

Welcome

Deployments, Homecomings, Changes

This facilitator guide was developed by Sesame Workshop to build upon and extend the **Talk, Listen, Connect** initiative, which you can use in your work with families experiencing new situations and challenges arising from deployment, multiple deployments, or when a parent returns home and is changed due to an injury. It will provide you with the tools you need to encourage communication, offer emotional support, and share practical, engaging tips and activities to aid families and children as they change and grow. In addition, it will help you celebrate the strength and resilience of the families and children you work with.

This two-part facilitator guide is easily adaptable for a variety of situations, including family readiness groups, child care, medical rehabilitation, and other such programs providing support to military families and their children. Both are divided into three sections that correspond to the stories in the DVD: deployments, homecomings, and changes.

Within each section of this 12-page guide for use with adults and children, you'll find:

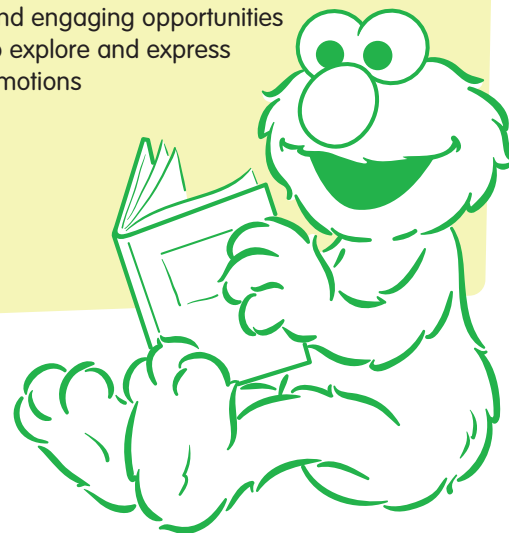
- » **Take-Home Messages** (key points to convey)
- » **Story Summary** (what you will see on the DVD)
- » **Watch It, Talk About It** (using the DVD to encourage discussion)
- » **Family Activities** (easy, engaging ways to build upon the messages in the DVD)
- » **Print Connections** (tips for using the magazine and poster)
- » **Family Pages** (ways to support the Take-Home Messages)

In the 5-page "Supplement to Facilitator Guide," you'll find:

- » **Key Messages** (highlights from the real-life documentary footage)
- » **Questions for Discussion** (conversation starters to guide adults in discussion)
- » **Plus one reproducible page** (for parents to customize)

The "Talk, Listen, Connect" kit includes:

- » **a DVD** featuring the Muppets™ of Sesame Street and live action footage. This DVD consists of separate stories that address three distinct topics:
 - » **Deployments**
 - » **Homecomings**
 - » **Changes** (when a parent returns home due to an injury)
- » **a Magazine for Parents and Caregivers** offering tips, strategies, and activities
- » **a Poster** providing interactive and engaging opportunities to explore and express emotions



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Deployments

Together with families, explore the many phases of deployment, including **pre-deployments, deployments, and homecomings**. Work together to build strategies that will help families to support one another and stay connected throughout these many transitions.

Take-Home Messages

- ★ There are many ways to stay connected before, during, and after deployment.
- ★ Routines and support systems are key to all phases of deployment.



Story Summary

Elmo's dad has to go away for work, but so many friends will be there for him while his dad is gone. Elmo and his mom write letters, draw pictures, and talk to Elmo's dad on the phone and by computer. When Elmo learns that his dad is coming home, he's excited but also a little nervous and shy. But all of these feelings are okay — his dad is proud of him and loves him no matter what.

Watch It, Talk About It

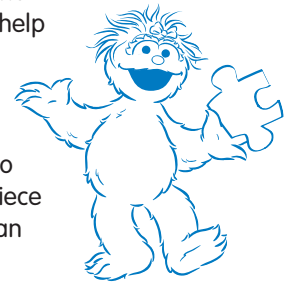
- » **Pre-deployments:** Show families "Someone's Going Away" on the DVD (by selecting "Select a Story," then "Deployments," then "Select a Scene," then "Someone's Going Away"). **Ask** children and parents, "What are some of the things that your family does to get ready for deployment together?"
- » **Deployments:** Watch "Staying Connected" on the DVD (by selecting "Select a Story," then "Deployments," then "Select a Scene," then "Staying Connected"). **Ask** children, "How do you stay connected when your mom or dad is away?"
- » **Homecomings:** Watch "Coming Home" on the DVD (by selecting "Select a Story," then "Deployments," then "Select a Scene," then "Coming Home"). **Ask** children, or have parents ask children, "How does it feel when somebody comes home after a long time away? What are some of the things that you do when you first come together?"



Family Activity: Family Puzzle

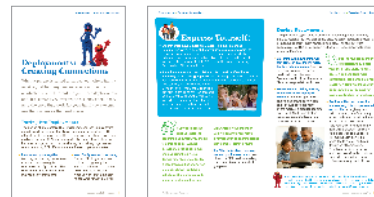
Extend the messages of the DVD story and help each family member to stay connected when they are apart.

1. Photocopy the "Family Puzzle" on page 3 (one per family). Use card stock for durability. Encourage parents and children to each decorate one or more of the puzzle pieces. They can work together on the pieces if they like. Now ask family members to cut the pieces apart and work together to put the puzzle back together again.
2. As children work together with their families, encourage them to talk about the puzzle. Ask, "What does your puzzle look like? How do you feel when someone has to go away? How might the puzzle help everyone to stay connected? How does it feel when the whole family is together and the family puzzle is complete?"
3. When one member of the family must go away, each person can take care of a piece of the puzzle. When they reunite, they can have fun making it whole once again.



Print Connections

- » **Magazine:** Find information and activities on deployments on pages 5–7 of the magazine.



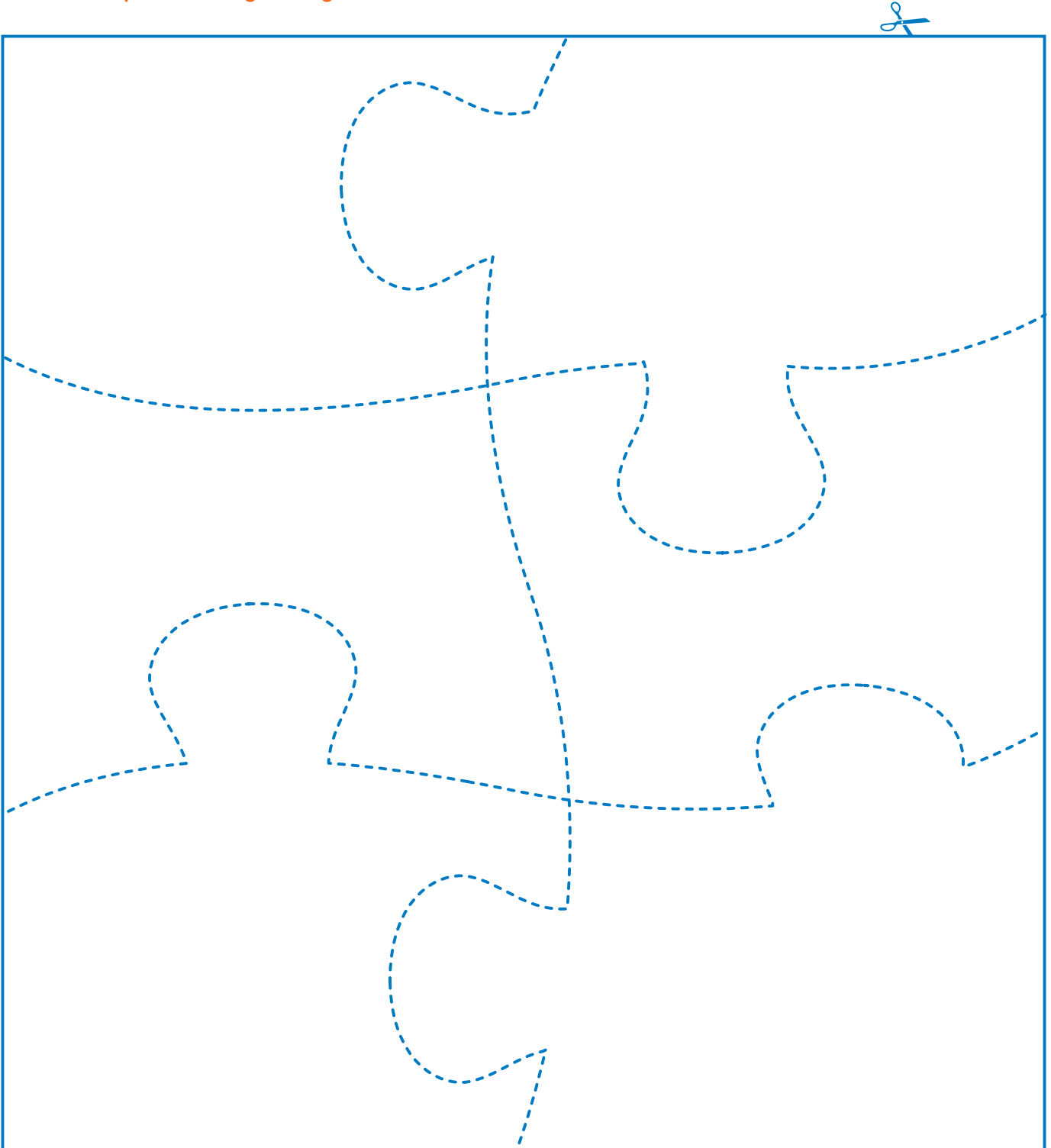
- » **Poster:** Have children and parents look together at the "Word Power" section. Parents can read the definition for the word "pride" to their children. In the "Faces and Feelings" section, parents can help children find Elmo's face. Have parents ask children to tell them about a time when they felt proud of themselves or one another.





Family Puzzle

Together, decorate the puzzle pieces. Then cut the puzzle apart and work as a team to put it back together again.



Homecomings: Reconnecting

Explore with families and children the many emotions that may surround a parent's homecoming and help them develop strategies that will aid families in reconnecting after a reunion.

Take-Home Messages

- ★ Though exciting, it takes time to adjust and reconnect after each homecoming.
- ★ Patience, support, and communication are important during this time as children navigate new family dynamics and changing routines.



Story Summary

When Elmo's dad returns after being away for a long time, the entire family learns how to readjust their routines once more.

Watch It, Talk About It

- » **Show** "Home Again" on the DVD (by selecting "Select a Story," then "Homecomings," then "Select a Scene," then "Home Again").
- » **Pause** the DVD when Elmo and his dad leave to get ready for bed. **Ask**, "What are some of the things that Elmo is excited to do with his dad now that he is home? What are some things that you are excited to do with your mom or dad when she or he gets home?"
- » **Pause** the DVD after Elmo and his dad say good night by the moon. **Ask**, "How does Elmo get ready for bed now that his dad is home again? Is getting ready for bed different when your mom or dad is home?"
- » **After watching the scene, ask** families to share stories about what it was like when their family member returned.



Family Activity: The "Things We Do Together" Book

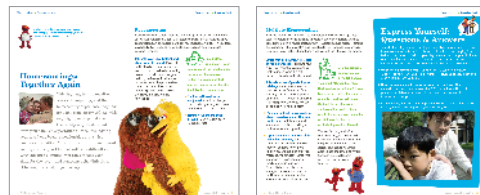
Extend the messages in the DVD story and share strategies for coming together as a family.

1. Photocopy page 5 (one per family).
2. Encourage families to draw, on each page of the book, a routine or activity that they have done with the returning parent. Have parents ask children, "What do you like to do together as a family?" Children can illustrate and parents can give each drawing a heading.
3. Now ask parents to help their children cut out the pages and staple them together to make a book. Encourage families to look through their book together. Children can describe to parents what is happening on each page.



Print Connections

- » **Magazine:** Find information and activities on reconnecting during homecoming on pages 8–11 of the magazine.



- » **Poster:** Look together at the front of the poster (the large photo with Elmo, his mom, and his dad). Ask, "What do you think Elmo wants to do with his dad when he gets home?"



Look at the little pictures of Elmo. Which of these things can Elmo do all by himself, and which does he do with a grown-up? What new thing can you do all by yourself?"



The “Things We Do Together” Book

On each page, draw and write a routine or activity your family has done together since Mom or Dad returned. Cut apart the pages and staple them to make a book.



The
Things We Do
Together



By _____

1

2

3

Homecomings: Redeployments

Express and discuss the feelings associated with redeployment.

Help everyone to feel pride in their strength and their commitment to support each other through this challenge.

Take-Home Messages

- ★ Although redeployment presents many challenges, families can do it together.
- ★ Families can find support in extended family, friends, and community.

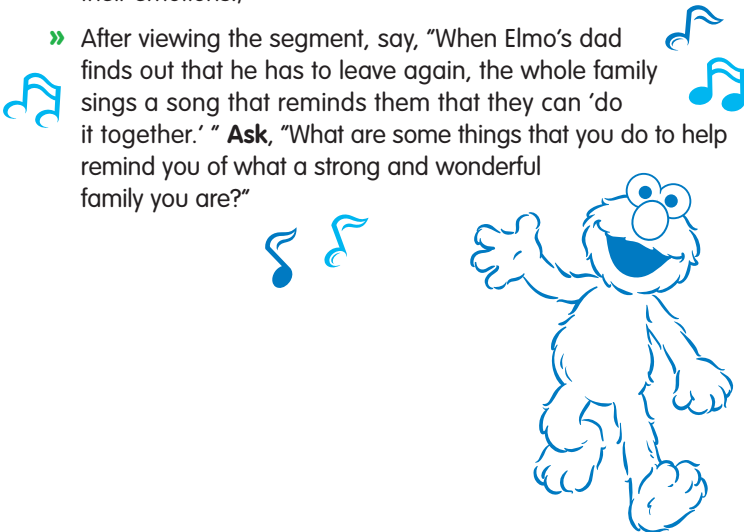


Story Summary

After some time together with his family, Elmo's dad learns that he must go away again. Elmo and his mom know they can manage, just as they did before.

Watch It, Talk About It

- » **Show** "We Can Do It" on the DVD (by selecting "Select a Story," then "Homecomings," then "Select a Scene," then "We Can Do It").
- » **Pause** the DVD after the live action clips. **Ask**, "How do the children in this video feel when their mom or dad has to go away again? How do you feel?" (You may want to use the feeling faces on the poster to help children articulate their emotions.)
- » After viewing the segment, say, "When Elmo's dad finds out that he has to leave again, the whole family sings a song that reminds them that they can 'do it together.'" **Ask**, "What are some things that you do to help remind you of what a strong and wonderful family you are?"



Family Activity: We Can Do It!

Build upon the messages in the DVD and encourage families to think of routines that they can continue to do even while a parent is away.

1. Photocopy "We Can Do It!" on page 7 (one per family).
2. Encourage children to think of a morning routine, an afternoon routine, and an evening routine that they can do together with the parent who is home (and any siblings). What can they do when they first wake up? How about before dinner: Can they help to set the table by counting out napkins or laying out placemats for each person?
3. Ask children to draw a picture for each routine. They can place these routines at various points around the clock. Now ask parents to cut out the clock and attach the arrow with a metal fastener.
4. Encourage families to take their "routine clocks" home. Throughout the day they can move the hand on the clock to remind one another of the many things they will do together throughout the day.



Print Connections

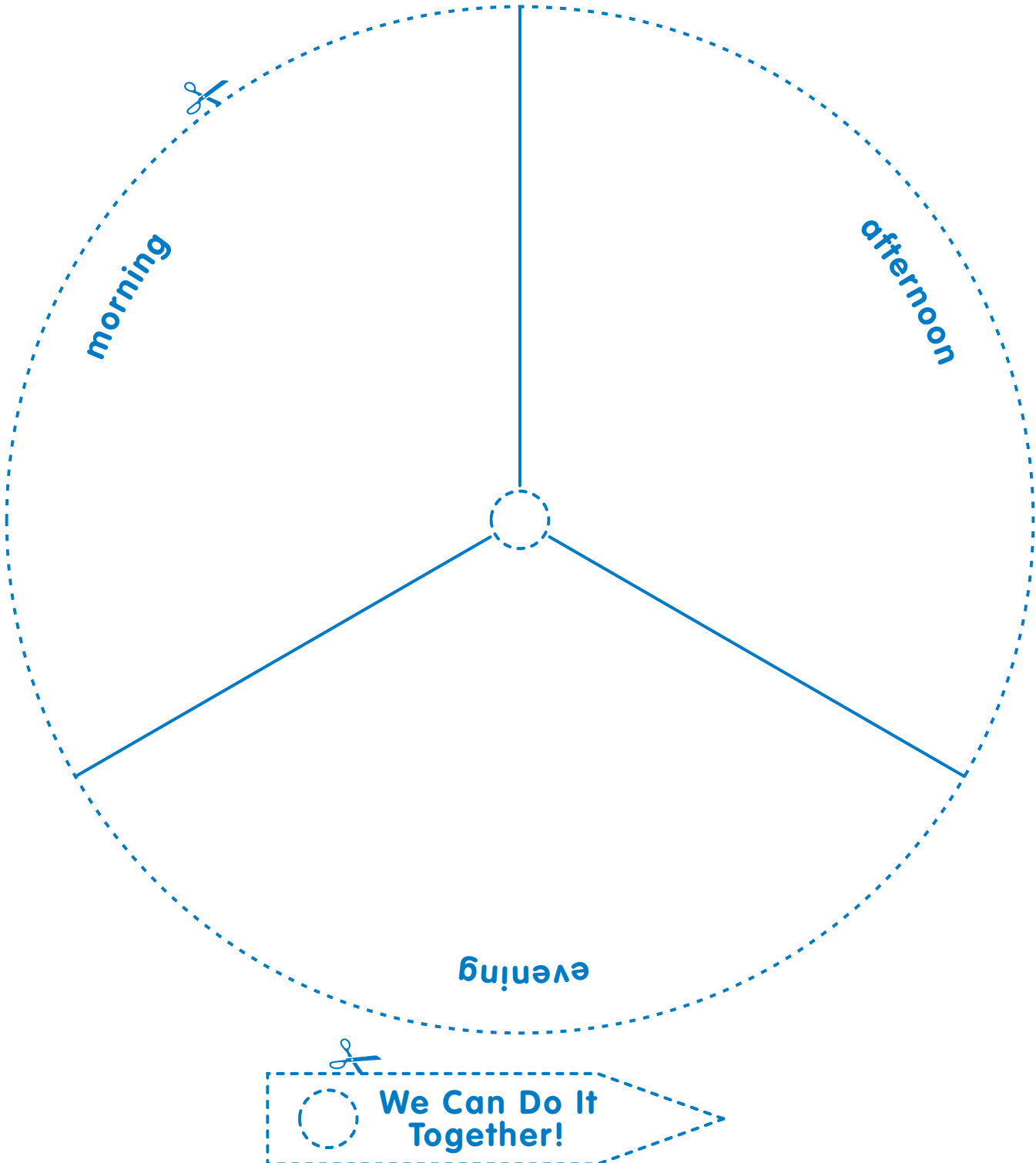
- » **Magazine:** Find information and activities about redeployments on page 10 of the magazine.
- » **Poster:** Focus on the "Faces & Feelings" section of the poster and encourage families to label their emotions.





We Can Do It!

Draw pictures of a morning, afternoon, and evening routine you do together when Mom or Dad has gone away. Cut out the circle and attach arrow with a metal fastener.



Changes: Things Are Different

Talk together about the many feelings and transitions that occur when a parent returns changed due to an injury, whether visible or invisible.

Take-Home Messages

- ★ When appropriate, it is important to talk together with children about the changes that have taken place.
- ★ Parents can offer hope by reassuring children that all family members can help one another through change and that they can do it together.



Story Summary

Rosita's dad has returned home with an injury that happened while he was doing his job. His legs have been hurt and now he must use a wheelchair. Rosita feels sad that she and her Papi can no longer play together in the same way, and she struggles to express her feelings.

Watch It, Talk About It

- » **Show** "Things Are Different" on the "Changes" DVD (by selecting "Continue," then "Select a Scene," then "Things Are Different").
- » **Pause** the DVD after Rosita talks to Elmo about her feelings. **Ask**, "How does Rosita feel about her Papi using a wheelchair?"
- » After viewing the segment: **Ask**, "How did Rosita share her feelings with her mom and dad? What are some ways that your family shares feelings?"



Family Activity: Feeling Flowers

Build upon the messages in the DVD story and help families explore their emotions.

1. Photocopy the "Feeling Flower" on page 9 (one per family).
2. Using precut paper flower petals, encourage parents to help their children write down the many emotions they have felt surrounding the changes that have taken place in their families (one emotion per petal). Children can illustrate the back of each petal.
3. As children draw, parents can encourage them to discuss their picture. What is it? Does it have a story behind it? How does it make them feel when they look at it?
4. Families can then help children glue the petals together to make flowers. Invite each family to share their flower. Encourage families to take their flowers home and display them.



Print Connections

- » **Magazine:** Find information and activities on changes on pages 12–19 of the magazine.



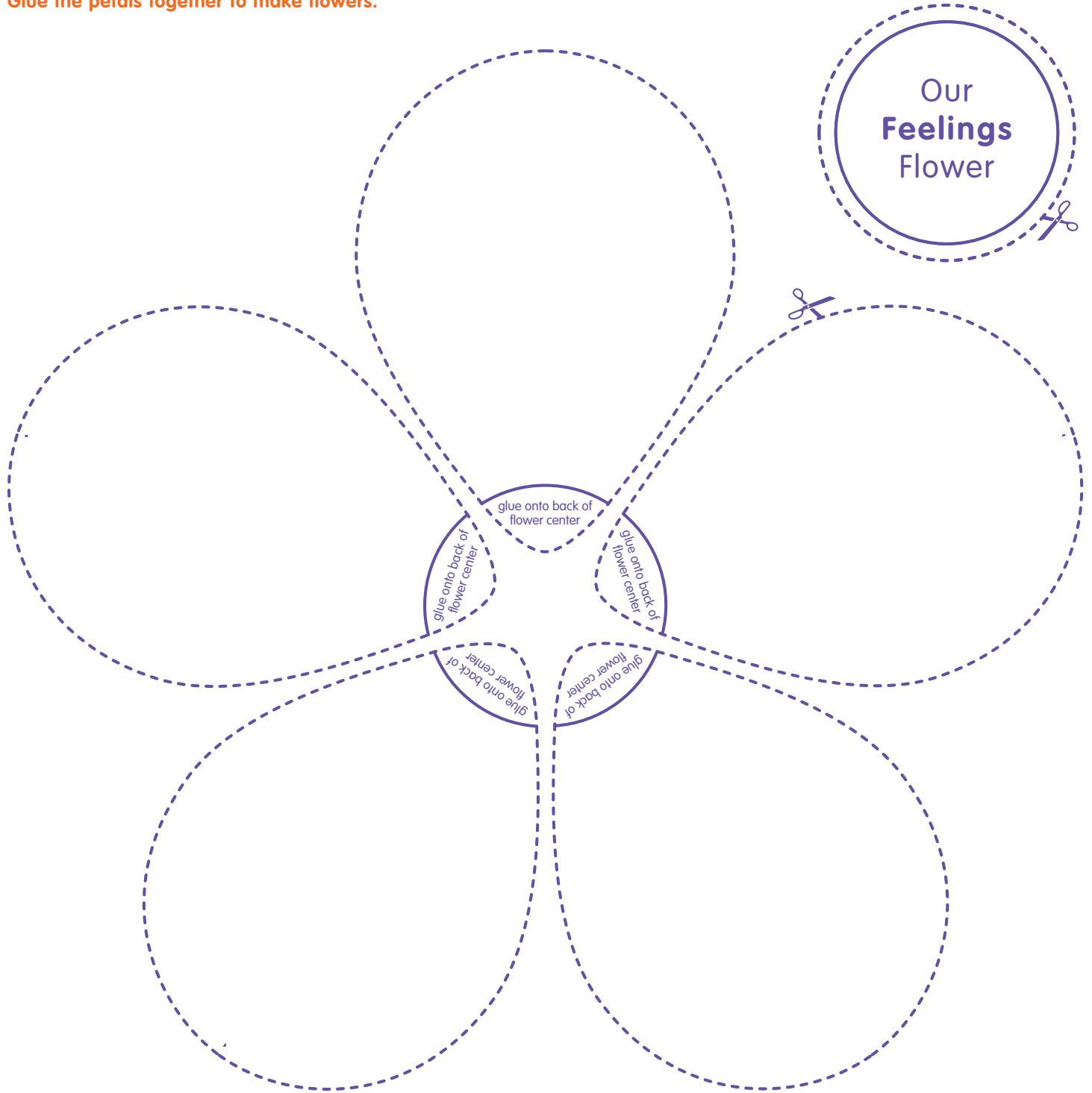
- » **Poster:** Have parents and children look at Rosita holding the photograph of her family. Parents can say to children, "How is Rosita's family the same as before her dad went away? How is it different? What is the same and different in our own family, between now and before mom or dad went away? No matter how things change, our love for you remains the same."





Feeling Flower

Write an emotion on each petal and illustrate it on the other side.
Glue the petals together to make flowers.



Changes: A “New Normal”

Explore some of the new routines that families will create as they begin to establish a “new normal” and work together to build a network of support that includes the entire family.

Take-Home Messages

- ★ Though changes have occurred, over time families will establish a “new normal.”
- ★ Patience and support are crucial to this time of transition.
- ★ Children can play active roles in helping to establish new routines.



Story Summary

Rosita and her family, with the help of Elmo and his dad, explore ways that friends and family can get used to the changes that have happened. Together they discover new ways to play together, dance together, and be there for one another.

Watch It, Talk About It

- » **Show** “A New Way” on the “Changes” DVD (by selecting “Continue,” then “Select a Scene,” then “A New Way”).
- » **Pause** the DVD after the live action footage. **Ask**, “What are some of the things that these families do together?”
- » After viewing the segment: Have parents **ask** children, “What are some new things that our family does together?”



Family Activity: Picture This

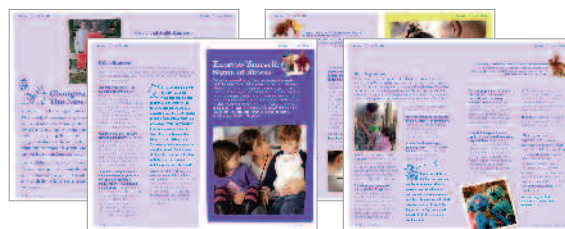
Build upon the DVD and help families think of ways that they can care for one another – and find new ways to enjoy time together – after an injury.

1. Photocopy “Picture This” on page 11 (one per family).
2. Encourage families to imagine new activities or altered routines that they can do together with the parent who has sustained an injury. For instance, if they liked to dance together and now a parent uses a wheelchair, how could they dance together in a new way?
3. Encourage children to think of favorite family moments. Have them tell their parents how these moments could be reimagined. Parents can ask children, “What are some new and special activities that you are excited to try together?”
4. Parents and children can work together to draw pictures of each new routine in the empty snapshots.
5. Encourage families to take their snapshots home. If the parent with the injury was not able to make it to the group, families can add more snapshots at home.



Print Connections

- » **Magazine:** Find information and activities on changes on pages 12–19 of the magazine.



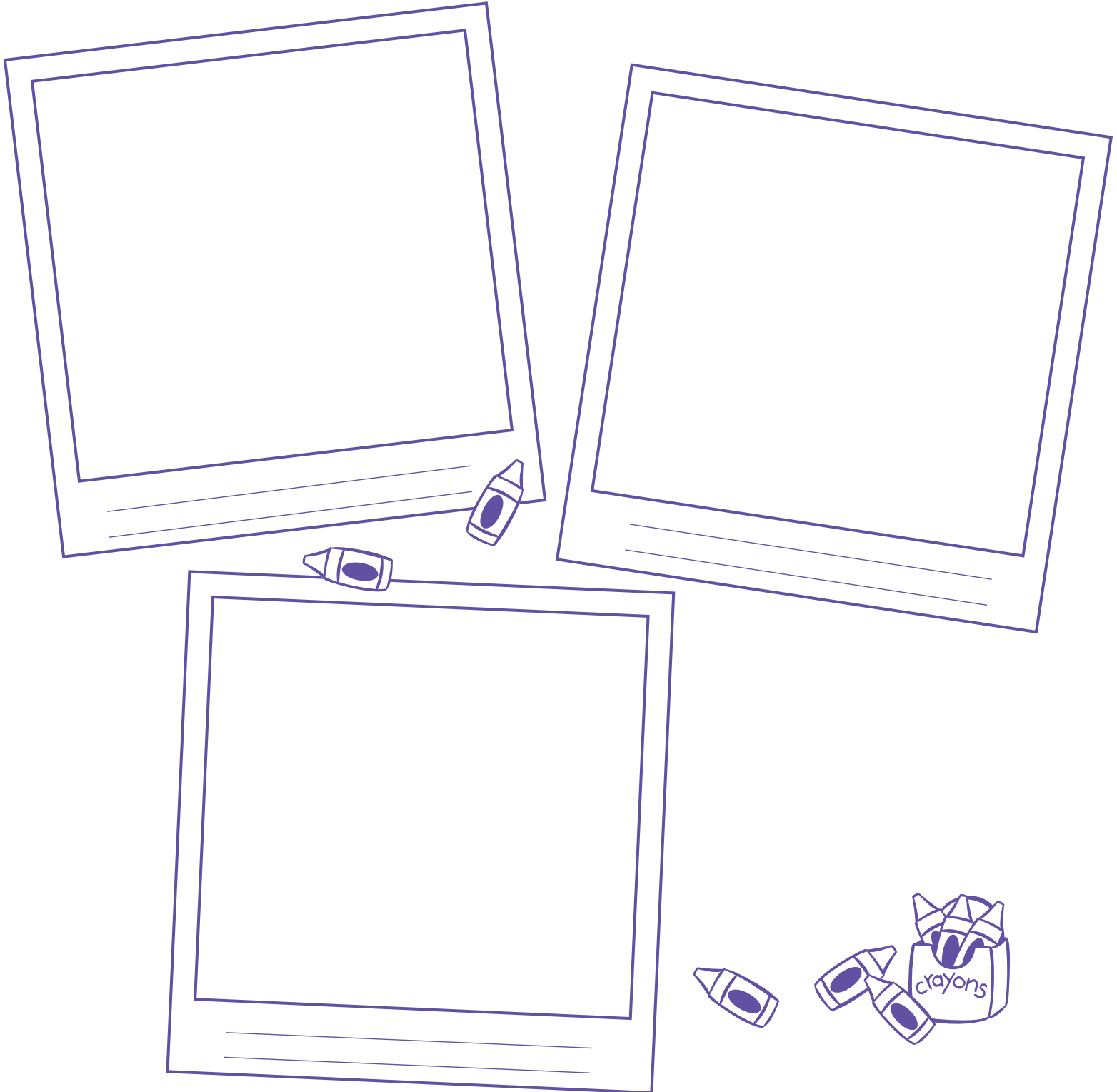
- » **Poster:** Together, everyone can sing along with the song on the back of the poster (under “Sing Along!”).





Picture This

Draw pictures of the new routines your family has begun since Mom or Dad returned home.
Add your own captions.



Resources

Books to Share With Children and Families:

That's My Hope by Lil Ingram and Marlene Lee, illustrated by Karen Thomison (Military Child Education Coalition, www.MilitaryChild.org)

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn, illustrated by Ruth E. Harper and Nancy M. Leak (Tanglewood Press, 2006)

Hooray for Our Heroes by Sarah Albee, illustrated by Tom Brannon (Dalmatian Press/Sesame Workshop, 2005)

While You Are Away by Eileen Spinelli, illustrated by Renée Graef (Hyperion Books, 2004)

Some Helpful Web Sites:

www.asymca.org

www.centerforthestudyoftraumaticstress.org

www.deploymentkids.com

www.militarychild.org

www.militaryonesource.com

www.militarystudent.org

www.nmfa.org

www.parentsasteachers.org

www.pva.org

www.saluteheroes.org

www.survivingdeployment.com

www.uso.org

www.woundedwarriorproject.org

www.zerotothree.org/military

