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Military Child Education Coalition Aids Military Families Who Are "Living in the New Normal"

Non-profit Organization Seeks to Help Military Families Cope with Grief and Loss of a Loved One

Harker Heights, TX (February 21, 2007) -- In an effort to support military families who have either lost a loved one or are coping with a life changing injury, the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) has launched the "Living in the New Normal" initiative to give families and communities the tools they need to cope with the changes and challenges ahead.

Living in the New Normal: Supporting Children Through Trauma and Loss, is a new project of the Military Child Education Coalition. By drawing on the expertise of approximately 100 representatives from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds including the military, business, community leadership, healthcare, education, faith-based institutions and services providers, MCEC laid the groundwork for instituting community based plans that will support the needs of the military families –especially the children who have experienced injury or the loss of life of a family member.

“Just as the experience of each service member who is injured or becomes ill as a result of combat is an individual one, so, too, are the unique experiences for their children,” said Dr. Steve Cozza, a retired Army colonel and associate director for the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, Child and Family Programs, Uniformed Services University. “For a child, the process of overcoming associated challenges is personal and developmental.”

Centered around three core modules of professional development, resources and research based references, and community and public engagement, Living in the New Normal promotes resilience and non-victimization, and recognizes the fact that military families are faced with the prospect of multiple deployments and that the loss or injury of a loved one creates a "new normal".

"By engaging members of the community to establish support networks and become active participants, communities are giving a tremendous gift to the children who are experiencing trauma and loss," said Patty Shinseki, MCEC board member and head of

the Living in the New Normal Initiative. "By coordinating the available resources and educational programs in a community so they are used effectively to better inform military families, communities will establish a network to immediately respond to a family's needs as they arise and provide sustainable support throughout the adjustment to the new normal."

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is a non-profit organization working to solve the challenge of helping schools, parents, and military installations address the needs of transitioning military children and their families. For more information about MCEC and its initiatives to help military children, visit www.militarychild.org.

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