

Friendships Across the Miles

Activities for Maintaining Close Friendships Wherever Military Life Takes You

Start before the PCS

Every friendship takes time and energy to maintain. Before the PCS, make time to develop strategies to maintain relationships with close friends. A little planning goes a long way!

- **Schedule a phone or video date.** Having a predetermined date and time for the first phone or video call following the PCS may give your student peace of mind that goodbye is not truly goodbye, particularly for younger children who do not have access to or ownership of communication devices.
- **Set a date for intentional twinning.** Schedule a specific date (i.e. last or first day of school) or day of the week to coordinate outfits, accessories, or colors. Whether it's R.E.D. (Remember Everyone Deployed) Friday or upcycled t-shirt Tuesday, make plans to copy your BFF's style and enjoy the shared secret

Capitalize on the digital era

Virtual events and opportunities have been around since before the pandemic, but options and access to virtual tools have improved significantly in recent years. Embrace old and new ideas to stay connected in real time.

- **Release your inner gamer.** Join your friends in an epic battle via your preferred gaming system. If you prefer to see your friends as you work through virtual worlds together, set up a video call on your smart device at the same time.
- **Share a movie and popcorn.** Some streaming services and social media platforms support watch party links, which allow you to either share a synchronized movie showing or video call one another as you watch your separate devices. Heat up some popcorn on both ends to up the "theatre experience", without ever having to share your soda!
- **Recruit the adults to help facilitate a virtual Chat & Craft.** Decide on a craft you want to make with your friends. Order and ship the required materials to each friend. Other friends (and parents) can provide care packages with snacks and other goodies to share. Bonus points go to those who ship locally made or manufactured snacks to those who have relocated out of the area! Schedule a virtual meeting on a video platform and prepare to make-and-take with friends!
- **Get social on social media.** Older children and adults are not the only ones who can use social media to stay connected. Some social media platforms have created kid-centric, parent-managed options to help the youngest family members get in on the fun. If it's too soon for a child's first social media account, parents can facilitate messages passed and video conferences using their own accounts.