



The Challenges of the Military Child

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When thinking about classroom adaptations to accommodate the multicultural scope of students, the military child may be overlooked. The United States military has become its own culture, and the life of a military child is very different than other children. The military child is typically thrown into an unstable and uncertain life with frequent changes to family dynamics and settings. I believe these circumstances set military children apart from other students. Due to these circumstances, military children have a unique set

of needs that educators should look at from a multicultural perspective.

In addition to the normal day-to-day issues in a child's life, military children are increasingly exposed to stressful and intense issues. Military children frequently have to relocate

situations. Military children and youth must also cope with their parent or parents' deployment. Children and youth are also highly exposed to the realization and fear of possibly losing their parent or parents. In addition, some military children actually have

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and adjust to new environments and cultures. Children thrive on routine and familiarity, making relocation one of the most potentially stressful

to cope with the loss of their parents and other family members.

These circumstances lead to challenges within the classroom.

The key challenges that will surface in the classroom are adjustment issues due to frequent moves and behavioral concerns due to deployment. In addition, more serious issues can surface due to parent injury or loss of a parent.

There are numerous strategies to enhance the military child's educational experience. Initial steps should be taken to welcome the child and help establish a strong family connection. The military parent(s) may be deploying, going

In addition, the teacher should be taking steps to ensure a strong welcome for the child (Virginia Military Family Service Board, 2003, p. 31).

Due to the challenges that military children face, the military has established a multitude of programs and practices to help military children. Although there are numerous programs and resources available, not all military members will be aware of these services. So, as an educator it is important to have a reference point for available

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on Temporary Duty Locations (TDY), or experiencing other military-related situations that would make the parent(s) unavailable for developing a relationship in the classroom or even addressing concerns pertaining to their child. So, initially focusing on establishing family relationships is imperative.

programs, services, and resources a military child may need. Most resources can be obtained by contacting the school liaison officer. If there is not a school liaison officer currently available, reach out to the nearest Military Installation's Airmen and Family Readiness Flight.

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