

Children, Youth and Families Program Content Guide

The following established style guidelines reflect the longstanding practices of developers and editors of content for the Children, Youth and Families Program area. They are consistent with rules and guidance outlined in the Associated Press Stylebook and reflective of Office of Military Community and Family Policy style and usage preferences.

Do

- Pay attention to the overall organization and flow of an article. Information and ideas should be logically organized, and there should be some sense of continuity or flow from one idea to the next.
- Avoid redundancy.
- Write a concluding paragraph of two or three sentences.
- Write in gender-neutral terms, except if appropriate (for example, gender-specific services/groups).
- Write in relationship-neutral terms, such as “partner” or “couple.” Use “parent” or “guardian.”
- Flesh out and clarify statements and ideas.
- Ensure that subheads reflect the content of the text that follows.
- Focus on the positive side of content as much as possible.
- Keep the wide audience range in mind.
- The term “kid/kids” is acceptable usage in appropriate contexts, such as social media and other informal content but should be avoided in Military OneSource articles, news releases, etc.
- Use “Children, Youth and Families” when referring to the program under Military Community and Family Policy.
- Use “Child and Youth Programs” when referring to a program on a military installation.
- Make “service member” and “service members” two words, except when referencing the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. Note that per MC&FP style guide, service member is lowercase.
- Make “child care” two words, no hyphen, at all times, even when used as a modifier.
- Use person-first language. For example, people are defined by their accomplishments and not their disabilities. “Ray Charles was a famous musician who just happened to also be a person who was blind.” NOT “Ray Charles, a blind musician...”
- Use caution using too many Department of Defense Education Activity, or DODEA, links. Fewer than 20% of Defense Department dependents attend DODEA schools. The majority of DOD dependents attend public schools.
- Reduce the number of extra links a parent has to click to get to the material.
- Use softening or qualifying words, such as “generally,” “may be,” “can be” or “might” to avoid making blanket statements about how people feel, react, etc., in different circumstances. See the examples below:
 - Wrong: “Any time you lose someone close to you, the grief is overwhelming.”
 - Better: “When you lose someone close to you, the grief can be overwhelming.”
 - Wrong: “Children are more resilient and better able to bounce back emotionally after a loss.”
 - Better: “Following a loss, children may be more resilient and may recover more quickly than adults.”

Do Not

- Make assumptions.
- Tell people how they feel.
- Tell people what they should/need to/must/ought to/can't/won't do.
- Tell people what they always/never do.
- Refer to summer camps or youth centers as child care.
- Refer to child care providers as babysitters.

Formatting

- “Less is more” — be concise.
- Keep sentences short.
- Use bulleted formatting for clarity when appropriate.
- Keep bullets to seven or fewer for each section.
- Insert transitions between paragraphs.
- Include a conclusion at end of each article.

Preferred Terms

Preferred	As opposed to
military life	military lifestyle
some or many	most or all
can, may or might	will or are
often or generally	always
tend to	usually
partner, spouse, parent or guardian	husband, wife
child, youth, teen, children, adolescent or student	kid
military-connected children, youth and teens or military-connected students	military children
installation	base or garrison
Boys & Girls Clubs of America	Boys and Girls Clubs of America
Boys & Girls Clubs of America National Military Youth of the Year or BGCA National Military Youth of the Year	Military Youth of the Year; BGCA Youth of the Year; National Military Youth of the Year
child care fee assistance	fee assistance
child development center; also acceptable: child development program, school-age center, school-age program, school-age care	day care or day care center
community or civilian child care providers	community-based child care programs
provided at no cost to service members and their families	free

Term	Definition
families with special needs, children with special needs, youth with special needs	special needs families, exceptional families, or special needs children, kids or youth
families enrolled in EFMP	EFMP families
Military Family Support Center	family center, Airman and Family Readiness Center, Fleet and Family

Preferred Reference to Age Ranges

Term	Definition
infant	birth to 12 months
infant/toddler/preschooler	birth to 5 years
pretoddler	13 to 24 months
toddler	25 to 36 months
preschooler	37 months to 5 years
children	birth to 12 years
school age	6 to 12 years of age or through 6th grade
youth	13 to 18 years
preteens	9 to 12 years

Definitions

Term	Definition
child care availability 24/7	Some installations operate centers that are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week; these centers are designed to meet the needs of shift workers and families seeking flexible child care arrangements.
Child Care Aware® of America	Child Care Aware® of America is a nonprofit organization that works directly with child care agencies and families. They are the third party administrator that assists the military branches to serve and support eligible military families through the Child Care Fee Assistance programs.
Child Care Fee Assistance	When capped, this refers to military Child Care Fee Assistance programs to assist military families with the cost of child care in the community when on-installation care is unavailable. When referring to the fee assistance received by families or providers, use lowercase: child care fee assistance.

	<p>Fee assistance programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood, or MCCYN ○ Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood-PLUS, or MCCYN- PLUS ○ Child Care in Your Home Fee Assistance pilot program
Child Care in Your Home Fee Assistance pilot program	<p>To help with expanding child care needs, the Defense Department launched a small pilot program to explore providing fee assistance for full-time, in-home child care services. This fee assistance pilot program covers full-time care for a minimum of 30 hours to a maximum of 60 hours of child care weekly. Care is not limited to Monday through Friday or time of day. The pilot program is operated by a third party administrator. Space is limited in the selected regions. Parents are responsible for finding, hiring and employing their providers. Also known as CCYH.</p>
child care programs	<p>This term is used to include both child development centers, school-age care and family child care providers.</p>
child development center program	<p>This program provides care to children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. More than 57% of the program’s care capacity is provided to children younger than age 3. Each military child development center is certified by the Defense Department and accredited by a national accrediting body.</p>
community child care	<p>Community child care expands the availability of child care options through comparable programs off installation. Care is provided in both Defense Department approved community child care centers and family child care homes. Child care providers are state-licensed or regulated; some providers are both state licensed and nationally accredited.</p> <p>Community child care is operated by a third party administrator.</p>
Department of Defense Education Activity	<p>The Department of Defense Education Activity, or DODEA, is one of two federally-operated school systems. It is responsible for planning, directing, coordinating and managing prekindergarten through 12th grade educational programs on behalf of the Defense Department.</p> <p>DODEA is globally positioned and operates 160 accredited schools in eight districts located in 11 foreign countries, seven states, Guam and Puerto Rico. Also known as DODEA.</p> <p>Department of Defense Education Activity–Europe operates 64 schools within three districts throughout Bahrain, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The system serves over 24,000 school-age children of active-duty military and civilian employees.</p> <p>Department of Defense Education Activity–Pacific operates 45 schools located in Japan, South Korea and Guam that serve more than 21,000 children of service members and eligible DOD civilian personnel families stationed throughout the Pacific theater.</p> <p>Department of Defense Education Activity–Americas operates 50 schools located in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions of the United States, Puerto Rico and Cuba, serving more than 20,000 school-age children of active-duty military and civilian employees.</p>

Term	Definition
Early Learning Matters	The Early Learning Matters curriculum was developed for use in Defense Department child development centers. It gives military children a strong foundation by promoting skills linked to school readiness, well-being and life success. Also known as ELM.
expanded hourly child care	Military families have access to a nationally recognized child care provider database to search for hourly, flexible and on-demand child care.
family child care/child development home program	This care is provided in certified private homes by providers living in government-owned, privatized or leased housing. Families rely on family child care to provide flexible child care including night, weekend and unusual hourly care, such as shift work and emergency situations.
Families OverComing Under Stress	This program was developed to help families and couples overcome common challenges related to military life. It builds on strengths families already possess and teaches skills to help enhance communication, problem solving, goal setting and more. Also known as FOCUS.
Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children	The Defense Department, in collaboration with the National Center for Interstate Compacts and the Council of State Governments, developed the compact to address the educational transitions for military families. Through the compact, all 50 states, Washington, D.C. and the Department of Defense Education Activity are working together to provide a consistent set of policies that will make getting started in a new school, joining extracurricular activities and meeting graduation requirements as easy as possible for military children.
Kids Included Together	This organization provides support to Child & Youth Programs to create inclusive environments so no child is excluded. Kids Included Together has developed best-in-class inclusion services to help programs ensure all children are included, regardless of ability. Resources include disability inclusion training. Also known as KIT.
local education agency	Local education agency refers to a public board of education or other public authority within a state that maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district or other political subdivision (including a combination of school districts or counties) recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public schools. Both school districts and county offices of education are local education agencies. Some states treat charter schools as local education agencies. Also known as LEA.

Term	Definition
Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood	<p>This program is a Defense Department fee assistance program available to qualifying families. The program pays a portion of child care costs on behalf of families who are unable to access on-installation child care.</p> <p>Providers must be nationally accredited. Child Care Aware® of America is contracted to administer this program on behalf of the DOD. Also known as MCCYN.</p>
Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood-PLUS	<p>The Defense Department fee assistance program MCCYN has expanded to MCCYN-PLUS to offer community child care providers that are participating in their state’s quality rating and improvement system an opportunity to participate in the military fee assistance program. Child care providers enrolled and participating in their state’s quality rating and improvement system will be additional options for families. Also known as MCCYN-PLUS.</p>
military child care programs	<p>This term refers to child care programs offered on installations. The Defense Department provides military families with a variety of quality, affordable child care options. While services may vary by location, the standards and quality of services are consistent and meet established regulations.</p>
MilitaryChildCare.com	<p>MilitaryChildCare.com is a Defense Department website that provides a single gateway for parents to find comprehensive information on military-operated or military-approved child care programs worldwide. By streamlining the child care search and request process, MilitaryChildCare.com makes it easier for military parents to understand and assess child care options and make more informed decisions about their children’s care. Families may search for full- and part-time care at child development, school-age care or family child care programs, including before- and after-school care, as well as summer and holiday camps. Child care definitions for preference request, metro zone, waitlist, immediate need, unmet need, met need and placement time can be found on MilitaryChildCare.com. Also known internally as MCC or MCC.com.</p> <p>It should be noted that parents/users should never be directed to search for the shortened forms, MCC or MCC.com, as other irrelevant websites show up in the search.</p>

Term	Definition
New Parent Support Program	The New Parent Support Program helps military parents, including expectant parents, transition successfully into parenthood and provides a nurturing environment for their children. The New Parent Support Program’s staff consists of nurses, social workers and home visitation specialists and is supervised and monitored at the installation level by the Family Advocacy Program manager. The program focuses on providing one-on-one support for new and expectant parents through home visits, but some installations may offer parenting classes and groups.
school-age care program	This program provides care to children from kindergarten to 12 years of age. The program is offered before and after school and during holiday breaks and summer vacations and provides school-age camps for school-out days. School-age care is a component of the child development program system of care. Each military school-age care program is certified by the Defense Department and accredited by a national accrediting body.
school liaison	School liaisons are located at each installation and are the central point of contact for commanders, military families and local school systems on school-related matters for grades pre-K-12. School liaisons advocate, advise and build alliances to help address education concerns, challenges or issues of the Total Force and offer a network to educate and provide information or referral for both military families and school districts. School liaisons help with transition support before and after a PCS and can connect parents to the Exceptional Family Member Program and their school’s special education department, as well as help parents navigate their new school district’s special education program. School liaisons can provide information on school districts and boundaries, assist with transfer of credits and class registration, help locate after-school and extracurricular programs, set up tutoring and youth sponsorship referrals, and help with college, career and military readiness.
Sesame Street for Military Families	Sesame Street for Military Families is a free multimedia website — with videos, games, tips, articles and more — offered in both English and Spanish for children and parents. Families can find information and multimedia resources on the topics of military deployments, multiple deployments, homecomings, injuries, grief and self-expression.
Thrive	This free, online parenting-education program promotes positive parenting, stress management and healthy lifestyle practices. The program is organized by children’s age groups, from 0-18 years, to help military parents raise healthy, resilient children. The four age groups are Take Root (for children ages 0-3), Sprout (for children ages 3-5), Grow (for children ages 5-10) and Branch Out (for children ages 10-18).

Term	Definition
	Supplemental modules are added regularly. Parents have access to content for exceptional families, grandparents as caregivers, mental health and wellness, and more.
Virtual Lab School	The Virtual Lab School is an online professional development and resource system supported by an extensive repository of professional development videos, research-based content and relevant, interactive learning materials. This system is the professional development platform for training child development personnel to build their knowledge and skill around research-based practices in child care and development. Also known as VLS.
Youth Programs	These programs contribute to the readiness, retention and lethality of the Total Force by helping families balance the competing demands of work and family life, assist the installation commander in supporting healthy youth development, increase youth well-being and promote resilience and inclusion, ease a successful transition through childhood and adolescence into adulthood, provide opportunities for personal, physical, emotional, cognitive and social development, and access to education-related services and resources.
Youth Programs — the arts	The arts programs, including digital, fine, applied and performing arts, offer opportunities to encourage imagination and self-expression, and help youth develop knowledge and understanding of specific arts forms.
Youth Programs — education and STEM programs	These programs complement and reinforce what youth learn during the school day while creating experiences that drive interest and build a capacity for success in these disciplines. They provide youth with homework assistance as well as support in developing a plan for the future by complementing academic success, preparation for a postsecondary education and career development.
Youth Programs — health and wellness programs	These programs provide opportunities for youth to enhance relationships with themselves and others, regulate emotions and solve problems by developing social-emotional skills.
Youth Programs — instructional classes	These sessions are age and developmentally appropriate with clearly defined goals and are designed to teach and develop the skills and abilities of youth in hands-on, informal settings. These include regularly scheduled classes and one-time clinics or events that reflect the interests of the targeted market and are generally offered on a fee basis. Classes cover a wide range of topics, including photography, woodworking, gardening, gymnastics, dance, martial arts, music and more.
Youth Programs — leadership and service programs	These programs help youth build leadership with self, leadership with others and leadership within the community.

<p>Youth Programs — sports and recreation programs</p>	<p>These programs help youth develop physical fitness, reduce stress and experience healthy physical development. Recreational programming includes active and passive leisure activities and events that are usually self-directed in nature for individual or group participation that meet the needs of the youth. Activities and events may include, but are not limited to, social gatherings, dances, sports, arts, technology and media. Youth are also introduced to lifelong sports, such as fishing, tennis and running.</p>
<p>Youth Programs — Youth Sports and Fitness Programs</p>	<p>Youth Sports and Fitness Programs provide supervised options designed to productively engage youth in physical and fun activities in a positive setting that supports varying skill levels and interests of youth, while developing life skills such as good sportsmanship and teamwork. These year-round programs are organized and offered in a variety of settings including, but not limited to, leagues, camps, clinics or instructional formats to enhance the emotional, physical, social and educational well-being of participants. Sports include individual and team sports and fitness activities such as baseball, basketball, soccer, cheerleading, flag football, tennis, golf and more. Individual sports may be offered through a variety of MWR programs and services facilities, such as golf courses, bowling lanes and youth centers.</p>
<p>youth sponsorship</p>	<p>Youth sponsorship is a program to facilitate the integration of dependent children of military families into new surroundings when moving to that military installation as a result of a parent’s permanent change of station. The program is primarily directed toward preteen and teenaged youth. Youth sponsorship can be accessed by contacting local school liaisons or through installation youth centers.</p>