

Component 3: Helping Families and Students

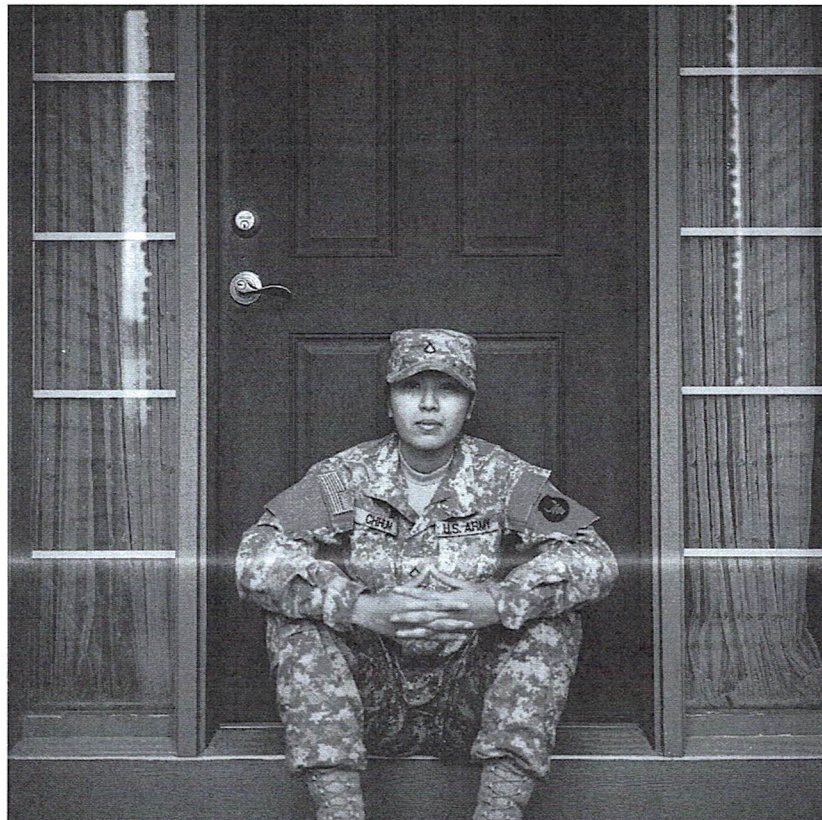
How Do We Help Families and Students?

Goals:

- Locate resources that can be used in assisting military families in the educational setting.
- Locate resources that can be shared with parents to assist them in making educational decisions and preparations for their children.

Now that you understand more about the hurdles that our Military Connected Children and Families encounter and what is expected of educators, how do you go about providing the support they need? The Military Child Education Coalition has put together several resources to make the moving easier for schools as well as the family.

An entire page has been developed for educators to provide resources for parents. This family page can be found here.



One of the most stressful times for a military family is that of transitioning from one location to another. Many spouses of military members talk of the pressure of making decisions on the receiving end while tying up things at the exiting end can lead to documents being misplaced, items not being signed, or even things forgotten or left behind. Educators can help by being aware and sharing with parents the items that will make their transition occur smoothly. The following lists are a place educators can help:

Student Checklist

Students with Disabilities Checklist.

Gifted List

While the one document is listed as a disabilities checklist, it could be used to assist parents of gifted, Title I and other students receiving special programming. The names of the documents may differ but the general idea would be similar. Perhaps, helping a parent write in the correct name would be a benefit.

Attendance

Attendance can be a special concern for families when special circumstances pull the family away from home and school. The following document shares information related to school attendance for military connected students. Be sure to refer back to the TN MIC3 code to verify how Tennessee has adopted this component.
attendance document

The MCEC website provides several tips for schools and educators regarding how the deal with attendance.

Educators

When parents notify you they will be deploying, take this opportunity to tell them you will keep them and their safekeeping in your thoughts.

Military families are transferred frequently throughout their career. While the communication you receive from the parent of military dependents who are assigned to your classroom may not be as consistent as you would like prior to deployment, understand that communication is a process. Work to establish strong methods of communication with the military parents, and they will often take these newly learned styles of communication with them to the next school in the community to which they are being transferred.

Educators should be alert to the effects of deployments on students. Express concerns to the school counselor.

Sometimes the parent's return requires adjustments, such as a household move. If you have a student who may have a sudden move out-of-state, to give a parent support during a period of recovery, make sure the receiving district gets all the paperwork needed to help that student be successful, especially during trying times.

School Districts/Local Education Agencies (LEAs)

During a recent survey, most states report that the determination of whether or not student absences are excused is a decision made at the local level. Some states require/recommend local education agencies adopt detailed policies while other states allow the guidance to be outlined in the student handbook or in guidance provided to attendance committees. Check to see what your state requires and then determine how your district wants to handle this decision if you are allowed discretion.

If your state is one that passed the Interstate Compact, then certain agreements were approved which you may need to heed. Most states have sent out guidance, but if you are not familiar with the provisions of this agreement, review the document linked below for the Tennessee code on this matter. Tennessee Code for MIC3

Needs of Military Connected Families

This excerpt from the Primer for Civilian Nonprofit Organization: Providing Support for Our Military Families shares other needs a family may need. A school may not be the provider for each of these but knowing there may be a need and who can be recommended would

provide a huge relief to families.

"It is important to remember that family members may need assistance in deciding when and what services are needed as well as how to reach out to the providers. This list of services indicate what a family may access through the DOD. Understand that these services may regionally accessible not locally accessible so families may need help accessing local providers.

Military support: core services The Department of Defense recognizes that taking care of military families is an important part of keeping our military strong. The DoD has a broad set of programs and services that support military families and ensure they are ready to meet the challenges of military life. The list of programs and support services is extensive and varies by military service and by installation, but these programs are at the core of military family support:

- *Child care*
- *Deployment support*
- *Financial management services*
- *Confidential help through non-medical counseling*
- *Relocation assistance*
- *Military spouse employment assistance*
- *School transition services for military children*
- *Support for youth development*
- *Services for families with special needs*
- *Counseling, advocacy and support for domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect*
- *Programs serving National Guard and reserve members and other service members who are geographically dispersed from a military installation"*

"This guide will help you identify some of the key issues military members and their families face and the support services available through military programs, whether on military installations, in local communities or online. This information can help you understand how the services you provide as part of the Military Family Readiness System can be tailored to meet the needs of military members and their families."

It may be important to help families make connections with appropriate agencies. Entering a new school and community can be difficult and it is essential that families are connected to the appropriate services as quickly as possible.

Administrators

The AASA provides a toolkit that can be downloaded to support educators and families that are connected with the military.

Additional Resources

American Psychological Association (<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/>) has a large number of resources available for teachers and parents under the topic of Military.

Child Traumatic Stress is discussed through a variety of resources on the National Child Traumatic Stress Network site.