

Caring for Families in Peacetime and War: Programs and Services for Military Families

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Overview of Presentation

- Challenges facing military families
- Overview of Military Community and Family Policy
- Key programs and services
- Opportunities for civilian service providers



Challenges Facing Military Families

- Competing demands of family life and military life
- High operational tempo
- Difficulty navigating systems of care and support
 - Access to support systems by geographically dispersed families
- National shortage of high-quality, affordable child care
- Frequent relocation
- Dangerous work environment
- Barriers to educational and career opportunities for spouses
- Ongoing disruption to dependents' education
- Grief and trauma related to injury, illness and loss
- Access to services for exceptional family members
- Financial decisions in a time of economic uncertainty

*Challenges of daily living in the unique
context of military service.*



Military Community & Family Policy (MC&FP)

- Responsible for programs and policies that support the quality of life of service members and their families.
- Mission
 - Help sustain a motivated, combat-ready force that can meet the military's demanding deployment schedule.
 - Facilitate the development of a network of support for military families.
- Collaborate with the Military Services to develop and monitor programs and support for families.



Department of Defense Family Philosophy

- Families also serve.
- Families embolden troops on the battlefield.
- Families impact Service members' decision to stay in the military.
- Families exemplify noble service and patriotism.



MC&FP Scope of Responsibility

- Morale, Welfare & Recreation
- Commissaries & Exchanges
- Voluntary Education
- Dependents' Education
- Exceptional Family Members
- Military OneSource
- Counseling
- Financial Readiness
- Domestic Violence & Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment
- Child Development Programs
- Youth Programs
- Joint Family Support Assistance Program
- Family Centers
- Defense State Liaison
- Casualty Assistance



DoD Child Development System

- 800 childcare facilities and 6,083 family child care homes at 300 military installations worldwide.
- Serving children birth to 12 Years.
- Recognized as a model for the nation.
 - High standards
 - Staff background checks
 - Specialized staff training requirements
 - Improved wages
- Child care expansion
 - Construction of new centers
 - Partnerships with providers outside the gates
 - Strategic outreach to recruit and retain a robust workforce



Dependents' Education

- DoD Education Activity (DoDEA) provides a comprehensive instructional program for children in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade
 - 92 fully accredited schools
 - 14 districts
 - 12 foreign countries, 7 states, Guam and Puerto Rico
- 99% high school graduation rate



DoDEA Partnership

- Authority in the NDAA (2007) to work with the Secretary of Education to ease the transition of military students
- Authorizes the use DoDEA funds to share experience with local education agencies (LEAs) who educate the 92% of military students attending civilian schools
 - Academic strategies and curriculum development
 - Virtual and distance learning capabilities
 - Teacher training to LEAs
 - Support for practices that minimize disruption



Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

- Part of the USA4 Military Families initiative
- Provides a vehicle for states to follow common guidelines in handling issues that impact children of military families as they transition between schools.
- So far in 2009, 13 states have joined the Compact, bringing the total number of member states to 24.



USA4 Military Families

- Developing state/military partnerships to improve the quality of life for military families in 10 key areas:
 1. Increase key support for Guard and Reserve members and families
 2. Facilitate assistance to the severely wounded, ill and injured
 3. Increase access to quality, affordable childcare
 4. Minimize school disruption for children
 5. Enhance opportunities for portable careers for military spouses
 6. Expand unemployment compensation for trailing military spouses
 7. Promote enforcement of the predatory lending regulation
 8. Improve absentee voting
 9. Satisfy foreign language requirements
 10. Increase coordination of local support services

<http://www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil>



Youth Programs

- 350 programs for youth ages 6-18 that promote positive youth development.
- *Military Youth on the Move* provides youth with creative ways to cope with challenges related to moving (<http://apps.mhfp.dod.mil/myom>).
- *Mission Youth Outreach* allows geographically dispersed Active, Guard, and Reserve youth to attend a local Boys & Girls Club at no cost to the family.
- *Operation Military Kids* is an initiative with the 4-H that supports military kids impacted by deployment and those geographically dispersed from military installations.



Military OneSource (MOS)

- Information, materials, counseling, support and referral available in person, online or via phone 24/7/365
 - www.militaryonesource.com
 - (800) 342-9647
- Email a Consultant
- Tax Filing Services
- Translation Services
- TroopTube
- eBooks and Playaways



Counseling

- Military OneSource
 - Face-to-face through affiliate provider network
 - Online using instant messaging
 - Via telephone
- Military Family Life Consultants
 - Rotational worldwide
 - In installation-based activities and programs
 - Through the Joint Family Support Assistance Program
 - At Operation Purple Camps



Joint Family Support Assistance Program

- Teams serving families in all states and territories, providing:
 - Information and referrals to community services and support
 - Non-medical short-term, problem-solving counseling
 - Child and youth services
 - Recreational opportunities
 - Financial education and counseling
 - Commissary/exchange outreach
 - Community capacity building



Wounded Warrior Resources

- Wounded Warrior Resource Call Center is available 24/7 to provide immediate assistance to Service members or families with issues related to health care, health facilities or benefits for the wounded.
- National Resource Directory is an online tool for wounded, ill and injured Service Members, Veterans, their families, and those who support them, providing access to more than 11,000 services and resources at the national, state and local levels that support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration.

– www.nationalresourcedirectory.org



Family Advocacy

- Promoting the prevention of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families.
- Providing comprehensive and coordinated safety planning and support to victims of abuse.
- Providing effective treatment for Service members and family members.
- Collaborating with state and local civilian social service and law enforcement agencies.



Military HOMEFRONT (MHF)

- Key source for official DoD quality of life information
– www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil
- Focus on tools and resources for service providers and leadership, including official DoD policy
- Access to *Military Installations*, which provides information related to installation and state resources for families



Special Partnerships & Initiatives

- Military Child Education Coalition Professional Development Programs
 - www.militarychild.org/education
- Sesame Workshop “Talk, Listen and Connect” Series
 - www.militaryonesource.com
- Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury
 - www.dcoe.health.mil
- American Red Cross “Coping With Deployments: Psychological First Aid for Military Families” course
 - www.redcross.org



Special Partnerships & Initiatives

- YMCA memberships
 - Pre-paid for Title 10 deployed Guard and Reserve members and their families who are geographically isolated from installations.
- National Military Family Association Operation Purple Camps
 - www.nmfa.org
- ZERO TO THREE Military Projects
 - www.zerotothree.org/military
- Network of Care
 - www.networkofcare.org



Opportunities for Civilian Service Providers

- Connect with local Military-affiliated service providers to collaboratively address the challenges facing families.
- Link families to resources
 - www.militaryonesource.com
- Sign up to receive information that supports your work with military families:
 - MHF Newsletters
 - MOS Affiliate Update Newsletter



*"I think sometimes what's forgotten is when one person in the family serves in our Armed Forces, that means the entire family is serving."
- President Obama, 25 July 2009*
