

# ON THE *move*<sup>®</sup>

the official magazine of the Military Child Education Coalition<sup>®</sup>



## THE GI BILL:

Benefits extend to family members. **Did you know?**  
Extensive Q&A inside...

### Learn about:

- The Army's School Behavioral Health Program
- Military Student Identifier
- Every Student Succeeds Act
- and more, *inside!*



# The Military Child Education Coalition



## VISION STATEMENT:

To serve as a model of positive leadership and advocacy for ensuring inclusive, quality educational opportunities for all military-connected children.

## MISSION STATEMENT:

To ensure inclusive, quality educational opportunities for all military-connected children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition.

## GOALS:

1. Provide responsive and relevant support systems, resources, and products.
2. Expand the MCEC outreach through engagement, advocacy, and partnerships.
3. Execute a strategic communications plan.
4. Build a strong, sustainable, and financially sound organization.

Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)  
is a GuideStar Silver Participant  
[www.guidestar.org/profile/74-2889416](http://www.guidestar.org/profile/74-2889416)



## FOLLOW US ONLINE!



[@MilitaryChild](https://twitter.com/MilitaryChild)



[Facebook.com/MilitaryChild](https://Facebook.com/MilitaryChild)



[YouTube.com/MilitaryChild](https://YouTube.com/MilitaryChild)



[MilitaryChild.org/blog](https://MilitaryChild.org/blog)



[flickr.com/MilitaryChild](https://flickr.com/MilitaryChild)



The Independent Charities Seal of Excellence is awarded to the members of Independent Charities of America and Local Independent Charities of America that have, upon rigorous independent review, been able to certify, document, and demonstrate on an annual basis that they meet the highest standards of public accountability, program effectiveness, and cost effectiveness. These standards include those required by the U.S. Government for inclusion in the Combined Federal Campaign, probably the most exclusive fund drive in the world. Of the 1,000,000 charities operating in the United States today, it is estimated that fewer than 50,000, or 5 percent, meet or exceed these standards, and, of those, fewer than 2,000 have been awarded this Seal.

Military Child Education Coalition®, MCEC®, and associated programs, institutes, trademarks and design elements are owned and licensed by the Military Child Education Coalition. TM/© 2016 Military Child Education Coalition. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction of this magazine, in whole or in part, is authorized with appropriate acknowledgment of the source.

### ON THE MOVE

Cindy Simerly, Executive Editor  
Dr. Mary Keller, President/CEO/Managing Editor  
Karen Kirk, Art Director  
Jessica Thibodeau, Editor  
Sarah Ricard, Technical Editor

# tableofcontents

## FEATURES

### Special Insert

#### College, Career and Life Readiness

Special report from MCEC's 2016 National Training Seminar Student 2 Student Summit



## 30

### One Amazing School

Oak Creek Academy, a year-round PK-12 school, emphasizes inclusion for all types of learners and provides on-site therapies.



 Denotes Science Advisory Board Member

## aboutthecover:

*I got the idea of transitioning camouflage to a flag from being at war or hard times to something with respect.*

Laina, Grade 6  
Virginia Beach Middle School, VA  
U.S. Navy



## WHAT ELSE IS INSIDE

### college and career readiness

-  4 Dual Enrollment
- 7 Q&A with Curtis Coy
- 12 Intentional Thought & Action

### mcec program growth

-  14 Parent to Parent Growth
- 16 If a Thing is Worth Doing...
- 18 Blind Wounds
- 20 Stepping Up to Lead

### challenges and support

-  21 New Resource for Military Caregivers
- 22 The Challenges of the Military Child
- 24 Connectivity: Important & Necessary
- 26 Understanding the Needs of Students from Military Families
- 28 Badge of Honor
- 29 Adolescents Function Better When Their Deployed Parents are Supportive from Afar
- 31 The Mission Never Ends
- 32 The Ultimate Project
- 34 Open Lines

### policies and partnerships

-  35 Stronger Together
- 36 A Partnership with 60 Schools... and Growing
- 38 Every Student Succeeds Act
- 40 Military Student Identifier

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

General (Ret) William Fraser, Chairman  
Brigadier General (Ret) Robert Gaylord,  
Vice Chairman/Treasurer  
Brigadier General (Ret) Earl Simms,  
Vice Chairman/Secretary  
Bruni Bradley, Vice Chairman  
Barbara Day, Vice Chairman  
Richard Lerner, PhD, Vice Chairman  
Robert Utley, Vice Chairman

### Members

Renee Bostick  
Cortez K. Dial, EdD  
The Honorable Chet Edwards  
Anne Haston  
Chief Master Sergeant (Ret) Denise Jelinski-Hall  
Kathy Killea  
Robert Muller, PhD  
Mary Claire Murphy  
Command Sergeant Major (Ret) Mark Ripka  
Ali Saadat  
Edward Van Buren  
Joyce Ward

### Members Emeriti

Cathy Franks  
General (Ret) Benjamin Griffin  
Dr. William Harrison  
Lieutenant General (Ret) Don Jones  
Dr. James Mitchell  
Kathleen O'Beirne  
Robert Ray  
Mary Jo Reimer  
Sandy Schwartz  
General (Ret) Thomas A. Schwartz  
Patricia Shinseki  
Lieutenant General (Ret) H.G. Taylor  
Zoe Trautman

## MCEC STAFF

Mary M. Keller, EdD

*President and Chief Executive Officer*

John L. Ballantyne

*Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer*

Cindy Simerly

*Vice President, Fund Development and Marketing*

Todd Garlick

*Vice President, Programs and Business Development*

Shellie M. Campos, PHR, SHRM-CP

*Director, Human Resources*

Lee Ann Deal, CFRE

*Director, Annual Giving*

Annette Farmer, JD

*Staff Counsel and Director, Contracting*

Jill Gaitens, EdD

*Director, Central and Coastal Virginia*

Juan Garcia, CPA

*Comptroller*

Larry Kruse, MS

*Membership & Member Benefits Coordinator*

David Lapan

*Senior Director, National Capital Region*

Daryl McLauchlin

*Chief Technology Officer*

Denise Montana

*Chief of Logistics and Retail*

Stacey Smith, PhD

*Director, Grants Management and Program Evaluations*



## « FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to this edition of *On The Move*. This is my first opportunity to let you know what an honor and pleasure it is to serve as Chairman of the Board for the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). Although I have not been in this current position long, I have been a huge supporter of MCEC for many years. I am well aware of the difference that MCEC is making in the lives of our military-connected children and could not be prouder of what you do - you are truly paying it forward.

Through moments of challenge and opportunity alike, we are anchored by a common mission to ensure inclusive, quality educational opportunities for all military-connected children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. As I look back at 2016 I can see that it has been a busy year and that MCEC has been very successful in accomplishing that mission. The highlight for me this last year was attending our National Training Seminar. I had the pleasure of meeting some truly outstanding teachers, superintendents and volunteers but can't begin to tell you how impressed I was with the children in attendance. It was obvious that what MCEC is doing is making an impactful and positive difference for our military-connected children now and into the future.

As we look forward to 2017 we will not be without our challenges. I am confident that we will not only meet these challenges head on but succeed in turning them into opportunities. MCEC will continue to be a model of positive leadership and a strong advocate for ensuring inclusive, quality educational opportunities for all our military-connected children.

Thank you all for what you do!

With my deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William M. Fraser III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and "F".

William M Fraser III

General, USAF (Ret)

*Chairman, Military Child Education Coalition*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT »



At MCEC, we work diligently each day to ensure military and veteran-connected children are college, workforce, and life-ready. What skills do military students need to make them college ready? What can post-secondary schools do to ensure graduates are well-prepared as they enter the workforce? How do extended GI Bill benefits impact Veterans' children? We sat down with the VA Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity, Curtis L. Coy, (page 7) to answer many of these questions.

Our mission is to help military and veteran-connected children affected by high mobility, transitions, and family separations. To accomplish this, we advocate for children at the national, state, and local levels to ensure their educational needs are recognized and appropriate support is provided. We are almost at the one-year mark of the inclusion of a military student identifier in the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, which you can learn more about on pages 36 and 38. Leaders are working hard to collect and interpret data to improve the way military students are educated.

After celebrating Veterans day last month, we are all reminded of the sacrifices our Veterans and their families have made for our country. Our new course, *Supporting Veterans' Children through Transitions*, generously funded by the Bob Woodruff Foundation, has resonated with our audiences. One military spouse and mother, Elizabeth, candidly shares with us the challenges her family faces with her husband's Post-Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury (page 30). "What may look like ADHD or ADD to educational professionals might actually be anxiety, stress, depression, anger, etc. We have found that second-hand PTS is a ripple effect in our home and for many in the military," shared Elizabeth. She attended our National Training Seminar and the new *Supporting Veterans'* course and was overwhelmed by the amount of resources the course offered her family. It's families like Elizabeth's that keep us working hard to identify new and developing resources.

We thank our students, parents, professionals, and advocates for sharing their work and stories with us. They help us continue our vision to *Advocate, Educate, and Collaborate...* and to *Serve the Children of Those Who Serve Us All*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary M. Keller".

Dr. Mary M. Keller  
President and CEO, Military Child Education Coalition



### MCEC OFFICE

(254) 953-1923 • (254) 953-1925 (fax)  
909 Mountain Lion Circle  
Harker Heights, Texas 76548  
info@MilitaryChild.org

### NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mrs. Charlene Austin  
The Honorable Valerie Baldwin  
Mrs. Patricia "Tosh" Barron  
The Honorable Carolyn H. Becraft  
Mr. Douglas Belair  
General (Ret) and Mrs. B.B. Bell (Katie)  
Ms. Dona Bushong  
The Honorable and Mrs. John Carter (Erika)  
Mr. Ed Casey  
General (Ret) and Mrs. George Casey (Sheila)  
General (Ret) and Mrs. Peter Chiarelli (Beth)  
Lieutenant General (Ret) and Mrs. Kurt Cichowski (Laura)  
Mr. Mike Cohen  
Dr. Dan Domenech  
Admiral (Ret) and Mrs. Walter Doran (Ginny)  
Mrs. Lea Ann Edwards  
General (Ret) and Mrs. Larry R. Ellis (Jean)  
Ms. Lucy Fitch  
Lieutenant General (Ret) and Mrs. Phil Ford (Kris)  
General (Ret) Tommy R. Franks  
Vice Admiral (Ret) and Mrs. William French (Monika)  
Command Sergeant Major (Ret) and Mrs. William J. Gainey (Cindy)  
The Honorable Pete Geren  
Mr. Roy Gibson  
The Honorable Robert L. Gordon III  
Major General (Ret) and Mrs. Mark R. Hamilton (Patty)  
Lieutenant General (Ret) Charles R. Heflebower  
Mr. David G. Henry  
Rear Admiral (Ret) and Mrs. Leendert Hering (Sharon)  
General (Ret) James T. Hill and Dr. Toni Hill  
Lieutenant General (Ret) and Mrs. William Ingram (Lil)  
Major General (Ret) and Mrs. Robert Ivany (Marianne)  
Lieutenant General (Ret) and Mrs. Darrell Jones (Holly)  
Mr. Gary Knell  
Mr. Luke Knittig  
General (Ret) and Mrs. Leon J. LaPorte (Judy)  
General (Ret) and Mrs. David McKiernan (Carmen)  
General (Ret) and Mrs. Craig McKinley (Cheryl)  
Mr. Drayton McLane, Jr.  
General (Ret) and Mrs. Duncan McNabb (Linda)  
Lieutenant General (Ret) and Mrs. Thomas Metz (Pam)  
Major General (Ret) and Mrs. Paul Mock (Karen)  
General (Ret) and Mrs. Richard Myers (Mary Jo)  
The Honorable James Peake and Mrs. Peake (Janice)  
The Honorable Danny Pummill  
General (Ret) Dennis J. Reimer  
Mr. Matthew Rogers  
General (Ret) and Mrs. Norton Schwartz (Suzie)  
General (Ret) and Mrs. Henry H. Shelton (Carolyn)  
Mr. James Shelton  
Lieutenant General (Ret) Stephen M. Speakes  
Lieutenant General (Ret) George J. Trautman III  
Dr. P. Uri Treisman  
Ms. Kirsten White



# DUAL ENROLLMENT:

## Public Postsecondary Institutions Required to Accept Credits

This database indicates whether public two- and four-year institutions other than the institution at which the student earned postsecondary credit are required to accept postsecondary credits earned through dual enrollment programs.

### WHAT THESE RESPONSES MEAN:

**YES:** state policy requires dual enrollment credits to be treated for transfer credit in the same manner as credits earned at the receiving institution, or requires dual enrollment courses to be included in a statewide guaranteed transfer list recognized by all public two- and four-year institutions in a state.

**NO:** Public postsecondary institutions are not required to accept postsecondary credits earned through dual enrollment programs.

**UNCLEAR:** State policy does not appear to address whether public postsecondary institutions must accept postsecondary credits earned through dual enrollment.

### WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Dual enrollment courses live up to their potential when end-of-course measures ensure the level of content is equal to that of traditional postsecondary courses. If courses meet rigorous criteria yet students are denied postsecondary credit, the value of dual enrollment as an option for students to save money and time to degree is negated.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Twenty-five states require all public two- and four-year institutions to accept college credits earned through dual enrollment programs.
- Fifteen states and the District of Columbia do not require public postsecondary institutions to accept dual enrollment courses for transfer credit.
- In four states, public postsecondary institutions must recognize credit earned through one state program, but are not required to recognize credit earned through another state program.
- Policies in six states are unclear or silent on this issue.

### METHODOLOGY:

This information was collected from state statutes, rules and regulations, and state education agency Web sites. A profile was sent to each state for review and modification, as needed.

Last updated: March 2016. This database was compiled by Jennifer Dounay Zinth: 303.299.3689 or jzinth@ecs.org.

### CALIFORNIA:

Both programs: **UNCLEAR**

However, 2015 A.B. 288 creating the College and Career Access Pathways partnership includes statements of legislative intent that (1) allowing a greater and more varied segment of high school pupils to take community college courses could provide numerous benefits to both the pupils and the state, such as increasing the number of community college students who transfer and complete a degree, and (2) dual enrollment partnerships, school districts and community college districts could create clear pathways of aligned, sequenced coursework that would allow students to more easily and successfully transition to for-credit, college-level coursework leading to an associate degree, transfer to the University of California or the California State University, or to a program leading to a career technical education credential or certificate.



### COLORADO:

**YES, provided a course is a gtPathways (Guaranteed Transfer) course**



Students who complete a state guaranteed general education course with a C- or higher will receive transfer credits applied to graduation requirements in all majors at all public institutions unless a specific statewide articulation agreement exists. More than

500 lower-division general education courses in 20 subject areas are approved for guaranteed transfer.

**FLORIDA:****YES**

Any course that has a statewide numbering system number must be accepted by Florida public institutions as if the course were taken at their institution. Private institutions are eligible but not required to participate in the statewide course numbering system.

The department of education must develop a statement on transfer guarantees to inform students and their parents, prior to enrollment in a dual enrollment course, of the potential for the dual enrollment course to articulate as an elective or a general education course into a postsecondary education certificate or degree program. The statement must be provided to each district school superintendent, for inclusion in the information provided to all secondary students and their parents as required above. The statement may also include additional information, including dual enrollment options, guarantees, privileges, and responsibilities.

A university designated as a preeminent state research university may require its incoming first-time-in-college to take a 9- to-12-credit set of unique courses specifically determined by the university and published on the university's website. The university may stipulate that credit for such courses may not be earned through any acceleration mechanism, including dual enrollment.

**GEORGIA:****YES**

A January 2012 agreement identifies the general education courses that University System of Georgia (USG) and Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) institutions will accept for transfer between their respective regionally accredited institutions. These courses are to transfer between USG and

TCSG institutions regardless of whether a student was a high school student when completing the course.

**HAWAII:****YES**

All dual credit course credits that would otherwise be transferable but for a student's grade level, must be transferable to any University of Hawaii system degree granting institution.

**KANSAS:****YES**

Public postsecondary institutions are required to accept courses approved by the board of regents for guaranteed transfer. As of April 2016, the list includes 66 courses, with additions occurring each year on the recommendation of a statewide Transfer & Articulation Council. This guaranteed transfer extends to courses on the list taken through a Concurrent Enrollment Partnership. A full list of approved courses is available at [kansasregents.org](http://kansasregents.org).

**MARYLAND:****NO****NORTH CAROLINA:****YES**

Career & College Promise has developed a college transfer pathway (CTP) with two separate track options one of courses leading to the Associate in Arts and another of courses leading to the Associate in Science. Courses in each of the transfer pathways consist of Universal General Education Transfer Components (UGETC), as specified in the 2014 North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement and as such, must be recognized as transfer credit by all public two- and four-year institutions in the state.

CTE courses from CTE pathways may transfer to individual universities/colleges if a local/bi-lateral transfer articulation agreement between the community college and university/college has been established.

**OKLAHOMA:****YES**

The State System has a course equivalency matrix that allows students to see how a course will transfer among institutions. The institutions are committed to honoring this agreement.



**TENNESSEE:**  
YES

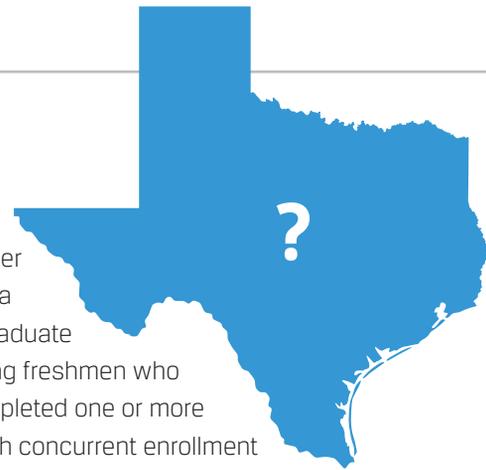
**Dual Credit:** Students who pass dual credit challenge exams earn college credit accepted by all Tennessee public postsecondary institutions.

**Dual Enrollment:** Courses listed in the Tennessee Transfer Pathways are recognized for transfer credit by all Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) institutions. Courses listed as general ed. typically meet all TBR institutions' requirements; the link identifies those recognized only at specific institutions.

A peer institution (i.e., four-year, two-year, or college of applied technology) must award the student credit for a dual credit course if the student passes the course's challenge examination with a score equal to or higher than the cut score required by the institution. However, each higher education institution awarding the credit determines whether the class credit is applied toward a major or the requirements of a specific program, or as an elective. A postsecondary institution may also set the cut score on the challenge examination results that is required for the award of credit in a major or a specific program or as an elective at the institution.

Participating high schools and postsecondary institutions developing unique dual credit or dual enrollment opportunities (outside statewide courses) must notify students prior to such dual credit course being taught of the availability of transfer of the course.

Private postsecondary institutions are encouraged to assess the statewide agreement produced by the consortium and determine which courses, if any, qualify for award of college credit at the institution. If a private institution determines a course qualifies for award of college credit, the institution, in addition to any institutional publication made of this fact, may notify the department of education of the potential for award of college credit for such course at the institution, for the department to disseminate this information to LEAs for notification of high school students.

**TEXAS:**  
UNCLEAR

Each institution of higher education must adopt a policy to grant undergraduate course credit to entering freshmen who have successfully completed one or more courses offered through concurrent enrollment in high school and at an institution of higher education. Policy does not specify whether credit must be applied toward an institution's general core or major requirements, or may only be awarded for elective credit.

**UTAH:**  
YES

Statute directs the State Board of Education and the State Board of Regents to coordinate to establish a concurrent enrollment course approval process that ensures credit awarded for concurrent enrollment is consistent and transferable to all institutions of higher education. Statute also requires an institution of higher education to accept concurrent enrollment credits on the same basis as credits earned by a full- or part-time student enrolled at the institution.

**VIRGINIA:**  
NO**WASHINGTON:****Running Start: YES**

Running Start courses in the general transfer agreement are recognized in the same manner as traditional postsecondary courses. **HOWEVER**, each public institution in the state varies in general distribution requirements.

**College in the High School: Not set in state policy**

Reprinted with permission from the Education Commission of the States: <http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/MBQuestRTL?Rep=DE1514>



# Q&A WITH CURTIS COY

Veterans Affairs Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity



1.

## What level of support is there to extending GI Bill benefits to Veterans' children?

VA education benefits are not limited to Veterans and Servicemembers. There are several programs that provide education benefits to family members. Depending on the Veteran's status, family members may qualify for one of two VA education programs: *Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship* or *Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance Program (DEA)*. Last fiscal year, over 2,500 spouses and children took advantage of the Fry Scholarship, and over 91,000 took advantage of DEA. Family members may also qualify for Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits through a Department of Defense (DoD) administered program known as Transfer of Entitlement. Since its inception, approximately 23% of all Post 9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries are spouses and children.

Fry Scholarship is available to children and spouses of Servicemembers who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. In 2014, the Choice Act extended the Fry Scholarship to spouses, and the VA began accepting applications for spouses just four months after the President signed the law. The Fry Scholarship is a fairly comprehensive benefit – equivalent to the Post-9/11 GI Bill – that provides eligible beneficiaries with 36 months of coverage for tuition and fees at a public in-state institution, a monthly housing allowance for those attending more than half-time, and a books and supplies stipend. For those using the Fry Scholarship at a private or foreign school, tuition and fees are capped at a maximum amount that is adjusted yearly.

DEA provides 45 months of education benefits to eligible dependents of Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or of Veterans who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition. DEA provides a flat monthly amount based on the student's rate of pursuit.

Transfer of Entitlement provides valuable assistance to dependents of Servicemembers. The transferability option under the Post-9/11 GI Bill allows active duty Servicemembers to transfer all or some unused benefits to their spouse or dependent children. Once DoD approves the transfer, beneficiaries will apply with the VA to utilize those benefits. The benefits are equivalent to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and the Servicemember determines how many months they wish to transfer.

SINCE ITS INCEPTION,  
APPROXIMATELY

**23%** OF ALL  
POST 9/11 GI BILL  
BENEFICIARIES ARE  
SPOUSES &  
CHILDREN.



2.

**Every business is looking for new recruits: new talent to sustain and grow their organization. What may have changed in the type of individual companies look for in today's business environment compared to, say, twenty years ago? What can post-secondary schools do to ensure newest recruits are well prepared to succeed as they enter the workforce?**

Today's employer is looking for a mix of particular education, soft skills, and experience as the workplace has evolved to sustain more complex environments and the need to satisfy both the goals of the employer and what the employee is looking for in a job. As the child of a military parent, I think it's important to recognize that by the very nature of living a military life, military-connected children possess many qualities, such as adaptability and resiliency, which make them marketable to employers.

In the information-based economy of today, businesses are looking for individuals with a degree. Throughout the economy, occupations that require a college degree are growing twice as fast as others. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), a non-profit organization that links college career placement offices with employers, reported in 2015 that the type of education does matter and that the three degrees most in demand were business, engineering, and computer and information sciences.

Businesses are also looking for individuals with skills that go beyond degrees, certification, and licensure. They are looking for well-rounded individuals. The most sought out soft skills are communication (at the top of the list), teamwork, taking the initiative, punctuality, critical thinking, social skills, creativity, interpersonal communication, adaptability, and having a friendly personality. Many military-connected children possess or have developed these skills since they have had to constantly adapt to new environments. Employers

are also looking to reduce their training expenses by hiring candidates with relevant experience.

Post-secondary schools can assist students with having a higher chance for success entering the workforce by providing opportunities and encouraging students to gain practical experience through practicums, internships, and extracurricular activities. They can also incorporate problem-based and experiential learning into their curriculum which directly requires students to access, evaluate, and communicate information, use technology, and work effectively in groups.

Many post-secondary schools have Student Veteran Centers that military and Veteran-connected children should be encouraged to access. Student Veteran Centers support student Veterans and/or their family members by coordinating their academic, financial, physical, and social needs. Students should also take advantage of their career centers on campus. Career centers help prepare students for life after graduation by advising on writing resumes, building a network, and developing interviewing skills. Additionally, due to the advances in social media, instruction on using LinkedIn as a marketing tool as well as a way to establish connections, develop relationships, and research companies has become key to preparing students in today's workforce. Ultimately, the best approach is one of team work, where there is collaboration in multiple ways involving the students, schools, and employers to optimally prepare students to succeed.

3.

**There is quite a bit of talk about the employment gap for "middle skills" (skills that require specialized training beyond HS and/or an associate's degree — tech jobs in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, tech, IT, etc.). There are LOTS of these jobs available, but not enough qualified people to fill them. What are your thoughts on what post-secondary schools can be doing to address this challenge?**

There is a need to create a smart pipeline of ready talent to fill positions within the middle skills area, which helps create opportunities for military spouses and military children. This means that post-secondary institutions need to establish relationships with communities and employers to foster programs that drive student interest and offer preparation in the way of real life experience.

VA education benefits can not only be used to pursue higher education but also job training opportunities. Programs such

as apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and classwork that are integrated into real life work situations are essential in providing candidates that are ready to fill middle skills jobs. But schools can't do this alone. It requires the commitment of employers to open their organizations to these programs and create incentives for students. It takes active partnerships between schools, communities, and employers to incentivize interest and provide pathways for students to reach those positions.



4.

## Military and Veteran-connected children experience transition, mobility, and family separation – what might schools do to ensure these children are properly supported?

Many schools have Student Veteran Centers that provide resources to Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families. Some schools also benefit from programs like VA's **VetSuccess On Campus (VSOC)**, which aims to help Servicemembers, Veterans, and all eligible VA beneficiaries succeed and thrive through a coordinated delivery of on-campus benefits assistance and counseling, leading to completion of their education and preparing them to enter the labor market in viable careers. VSOC Counselors provide community and on-campus outreach, communication with VA beneficiaries to address questions regarding VA education benefits, health services, and general VA benefits, as well as educational and career counseling.

In addition to on-campus resources, the GI Bill website offers tools for all VA education beneficiaries, including spouses and children. The **GI Bill Comparison Tool**, **CareerScope**, **GI Bill Feedback System**, and **Choosing A School Guide** eases the transition and provide Veterans and their family members the tools to make an informed decision about their VA education benefits. We maintain websites specifically tailored to assist schools in better serving the military population. We host webinars providing school certifying officials and other appropriate personnel guidance on how to best serve our beneficiaries.

The **President's Principles of Excellence (POE)** program was designed to ensure that student Veterans, Servicemembers, and family members have information, support, and protections while using federal education benefits. Educational institutions participating in the POE program agree to uphold the following:

- Provide students with a personalized form covering the total cost of an education program.
- Provide educational plans for all military and Veteran education beneficiaries.
- End fraudulent and aggressive recruiting techniques and misrepresentations.
- Accommodate Servicemembers and Reservists absent due to service requirements.
- Designate a point of contact to provide academic and financial advice.
- Ensure accreditation of all new programs prior to enrolling students.
- Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV, which governs the administration of federal student financial aid programs.

POE status can be verified using our GI Bill Comparison Tool.





5.

What do you think is the biggest challenge facing military and Veteran-connected children today? And what do you believe is the best way to address that challenge? What advice would you give these children in facing and dealing with said challenge?

Many military and Veteran-connected children have grown up on or around military installations. Often times they are not exposed to diverse occupations and sectors because much of their life revolves around the military community. Because of this, it's often a bigger challenge for these children to identify what they want to do when they grow up. It is also atypical of most kids to know exactly what type of occupation they want to pursue when they get out of school.

**CareerScope** on the GI Bill website is a tool that military and Veteran-connected children can use to indicate interests and aptitudes and may help steer them in one particular direction or another. I would encourage children to utilize **CareerScope**

or seek out other tools to measure interest and aptitudes. They should also take advantage of networking opportunities such as career fairs, career websites, and social media to broaden their awareness of various occupations and fields.

Additionally, for those who have an idea of what they would like to pursue, I would encourage them to use their VA education benefits to take advantage of apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities. Apprenticeships and on-the-job training can not only help gauge one's aptitudes and interests for a particular field, but also provide a structured, proven path for obtaining valuable skills that serve as a foundation for a successful career.

6.

What important skills and traits do you hope military and Veteran-connected children will gain that will make them college and career ready?

I would argue that military and Veteran-connected children already possess many skills and traits that make them college and career ready. By the very nature of what military and Veteran-connected children go through, such as moving from base to base and transitioning from one community to the next, they become highly adaptable and tend to possess a lot of the soft skills that schools and employers are looking for.

Military kids feel the same sense of mission and accomplishment as their parents, in knowing that they are going to school leveraging the benefits that their mom and dad have so proudly earned. This also gives them a sense of purpose to ensure that they use those benefits.

## CURTIS COY

*Curtis (Curt) L. Coy was appointed to be the first Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity in the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on May 9, 2011. In this role, Mr. Coy oversees all education benefits (GI Bill), Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment for wounded warriors and disabled Veterans, Loan Guaranty Service (VA home loans), and strategic initiatives to improve economic outcomes for Veterans and their families. These programs work collectively to assist Veterans in achieving personal and economic success.*

Two MCEC Professional Development Online Training Courses:

# The Journey from “Welcome Home” to Now: Reunion, Reconnecting, Routine™

ONLINE

The Journey from “Welcome Home” to Now is an online learning platform which teaches professionals who support military-connected children and youth the challenges and joys that children face during a time of reintegration.



## Learning Outcomes:

- ▶ Identify potential reintegration stressors and their implications for the child and family structure
- ▶ Differentiate structures that support children and youth during reintegration and those which strengthen or impede the ability to thrive
- ▶ Integrate positive strategies which develop strength in children and youth during the reintegration phase
- ▶ Identify the importance of service and “giving back” in the lives of children and youth as an important trait to develop

## Helping Military Children Discover Their



**Strength • Potential • Aspirations  
Resourcefulness • Confidence™**

S.P.A.R.C. is an online learning platform which provides participants with the knowledge needed to prepare young people to develop hardiness skills to meet personal and professional goals through identification of their sparks and interests while developing a growth mindset.

## Learning Outcomes:

- ▶ Learn what it means to thrive and understand the role of caring adults in helping children reach their full potential.
- ▶ Interpret current research on thriving and examine a specific four-step process to help adults support youth.
- ▶ Network with colleagues to develop strategies for promoting thriving attributes in children and youth.



Visit [MilitaryChild.org](http://MilitaryChild.org)  
for Upcoming Dates

### Training costs:

Journey: \$130.00 per participant  
SPARC: \$67.99 per participant

Sponsored by Military Child Education Coalition

Upon completion of the training  
(8 clock hours - Journey, 6 clock hours - SPARC)  
participants may apply for continuing education credits  
for a fee of \$25.00. CE credit applications must be received  
within 12 months from the completion of the training.

For additional information visit:  
[www.MilitaryChild.org/professionals/programs/  
continuing-education-graduate-credit](http://www.MilitaryChild.org/professionals/programs/continuing-education-graduate-credit)



Provider #: 6283



Provider #: 1307336

Register at: [www.MilitaryChild.org/training](http://www.MilitaryChild.org/training)

For more information about these trainings, other professional development opportunities, or support, please contact:

**Myriam Virella at [Myriam.Virella@militarychild.org](mailto:Myriam.Virella@militarychild.org)  
militarychild.org or (254) 953-1923 x 1119**

**Military Child Education Coalition**

909 Mountain Lion Circle • Harker Heights, Texas 76548 • (254) 953-1923 • [www.MilitaryChild.org](http://www.MilitaryChild.org)



# Intentional Thought & Actions

*Ensuring my daughter was okay during my deployment led to a study to better prepare youth for adulthood*

LT. COL. CASEY MINER, EdD



**Our families** often, really, suffer much greater disruption and emotional distress than us service members who mobilize in support of operations around the world. As my family prepared for my deployment to Afghanistan, my wife and I realized that the timing would cause me to miss my daughter's entire second grade year.

We decided upon notification of my deployment to take an active role in our daughter's well-being for our year apart. We chose as a family to do whatever we could to make life as normal as possible for her, even though she would be the only student in her school to have a parent absent for the whole year. As an Army Reserve soldier, we lived in a city that did not have a military population and did not have families that had personal connections to military service.

When we brought our daughter to school on that first day in fall and met with her teacher, we scheduled time to explain that I would be deployed all year and asked for her support. We asked that she keep an eye out for changes in behavior and explained some emotions that our

daughter may exhibit at different times during the year.

Everyone my wife met was very supportive and understanding, and she was very honest with them. I

believe part of her own success with my absence was her active choice to surround herself with a community of women who supported her and my daughter. They chose to become active in the school through a running club, PTA, Girl Scouts, and other activities when time allowed between hectic schedules. Becoming involved took effort on their part and wasn't easy at first. But, participating in the activities became routine and easier as time went on, and their community – both inside the school and with outside friends – regularly asked for updates and asked how they were doing. They both initiated that communication, and their willingness to be transparent really allowed others to join their journey while I was gone.

In the end, I feel that I didn't really miss much of our daughter's second grade year. I was able to be part of many of her events, and she was able to remain in regular communication with me. I made a conscious effort to be

---

**...our youth need real-world, out of classroom experiences that have responsibility and accountability connected to it.**

---

a voice she could hear in the morning before school or before going to bed as much as possible. Advances in communication, for most units and locations, really

make regular contact with family members much easier. I was also able to maintain a close relationship with my wife and share life with her as we went through the year.

---

*Lieutenant Colonel Casey Miner is currently an interagency fellow with the United States Agency for International Development, covering programs and educational issues in Central Asia to bring children out of poverty.*



## Practices that worked well during our deployment:

- » I emailed periodic letters to the teacher for her to print for my daughter.
- » We kept an emergency phone in my daughter's backpack, and I would maintain contact with the teacher if I wanted to call or if she recommended that I call.
- » I Skyped into the classroom periodically to talk about subjects and events.
- » My wife would Facetime with me during plays, musicals, and Back-to-School night.
- » I planned getaways, retreats, and special events for my wife and daughter within our budget.
- » My son took our daughter to the father-daughter dance, and my father took her to the father-daughter breakfast.
- » My wife scheduled play dates for both her and our daughter.
- » I kept the teacher updated on my situation, and she kept me updated with how my daughter was doing, often detailing her interactions and projects.
- » I sent my wife and daughter small gifts and handwritten letters and also Facetimed with them.
- » I trained in resilience and regularly reviewed the skills with my family.
- » We had a strong faith that kept us positive and gave us strength.
- » I surrounded myself with committed men, and we regularly met to share our experiences.
- » Both my wife and daughter attended scheduled Yellow Ribbon events.

**WE REALIZE THAT OTHER FAMILIES** may not have the same demographics we had during our deployment, but these practices can be replicated with intentional thought and actions.

My relationship with my daughter's school culminated in an agreement with the district superintendent, who I met when I came home and surprised my daughter on her first day of third grade. I just wanted to grab my daughter and go home, but my wife correctly identified that having me surprise her in front of her friends and those parents who could attend brought closure for all who were on this journey with us. All of my daughter's friends recognized me and hugged me like an old friend. It was a really special moment for everyone involved, and I have been thankful ever since for following my wife's advice.

As I redeployed home, I began my second year of a doctorate program at UCLA in education. I had been contemplating how to structure a study on better preparing youth for adulthood. I had read and seen how business leaders, college administrators, and students themselves were realizing more that graduating seniors, regardless of demographics or academic standing, were not ready for the rigors of the real world.

I met with the district superintendent, and we discussed developing a pilot program for seniors at the high school to get real-world experiences. We

focused the study to ensure **skills development, adult mentorship**, and a **self-directed opportunity for accountability**. Major findings included that students often overestimated their skill levels conceptually with little or no practical experience, and students could not believe how much responsibility the opportunity gave them, often changing or confirming post high school pathway choices.

The study and the progression for the students were not easy. The study took a lot of effort from teachers, site mentors, and other involved adults to institutionalize best practices for an effective work-based program. But, **for parents reading this article, there is no doubt in research and from my study findings that our youth need real-world, out of classroom experiences that have responsibility and accountability connected to it.** Regardless of what pathway your child chooses post high school, connecting conceptual knowledge to practical application will better prepare youth for the rigors of adulthood. Failures, struggles, and stressors are important parts of the journey, and every student in my study was grateful upon reflection for the knowledge and experience gained from the opportunities to struggle and grow.

My deployment was an incredible year that led to even more opportunities to help our youth. I believe that our positive attitudes and intentional behavior were the keys to success.



# MCEC Parent to Parent Growth



MCEC conducted a *Parent to Parent* Training event at headquarters this summer with new and returning trainers in attendance. Parent educators received the latest information on the *Parent to Parent* program and got an opportunity to observe workshops, learn about new policies and procedures, and practice the craft of workshop preparation and delivery.

### **Parent to Parent teams are now in place in the following communities:**

- > El Paso, TX (Fort Bliss)
- > Killeen, TX (Fort Hood)
- > Tampa, FL (MacDill AFB)
- > Enterprise, AL (Fort Rucker)
- > Montgomery, AL (Maxwell-Gunter AFB)
- > Phenix City, AL (Fort Benning)
- > Pensacola, FL (Pensacola NAS/ Escambia County)
- > Abilene, TX (Dyess AFB)
- > Greater San Antonio, TX





The MCEC *Parent to Parent* program gives parents resources that help them become their child's best advocate on educational and social/emotional concerns. When the parent is informed and equipped to help their student, the student will have a better chance at success.



These teams are funded through state comprehensive support plans that address educational needs for military-connected children by placing support structures in the communities and schools near military installations with high densities of military families. The goal is to provide a network of professionals, educators, and parents who have the tools necessary to enable each military-connected child to not only succeed, but thrive throughout their educational careers.

## Maintaining Routine THROUGH Challenging Times

Being a mother and a wife can be hard work at times, which can be exacerbated when part of a military family. A wounded spouse compounds those challenges. "It's sometimes hard with all the uncertainty, but having MCEC programs and materials to rely on has been a big help," according to Beatrice Munoz, a spouse of a medically retired wounded Veteran.

Beatrice has been to a number of *Parent to Parent* workshops and *Tell Me A Story* events at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, learning strategies to help her family. "We are a busy military family and we are on the go a lot. Keeping up with homework is never easy," shared Beatrice. She attended the "Tackling Homework Hassles" workshop where

she learned about the "homework box," which has become a family staple. Many times Beatrice and her family run errands or attend appointments after school, so she keeps a homework box filled with school supplies in the car so her children can do homework on the go. Beatrice says the homework box is "just an example of the easy, important

*She appreciates the chance to expose her children to literacy events and "unplug from the TV."*

tips we get from the *Parent to Parent* workshops. They also share information on local learning opportunities and how to keep our kids learning over the summer and on school breaks."

Beatrice's children enjoy the MCEC *Tell Me A Story* events and love

getting a copy of the book and activities when they leave. She appreciates the chance to expose her children to literacy events and "unplug from the TV." She continues, "As a military family, with a soldier injured during combat, it is often stressful trying to juggle everything and keep a sense of normalcy for the

children. Having the tips and ideas that I have learned in the *Parent to Parent* workshops and the *Tell Me A Story* events has helped me maintain a routine with my kids and has helped them develop their love for reading and learning."



# If a thing is worth doing...

LEAH P.  
Falcon High School Graduate and S2S Alumni



In his book *What's Wrong with the World*, G.K. Chesterton states, "If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly." Chesterton does not intend to suggest that if saving lives is worthwhile, we should run around with no medical knowledge trying to save lives, or that if our room needs cleaning, it is okay to clean it poorly. Instead, what he implies is it is okay to do them poorly because it is more important that we engage in behaviors deemed important, even if we do them badly, rather than not do them at all.

Until freshman year, I was living in a manner captured in the motto, "If a thing is worth doing, I should avoid it and someone else can do it instead, because I am not the right person to be doing this thing." What changed my version of this quote is a group I joined my freshman year after hearing numerous testimonies from my older sister. The group, *Student 2 Student*, is dedicated to helping new students who enroll throughout the year transition to Falcon High School. When students come in, they are paired with a *Student 2 Student* member who shows them around, takes them to their classes, and eats lunch with them.

In my mind, I was the poster child for the opposite type of person I believed belonged in this group. I was not keen on moving from my comfort zone, quite introverted, and

---

**It was an opportunity to grow weak skills and to have fun**

---

terrible at small talk. Regardless, I joined the group. It was an opportunity to grow weak skills and to have fun, or at least that was the way I regarded it.

After a semester in the group, I had the opportunity to become a core leader and plan and run events. Although

I never pictured myself as a leader, I knew it was an opportunity

I could not ignore. During my first day as a leader, the foremost thought running through my head was, "What have I gotten myself into?" Three years later, I know. I involved myself in a lot of good.

As a leader, I needed to do what I like to call "put my mom pants on." Putting my metaphorical mom pants on meant I stopped doing what I wanted to do, which was to sit in the corner and let someone else lead. Instead, I started thinking about what I needed to accomplish, forgetting about my fears and getting the job done. By getting my mom pants on, I viewed *Student 2 Student* from a different perspective. It was no longer

something to just do but became purposeful as a platform to give back and serve others.

Due to the multiple military bases in

Colorado Springs, the majority of students who transfer to Falcon High School are military children. I view assisting these military children as a way to give back to the military community. New students no longer have to worry about finding their classes alone or who they will eat lunch with and instead can focus in class since they know they have someone looking out for them. They can go home and tell their parents their transition is going well, and their parents now have one less thing to worry about.

Additionally, *Student 2 Student* opened my eyes to the good that small actions bring. When I shared little details about Falcon with new students, I observed the positive impact that resulted. I shared where the best water fountain is, what stairs

*When one person  
whether it  
others become*



A Military Child Education Coalition® Initiative

are the least crowded, and that the Social Studies teachers will throw your food or drink away if it comes anywhere near their classrooms – especially if it is a blended coffee drink that comes from a famous coffee shop chain. These minor things were just as essential as guiding them to and from their classes, and it showed them

I genuinely cared. Since these seemingly

little things had as much of an impact as the comparatively larger things had, why not do them more often?

The ideas I learned in *Student 2 Student* quickly became embedded into my lifestyle. I began to believe if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing often, and I should not wait for someone else to do it because I am able to do it, so I should. I helped anyone however I could, whether it was lending a pencil, giving a ride from practice, or donating to those in need.

When one person is doing something positive, whether it seems small or large, others become inspired. They are aware of the impact these actions have, and they desire to perform positive actions too. By inspiring others, we invoke change. If I live a life dedicated to helping others, others will be inspired to do the same. It is in all of us to be good and to do good. All the little acts of kindness compile to create a big impact. If I inspire even one person, who then inspires one person, and a chain reaction continues, eventually an entire community can be inspired to be more loving, more willing to help, and implement caring actions in their lives. With this building of

*is doing something positive,  
seems small or large,  
inspired.*

thoughtful acts, I realized that if a thing is worth doing, it is worth motivating others to do as well.

If I have the ability to create this kind of change, even if in one person's life, I can create a change in America. It may be a slight change, but it is still a change! It is still a positive action, and it is just the beginning. In order for America to become even better, it is vital that we all put our “mom pants” on and realize if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing to the degree each of us is capable, even if it is short of perfection, as more good will build from actions taken rather than actions pushed aside.

For more information about S2S, visit: [www.MilitaryChild.org/parents-and-students/programs/student-2-student](http://www.MilitaryChild.org/parents-and-students/programs/student-2-student)

[www.MilitaryChild.org](http://www.MilitaryChild.org)

## CALL FOR THE Arts!

**ATTENTION all military and veteran-connected kids K-12 (and their teachers and parents)!**

*Showcase your creativity!*

MCEC is looking for artwork, poetry, essays, photography, videography, or any artistic representation you'd like to feature. Your submission could be featured on the cover of our magazine, calendar, or in our traveling art exhibit.

*Submissions accepted  
now through January 2017.*



For more information, visit:  
[www.militarychild.org/parents-and-students/programs/the-call-for-the-arts](http://www.militarychild.org/parents-and-students/programs/the-call-for-the-arts)



# BLIND WOUNDS

**Not all wounds can be seen.** That goes for our Veterans and their families, too. Elizabeth’s husband suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) symptoms that make it difficult for her four children to interpret. “His symptoms are then internalized by our children,” shared Elizabeth. **“What may look like ADHD or ADD to educational professionals might actually be anxiety, stress, depression, anger, etc.** We have found that second-hand PTS is a ripple effect in our home and for many in the military.” Military and veteran-connected children are inherently resilient and Elizabeth’s children are no different. “They try not show their fears or weaknesses; they stay strong for their family and try to carry on.”



Elizabeth attended the 2016 National Training Seminar and participated in the *Serving Veterans’ Children through Transitions* course. During breakout sessions, participants were able to connect and learn more about each other. “I was impressed with the breakout sessions which helped to focus on the needs of military children, what signs to look for when struggles arise for them, and how to approach or handle those struggles,” shared Elizabeth.

After her group realized she was a mother of four children who all have special needs due to the second-hand

PTS, they wanted to learn about the resources her family was using and how they were working with the schools. As a military caregiver, Elizabeth knows how important it is for those who serve our military and veteran children “to take the time to listen to the kids, pull them aside and check in with them, ask about their home life and if there is anything they need,” explained Elizabeth. In turn, Elizabeth learned from the professionals in her group how to better advocate for her children and what her family can do to reach out to MCEC *Military Student Transition Consultants* (MSTC) in local schools

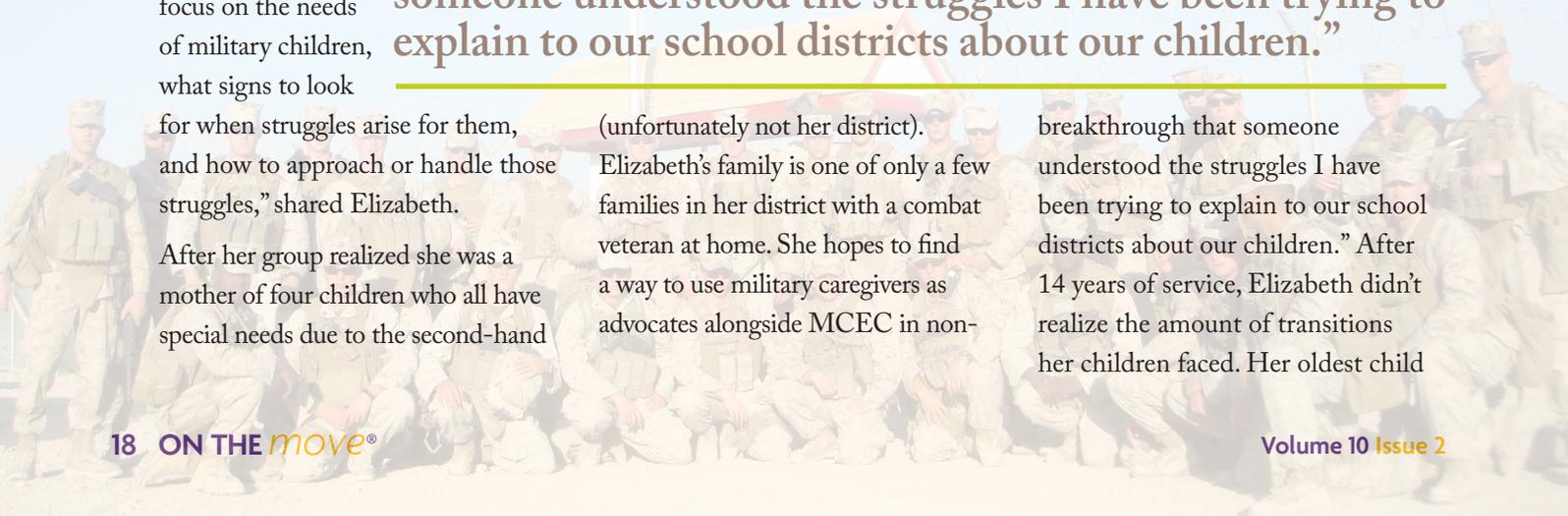
military communities to reach the military families that do live there. “To understand that MSTCs are available in many of the schools is wonderful to hear due to the need for advocacy for our brave young warriors.”

Elizabeth was overwhelmed at the amount of resources available to help her family. “Many of these services have been around for years, some for decades, that I along with many military families never knew existed,” explained Elizabeth. She expressed how impressed she was with the speakers and MSTCs at the National Training Seminar. “I felt a sense of relief, an emotional

**“I felt a sense of relief, an emotional breakthrough that someone understood the struggles I have been trying to explain to our school districts about our children.”**

(unfortunately not her district). Elizabeth’s family is one of only a few families in her district with a combat veteran at home. She hopes to find a way to use military caregivers as advocates alongside MCEC in non-

breakthrough that someone understood the struggles I have been trying to explain to our school districts about our children.” After 14 years of service, Elizabeth didn’t realize the amount of transitions her children faced. Her oldest child





went to seven schools by sixth grade; her twins attended four schools by third grade, and her youngest won't be transitioning like the others since they are no longer in the military. "The number of deployments and travel has created separation anxiety in all of the kids, and our oldest is the other caregiver to his father and siblings when I am not at home," shared Elizabeth. "MCEC taught me to consider everything our kids are faced with daily on top of the educational demands and to consider their needs a little deeper. I look forward to reaching out to an MSTC to help us coordinate with the schools our kids attend to better their quality of life and educational experience."

*Elizabeth Rotenberry is a 2015, Elizabeth Dole Foundation Fellow for Maryland.*



# Supporting Veterans' Children through Transitions



One-day course for **youth-serving educators, professionals, and parents**. Learn more about unique **transitional issues** children face when their parents separate from the military.



## Learning Objectives:

- ▶ **Explore** the academic and social-emotional implications for children and youth when their parents voluntarily or involuntarily transition from the military to civilian life.
- ▶ **Identify** needs for children and youth whose military-connected parents have died, been wounded, or have combat-related illnesses.
- ▶ **Discover** resources and integrate positive strategies to support Veterans' children.

## Visit [MilitaryChild.org](http://MilitaryChild.org) for Upcoming Dates



Participants receive the following resources during training:

- *Making Hope Happen: Create the Future You Want for Yourself and Others* by Shane J. Lopez
- *Start Where You Are: A Journal of Self-Exploration* by Meera Lee Patel
- *Grief Support for Military Children: A Guide for School Personnel* from Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
- "Changes" Growing, Learning, Understanding GLU Kit (MCEC Publication)

### Course Length

This course includes **6 clock hours** of instruction and interactive work time, exclusive of breaks and lunch.

Participants who complete this course are eligible for **6 clock hours of Continuing Education Credits (CEUs)**.

*This course was developed through a generous grant from the Bob Woodruff Foundation. The Military Child Education Coalition® solely exists to help the military and veteran-connected child thrive in the face of transition and separation.*

### Military Child Education Coalition

909 Mountain Lion Circle, Harker Heights, Texas 76548 • (254) 953-1923  
www.MilitaryChild.org • CFC #10261



# Stepping up to **LEAD**

## A family of Student to Student leaders



even teach.” S2S allows Freddie to develop the skills to achieve his greatest accomplishments. “The program has taught me how to be open and communicate with any type of person. To be able to step up in a situation where no one else wants to be a leader,” shared Freddie. “I attended a local booster training where I learned about the struggles of a military child and how they feel.”

The S2S team at Shoemaker High School in Killeen, Texas, is extremely involved in community service. They

for their school environment, the ability to develop leadership skills and be seen as a leader, and to learn to succeed on a national stage,” Central shared the reasons for encouraging his children to join S2S. **“They all influence each other and enjoy being a part of the organization.”**

College, career, and life readiness is important to Freddie’s parents. Central expressed the importance of opportunities like the MCEC National Training Seminar, which two of his children have already attended. “At

### Going into his fifth year

as a member, Freddie, a civilian student, was the third student in his family to join the MCEC *Student 2 Student* (S2S) program. For Freddie, joining the program was a natural move because of all the great experiences his siblings had. He also saw how well his siblings were doing in school, and he also wanted to do well. Once he got involved with S2S, however, he realized how much he had in common with the goals of the program.

In addition to S2S, Freddie is in band, football, track and field, and he is going to be running for class officer this year. He is also in all Advanced Placement classes this school year. Ultimately, Freddie wants to be a professional musician. “I play the tuba. I want to go to college and finish with a doctorate degree so I can be recognized, and

---

**“The program has taught me how to be open and communicate with any type of person. To be able to step up in a situation where no one else wants to be a leader.”**

---

adopted Elms Road and regularly clean up any litter on the road. The team helps out with school-sponsored events and any local service needs. Freddie spoke about making wreaths to put on graves. The team is also active in welcoming new students — civilian and military. **“I tell them to sit with me and introduce them to my friends and other military kids.”**

Central, Freddie’s father, saw S2S as an opportunity for his children to be ambassadors to their school. “Pride

the national level you begin to get a deeper understanding of what needs to be done,” shared Central. “For college packets, all eyes are going to look at this, not just people at your school. You have to ask, ‘Are you prepared for that?’” Willingness to meet new people and interact with others are skills Central and his wife work hard to teach Freddie and their other children. “They need to learn to advocate for themselves and others. To be able to walk that line of being a student and a community leader.”



# New Resource

## FOR MILITARY CAREGIVERS

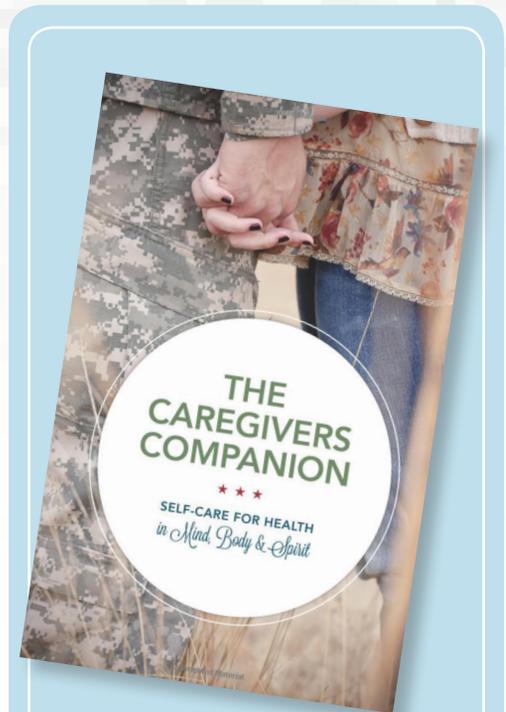


**M**ilitary caregivers are America's hidden heroes, caring for ill, injured or wounded military service members or veterans. However, their own needs go unmet. So often caregivers hear that it's important to care for themselves, but for individuals who spend so much time and effort caring for someone else, how is that possible and what does that mean?

A new self-care guide by Samueli Institute, an expert in the field of military health, provides tools for coping with stress and tips for navigating the different phases of caregiving. The research-backed guide covers managing one's sense of self, making health-supporting choices, building a circle of support, and interacting with the outside world.

*The Caregivers Companion: Self-Care for Health in Mind, Body & Spirit* is available as a free downloadable PDF for easy printing and viewing on a PC, smart phone, or tablet. Or access a free ebook on iTunes to read on a Mac or iPhone using iBooks, or any device that supports the epub format. *The Caregivers Companion* is also available as a paperback book for purchase on Amazon.

Samueli Institute created *The Caregivers Companion* to put hidden heroes center stage and provide the necessary resources to begin a journey to health and wellbeing. Visit [SamueliInstitute.org/Caregiver](http://SamueliInstitute.org/Caregiver) for a free download and other helpful resources.



### THE CAREGIVERS COMPANION

In this book you'll learn how to incorporate self-care into your life and to make your home a place of healing and peace. You'll learn to:

- Retain your sense of self through journaling
- Use the breathe and mindfulness techniques to control your stress levels
- Build a healthy relationship with food for you and your family



# The Challenges of the Military Child

CATHERINE COTTEN, M.ED  
Supervisory Education Technician  
for Air Force Child Development Center



**W**hen 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

**Children thrive on routine and familiarity, making relocation one of the most potentially stressful situations.**

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

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

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

**...as an educator it is important to have a reference point for available programs, services, and resources a military child may need.**

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.

## References

**Floyd, M.L., & Phillips, D.A. (2013).** Child care and other support programs. *Future of Children*, 23(2), 79-97.

**Harrison, J., & Cannest, K.J. (2008).** Educators supporting families in times of crisis: Military reserve deployments. *Preventing School Failure*, 52(4), 17-24.

**Lemmon, K., & Stafford, E. (2014).** Advocating for America's military children: considering the impact of parental combat deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan. *Family Court Review*, 52(3), 343-354. doi: 10.1111/fcre/12096.

**Lester, P. (2012).** Evaluation of family-centered prevention intervention for military children and families facing wartime deployments. *American Journal of Public Health*, 48-54.

**Risberg, S., Curtis, L & Shivers, L. (2014).** A professional development school in-action: Meeting the needs of military connected students and families. *Educational Considerations*, 42(1), 43-48.

**Ruff, S. B., & Keim, M.A. (2014).** Revolving doors: the impact of multiple school transitions on military children. *The Professional Counselor*, (2), 103.

**Tovar, N. H. (1998).** Addressing the needs of school-age military dependents. *The Delta Kappa Gama Bulletin*, (64) No 4, 23-28.

**Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. (2008).** Traumatic grief in military children. *The National Child Traumatic Stress Network*, 1-11.

THE MILITARY CHILD: CHALLENGES IN THE CLASSROOM 12 .

**Virginia Joint Military Family Service Board. (2003).** Working with Military Children. Langley AFB, VA: Army Community Services.



# Connectivity: Important and Necessary



*We'll be highlighting one of our Military Student Transition Consultants in each issue. Amanda Woodyard is serving our students in Prince William County Schools, Virginia.*

**M**CEC Military Student Transition Consultants (MSTC) serve in school districts as navigators and advocates for military-connected students and their families as they transition in or out of schools.

As a military spouse and mother, Amanda Woodyard has always taken pride in providing support and resources for service members and their families. "The military lifestyle comes with very unique challenges and being an available resource is critical," shared Amanda. Prior to becoming an MSTC, Amanda worked with the Military Family Support Center at Bolling AFB and the Washington Navy Yard. There she developed a partnership with Hayfield Secondary and MCEC to start a MCEC *Student 2 Student* program.

Amanda visits each of her schools multiple times a

**important and necessary."**

As a mother of two military children, Amanda has witnessed their struggles to live in their new normal and understands that solutions and resources come in all shapes and sizes. She knows that while installations and many organizations do a great job supporting military service members and their spouses, MCEC focuses on the child. Amanda is able to use resources from MCEC, the community, and military installations. Since the majority of her students do not live on the military installation, using the community resources provide complete wraparound services for students and their families.

Amanda would strongly encourage a student who is unsure about seeing an MSTC to at least have an initial

***“The military lifestyle comes with very unique challenges and being an available resource is critical.”***

week and works closely with small groups of students on a monthly basis. "Parent deployments can be extremely disruptive for a family and children don't always handle having an absent parent very well," shared Amanda.

"Providing support becomes an important outlet for students to express their feelings." Amanda has noticed that students are almost always receptive when someone shows concern and take an interest in their well-being. Listening to a student can be one of the easiest and most important things someone can do. **"If you can gain their trust, they become open and receptive to receive guidance and advice,"** explained Amanda. **"Connectivity for military students is**

conversation. She believes students will see the benefit once they take the first step and says, "the MSTC is relatable, speaks the military language, and provides the warm reception a student needs to feel comfortable and at ease when discussing their concerns and challenges."

"Through the years, I have seen students struggle academically and socially because the constant family transitions make it difficult to start over time and time again," says Amanda. "My goal is to provide a warm hand-off for new students and provide them with school and community resources to ease their transition."

**For more information about MSTCs, visit: [www.MilitaryChild.org/MSTC](http://www.MilitaryChild.org/MSTC)**



# MSTC

military student  
transition consultant™

A Military Child Education Coalition® Initiative

## Military Student Transition Consultants:

### Program Manager

Jacqueline Matlock, Ed.S.

(254) 953-1923 ext. 1128 | jacqy.matlock@MilitaryChild.org

### Fort Sam Houston ISD, San Antonio, TX

Amanda Ebner, M.S.

(210) 368-8716 | amanda.ebner@MilitaryChild.org

### Copperas Cove Independent School District, Copperas Cove, TX

Terri Jones, B.S. Education

(254) 547-7064 | jonest@ccisd.com

### Prince William County Schools, VA

Amanda Woodyard, B.A.

(703) 791-7268 | woodyaA@pwcs.edu

### Killeen Independent School District, Killeen, TX

Abby Rodriguez, M.A.

(832) 577-9335 | abby.rodriguez@killeenisd.org

Simisola Aromolaran, M.Ed.

(254) 336-1288 | simisola.aromolaran@killeenisd.org

Alicia Lightell, M.A.

(757) 849-8873 | alight35@gmail.com

Sharon Glendening, M.Ed.

(254) 336-1100 ext. 1145 | sharon.glendening@MilitaryChild.org

### Cumberland County Schools, NC

Tanisha Perkins, M.Ed.

(910) 678-2623 | tanishaperkins@ccs.k12.nc.us

Mark Patton, M.A.

(910) 425-8181 ext. 254 | mark.patton@ccs.k12.nc.us

### Huntsville City Schools, AL

Michael (Mike) Kersjes, M.Ed.

(256) 428-6800 ext. 6036 | michael.kersjes@MilitaryChild.org

### Vernon Parish School Board, LA

Vicki Snowden, M.Ed.

(337) 537-8120 | VickiSnowden@vpsb.k12.la.us

### Norfolk City Public Schools, VA

Beth Mills, M.Ed.

(757) 628-3850 ext. 21154 | beth.mills@MilitaryChild.org

# CONVOY OF SUPPORT



**AMANDA WOODYARD**, Military Student Transition Consultant, and Nana, *Student 2 Student* (S2S) member, met three years ago at Hayfield Secondary School in Alexandria, Virginia. Amanda and Nana's bond strengthened when they attended the 2016 National Training Seminar Student Summit. "Nana represented Hayfield S2S at the Student Summit. She gave a moving speech at the VIP reception," shared Amanda.

Cortez Dial, Ed.D, associate professor at Virginia State University and an MCEC Board Member, heard Nana's story at the reception and offered to give Amanda and Nana a personal tour of the university. This was Nana's first college tour. "I was thinking about going to a community college, but then I met Mr. Cortez Dial," she shared. Nana described the tour as a remarkable experience, and Amanda added, **"The personal attention Dr. Dial afforded Nana was invaluable. She came away with direction and the confidence to move forward in her college pursuit."**

Nana's goal is to become a counselor to help others. She is co-leader of her S2S team and also a member of the *Black Women Round Table*. Nana said her favorite part of the S2S program "is giving new students opportunities that I never had as a new student."



# Understanding the Needs of Students from Military Families

MAURICE J. ELIAS, PH.D.

**Depending on how one might estimate, an approximate four million students have parents who are connected to the military, and of those, at least 80% go to public schools.**

However, teachers often do not know when these children are in their classes, and their many social-emotional needs are not being adequately met.

Children of military and veteran parents was the topic of a White House conference — Operation Educate the Educators — convened by Dr. Jill Biden and Joining Forces (a military initiative with First Lady Michelle Obama). I had the privilege of attending the conference last month, and I would like to share some of what I learned.

First, schools should seek to know which children have parents who are connected to the military. These children suffer from what I refer to as ecological disruptions of nurturance. These disruptions are related to frequent relocations, which means changes in schools, peers, health care professionals, and religious institutions.

may be the quickest and easiest way to get an initial orientation. Schools and teachers should routinely know the occupations of children's parents, and of course, that would lead them to identify children whose parents are in the military.

## *Appreciate Their Assets*

Third, panelist Richard M. Lerner, Ph.D. of Tufts University, at the second general session, made the point that there is considerable diversity of experience within the population of military-connected children, with age and context being strong contributors to the way children cope.

But too often neglected is the plasticity of children, which is an enormous asset. And so, we also can see resilience in many military children, including:

- A strong sense of purpose, inspired by their parents' commitments, helping them be more likely to take on leadership and social action roles

*A positive school climate dedicated to promoting the social-competence of all children is the front line of support for and veteran families, and all other children.*

This is then compounded by overseas or domestic deployments by one or both parents for weekends, weeks, months, or years, potential or actual danger or harm experienced by parents, and the stresses related to parental return and readjustment.

## *Understand Military Children's Experiences*

Second, educators should understand the experiences of children with military-connected parents. The website Joining Forces provides excellent resources, and this short documentary, *A Walk In My Shoes: Military Life*,

- A capacity to socialize and move fluidly into new social situations
- Knowledge of different cultures and traditions
- An intergenerational commitment to character and service and a devotion to something beyond themselves

Of course, not all children of military families show resilience in all — or any — of these areas. But it is important for educators to see their strengths and to view them as potential assets to classroom and school settings.

*Reprinted with permission from the author. Original article printed by Edutopia.*

## *Creating Welcoming, Supportive Schools*

Finally, the guiding principles articulated by the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) and presented at the conference noted that all schools must be places of welcome and acceptance for all children.

Children of military families are unique, but share ecological disruptions of nurturance with children who are homeless, in foster care, or who suffer from chronic poverty, or have parents who are incarcerated, chronically medically or mentally ill, or recent documented or undocumented immigrants.

Each of these groups brings assets to schools, but if schools are not oriented to look for them, build them, and celebrate them, the focus is likely to be on children's risk factors and deficits.

A positive school climate dedicated to promoting the social-emotional competence of all children is the front line of support for children of military and veteran families, and all other children. This must be accompanied by the capacity to reach out to parents, and in the case of military-

## *emotional children of military*

connected children, it's important to seek out the specialized knowledge of resources and supports that these families need.

An excellent and accessible set of resources for schools and educators can be found at MCEC.

---

### **Maurice J. Elias, Ph.D.**

*Professor of Psychology Rutgers University  
Director, Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character  
Development Lab Academic Director, The  
Collaborative Center for Community-Based  
Research and Service Co-Director, Academy for  
Social-Emotional Learning in Schools*

[www.MilitaryChild.org](http://www.MilitaryChild.org)





**Being a military kid can have its own challenges**, including transition, family separation, and mobility. Struggling with developmental or social disorders can heighten these difficulties. Dax, a student at Stacey Junior-Senior High School in San Antonio, Texas, moved to Texas when he was six years old. His father was re-stationed at Lackland Air Force Base, and his family has lived in San Antonio for the last 10 years. “Mostly we stayed here for medical issues and I believe, by the grace of God, it was a good thing,” shares Dax, who was diagnosed with autism as a baby.



# BADGE of HONOR

Dax enjoyed moving as a military child but prefers the comforts of familiarity. “One of the things that is great about moving is getting a fresh start with new friends, and better influences,” he explains. “An advantage of staying in the same place is familiarity. You’re never lost. People ask all the time for information, and I give them directions.”

Dax is considering a career in the Air Force and is currently in a dual credit program which will allow him to earn an associate’s degree by the time he graduates high school. He has always been interested in a career in law enforcement, stating, **“I was born with autism, and things to me are mostly black and white. It’s hard to see grey areas, so I found an interest in rules and take them seriously.”** Dax used to call his parents and tell on himself for cursing because of his strict adherence to rules.

In sixth grade, Dax would come home from school crying frequently because other students bullied him. He didn’t understand social cues, so students would call him names and pick on him.

As a result of being bullied, Dax invented a game that helped him cope with his challenges and teach him communication skills. Each of the characters in the game had their own

behavior, way of speaking, and beliefs, and each conversation he had or decision he made would carry on to the next game, making Dax’s decisions in the game consequential. Dax says that the game showed him “how relationships work, how to establish them, and how to communicate with others.” “If I didn’t like the response I could go back to the start and begin the conversation over again,” he shares. Another component of the game portrayed prejudices. “One character didn’t agree with having aliens on the ship; he would work with them but didn’t want them on the ship.”

**The game was able to teach Dax social cues by showcasing the results of his decisions all while reinforcing the rule-driven behaviors in which he found an early interest.**

Dax has also been a member of the Military Child Education Coalition Junior *Student 2 Student* (JS2S) and *Student 2 Student* (S2S) programs for the last five years. Dax loves to meet people and says, “S2S is about welcoming people and having a whole climate of acceptance of people for who they are.”

Dax works hard each day to support the people around him in the ways others have done for him. When asked why he decided to share his story he explained, “Because it’s who I am, and I see it as a badge of honor.”





# Adolescents function better when their deployed parents are supportive from afar



SAB

SARAH L. FRIEDMAN,  
CAROL K. SIGELMAN,  
CYNTHIA A. ROHRBECK, AND  
ANA MARIA DEL RIO-GONZALEZ  
The George Washington University

**D**o you believe that long distance communication between deployed parents and their adolescents might help adolescents' functioning? We took a first small step toward finding out if this is the case. We studied the quantity and quality of such communication and their association with how well adolescents are doing when their parents are deployed.

We asked 75 sons and daughters ages 11-18 of deployed parents about the frequency and duration of communicating by phone, email, social media, text, video chat, photo sharing, and letters. We also asked them about the positive and controlling quality communication when parents and adolescents were on the phone or were video chatting. For example, we asked **"How often did your parent ask you about what was happening in school?"** **"How often did your parent tell you he/she can't wait to see you again?"** **"How often did your parent tell you that you need to try harder?"** We also asked the adolescents about their health and functioning (e.g., **"Have you felt fit and well?"** **"Have you felt lonely?"** **"Have you had fun with your friends?"**). We also asked them how they felt after the communication with the deployed parent was over.

We asked the at-home parents/

caregivers the same questions about the adolescents' functioning and feelings, and we added questions about internalizing and externalizing behaviour (e.g., **"Does he/she have sudden changes in moods?"** **"Is he/she cruel or mean to others?"** **"Is he/she disobedient at home?"**)

Our analyses of the information we collected revealed great variation in the quantity and quality of communications. On the average, the adolescents communicated with their deployed parents over 10 times a week with an average duration of 9.6 minutes per instance of communication. The analyses also revealed great variation in the quality of communication. On average, adolescents reported that they had positive communication most of the time, and they experienced controlling communication just sometimes.

Surprisingly, we found that the quantity of communication was not

associated with the adolescents' functioning, but that the quality of communication was linked to the adolescents' functioning. More specifically, we found that positive communication was related to (i) better adolescents' functioning and to (ii) more positive and negative emotions following communication. We also found that controlling communication was associated with worse adolescent functioning. We concluded that adolescents function better when their deployed parents are supportive from afar but did not prove that positive communication leads to or is the cause of better functioning. To prove such causality, we would have needed to rule out the possibility that better adolescents' functioning leads to parents' being more positive when communicating with their adolescents. We expect that future research that tracks adolescents functioning and parent-adolescent communication from pre deployment through deployment and reintegration will establish how adolescent functioning and the quality of deployed parent communication influence each other.

Friedman SL, Sigelman CK, Rohrbeck CA, del Rio-Gonzalez AM, Quantity and quality of communication during parental deployment: links to adolescents' functioning, Applied Developmental Science

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10888691.2016.1207536>

Artwork by Hailey, Grade 11 • Bayside High School, Virginia Beach, VA • Civilian



# ALL of a students' needs met at one amazing school

**OAK CREEK ACADEMY**, which opened in 2013, is a nontraditional PK-12 school that operates year-round in the greater Killeen, Texas, area. The school emphasizes inclusion for all types of learners and provides on-site speech, occupational, physical, and behavioral therapies.

Oak Creek Academy founder and head of school, Tracy Hanson, MEd, was an educator for eight years when she opened Education Connection, a child development center for children six weeks to four years old. As Tracy started to see the needs of the kids changing in her center, she realized she wanted to do more to provide nontraditional instruction to these children. "The stress on the parents and students and the revolving door pushed me to do this," she explains. "Those students needing extra support are able to receive it."

At Oak Creek Academy, students are taught by certified teachers with a 1:5

teacher/student ratio using instruction methods geared toward the individual child. Having over 35 therapists on campus allows all of a student's needs to be met without leaving school. Tracy believes the school's biggest advantage is the in-house therapies and shares, "A parent doesn't have to interrupt the school day to take their child to various therapies. When they pick them up in the evening, they get to go home and be a family."

## PARENTS are a huge part of the Oak Creek Academy environment

and know what goes on in their child's classrooms. Amber, a parent of an Oak Creek Academy student, conveys, "We all work toward the same goals. When a child is taken to speech down the road and brought back, the school has no idea what they just worked on. But here, the teachers can talk to the therapists about behaviors or trends they are noticing and the teacher can develop work in the classroom that will help them."

Amber adopted her son when he was three years old and knew he had developmental delays including autism, dyslexia, and dysgraphia. Amber and her husband were not aware of alternative options for their son's education, so he was enrolled in public school until fourth grade. Amber continues, "As he got older we needed to hold him back, but because he had special needs he automatically progressed to the next grade." Amber's son struggled to complete the work and was bullied because of his challenges.



He also had therapy appointments to attend during the day. "I was at one of his therapy appointments, and I told them that something had to give. My husband is a wounded warrior, so I have to work, and that's when I learned about Oak Creek Academy." Since being at the Academy, Amber's son has advanced two grades and has learned to be his own advocate.

Tracy Hanson is a firm advocate of inclusion programs. She believes that all children with all abilities can be successful in a stimulating environment that provides exploration and unique opportunities for learning. Tracy recognizes that "students can be auditory, visual, or tactical learners. In a nontraditional environment you have to teach in a setting that is supported by therapists, assistants, teachers, parents, and inclusion."

Texas A&M University-Central Texas (TAMUCT) students visit Oak Creek Academy to help with the students and observe. The Academy's vision is to partner with TAMUCT and build a center on the University campus for students to use as a lab to observe and learn about early childhood development and nontraditional inclusion schooling for all ages. Tracy believes this arrangement will help prepare general education majors for the classroom.



To learn more about Oak Creek Academy or sponsor a military child's attendance, visit [www.oakcreekkilleen.org](http://www.oakcreekkilleen.org).



# The MISSION NEVER ENDS



**A FORMER ROTC STUDENT**, Staff Sergeant (Ret) Alejandro (Alex) Del Rio, USMC, was an athlete from San Antonio who came from a long line of Veterans.

“**I**n our family, on my mom’s side, it was a tradition that at least one male in each family serve. My grandfather and great uncle both served in WW2, my great uncle also served in Korea, and my uncle Frankie served in Vietnam,” shared Alex. “No one had been a Marine since my grandfather, so I joined in 1999.”

Alex served in the U.S. Marines for 10 years, including four combat tours. Alex sustained an injury in 2006 which resulted in the loss of both legs below the knee. Alex pushed himself hard to get back up and going after his injury and was back to work within 6 months. “I was ready to get up and finish my mission. I didn’t want pity. I was just doing my job.”

Alex’s daughter attended private school and the teachers worked with her, but she had difficult days. “She was very defensive and protective. When my family took me out for the first time, it was hard for me that my daughter had to push me because I couldn’t use my arms. One time there were people who didn’t move out of the way and she yelled out, ‘He lost his legs in war!’ And then she broke out crying,” shared Alex.

Alex is confident that one day his daughter will understand that you get up and keep going in life, regardless of the circumstances. “My injury brings up a lot of memories for her. She wants to be a nurse when she grows up now.”

*“They will say, ‘Put on your legs, dad. Let’s go!’ It’s routine. It’s their normal.”*

Alex’s oldest daughter was 5 years old when he was injured and she immediately began taking on a caretaker role. “My oldest daughter would get after me if I was limping, inspect my legs and arms and, when I had nightmares, she would wipe off my sweat,” shared Alex. “She started secluding herself. She always wanted to be with me. She was growing up too fast and I didn’t like that.” Alex remained in the military, serving as a Cadre RMAT Instructor after his injury and felt that his daughter was being affected by his choice. “I was gone a lot of her life for training and the war. She has trouble understanding it. She’ll say, ‘You lost your legs for this country, dad.’”

Alex has had two children since his injury so their perspective of their father is different. “They know what happened. They still inspect me and ask if I’m okay. The difference is they are so used to it. They will say, ‘Put on your legs, dad. Let’s go!’ It’s routine. It’s their normal,” explained Alex.

Still reflecting his responsibilities as a Marine reconnaissance specialist, Alex has shown his children that the mission never ends. His growth and perseverance continues to serve as an example for his family and other arounds him.



# The Ultimate Project

LYNDA MACFARLAND

## LYNDA AND ERIN, A MOTHER-DAUGHTER REFLECTION

I spent time with my daughter and her family recently and, as she prepares to leave her twenties behind, I marvel at the woman, mother, and the wife she has become.

As an Army brat who is now raising her own Army brats, I can recall so easily her years at home, and those of her younger brother, as well. Before we knew it or were ready, her father and I were sending her off to college. And then four years later, her brother was off to school. That is almost a decade ago now, which startles me. Life really is short.

I think back fondly on our time when the children were at home. There were lots of challenges, but also lots of laughs. We enjoyed each others' company and did a lot of things together as a family both in and outside our home. From the time they were old enough to join soccer teams or ballet classes, we were always looking for ways to be with them while letting them move out, little by little, into the world. It is, after all, the parents' job to equip their children for adulthood. It's hard to think about that when they are babies, toddlers, or in grade school. But it starts to become more real as they become adolescents. Conversely, it seems easier to play with, talk to, and generally interact with your children when they are under, say, the age of 10 or 11 than it is when they are 12 years or older.

I'm not sure why sometimes parents start to communicate less with their children as they move into adolescence. Maybe it's because their children want to discuss more difficult or complicated topics. You don't get to always be silly with a 13-year old, although they are enough of a little kid still to enjoy some silliness, I assure you!

I think one of the most important factors in maintaining strong

communication with your adolescent children is just to embrace the culture. If you start having discussions with them about anything – stuff you see on TV, or on the internet, popular memes, music on their iPods or phones, movies, books – there will be less awkwardness as they mature.

Embracing the culture does not mean you have to let them see, hear, or read anything they want. There must always

be boundaries, but it is important to remember that young people want to be taken seriously and thought of as adult long before they actually reach adulthood.

## You as a parent

There are challenges for parents in navigating how much is enough or what is 'over the line,' but there have to be, whatever a parents decides is acceptable for their children, reasons for those boundaries. It's helpful if a parent can articulate the reasons why some things are unacceptable at a particular time in a child's life. Everyone, young or old, always reacts better to a situation when they know the 'why' of it.

"Because I said so" is rarely the best response for your child's question.

As a parent you have to be on your toes because children will find the strangest things to ask you about, and that includes when you give them the rules of the house. Now, that is not a guarantee they will magically begin to do what you have requested, but you have shown them that you think enough of them to explain the reasons behind your rules. And it doesn't mean that they won't be in trouble for disobeying your wishes. The type of





*must be as good as your word.*

punishment for ignoring a rule must be known in advance by all parties, as well. And keep in mind that punishment can and should include consequences for their infractions. Parents need to decide before an incident what will the consequences for that action be. You and the child should both know before they begin and the parent should immediately implement that consequence for the offense.

Consistency and predictability in discipline for children is key. You as a parent must be as good as your word. Otherwise, children do learn that they can get away with things when the promised consequence does not occur. That can eventually erode the respect for the parent as s/he begins to be perceived by the child as someone who cannot be trusted. Of course trust is crucial in any relationship but parents need to be respected not just because of their role in the family, but because respect for authority in society begins

at home. Parents are the first authority figures in our children's lives. Are we fair? Are we patient? Do we respect our children as fellow human beings; with dignity they deserve? Do we teach them by example what respect for authority is in the world and explain to them why it matters? We need to do these things if we want our children to be productive, content members of our society, and contributors to it, one glorious day.

*A pleasant, law abiding, polite, thoughtful adult does not just appear one day; he or she is cultivated with care, effort, time, and yes, love by a caring parent or parents.*

With any project, there should be an end goal in mind. Our children are the ultimate project. And they are ones that we don't expect to ever see the end result of, if we are lucky. May we all be long gone before our 'projects'

are finished. We are helping to build the foundation of their lives that we then continue to assist them in building until the time when they can lift the bricks and apply the mortar themselves.

If we love unconditionally, but not thoughtlessly, our children will know that we have rules and we are rearing them within certain rules, because of that love for them. Yes, we want them to be happy, but we also want them to be safe. And we want them to make others happy and to want to do so. A pleasant, law abiding, polite, thoughtful adult does not just appear one day; he or she is cultivated with care, effort, time, and yes, love by a caring parent or parents.

Treating an adolescent in an adult manner, which includes answering their questions and not ignoring

them, explaining why we do things in the ways we do, or why they should not do certain things are ways we normally treat adults. Our adolescent children deserve that same courtesy.

*more >>>*



Genuine compliments for things they've done well, or even just authentically attempted, add to the adult we are working to build. Help when things aren't going well, asking how you can help – these things will also be welcome by a young teen and then an older teen.

Who wouldn't like to know that their family, the people they live with and who love them more than anything, are going to pick them up when they fall, hug them when they need it, hold on to them when they are sad, tired, or hurt? And also let go so the young, loved person can pick themselves up one day, but always assure them that we will be there when they need to return to us. It might be a pep talk or maybe a shoulder to cry on, but we can be a support to our adolescents. Sometimes it's sought after advice, or maybe being silent so they can talk to us as they work out a problem. Maybe we ask a question they haven't considered and let them ruminate over that for a bit. Or perhaps we ask open ended questions that shows we respect their opinions.

### *My children are amazing.*

Who doesn't feel that way about their kids? I hope we all can say that because we love them. And with that love for them, we want them to be the best people they can be. We get to assist with that. What an amazing opportunity, what a daunting task! But it's worth it. We get to be part of the ultimate project. For my husband and me it was quite the ride and we are grateful for every minute of it. Even the mistakes – theirs and ours. It's made us all who we are today.



## Open Lines

ERIN M. PHILLIPS

*First of all, let me begin with a warning:*

nothing I am about to say is likely to earn your kid any cool points. If you told any of my high school classmates I was writing an article with my mom about how important it is for kids to talk to their parents, the most common reaction after, "Who?" would be the understanding smile and closed-eyed nod of total non-surprise. Let me issue a second warning: keeping open lines of communication with my parents left me with such positive attitudes toward military life that I ended up marrying a soldier. So, if you want to raise a cool teen with no future military affiliations, read no further. But if you're interested in raising a reasonably well-adjusted adult who is open to caring for you in your old age, then I may be able to help.

I didn't realize it at the time, but I think the thing I found most helpful growing up in a military family was that we were kept well-informed in an age-appropriate way. I see it now in military spouses, and I think the same thing holds true for military kids; the family members who best understand the nature of their service member's work tend to be the happiest family members. We usually knew our dad's unit, his job, the broad strokes of what that meant in the grand scheme of the way the Army works, and where we as his children fit in. Specifically, when we were stationed in Europe, my brother and I were made to understand that we were acting not only as ambassadors for our family, but for our country. It was a big responsibility, but it showed trust and confidence in us, and so I think my brother and I were happy to comply.

*...the thing I found most helpful growing up in a military family was that we were kept well-informed in an age-appropriate way.*

That same trust and confidence displayed by our parents in other facets of life meant that while we were given quite a bit of latitude as we got older, we knew we could come to our parents with our questions, concerns, and feelings. To me, it seemed almost counterintuitive to keep important things from my parents, since my anxieties, questions, and opinions were always taken seriously and addressed. You wouldn't keep really serious symptoms from your doctor, would you?

Parents don't need to be their kids' best friends. Frankly, my kids are still pretty small, so I can't fathom why any parent would want to be their kids' best friend. Our priorities are just too different, and probably will be for at least the next fifteen years or so. But you can treat your kids like people, and give their feelings and opinions the same respect and consideration you would give those of an adult. That doesn't mean treating them like adults, or burdening them with your own concerns, obviously, but a kid who feels listened to on a daily basis will be more likely to come to you to talk.



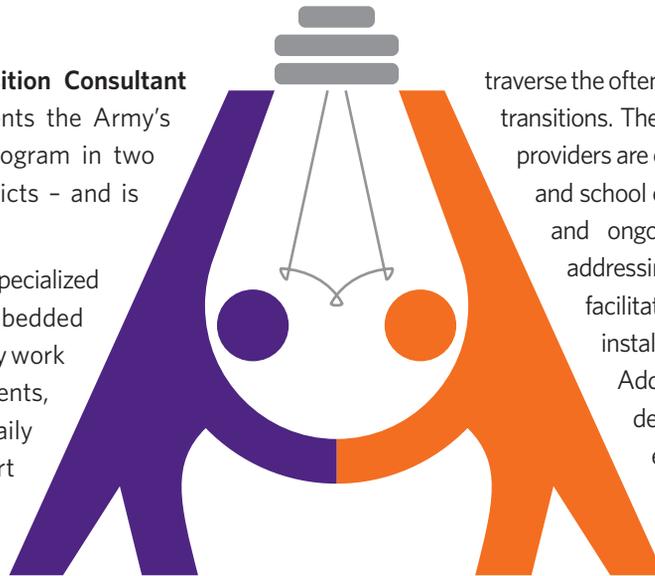
# STRONGER TOGETHER

The **Military Student Transition Consultant (MSTC)** Program complements the Army's School Behavioral Health Program in two highly-impacted school districts – and is growing.

An MSTC is a full-time, highly-specialized education professional embedded within the school district. They work directly with children, parents, and school personnel on a daily basis and serve as an expert “navigator” and advocate for military-connected students and their families. The MSTC

helps to decrease the turbulence in family life and helps build resiliency in students so that they can successfully cope and overcome the unique challenges they face and meet their academic goals.

When partnered with School Behavioral Health (SBH) Program providers, MSTCs provide an ongoing continuum of care to support social/emotional needs and help students and parents

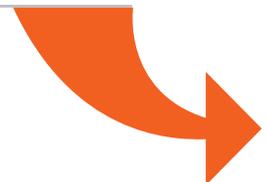


traverse the often confusing paths associated with transitions. The fact that both MSTCs and SBH providers are embedded within school districts and school campus sites ensures immediate and ongoing care is accomplished by addressing challenges and needs which facilitates connections to school, installation, and community resources. Additionally, MSTCs create and deliver professional development, educating others on the unique needs of military-connected students and how to provide the best support possible.

Leveraging connections and building networks between MSTCs and SBH providers means that both parents and students gain access to professionals who can respond to individual student needs and anxieties in a timely and effective way. To echo the comments of Dr. Ban, Dr. Johnson, and Dr. Faran when they share the motto of MCEC: “...for the sake of the child.”

## Sites where the School Behavioral Health Program Providers and the Military Child Education Coalition Overlap

<b>Killeen Independent School District</b>	Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center Fort Hood	<b>Texas</b>
<b>Cumberland County School District</b>	Womack Army Medical Center Fort Bragg	<b>North Carolina</b>





# THE ARMY'S SCHOOL BEHA

## A Partnership with 60 Schools...



The U.S. Army strives to ensure that the children and families of our military Service Members are provided with opportunities and resources to optimize their resiliency, health, and well-being. Many Army programs have been implemented over the years to achieve this goal, with one of the most innovative and successful being the U.S. Army Medical Command's (MEDCOM) School Behavioral Health (SBH) Program, a collaborative effort that leverages key partnerships to imbed highly accessible health prevention and promotion, as well as clinical services, into the place where youth “live and work” – their schools.

Historically, behavioral health services have been available to Army children and families through a network of direct care and community professionals and resources. In order to ensure high-quality behavioral health services throughout the Army's medical treatment facilities, in March 2014, MEDCOM mandated the dissemination and implementation of the Child and Family Behavioral Health System (CAFBHS), a comprehensive, standardized model of BH care. CAFBHS, which includes SBH, reduces the barriers to and the stigma of receiving behavioral health care. The model implements best practices and partnerships in the delivery of evidence-based BH care by consulting and collaborating with patients' Primary Care Managers in the Army's Medical Homes; the Department of Defense Education Activity and local educational school districts; institutions of higher education such as the Center for School Mental Health, University of Maryland; and non-profit national organizations such as the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). As the African proverb says, “It takes a village to raise a child,” and as the MCEC motto reminds “...for the sake of the child.”

### WHAT IS THE ARMY'S SCHOOL

- Through a memorandum of agreement or understanding between the Commander of the Army's medical treatment facility on an installation and the Superintendent of the schools located on the installation, the parties agree to implement the SBH program.
- The SBH program embeds Child and Adolescent Psychologists or Licensed Clinical Social Workers in on-post schools to provide comprehensive BH services from prevention to evidence-based treatment. Care is delivered in the school setting, an environment where a child or youth spends about a third of their day, improving access to care, reducing stigma, enhancing resiliency, maximizing time in school, and minimizing time away from work for parents.
- SBH services for children and youth include screening, early identification and intervention for the “at-risk” (e.g., bullied, neglected, etc.), evaluation, and treatment that are delivered at the school. Early intervention strategies include a variety of



# VIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM: and Growing!

PAUL K. BAN, PH.D., PATTI L. JOHNSON, PH.D., MICHAEL E. FARAN, M.D.  
Child and Family Behavioral Health System, US Army Medical Command



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH MODEL?

programs focused on adjustment and other psycho-social issues, and coping with deployment and other military-related stressors. More intensive interventions for children and adolescents with problems that reach a clinical threshold include counseling, psycho-social interventions, parent education and medication management. Services may include individual, group and/or family treatments with recognition of the unique stressors of the military lifestyle guiding all clinical practices.

- The current target population for the SBH program is children of active duty members attending 60 schools (two pilot schools in Hawaii are off-post) at 14 Army installations on the continental U.S., in Hawaii and in Germany. The goal is to have the SBH program in the majority of the on-post schools at 17 installations Army-wide when the Academic Year 2017-2018 begins.

## 14 CURRENT SCHOOL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SITES

Tripler Army Medical Center	Hawaii
Schofield Barracks & Mokuapu Marine Corps Air Station	
Madigan Army Medical Center	Washington
Joint Base Lewis-McChord	
Evans Army Community Hospital	Colorado
Fort Carson	
Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center	Texas
Fort Hood	
William Beaumont Army Medical Center	Texas
Fort Bliss	
Irwin Army Community Hospital	Kansas
Fort Riley	
Blanchfield Army Community Hospital	Kentucky
Fort Campbell	
Ireland Army Community Hospital	Kentucky
Fort Knox	
Womack Army Medical Center	North Carolina
Fort Bragg	
Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center	Maryland
Fort Meade	
Winn Army Community Hospital	Georgia
Fort Stewart	
Martin Army Community Hospital	Georgia
Fort Benning	
Landstuhl Army Medical Center	Germany
Kaiserslautern, Vogelweh	
Bavaria MEDDAC	Germany
Vilseck, Grafenwoehr, Natzaberg, Hohensfels, Ansbach	



# Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

On Dec. 10, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – Public Law 114-95. ESSA reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. Under ESSA, responsibility for making key decisions about education policy is shifting back to the states from the federal government.

DAVID LAPAN  
Senior Director, National Capital Region



Among the provisions in the new law is the creation — for the first time ever on a national scale — of a military student identifier (MSI). ESSA requires states to better track and report how homeless students, students in foster care, and military-connected students are doing in school. The MSI data should appear in the State report cards as mandated by the law.

The advantages of gathering school-level MSI data are similar to gathering information about other sub-groups of students. Schools have a more accurate picture of their student population and can shape programs, activities, course offerings, daily schedules, extra-curricular programs, and more to meet the needs of their particular student population. Resources including

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) sees real advantages in having schools and school districts use aggregated MSI information to better understand and serve their student populations. MCEC is hopeful that this will provide more useful programs for students of active duty parents as well as for students of parents serving in the Reserves and National Guard who are more widely dispersed within states and, in many cases, are invisible as military children in their schools and communities. Schools have a hard time creating great programs for their students if they don't know anything about them. Here's an opportunity to bring military students into clear focus and help them thrive.

Today, as ESSA is being prepared for implementation

*Schools have a hard time creating great programs for their students if they don't know anything about them. Here's an opportunity to bring military students into clear focus and help them thrive.*

programs along with staff and budget allocation can all be adjusted to meet the needs of the student body and achieve the goals and objectives set for the school.

Military-connected students attend many different schools in different states and sometimes different countries. Their transcripts and experiences differ from students who stay in the same community during their K-12 years. Knowing that a school has a significant military population helps the school staff plan accordingly and making appropriate adjustments.

School staff regularly look for patterns, advantages, and challenges that are presented by the student groups they serve. Aggregated or summarized information is needed and used for planning program design and program offerings. Personally identifiable information is not reported.



(in the 2017-18 school year) by the Department of Education, there are 19 states with some form of military student identifier. Although the MSI varies somewhat by state, most include the children of active duty, National Guard and Reserve service members. However, at present, ESSA specifies students with “a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces... on active duty.” The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) strongly advocated for the inclusion of students whose parents serve in the National

Guard or Reserves as part of the ESSA reporting on military-connected students and will continue to do so. Service members with children should contact their congressional representatives to push for the inclusion of all military-connected students in the military student identifier provision of ESSA.

See more →



# The Military Student Identifier

DAVID F. SPLITEK, PhD  
Program Manager, Higher Education Initiatives

Say  
What?

MCEC has advocated for the inclusion of the **Military Student Identifier** (MSI) in public school data reporting systems since the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Connected Children was created and seven states added the legislation to their state laws in 2010. Now in 2016, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have adopted Compact legislation, and the DoDEA schools have indicated that they will adhere to Compact principles as well.

In the years since the Compact began to operate, the DoD state liaison office has kept track of which states have initiated a military student identifier and they report that 17 states are now on board:

[www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil/MOS/f?p=USA4:ISSUE:0::::P2\\_ISSUE:3](http://www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil/MOS/f?p=USA4:ISSUE:0::::P2_ISSUE:3)

In addition, the **Common Education Data Standards**, the gold standard used by states and the federal government added a common definition for the military-connected student indicator: *An indication that the student is currently serving on Active Duty, in the National Guard, or in the Reserve components of the United States military services.*

<https://ceds.ed.gov/elements.aspx>.

The next big step took place in December 2015, when Congress approved and President Obama signed the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, now styled the **Every Student Succeeds Act** (ESSA). ESSA includes the military student identifier as a required data element for all annual state data collections.

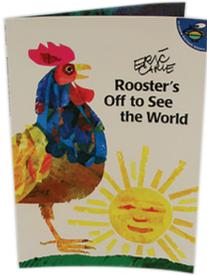
THIS IS REAL PROGRESS AND CERTAINLY GOOD NEWS.

Collectively, school districts, states, the Department of Education, DODEA, etc., need to review the results of this data and determine what it says about military children as they move around the world and through their K-12 years of education. If the information is collected and never analyzed or interpreted, then the time and energy of those collecting the data has been for nothing. Making sense of the data and using it to improve the way military students are educated is a great opportunity.

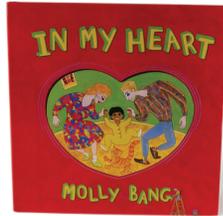
Let's not pass this by.



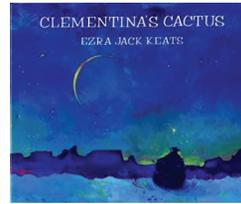
THE MCEC STORE



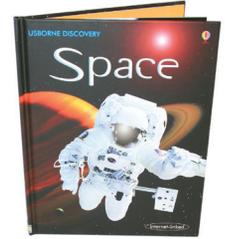
\$0.50



\$6.00



\$5.00

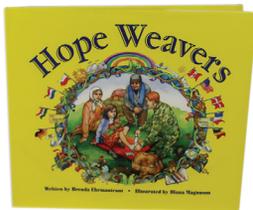


\$4.00

# Check out these wonderful SALE BOOKS

## before they are gone!

Books make excellent gifts and stocking stuffers!



\$1.00



\$2.00

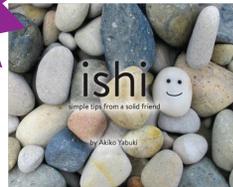


\$5.00

[Store.MilitaryChild.org](http://Store.MilitaryChild.org)



\$23.95

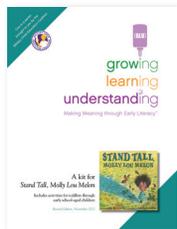


\$11.50  
Also featured in our Stand Tall GLU Kit



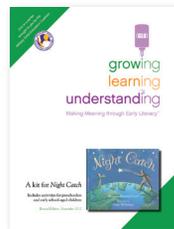
\$16.95

## GLU KITS REDUCED IN PRICE – EACH WITH A NEW BOOK!



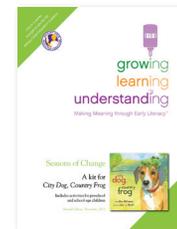
### Stand Tall GLU Kit

This GLU kit for toddlers through early school age children, assists parents and care providers in setting the stage for children's good choices and contains activities that will assist children in exploring their own competence, learning how to take care of themselves and others, and beginning to make healthy, responsible decisions. .... \$39.95



### Night Catch GLU Kit

Night Catch is the framing book for activities and discussions honoring the sense of awe and wonder that drives preK through second grade children. This kit fosters the natural scientist and born learner in every child. Activity ideas address the challenges of deployment and separation, explain location and introduce geography, discuss the passage of time, and instill a love of learning while fostering strong research skills. .... \$39.95



### Seasons of Change GLU Kit

Designed for children in preschool through fifth grade, this GLU kit is intended to assist children in embracing change through the characters and themes found within literature and poetry. With deployments, trainings, frequent moves, and changing schools, military-connected children are no strangers to change. This kit will give parents activities and tools that they can use to foster meaningful communication about change. .... \$45.95

[Store.MilitaryChild.org](http://Store.MilitaryChild.org)



# 4 million reasons to join

*serving the children of those who serve us all.*

Membership in Military Child Education Coalition® (MCEC®) demonstrates your support of military and veteran-connected children!

## Our community is over 70,000 strong!

JOIN NOW!



### Military Child Education Coalition

909 Mountain Lion Circle | Harker Heights, Texas 76548 | P (254) 953-1923 | F (254) 953-1925

[www.MilitaryChild.org](http://www.MilitaryChild.org) | CFC #10261

Art by Anna, Grade 3 • Ramey School • Aguadilla, Puerto Rico • National Guard



Facebook.com/MilitaryChild



Twitter.com/MilitaryChild



YouTube.com/MilitaryChild



MilitaryChild.org/blog



flickr.com/MilitaryChild

1998

2017

# SAVE the DATE



# 19<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL National Training SEMINAR

31 July - 2 August 2017 ★ Renaissance Hotel ★ Washington, DC Downtown