efforts to ensure that the sample is useful and representative of the sample of books available.   Books (both fiction and nonfiction), written in English, were selected based on these factors:

- The main character was a related child of a deployed military person.
- The target reading level of the book was for children ages 3–8, with a lexile of BR to 820L.   This lexile range used was based on the 2012 CCSS Text Measures

(Common Core State Standards, 2012). This lexile range correlates with preschool age through third grade expanded-level student reading skills and matches the age range of children whose parents' are deployed. Third grade is roughly about the age of 8 for most children. This age group was selected because of the potential to help the youngest age group and their parents identify strategies for dealing with deployment in a preventative manner given that this age group is the largest population of children present in active duty families (Clever & Segal, 2013). Picture books and early chapter books can be used with older children, as well. In addition, these books are more likely to be read by a parent with or to a child making them more likely to be utilized by a parent or counselor.

- The publication year was from 2000–2013. The selected books are those that were easily obtained through the Brigham Young University library or the use of the university interlibrary loan program. Because children's books go out of print relatively quickly, only recently published books were be used.

- Only books where the main character is a child, rather than the deployed person or the remaining parent, were analyzed to be consistent with this study's purpose—finding books to help children mediate, explore, and understand their emotions related to deployment of a parent.

- The books had the word(s) "military deployment," "military children," "military families," or other word variants and related words such as "deployment" and "armed forces" as one of their main subjects, themes, or keywords in a database or catalog search.

The books were selected from current websites for literature and children's literature and websites from professional organizations that recommend books for children. The following is a list of the websites that were searched: (a) the BYU Online Catalog was used with the classification of Juvenile Literature along with Children's Literature. (b) Children's Books in Print, (c) www.barnesandnoble.com, (d) www.amazon.com, (e) www.militaryfamilybooks.com, (f) www.myarmyonesource.com, and (g) the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database.

Using these websites and databases the following criteria were applied to find eligible books. Early chapter books were distinguished from chapter books written for adolescents and young adults by visual inspection. The first step was to examine the book itself. Early chapter books are between 40 and 90 pages in length and usually have the slim and short format of a novel, not the long and straight form of a picture book. Additional indicators of an early chapter book are the font size of the text and the proportion of page space that is filled with text. Early chapter books can be distinguished from chapter books for older children by using either the publisher's target audience or researching the reading level of the book from determined lexiles found on hwww.lexile.com. The lexile level was from BR (beginning reader), which is any book below the lowest level of the lexile chart, up to 820L, which is representative of the highest range of most third grade texts. This information is based on the information from the common core state standards for English (Common Core State Standards, 2012). Lexiles are a scientific way of matching children's reading skills with text demands (The Lexile Framework for Reading, 2014).

Each book was analyzed according to the identified coding variables. These variables included gender of main character (child in the story; MC) and deployed person (DP), the type of deployment (e.g., length, location), the type of emotion (e.g., sadness, anger, etc.) expressed by

the MC as a result of the deployment, resolution to the problems that the MC is experiencing, and type of strategy used to resolve the symptoms/consequences of the deployment.

Measures

A coding instrument entitled "Military Bibliotherapy Coding Instrument for Children's Books" was developed by the author of this study.   A coding instrument was developed to assist in the data extraction and analysis of the books.   This instrument was constructed based on a few previous studies (Moulton, 2009; Pajo & Stuart 2012).   The coding instrument for this study is included in Appendix B.   The coding sheet was piloted with one picture book with two independent raters.   The coding sheet received one revision wherein the category of interest level in the book information section was removed and an additional subcategory for Gender of MC was added; a variable entitled Unknown.   This category that addressed interest level of the book was difficult to establish clear guidelines, so it was deleted from the final version.

This instrument was tested just prior to the data-collection phase of this study.   One research assistant and the author of this study served as the coders for the content analysis.   A research assistant was trained in the use of this instrument by the author of the instrument.   The details of the rater training are found in the Procedures section below.   The coding instrument contained 28 items that cover a range of topics such as demographics of the book, demographics of the characters in the story, the type and length of the parent's military deployment, identification of the problem, and the problem resolution.   The first seven questions are free response and are related to identification of the book such as the title and author.   The next 19 questions are completed using multiple-choice answers for each question.   The last two questions are free response related to the problem resolution.   A problem or challenge resulting

from deployment was considered resolved if the DP returned home and no further display of challenges were assumed to continue on in time.

Procedures

The first step in the research was to identify eligible picture books and early chapter books. The list of books to study was found using an internet search of websites for military families as mentioned earlier. Twenty-three books were found that met the study requirements. All of the books met the description for picture books. The books were selected from current websites for literature and children's literature and websites from professional organizations that recommend books for children. The BYU Online Catalog was used with the classification of Juvenile Literature along with Children's Literature. Additionally, the following resources were also accessed: Children's Books in Print; [www. barnesandnoble.com]; [www.amazon.com]; Children's Literature Comprehensive Database; [www.militaryfamilybooks.com]; and [www.myarmyonesource.com].

Once the books were collected, they were analyzed using the Coding Instrument for Children's Books on Military Deployment by two independent raters (the primary researcher and a second rater) and a third rater who served to resolve coding disagreements. The second and third raters who assisted the primary researcher were trained by the author in the use of the coding instrument. The training consisted of reading one picture book together and jointly completing the coding instrument. Then the primary researcher and the second rater independently completed the coding instrument on a separate picture book, and their answers were discussed and differences agreed upon. Most discrepancies involved the prompts for determining race/ethnicity, age of MC, and phase of deployment. Therefore, two books were analyzed jointly by the two raters to ensure reliability in the use of the rating system. When

there were discrepancies between the two raters, a third party individual (the third coder) would code the item in question for final determination. When there were further questions, a discussion was conducted between the three raters to reach a consensus decision on the code.

All the eligible books were evaluated by two raters. The raters hold master's-level degrees or a master's-level degree candidate in field related to education and have experience with children's literature. During the course of this study, one of the two independent raters was unable to complete the project. The primary author became the second rater and a university professor became the independent rater to resolve discrepancies. Upon completion of the independent evaluations, the primary researcher compared the results to determine if discrepancies existed. The primary researcher met with the independent evaluator to come to consensus regarding any discrepancies.

Research Design

The design of this research was descriptive and a content analysis of children's literature related to military deployments. The sample of books were analyzed according to multiple variables relating to the aforementioned criterion to create a table that can be used by parents or mental health providers to select a specific book for a child's unique deployment situation (see Appendix A – Literature Review; Appendix B – Coding Instrument for Children's Books on Military Deployment; and Appendix C – Tables of Books Related to Military Deployment for Children). The tables include basic information, one chart has the characteristics of the book, and another contains the characteristics of the book as it relates to deployment. The analysis involved coding book content based on the coding instrument in Appendix B. The analysis reflected themes/topics that are found in the professional research literature as reported in the review of literature. The analysis also involved gathering basic information of interest to

parents and mental health professionals such as issues related to ambiguous loss, boundary ambiguity, behavioral changes (i.e., externalizing/internalizing behavior changes), relationship changes, and changes in mental health.

Content analysis for all the books in this sample was summarized in frequency counts and percentages. The following content areas were included in the tables: characteristics of the main character (i.e., human or animal, gender, age, and race), characteristics of the deployed person (i.e., human or animal, gender, age, race, and branch of military), approximate length of the deployment, type of problem encountered by the MC, type of resolution of problem by MC. Variables such as race of MC, race of DP, branch of service, and location of deployment were identified using the illustrations and written text of the story. For example, the pictures were used to determine race/ethnicity based on the color of the MC's skin and text was scanned for words or names linked to particular racial/ethnic groups.

After the coding of the selected books was complete and consensus has been reached regarding final coding of each item, a descriptive statistical summary was completed. Frequency distributions and relative frequency distributions were calculated on the date published, number of pages for picture books, reading, target age level, and type of book (fiction or nonfiction), and Table 1 – *Summary of Book Analysis* – contains the information from the content analysis.

Results

Research Question 1: Messages in the Books

What messages regarding military deployment, such as gender of main character and deployed person, type of deployment, effects of deployment, strategies for coping with deployment, and resolution to problems associated with deployment, are presented in children's

literature? Analysis of the books (*N*=23) provided evidence of messages that are present in military deployment–themed books for children. The variables analyzed were divided into several categories. The categories are variables describing the following: (a) the demographics of the books and the main character (MC) and deployed person (DP), (b) symptoms/consequences of deployment, and (c) strategies to manage symptoms/consequences.

Character portrayal. One book had three main characters. Therefore, any category that evaluates the MC will have an N equal to 25. The characters were human in the majority of the books (96%, n=22). Animals as the main character were in the minority and were present in 4% of the books (n=1).

Age of main character (MC). When analyzing the age of the main characters, the majority were in the age range of 6–8 years old (43%, *n*=10), followed by the 3–5-years-old age range (22%, *n*=5). The MC in the 9–11 age ranges was also present in the same number of books (22%, *n*=5). The smallest age group represented in the books was the 12+ age group, (13%, n=3).

Gender. With regard to gender, the majority of the main characters, (those characters through whose eyes the story was experienced), portrayed were male (60%, *n*=15); however, females were also frequently represented (36%, *n*=9) and the gender of one MC was unknown (4%). In regard to the gender of the DP, the great majority were male (76%, *n*=19), and females represented a much smaller portion of the gender of the DP (24%, *n*=6).

Race/Ethnicity. The analysis of race/ethnicity of the MC and DP was determined largely through the pictures or text cues in the book. The color of skin of the main characters was observed using the pictures and the names of the characters, is any were noted and scanned for clues to racial identify if possible. The determination of race or ethnicity was sometimes

Table 1

Summary of Book Analysis—Demographics and Characteristics

Category	Variable	No. of Books	Percentages
Main character (MC)	Human	22	96
Human or animal	Animal	1	4
Fiction/non fiction	Fiction	23	100
	Non-fiction	0	0
Age of MC	3-5 years	5	22
	6-8 years	10	43
	9-11 years	5	22
	Age ≥12 years	3	13
Gender of MC	Male	15	60
	Female	9	36
	Unknown	1	4
Gender of deployed parent	Male	19	76
	Female	6	24
Race of MC	White	15	60
	Unknown	5	20
	Mixed Group	2	8
	Black	2	8
	Hispanic	1	4
	Asian, PI	0	0
	Native American	0	0
	Other	0	0
Race of DP	White	15	60
	Unknown	5	20
	Mixed Group	2	8
	Black	2	8
	Hispanic	1	4
	Asian, PI	0	0
	Native American	0	0
	Other	0	0

impeded by difficulty determining difference in race based solely on pictures.   Therefore, many

MC and DP were categorized as mixed if race/ethnicity was not white but another race

determination was not obvious from text cues.   When the race of the MC could not be

determined, it was categorized as Unknown.

The majority of MC's were white (60%, n=15).   The race/ethnicity of some of the MCs

were unable to be determined and were rated as Unknown (20%, n=5).   The same number of

DP as MC were also white (60%, n=15).   The other race categories for the MC and DP were

represented in the literature as follows: Hispanic (4%, n=1), Black (8%, n=2), Mixed Group (8%,

n=2).   The remaining categories consisting of Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and

Other were not represented in the analyzed literature (0%, n=0).

Phase of deployment.   Table 2 lists the length, type, and description of deployment,

including the child's relationship to the deployed loved one and other characters listed in the

books.   When analyzing the books for the phase of deployment, these characteristics were

arranged in the following general categories; notification/pre-deployment, departure, beginning

of deployment, middle of deployment, end of deployment, reunion, reintegration, and unknown.

Unknown was used when it was unclear which phase was addressed.   Some books addressed

more than one phase of deployment so the total number for this subset does not equal 23.   The

majority of the books covered the beginning, middle and end of the deployment.   The middle of

deployment was determined if the DP was gone on a deployment and there was no mention of

the initial departure or impending return.   Middle of deployment was also assumed to be present

if the storyline covered the DP being absent from the family and lasting through to reunion.

Notification/pre-deployment was addressed in 32% of the books (n=7), departure was addressed

in 64% (n=14), the beginning of the deployment was addressed in 59% (n=13), the middle of the

Table 2

Length, Type, and Description of Deployment; Child's Relationships with Other Characters

Category	Variable	No. of books	Percentages
Length of deployment	Unknown	16	74
	6 months or less	1	4
	7-12 months	5	22
	13+months	0	0
Phase of deployment	notification	7	32
	departure	14	64
	beginning deployment	13	59
	middle deployment	17	77
	end of deployment	16	73
	reunion	14	64
	reintegration	0	0
	unknown	0	0
Location of deployment	Unknown	15	65
	Inside US	0	0
	Outside US, non- war zone	0	0
	Outside US, war zone		
		7	35
Branch of service	Army	10	40
	Unknown	7	28
	Navy	4	16
	Air Force	2	8
	Marines	1	4
	Army National Guard	1	4
	Coast Guard	0	0
	Air National Guard	0	0
	Navy Reserve	0	0
	Air Reserve	0	0
	Army Reserve	0	0
Other Child Present	No	12	52
	Yes	11	48
Other Adults Present	No	4	17
	Yes	19	83
Relationship of Other Adult	Father	15	47
	Other	6	19
	Teacher	4	13
	Grandparent	3	9
	Mother	1	3
	Unknown	1	3
	Other School	1	3
	Neighbor	1	3
	Aunt/uncle	0	0

deployment in 77% (n=17), the end of the deployment in 73% (n=16), the reunion phase in 64% (n=14), reintegration phase or the phase was unknown was not addressed in any of the selected books (0%, n=0).

Location of deployment.   Information from the text and pictures was used to determine the location of the deployment.   The majority of books did not specify a location for the deployment, (65%, n=15).   Not one of the analyzed books specified a location in a war zone, inside or outside the United States.   Of the remaining books that specified a location, (35%, n=8) the location was noted as outside of the United States and in a war zone.

Length of deployment.   Information from the text was used to determine the length of deployment.   In the majority of the books, the length of deployment was of an unknown time frame with 74% (n=17) assigned to the unknown category.   One book described a deployment of 6 months or less (4%, n=1), five books described a deployment of 7–12 months (22%, n=5), and no books described a deployment of more than 12 months (0%, n=0).

Branch of service represented.   Branch of service was determined using text and picture clues.   Raters looked for cues in the type of uniform worn by the DP or the type of vehicles in the pictures as well as cues from the text.   The branches of service of the deployed person representation were split among the branches with 28% (n=7) being unknown, 40% (n=10) being in the Army, 8% (n=2) being in the Air Force, 16% (n=4) being in the Navy, 4% (n=1) being in the Marines, 4% (n=1) being in the Army National Guard.   The following branches of service were not represented in this sample, Air National Guard, Navy Reserve, Air Reserve, and Army Reserve.

Other children or adults.   The presence of other children or adults in addition to the MC and DP was analyzed.   The presence of other children in the stories was split almost evenly

with 52% (n=12) of the books not including another child in the story and 48% (n=11) including

the presence of another child.   The presence of other adults was represented differently with the

great majority of stories having another adult represented with 83% (n=19) having another adult

and 17% not having another adult represented (*n*=4).

The adult to MC relationships were examined.   The total number of other adults in the

stories is greater than the total number of books in the sample because some books contained

more than one other adult.   Seventy-six percent of the deployed persons were males; it cannot

be assumed, however, that they were all fathers.   For example, in one book the DP was an older

brother.   The breakdown of the relationships is as follows: in 5% of the books the mother was

represented as the other adult present (*n*=1), in 5% (*n*=1) of the sample the other adult

relationship was unknown; the other adult was identified as the father in 68% of the samples

(*n*=15), the grandparent was identified in 14% (*n*=3), a teacher was identified in 18% (*n*=4),

other school person identified in 5% (*n*=1), a neighbor in 5% (*n*=1), and other adults were

identified in 27% (*n*=6).   In one instance the other adult relationship was that of the DP's fellow

military unit members.   Aunt or uncle relationships were not identified in any book in this

sample.

Responses related to deployment.   The symptoms or consequences of the deployment

as experienced by the MC were analyzed, and the percentages do not sum to 100% due to the

stories containing more than one issue related to deployment.   Therefore, the total number for

this variable is greater than 23.   Sadness was represented in 65% (*n*=15) of the books.   Other

symptoms were represented in 52% (*n*=12, in this sample, being scared was represented in 35%

(*n*=8), being worried about the safety of the DP and crying were represented in 30% (*n*=7, of the

sample, fighting at home was represented in 17% (*n*=4), feeling unsure was present in 13%

(*n*=3), physical ailments were represented in 9% (*n*=2), and problems with homework were represented in 4% (*n*=1).

The high number of other symptoms reported indicated that the established categories of the coding instrument were not enough to cover the range of issues related to deployment that is present in this sample of children's literature.   The other symptoms/consequences were pride of DP's military service, mad/aggression, lonely, and mean or stubborn.

Responses experienced by the DP.   For this analysis, the symptoms and challenges that were experienced by the DP were noted.   These symptoms/challenges were reported in nine of the books in this sample (41%).

Of these books, four contained references to the DP missing their family (44%), one book (11%) reported homesickness by the DP, one book (11%) reported the DP being proud of the family that is at home, one book (11%) reported the DP is sad, and one book (11%) reported that the DP grumbles and groans about the upcoming deployment.

MC strategies for dealing with deployment.   The majority of the books discussed finding ways to keep in touch with the DP (82%, *n*=18) as the primary way to deal with the deployment.   Talking to an adult appeared in 45% (*n*=10), drawing pictures appeared in 36% (*n*=8), physical activity appeared in 18% (*n*=4).   Journaling was addressed in 9% (*n*=2), and other strategies were discussed in 68% (*n*=15).   The other strategies were praying (*n*=3, 13%), keeping pictures in view (*n*=4, 17%), making videos (*n*=1, 4%), having a private place to think and have quiet time (*n*=1, 4%).   Attending family readiness or support meetings was mentioned in two books (9%).   The Other category also included expressing pride of the DP (*n*=5, 22%), with the following categories being mentioned in one book each (4% each) keeping pictures in

sight, keeping normal routines, having a wishing tree with yellow ribbons, washing a DP older brother's car each week.

Problem resolution. Finally, analysis was conducted to determine if the symptoms/consequences of the deployment were resolved. Resolution was determined to have occurred if the DP returned home to the MC or there was mention of issues/symptoms going away. The majority of the symptoms were considered resolved with the return of the DP, and resolution was present in 61% (*n*=14) with 39% (*n*=9) not having a resolution in the book with implication that the symptoms/consequences were ongoing. Of the books that did not have a clear cut problem resolution, seven (78%) mentioned that the MC had learned coping skills to continue using for the duration of the problem, and two (22%) mentioned that it is okay to feel sad.

Research Question 2: Children's Problems Reflected in the Books

In relation to what has been reported in the research literature, how well does this sample of books reflect the problems children have with their parent's deployment? Specifically, the researcher compared characteristics from the selected sample of books with information provided in the professional literature. These characteristics included the gender of the main child character, the gender of the deployed parent, and the symptoms experienced by children of deployed parents.

Gender. In this sample of books, the gender of the MC was almost evenly split, with boys representing slightly more than half (60%) of the main characters. According to research literature, boys are more likely to experience problems with a loved one's deployment (Jensen et al., 1996). In addition, the great majority of deployed persons are fathers, and in this sample fathers were represented in 76% of the sample books.

Symptoms experienced by MC.   The current research presents many symptoms that include loneliness, school problems, externalizing problems, and internalizing problems (Flake et al., 2009).   The sample books had sadness being represented in 65% (*n*=15) of the books. Being worried about the safety of the DP and crying were represented in 52% (*n*=12) of the sample, being scared was represented in 35% (*n*=8), physical ailments were represented in 9% (*n*=2).   These represent internalizing problems children may have during deployment.

Table 3

Number and Percent of Books Addressing Emotional and Behavioral Challenges of Children Coping with Parent's Military Deployment, Coping Strategies, and Resolution of Challenges

Category	Variable	No. of Books	Percentages
Symptoms of MC	Sadness	15	65
	Other	12	52
	Worried about DP safety	8	35
	Scared	7	30
	Crying	7	30
	Fighting at home	4	17
	Feeling unsure	3	13
	Physical ailments	2	9
	Problems w/schoolwork	1	4
	Fighting at school	0	0
Strategies in book	Finding ways to keep up	18	82
	Other	15	68
	Finding ways to keep up	10	45
	Drawing pictures	8	36
	Physical activity	4	18
	Journaling	2	9
	Reading a book	0	0
Symptoms brought to resolution	No	9	39
	Yes	14	61

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze content in children's books related to military deployment. The information in the books in this study was compared to the current research literature on deployment effects on children (e.g., depression, aggression, loneliness, anxiety, and worry about deployed parent's safety; see Table 3). The information has been collected into tables found in Appendix C to help parents, health care practitioners, and educational professionals select deployment-themed books to read with children who are experiencing the deployment of a loved one.

Connections to Research Literature

When comparing the age group represented in the books with the research literature, more books were geared for 6–8 year olds (second most common age group) than preschool age, which is the most common age group represented in military children. More books were geared toward the white population, which reflects the predominant race currently in the military (Clever & Segal, 2013). However, the black population was underrepresented in the books. Blacks make up 16.9% of the active duty population but were only represented in 8% of the books. That translates into 2 books with a black MC and 21 books with characters of other races. This low number of books matches the current dearth of children's books currently being published. In 2013, 3% of the children's books published that year were geared toward black children (Myers, 2014).

The most prevalent theme found in the books was that of describing ways that the main character and the deployed person can stay in touch. Being scared, worried about the safety of the deployed person, and crying were also found in almost half of the books analyzed. These types of behaviors are descriptive of internalizing behaviors described in the research literature. Fewer books were identified as being descriptive of externalizing behaviors. Three books did

mention conflict at home and one book mentioned difficulty at school.   This is interesting because there has been some research into the difficulties that children experience when a loved one is deployed (Drummet, Coleman, & Cable, 2003), but the representation of this topic was only found in one book.   There were several books that mentioned other symptoms of deployment that were not addressed by the coding instrument.

One interesting theme to note is that many of the books conveyed the theme of pride or being proud of the military member serving on a deployment as a source of comfort or as lessening some of the effects of sadness during a deployment.   This theme is not mentioned in the current literature, but it is present in many of the books in this study.   Pride appeared to be a positive coping strategy.   In the stories it was conveyed in terms of being proud of the DP, being proud that the DP is helping other people, being proud that the DP is sacrificing family time to be of service to their country.   This was not viewed in a negative light but as a positive strategy in which to view the deployment of a loved one.

A wide range of strategies were present in the available books.   They included such strategies as finding ways to keep in touch (82%), followed by talking to an adult, drawing pictures, expressing pride, physical activity, keeping pictures of DP in view, praying, journaling, and attending family support group meetings.   Interestingly, no book mentioned reading a book as a coping strategy.

In addition to the valuable information gleaned from the books, there was also valuable information that was notably absent from the children's books.   It is noteworthy to recognize that no books represented the deployment of Air National Guard personnel or any personnel from the reserve components.   Additionally an important finding was that no books addressed reintegration with the DP or how that may happen.   No book addressed multiple deployments.

No book addressed the possible death or injury of the DP; although, being scared was reported in some books.   This last category may have been absent due to the young age of the target audience and whether such a serious topic is developmentally appropriate.

Implications for Practice

Preparing for deployment is helpful to children and bibliotherapy can be used to help (Watanabe & Jensen, 2000).   Parents and practitioners may be able to use the information in this study to select books that fit the unique circumstances of their children based on gender and age of child, gender of the deployed person, and the challenges being faced by their children. Children may identify with characters in a book and feel more comfortable talking about the characters in the book.   When parents read to their children it may provide an avenue to open dialogues between the parent and child and help to foster a strong relationship bond to assist in the resilience needed to go through a military deployment.

As with parents, this study provides information for educators and mental health providers on children's books related to deployment gathered into one location where professionals can select books that fit a student's unique situation in relation to deployment. The books may be used individually with a student or read aloud to a small group or to an entire class either to help students currently experiencing a loved one on a deployment or to understand the challenges a classmate may be experiencing and foster empathy in the classroom setting.

Given that bibliotherapy can be a useful method of support for a variety of situations, such as anxiety or depression, it is likely that bibliotherapy is useful for children experiencing a deployment of a loved one.   Researchers studying the effects of deployment on children often recommend finding ways of offering support (Jensen et al., 1996).   Professionals may find the information presented in the tables in this study helpful in selecting the appropriate book for the

child with concerns related to military deployment.   Practitioners may also find the information useful in recommending books for parents to read to their children.

Limitations

One area of limitation of this study was that the coding instrument has not been validated and some components of the coding instrument require further clarification.   It was difficult at times to obtain an objective measure of the phase of deployments, such as when one phase ended and another began.   This presented difficulty in accurately determining the phase addressed in each book.   Another limitation with the coding instrument was the question addressing resolution.   The resolution was often determined based on inference from the text and pictures rather than an explicit resolution appearing in the story.

Another limitation to this study was the sample size and access to books.   However, the researcher did spend considerable time searching for books to include.   Given that this focused and time-intensive search only identified 23 books suitable for this study, it is likely that parents and mental health professionals would have difficulty identifying other books.   The sample was limited to picture books.   Chapter books and books geared for older ages were not studied at this time and would be a recommendation for further research.

Additionally, there were a number of non-fiction books geared toward children that address the deployment topic but they were excluded from this analysis due to factors such as no main character or story plot.   These books may prove very valuable.   Publishers need to find and publish books that address a wider variety of content, such as books that are more racially diverse, books for Air National Guard and reserve components, books addressing multiple deployments, and books addressing the possible death or injury and reintegration challenges a family may face.   The Air National Guard or reserve components are important to include in

these stories as they may have unique challenges compared to the active duty families (Clever & Segal, 2013). These military branches often have the unique dynamic of the remaining military family not living close to other military members or installations and being able to use them as a support system during a deployment. The absence of these types of books is as important in this study as the information that was found within the books.

Implications for Future Research

The coding instrument was developed for this study, and further research into its usefulness with other books related to deployment is needed. This study was limited to identifying books for young children; future research could identify and describe books for older youth and teens. As previously mentioned in this section, the presence of pride for the military member's service was present in many of the books in this sample, and yet it is not mentioned in the research literature. This may be an intriguing theme to study and examine whether expressing pride and discussing the purpose for the military service assists in the reduction of symptoms for children.

Another possible research study area is to research the effectiveness of bibliotherapy specifically with children during a military deployment. There have been many studies on the effectiveness of bibliotherapy for other challenges. During the course of this study, no research specifically related to military deployment and the effectiveness of bibliotherapy with military children was found in the research literature.

Additionally, future studies could consider describing and exploring the background information (e.g., experience with the military) of authors and illustrators of children's literature targeting military children. Future studies could also consider a way to evaluate the quality of

the literature (i.e., well-written, engaging stories that are developmentally appropriate).   The

content has been captured in these books but the quality of the content was not evaluated.

Conclusions

This study extracted descriptive information and analyzed content in 23 children's books

related to military deployment using a coding instrument entitled, "Military Bibliotherapy

Coding Instrument for Children's Books," developed for this study.   Additionally, the content

from the books was compared to themes found in current research literature.   The books were

not as racially diverse as the military population.   Books for black children were

underrepresented with only 8% of books having black characters compared to the 16.9% black

population in active duty military service.   The most prevalent response to the deployment of a

loved one described was sadness with 65% of the books describing this response.   Finding ways

to keep the main character and the deployed person connected was the most prevalent coping

strategy described in the books (82%).   A surprising find is that pride in the deployed person's

military service was described as a coping strategy in some of the books although it was not

found in the research literature.   All phases of deployment were described with the exception of

reintegration.   No books addressed this important phase of deployment.   Information from this

analysis will assist parents, educators, and mental health professionals in selecting books for

bibliotherapy use that align with the unique circumstances and characteristics of military

children.   Information presented will also inform and encourage publishers to seek out and

publish books to more adequately meet the demographics and meet the unique experiences faced

by military children.

By comparing the information in the books with current research and considering things

that are helpful to children, parents, and professionals in choosing books for a particular

situation, the caring adults may be better able to discuss, explain, and reduce challenging

symptoms children may be experiencing surrounding the deployment of a loved one.   The

information tables resulting from this study of children's books related to military deployment

may become a valued resource.

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APPENDIX A: Review of Literature

In this review of literature, the following topics will be discussed: metrics of deployment, effects of deployment on families, effects of deployment on children such as ambiguous loss, efforts to help military families, and bibliotherapy.   Families and children are exposed to stresses every day.   Some of the stresses that children may experience are school issues, relationship problems, poverty, and crime.   Children and families can also be exposed to stress caused by current events in our society.   One group experiencing stress, brought on by world current events, is the children in military families (Drummet, Coleman, & Cable, 2003).

Metrics of Deployment

Metrics of deployment can be described as the standards or logistical requirements of deployment.   In regard to this research, only the metric of troop numbers in a deployed status is considered.   The term *deployed* means a tour of temporary duty for a military member away from home station and family.   Currently, using the number of troop-years deployed has become a way for tracking troops in deployments.

A troop-year is a metric used to measure cumulative deployment length.   For example, one troop-year is equivalent to any of the following cases: one soldier spending 12 months deployed, two soldiers deployed for six months (each), one soldier deployed for eight months and another soldier deployed for four months, and 12 soldiers deployed for one month each (Baiocchi, 2013, p. 3).

The diversity of military families can be readily seen in the demographics of race.   In regard to race, 68.9% of active duty personnel are white, 16.9% are black, 11.2% are Hispanic, 3.8% are Asian, and 9.6% are other races.   It has been reported that military has a higher proportion of black people than the civilian work force (Clever & Segal, 2013).   An important

concept to study in children's literature is whether the main characters in the books reflect this diversity.

The Global War on Terror has become a part of American society. More people were utilized for Operation Desert Storm than any other time since the Vietnam War (Jensen, Martin, & Watanabe, 1996). Operation Desert Storm took place during the early 1990s. In 2009 there were 2.4 million people serving in the Armed Forces in active duty status and an additional 1 million serving in the reserves. Those active duty and reserve members have 3.36 million children, which are impacted by a parent's deployment. It has more recently been estimated that about 2 million children have been impacted by a deployed parent (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011). The current active duty force is expected to remain constant through 2015, although not solely in the Middle East. The current force is being reduced in the Middle East and reassigned to other areas of global need (McLeary, 2012).

Deployment affects many people in addition to active duty military members. Of those currently serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, about 31% are reservists/guard members (Hosek, 2005). More recently, in 2011, the Department of Defense reported that there are 2.2 million volunteer services members, which are the makeup of the US military volunteer force. This includes both active duty and reserve/guard troops. Additionally, they report that 2 million members have been deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq and that 55% of these members are married and 40% of them have at least two children. These reservists are required to deploy more frequently and for lengthier durations than their active duty counterparts (Quadrennial Defense Review, 2002).

In a study conducted by Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, and Blum (2010), slightly less than half of a sample of high school and middle school parents living near a military base

reported that they have a parent who has deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan.   Almost 90% had a parent who has been deployed in a variety of worldwide locations.

Additionally, since September 11, 2001, over 2 million service members have deployed during Operation Iraqi or Enduring Freedom (Iraq & Afghanistan), (Department of Defense [DoD], 2011).   Of the 2 million service members, 55% are married and 40% have 2 children. There are multiple ways that deployment impacts service men and women and their families: multiple deployments, combat injuries and problems of reintegration reach the families as well as the service members (DoD, 2011).

The 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States forever changed how the United States utilizes its military.   Reservists are utilized more in the conflicts overseas and at home now than in the past.   In 2008, reservists comprised 31% of the force in the Middle East.   Since reservists play more of a central role in the overseas contingency operations, they are deployed more frequently and for longer deployments (Faber, Willerton, Clymer, MacDermid, & Weiss, 2008).   These more frequent and longer deployments affect many families.

Effects of Deployment for Families

Military families are very similar to any other type of family in that it has its inherent strengths and weaknesses.   The military family has these inherent strengths to draw on in times of stress and may not always be in a complete state of stress while preparing or experiencing a deployment; Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass, and Grass (2007) found that youth (ages 12–18) demonstrate a great deal of resiliency and maturity during their parents' deployment.   However, children and their families are still susceptible to the stresses created by deployment such as the problems associated with separation from a parent, the possible injury or illness of a parent, and the potential for parental injury or death (Cozza, Chun, & Polo, 2005).

While all families experience stress, the greatest stress military families experience occurs during the deployment (National Military Family Association, 2005).   The families of currently deployed personnel reported more intervening stressors than families of nondeployed personnel.   Separations related to deployments are identified as a major stressful event for military families (Bell & Schumm, 1999; Faber et al., 2008; Wood, Scarville, & Gravino, 1995).

Stress for Those Remaining at Home

No one feels the effects of deployment more than the members of these families (Rush, 2007).   Factors that make deployment stressful on the at-home spouse and other family members include loneliness, financial insecurity, children's discipline, and changing family roles (Di Nola, 2008).   Additionally, family members left at home need to manage feelings of missing the deployed person (loneliness and sadness).   They also have fears for the marriage and often find they have increased responsibilities (Rosen, Furtrand, & Martin, 2000).   One study found that up to 80% of spouses with a deployed spouse on a peacekeeping mission reported loneliness and sadness at least once a week during the deployment.   And, the parents self-reported that the remaining spouses had higher levels of depression (Rosen et al., 2000).

Financial difficulties are sometimes experienced because the deployed spouse may receive a pay cut when they leave their civilian job to serve in their Guard responsibilities.   This situation creates a loss of income for the family during the deployment (DiNola, 2008). Coupled with financial insecurities, another stressful factor is that the responsibility for home repairs often changes to the at-home spouse along with the responsibility for the yard work, child care, and transportation needs of the family.

Reservists

The result of using reservists more frequently than in the past, is that the life of the military family is impacted in a way not fully recognized at the beginning of the Global War on Terror (also known as the Overseas Contingency Operation). In addition to the above mentioned stressors to military families, reservists often have additional stressors. The more frequent and lengthier deployments pose a unique challenge to reservists and their families when compared to active duty military members (Segal & Segal, 2003). The explanation for this challenge can be evidenced by the social systems perspective, which indicates that the family is a multifaceted set of interacting relationships influenced by the larger social perspective (Berk, 2006). Military families reported less nurturance, less family cohesiveness, and more internalizing and externalizing behavior in children when a parent is deployed (Kelley, 1994).

Reservists' difficulties during deployment may have several explanations. Women about to deploy may experience heightened levels of parenting stress (Kelley, Herzog-Simmer, & Harris, 1994). Reservists and especially their families have a tendency to have difficulty accessing military services. They often do not live near a military installation and have less access to resources geared toward the military family. Family stress can be enhanced or mitigated by where the family lives in relation to a military installation. Some families reported that that those who lived on the base or in areas with high military family populations experience less stress than those who live in areas where there were fewer military families (Segal & Segal, 2003).

Active duty members and their families often live near military installations and have easier access to social support networks. They also tend to be more familiar with how to access military benefits. While active duty families are most likely more accustomed to the periodic

absence of the military member, reservists' families most likely are not accustomed to deployments and may have a more difficult time during the deployment (Faber et al., 2008). Reservist families are also often less aware of what services they are entitled to and how to access them (Segal & Segal, 2003).   Perhaps they are less aware due to their further proximity to a military installation.

Cycle of Emotions During Phases of Deployment

The military deployment has been studied, and it has been found that there are phases of deployment, and a cycle of emotions has been identified to exist in those families experiencing deployment.   Each phase of this cycle can create stress in the lives of military family members. The cycle phases are the notification of the deployment; the departure, beginning, middle, end of deployment; and reunion and reintegration.   Families have reported that the most stressful times in the cycle are at the beginning and middle of the deployment (National Military Family Association [NMFA] Report, 2005).

Studies demonstrate that military families experience stress related to deployment.   In a survey of 101 participants on the family of military spouses of deployed Army soldiers, it was found that the deployment creates a strain on the family.   Each phase of the deployment cycle is an opportunity when stress levels can be high for children and spouses (Flake, Davis, Johnson, & Middleton, 2009).

This heightened level of family stress can create problems for the children in those families.   In their post-hoc analyses, Jensen et al., (1996) found that children's difficulties during deployment are best understood as a family problem.   The findings demonstrate that children who have higher reported symptoms of depression during deployment also have a parent/caretaker that reports higher levels of depression (Jensen et al., 1996).   When parents are

stressed during deployment, there is a family-level risk for a diminished ability to effectively cope with the stress of deployment (Lester et al., 2010).

Effects on Children

Children may develop problems related to their exposure to stress created by military deployment of a parent; coping skills of youth are only developing at this time (Huebner et al., 2007). The requirements of deployment placed on the youth compound adolescent developmental load since deployment taxes the coping skills of the remaining family members and exacerbate normal developmental challenges of children (Rush & Akos, 2007). Children may develop problems related to their exposure to stress created by military deployment of a parent For children the areas that deployment stress is evidenced in are school problems, externalizing problems, and internalizing problems. From the Watanabe and Jensen (2000) study, we see that caregiver coping skills with deployment has considerable effects on the family system in all the areas mentioned above.

School Problems

Military children's progress in school has been studied to determine if deployments negatively impact their academic achievement or school behavior. Some studies have concluded that there can be a significant impact on these areas. Lyle (2006) studied the impact of a caregiver's deployment on children's academic achievement. His participants were children age 6–19 living in Texas between 1997 and 1998. Texas was selected because it is a state that has conducted regular academic testing throughout the students' school career, and it has a high number of military children, as well. This study compared the child's math scores with the caregiver's deployment, which was determined by the presence of hostile fire pay on the caregiver's pay records. Hostile fire pay is only given during the months a member is actually

deployed.   This study found that officers' children did better than enlisted children by a score 5–6 points higher.   The assessment used in this study is the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, with scores ranging from 0 to 100.   A test score of 70 means the student has met the standards to pass that grade level.   This test is used to determine a student's ability to graduate from their current grade.

Lyle's study found that a child's math score declines as the duration of the absence increases.   Mother and father absence tended to be equal in effect; however, sometimes the mother's absence effect was stronger, most noticeably when a single-parent mother was deployed.   Absence of the deployed caregiver has stronger effects for younger children. Children with an absent single parent scored worse than an absent married parent.   These children experienced a 1.36-point decline when the father was gone and a 5.07-point decline when the mother was deployed.   For children of enlisted parents, their average score in the "1–2 month-gone" period was 77.21.   When the time period moves to the greater than the 3-month range, the average score is 75.91.   For officers' children, their scores range from 82.56 in the 1–2-month time period and then dropped to 80.91 in the greater than 3-month absent range.   These point declines are important because they represent the academic achievement of the child, and if they are performing poorly and have trouble in school, it can lead to poor attitudes toward academic achievement in the future.   A child who falls behind in one school year may fall behind in other years.

Other researchers conducted 24 focus groups to gather information on the perceptions that school teachers and counselors have regarding the impact that deployment has on the students in their schools and the differences between active duty and reserve/guard families in regard to deployment (Chandra, Martin, Hawkins, & Richardson, 2010).   These school personnel

perceive that many military families, including the children, cope fairly well with the demands of a parent gone on a military deployment.   However, they also reported that they assisted a significant number of students that were having difficulties related to their parent's deployment. The school staff felt that the difficulties from deployment negatively affected the children at school.

Additionally, the children from reserve/guard families faced additional challenges because they were often in a school with very few other military children and the school staff had little experience helping children during deployment.   One counselor reported that the students in reserve/guard families can feel very isolated and alone in their experience.   They often do not know of other military families, and this adds to the child's feelings of isolation.   School staff reported that the student's feelings of sadness and loneliness often lead to problems with peer relations and classroom disruption of activities.   It was also reported that school staff sometimes witnessed a decline in academic performance toward the beginning of a deployment (Chandra et al., 2010).

Child Externalizing Problems

Military children may show symptoms of the stress of deployment at home and/or at school.   In a qualitative study conducted at Johns Hopkins, school staff members reported that since the Iraq war began, they noticed more externalizing behavioral problems among military youth (Mmari, Roche, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2008).   In another qualitative study from Johns Hopkins, school staff members reported that the tension in the home during deployment of a loved one could often be reflected in the students' behavior at the school (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Child Internalizing Problems

Studies have demonstrated the effects of deployment on children and it appears that boys and young children seem to be especially susceptible to the effects of stress reaction to deployment. Rarely, however, do these symptoms reach the pathological stage (Jensen et al., 1996). Despite that finding that the symptoms of deployment-related stress does not reach a pathological level, other studies have found that up to one-third of military children were reported to be at high risk for psychosocial difficulties (Jensen et al., 1996). The significant predictor reported in this study for the high risk of psychosocial morbidity (or difficulty) was the remaining spouse's level of parenting stress. Support from the military, family, and the community can help mitigate this stress. Since the same amount of support is not required by all families, all military families should be offered resources and have them accessible (Jensen et al., 1996).

Some studies have been conducted more than 15 years ago during Desert Storm/Gulf War. A summary of studies from the time period before the current overseas military operations demonstrates that a child's self-report of depressive and anxiety symptoms increased in relation to the recent absence of the father (Jensen et al., 1996).

Deployment is often a time of great stress due to safety concerns, prolonged and repeated absence, and emotional upheaval in the family. Some of the respondents in a study of military families reported that the child may feel "overwhelmed, sad, anxious, clingy, have increased somatic complaints, or exhibit increased aggressive behavior" (Flake et al., 2009, p. 273). Additionally, parental and child stress has been found to be more than twice the national norm. About one-half of the parents reported parenting stress at the clinically significant level. The

results demonstrate that one of the most important predictors of child stress during deployment is the level of parental stress (Flake et al., 2009).

The number of children at risk for internalizing problems is two and a half times the national level and is at higher levels than historical military samples (Flake et al., 2009).   Two million children, cumulatively, are impacted by deployment.   One study found that children who had a parent deployed displayed modestly elevated levels of child depression, yet no differences were found in anxiety levels or parental report of child behavior problems (Jensen et al., 1996).

However, one-half of the spouses in the survey by Flake et al. (2009) reported high levels of stress and that significantly impacted the child's ability to cope.   The children showed the impact in areas of internalizing symptoms: anxiety, frequent crying, and worrying (Flake et al., 2009).

Focus group participants consisting of children ages 12–18 years who were attending a National Military Association camp for adolescents and had a parent deployed at the time of the study reported changes in mental health and increased family conflict during the period of deployment.   These changes and increased conflict suggest that adolescents need assistance in appropriately externalizing the situation and normalizing their feelings (Huebner et al., 2007).

Kelley et al. (2001) report that children whose mothers are deployed have higher rates of internalizing behaviors than children of mothers from the civilian community.   This research reported common themes: tension at home, strained peer relationships, adapting to new school or home environments, and academic challenges.   Tension at home was often increased when children needed to manage more adult emotions and responsibilities related to role changes and safety concerns of the deployed family member.   The study reported that adolescents were more

likely to assume more responsibilities and adjust to increased independence.   Many reported that emotional and physical demands are increased during deployment, and it is difficult to manage.   These demands may not be developmentally appropriate for the child, making the stress even more noticeable to the child or parent (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Jensen et al. (1996) studied children's responses to parental separation during Operation Desert Storm, comparing military children by dividing them into two groups: children with a deployed parent and children without a deployed parent.   The study involved 383 children and their remaining caregiver living on a military post near Washington, DC.   The children completed self-reports and parents completed the parental-report instruments.   Results indicated that the children experienced elevated self-report of depression, as did their parents compared to the non-deployed group.   However, deployment rarely provoked pathological levels of symptoms in otherwise healthy children.   Therefore, these researchers recommend that for persistent or pervasive pathology, professionals should investigate something other than deployment as a cause.   Results of this study also found that boys and younger children appear to be especially vulnerable to the effects of deployment.   Children reported elevated levels of depression during the deployment of one parent.

Related to the impact of the emotional state of the caregiver on the youth, an adolescent's family environment also influences their level of stress and ability to cope.   Youth in the Jensen et al. (1996) study reported changes in daily routines and behavior changes in school.   In daily routines they often experienced more responsibility in the care of younger siblings, more chores around the home, and less supervision from the remaining caregiver.   All these changes can lead to changes in school with less time for assignments and fewer social interactions than before deployment.   The authors suggested that youth might withdraw from social events that they

used to attend because of home responsibilities or the feeling that no else understands their situation.   They can feel isolated in their experience with deployment.

Another study investigated whether some children and/or families were likely to experience negative effects of deployment.   The children ranged in age from 4 to 17.   Age appeared to be a factor in the intensity of the symptoms with younger children showing the greatest increase in internalizing symptoms (Jensen et al, 1996).   In addition to age, there were also gender differences in the results.   They found that boys were more likely to experience increased symptoms than girls.   Their findings emphasize that deployment is related to modest increase in children's depressive symptomology, but the results are well below clinical cutoffs. The functioning of the child and parent are closely intertwined but do not indicate a causal relationship.   Since a great majority of deployed parents were fathers, boys may be vulnerable to the loss of the father in the home (Jensen et al., 1996).

Changes in mental health are also reported, with reported changes relating to feelings of depression.   It appeared that the youth in this study were sensitive to the mental health state of the remaining caregiver, and if that caregiver was exhibiting depressive symptoms, then the child was highly affected with emotional outbursts and tendency to act out.   There was often increased conflict between the child and the non-deployed parent.   Additionally, there was an overall increase in the emotional intensity among the family members.   The youth also reported a greater tendency to act out toward others and have a lowered ability for restraining their emotional outbursts (Huebner et al., 2007).

Lester et al. (2010) conducted a study of emotional and behavioral adjustment problems of children with active duty parents currently deployed or who had recently returned from a deployment.   The outcomes of child adjustment were examined as they related to the level of

parental distress and the months of deployment.   The number of children in the study reporting

significant symptoms of anxiety was one-third of the 232 respondents (Lester et al., 2010).

Lester et al. (2010) reported that children's levels of distress are linked to parental distress, and

those children can have complex reactions to deployment.   This research found that in both

groups of children, currently deployed and recently returned, the children report significantly

higher levels of anxiety symptoms when compared to local norms.

Ambiguous Loss

A concept that is present in the experiences of the military family when someone is

deployed is that of ambiguous loss.   Boss (2007) explains ambiguous loss is a loss that

remains unclear.   The premise of the ambiguous loss theory is that uncertainty or a lack of

information about the whereabouts or status of a loved one as absent or present, as dead or alive,

is traumatizing for most individuals, couples, and families.   The ambiguity "freezes the grief

process" (Boss, 2007, p. 105).   The grief is unresolved (Boss, 1999).   Since the grief process is

stalled, it "prevents cognition, thus blocking coping and decision-making processes.   Closure is

impossible.   Family members have no other option but to construct their own truth about the

status of the person who is absent in mind or body".   Lacking the information to explain their

loss, they "have no choice but to live with the paradox of absence and presence" (Boss, 2007, p.

105).

Not only may the ambiguity of the absence bring change in the relationships the military

family members have with each other but it may also change the relationships the family has

with friends and neighbors.   The people who could have been a support for the family often

spend less time in the relationship because they do not know how to act or what to say to these

families.   The meaning of the loss is unclear and people become immobilized in the process of

both coping and grieving.   Ambiguous loss can create feelings of uncertainty, hopelessness, and confusion in a family and can lead to depression, guilt, anxiety, and immobilization (Boss, 2004).   Ambiguous loss is, therefore, a relational problem, not a psychiatric problem (Boss, 2007; Gergen, 2006, as cited in Boss, 2007).   For example, Boss (2007) made the following statement:

> The symptoms may be individual, resembling those of complicated grief, or depression, anxiety, and ambivalence. . . . The family's ability to find coherence and meaning in the ambiguity surrounding the absence and presence of a loved one is impaired.   (p. 106–107)

Ambiguous loss theory is a relational theory and therefore we study its effects on the child within the context of family relationships.   So, within the context of the military family, one area that can make things difficult for family members (e.g., children) is the constant thoughts about the deployed service member.   With these thoughts, one of the biggest stressors seems to be the thoughts of all the unknowns in the deployment situation and the lack of control over the situation (Faber et al., 2008).   The unknowns in the deployment situation are such things as the lack of knowing exactly where the person will be serving, whether they will be hurt or not, and how long he or she will be gone.

Another concept that may be created by ambiguous loss present in the military family dealing with a deployment is boundary ambiguity.   This refers to the situation in which the family members are unsure of who is in or out of the family and who does which roles and tasks within their family system (Boss, 2004).   An individual's perception of a situation of ambiguous loss influences the degree of boundary ambiguity and its related effects (Boss, 2004; Lee & Whiting, 2007).   In the military family, ambiguous loss requires the family members to

expand their view of the family to include the military member who is currently deployed though physically not present in the family, yet the family will need to reassign, temporarily, the responsibilities and roles of the absent family member (Faber et al., 2008).

Factors that affect boundary ambiguity are often personal characteristics such as the ability to give up control and life events that occur around the same timeframe as the deployment. It is found that high levels of boundary ambiguity are usually centered around the roles and responsibilities of the family member on the deployment and that the ambiguous loss is experienced through the duration of the deployment (Faber et al., 2008).

Huebner et al. (2007) conducted qualitative research regarding uncertainty and ambiguous loss when military parents are deployed. They gained information from 107 youth ages 12–18 years old (46% female) attending summer camps using in-depth semi structured focus group interviews. They found negative themes surrounding uncertainty and loss, boundary ambiguity, changes in mental health and relationship conflict. The uncertainty and loss comes from being unsure about the safety of the deployed caregiver. These adolescents were keenly aware of the dangers faced by the deployed caregiver, and this impacts their thoughts and feelings. "Words like 'nervous,' 'worried,' 'confused,' 'mad,' 'lonely,' 'isolated,' 'sad,' 'afraid,' and 'shocked' were consistently mentioned by 53 of the participants" (Huebner et al., 2007, p. 116).

Boss (2007) described notions of normalizing ambivalence and revising attachments that are useful. Ambiguous loss can lead to feelings of ambivalence toward the missing person and others in the family and if left unidentified, can lead to such negative outcomes as anxiety, somatic symptoms, and eventual guilt (Boss, 2007).

Efforts to Help Military Families

Support networks, such as military support systems and religious institutions, are able to help somewhat in alleviating the strain (Flake et al., 2009). Not all research has focused on the particulars of stress that deployment creates. A limited amount of research has focused on what may help reduce the stress felt by military families. Research indicates that families are able to cope with the stress of deployment when they are given access to information (Flake et al., 2009).

Previously the military has used large meetings to convey information to military members and their spouses about deployment. While "accurate and timely information was important in facilitating good adjustment among spouses during the deployment, information meetings that occurred at lower organizational levels were more effective than mass meetings" (Rosen et al., 2000). Family support groups seem to be a source of support by providing information on the welfare of soldiers and also a source of emotional strength (Faber et al., 2008).

Coping Resources for Families and Their Children

Nevertheless, they have pre-existing resources and strengths to help them cope with the stress. Many military families remain resilient and emotionally healthy (Cozza et al., 2005). Being prepared for the deployment helps children with positive coping behaviors. Watanabe and Jensen (2000) reported that children who were prepared for the deployment fared better than those who were not prepared. Learning coping skills before the deployment may be beneficial in preparing for the deployment. One source of social support and help in learning positive coping strategies for children may be talking to other military children. In a qualitative study that involved 39 children in grades 6-12 reported that these participants felt that talking to other

children in the military was often more helpful than talking to someone who was not in the military.   The participants also reported that they felt more comfortable discussing their problems with their peers in the military rather than those not acquainted with the military (Mmari et al., 2008).   These other military peers could serve as resources on which they can learn positive coping strategies to prepare for the deployment of a loved one.

Current Resources and How to Help

Sometimes it is difficult for people not in the military to know how to help mediate the stresses experienced by military children.   At times, the manner that people, particularly school professionals, act toward military children can either be helpful or make stress worse for students experiencing a loved one gone on a military deployment (Harrison & Vannest, 2008).   School professionals often feel that they do not have enough training to know how to support military children.   Parents also said that teachers who work with military students need more training on how to deal with the issues unique to military children (Bradshaw et al., 2010).   Often the remaining caregiver seeks help from the child's school when dealing with the impact of deployment on the their child and the other family members; however, many families find that while school personnel are very willing to help, they often do not know how to help (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

The Military Family: A Practice Guide for Human Service Providers (Rosen et al., 2000) describes how families cope with a loved one away on a military deployment.   When a spouse can have a positive attitude about the deployment, it will help them adapt better to the deployment.   Families that adapt well to deployments are those families that have the most social, financial and emotional resources.   Also, those people who adapted better were those people who were better educated, older (experienced), or married to senior noncommissioned

officers or officers (Rosen et al., 2000, p. 145).   In this same text, Rosen et al., includes

information from Bell, Stevens, and Segal (1991), which gives a summary of what can help

military families deal with deployment.

1. Develop family and individual goals; accept the lack of control over the deployment.

2. Concentrate on what you can control such as yourself, your family, and/or your job.

3. Become or remain active, volunteer, get a job, take up a hobby.

4. Seek relevant information about the mission, the military, helping agencies.

5. Seek social support from friends, relatives, family readiness groups (FRGs).

6. Communicate with the soldier and open channels of communication within your own
    family.

7. Make sure that the information that is being passed around between families is
    accurate and not just a rumor (pp. 144–145).

The appropriate treatment of children should include treatment of the effects of the

deployment on the other family members.   This is important because to have an understanding

of how the child is functioning with the deployment, it is necessary to be aware of the problems

parents face during deployment.   Children's difficulties with deployment are best understood as

a family problem (Jensen et al., 1996).

People attempting to assist military youth should be aware that these youth are sometimes

wary of the assistance that is offered.   When the military youth were asked about their

experience with offered support, they reported that they are wary of the type of support offered

(Lemmon & Chartrand, 2009).   They report that they can sense insincerity in the person

offering the support and do not respond well to insincerity in the offered assistance.   The youth

reported that they felt best when their own coping skills were complimented by support from parents, educators, and other important adults in their lives.

Interventions that are used to ease the effects of deployment are maps, calendars, and military unit visits (Allen & Staley, 2007). These may help to let the child know that others are involved in their life and care about what happens to them. In addition, because children's distress may not be so easily perceptible, school professionals should remain watchful for problems that affect academic performance or social interaction (Harrison & Vannest, 2008).

Another source of assistance in alleviating some of the stress is connecting with other military children because military youth report that it is easier to talk to someone in the military because they understand what military children are going through, and friends not in the military do not seem to understand. Many reported that they are not aware that school psychologists and counselors are a source of support and say that they rely on peers first to talk to over a professional (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Another strategy to ease the stress is increased communication between schools and families. Options include offering activities that foster communication between students, providing training for school staff on dealing with military children, and altering school policies to strengthen support for military students and their families (Bradshaw et al., 2010). When communication between schools and families is increased, then reinforcement of positive coping behaviors can happen at home as well as at school.

There is a wealth of information available to assist the family in the home to deal with the deployment cycle, but very few sources mention using books. The research into this area is very limited and a search of what is available shows that very few empirical studies have been conducted to date to determine what the effects of deployment may be on children and what

interventions may actually ease the effects of deployment (Lincoln, Swift, & Shorteno-Fraser, 2008).

Bibliotherapy

Self-help therapies are considered to be among the most extensively researched alternative to clinical therapy (Rapee, Abbott, & Lyneham, 2006).   One of the most common and readily available forms of self-help therapy is to use books.   Bibliotherapy has been defined as using written materials during guided reading (therapeutic support while reading) to solve problems or gain insight into an individual's problems.   The definition of bibliotherapy has changed since its beginnings; however, it consistently includes reference to inclusion of discussion, which should follow reading of written materials (Jack & Ronan, 2008).   One of the best uses of books in difficult times is as a pathway to communication and empathy between self and individuals (Rycik, 2006).   Bibliotherapy is often a choice of care for many because it is less expensive than professional psychological treatment, individuals will not be put on a waiting list or worry about travel concerns, and it makes treatment accessible to people in rural areas (Bilich et al., 2008).   It may be that many problems associated with experiencing a loved one on a military deployment can be mediated through the use of bibliotherapy and not only administered by educational professionals but by other individuals, as well.   Bibliotherapy can be used in the home, school, or counseling setting to help address some of these issues.

Uses of bibliotherapy.   Bibliotherapy is useful and has been researched for many individuals experiencing a variety of problems in life.   Prater, Johnstun, Dyches and Johnstun (2006) indicate that a research base exists for the use of bibliotherapy for students experiencing difficult circumstances such as depression and crisis.

Pardeck and Pardeck (1993) discuss the importance and goal of bibliotherapy.   They report that "self-understanding and insight is an important goal of bibliotherapy" and "is an excellent technique for stimulating discussion about a problem which may otherwise not be discussed due to fear, guilt or shame."   Additionally, they state that bibliotherapy "can help clients confront and change presenting problems as they read about others who have done so successfully" (p. 2).   A child may gain insight into adaptive ways to handle emotions as bibliotherapy can stimulate a discussion between the child and the caregiver, which allows them to discuss things that the child may be too fearful or embarrassed to share with someone else. Using books can help a child discuss a character with a problem and learn from their successful resolution of the problem.

In order for bibliotherapy to be effective it needs to include the following conditions:

1. The fiction must accurately portray the problem confronting the client.   After the client reads the fictional work, the practitioner helps the client develop insight and solutions to the problem through the literature (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993, p. 11).

2. Three phases: identification and projection, abreaction and catharsis, and insight and integration" (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993, p. 11).

3. Children will respond in a spontaneous fashion to the story and are likely to become highly involved in the story emotionally.   As they hear the story, children may criticize or applaud the story characters and even make value judgments about the characters. Anger, joy, envy, or relief may be expressed (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993, p. 15).

How to administer bibliotherapy.   Bibliotherapy can be performed by a variety individuals and is no longer limited to licensed mental health professions; social workers,

psychologists, teachers, librarians are all engaging in bibliotherapy now.   The use of books for therapy has even changed to include self-help techniques (Jack, 2006).

There are a few steps to follow when conducting bibliotherapy.   The first and most important step is to closely match a book to an individual's problem.   It is important because then the individual can relate to the character in the book and see him- or herself in the story.   It is often most helpful to have another individual act as a guide through the book including leading a discussion after the reading.   This guide can help the individual see similarities between the reader and the characters in the story.   Through reading the story, the individual can see their problem in a manner that may help them find ways to repair the problem.

Sridhar & Vaughn (2000) provides four steps in conducting bibliotherapy.   The first step is to choose a book that closely matches the situation/problem of the individual.   The second step is to talk together about the general theme of the book.   The third step is to ask questions while reading the book and directly after reading the book.   The final step is to have a discussion about the story, including alternate choices the characters could have made.   Then relate the story to the individual and how they might resolve their problem with some of these same ideas (Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000).

In addition to helping children relate the stories to their own experiences, bibliotherapy may also help children find words to describe their experiences.   The philosophy of the Children's Bereavement Center is that children might have a tough time defining and putting into words their experiences, specifically they may have a hard time defining their thoughts and feelings.   When books are used as therapy, children are provided the opportunity to talk about the characters in the story rather than directly talking about themselves.   By discussing the experiences and feelings of another individual such as the characters in the story, as they are

expressed in a story, individuals can expand their understanding of their own feelings (Berns, 2003).

  Effects of bibliotherapy. Research has shown bibliotherapy to be helpful for a variety of mental health issues and life circumstances. Bibliotherapy is helpful for anxiety and mood disorders, eating disorders, agoraphobia, alcohol and substance abuse and stress related physical disorders (Fitzgerald & Wienclaw, 2012). In one study 267 clinically anxious children, bibliotherapy was shown to improve children's anxiety symptoms in 15% of the participants (Rapee, Abbott, & Lyneham, 2006). Bibliotherapy also was shown to be more effective than when participants received no help and were placed on a waitlist for a therapist. It was not shown to be more effective than face-to-face counseling but was still more effective than no counseling (Rapee et al., 2006).

  Using bibliotherapy can help children discuss their feelings about difficult topics. In a study of children with diabetes and short stature, bibliotherapy was used and found to help these children discuss their feelings about these topics (Hayes & Amer, 1999). Additionally, depressive symptoms can be diminished by the use of bibliotherapy. In a study of 22 adolescents with mild/moderate depressive symptoms, the adolescents had significant decrease in dysfunctional thinking (Ackerson, Scogin, McKendree-Smith, & Lyman, 1998). Bibliotherapy helps children with divorced parents (Pardeck, 1985; Pehrsson et al., 2007). Bibliotherapy can also be useful to help children with the grieving process (Berns, 2003).

  Using books for therapy has also been shown to help people with insomnia. Fifty-four adults participated in a randomized study with bibliotherapy treatment, weekly phone calls, or no treatment. The study showed that those participants in the bibliotherapy group reported more

sleeping hours and less trouble with sleeping than those in the no-treatment group.   They also

did as well as those participants in the weekly phone call group (Mimeault & Morin, 1999).

In conclusion, families and children are exposed to stresses every day.   Some of the

stresses that children may experience are school issues, relationship problems, poverty, and

crime.   Children and families can also be exposed to stress caused by current events in our

society.   One group experiencing stress brought on by world current events is the children in

military families.   These children often experience internalizing, externalizing, and school

problems when a loved one is away on a military deployment.   Parents, educators, and mental

health professionals may appreciate finding strategies to help mediate the effects of stress the

deployment may cause a child.   Bibliotherapy has been shown to help mediate other issues

children may encounter and this study examined children's books and (a) What messages

regarding military deployment, such as gender of main character and deployed person, type of

deployment, effects of deployment, strategies for coping with deployment, and resolution to

problems associated with deployment, are presented in children's literature? and (b) In relation to

what has been reported in the research literature, how well does this sample of books reflect the

problems children have with their loved one's deployment?

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APPENDIX B: Coding Instrument

Military Deployment in Children's Books Coding Instrument – Aimee Tubbs

Book Information

- **Title:**

- **Author:**

- **Illustrator:**

- **Year:**

- **Number of pages:**

- **Picture book or chapter book:**

- **Interest level**:

- **Reading/Lexile level:**

Demographics/Characteristics of Main Character and Deployed Person

- Are the characters human or animal?

  - o 0=Animals

  - o 1=Human

- What type of book?

  - o 0=Fiction

  - o 1=Nonfiction

- Approximate age of Main Character (MC).

  - o 0=3–5 years old

  - o 1=6–8 years old

  - o 2=9–11 years old

  - o 3=12 years and older

- What is the gender of the Main Character (MC)?

    o 0=Male

    o 1=Female

- What is the gender of the Deployed Person (DP)?

    o 0=Male

    o 1=Female

- What is the race/ethnicity of the MC?

    o 0=Unknown

    o 1=White

    o 2=Hispanic

    o 3=Black

    o 4=Asian, Pacific Islander

    o 5=Native American

    o 6=Other

    o 7=Mixed group

- What is the race/ethnicity of the DP?

    o 0=Unknown

    o 1=White

    o 2=Hispanic

    o 3=Black

    o 4=Asian, Pacific Islander

    o 5=Native American

    o 6=Other

- 7=Mixed group

- What is the length of the deployment?

  - 0=unknown

  - 1=6 months or less

  - 2=7–12 months

  - 3=13 months or more

- What is the phase of deployment addressed in the book? Book may have more than one code.

  - 0=notification/predeployment

  - 1=departure

  - 2=beginning of deployment

  - 3=middle of deployment

  - 4=end of deployment

  - 5=reunion

  - 6=reintegration

  - 7=unknown

- What is the location of the deployment?

  - 0=Unknown

  - 1=Inside the United States, non-war zone

  - 2=Outside the United States non-war zone

  - 3=Outside the United States war zone

- What is the branch of service of the DP?

  - 0=Unknown

- o 1=Army

- o 2=Air Force

- o 3=Navy

- o 4=Marines

- o 5=Coast Guard

- o 6=Air National Guard

- o 7=Army National Guard

- o 8=Navy Reserve

- o 9=Air Reserve

- o 10=Army Reserve

- Are there other children involved in the story besides the MC?

  - o 0=No

  - o 1=Yes

- Are there any adults involved in the story besides the DP?

  - o 0=No

  - o 1=Yes

- Identify the relationship of adults involved to the MC.

  - o 0=Unknown

  - o 1=Mother

  - o 2=Father

  - o 3=Grandparent

  - o 4=Teacher

  - o 5=Other school person

- o 6=Aunt or Uncle

- o 7=Neighbor

- o 8=Other Adult

Issues Related to Deployment

- What are the symptoms/consequences of the deployment experienced by the MC?

  - o 0=Sadness

  - o 1=Crying

  - o 2=Fighting at home

  - o 3=Fighting at school

  - o 4=Problems with schoolwork

  - o 5=Physical ailments (i.e., stomachache, headache)

  - o 6=Feeling unsure of how to feel (ambivalent)

  - o 7=Scared

  - o 9=Worried about safety of DP

  - o 10=Other (please explain)

- What are the symptoms/consequences of the deployment experienced by the DP?

- If applicable, describe who the adult is and how he/she responds to the deployment's

  effects on the MC.

Strategies for Dealing with Deployment used by MC

- o 0=Talking to a caring adult

- o 1=Journaling

- o 2=Finding ways to stay in touch with deployed parent

- o 3=Drawing pictures

- o 4=Physical activity

- o 5=Reading a book

- o 6=Other (please describe)

Problem Resolution or Coping Mechanisms

- Was the problem/situation brought to a resolution?

  - o 0=No

  - o 1=Yes

- If not brought to resolution, describe how the situation/problem is managed.

- If brought to resolution, describe how the situation was resolved.

APPENDIX C

Bibliographic Information of Sample Books Related to Military Deployment for Children

Title, Author & Date	ISBN	*Lexile	MC Gender & Race	DP Gender & Race	MC Age	Branch of Service	MC Response to Deployment	MC Coping Strategies
Boo Boo Bear's Mission: The True Story of a Teddy Bear's Adventures in Iraq- Sather, Mary Linda 2009	9781592982837	760L	Female, White	Male, White	6-8 yrs	Air Force	Sadness, crying, physical ailments, scared, worried about DP safety	Talking to adult, finding ways to stay connected, baking & sending favorite treats
My Mommy Wears Combat Boots - McBride, Sharon G. 2008	978-1434351647	570L	Female, Unknown	Female, Unknown	3-5 yrs	Army	Sadness, crying, scared, mad	Talking to adult, praying
Night Catch - Ehrmantraut, Brenda 2007	978-0972983396	630L	Male, White	Male, White	6-8 yrs	Army	Neutral	Finding ways to stay connected
My Dad's a Hero - Christiansen, Rebecca & Armstrong, Jewel 2007	978-1595712097	AD730L	Male, Unknown	Male, Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Pride	Finding ways to stay connected, drawing pictures, thinking of Dad as a hero
Love Lizzie - McElroy, Lisa Tucker 2005	9780807547779	730L	Female, White	Female, White	6-8 yrs	Unknown	Worried about DP safety	Finding ways to stay connected, drawings, special place in room to be alone
Hero Dad - Hardin, Melinda 2010	978-0761457138	AD610L	Male, Unknown	Male, Unknown	6-8 yrs	Army	Sadness	Finding ways to stay connected, finding positive aspects of DP's job
A Paper Hug - Skolmoski, Stephanie 2006	978-0978642501	620L	Male, White	Male, White	6-8 yrs	Unknown	Sadness, crying	Finding ways to stay connected

Title, Author & Date	ISBN	*Lexile	MC Gender & Race	DP Gender & Race	MC Age	Branch of Service	MC Response to Deployment	MC Coping Strategies
The Wishing Tree - Redman, Mary 2008	978-1934617021	500L	Female, White	Male, White	9-11 yrs	Unknown	Sadness, worried about DP safety,	Talking to adult, finding ways to stay connected, keeps a wishing tree
Ned & The General - Madison, Ron 2001	9781887206259	320L	Male, Unknown	Male, Female, Unknown	6-8 yrs	Army	Sadness, problems with schoolwork, unsure, scared, angry	Talking to adult, physical activity, proud of DP
My Red Balloon - Bunting, Eve 2005	9781590782637	390L	Male, White	Male, White	3-5 yrs	Navy	Worried DP will not recognize MC on return	Held red balloon at reunion for identification
My Big Brother - Cohen, Miriam 2004	9781595720078	410L	Male, Black	Male, Black	9-11 yrs	Army	Sadness	Talking to adult, finding ways to stay connected, washing DP's care while he is away
Love Spots - Panier, Karen 2010	781936352449	620L	Male, Mixed	Male, Mixed	12 yrs+	Unknown	Sadness, crying,	Using spots on uniform to remind DP of love for MC
I'm a Hero Too - Sokol, Jenny 2007	9781425989859	750L	Male, White	Male, White	9-11 yrs	Marines	sadness, crying, scared	Talking to adult, journaling, finding ways to stay connected, drawing pictures, physical activity
Mommy, You're My Hero! - Ferguson-Cohen, Michelle 2005	9780972926430	400L	Female, Unknown	Female, Unknown	3-5 yrs	Unknown	Sadness,	Talking to adult, drawing pictures

Title, Author & Date	ISBN	*Lexile	MC Gender & Race	DP Gender & Race	MC Age	Branch of Service	MC Response to Deployment	MC Coping Strategies
A Year Without Dad - Brunson, Jodi 2003	9780974068312	490L	Male, White	Male, White	9-11 yrs	Army	Sadness, scared, worried about DP safety	Talking to adult, finding ways to stay connected, drawing pictures, attend family support group meetings, learned about place of deployment
My Mommy Is a Guardsman - Hilbrecht, Kirk. Hilbrecht, Sharon 2004	9781889658339	550L	Male, White	Female, White	6-8 yrs	Army National Guard	Sadness	Finding ways to stay connected, drawing pictures
My Daddy Is a Hero - Childers, Chad 2007	9781430321958	610L	Male, White	Male, White	6-8 yrs	Army	Sadness, crying	Finding ways to stay connected
Don't Forget, God Bless Our Troops - Biden, Jill 2012	781442457355	380L	Female, White	Male, White	6-8 yrs	Army	Sadness, crying, unsure, scared, worried about DP safety	Talking to adult, finding ways to stay connected, drawing pictures, physical activity, praying
Daddy Is a Soldier - Hallowell, Kirsten 2004	9781412018531	290L	Male, White	Male, White	3-5 yrs	Unknown	Sadness, angry	Finding ways to stay connected, keep DP picture by bed
Daddy's Boots - Linhart, Sandra Miller 2010	9780984512706	600L	Male, Unknown	Male, Unknown	3-5 yrs	Unknown	Scared, worried about DP safety	Leaning what DP will be doing during deployment
Lily Hates Goodbyes - Marler, Jerilyn 2012	9781936214785	680L	Female, White	Male, White	3-5 yrs	Navy	Sadness, unsure, scared, mad, being mean & stubborn	Talking to adult, finding ways to stay connected, drawing pictures, physical activity, keep a memories box for DP's return

Title, Author & Date	ISBN	*Lexile	MC Gender & Race	DP Gender & Race	MC Age	Branch of Service	MC Response to Deployment	MC Coping Strategies
My Dad Is Going Away But He Will Be Back One Day: A Deployment Story (Deployment Series, 1) (Volume 1) - Thomas, James, Thomas, Melanie 2005	9781468175455	550L	Unknown, White	Male, White	3-5 yrs	Navy	Neutral/None	Finding ways to stay connected, physical activity
While You Are Away - Spinelli, Eileen 2004	978-1423113515	480L	2 Male, 1 Female, White, Hispanic, Black	2 Male, 1 Female, White, Hispanic, Black	(2) 6-8 yrs, (1) 9-11 yrs	Army, Air Force, Navy	Sadness, fighting at home, scared, worried about DP safety	Finding ways to stay connected

*A lexile score is obtained from a reading test. A lexile score matches the reader with comparable books in their tested level range. Preschool-1 is BR 420L–820L is 2–3 grade, 740L–1010L is 4–5 grade. The abbreviation AD before a lexile score denotes "adult directed" meaning the book should be read to a child rather than read independently due to complexity of text.