

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING MILITARY CONNECTED FAMILIES: AN OVERVIEW

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MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS





2017 DEMOGRAPHICS PROFILE

ACTIVE DUTY FAMILIES

More than half (53.3%) of all active duty members have a spouse and/or dependents, and the more than 1.6 million active duty family members are an important part of our military community.



1.6 Million Family Members

612,127 Spouses

1,002,189 Children

8,989 Adult Dependents



1.3 Million Active Duty Members

dual-military marriage, with children: 32,430

2.5%

4.1%

dual-military marriage, no children: 52,824

single, no children: 561,376

43.4%

31.8%

married to civilian, with children: 412,072

single, with children: 52,385

4.0%

14.2%

married to civilian, no children: 183,433

Family Status



Active Duty Spouses



52.6%

Active duty members married

6.6% Dual-military marriage



31.5

Average age of spouses

8.5% MEN

91.5% WOMEN



Active Duty Children



38.4%

Active duty members with children

Children in each age group

0 to 5 years 42.2%

6 to 11 years 32.1%

12 to 18 years 21.5%

19 to 22 years 4.2%

ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY FAMILIES



2017 DEMOGRAPHICS PROFILE SELECTED RESERVE FAMILIES

More than half (53.3%) of all Selected Reserve members have a spouse and/or dependents, and the more than 1 million Selected Reserve family members are an important part of our military community.

 **1 Million** Family Members

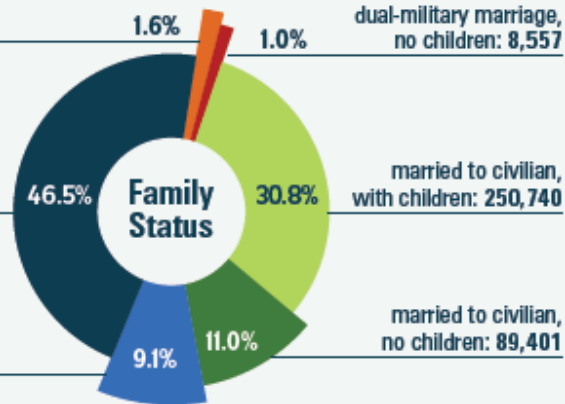
 **369,653** Spouses
 **682,925** Children
 **2,205** Other Dependents

 **815 Thousand** Selected Reserve Members

dual-military marriage,
with children: **13,192**

single,
no children: **378,901**

single,
with children: **74,325**



Note: Data presented here are based on Selected Reserve members who train throughout the year and participate annually in active duty training exercises.

Source: 2017 Demographics Profile of the Military Community (Department of Defense)
<http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2017-Demographics-Report.pdf>



Selected Reserve Spouses



44.4%

Selected Reserve members married

2.7% Dual-military marriage



36.4
YEARS
OLD

Average age of spouses

13.3%
MEN

86.7%
WOMEN



Selected Reserve Children



41.5%

Selected Reserve members
with children

Children in each age group



RESERVE COMPONENT FAMILIES

VETERAN POPULATIONS

- As of 2018, there were an estimated 19.2 million, veterans in the US.
- The veteran population is consistently evolving
- Ninety-one percent are men
- Women comprise nearly 9 percent of all veterans; one of the fastest growing segments
- Half of the veteran population is aged 65 years or older
- Almost a quarter of veterans are living in rural areas

MY MILITARY FAMILY



QUOTE FROM AN ARMY SERGEANT FIRST CLASS (SFC)

“The families have it hardest. Our service is selfish and not selfless as is commonly portrayed. We do what we need to in order to get promoted and make the next successful leap. The families don't have that choice. They have to go with. No one asks them. They are not trained to be tough. They learn only through OJT and that's like getting information through a fire hose.”



MILITARY CHILDREN



ONE WORD
THAT I WOULD
USE TO
DESCRIBE MY
MILITARY CHILD
IS....

(N=27)



MILITARY CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

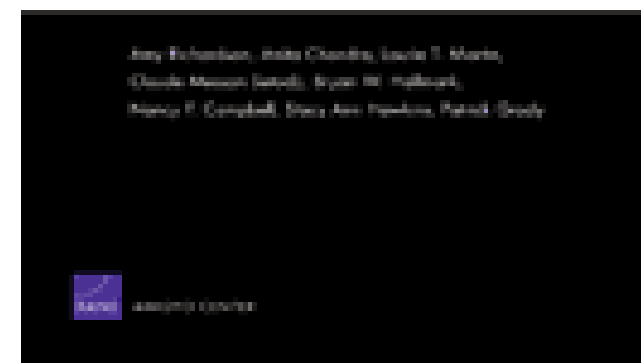


- Highly mobile populations
 - 33% of military families move annually versus 20% of civilian families
 - Military children are 3 times as likely to experience a school transition than civilian children

MILITARY CHILDREN AND SCHOOL

- Military youth (11-17 years)
 - Fared above average in academic engagement and peer relationships
 - Fared below average in family relationships, anxiety, and emotional difficulties
- School staff felt disconnected from military installations and that Reserve youth were more isolated
- Many school staff had no consistent information regarding military or deployment status of parents

Effects of Soldiers'
Deployment on
Children's Academic
Performance and
Behavioral Health



WHAT EDUCATORS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MILITARY CHILDREN

- “Know which kids are Military/Veteran children. Identify them and make sure they are ok.”
- “Take time to learn about Deployments/TDY (active duty) or injuries/illness (veterans). If they know obstacles faced at home they know how to handle situations that may arise in a more appropriate manner.”
- “That children affected by military life are not only children of service members, they are also young siblings.”
- “We take vacations when our schedules allow so we miss more school days than other kids.”



DEPLOYMENT



OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) AND OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) DEPLOYMENT FACTS

- Since 2001, more than 2.6 million active duty, National Guard, and Reserves have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan; 60 percent active duty and 40 percent National Guard and Reserve¹
- Repeated frequent deployments with prolonged exposure in combat zones
- Higher rates of survival and longer recovery times; physical injury to death ratio is 7.5:1
- As of 2013, 2 million have separated from the military; over half Reserves or National Guard

MILITARY SPOUSES AND DEPLOYMENT

- Experiences vary by branch with Reserve spouses having less support
- More responsibilities at home during deployment
- Supporting children

TECHNICAL REPORT

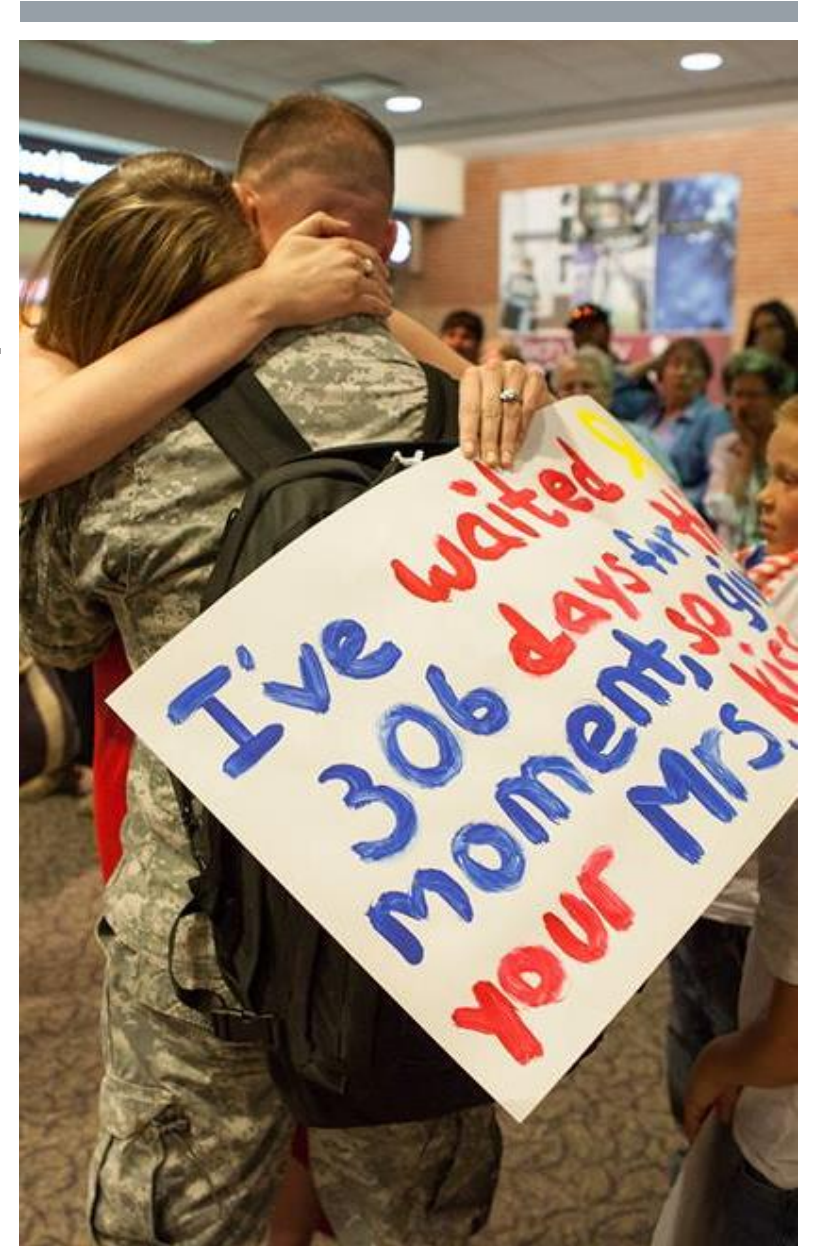
Views from the Homefront

The Experiences of Youth and Spouses from Military Families

Andie Chandler • Sarah-Jane Collins • Lisa M. Jones • Sam Tomlinson
Brynnell • Rachel M. Smith • Maggie Smith



Center for Military Health Policy Research
www.cmhpr.mil



MILITARY CHILDREN AND DEPLOYMENT

- Higher reports of stress and anxiety in children dealing with deployment, whether combat or training, than their civilian counterparts
- Increase in utilization of mental and behavioral health services
- Increase in problem behaviors at home reported by other parent

MY DEPLOYMENT STORY



- Wedding
- New home
- New job
- Financial and physical responsibilities
- Co-parenting
- Advocating for children



CONSEQUENCES OF MILITARY SERVICE



- The Institute of Medicine (2014) estimates that it will be 2040 before we as a country know the full extent of behavioral health consequences among OIF/OEF veterans.

RESERVE COMPONENTS



- Post-deployment, 42.4 percent of Reserve Component soldiers screened positive for mental health issues (twice the active duty rate) 2
 - May not have the same resources in civilian communities as on military bases
 - May face unique social and economic issues that affect mental health

AFTERMATH OF COMBAT EXPOSURE

- Signature injuries of OIF/OEF
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) prevalence ranges from 13-20 percent
 - 22 percent of all OEF/OIF combat wounds are estimated to be brain injuries
 - Co-occurring conditions
 - 1 in 10 returning OEF/OIF veterans seen at the VA has a problem with alcohol or other drugs
 - Risk of suicide among veterans is greater than civilian counterparts

Institute of Medicine. (2014). Treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Military and Veteran Populations: Final Assessment

http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/problems/traumatic_brain_injury_and_ptsd.asp

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015

Suicide Data Report, 2012, Department of Veterans Affairs

ADVERSE LIFE EVENTS

- Veterans represent 11% of the homeless population
 - 28% of homeless veterans live in California
- In 2012, about 8% of inmates in state/federal prisons or local jails were veterans
- 2018 Unemployment rate: 3.8%

EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INJURY ON CHILDREN

- Greater risk for the development of secondary PTSD, depression and anxiety
- Childhood hyperactivity has been associated with paternal PTSD among boys aged 11 and younger
- Behavior problems (e.g. hostility and violence) prevalent in children of a parent with PTSD
- Shifting roles and responsibilities at home



MILITARY AND VETERAN CAREGIVERS



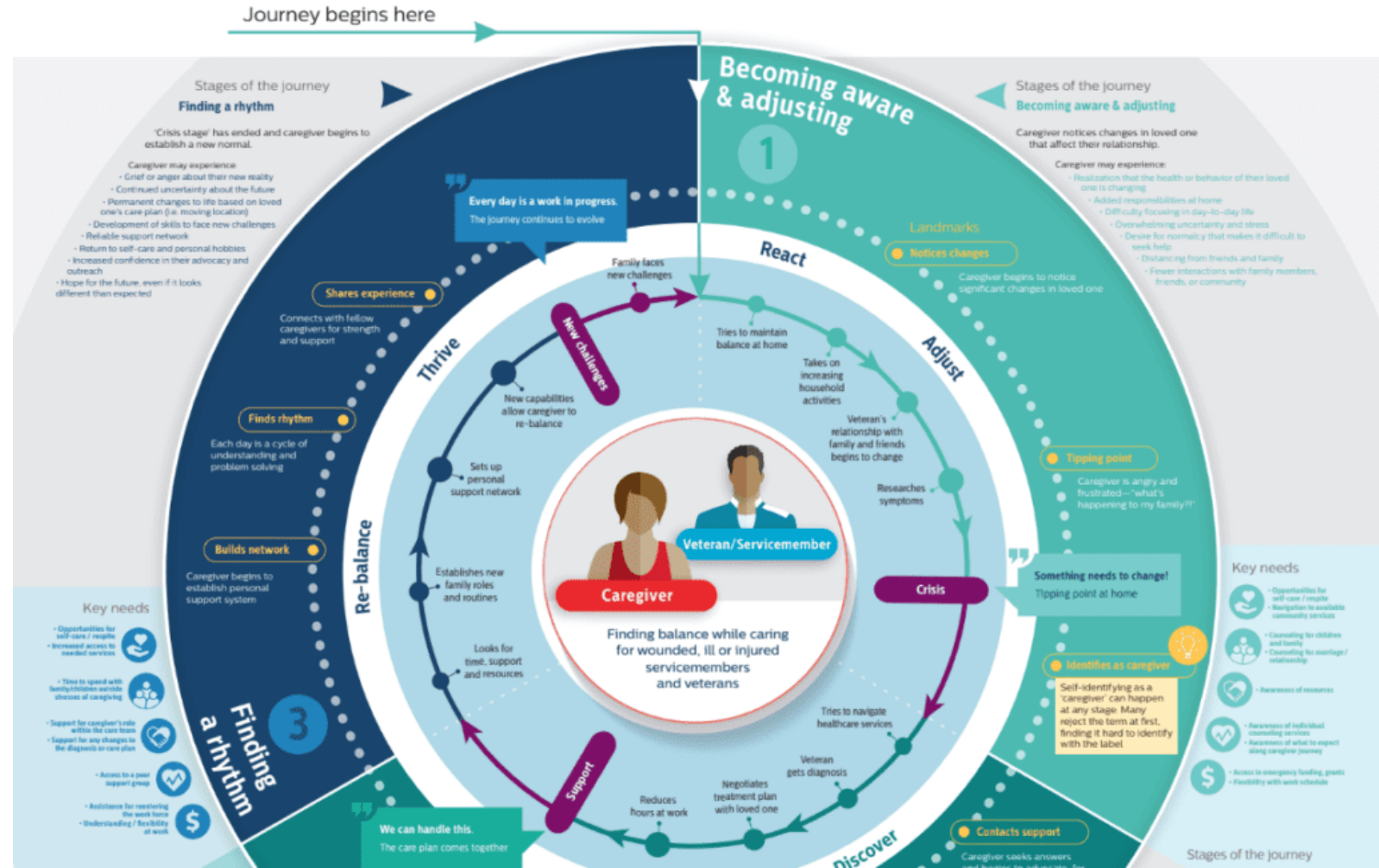
MILITARY AND VETERAN CAREGIVERS

- There are over 5.5 million veteran caregivers nationwide
- Over 1.1 million spouses, parents and friends are caring for injured and disabled veterans who have served since 9/11/01
 - Little to no formal support network
 - Younger than other caregivers
 - Employed outside the home
 - More likely to care for someone who has a behavioral health problem
 - Increased risk of depression and other challenges in personal and professional life
 - 33 percent uninsured

MILITARY AND VETERAN CAREGIVER JOURNEY MAP

Military and Veteran Caregiver Experience Map Overview

Military and Veteran Caregiver Experience Map



CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN OF MILITARY CAREGIVERS

- **Mental and physical health challenges**
 - *"You can't live in a household with somebody suffering and not have it affect everybody in the household."*
- **Risk of social isolation**
 - *"I try to explain to the school everything that my son deals with. The panic attacks. He's not late to school because he's oversleeping. He's late to school because he is having a severe panic attack in the bathroom and he won't come out...We just had difficulty explaining why things are happening. They can't understand it. They kind of label them as a problem child."*

CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN OF MILITARY CAREGIVERS

■ Communication

- "I think it's very important to make sure we speak to our children openly and honestly and engage them and involve them. They need to know because they are not oblivious to what's happening."

■ Financial

- Challenges of working while caregiving

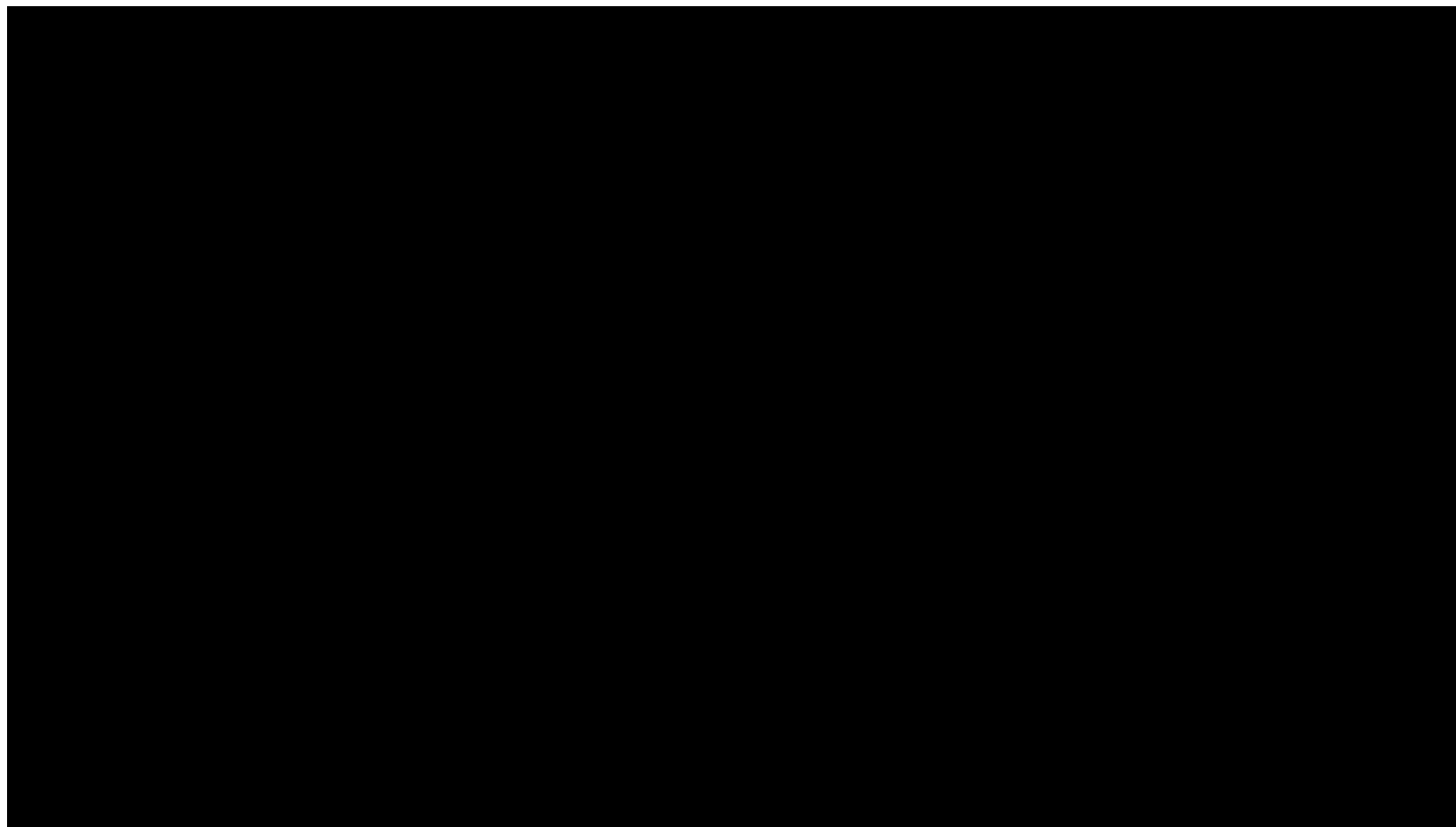
■ Negative impact of caregiving responsibilities on parents

- "The hard part is I feel like sometimes I don't get to be that loving mom or that loving person as much..."
- "I've often felt like a single parent."

WHAT EDUCATORS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHILDREN OF WOUNDED OR ILL VETERANS

- “Even here, literally right outside of Ft Benning, educators don't seem to get that having a wounded warrior parent (especially with invisible injury) means that parent isn't always going to be involved with things. Not for lack of wanting to but due to very real limitations.”
- “School is not a Wounded Veteran's child only job. Sometimes they take on the chores of being a caregiver indirectly.”
- “I wish that they understood that sometimes our kids aren't acting out to be naughty, but because they are frustrated and sad and need extra love. Sometimes they internalize things and it comes across as anger or impulsiveness but if they got that extra hug or that high five, or even that break when its needed then everyone would benefit.”
- “Secondary PTS IS a real thing.”

SESAME STREET: CAREGIVERS



<https://youtu.be/iglkKmMzuS4>








WHAT CAN EDUCATORS DO TO SUPPORT MILITARY CONNECTED FAMILIES?





Select your profession to see how:

<      >

Aging & Senior Services Children's Services & School Systems Employment & Vocational Services Faith-Based Groups Health Care & Medical Services

By asking "Have you or a family member ever served in the military?" children's services professionals can:

1. Help a student thrive when a parent is deployed
2. Support families facing deployment and reintegration
3. Improve peer sensitivity to military children

[Click here to learn how](#)

IDENTIFY MILITARY FAMILIES

ASKTHEQUESTIONNH.COM

HONOR MILITARY CONNECTED FAMILIES

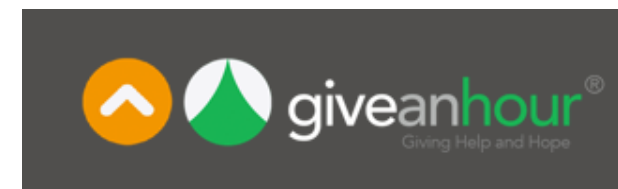
- Require military cultural competency training for staff
- Familiarize yourself with local and national resources to support military and veteran families



Elizabeth Dole Foundation
CARING FOR MILITARY FAMILIES



Educating a Nation



- Establish a peer support program (e.g. group, after-school club, etc.)
- Celebrate Month of the Military Child (April)

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES: WELCOME AND REENTRY CIRCLE



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QUESTIONS?