

Military OneSource Podcast — MilitaryChildCare.com: Placing a Request and Searching for Child Care

Child & Youth Programs

Episode transcript

Intro voiceover:

Welcome to the Military OneSource podcast. Military OneSource is an official program of the Defense department with tools, information and resources to help families navigate all aspects of military life. For more information, visit [Militaryonesource.mil](https://militaryonesource.mil).

Bruce Moody:

Welcome to the podcast, I'm Bruce Moody. Today we're going to talk about how military families find child care, and that's through using a website, a Department of Defense website called MilitaryChildCare.com. We'll put a link in the program notes. And we're going to talk about that website, MilitaryChildCare.com, and military child care programs in general with our guests, Diane Brewer and Mujaa Latif. Great to have the both of you with us. Welcome to the podcast.

Diane Brewer:

Hi Bruce.

Mujaa Latif:

Thank you.

Bruce Moody:

Mujaa, we're going to get to you in just a couple of minutes. Diane, I want to begin with you. Just give us a general introduction to MilitaryChildCare.com, what it is and kind of where it is from within the department.

Diane Brewer:

Thank you for having me on today and giving me an opportunity to talk about MilitaryChildCare.com. I feel very passionate about the mission and the way that we serve military families. My role on this project is really that I am the program manager for the Department of Defense's Military Children, Youth and Family Joint Application Suite. The Department of Defense has created a full suite of applications that serve both military families and the program users that support those military families, and this includes, of course, what we're here to talk about today, which is MilitaryChildCare.com, or MCC, as we call it for short. We like acronyms of course. And

MCC serves as that entry point for military and other eligible families who serve the Department of Defense mission.

Bruce Moody:

Yes, but we try to curb our use of acronyms. We have an acronym jar. Some people have a profanities jar, we have an acronym jar here. So we may be hitting you up for money after this recording. We'll see how this goes.

Diane Brewer:

[Inaudible]

Bruce Moody:

But I think the point that you make is really worth repeating is that even though people see the .com in MilitaryChildCare.com, this is actually a site run by and owned by the Department of Defense. And you're over actually with the Navy, which kind of runs it for us for the whole department. But let's get into how this site works. Let's break down MilitaryChildcare.com. I want people to really understand how it works for them, what it does for them. Just in the most general sense though, what is the purpose of MilitaryChildCare.com?

Diane Brewer:

The Department of Defense developed MilitaryChildCare.com as its global request for child care system. It allows families to search for and apply for child care from anywhere at any time across the globe. How we're different than other off-the-shelf products is that MCC is designed specifically to meet the very unique needs of our military families and the military mission, and part of what we do is administer the priority of care system that the military has established. So how do families get involved? Families establish a universal household profile that follows the family through the time that they first need child care, and then as they transfer throughout their career to new duty stations.

MCC is unique because a family who needs child care for their infant can also request care at the same time for their school-aged children without having to find and access multiple websites. And each time the family is faced with a transfer, which as our listeners are probably aware of, can be transferred anywhere across the globe, families can come right back to MCC and start a new child care search. One of the great aspects is that MCC is a great resource for families to use even before they know where they're going. We always encourage families to visit MilitaryChildCare.com as early as possible so that they are informed about child care resources while they are having those really important conversations, both internally with their families and also with the detailers and making decisions about not only their military career, but also where that family will be transferring to.

Having MilitaryChildCare.com's global database at their fingertips provides a plethora of child care resources available to them. And we see MilitaryChildCare.com as just one

more tool that the military has made available for families to help in that decision or those very many decisions that they're making as they're transferring.

Bruce Moody:

So there's a lot going on with military child care, but let's break those points down a little bit more. Let's start with eligibility. Who is eligible for MilitaryChildCare.com?

Diane Brewer:

All families can visit MilitaryChildCare.com public pages to find resources. Families do need to meet basic eligibility requirements in order to apply for and request care through MilitaryChildCare.com. The Department of Defense has established three basic factors that help determine access to military child care. Eligibility overall, which is first and foremost, is based on the sponsor's type, and this includes active duty and members of the Guard and reserve service members. This includes those serving the Air Force, Space Force, Army, Marines, Navy, and the Coast Guard as well use MCC. Sponsors also include DoD civilians and where space is available, also contractors, retirees and other federal employees.

When families are setting up their household, MilitaryChildCare.com collects sponsor information as well as other information about the family to determine the family type and their priority for care. For example, some of the questions are like, are they single or married to another active duty? Do you have a spouse who's working for either the Department of Defense or in the civilian sector, either full or part-time or attending a post-secondary school? All this information is used to determine their priorities for care. Families can also sign up even while they're just looking for employment when they've moved to a new area.

And because MilitaryChildCare.com includes a wide range of options, families who aren't working can also find educational and social opportunities for their children as well. Like I mentioned, MilitaryChildCare.com uses this information to determine the family type and the priority for care for the family. The DoD's priority for care system is designed to support the military mission, and families identified as critical to the military mission are given the highest priorities. Families can learn more about who's eligible for military childcare and the DoD's priority for care by visiting [MilitaryChildCare.com](https://militarychildcare.com) and clicking on the support for family link that's there.

Bruce Moody:

And we'll put that link in the program notes, of course. Let's continue on figuring out how this site can help families, which would be starting with step one. How do you register with the site?

Diane Brewer:

When families are visiting MilitaryChildCare.com, they can look at a number of resources without being logged in, and then when they're ready to actually create an

account and request care, they simply click on the create an account link that's at the top of the page and the system walks them through how to apply for an account and create a household profile for their family.

Once the account is created, the stored information is used in combination with other information that's collected at the time they're searching for care, so information specific about their needs at that time. And it tailors a list of child care options and makes those available for the families. Families then select those options that work for them. They submit their request and MCC puts them on all the waitlist all at one time. As soon as they click that button they're on those waitlist and it's really quite easy.

Bruce Moody:

Once people are in the system, there is something called a global database, which helps a family find child care options, programs and resources. How does that work? Talk to us about this global database.

Diane Brewer:

As we've talked about, MilitaryChildCare.com serves as the Department of Defense's gateway linking military families to their resources. The Department of Defense has developed a wide range of options to support military and DoD families. And our role with MilitaryChildCare.com is simply to connect families with those options. We really strive to service that one-stop shop for military families. It's such a stressful time for them when they're looking for child care, and we want to make sure that these resources are available in one place, allowing them to really be in the driver's seat. With all the important decisions that they have when a family's transferring, while it's still not an easy decision, we want to make sure all these options are available in one place.

Some of the options that they can find in MilitaryChildCare.com's global network is options that include the child development centers and school-age programs that are operated by the Air Force, Army, Marines and Navy, as well as the Defense Logistics Agency, or DLA. Families can access a wide range of information about these programs, including hours of operations, the ages that are served and can even find transportation options for their school-age children.

We also are the request-for-care system for family childcare providers who offer childcare services in their home. Many of these DoD-certified FCC providers offer those non-traditional hours of care, which as we know are so important for our military families. And in addition to those military-operated programs, families can also find information and sign up for the department's fee assistance programs. These programs are so important because while there is a shortage of on-base care, the DoD has recognized and responded to this by establishing fee assistance programs that help military families find and pay for community options. They find these fee assistance options right alongside their other options when they're searching for care in MilitaryChildCare.com.

Bruce Moody:

Families move a lot, obviously, it's just what we do. What is the best time in the process of moving to initiate a request or a search for child care at the place you're moving to?

Diane Brewer:

So choosing childcare is such an important decision, as you mentioned, especially during that transfer process, and it can take time. So we encourage families to visit [MilitaryChildCare.com](https://militarychildcare.com) as soon as they have an idea of where they're going, and there's a lot of resources under the "Support for Family" tabs, which talks about how to improve their chances of receiving care. And one of those ways of doing that is placing those requests as soon as they know their next assignments, and they can do this even before they receive their orders.

Bruce Moody:

Thanks, Diane. That's a lot of great information. Let's bring in Mujaa and talk about fee assistance. So when we talk about fee assistance, there are programs such as Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood. Walk us through some of the things that families should know.

Mujaa Latif:

Hi, my name is Mujaa Latif and I too am on the [MilitaryChildCare.com](https://militarychildcare.com) team. I'm here to share with you today about military fee assistance programs. The most popular program is Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood, which many of our families are familiar with, and I'll go into detail in just a moment. I also want to mention Child Care in Your Home. It's a relatively new fee assistance program. We have an entire podcast dedicated to explaining that program and how to get started. And we'll ensure there's a link provided in the notes.

The purpose of the military child care fee assistance program is to help reduce the costs of community-based child care. Families that are able to utilize child care in a military installation are offered subsidies through the Department of Defense. When families are using community-based child care, they too are asked to pay market rates. Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood's goal is to help reduce that cost.

Bruce Moody:

Thanks to the both of you, Diane Brewer and Mujaa Latif, you're both with [MilitaryChildCare.com](https://militarychildcare.com) which, again, the foot stomp, is actually owned and operated by the Department of Defense. So it's ours and it's how we take care of our people. Thank you for joining us today.

Mujaa Latif:

Thank you for having us, Bruce.

Diane Brewer:

Yes. Thank you for having us today, Bruce.

Bruce Moody:

Our pleasure. Absolutely. Want to remind you that Military OneSource is an official resource of the Defense Department. We always like to hear from you. We have a link in the program notes. And you can send us a question, a comment or an idea for a future episode. Be sure to subscribe to this podcast wherever you listen to your podcasts because we cover a wide variety of topics to help military families navigate military life. Thank you for listening. Take care. Bye-bye.