

## 6 Staying Connected

Hello, in our parenting segment, we will be talking about staying connected even over a distance. No matter the length of time, nor the reason for parents becoming separated from their families, there are ways to stay connected. It is VERY important to children to have regular communication. *Regular* means communication they can expect and look forward to. It could be weekly, daily, or every other day. The point is to keep the lines open. Doing so will make the transition much more smooth.

*Use of online technology* – use of email, blogs, webcams and chat rooms are ways to communicate with all ages including partners, children and adult parents. With children, think about writing a story; asking about school or friends so they will write back in response to your questions; sending photo attachments or sending websites to visit that are appropriate for children then talking about them in the next communication.

*Paper communication* – Letter writing is not a dead art! A hand written and mailed letter is very special. Enclosing a photograph, a journal of thoughts, a made-up story, or a personally made birthday card are ways to communicate in writing. In addition, children can save these and share them with their friends or at school.

*Videos, DVDs, Audio files* – There are ways to capture real video and audio using cameras and phones. Often these can be uploaded to the Internet and viewed or they can be mailed for viewing or listening. Having a parent record their voice reading a series of children's books for bedtime is a wonderful way to keep your voice in the child's world.

*Books* - Books are a great way to help children begin to address their complex emotions. When reading, the point is not simply to read through the book but use the story as a tool for discussion. Once children begin to question or open-up, pause the reading and talk, affirm their safety and comfort them. Ask for books at the local library or search for them by topic online.

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