

5 Ways Command Leaders Can Prevent Child Abuse

To ensure the best possible future for our children, it is essential for every leader to share positive parenting resources as well as report suspected child abuse and neglect.

1. Share parenting resources

Military parents in your unit need to know they have your support. Parenting is a tough job, and all parents need help at some point. It is important to share the resources and support programs available to help prevent certain stressors from leading to child abuse and neglect:

New Parent Support Program

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/parenting/new-parents/the-new-parent-support-program/>

Military OneSource's New MilParent Specialty Consultation

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/specialty-consultations/new-milparent/new-milparent-consultation/>

Military Parent Resource Center

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/parenting/family-life/military-parent-resource-center/>

Thrive

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/parenting/children-youth-teens/thrive-online-program-for-military-parents/>

2. Support parents

Support parents in your unit – especially single parents – by being flexible with child care needs. Know the resources available to service members, which may include MilitaryChildCare.com, child care solutions through Military OneSource and Child Care Aware® of America.

3. Educate yourself

You can do your part to keep military children safe by learning the signs of child abuse and neglect: <https://militaryonesource.mil/prevent-child-abuse>.

The Family Advocacy Program is congressionally mandated and is a key element of the Defense Department's coordinated community response for preventing and responding to reports of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families.

4. Take action immediately

Show those who report child abuse and neglect that you take their concerns seriously by:

- Explaining how you will document their concerns and take action
- Immediately reporting suspected child abuse and neglect to the nearest FAP office in accordance with Section 575 of Public Law 114328
- Connecting them with the appropriate resources:

Immediate crisis support

Call 911 or military law enforcement if a child is in immediate danger.

Child Protective Services

<https://childcare.gov/consumer-education/child-protective-services>

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline

Call 800-422-4453

<https://www.childhelp.org/>

Local support

Family Advocacy Program office via MilitaryINSTALLATIONS

<https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/?looking-for-a-program/program-service=32/focus=program>

5. Join forces to prevent child abuse and neglect

Coordinate with other command leaders and departments throughout your installation to provide consistent and easily accessible awareness and prevention education about child abuse and neglect, including resources and support.