

As a military leader, you play a critical role in providing timely, accurate and relevant information to service members, their families and survivors. As you know, maintaining unit cohesion and operational readiness requires attention to the overall well-being of your service members, their families and survivors. To this end, family programs perform the critical roles of assisting you in preventing, identifying and addressing family readiness challenges. These programs provide a network of family support, known as the Family Readiness System, which mitigates the challenges of daily living and those associated with the military lifestyle. They also provide opportunities for service members and families to enhance everyday life skills. However, the Family Readiness System is only valuable if service members, their families and survivors understand what it offers, how to access it and that it is endorsed by their leadership. This toolkit has been developed to help you share important information about changes in family readiness policy, with the ultimate goal of helping you maintain a mission-ready force and optimize military family readiness.

Since the original Department of Defense Instruction 1342.22, “Family Centers,” was published in 1992, the need for robust family support programs has increased dramatically. As you know, today’s force is much more geographically dispersed and is operating at a higher tempo than it was in 1992.

The Department of Defense responded to these challenges by updating its policy to better meet the needs of today’s service members and their families. The reissuance of Department of Defense Instruction 1342.22, “Military Family Readiness,” (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/134222p.pdf>) published July 3, 2012, updates policy and provides a new framework for delivering family readiness services. The Family Readiness System approach integrates policy for many family readiness services into a single source and focuses on coordination and partnerships among all of those who support military families.

The Family Readiness System approach means service members, their families and survivors can reach out to an entire network of support through a variety of access points. In person, by phone and online, the system is available to every service member, family member and survivor, regardless of activation status or location. To help you share this message with military families, we have created a toolkit full of resources and information you can use to engage the service members in your command and their families. Your toolkit includes:

1. **Policy Fact Sheet** - The fact sheet summarizes changes to the Department of Defense Instruction.
2. **Family Programs Outreach Guide** - The guide includes talking points and key messages on family programs and provides examples of opportunities for sharing this information.
3. **Sample Editorial** - The editorial is written from your point of view and is intended for inclusion in a unit newsletter or blog. The content may be used as written or tailored to capture your voice.
4. **Sample Advertisement** - These are examples of what might be included in a unit newsletter, website or blog. The advertisements can be used as-is or may serve as a starting point for developing an individualized advertisement consistent with approved family program messaging.
5. **Social Media Tactics** - The social media content includes several Facebook and Twitter updates to disseminate through unit social media outlets.

We hope this toolkit is a valuable resource in your efforts to demonstrate your commitment to the welfare of our service members and their families.