Staying connected the **write** way.....

Separation is never easy. Being away from home can be hard for you and your family. You can make the distance seem shorter by staying in touch with those at home. Staying in touch with those at home can help reduce concerns, fears and worries; share warm feelings and love; and ease loneliness.

- **Include details**: Amusing events, daily routines, stories about local sites and people. Details that may seem unimportant to you can help your experiences seem more “real” to the people at home.

- **Don’t forget the little things**: Send a photograph of yourself where you are. A small keepsake can be a nice surprise. It also gives you something to write about. If your family has a pet, make sure to mention it, too.

- **Correspondence works both ways**: If someone writes to you, let him or her know you appreciate the letter by writing back. Answer any questions he or she has. Ask questions about what is going on in his or her life. Praise your family members for any accomplishments you learn about.

- **Remember important dates**: Let your friends and family know that you are thinking of them. Be sure to acknowledge birthdays, anniversaries and other special dates.

- **Make each letter special**: Write separate letters to individual family members and friends. Try to match what you write about to each individual’s interests. For example, if your child is interested in animals, write about any you have seen.

- **Keep it light**: Be upbeat. A sad letter or one with bad news may worry your family and friends. Don’t try to discipline your child from a distance, your support and encouragement are most important.

- **Let your feelings show**: Don’t forget to tell others how you feel about them. Let them know how much you love and miss them. Reassure your child that you are OK and will be coming home.

- **Number and date your letters**: Letters may arrive late and out of order. Help those at home keep track by numbering them.