



# PRESS RELEASE

## MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **EL PASO COMMUNITIES LAUNCH NEW INITIATIVE TO BENEFIT MILITARY FAMILIES**

*“Living in the New Normal™” creates support networks for local military families.*

**EL PASO** – More than 100 representatives from local government, business and education communities today collaborated to devise a plan for supporting local military families experiencing trauma, grief or loss related to the injury, illness, or death of a service member. The daylong session, part of the Military Child Education Coalition™’s Living in the New Normal: Supporting Children Through Trauma and Loss (LINN™) initiative, was hosted by the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC™). The MCEC™ has launched similar initiatives in Central Texas and North Carolina to date.

Created by the MCEC™ in 2004, the “Living in the New Normal” initiative is centered on three major components including 1) a two-day training for educators, professionals, and other caring adults who work with children, 2) a resource and reference library featuring publications for adults and children, and 3) a day-long public engagement session that enables state and community leaders to collaborate and plan homefront responses to support military-connected children during times of uncertainty and trauma.

“El Paso’s participation in the LINN™ initiative demonstrates the level of commitment and respect this community has for its families and soldiers,” said Gus Rodriguez, Chair of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce’s Military Affairs Committee. “By joining together and developing a plan, the community is proactively ensuring our families and our troops are well taken care of as they return home from service.”

At the session, the MCEC™ facilitation teams provided attendees with resources and strategies for homefront efforts to help military families cope with grief, trauma and loss. Attendees drew on these new tools and their knowledge of pre-existing local support networks to create a new plan to support military families in transition. The MCEC™ will continue working with attendees to implement the plan and reach military families throughout the greater El Paso community.

“The work of the MCEC™ and the local steering committee in coordinating this event is commendable,” said Major General Robert Lennox, Commander of Fort Bliss. “The next step of implementing the plans will be the most important, as we continue to support our soldiers in attending to the unique needs of their children.”

Local organizations participating in LINN™ included: the City of El Paso, the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, Fort Bliss Garrison Command, the University of Texas at El Paso, five local school districts and numerous area service providers. The session was made possible by

contributions from Morrison Healthcare Food Services, First Light Credit Union, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, El Paso Community College, Bank of the West—El Paso and the Association of the United States Army (AUSA). .

"The MCEC™ salutes the tremendous efforts of community leaders in El Paso to create a strong network of support for their military families," said Dr. Mary Keller, Executive Director of the MCEC™. "The work being done here today and in the months ahead will serve as a model for communities across the nation. Through initiatives such as LINN™, we come together as a community to ease the unique burdens of our military families."

#### **About MCEC™**

The Military Child Education Coalition™ is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, world-wide organization. A model of positive leadership and advocacy, the MCEC™'s work is focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military-connected children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. MCEC™ seeks to include all military installations, their supporting schools, concerned organizations, and caring individuals in their mission to serve the children of Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve service members. For more information, please visit [www.militarychild.org](http://www.militarychild.org).

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