

THRIVING LIVES TOOLKIT FOR EARLY YEARS

PRINCIPLE 2 GUIDANCE

developed by CREC on behalf of the SCiP Alliance



PRINCIPLE 2: CHILD WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH ARE SUPPORTED

Evidence Suggests that Service children <u>may</u> ..	What Might This Look Like	Emerging, Developing and Embedding Practice
<p>...experience deployments, frequent moves, separations from parents and changes in early years setting which can often lead to anxiety, attachment issues, behavioural changes and emotional regulation challenges. The impact of these experiences is most evident in children's early years of life.</p> <p>... struggle with loneliness and difficulties in forming long term friendships, needing extra support in emotional regulation and social skills.</p> <p>... actively use resources, objects and spaces to pursue their personal development and create meaningful experiences to counter isolation and disrupted relationships. This might display as a desire for belonging, connectedness and close relationships.</p> <p>... be more likely to face challenging life circumstances, such as family difficulties, trauma, bereavement, or issues related to health, wellbeing, and stability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a stable, nurturing environment, with consistent routines, and extra care offered during transitions with emotional literacy support (e.g. ELSA) provided. • staff understanding the range of Service children's potential experiences and emotions during different stages of deployment and separation. • a range of opportunities for Service children to explore their experiences and express their feelings. • the child being supported to research and map a deployed parent's location. • tailored resources and activities offered such as deployment bags, memory books, storybooks, countdown charts and interactive tools like photo albums and world maps to help children stay connected with deployed parents. • individualised support such as extra one-on-one time, flexibility in settling in periods, quiet spaces and adapted care based on a child's emotional needs. • a nurture group that children can join when the parent is deployed so they can spend time with other children in the same situation. • close engagement with parents and families to ensure support before, during and after deployments. • military-specific programmes and resources can offer bespoke additions to an early years programme. 	<p>Emerging: Early Years providers will be exploring how to support young children from Armed Forces families to develop a sense of belonging but may not have implemented targeted initiatives. There is limited recognition of their unique experiences and specific resources and/or approaches regarding transitions and deployment have not yet been identified and used.</p> <p>Developing: Early Years providers will recognise the unique experiences of Service children and have identified specific approaches and resources to support wellbeing and mental health during periods of potential stress. Some staff awareness may exist, but further CPD and support is required. Induction and transition activities may reference, but not actively support, Service children.</p> <p>Embedding: Early Years providers will provide tailored pastoral support for Service children's mental health and wellbeing ensuring children can thrive and flourish. Well-established and actively promoted approaches and resources are utilised by all staff and embedded within daily practice. Induction and transition support will be tailored to children's individual needs, strengths and experiences and additional support is provided before, during and after periods of parental deployment.</p>



PRINCIPLE 2: PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF GOOD PRACTICE

To support this process, a number of practical examples are set out (in the form of practitioner quotes) at the end of this document. These examples can be used to inspire new ways of working, provoke reflective dialogue, and to demonstrate what things are possible across the range of different early years provider types that exist.

Examples from Practice: Principle 2

We ensure that we provide additional support and continuity of care is vital to make sure our routine doesn't change so the children can rely on us for the support they need. (Online Survey)

We have special packs, books and other resources to familiarise us and them, and we do our best to help them through the process with extra attention to activities they love, toys, books and more one-to-one attention. (Online survey)

We give extra support when parents are deployed and make sure we welcome the parents when they are back, giving regular updates on their online journals so all parents know how their children are doing. (Online survey)

With families living not as part of the community we provide extra support. This might be something as simple as dropping off early as one parent is serving abroad – we have found it's a key time for the child when the parent is away. It's simple things like making sure the children can join in with activities outside the pre-school. An example is we helped organise a number of children from the pre-school into the same swimming group so other parents could help the child and this in turn created a support network around the family. (Online survey)

We have to be sensitive around family events such as Father's Day and use books and resources showing service families in a way that reflects their experiences. (Online survey)

We discussed when they were going away/coming back, we counted down to return, discussed pictures/photos sent to the nursery, created an online app for parents who are away, and made pictures for when parents came home. (Online survey)

We provided music for babies and toddlers sessions that were non-verbal and used a variety of musical and cultural genres. (Online survey)



All children are taught emotional regulation techniques. We provide visuals to support transitions and emotions and travelling teddies. (Online survey)

For the child we did a lot of stories and role play of dads being away, We had dad spray some ribbon with his aftershave so she could carry round his smell. We also got him to wear the same tee shirt for ages so it smelt of him then she put this on her teddy at night times. Dad was also given a small toy of hers to take with him. When he was able to video call he had the toy and could tell her all about what the toy had been up to. (Online survey)

