**Interview Details**

**Project Title:** An exploration of service children with SEND’s experience of separation and deployment throughout education, from the perspective of service children, their families and school staff.

**Interview Date and Time:** 28/02/2025 09:00 – 10:00 (58 mins)

**Interview Location:** Online via Teams

**Interviewer:** (“I”)

**Interviewee:** Participant 3 (“P3”)

**Key:**

[*inaudible*] = inaudible word due to interference on the recording

**Interview Transcript**   
I: And we'll start with some demographic questions first. So, this is just to help me get an idea of kind of context and who we're speaking about. So first of all, could you tell me a little bit about your child with special educational needs? So how old they are? I know you just mentioned that your ETHNICITY, so I assume that's your ethnicity. What their gender is? What pronouns I should use when I describe them?  
P3: OK. Well, my daughter is 8 years old. She's turning 9 in August. So, so we come from my, like my husband was born and raised in LOCATION so, so they moved back to England in 2006/7 somewhere. And then he started serving in British armed forces, so. And then CHILD NAME has a little brother who is about he’s turning five in July. So both of them are summer babies. So and we just, we just knew CHILD NAME had additional need, when was, I think it was back in 2020 when like I could figure out that she had speech and language difficulty when she was in nursery because she couldn't, she could count 1 to 20, she could sing all the nursery rhymes, I never heard her reading phonics because she could sight reading, but little did I know that she does have that condition, so she's kind of like a bit different compared to other kids. And then I didn't know because like 'cause, since I come from ETHNICITY background and autism is a different new topic, I used to do [*inaudible*] at that time and then I used to do lots of like trainings and stuff with other team members, and then I started slowly forming a little community where I could talk about my kids having that different problems that I was facing and I was pregnant at that time, so it could be a pregnancy hormone did play a role, so I was really quite invested about like how I could get assessed, since that was Covid period everything was very difficult for me to get an appointment with the paediatrician so in her, in her time, my husband was deployed in LOCATION and LOCATION for about like months and months, so I had to do it on my own. It was really hard for me. Being pregnant mom and having a toddler who is about to get diagnosed with autism and then so I had to figure it out on my own, so I realized, I had to contact the paediatrician instead of GP because those information were completely new to me. Firstly, I was a first mum so I barely have any idea about what I was doing. So, all I told her everything could be solved by GP, I had to go to GP, I had to speak with health visitor, none of them could help me at that case and then I didn't know school could have referred CHILD NAME. Sorry, it is a very long story that [*inaudible*] to be able to share this one, so I never knew that school could refer to its speech and language therapies if there is a problem in the child, all I could hear from the school was she had a lovely day because she is a happy and plays alone, and then she never bothered everybody. I think it was very easy for them to say like to see was having a lovely day because she doesn't have any meltdown because he was happy to play on her own. But somehow it kind of bothered me because she didn't have any eye contact, she never responded her name, but when I used to call, like, ask her to do something, she couldn't respond her name. But whenever I used the word ice cream, she would be hearing that when running back to me, and I didn't feel that was quite right for me. So, I had a friend who used to work in HOSPITAL NAME. She suggested me to go through self-referral thing with the speech and language therapist. So, I had to fill up that and it took me about 21 days and I got an appointment with the speech and language therapist in LA NAME, based in TOWN NAME. So as soon as he saw her, she felt something is not right and she was negating what she wanted us, what she was desperate in need of. So and I was, I was just a new mum at that time, like, you know, just a little bit bit like all of those pregnancy thing and new baby and having your kids about to get diagnosed autistic. It was a so new thing to me and I was completely having a mental breakdown at that time, since my husband was away and it was really hard for me at that point of time. And then. So, she told me to raise a complaint, So which I did. And then after that, her EHCP process started rapidly. So she did need some help, but it did take me all of those challenges I had to face. And then if I wasn't aware about like how I could do it. And then when I was doing the EHCP process, They needed a paper copy that she has been diagnosed with autism. So since it was a COVID period of time, There was very less chance for me to get an appointment with the paediatrician, which would be face to face, of course. But all of those were bit of a hurdle for me, so, I had to go through because I had to be very firm with them because I needed that to be have diagnosed ASAP to get her EHCP done. So we had in that period of time there was 4 paediatrician that I had says in those couple of months because it kept changing. So I had to explain every situation to different paediatrician and what I was facing and then later one of this lovely lady I forgot her name, her surname was SURNAME so, she she, like, she agreed to do a video call like this and she saw CHILD NAME she felt something was off. So she had she had stated in the paperwork that was she is definitely autistic. So that helped me escalate the process of EHCP and that was done. And CHILD NAME goes to SCHOOL NAME at the moment. And when CHILD’S NAME started her reception year, her EHCP was in process at that time. And then I had a work with lovely lady in her Infant School, she is the SENCo there NAME. So we we kinda discuss every term because I I was so interested to see my kid like that and I wanted to know how I could give the best for her so I could understand her better. Knowing that she can read, I never realized that she should have an understanding of comprehension. Back in LOCATION where I studied, everything was like a para reading whatever teacher used to say, we had to follow that. And then I was home till [*inaudible*] and I was good at studies at that time. And then so I started learning that way, but in CHILD NAME’s case, it was completely different. And the way I was taught and CHILD NAME will be taught will be very different. So SENCO NAME suggested me to do this understanding autism course in online, which I did and I found it very helpful so I could understand and help CHILD NAME in a better way for her. And then that was all the little history how CHILD NAME was diagnosed with autistic autism. Sorry. So yeah, that's all about her at the moment. And for her pronouns she is still she I know.

I: Yes. Yes, thank you. That's really, really helpful to get that kind of summary, I guess, but it sounds like that was really challenging for you and you had to do a lot of advocating and like coming up against barriers at every hurdle. It sounds like you've really kept pushing for CHILD NAME, which is really lovely.

P3: Yeah, yeah.

I: And I just want to check as well is your husband currently serving in the military?

P3: He is currently serving as a practice manager in NAME Medical Centre.

I: OK. And which is that the army that he's in then?

P3: He is, yes.

I: Thank you.

P3: You're welcome.

I: So I want to think a little bit more specifically about kind of CHILD NAME’s experiences of having a parent in the military and her dad going away, if that's for training or deployment or whatever that looks like, but could you tell me a little bit about what that's like for CHILD NAME when her dad goes away?

P3: Right, since CHILD NAME is very, I would say a happy kid for like say self-contained. I think she is her own bubbles. She is aware that her dad is away. She will, she is, she will be quite distressed if I am not around, rather than him not being around, because she is, I think, slightly getting used to it. So since having my little one he has been only deployed about two or three times, but not that very long, but when I was pregnant at that time, he was deployed in LOCATION for seven months, LOCATION for nine months. So so it was about a year that he had been frequently away. CHILD NAME is, her level of understanding has gone better now since she started in Junior School. When she was in infant school, she roughly had an idea about like what is what sort of things is going around and what are the changes that she had so. She is not quite distressed and hasn't been really upset about it, when her dad was away because of probably the emotional connection and the amount of time, they're haven’t spent much time together. But now, if he's gonna be away, she will be searching for him because her use of language is coming. I wouldn't say it is a fully proper vocabulary language in a sentence, but we have allowed her to take our names in person. For example, we like if she wants something, if she is need in need of something, we are not her mom and dad. She is allowed to tell our name. So she can feel confident, she can tell her needs confidently. Like, ok ‘MUM’S NAME, I need this’. So, she will be ‘MUM’S NAME I need googly eyes please’ so because MUM’S NAME is a friend for her at that time MUM’S NAME will be getting those things for her. And if if I'm in a mom character, let's say, OK, mum is going to be home now, everything should be spot clean. So she knows Mummy is going to be away and Mummy is going to be distressed if she see’s her house messy. So they will be starting cleaning. So they are slightly getting better and which has helped my little one, her brother, to understand CHILD NAME case, CHILD NAME case as well. So so we are all trying to work together. But in infant school, her speech was nothing at all. But once she started joining the Junior School, so probably the age is playing a vital role in there because I was told she was about 18 to 20 months delayed in her brains. So so possibly that is slightly playing a part. So, even though she is about 8 years old, so she must be between five to six years old maybe at the moment. So yeah, that is, that is what we have figured out. Like she is not stressed when her dad is away, but now she will be looking for him, because she knows that Daddy is going to take her to 360, because she knows Daddy is going to take her to swimming, she knows that Daddy is going to go out for take them out for shopping. So all of those things has slightly playing the importance of having her dad around.

I: Yeah. So, it sounds like when she was a bit younger and didn't have that, that built up relationship with him as much, it wasn't too much of a difficulty when he went away, but the separation from you would be quite distressing because you were her emotional support. But now as she's getting older and she spent more time with him and has built quite strong relationship with him, now you're starting to see that if he was to go away, there might be some changes with her looking for him because her routine is different. Is that right?

P3: Yes, yes, yes, yes, 'cause like whenever he is late, 'cause like he his usual time to be home is around 5. And then sometimes, because usually I'm off on Wednesday, so he will be coming and taking my room where is DAD’S NAME because she knows he is quite late home today. So and then little one says ‘daddy’s at work’ so and then, ‘oh, Daddy is not home yet’. And then I start playing up and then I have to ring in front of time so like they can they and then he will be speaking saying like, ‘oh, I'm on the way’ and they will be feeling ok. So I think she is slightly getting a little bit of understanding like how having her dad around is playing a role there. So previously it wasn't the case because she what the most of the time she used to be with me myself, because he used to be guaranteed deployed. And then she was. And I didn't used to work at that point of time, so maybe the bond got a little bit stronger because she used to be with me most of the time. And then once I had, baby, the baby came up and but she was still around, but he was away, so probably that could have built us to grow a little bit stronger, a little bit further with her dad.

I: Yes, which makes sense, doesn't it? If you’re the parent that's around, she's you're the one that she's going to be be closer to at that time.

P3: Hmm.

I: When when CHILD’S NAME’S dad does go away with with his work, does CHILD’S NAME understand why he's going away? Do you know?

P3: She all thinks it is a work related. She knows that he’s gone to work, but she wouldn't, she wouldn't be asking, but like it, we will be getting in touch with video calls, but she does have a very little bit of understanding only that she knows that he's going to be away because of the packing. And then we kind of use a motivational thing for her like, ok, if we finish this one and once Daddy’s back, we're going to go 360 and then all of those exciting things for her that is in plan. So maybe that has helped her stating the condition, since he's away once he’s back, she's gonna go out now with Daddy. So possibly that is the thing.

I: So yeah, so having those exciting things that she enjoys with him booked in and she knows they're going to happen are helpful, ok? And does she understand, like how long he's going to be away for or is it just daddy's going away, daddy will be back soon.

P3: She doesn't have that level of understanding yet, I think, but she's only understanding that she that since he's going to be away, she will not be seeing him around and mum is not going to take anywhere.

I: Yeah. Ok. And you started to mention then about some things that might help when when Dad goes away for CHILD’S NAME to understand or to kind of experience that. And I'm wondering if there's anything that she does for herself to help her manage while Dad's away, or whether it's just kind of just the same as normal.

P3: So she is with me most of the time and what I do that I will be taking, I will be planning all the activities. For example, going for a walk and collecting twigs and then who has collected the most will be getting some candy or rewards. I know it's very silly, but sometimes you have to do it, And then the other thing is like we will be going out to explore foods. So for example, she does watch all of these YouTube videos where it is called like, I'm sure you know about this so-called mukbang, where you will be eating varieties of food. So, I will be taking them to try all of those new cuisines, ‘like, ok, we're going to go out this time if your guys are behaving on this day, we're going to go out and try this and we're going to have a family mukbang’. So we will be looking forward, so having her motivational things going to come around, has helped her to regulate herself. In order to calm herself down, she does have all sort of colors. She loves art and crafts. She loves googly eyes, that has to be a specific eyelashes in there. So and then I have allowed a screen time in computer only for an hour max and she is allowed to do with me some reading, spellings, addition and subtraction and times table with me. So she does have a fixed routine, so I'm trying to stick up with the routine and I think that has helped me because she is one of the person who has to be consistent in everything, so I am not trying to change that one till she understands. So she knows, like I have been using now and next very often because that has been very helpful for me and it is working at the school as well. So sometimes she just amazes me like I wouldn't know what is going around in her classroom. For example, if they are going to go away for like Museum visit, And I would be so busy at my work, and having a family side, and then and then there would be so many emails popping around in my e-mail, so I will not be having track of it. And then sometimes she makes me aware she's going to go somewhere, and then I have to double check with the teachers, ‘ok is is CHILD’S NAME going somewhere? She been saying this to me for a couple of days now’. ‘Oh yeah, they're going gonna go on this trip’ and then that is how I come to know. So even though she doesn't have a use of language there, she does have a little bit of understanding that she's gonna go away and school is planning some trips for them. So which is kind of like slowly coming in a very bunny hops kind of thing. I'm quite, just impressed with how she must have, like, you know, how she has progress from the time that she was, like, completely mute to being a verbal and letting me know what is going around. And so such things has really helped me, like you know, 'cause like something exciting is going to come around and then in order to regular her emotions like, yes, she does throw her palm on her forehead when she's distressed. Yes, she bangs herself with her knees on the floor when she's distressed. She sometimes run over and hits herself on the wall. That is, that is her way of showing frustration. And I know that she's not going to self-harm that much, to the point that she is going to hurt herself, like, completely bleeding. And then she she's still aware if I could bang my head, this one and then I might be getting attention because she is not gonna hit herself that dangerously. And then I used to be really worried about previously thinking like if she is hitting herself might have affected the brain and then, but that is the way of her showing anger. But it is not that much that has to be a very serious that I have to be concerned. So that is just that is just a way of showing, like sometimes even if you are mad with just slam the door harder. So possibly that is the way of showing her anger towards me from her side. And then.

I: Yeah. So she's finding ways to express that herself in a way that somebody else can understand.

P3: Yeah. And yes, so yes, so so those are the things that she does when she is distressed and I used to apply a moisturizer before so ‘oh CHILD’S NAME is hurt’, so that soothing might help giving her emotional and sensory needs that she needed. A hug, even a hug will make us better, So sometimes giving her a hug. But if I know that she is already had done a mistake knowingly, but it's a brain that has to function sometimes, and I just let her be quiet at that time. Like when she is having emotional breakdown, I just let her cry for like 10/20 minutes and then she comes to me saying sorry. So she knows she has done something wrong and I'm not like I have realized at that time when she was about 28 to 32 months time because I used to be very protective mum, let's say. Whenever she used to go around and then had a fall and I had to go and ‘oh, what is wrong?’ So because of being a first mom, I think it was, it came in my nature, but after that she started being so much complaining about simple things which didn't need my attention. And then everybody told me like, that is not really nice to let them be because kids will be kids. So that is how I started doing that and it has gone better now. So I hope I did answer your question.

I: Yes. Yeah, you took. So there's a few things that you talked about that help her. So having a routine and then like kind of the structure of the day and being quite consistent with that. Also given her time to

P3: And having motivation as well, yeah.

I: Yes. Yeah, the now and next and the motivators. And also having processing time when she's experiencing those big emotions so that she can kind of either one kind of get there and regulate herself and then kind of do that connection back with you, or then come and receive that support from you to help her regulate. Do you see any more of that behaviour, those that dysregulation, when Dad is deployed or is it just kind of there's no change?

P3: It's a regular thing, so no change at all, I would say.

I: Yeah. OK. That's perfect. Thank you. And when if dad's been away for a little while, for deployment or training, and then Dad comes back, so he is kind of like reintroduced back into the house. Does CHILD’S NAME manage that transition ok, or is there anything that's that's quite challenging?

P3: Ok, this is a very interesting question so. As we know, like we're not allowed to sleep together when we have a baby. So when, when he was deployed for nine months, like in LOCATION and I was really worried about her toilet training thing, then I wanted to push myself to train her to the toilet. But it made me kind of like no sleep at all, going back to her room, wake her up and take her to the toilet and come back and make her sleep. And then we and then there will be a baby crying in next room. So I kinda struggle with that one. So what I started doing, we used to sleep all together and then hoping that would help. But like since CHILD’S NAME snores while sleeping, it kind of frequently woke up baby at night and it was really disturbing for her. And then and then I had to pause toilet training at that time. So we had to sleep together at that point of time when, and then she got I think she got used to it sleeping with me. And then she didn't go back to her bed. And then, it was about like 7-8 months that she slept with me. And then when her dad was back and then baby has to go back to cot and CHILD’S NAME has to go to her bed, and then she didn't like it. She was, she was really, really not happy at the time. And then so, she was a bit of shy character, which was very unusual for me. And then she didn't come to our room for about, like, 2/3 days. And then whenever Dad was around, then she used to, like, you know, putt her head [down] and walk around, like, completely treated her him as a stranger. And then I I spoke this to SENCO NAME and then she told me that since he has been away, so like the bond has not gone very like in a strong, so I think he has to build it up. And then when I used to be in meetings then he used to take them for walk, go to park together, have Burger kings and then slowly develop that relation. So I think it was, it was both a thing that I have experienced when he was not away and then when he was back, how she found it kind of like a different experience for her and we we never knew CHILD’S NAME used to be shy. So that was her, like something strange for me looking at her, even having a baby. When we had a baby, she didn't come to our room for about 28 days. She never come and talk to us. Not mom. Not dad. That was very strange so she was really close with my brother at that time. My brothers and his sister was here to help us during COVID time because I had C-section and then knowing CHILD’S NAME was autistic, they were really, I think they were trying to give me emotional support for probably because I was going through post-natal depression at that time and then they were around and then. So she didn't come to our room for about 28 days. That broke my heart. She didn't even see baby's face. She never used to come to our room. She was all self-occupied with her uncle and auntie most of the time. So I was very strange for me and when I spoke to GP about it, she said some times it happens and so it is normal. I do not know. So it was really strange for me.

I: Yeah. It sounds like when something, like a big change happens in her family home, there's a new person, or somebody's been away and comes back, then in those times she takes quite a long time to then readjust to the new normal. It sounds like when when there was a new baby, it took her a while to kind of get used to the fact there was another person there.

P3: Yes, she never liked a baby. She never liked baby. And then it sounds silly, so sometimes when she doesn't listen, what I tell her to do, ‘do you want Mommy to be pregnant?’ And then she keeps saying no. Maybe that has get quite a traumatic for her, probably. But she does love watching babies thingy. Like even you can ask schools about it, so whenever she was given iPad for like, you know, some kind of activity in the school provided, all she used to do was, they told me all you see is just as baby bottles, baby pacifiers, What else? Pampers. She used to look all those [*inaudible*] but I do not know why she doesn't like babies or like. Even one of my cousin had a little baby and then she was here to visit us, and then we thought, like, ok, they need some time together, because they have just got, like new babies, so we will look after the baby and you guys go and have a dinner and then CHILD’S NAME hated it absolutely. And then once her auntie was back, she was just like, take baby out. So so maybe she doesn't like somebody who is getting our attention, probably I do not know. It was really hard for us.

I: I wouldn't. I wonder as well because what you were saying about CHILD’S NAME before is that she quite likes that structure and predictability and knowing what's next. And I wonder with a baby, they're quite unpredictable, aren't they? And I wonder whether that is a bit uncertain for her. So she's a bit like, I don't know what, what's going to happen or what's what this is all about. And I wonder if her exploring some of that in school is her trying to make sense of it all. Just a wonder.

P3: Yeah. Could be. But her brother was completely different. Her brother used to be the most caring person for the babies. And then when it comes to CHILD’S NAME she hated babies. But whenever, like, even even, even if there are other parents with buggies and if the kids have pacifiers she goes and see what brand of pacifiers that you've been using and she comes back to me saying ‘mam dummy’. So I do not know what is that, so I had to Google it, so it was a brand called mam and it was pacifiers. So I think it is that gives her sensory kind of fact when she sees those pacifiers. But having a baby around might have give her some kind of shock. I do not know. So that was all all different to me, like looking at her behaviour and experience. I have experienced those things so completely different. But her dad being around has been, I think so since since she grew up with me, so it hasn't been affected much. But when she was about, like, nearly three years old and he was back, she saw that character and it was completely different, but since then he has been away for about 3/4 times, LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION and then he went recently to [*inaudible*]. So those are the places he'd been around for, like, a couple of weeks only, so she hasn't been that disturbed so far.

I: So when it's a shorter period of time when he's away, she manages that better than what would be a long time.

P3: Yeah, yeah.

I: Yeah. Ok. And I'm wondering if you think her special education needs, so autism and you kind of talked about her speech and language as well, whether they have a particular impact on her experience of Dad going away. Do you think it's different for her compared to your other child?

P3: So like it's very different. The cases are completely different for me. For example, CHILD’S NAME was diagnosed with autism and BROTHER’S NAME doesn't have a speech clarity. So both of them went through speech and language therapy. BROTHER’S NAME is still under the speech and language therapist. He does have a very good eye contact. He does have a good level of understanding. He is friendly and a very lovely boy, goes easy, easy, easygoing with everybody. But if the speech, we thought it could be a speech delay, but he does have a level of understanding. He does say, but when like let's example for example when he says Mummy, it's not Mummy, it's [*inaudible*], but we do understand what he's trying to say Mummy, it is the clarity is not there. Where compared to CHILD’S NAME, she was completely mute. When I say completely mute, only when we used to have a communication. When you were like, when you give her books she could read, and it wasn't like phonics explained it, so I never taught her phonics, and then that was the condition where teacher says it to me maybe CHILD’S NAME is used to with the sightseeing reading? So, but she doesn't have any understanding of comprehension whatsoever. And then she could talk. But she could sing. But when we used to communicate with her, ‘Ok, what is CHILD’S NAME name? What is your name? How was your day going? Did you have a good day?’ She had this condition called echolalia. She used to say what she has heard. She used to repeat what we said to her. She is still somehow like that, but we we do not know like what is going on with her like, you know, because she cannot express it so much. And but now she has been using some of the words now. Is so sometimes, if she does better need something she uses first pronouns ‘I want this’, but if she wants to do something, ‘CHILD’S NAME going somewhere’ so she still uses her name so. With this speech and language therapist and my husband getting connected, we had about two assessment with CHILD’S NAME in TOWN NAME for Health. It was trying her to fill up the communication level, but she wasn't really easy going. She loved playing with the bucket time thingy. But she wasn't really using the words at that time. But I think it was since last year she started using words and a simple sentence is about 3 or 4 words a day. So. I don't think it has made such impact for her with the speech and language and my husband being around like being completely like away. So I don't think there is a connection without that one because of her condition yeah.

I: Yeah. Which makes sense. Yeah. Thank you. You talked a little bit about how sometimes when dad's away that she can, or when Dad comes back, that kind of impact in terms of CHILD’S NAME being a bit uncertain about him or a bit more shy and reserved around him to begin with and it taking time to rebuild that relationship, but I'm just wondering if if there's been any impact of that deployment or separation on CHILD’S NAME in terms of her learning or her education?

P3: I've never seen my husband like, you know, because like he, he works and comes late, so he will be gone first thing in the morning around 7 and then he comes around five or six in the evening. And then that that hasn't given enough time for, he will be tired as well. So I think he will love to be on board at that time because of having a long day, but it will be me most have the time who will be spending time to read a book, read a story, do some kind of like activities related to art and crafts, and going to the library and then having a selection of books and bringing them back and reading them. I haven't seen much, so I would I would think so, because if he wasn't that busy he would have given him some time to build a connection, but I think it has just been one person attention probably that she has been getting this from a long time. She's going to be nine this year, so since the amount of time that she has spent with me, maybe she finds my voice a bit soothing and comforting for her, rather than Daddy telling a story. Because like when we and then since that is not like that, there is not that bond created about like how stories should sound with kids since he's being frequently around, maybe that doesn't give them that much time to understand, like, you know the process about like, Ok, since there is not any bond, let's say in a simple sentence, they might not find him reading a story would be kind of soothing for them, isn't it? So for example, if I have to read a story about, about 3 little pigs, let's say, and then I will be starting with this sentence like ‘Once Upon a time there was this 3 little pigs’. So I will be making voices, but since my husband has been frequently away, he might not know the tricks and all of these black magic thing I will be doing for them to get entertained. And make like, I have seen him reading, he was reading this book called Jack and The Beanstalk, ‘Jack went up to the tree’, Nobody would find that pleasing, will they? So maybe maybe like so I did ask my colleagues as well, ‘Is that how your dad like it? Is that how your man sound like when he's reading his story?’ Do you get and they were saying like they had to spend much of the time with the kids and they will be knowing how to treat like [*inaudible*] and then we did try watching Peppa Pig as well together and I told her you have to mimic those kind of voices to make them entertained and listen to you, and he was like, I cannot do that one. So maybe he doesn't have that emotional connection. I'm not saying like he doesn't love his kids, but he doesn't have built up interaction with them and probably since he doesn't have that much time and he doesn't want to focus it could be being frequently away had taken that back. You know, I mean I, I do think so.

I: It sounds like there's kind of two things there. One's been that because usually you're the one that does kind of like the learning and the creative things at home with with your children that when Dad goes away, there isn't really that much impact because it's still the same. You're still doing all of those things.

P3: Yes, that is how it is. That is how it is most of the time.  
I: Yes. Yes, exactly. OK, perfect. And then also there could be something around because Dad's away some, quite a bit, or has been, that he doesn't know all the ins and outs of how you interact with CHILD’S NAME and her little brother and how they like to be engaged. So it's consistent if you're the one doing those things. That's really helpful to understand.

P3: Yes, because I’m with her most of the time, with her the most of the time at home. So he he'd I don't think that he has built up bond with them and they will not find them pleasing when he does that one as well because they are so used to me.

I: So that familiarity with you and that bond is really important. Thank you. I want to think a little bit about school as well and just thinking about is there anything that school does to support CHILD’S NAME when Dad is deployed or away from home?

P3: Mm hmm. I think it is still the same.

I: Still the same support?

P3: Hmm.

I: Yeah. OK. And do you think there's anything that school could be doing that would be helpful for CHILD’S NAME at those times?

P3: For example, I did try to put her to these afternoon clubs, so thinking that I will be able to spend time little with little one, But she didn't get that chance. It sounds a bit of dark and unfair, But they did mention since CHILD’S NAME has additional need, she will not be fit for this kind of activities because somebody needs to be there. And then since she has a one to one support and the school doesn't have funding for that one, I know it was really heartbreaking at that time, but I think I have gone over to that one, so I stopped taking her to any of the school clubs other than art and craft because it will be all of the teachers will be in the room and she loves arts and crafts and that was the only club that I used to do. And then she was taken away back from all of the activities. So she likes, she likes doing marble run, she, and the reason why I wanted to put her to the after school clubs because was her being, not playing alone, her being to be aware about how the outer environment's going to be. I know her brain works differently compared to others, but, it's like none of the none of the things that we have done so far have been taught or like, it's not theoretical, we have learned ourselves haven't we? We have seen and then learned. I was like, oh, this is how it will be. Since CHILD’S NAME is still unfamiliar with the outer environment that was, that was my plans thinking, ok, so here's a way, so by the time when she's going to be here, I have to give my full attention to both of the kids. So she, if I put her to after school club, and I can spend this time with little ones, I can give this time, so I will be finishing my house goals and then I will go and pick up her since he is now away. So that would be tiring her and then I can really start going back to sleep. As a mom and having additional, like, need kid and a new mom, it was, that was my plan, to be honest. But that didn't work in my favour. So they did mention about government funding. They did mention about since she is one to one support, there is nobody to look after and somebody has to hire them. I had a go with them and then I felt really stupid, like if they cannot understand my part, then I don't need to explain them what I'm feeling around. And then I had to take her away from this after school club activities. So yeah, I don't think. I don't think that has made such changes so far.

I: Yeah, that sounds really difficult as well when you're trying to support CHILD’S NAME and give her those opportunities.

P3: Yeah. I just want to. Exactly. I just wanted to they they do keep saying in the EHCP that we have been given this kind of a support like she needs of course. It's, I'm not completely blaming only in school staff, I do understand how it's school business setting like will be, and how it is to look after kids because I have to, I do understand that, I do have to see so many of kids and from different backgrounds and all of those, it's a very hard job, I don't understand that one. And so recently about 3 weeks ago, two weeks ago, she came up with this big bruise like about 5 centimetres length or maybe more than that. And then I was really concerned about, like, how it happened. So normally what they used to do is if there was some kind of incident they used to report me back in incident report. And I was at work, I got a call from school saying, ‘has anything happened to CHILD’S NAME because there is this massive bruise?’. And I was so concerned because CHILD’S NAME is that kind of person who doesn't let us know what has happened and what went wrong. Luckily I made, I tried to play with her, made her comfortable once I came back from home, I mean, I came back from work and I said, ‘oh my God, what happened CHILD’S NAME knee?’ And then she was like, ‘CHILD’S NAME has a bruise.’ And I said, ‘oh, my God, how did it happen?’ You know. ‘On a bike’ and ‘did somebody push away CHILD’S NAME or did CHILD’S NAME just had a magic fall?’ and she said ‘NAME and CHILD’S NAME riding a bicycle and it hurt CHILD’S NAME’. So, which basically in my level of understanding they were playing on like you know a cross trainer kind of bike, and then once she is a bit of clumsy and I know like how autistic people sometimes would be, and while she was trying to get off she probably might have crushed her leg and then it came out a very big purple-ish bruise. And then nobody did know about it. And then, some, like when they mention about one to one support, it is not possible I do understand it, but when there are kids playing in the garden, there should be some kind of adult supervisiing it. And and in like couple of months back, she had slip and she did hurt her jaw probably on the playground and she couldn't turn her head around in the evening time. That really concerned me thinking, because she cannot express it, and I was so worried I had to ring 111 and had to go in TOWN NAME centre for health to get assessed if something is wrong or not, because she couldn't explain her pain. And then it was second time that had happened and I was really fuming. But I couldn't, I couldn't completely blame the school setting can I? Because have seen CHILD’S NAME has progressed as well. And then I I had a word with the class teacher about it. The class teacher who made me aware about this was what happened, and I think that is the reason why it's happened, and I showed her the video because I had a proof of what had happened, and then it wasn't me teaching her it was in her own words. So, I felt completely bad when, when kids are playing at the playground, there wasn't any kind of adult supervision. And one of the ladies staff was defending saying ‘kids can play and then we cannot be taking [*inaudible*], like sometimes when we just turn our head there will be an accident and we wouldn’t know of it?’ That is the reason why they are in school being telling that something needs to be supervised when they are, and they are not other kids, they are not randomly, there are other kids, like additional needed children, like you know specialized and special needs kids, so of course there should be some kind of provision wouldn't it, that is the reason why the government has funded something, and has some, something must be done. And we just wanted to rectify and she completely bashed us, like you know, saying like, ok, from now on if, ‘do you want us to check CHILD’S NAME’s body every single day about if she's having a bruise?’ That is not kind of professionalism there. Is it? Instead of as a teacher, as I do work myself with NHS, if I come up with that attitude, it is not self assuring, is it? It should be giving me some kind of emotional support saying, ‘oh ok, this has happened’. I would like, ‘I'm so sorry that you had to go through this and this will not happen again and we will try our best to keep her safe’. That is the thing we would like to hear rather than ‘ok if sometimes they will be falling over in a millisecond and we couldn't be getting [inaudible]’, that came out very negative and that didn't sound me really professional. So, I think sorry, it was a very different topic. I just got carried away, so yeah.

I: It's ok. No, I think it's it's helpful to understand though, because what you're describing there is that sometimes it doesn't seem like the school are doing what they should be doing to appropriately support CHILD’S NAME with her additional needs. Which must be really, really challenging for you. And I'm just wondering to bring it back to kind of what we were talking about before about specifically around separation and deployment, is there anything that you think would be important for schools to know to better support children like CHILD’S NAME, who are a service child and have a special educational need?

P3: They have started this wrap around childcare thing, haven't they? So that was the thing I was trying to put her in the after school clubs, which didn't work in my favour in short, let's say.

I: So being able to access things like that would be supportive.

P3: It would have been supportive if school had, it school had been like a bit of giving some kind of attention to those kind of children, not only mine. TOWN NAME is a huge military Garrison centre, so it would have been helpful for all the service kids, when they are deployed or when they are not around, if there are some kind of activities going around during weekend time, where some parents cannot drive, some parents will be having two or three kids or more than that. It would have been easy if there was some kind of provision where they could be having this weekend getaway just like for a couple of hours, they they can play around and it will keep them, especially moms from certain period of time to be kids free, let's say.

I: Yeah. So it’d be helpful to have some additional support for these children, not just during the week, but weekends too that could be a space for them to come together and play together, but also space for parents to have some space as well, because that must be quite hard when.

P3: Yeah, yes, which is most needed. If moms are not right, how would kids be safe? They need some rest as well, but, but yeah, it's it's very complicated I do understand.

I: Yes, yes. But I think it's important to think about what would be helpful, because if we don't have those conversations, we can't think about how that could be possible, so thank you. I just have one more question and that's just, is there anything else that I haven't asked about in terms of CHILD’S NAME experiences of separation and deployment that you think it would be helpful for me to know?

P3: Not much, but if if there was some kind of like, you know if if there is some kind of activities that can help, for example just reading or building blocks, it doesn't have to be very expensive, just some kind of community activities like just for sensory play. Because we used to be in PLACE NAME and they used to do this messy play thing every Wednesday. So, since it is sensory, since our kids are allowed to do whatever they like and be messy as much they want, I think those will be helpful. And some kind of activities related to kids would be, not only for me, but other service families it would be nicer.

I: Yes, they're having some of that community support and events and things that you could engage with.

P3: Mm hmm. Yeah, yeah, 'cause. Like, since I come from a ETHNICITY background, I haven't seen, I'm sorry, I'm just highlighting my point because I haven't seen much of the ETHNICITY ladies being around in such kind of events. Sometimes, I'll just go and try to explore like what's going around, and I have been to some of the meetings with the family, like families like me, let's say, who has additional needs kids, and they do have a different kind of, different kind of additionally needed kids like where the things will not be same as mine condition, the way of approach, the process will be completely different and what ETHNICITY would like to do is like they would like to copy the same strategy for their kid because they will not go and try to find it out. The other thing, while I was trying to do CHILD’S NAME thing, I just came to know like, since I do have a very, I think I can speak quite good English compared to rest of the ETHNICITY, I'm not trying to just boost myself, but since I can speak this language, since I have a little bit of understanding about the case, since I have been trying my key to help better, I'm having these problem. There are so many parents who doesn't have a very good use of language, that not many parents who will be able to do the paperwork, and I felt completely bad about them. And I did highlight this case when I have the EHCP meeting with the school and the SENCo and the EHC coordinator when I had the meeting with them saying I can speak this much and I'm having these problems, I feel completely bad and I'm not thinking that I'm getting the right kind of support in terms of paperwork, in terms of having the needs met and then I just this could be highlighted. So probably there are so many families, service families, where the deployment has been playing a part of it slightly about removal things let’s say, about, about us having us changing the school, let's say, about having the EHC amended. Some, some parents will not be knowing all the paperwork and they have to wait the husband there to come back and do the paperwork for them, but and then what? It is gonna result to the EHC going to be delayed for that case and how long they have to wait months and months and years and years. And that is not fair for those families, is it? So if this case could be escalated in like if there is somebody who can do like, I'm not trying to say they have they must not do their homework. They must have to do their homework as well. But having their needs understood, having their needs to be like highlighted correctly would be very helpful for those families who doesn't have like a good level of understanding with English language.

I: Yeah. So what you're describing there is that these families are like, there's another barrier there as well as what's already exist that you had to experience because they don't understand the paperwork or the language or there's they're waiting for their their deployed partner to come back to support them with that process.

P3: And that that kid is just going to be waiting another year. Since I have been fighting for EHCP, it take me about like a couple of months because I did understand the paperwork, I did prove it right, how it has been lacked, and since I wasn't happy with the school settings since I wanted CHILD’S NAME to change the school and I was going through this paperwork, I felt I was like, I'm having this problem even though I do work in a GP, even I do have a good use of language, even I can do the form works clearly and I'm having this problem. I feel so sorry for other parents who couldn't do those and they have to wait for the partner to come and do it. So yeah, those things says.

I: Yeah. And I think that's really important because yeah, that could really delay the kind of support needed for those service children with special educational needs, couldn't it?

P3: Yeah.

I: OK. Thank you very much for sharing that, it's really, really helpful for me and kind of the purpose of what I'm doing is that all of this information that I'm collecting, I'm going to kind of bring it all together and write it up and hopefully publish it as well so that we can kind of get, kind of keep sharing this message.

P3: I hope it helped, it helped you. What do not know, but I did try my best. All of those wonderful experience I had.

I: Yes. No, no. Yes, thank you. And I'm just going to stop the recording now.