

THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

# Military Community and Family Policy

## Quick Reference Guide for Civilian Health Care Providers Working with Military Families



Providing policy, tools, and resources to further enhance the quality of life of service members and their families.

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## Introduction

The Quick Reference Guide for Civilian Health Care Providers Caring for Military Families offers practical information about military families. It is designed for use in assessing their medical and psychosocial needs and in delivering effective services.

This guide provides demographic information and highlights the factors that make military family needs unique. Given the current demand placed on the military, it highlights the importance of assessing for the impact of deployment and other stressors on military families and offers suggestions for talking with them about their experiences and needs. The guide also provides referral information for families who need additional support.



## Military Demographics: A Young, Married Force with Children

The military is made up of individuals on active duty (1.42M) as well as individuals who are members of the Reserve Component (857,000). The Reserve Component includes the Reserve elements of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force, and the Army and Air Force National Guard. Over half of the active duty members are married with 1.98M family members, as are just under half of the Reserve members with 1.16M family members. Of these family members, 42.3% of the active duty children and 27.9% of the Reserve children are 5 years old or younger.

## What Makes Military Families Different from Non-Military Families?

- Demographics such as ages of parents and children, a large single population (many of whom have children)
- Cultural diversity of members and families
- Living on a military installation, often in remote locations, away from extended family support
- Frequent absence of the military member due to training and deployments
- Multiple relocations, sometimes entailing living separately
- Exposure to various cultures
- Military member's job entails risk of injury/death
- Military command involvement in the military member's personal and family life
- Irregular hours/unpredictable schedule

Note that these (and other) factors generate strength in some families while they pose challenges for others.

## What is Military Family Readiness?

Military family readiness is the state of being prepared to effectively navigate the challenges of daily living experienced in the unique context of military service. Ready individuals and families are knowledgeable

about the potential challenges they may face, equipped with the skills to competently function when presented with such challenges, and aware of the supportive resources available to help them manage such challenges.

## What Impacts Family Readiness for Deployment?

- Member readiness to perform his or her assigned mission
- Spouse satisfaction with the military
- Experience with prior separation (may become easier for some and more difficult and challenging for others)
- Marital and family relationships and the ability to manage what causes them stress
- Co-occurring stressors such as relationship difficulties, health problems, financial stress
- Whether they feel prepared
- Feeling connected to, and informed about, support

## What You Can Do To Help?

- Be aware of services available through the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and other organizations.
- Look for ways to make your office/agency environment "military friendly."
- Ask about military service on your intake form.
- When a military family member comes to you for health care:
  - Ask them why they came to see you. Then ask them what else they would like to talk about (the real issue may be the one they bring up as they exit your office, leaving little time to respond).
  - Observe energy level, eye contact, facial expression, posture, and other indicators of both physical and emotional distress.
  - Listen to what they do say but also to what they do not say.

Resource and training websites are provided at the back of this guide.

## Focus on Deployment

- In this time of high demand placed on the military, there is a good chance that a military family member has had some experience with deployment.
- Ask the family member if he or she has experienced deployment and, if so, ask them to tell you about it.
- If the military member has been, is now, or will be deployed, consider these suggestions:
  - Acknowledge that deployment is a stressful situation.
  - Ask what concerns he or she has about deployment.
- Recognize that even when a member has not been deployed, the military families may have experienced stress similar to that of deployed families:
  - Non-deployed military members may have to work longer hours in the absence of deployed members.
  - These families may need to make adjustments in family functions and routines.
- Ask what support systems they have in place to help address these concerns and others that may come up later.
- Suggest that they contact one of the resources listed at the end of this guide for assistance with current issues and those that might emerge.
- During follow on visits, ensure that current needs are being addressed and determine if services need to be adjusted to meet changing/emerging needs.
  - Provide direct referrals for specific services as indicated.

## Children and Youth

- 354 Youth Centers worldwide
- 920 Child Development Program facilities, providing 174,000 child care spaces
- 19,588 staff employed, 6,869 of which are military spouses
- 97% of eligible centers are nationally accredited
- 15,000 military youth participated in a variety of camp programs in 2011 at little or no out-of-pocket expense
- Approximately 5,500 Family Child Care homes
- Respite child care provided by the Services and through an MC&FP partnership with the YMCA for families of deployed and independent duty personnel
- Fees range from \$44 to \$139 per week based on total family income
- Child Development Center construction
  - 2007 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) – Services initiated 15 projects, creating 1,700 child care spaces
  - 2008 NDAA – Services initiated 74 projects, creating approximately 8,600 child care spaces
  - FY08 Military Construction (MILCON) projects increased capacity by approximately 5,000 spaces
  - 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects will increase capacity by 3,950 spaces



## Family Centers

- 267 installation Family Centers worldwide; all are required to provide the following services:
  - Relocation assistance
  - Deployment assistance
  - Information and referral
  - Personal financial management
  - Employment assistance
  - Outreach
  - Family life education
  - Crisis assistance
  - Volunteer coordination
- The Services vary with respect to whether counseling and Family Advocacy Program services are offered in Family Centers.

## Exceptional Family Member Program

- As many as 220,000 members of active duty families may have a member with special needs; over 120,000 are currently enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).
- EFMP enrollment is mandatory for these members.
- EFMP enrollment provides information about the family member's needs, which is taken into consideration when approving an assignment.
- All Services provide EFMP family support services.

## Child and Domestic Abuse Prevention and Treatment

- 169 New Parent Support Programs
  - Supports 328 home visitors at 169 installation programs with a budget of \$10M: 45 Army programs, 16 Marine Corps programs, 37 Navy programs, and 71 Air Force programs
- 238 Family Advocacy Programs
  - Supports 1,334 positions with a budget of \$131M: 81 Army programs, 18 Marine Corps programs, 60 Navy programs, and 79 Air Force programs

## Outreach

### Military OneSource

Military OneSource (MOS) is a 24/7 support program offering assistance and resources at no cost to service members and their families online or with professionally trained consultants by telephone. MOS is particularly helpful for service members and families who live far from military installations because they can access services quickly and easily where they live. The MOS program includes the following key components:

- An interactive website with expertly prepared information, resource lists, moderated chats, audios, discussion boards, blogs, podcasts, Webinars, access to consultants, and an exhaustive online library; the site also includes downloadable and orderable materials
- Information on a wide range of topics, including deployment adjustment, relocation, spouse employment, special needs, parenting and child care, education, and health and wellness
- Master's level consultants available to provide support
- No-cost counseling services with licensed counselors who provide confidential non-medical, short-term, solution-focused counseling face-to-face in the local community, by telephone, and online through secure chat (up to twelve sessions per person, per issue)
- Health and wellness coaching by telephone or online with information, support, encouragement for weight management, nutrition, exercise, and stress reduction
- Referrals to resources, services, and support in military and civilian communities
- Specialty consultations, such as online and telephone financial counseling, spouse career consultations, Wounded Warrior consultations, and consultations for families with special needs
- Simultaneous language translation and official document translation in support of a consultation
- Outreach support that incorporates a network of Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP) MOS consultants in each state to provide briefs and support for deployment-related events, including Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events

## Military and Family Life Counselors

Military and Family Life Counselors (MFLCs) are licensed professionals who provide confidential non-medical counseling services, similar to those provided by MOS, at no cost to military members and their families for everyday issues such as anger management, stress, parenting, family relationships, and deployment adjustment. MFLCs are available to service members and their families on military installations and with mobile JFSAP teams reaching those who cannot access traditional installation support services. MFLCs

- Are master's or doctorate level counselors who are licensed to practice counseling independently
- Support service members and family members with non-medical short-term, solution-focused counseling
- Provide private and confidential counseling, with the exception of mandatory state, federal, and military reporting requirements (e.g., domestic violence, child abuse, and duty to warn situations)
- Provide flexible support to meet the needs of service and family members when and where they need help
- Support Guard and Reserve members and families located in geographically dispersed locations as members of JFSAP teams in all fifty states, four territories, and the District of Columbia
- Provide surge support for service members returning from combat or in response to emergency situations at a commander's request with up to twenty MFLCs for up to forty-five days
- May be embedded to provide military units with dedicated support
- Support service members and family members on rotations up to ninety days
- Include Child and Youth Behavioral (CYB) MFLCs who support children and youth in child development and youth programs, schools, and summer programs

## Joint Family Support Assistance Program

When National Guard and Reserve service members are called to active duty, their families experience the same deployment related challenges as other military families. JFSAP supports Guard and Reserve families as well as other active duty families who do not live near an installation and are unable to take advantage of installation support services. JFSAP teams

- Provide support to geographically dispersed service members and their families in all fifty states, four territories, and the District of Columbia
- Include MFLCs, CYB-MFLCs, Personal Financial Counselors (PFCs), and MOS counselors
- Provide information and referrals, non-medical counseling and education services, child and youth services, and financial counseling and education
- Offer on-demand support at briefings, Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events, and other deployment events

Work with state National Guard and Reserve centers and family programs on military installations to augment existing services

## Online Resources

**Military OneSource** - <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>

Provides a 24/7/365 toll-free information and referral telephone service worldwide to active duty, Reserve, and National Guard military members and their families, offering information ranging from everyday concerns to deployment-related issues

**MilitaryHOMEFRONT** - <http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil>

Serves as the official DoD website for MC&FP program information, policy, and guidance designed to help troops and their families, leaders, and service providers

**Plan My Move** - <http://planmymove.mhf.dod.mil>

Provides online organizational tools designed to make frequent moves easier and less disruptive for service members and families

**MilitaryINSTALLATIONS** - <http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil>

Provides contact information for programs and services, maps and directions, links to comprehensive location overviews, and community points of interest for military installations worldwide

**Military Youth on the Move** - <http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/myom>

Provides information and resources for elementary, middle, and high school-age children, and parents to help navigate the challenges of the mobile military lifestyle

**TRICARE** - <http://www.tricare.mil>

Provides information pertaining to health care resources and benefits for active duty and retired military families

**United States Department of Veterans Affairs** - <http://www.va.gov>

Provides a wide range of benefits information for veterans including topics such as health care, disability, education and training, vocational rehabilitation and employment, home loan guaranty, dependant and survivor benefits, life insurance, and burial benefits

**The National Resource Directory** - <http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov>

Provides access to services and resources at the national, state, and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation, and community reintegration for wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, their families, and those who support them; available information addresses topics including benefits and compensation, education and training, employment, family and caregiver support, health, homeless assistance, housing, and transportation and travel

**Joint Family Support Assistance Program**

- <http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/sp/jfsap>

Provides information and resources related to JFSAP including the JFSAP Desk Reference and the link for On-Demand Support requests.

**Joint Services Support** - <https://joinservicessupport.org>

Provides information for Guard and Reserve members, including event schedules and links to programs specific to National Guard and Reserve members and their families.

**Wounded Warrior Care** - <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/woundedwarrior>

Provides articles and links to other resources specific to the needs of Wounded Warriors and their families.

## THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

### Military Community and Family Policy

**For assistance with:**

**Military Life & Deployment**

**Career & Education**

**Crisis Situations**

**Family Life & Recreation**

**Finances & Legal Affairs**

**Health & Relationships**

**Contact**

**Installation Family Center:**

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MilitaryINSTALLATIONS for local Family Center contact information:

[www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil](http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil)

Military OneSource: 1-800-342-9647 or

[www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

Health care resources for active and retired military families:

[www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil)

Resources for geographically dispersed families (JFSAP) -  
contact State Family Program Directors:

[www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/sp/jfsap/stateinformation](http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/sp/jfsap/stateinformation)

Resources for wounded, ill, and injured service members,  
veterans, their families, and those who support them:

[www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov](http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov)

Resources for veterans:

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)





**Mission Statement.** The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy is directly responsible for programs and policies which establish and support community quality of life programs for service members and their families worldwide. This Office also serves as the focal point for coordination of the broad range of quality of life issues within the Department of Defense.

Brought to you by the MC&FP  
Office of Military Community Outreach



Providing policy, tools, and resources to further enhance the quality of life of service members and their families.