

Develop Social Connections

Podcast Transcript

This podcast is brought to you by Military OneSource.

It's hard to imagine what parenting must have been like for our great grandparents. How did they manage without easy access to best-selling parenting books, the Internet, or—yes—even podcasts? I think we can all agree that our past generations must've gotten something right since we're here. In fact, maybe there's something we can learn from our technologically deprived grandparents, great grandparents, and those even farther up the family tree.

Ever heard, "It takes a village to raise a child?" This just means that parenting isn't meant to be a solo sport. Parents and children need the outside support of extended family and trustworthy friends. This was true way back when for great grandma, and it's still true today! Even though we can find help with just the click of a mouse, sometimes it's hard to top the understanding ear of a friend or advice from someone who knows you better than any parenting book ever could.

So, how can we develop our own network of support, especially in the military community where family may be far away and friends aren't necessarily constant? Let's start by getting to know people in our area with common interests and values. This might include coworkers, neighbors, fellow members of our religious congregations, or parents whose children participate in the same activities as our children, like playgroups, sports, or plays.

When we swap parenting stories and questions with new acquaintances, we might begin to see that we share common challenges, like finding a trustworthy babysitter, getting our children to eat vegetables, or figuring out potty training. We can brainstorm solutions together or compare notes about what worked and what didn't.

Occasionally, we need more than advice or an understanding ear. The network of social contacts that we develop can provide meals during hectic times, like deployments or the birth of a new baby. They can also be convenient babysitters in a bind or reliable transportation on occasion.

As parents, who we socialize with becomes more important than ever. We need to make sure that the social network we build is full of understanding and supportive individuals who have our interests, as well as our children's best interests, at heart. And, of course, to have good friends we need to be good friends ourselves. So let's make sure we're lending an understanding ear or offering help when we're able.

If we can help each other we can eliminate much of the stress that comes with trying to take on too much as a parent. A solid network of support can help us stress less and spend more time making great memories with our children!

--

For more information, visit Military OneSource at <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>, an official Department of Defense website.