



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAR - 1 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
CHIEFS OF THE MILITARY SERVICES
CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

SUBJECT: National Child Abuse Prevention Month – April 2018

All children deserve a safe, stable, and nurturing environment in which to live, learn, and thrive. This is especially true for our military children worldwide, who faithfully serve alongside their parents to keep our nation strong, while facing the unique challenges posed by a mobile military life. It is for these reasons that the Department of Defense (DoD) remains unwavering in its absolute commitment to the safety and well-being of our children. As we observe National Child Abuse Prevention Month this April, we must always ensure that military families have the support they need to effectively recognize and prevent the scourge of child abuse and neglect in our communities.

There are key responsibilities with regard to reporting child abuse. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328), requires any individual within the chain of command of a military member to report to the Family Advocacy Program credible information that a child in the family or home of a member has suffered an alleged incident of child abuse. Additionally, per 34 U.S.C. § 20341, "Child Abuse Reporting," DoD personnel designated as "covered professionals" are required to report any suspicion of child abuse to the local child welfare services agency.

In the Department and the Military Services, the Family Advocacy Program is the primary resource responsible for coordination of child abuse and neglect prevention, training, response, and intervention. Please contact your local Family Advocacy Program should you have concerns about the safety or well-being of a child. Military OneSource is also available for general information and confidential support at 800-342-9647 and www.militaryonesource.mil.

It is always important to remember that prevention of child abuse and neglect within the Department is our ultimate goal. I expect our commanders and leaders at all levels to proactively recognize indications of family distress and to take prompt action to support our parents, safeguard our children, and facilitate necessary interventions.

Thank you for joining me in recognizing National Child Abuse Prevention Month and in protecting and supporting military children everywhere.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert L. Wilkie".

Robert L. Wilkie