



Month of the Military Child – Let's Celebrate our Youngest Heroes

In 1986, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger designated April as Month of the Military Child. Military bases, cities and school districts around the world will honor these young American heroes with special events just for them. As part of this month-long celebration, local communities are invited to take part in **Purple Up Day! (wear purple)** on **April 13th** to recognize our military children.

Here are a few suggestions on how your school can celebrate the Month of the Military Child. Plan now for how you can show your support for military children in your schools. Work with your students, staff, PTA or Boosters to do recognition.

1. Kick off the Month of the Military Child with a breakfast, or lunch for Military Connected Youth (MCY) in the school. Include their parents or other family members associated with the military. Don't forget to invite staff who were once military kids, too, or who may have a close family member serving our country. Ask everyone to wear purple and invite all military members to wear their uniform. PTO/PAB could pick up the tab.
2. Identify one day each week in April to highlight military families. Ideas include: favorite service logo day, patriotic day, Purple day, etc. Dress-up throughout the month of April. Decorate the school with purple, purple camo, military insignias, etc.
3. Highlight April as Month of the Military Child on the school's marquee, and in staff and parent newsletters.
4. Have a daily or weekly announcement with military-connected student facts. Start with the national facts and move into school facts. (i.e. Military Monday ...Did you know?) Followed by a public "thank you" for their service to our country.
5. Throughout the month, ask military connected kids or family members to do the announcements, or share an interesting fact about their life as a military child on the morning news show.
6. Decorate display cases and bulletin boards throughout April with military focused memorabilia, or items brought by military kids reflecting their experiences (where they have live or traveled, family members' service memorabilia, parts of a uniform, patches, coins, models of planes etc.)
7. Create a world map and pinpoint where students and staff have lived because of their military lifestyle. This is a fantastic way to connect military kids with their peers. It's total conversation starter when their peers say to them, "Wow! You lived in Japan?"
8. Take pics and decorate using flag as a backdrop and unique to their branch of service.
9. Decorate the school in flags, purple, and posters! Have a group of kids design posters thanking their families for their service. Have military kids make posters reflecting their experiences. Decorate with purple balloons. Have staff and students wear purple ribbons or carnations on the designated Purple UP day!
10. "Wall of Honor" Recognition: Schools are encouraged to display a "Wall of Honor" as a visual depiction of the school's military student population. These bulletin boards typically display pictures of military-connected students, or different color graphics (based on military branch) representing the number of military students in the school.
11. "Share Your Story" Project: Whether a military dependent yourself, classmate, friend, or neighbor of a military student, we are all impacted by the military community in Texas. Teachers are encourage to incorporate Month of the Military Child recognition in their instruction by having students share their military-connection story through the visual arts, creative writing, musical composition, poetry, etc.
12. Adopt a deployed service member or unit. Create Care Packages for deployed troops. As a service project collect items from a class, grade, school group, or whole school. Packages can be sent to a student's family member or another unit identified through the school or community. Don't forget notes, card, pictures etc. For ideas of what to send contact a family member, local installation, or Red Cross.
13. As a service project adopt a deployed family. Find out what a family with a deployed service member needs help with. A class or school group can help with yard work, in home technology, childcare, tutoring, homework help, a weekend buddy, care package for the kids in the family and/or deployed member. This can be Tricky for some families with deployed member because of confidentiality, but it might be able to be done if handled correctly.
14. Create an atmosphere in individual classrooms to bring an awareness of MCY's lifestyle to their peers through conversations – ask questions, share experiences and point out the relatable experiences that all children have like:

Talk about what it may feel like going to new school or on the first day of school, having parents leave on business trip, struggling making new friends or having to say goodbye to friends.

15. Ask a military member (a parent or sibling of someone in the class) to be a guest speaker and share their perspective on life in the military as well as their profession.
16. Time Zone Wall: A series of clocks on a wall identifying different time zones from around the world, with a focus on where a deployed family may be, where a MCY lived in the past, or where a MCY might be moving to.
17. Story time using books about military kids' experience, the military lifestyle, being the new kid in school, or appreciating differences in one another.
18. Show-n-Tell – Have students in something military related. Examples: memorabilia from an installation or service branch, favorite airplane, book, military character, items or pictures from prior living locations, pictures or anything related to being a mil kid.
19. Have a tshirt drawing contest for the Month of the Military Child and make tshirts for the school to show their support.
20. Write letters or draw pictures and send to deployed family members. They “serve too” and would benefit from a class pick me up.
21. As a class service project to send thank you cards to a local military installation, a local veteran home or get well cards to service members in a local military hospital. Blue Skies of Texas (formerly Air Force Village) Debbie Zazeela, Life Enrichment Manager, BST East: (210) 568-5200, BST West: (210) 568-3296 Cell: (210) 725-8162 debbiezazeela@blueskiestx.org ; Wounded Warriors; Have a Drive to make a donation to Operation Homefront; Have a drive for a Cup of Joe for Joe
22. Salute to Military Children at Sporting Events - Have the announcer make a special announcement before, during or after sporting events recognizing all military children. Have them raise the flag, sing the National Anthem or recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
23. Work with your School Liaison Office and bring in Senior Leadership (Male & Female) as guest speakers in High School Classes
24. During the daily morning announcements acknowledging military such as:
 - a. Thanking military parents/faculty
 - b. Play music such as I'm Proud to be an American
 - c. Read a military poem
25. Do guidance lesson H is for Honor
26. Create Bulletin Board “What does HONOR mean to you...”
27. Designate a spirit week and have activities every day such as: Monday: Flag ceremony, Tuesday: wear red, white, and blue, Wednesday: Write a letter to thank a military person, etc...(Mon- Service Branch t-shirt, Tuesday Purple, Wed Orange for Unity
28. Invite neighboring JROTC to your campus for demonstration
29. Encourage leadership by military students in the planning and implementation of the activities.
30. Create a postcard with the banner design on one side; write your thanks and give to a military family, individually or in an assembly
31. At an assembly or recognition tea, give a certificate of thanks to each military child. Invite military leadership or principal or military parents to hand out the certificates to each child.
32. Invite military parents to visit in their children's classrooms or at an assembly.
33. Have students create “thank you” cards for class-room or main hall bulletin boards to support military children.
34. Tie yellow or purple ribbons, one per military child in the school, on a tree outside the school or attach on the walls of the lunchroom or main hallway
35. Create a Transition Center with flyers and other district, school, SLO resources, and community resources for parents and staff.
36. Recognize Month of Military Child in your community via district and/or school webpages, school newsletters, school, social media and community readerboards, encouraging the local paper to do an article.
37. Have students create a banner each year to hang at the school entrance, on the fence, in the commons or gym for the month.
38. Create and share your school's activities with parents, children, and community members! Tag us on social media Twitter: @jbsa_slo Facebook: JBSA School Liaison Office use hashtags #momc #milkids #PurpleUpTexas
39. Cafeteria serves Purple Foods during MOMC
40. Military Parade All students dress up in patriotic outfits and parade through the school; ending in the courtyard. Each grade level performs a song and the Principal delivers a short speech thanking the children and families for their service.

41. Invite students to participate in an Essay Contest to describe how they do or can better support this nation and its military community; winners could be recognized by installation leadership.
42. Bootcamp challenge – invited Active Duty volunteers to conduct various games with advisory classes (i.e., relay games, sit up challenges, etc.)
43. Door Decorating Contest – Theme – The Military Child – One winner per grade level – class would receive popcorn, or some kind of treat from PTSO.
44. “Purple Ball”: It's an evening that is all about the military child. The children dress up in their nicest clothes and The Active duty parent wear the dress uniform. There's music and food and fun. A photographer donated time and an 8x10 photo of the family. We had the Disney princesses and princes lead the procession in to the place where it was being held. If the parent was deployed we had volunteers in dress Uniform available to escort the child as they were announced.
45. Host a Military Art Fair: have students provide images of military life or experiences; winners could be acknowledged by installation leadership or Adopt-a-School partners
46. Host a military luncheon for active duty parents to have lunch with their children
47. Web Site Feature - Schools can promote the Month of the Military Child on their web sites. Provide links to sites that offer resources for military families.
48. Publicize Installation/Community Events - Use the school newsletter to publicize Month of the Military Child events and activities hosted by the installation/community. Look for ways schools can contribute to these celebrations (setting up an information or activity booth, having teachers volunteer at events and activities, etc.).
49. Host an Assembly for Month of the Military Child - Hold a school assembly honoring military children. Include a performance by the band. Have students write a poem about what it means to be a military child and select several student volunteers to read their poems.
50. Teachers Salute Military Children - Ask teachers at your school make a special project with their classes such as a picture frame, bookmark, journal, etc., that ties into the Month of the Military Child.