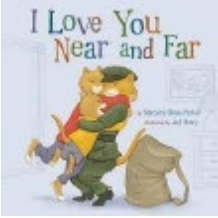


## Interactive Read Aloud: Month of the Military Child

Each classroom teacher in the district will be receiving a copy of the read aloud below. The literacy coaches brainstormed some possible extension activities that you could do with the book. Feel free to modify to fit the needs of your classroom community. Happy reading and thank you for all you do each and every day!

TEXT	GRADE	Possible Extension Activities
 <p><b>I love you long distance, across all those miles. Sometimes parents divorce. Sometimes mom or dad is sent overseas to fight. And sometimes cherished members of the family – grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins – live too far away to see every day. This sweet rhyming story, written from the child’s point of view, is a love letter to those who may not be geographically near – but remain very close at heart.</b></p>	<p><b>Kindergarten</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have each child draw a family portrait, use those family portraits to label/ plot: where their military member is deployed to or where their extended family is located (if they do not have someone deployed right now)</li> <li>• Have each student in the class use a speech bubble to write a message to a deployed military member of a student in the class</li> <li>• If no military members are currently deployed within students in the classroom, teacher could open it up to grade level and write messages to a military family member within the grade level</li> <li>• Or the class could interactively write a letter to a military family member of the class who is deployed, students could include a class “family” portrait drawing or picture</li> <li>• Class could interactively write a book of ideas and suggestions for students to use when they have a parent who is deployed or family who live far away. Ex. Become pen pals and write letters to each other weekly. Keep a journal of things that happened that you want to say or share with them (pictures or words). Draw a picture showing different things you have done while they were gone.</li> </ul>



Have you ever said good-bye to someone very dear? Here's a story about a little boy who figured out the best gift to give his dad who was leaving to serve his country ... a paper hug.

Grade 1  
&  
Grade 2

- An activity the students could participate in after reading this book would be to think of ways to love others better. They can begin brainstorming the importance of kindness and how they can spread kindness in the room. Everyone will create a "hug" for a peer they have been assigned to. On the "hug" they will write some kind words about their friend. We could hang these around the classroom as a reminder of the importance of thinking of others and showing kindness.

#### PRE-DEPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

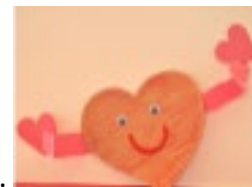
- Make your own paper hugs. Have your service member and family members make paper hugs for each other to exchange before your service member leaves. To make a paper hug, trace both hands on a piece of paper and cut out. Laminate or use clear contact paper to make the hand cutouts more durable. Then, cut a length of string the length of the person's outstretched arms. Attach one paper hand to one end of the string and the other hand to the other end of the string. Now you have a paper hug. (*Supervise young children using paper hugs to prevent any risk of injury.*)
- Prepare a box of special items that your service member likes such as favorite snacks, pictures of the family, favorite reading materials or other favorite items. Give it to your service member before he or she leaves.

#### DURING-DEPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

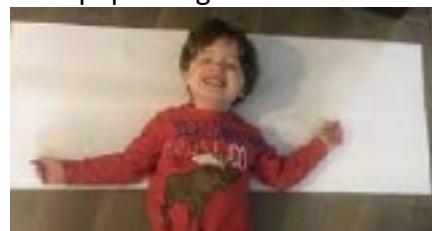
- Remind family members when they feel sad, upset or angry that they can use their paper hugs to get a hug from their service member. Take pictures of family members using their paper hugs and send it to your service member.
- Write your own paper hug poem and send it to your service member.

#### POST-DEPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

- Give each other real hugs.
- Have everyone share their paper hugs. Talk about how they look. Are they faded or worn? Have you used them often? Do some appear smaller because people have grown? Talk about how family members used the paper hug and how it made each person feel to have the hug near.



Make a paper hug.





**This book is about a soldier whose job takes him across the world from his family. The father uses the North Star to create a game of “catch” with his son while he is away from home. Night Catch shows children they can stay connected to their military caregiver while they are deployed.**

### **Grade 3**

- Have students compare the night sky at home to the night sky of their military caregiver. Use the website below to enter the location and explore the constellations. “Always together, never apart. Maybe in distance but never at heart.”
  - <https://in-the-sky.org/location.php>
  - [Pipe Cleaner Constellations: A Hands-on Constellation Activity](#)
- [Make a 3D Star](#) and hang it at home to remind children that they can send their love back and forth to those faraway.
- Invite military caregivers in for a Q&A so students can learn more about the military and take time to honor those that serve. Afterward, play catch together or a game of wiffle ball.
- Take/Create a world map and pinpoint where students and staff have lived because of their military lifestyle. This is a fantastic way to connect military kids with their peers.
- Place a “North Star” on the cover of a notebook. Write a message from your class and mail it to the deployed service member. Do this for each student who has a military caregiver that’s deployed. Have them write messages back and forth with their son/daughter. The hope is the deployment notebook can be a place for them to send messages any time they are away.
- Use this [poem with yoga poses](#) for shared reading and make connections to the read aloud. This love and kindness activity will help calm the body and release energy.



**The story of military homecomings, Greg Ruth's Coming Home focuses on a boy reuniting with his military mother, as well as other reunions (and dogs!).**

**Every day, soldiers leave their families to protect others. We love them. We miss them when they're gone. And we want them all to come home. They are our heroes.**

#### **Grades 4-5**

- Have students predict who the child is looking for and what will happen, stopping at various points in the story.
- Have students write their own text/dialogue using the illustrations and share.
- Have students think about a time that someone went away or returned from being away and write a letter to that person to express their thoughts/feelings.
- Discuss POV and have students rewrite the story from another character's POV.
- How can kids teach each other how to find the hope and resilience they need to get through challenging times in their lives?