

THE HELPING HANDS GUIDE

DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS



Prepared by
The DoDEA Office of Safety and Security



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INTRODUCTION

HELPING HANDS INTRODUCTION

For many children of military service members and their teachers, deployment is a fact of life. The U.S. Military currently has 1.4 million active duty service members. Those service members in turn are the parents of some 1.2 million children. Research tells us that 56 percent of those children are between the ages of 6 and 11. Many of those children are students in DoDEA schools.

DoDEA educators are recognized as leaders in the development of best practices to support the needs of children coping with deployment. We know that sending positive messages to students helps them feel supported. Our teachers use motivational strategies to keep students focused on learning. These include providing immediate and specific feedback on assignments and using attribution strategies which let students know their hard work is paying off.

In the social and behavioral realm, our teachers establish and maintain rules and routines so that children have safe environments conducive to learning. DoDEA educators help students make connections within peer groups by using cooperative and partner activities. Further, they communicate with counselors and caregivers when they observe changes in a child's behavior.

DoDEA counselors work with classes, small groups, and individual students to develop resiliency through character education, teaching positive coping strategies, and helping children experience the competence that leads to personal confidence. Numerous studies have shown a strong correlation between diet, fitness, and emotional health in children. Our school nurses and PE teachers encourage students to take care of their bodies through exercise and healthy choices at the dinner table.

In addition to the commitment of our teachers, staff, and administrators, DoDEA implements policies to provide extra support to military families. We offer block leave so that families can spend time together during post-deployment reintegration. We use 21st Century educational tools to include deployed parents in high school graduations and parent teacher conferences. We also maintain an ongoing arrangement with Tutor.com so that DoDEA students around the world always have access to free professional tutoring when they need it. Perhaps most importantly, DoDEA schools serve as the heart of the military community. Our schools work closely with other installation organizations and throughout the Department of Defense to support and care for the entire military family during a service member's deployment.

Occasionally, however, situations arise when children need additional support requiring the resources of the larger military family community. There are numerous programs, games, and handbooks currently available to help military families. Sifting through them to find the right program for a given situation takes time. Sometimes even the best educators in the world need a helping hand. In recognition of this, we have provided the Helping Hands guide so that DoDEA's teachers, counselors, and staff members can easily connect children and families with the resources they need. These resources fall into five categories:

- General deployment education programs,
- Programs that help children and family members adapt to deployment and reintegration,
- Programs that enhance the coping skills of children by building social skills,
- Programs that support families with special needs children,
- Grief assistance and suicide prevention and awareness raising programs.

Our stated DoDEA vision is for "communities to invest in the success of all students." The following guide lists programs, initiatives, and resources DoDEA educators can use to connect children struggling to adapt to a parent's deployment or reintegration with the resources and support they need so that they can succeed academically and gain the life skills required to achieve their dreams.

All the programs contained within this guide are offered by the federal government or the Department of Defense specifically for the benefit of military children. If a Web site or hyperlink in this guide does not work, please copy the Web site address (URL) into a browser. Some of these programs are comprehensive in scope and are designed to familiarize whole school populations with key concepts such as the deployment cycle and basic emotional self-care techniques. Other programs focus on specific issues such as managing depression and are designed to be used in small group settings. Some programs include activities teachers can introduce in the classroom, such as a board game. Others require off-site or Web-based training and implementation by a licensed school mental health professional. All these programs and resources, however, share one important goal: to support and care for the emotional and social well-being of the children of our uniformed personnel.

Thank you for your caring commitment to our students and their families. We hope this guide is helpful as you work to support the needs of the children of our U.S. service personnel.

SECTION 1



GENERAL DEPLOYMENT GUIDES

The following programs are the “book-shelf basics” for teachers and counselors of all students facing deployment.

As anyone who works with these children knows, when a parent deploys, children are profoundly affected. Some children take deployments in stride and seem to grow from the experience. Others regress emotionally. These students may struggle to complete school work, and seek comfort in unhealthy behaviors. Researchers are beginning to identify preliminary patterns indicating the effects of deployment on children. A 2009 study conducted by the RAND Corporation involving 1,500 military children attending “Camp Purple,” the National Military Family Association’s sleep-away camps for children, found:

- About a third of children reported physical symptoms of anxiety related to deployment. This was especially prevalent in elementary-aged children.
- Teenage boys reported difficulties with school work and some problem behaviors, such as fighting.
- Teenage girls reported more anxiety-related symptoms, such as stomach aches.

Parents were also interviewed as part of this study. The findings also confirm what many educators have observed: Longer deployments and repeated family separations were associated with more difficulties in children’s social and emotional functioning. How parents handled the stress of deployment, also had an impact on the children. One study at Madigan



“Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end; Then stop.”

Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

Army Hospital found that parents who said they struggled emotionally or mentally during the deployment tended to have children who visited the doctor more. This pattern played out through the entire deployment cycle, underscoring the need to support parents as a basic step in helping children stay well.

Several related studies indicate that reintegration appears to be a particularly fraught time for children. Some preliminary research has indicated that girls face more challenges after the return of the service member than boys. The reasons for this are not yet clear. On the other hand, research has also shown that children who live on a military installation, who attend a school which offers compassionate support programs such as block leave, and those who have parents with strong coping skills, tend to do better during all phases of the deployment cycle.

The following resources provide information that may be of assistance for educators, counselors, and administrators who are working with children and families affected by deployment stress, grief, and/or trauma. The resources can be used with an entire school population, or simply as background reading for concerned educators prior to implementing a more specific program.

CHILDREN OF MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS RESOURCE GUIDE

Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury

(Links to books and resources)

http://www.dcoe.mil/blog/13-03-15/DVBIC_Resource_Guides_Address_TBI_and_Families.aspx

The DCoE provides this resource guide to assist parents/sponsors, other family members, and healthcare providers in addressing the mental and emotional health needs of military children. The guide contains descriptions of story and picture books, self-help manuals, films, Web sites, social media, and support groups, sorted by cognitive age level and topic. Topics covered include: community, deployment

homecoming, mental/emotional health, and moving. This guide offers images of each resource included which can be particularly helpful when selecting from the extensive list of children's books.

The guide also describes several kits designed for implementation in schools to assist students in stress management during deployment. One such kit, "The Interactive Military Youth Stress Management Plan," uses interactive technology to support the film *Military Youth Coping with Separation: When Family Members Deploy*. This tool was developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Children of Military Service Members Resource Guide includes an accompanying webinar produced by the DCoE and is designed for educators. The webinar originally aired April 2011 and is entitled "Supporting Military Children in School Settings." That webinar can be accessed by contacting DCoE.MonthlyWebinar@tma.osd.mil.

RESOURCES FOR PROFESSIONALS CARING FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH DEPLOYED PARENTS/ SPONSORS

Colonel Elisabeth Stafford MD, FAAP, FSAM Adolescent Medicine Fellowship Program Director, San Antonio Military Pediatric Center

(List of resources, PDF, 8 pages)

www.am.dodea.edu/knox/high_school/guidance/documents/ResourcesforProfessionalsCaringforChildrenandAdolescentwithDeployedMilitaryParents.pdf

Dr. Elisabeth Stafford, a military pediatrician, prepared this guide in response to perceived needs for resources to assist parents/sponsors, schools, and community leaders in supporting children during deployment. It contains links to the major military assistance programs. The guide also includes helpful resources such as extensive lists of children's story books about deployment and military life.

In addition, Dr. Stafford includes a list of self-help books for parents/sponsors about

financial management, home care, and parenting during times of stress. A section of the guide is devoted to educating school systems and staff members about the unique needs and circumstances faced by military children. This section includes links to resources created by the Military Child Initiative at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, some of which may be helpful to military educators.

DODEA PREVENTION PROGRAMS GUIDE

DoDEA Safe Schools Program

(Descriptive summary of programs with comparative table, PDF, 31 pages)

www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm

This resource published by the DoDEA Office of Safety and Security can be found on the DoDEA Safe Schools Web site. It contains short descriptions about a range of evidence-based prevention programs and behavioral support programs for use in schools. These programs focus on skill-building curriculum and school-wide bullying prevention strategies that foster a positive school climate. They can also contribute to resiliency among children facing deployment related stress. Topics covered in the guides include: Bullying Prevention, Behavior Management, Conflict Resolution, Cyber Security, Deployment Stress, Parental Involvement, Sexual Harassment Prevention, and Suicide Prevention.

U.S. ARMY DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT HANDBOOK: CHILDREN AND YOUTH

(Hyperlinks and PDF docs, Web site.)

https://www.myarmyonesource.com/cmsresources/Army%20OneSource/Media/PDFs/Family%20Programs%20and%20Services/Family%20Programs/Deployment%20Readiness/Operation%20READY/DEPLOY_SPPT_HBOOK_CHILD_YOUTH.pdf

The U.S. Army Deployment Support Handbook was created in 2007 for Army Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) by a doctoral student at the Virginia

Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). The handbook was written for health and education professionals working with military children during deployment. While the guide has not been updated since 2007, much of the information about the developmental needs of children and the types of challenges they face during a parent's deployment remains current.

This resource includes a discussion of the deployment cycle, an explanation of how the developmental needs of children are affected by stressors such as deployment, and extensive strategies for supporting children during this time. The handbook also identifies resources for supporting military children, although some of those resources have moved since the guide was compiled. The handbook is part of the Operation READY (Resources for Educating about Deployment and You) series developed for soldiers, families, and Family Readiness Groups (FRGs).

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO THE MILITARY CHILD DURING DEPLOYMENT

(Guide, PDF, 11 pages)

www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/os/homefront/homefront.pdf

The Educational Opportunities Directorate of the DoD developed this guide in response to requests from teachers and civilian school personnel for background and intervention strategies to support military children during deployment or mobilization. The guide covers the phases of deployment and the types of stress reactions a child is likely to exhibit. Intervention strategies are presented for each age group. The guide includes teacher interventions for the classroom developed by Marleen Wong, Ph.D. Dr. Wong directs the School Intervention Unit at the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress, and serves as director of Field Education at the University of Southern California School of Social Work.

SECTION 2



ADAPTING TO DEPLOYMENT AND REINTEGRATION

Programs to Help Military Children and Families



Over the past decade, an estimated two million American children have experienced military deployment. Research has yet to quantify the numbers of educators who have provided comfort, educational support, and practical help to those children. Perhaps one day, academic research will validate what we all know: educators make a huge difference in the well-being of military children.

Educators and parents know that children of deployed personnel face three types of challenges. While a parent is away, children may experience a decrease in school performance, concentration, or even begin avoiding school. They may exhibit social or behavioral problems. These problems can manifest as difficulty getting along with peers, becoming more withdrawn, or fighting. Finally, several studies have shown that students with deployed parents are at risk for anxiety, fearfulness, and depression. The following programs offer a range of

**“Coming together is a beginning;
keeping together is progress;
working together is success.”**

resources, techniques, and activities that provide academic, emotional, and behavioral support to children of deployed service members.

TALK LISTEN CONNECT (TLC): A FAMILY FOCUSED INITIATIVE FOR THE MILITARY COMMUNITY

(Kit with muppet videos on DVD, facilitation guides, Web site, and PDFs).

www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/tlc

www.cstsonline.org/our-work/children-and-families/

www.cstsonline.org/talk-listen-connect-tlc-iii-kit-evaluation-findings/

The Children's Television Workshop developed Talk Listen Connect (TLC) in collaboration with the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE). This initiative offers several resources for young children affected by deployment and their families. The centerpieces of the program are two Sesame Street DVDs which feature Elmo and friends coping with the feelings and challenges that military children face during deployment. *Talk Listen Connect: Deployments, Changes, Homecomings* and *Talk Listen Connect: When Families Grieve* are best suited for young children and toddlers, although a portion of the program addresses the needs of parents.

The TLC program includes the "Family Connections" Web site, launched in 2009. This site offers military families with young children a safe online destination for social networking. At Family Connections, they can engage in artistic projects, post photos and videos for loved ones serving overseas, and even take part in moderated message boards with other families facing deployment. The children can also play educational games.

The final program component involves the creation of "Talk Listen Connect: Sesame Rooms" in military treatment facilities and family support centers around the world. These are waiting and soft-play rooms for

children. They are decorated with pictures of the Sesame Street characters and filled with comforting toys and stuffed animals for children to play with. These rooms extend the TLC message of the importance of taking time to comfort and communicate with small children during times of stress and uncertainty.

In 2010, the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (CSTS) positively evaluated Sesame Workshop's Talk, Listen, Connect: When Families Grieve. The TLC DVDs and other materials are available through a variety of channels including Military OneSource, Military Pathways, and directly through the Sesame Street Web site.

ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Phone: 252-737-1850

(Web site, workshop)

<http://m.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/programs/essential-life-skills-military-families>

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provided the funding for this program developed by East Carolina University in response to a need to educate reserve component families about military life. The program has since grown and many U.S. military installations use this program to familiarize new military families with mobilization changes. While not specifically designed to benefit DoDEA families, this workshop training may offer benefits to the families of new military personnel, as well as those transitioning from an active to a reserve component. This well-designed program may also serve as a useful template for local communities planning pre-deployment retreats and reintegration programs at the installation level.

FAMILY RESILIENCY KIT

Military Pathways (formerly the Mental Health Self-Assessment Program MHSAP) Screening for Mental Health

(Web site with links to videos, Webinars, PDFs)

www.mentalhealthscreening.org/

www.mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/military/resources/past-webinars.aspx

www.mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/military/resources/a-different-kind-of-courage.aspx

Military Pathways developed the Family Resiliency Kit as a convenient tool for presentation by military commanders, mental health professionals, and chaplains to use with family readiness groups. Screening for Mental Health, based in Wellesley, Massachusetts, operates Military Pathways. Military Pathways is a DoD-sponsored, anonymous, mental health/alcohol screening and referral program offered to families and service members affected by mobilization. The primary goals of the program are to educate, raise awareness, offer screenings, and host events about mental health.

The centerpiece of this kit is A Different Kind of Courage: Safeguarding and Enhancing Your Psychological Health. This 25-minute educational DVD portrays issues of mental health and self-care through the use of real stories of service members and their families.

The Family Resiliency Kit contains a range of other materials designed to support the needs of military families. These include:

- A Facilitators Guide
- Talk Listen Connect DVDs
- My Story: Blogs by Four Military Teens
- Information sheets and booklets about alcohol use, communication, stress management, and depression
- Promotional materials for the Military Kids Connect Web site
- Screening forms for depression, alcohol problems, and suicide risk (both anonymous self-assessments and forms which can be used by concerned family members)

Military Pathways program materials are provided at no cost to military organizations and agencies. Funded by the Department of Defense, with support from the Center for Telehealth and Technology, Military Pathways offers a wealth of mental health resources for military personnel including anonymous online well-being assessments, booklets, brochures, and monthly informational webinars which are

archived for later access. Most recently, Military Pathways has begun offering webinars for military personnel covering a range of topics including meditation, self-harm, family resiliency, and the ways in which children are affected when a parent suffers from PTSD. In addition, Screening for Mental Health provides the Signs of Suicide (SOS) program to DoDEA schools.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAM: FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH 10-14

**Iowa State University Research Foundation.
Ames, Iowa.**

(Seven week evidenced-based workshop training, Web site, powerpoint, DVDs, videos, guides)

www.extension.iastate.edu/sfp

Strengthening Families is a “partnership-based” family competency training designed for parents and their young adolescent children. Researchers at Iowa State University developed the program in 1993 with funding from the National Institutes of Health. The program was originally intended as an intervention for families struggling with substance abuse and aggression. Over time school districts around the country have used this program because counselors found it effective for improving academic success among students engaged in substance abuse. This program includes a component designed to help kids reengage academically even if they are distracted by the deployment of a parent.

The program is presented to small groups over seven sessions. Typically a trained facilitator, such as a counselor or school psychologist, trains a new cohort of families every seven weeks over the course of a year. The program involves meetings, a movie presentation, and activities designed to raise awareness of the risks of substance abuse and violence among youth. Parents increase their confidence, learn to set (and enforce) limits, and also engage in bonding activities with their teenagers.

Strengthening Families has been implemented at approximately 1,300 schools since 1993 and has undergone one major study of participants four and six years after taking part in the program. Several additional studies have replicated the findings of the initial study. SAMSHA recently evaluated the program and gave it a 3.3 out of a possible scale of 4.0. The program was found to be beneficial for reducing substance abuse, increasing school success, and lowering aggression among youth.

TRICARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TRIAP) AND TELEMENTAL HEALTH

DoD TRICARE Management Activity

(Help line, Web site, mental health services delivered using telecommunications)

www.myarmyonesource.com/cmsresources/Army%20OneSource/Media/PDFs/Healthcare/TRIAP_Brochure.pdf

For family members who might benefit from the support of a trained counselor during deployment, TRICARE offers a Web based program and a Telemental health program (using telecommunications technology to provide mental health services) for dependents age 18 and over. The programs are currently available only to stateside beneficiaries. Unlike TRICARE's

traditional behavioral health programs, eligible beneficiaries can use these services an unlimited number of times per year to work with licensed counselors on non-medical issues such as: stress-management, family difficulties, family separations, relationships, parent child communication, and self-esteem. Program participation requires a referral from the patient's primary healthcare manager (PCM).

MILITARY ONESOURCE SPECIALTY CONSULTATIONS

(Help line, Web site)

www.militaryonesource.mil

1-800-342-9647

This telephone-based resource provides one-hour consultations up to twelve times per fiscal-year with a "Special Needs Specialty Consultant." This consultant can answer questions about moving benefits, education, finances, housing, support groups, and medical resources. Families interested in using this service do not need a referral. Instead, to schedule a consultation, contact Military OneSource (800-342-9647) and ask for an appointment with a "Special Needs Specialty Consultant."



SECTION 3



BUILDING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COPING SKILLS

Positive social skills can have an enormous impact on how children cope with stressful situations. Helping children interact socially, make friends, keep friends, and work through peer misunderstandings, may not seem related to deployment. However, children who have a strong social network of friends and playmates, either locally or on the other side of the world, develop skills and resourcefulness which their

more isolated peers may lack. Those skills build resiliency and can provide a cushion from the stresses and increased responsibilities that come with having a parent deployed. In some cases, helping a child find a friend can make the difference in how that child copes with deployment. For that reason, this guide contains information on social networking, interactive activities for children, and information about bullying prevention.



John Lennon and Paul McCartney, 1967

"I get by with a little help from my friends."

OPERATION MILITARY KIDS

U.S. Army Child and Youth Services

(Web site, community partners, links to additional resources)

www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/p.aspx?tabid=173

The Operation Military Kids initiative consists of representatives and partners in 20 states experiencing high deployment rates. The U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H, Military Child Education Coalition, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and other community groups came together to provide and coordinate support for geographically dispersed military families. This resource is particularly important for youth who suddenly find themselves with deployed family members, but who do not live on or near a military installation.

OPERATION MILITARY KIDS (OMK) YOUTH CAMPS

(Web site, camping experience, links to additional resources)

www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/p.aspx?tabid=205

As part of a nationwide effort to increase the well-being of children of deployed soldiers and sailors, OMK offers free or low-cost camp opportunities to children affected by deployment. In 2011, nearly 10,000 military children attended some 250 camps across the United States. The camps focus on increasing life skills such as teamwork, competency, and responsibility. According to a program evaluation conducted by Virginia Tech, over 60 percent of camp attendees said their overall stress levels were reduced after the camp experience. Other benefits include the opportunity to make friends with others facing similar issues.

DEPLOYMENT: IT'S NOT A GAME (IOWA OMK)

(Web site, board game)

www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/EventDetail.aspx?ID=1094

Iowa's Speak out for Military Kids created "Deployment: It's Not a Game." This board game, which can be downloaded from the Internet, teaches children (and adults) what to expect during the deployment cycle. As players move through the game, they have opportunities to consider and discuss the impact of deployment on military kids and families. A concerned adult playing with a group of children can use the game as a vehicle to discuss a parent's deployment with children. Facilitators can help children identify possible challenges and discuss ways they can ask for help and increase their coping skills. Accordingly, the game can be used by community organizations as a brainstorming tool for developing a plan for activities they can lead to help children in their community who are affected by deployment.

MILITARY KIDS CONNECT (MKC)

The National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2)

(Web site, secure online social community)

www.militarykidsconnect.org/

The DoD launched this Web site in January 2012 to provide a safe online environment for military children to use when communicating with a deployed parent. The site also offers the opportunity for military children to build a virtual social community of kids facing similar challenges related to the military lifestyle. The Web site was developed by the National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2), the DoD agency for "applying innovative technology to issues of mental health and brain injury." The site, which requires registration prior to participation, features custom content for three age groups: children, preteens, and teenagers. MKC covers all phases of the deployment cycle from pre-deployment through reintegration. The site also offers upbeat "news" stories for children including interactive maps and recipes so they can learn about the places where their parents/sponsors are deployed.

In addition, Military Kids Connect offers several resources for parents/sponsors and educators of military children including information about how to have positive conversations with children about deployment, and how to keep children safe online as they communicate with a parent downrange using other, less carefully monitored, online resources. Information on behavioral responses to deployment is also available through the site.

“BULLYING PREVENTION: WHAT WORKS” WEBINAR (AUGUST 24, 2011)

The Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention (Archived webinar with audio and presentation slides)

www.stopbullying.gov

www.nttac.org/views/docs/webinarBullyIntervention2011/Bullying%20Webinar%20PPT%20for%20508%20Compliance%208%2024%2011_PDF.pdf

Bullying is usually not associated with deployment stress. Nonetheless, the topic is included here because many bullying programs teach children important social skills. Stopbullying.gov offers a clearing-

house of the most thoroughly tested and best-rated bullying prevention and intervention programs available today. The “What Works Webinar” provides an ideal starting point for anyone wishing to learn more about bullying prevention.

Discussion topics covered in this solutions-based Webinar include practical tips for identifying bullying, steps educators can take to empower students to stand up to bullies, and tips for teaching students how to report the incident to a caring adult. A portion of this Webinar is devoted to discussing ways to help children who use bullying and intimidation as a means of dealing with their own stress. The webinar was called “What Works” because it offers research based lists of effective strategies for talking to children who are the targets of bullying, ways of starting a conversation with children about their experiences on the playground, and specific actions bystanders can take to support children who are targeted by bullies.



SECTION 4



SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

For families already managing the logistical challenges of raising a child with special needs, deployment presents an additional layer of stress. In some cases, families that were efficiently managing a child's condition may find themselves challenged when one of the adults is no longer available to drive the child to medical appointments or help the child with homework. Even small changes to the daily routine can create difficulties for some children with cognitive disabilities. Parents report that children with autism, for example, are particularly impacted by deployment because the departure of a parent inevitably changes the child's daily patterns. This can increase anxiety in the child which might trigger behavioral changes or regression in his or her social development. Even families who cope well under typical circumstance may find they need an additional "helping hand" when deployment becomes part of the picture.



"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

**Harper Lee,
To Kill a Mockingbird**

The first step to helping families with special needs children is to enroll the child in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). While this is a required program, not all parents/sponsors take advantage of the wealth of resources offered by EFMP. Program members benefit from a DoD Special Needs Parent Tool Kit, the Special Care Organization Record for Children, and the EFMP newsletter (see below). Parents/sponsors of special needs children who are facing deployment and who have not yet enrolled their children in EFMP should be encouraged to do so to get additional support their children may need during this extra-stressful time. All program materials are available through Military HOMEFRONT and Military One-Source. Military sponsors can enroll in EFMP at their local medical treatment facility.

Following are three resources that can help in securing services and support for families of special needs children.

THE EXCEPTIONAL ADVOCATE: A NEWSLETTER FOR MILITARY FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Exceptional Family Member Program

(Web site, newsletter, other resources)

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/efmp>

The Exceptional Family Member Program publishes a newsletter that is part of the DoD-required program for families with special needs children. The Exceptional Advocate Newsletter serves as a vehicle for communicating important program changes and offering insight into successfully navigating the logistical and social challenges of raising a special needs child. A recurring column in the newsletter focuses on the unique challenges of raising a child with autism. The newsletter also offers resources for bullying prevention, developing social skills, and managing stress.

EDUCATION DIRECTORY FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Exceptional Family Member Program,
Military Community and Family Policy

(Resource directories)

http://apps.militaryonesource.mil/MOS/f?p=EFMP_DIRECTORY:HOME:0

This resource consists of two related components, both of which are available on a single Web page:

- The Early Intervention Directory describing early intervention services for children birth to three years of age.
- The School-Age Directory describing special education services for children three to 21 years of age.

Both directories provide practical suggestions, information, and resources to help families identify local special education resources when they are moving to a new location or when they are in need of additional practical support. Fifteen U.S. states with the highest number of assigned military personnel are profiled in the directory. The guide pays special attention to services for children identified with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), Emotional/Behavior Disorders (E/BD), and Intellectual Disabilities (ID). Many of the practical suggestions, however, are applicable to a range of developmental concerns. Both guides offer a section entitled "Tools for Making a Smooth Transition," which include practical organizational tips which parents can use to reduce stress as they enroll a child in a new school or begin treatment with a new health provider.

STOMP (SPECIALIZED TRAINING FOR MILITARY PARENTS/SPONSORS)

(Workshop, Web site, Help line)

www.stompproject.org

Phone: 253-565-2266

This federally-funded Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center was established

in 1985 to assist military families who have children with special education or health needs. The program supports EFMP, although they are not directly affiliated. STOMP offers training courses for military parents/sponsors of children with special needs. EFMP parents/sponsors are often referred to STOMP, and vice versa.

According to STOMP, "While all military families face certain challenges such as frequent PCS moves/military member being placed in harm's way/deployments, our families with special needs family members face additional difficulties." These difficulties can include lack of continuity of Individual Education Program (IEP) services when an individual moves from one state to another, finding health care specialists who accept TRICARE when moving to a new region or country, and helping the special needs child adapt to the change in routine that comes with having a deployed parent.

STOMP is run by a handful of military spouses all of whom are also mothers of special needs children. This group of

experienced military parents offers direct consultation by phone and email with parents/sponsors to answer questions, develop strategies for success, and allay fears. In some locations, such as Fort Bragg, parents can visit the STOMP office for a face-to-face consultation. STOMP also offers a listserv, social networking sites, in-person workshops, and a blog. The Web site offers links to local and national resources for exceptional military families.

One of the most valuable components of STOMP is the parent and education training center available in each U.S. state. These centers are funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of these parent training centers is to educate parents/sponsors about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and to ensure that parents/sponsors of military children are familiar with their rights under IDEA before moving a child to a new state and school district.



SECTION 5



MAKING ROOM FOR GRIEF, WHEN THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENS

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) estimates that as of May 2012, more than four thousand American children have lost a parent in Iraq or Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn). While not all of these children attend DoDEA schools, a great many of our schools have had to help bereaved students and have offered exemplary support to students who have lost a parent to war.

Grief and loss are difficult subjects for everyone. When a child loses a parent, however, people are often at a loss for words. They want to help but they are not sure what to do.

Sometimes, well-meaning adults are afraid they will say the wrong thing by beginning a conversation about grief. The same is true for suicide. Some people fear that talking to a



“Lean on me, when you’re not strong. And I’ll be your friend, I’ll help you carry on.”

Bill Withers (1972)

depressed person about suicide might “put the idea in their head.” Experts say this is not true, but knowing how to recognize the risks and signs of suicide and knowing when to take action is not always simple.

Following are several resources designed to support the needs of bereaved children and prevent suicide. The former can be used by school staff, families, and community members both as educational tools for understanding grief in children and as resources for practical ways to support grieving children. These are based on the current research into how children and teenagers grieve. They include a wealth of tips and best practices for supporting children through this difficult process.

TRAUMATIC GRIEF IN MILITARY CHILDREN (INFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS)

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)

(Web site, guide, PDF, 12 pages)

www.nctsn.net.org/trauma-types/traumatic-grief/traumatic-grief-military-children

www.nctsn.net.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/military_grief_educators.pdf

www.centerforthestudyoftraumaticstress.org/

This guide, created in partnership with the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress Uniformed Services University and funded by a grant from SAMHSA, deals with the painful issue of grief in children. The guide notes that educators play a special role in helping children who have experienced loss and addresses ways that educators and administrators can partner with the surviving parent to support the grieving child.

The guide includes tips for dealing with the public aspects of a military death, such as how to deal with the media and how to manage intrusive questions about how the service member died. In addition, the guide comes with a handy pull out chart of children's reactions to grief, arranged by age. Because bereaved children can exhibit a wide range of emotions and behaviors, this chart may be helpful for

educators working with grieving students in helping to assess which reactions are typical and which ones may be a flag indicating that the child would benefit from further assessment.

The guide also addresses common symptoms of PTSD in children whose parents have been killed in combat. The NCTSN also offers a companion guide for parents/sponsors of bereaved children.

SOS: SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Military Pathways

(Curriculum, DVD, videos, guides, Web site)

www.mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/youth-prevention-programs/sos/

The Signs of Suicide (SOS) prevention program is currently in use in all DoDEA high schools. The program involves a two-day training for program leaders. Students learn about the program through assemblies and on-going sustainment activities. The SOS program teaches students to recognize the signs of depression, self-harm, and suicidal behaviors. Students are empowered to ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell) when they notice a friend is experiencing the signs of suicide. Numerous follow-on trainings for administrators in the form of webinars are available through the Military Pathways Web site. SOS also offers a booster program for students heading to college and a self-injury (cutting) module.

In the 2012-13 school year, SOS added a 90-minute self-paced training program for administrators and program facilitators, and a “Training Trusted Adults” DVD. This tool explains the program and can be used to educate parents, community members and staff about the SOS program.

AFTER A SUICIDE: A TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS

Suicide Prevention Resource Center and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

(Guide, PDF, 49 pages)

www.afsp.org/preventing-suicide/our-education-and-prevention-programs/programs-for-teens-and-young-adults/after-a-suicide-a-toolkit-for-schools

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center prepared this document to assist schools in responding to a student suicide. The evidence based best-practices included in this guide help administrators gather facts in order to make decisions about how to memorialize a student who committed suicide, how to handle media inquiries about the incident, and how to stem the risk of suicide contagion among the school population. The guide also contains resources for helping students and school staff members cope with grief and any potential feelings of guilt they may experience.

SECTION 6

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

When it comes to understanding kids and deployment, more information is better. For educators who wish to delve deeper into the research about how children are affected by deployment, the following studies provide a starting point. They are included here because they are currently the most commonly cited studies regarding children and military life. Some of these studies are available online, others require journal subscriptions.

SCHOOL TRANSITIONS AMONG MILITARY ADOLESCENTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF STRESS AND COPING

School Psychology Review, 2010

Catherine P. Bradshaw, May Sudhinaraset, Kristin Mmari, and Robert W. Blum.; Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

This journal publication describes the transition-related stressors experienced by mobile military students, describes the efforts employed to help these students cope with their stress, and identifies strategies that schools can use to ease the transition process for mobile military students.

THE WAR WITHIN: PREVENTING SUICIDE IN THE U.S. MILITARY

RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2011

Rajeev Ramchand, Joie Acosta, Rachel M. Burns, Lisa H. Jaycox, Christopher G. Pernin

Examines data on military suicides, identifies what the scientific literature suggests and leaders in the field indicate to be



"Knowledge is Power."

**Francis Bacon
1561-1626**

state-of-the-art suicide-prevention strategies, and recommends ways to ensure that the programs in each service reflect the state of the art practices.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DEPLOYMENT ON MILITARY CHILDREN

Journal of Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics, August 2009

Eric M. Flake, M.D.; Beth Ellen Davis, M.D., MPH; Patti L. Johnson, Ph.D.; Laura S. Middleton, Ph.D.

Describes the psychosocial profile of school age children during parental deployment utilizing standardized psychosocial health and stress measures, and identifies predictors of children at “high risk” for psychosocial morbidity during wartime deployment.

EDUCATIONAL/ACADEMIC OUTCOMES IN RELATION TO TRANSITION AND DEPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES OF MILITARY CHILDREN

Prepared for the Military Child Education Coalition, June 2010

Janice H. Laurence and Michell A. Cleary, Temple University

Documents the results of a literature review of 43 articles, discussing the “academic outcomes” of military children, published between 1976 and 2010. Seven articles were found that addressed academic achievement specifically among military children or among civilian children who experience similar factors that affect academic performance, such as frequent moving. Other articles reviewed were organized in the following categories: geographic mobility, deployment, military families, and socio-emotional factors.

PARENTAL WARTIME DEPLOYMENT AND THE USE OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AMONG YOUNG MILITARY CHILDREN

Pediatrics, November 2010

Col. Beth Ellen Davis, M.D., M.P.H, F.A.A.P., U.S. Army (retired)

Analyzes the cumulative stress from subsequent wartime deployments of at-home parents and their children, and the potential negative lifetime effects, by studying health care utilization. The study captures data from a large number of military children representing multiple active-duty services during a period of high-intensity parental deployments.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF DEPLOYMENT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: FINDINGS FROM A PILOT STUDY OF OPERATION PURPLE CAMP PARTICIPANTS

Prepared for the National Military Family Association, April 2008

Anita Chandra, Rachel M. Burns, Terri Tanielian, Lisa H. Jaycox, Molly M. Scott; RAND Center for Military Health Policy Research.

This study surveyed family and participants of Operation Purple Camp, a summer camp program that children with a deployed parent attend free of charge, to describe the functioning and well-being of children of deployed military personnel over time, compare the potential differences in the effects of deployment on functioning and well-being of children by service component (active versus reserve) and deployment status, and describe the reasons for attendance and benefits of OPC.

SECTION 7

PRACTICAL HELP FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

Sometimes the best way to help a person in need is simply by pointing him or her in the direction of the appropriate agencies. Following is a directory of some of the Federal and Defense offices and agencies that offer resources which may be of help to the families of deployed personnel. Also

included here are links to military healthcare resources, including some behavioral health programs. This is only a partial list. There is space below for the telephone numbers of local contacts, such as the chaplaincy or Child Development Center, which can be called upon for practical assistance.



AT&T "The Yellow Pages" advertising slogan, 1961.

"Let your fingers do the walking."

Mental Health Resources	
Military-Related Resources	Contact Information
Army Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR)	www.armymwr.com
Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, Uniform Services University	www.cstsonline.org/
Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)	www.militarychild.org 254-953-1923
Military OneSource	www.militaryonesource.mil 800-342-9647 (CONUS)
National Military Family Association (NMFA)	www.militaryfamily.org/ 800-260-0218
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Veterans Hotline	www.veteranscrisisline.net/ 800-273-8255

Resources for Educators	Contact Information
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)	www.taps.org/survivors/ 800-959-8277
Center for Health and Health Care in Schools School of Public Health and Health Services, George Washington University	www.healthinschools.org 202-466-3396
Center for Mental Health in Schools (SMHP) School Mental Health Project, UCLA	www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu 866-846-4843
Center for Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents Allegheny General Hospital	www.pittsburghchildtrauma.org 412-330-4328
Children's Grief and Loss Issues	www.childrensgrief.net
Mental Health America	www.mentalhealthamerica.net 800-969-6642
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Mental Health Information Center	www.mentalhealth.gov/ 800-789-2647

Additional Resources	Contact Information
Tutor.com (Professional academic support for military children. Available at no-cost to eligible participants.)	www.tutor.com/military
ZERO TO THREE (Military Families)	www.zerotothree.org/about-us/funded-projects/military-families/ 202-638-1141
Army Emergency Relief	www.aerhq.org 866-878-6378
Army Knowledge Online	www.us.army.mil
Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) TriCare	http://www.tricare.mil/DEERS
Defense Commissary Agency	www.commissaries.com
Health Beneficiary Counseling Assistance Coordinator	www.tricare.mil/bcacdcao
































































TRICARE Resources	Contact Information
TRICARE: Your Military Health Plan	www.tricare.mil
TRICARE South (AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, OK, SC, TN and TX)	www.humana-military.com/ 800-444-5445
TRICARE West (AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, IA, KS, MO, MN, MT, ND, NE, NM, NV, OR, SD, SW TX, UT, WA, WY)	www.triwest.com 888-TRIWEST
TRICARE Overseas	www.tricare.mil/overseas 888-777-8343
TRICARE Retail Pharmacy	www.express-scripts.com 866-363-8779












































Personal Resources	Contact Information
Installation Chaplain	
Child Development Center	
Hospital Social Worker	
Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)	

SECTION 8

CATCHING IT ALL—GUIDE AT A GLANCE



Resource		For Use By				Benefits Students in Grades			
Alphabetical List	Pg	Teachers	Counselors/ Psychologists	Parents/ Sponsors	Admin- istrators	Pre-K	ES	MS	HS
After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools	18								
Bullying Prevention: What Works Webinar	11								
Children of Military Service Members Resource Guide	4								
Deployment: It's Not a Game (Iowa OMK)	11								
DoDEA Prevention Programs Guide	5								
Education Directory for Children with Special Needs	14								
Educator's Guide to the Military Child during Deployment	5								
Essential Life Skills for Military Families	7								
Family Resiliency Kit	7								
Military Kids Connect (MKC)	11								
Military OneSource Specialty Consultations	9								
Operation Military Kids	11								
Operation Military Kids (OMK) Youth Camps	11								

Resource		For Use By				Benefits Students in Grades			
Alphabetical List	Pg	Teachers	Counselors/ Psychologists	Parents/ Sponsors	Admin- istrators	Pre-K	ES	MS	HS
Resources for Professionals Caring for Children...	4								
SOS: Signs of Suicide	17								
STOMP	14								
Strengthening Families Program ...	8								
Talk Listen Connect (TLC)	7								
The Exceptional Advocate	14								
Traumatic Grief in Military Children	17								
TRICARE Assistance Program (TRICAP)	9								
U.S. Army Deployment Support Handbook	5		