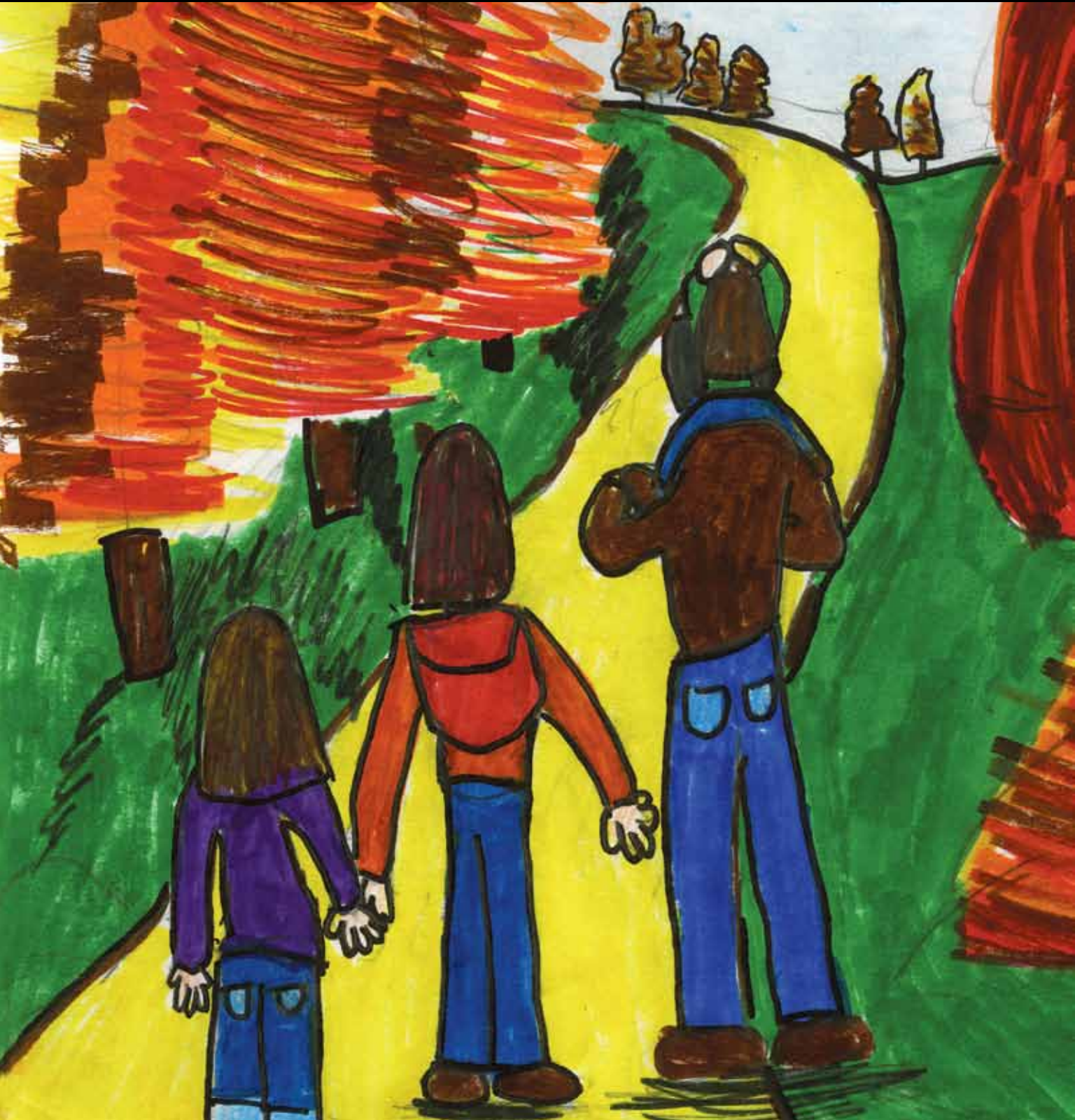


# Researching Ways to Better

# Support Military Children



The Military Child Education Coalition has always been at the forefront of research about military children. Early in its history, the MCEC conducted the seminal research about military teens and their transitional high school challenges — the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS). Its findings paved the way for many changes in the U.S. Army’s policies regarding soldier transition and provided the beginnings for many of the MCEC’s initiatives that address transition for all military children.

The MCEC remains committed to conducting qualitative research in support of military children, and in 2008, created a dynamic research team, tasked with conducting further studies into the effects of transition and deployment on military children’s education. Here is an overview of the MCEC’s key studies over the last ten years:

- The U.S. Army Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS)
- “What Transitioning Military Families with Children who have Special Needs Currently Experience” (2005) and “What Transitioning Military Families with Children who have Special Needs Currently Experience: Communication and Continuity of Care” (2009) – both studies for the U.S. Army Family & Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command
- U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) School Transition Study
- Post-Hurricane Katrina Education School Site Review for the U.S. Navy
- “Pre-K for Military Families: Honoring Service, Educating Children,” for Pre-K Now
- Ongoing Research

*“This [the MCEC’s Post-Hurricane Katrina Education School Site Review] assessment significantly supported the Task Force Navy Family mission by providing Navy families the facts that allowed them to make an informed decision for their children’s education.”*

**Cathy Stokoe**  
USN, FFSP Director



## We Research Ways to Better Support Military Children

### The U.S. Army Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS), 2001

In 2001, the U.S. Army chartered the Military Child Education Coalition to study mobility and make research-based recommendations to improve high school transitions for military-connected children. The MCEC assembled a team of highly qualified field researchers and developed a methodologically robust protocol to survey military high school students, parents, and educators, making this one of the most meaningful pieces of research in the field today. The study highlights the academic challenges and social and emotional struggles encountered when students move. These findings are important, not only to the Army, but also to the wider American mobile society which increasingly moves as much as their military counterparts.

In 2008, the U.S. Army FMWRC contracted the MCEC for SETS II - a second in-depth look at secondary students in the light of significant changes in both Army life, school requirements, and technology since their original study.

### “What Transitioning Military Families with Children who have Special Needs Currently Experience” (2005) and “What Transitioning Military Families with Children who have Special Needs Currently Experience: Communication and Continuity of Care” (2009)

The MCEC was contracted by the U. S. Army in 2004 to conduct a study of families within its Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). The findings, published in June 2005, led to enhancements of Army EFMP programs and ongoing development of the MCEC’s Special Education Leaders Institute (SELI). As a result of the research’s first phase, and increasingly amplified changes for students with special needs, a second phase of research was warranted. It will consist of a deeper exploration into the areas of consistency and predictability of services as well as communication. It will be completed in early 2009.

### U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) School Transition Study, 2004

For the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), in 2004, the MCEC conducted research that focused on the issues related to the transfer of school-age military children to and from the Hawaii public schools. Completed in June 2005, the research resulted in a proposed support template to improve transitions and to provide predictability for students and their families as they move to and from Hawaii.



### Post-Hurricane Katrina Education School Site Review, 2006

Shortly after the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina, the MCEC was asked by the U.S. Navy to provide management and administration experts who could work within damaged communities in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama to help determine if, and when, schools were ready to re-open. The MCEC provided this as a community service and was delighted to be of help in a critical time for Navy Families.

### Pre-K for Military Families: Honoring Service, Educating Children, 2007 [www.preknow.org](http://www.preknow.org)

In partnership with the prekindergarten advocacy group, Pre-K Now, the MCEC conducted a 2006 study of existing states’ policies regarding free prekindergarten programs for military children. Acknowledging the critical importance of high-quality prekindergarten accessibility, the MCEC recommended the implementation of state-based programs that fund prekindergarten for military children, prekindergarten eligibility reciprocity from state to state, and increased support for parents as their children’s first teachers. This study was published in July 2007.

### Ongoing Research

The MCEC has continued to be keenly attuned to local, state, and federal policies that impact military children and their education at all levels. Whether in search of information to inform structured research as background for expert testimony or to answer the questions of military parents, the MCEC has focused sharply on the policies and data that affect all military children.

Long-term studies include research in the following areas for the U.S. Army (FMWRC-CYS):

- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, “Consistent College Ready Standards for Students: the Unique Challenges of the Mobile Military Child”
  - ~ Identification of high-stake math elements that are important for mobile students as they transition through school systems
- Education of the Military Child – 21st Century
- Home schooling
- Enrichment Programs
- Effects of multiple deployment on students’ school experiences

