

Family Programs Outreach Guide

The Bottom Line

As a military leader, you play a critical role in providing timely, accurate and relevant information to service members, their families and survivors. Because you are a credible and trusted source of information, it is important that you are aware of recent revisions to Department of Defense guidance for family support programs and changes to service delivery through the Family Readiness System.

The military family readiness policy (Department of Defense Instruction 1342.22) lays the foundation for a Family Readiness System to help service members, their families and survivors more easily find the information and services they need to meet the challenges of everyday military life. The policy addresses delivery of family readiness services to promote military family readiness by maximizing the network of agencies, programs, services and individuals in a collaborative manner through the Family Readiness System. The Family Readiness System helps users find the information and services they need to face life's challenges and to develop many essential life skills from money management to communication to parenting. The system ensures that regardless of branch of service, active or reserve status, or geographic location, there is a trusted network of support that maximizes both military and civilian resources.

Approach

As a leader, you connect service members, their families and survivors with the resources they need to be mission ready. Those resources may be internal to the unit or provided through other means such as your family readiness programs. The family readiness programs are a key resource in your toolkit, but sometimes service members, family members and survivors are hesitant to reach out for help or don't know where to start. The strongest statement you can make for family programs is to **use them yourself and share your experiences.**

Outreach Opportunities

As a leader, you interact daily with service members. Take the opportunity during these routine interactions to talk about family programs. Even brief conversations can make a difference. Consider talking about your experiences with family programs and encouraging those in your command to make use of them, both in the face of challenges and for the skill---building opportunities that they provide. These conversations can take place anywhere, such as:

- At unit formations
- At mealtime
- In the field
- At a unit town hall meeting
- In a unit newsletter or blog

Talking Points

Below are some key messages and talking points you can use when talking about family programs.

- Make the Family Readiness System part of your trusted network of support; it's part of mine.
- You can rely on family programs; they are a part of our unit's readiness toolkit.
- Family programs provide you with information, services and programs for everyday life, not just personal emergencies. Use them early and often.
- Use family programs to sharpen your skills to be prepared for life.
- Family programs contribute to the stability and strength of you and your family.
- Seek help early.
- The family programs network of support ensures that you will always have access to support, regardless of your geographic location.
- On the installation, in the community or online, family programs are here for you.
- Find family programs on the installation at [insert contact information]. If they don't have what you need, they can refer you to someone who does.
- Find help online at Military OneSource (<http://www.militaryonesource.mil>; 800-342-9647).