

ON THE *move*[®]

the official magazine of the Military Child Education Coalition[®]



I had no idea what it meant when my dad told me he was leaving for awhile. However, I remember the feeling of complete joy and happiness when I was back in his arms. And that is the inspiration for my illustration.

~ Sierra



Month of the Military Child Poster and Sesame Transitions Activity Book *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.

Awarded the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance National Charity Seal - demonstrates MCEC commitment to ethical practices and full accountability



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ON THE MOVE

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 Denotes Science Advisory Board Member

aboutthecover:

This is a real photograph of my father and I. At the time, I had no idea what it meant when my dad told me he was leaving for awhile. However, I remember the feeling of complete joy and happiness when I was back in his arms. And, that is the inspiration for my illustration.

Sierra, Grade 12
Ocean Lanes High School, Virginia Beach, VA
U.S. Navy



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Olivia Amos, an Enterprise High School senior, believes everyone knows what it's like to be the new person once in a while, but not everyone knows what it's like to **switch schools every few years**.

student 2 student®



A Military Child Education Coalition® Initiative

"When the orders come, military kids must leave their friends and the school they've become comfortable with to move to an unfamiliar place where they have to – once again – start over in a whole new environment," expressed Olivia. She explained starting at a new high school can be particularly rough. "Teams, clubs, and other groups are pretty well established and new students can have trouble breaking in."

Enterprise High School is Olivia's ninth school and third high school.

When she arrived at Enterprise, Olivia found the MCEC program, Student 2 Student® (S2S™), a student-led program that brings military and civilian kids together to welcome new students, create a positive environment, support academic excellence, and ease transitions as students pass in or out of schools. "The leaders are very welcoming and willing to answer any questions new students may have. I met some of my first friends through this program," shared Olivia. She shared that S2S members are from all grades and are each involved in different things so new students will be able to find someone with similar interests.

"The most dreaded time during a new student's first day is lunch. At least it always has been for me. You never know where to sit or who to sit with. No one wants to eat alone, but you may not know anyone in your lunch," explained Olivia.

S2S has a designated table at her school for new students and S2S members.

"This is a place where new students can sit when they first come to EHS so that they have a welcoming group of friends to eat with."

**OLIVIA IS AN
EXAMPLE OF THE GRIT,
DETERMINATION, AND
PERSEVERANCE OF
MILITARY KIDS.**

She has the courage to take on new challenges, the determination to help other transitioning students, and the perseverance to continue to thrive through changes.



Join us at the 18th National Training Seminar to learn more about Student 2 Student and hear from other military-connected trailblazers!

FROM THE PRESIDENT »



We are mission driven at MCEC. That mission is to ensure inclusive, quality educational experiences for all military-connected children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. With that goal firmly in mind, we worked diligently toward the inclusion of a military student identifier in the Every Student Succeeds Act, which was passed in December. The provision will allow our nation's leaders to better understand the needs of military students and develop policies that will help them. Though the new law tracks students of the Active Duty military, we will continue to work toward the addition of an identifier for the approximately half million school-aged children of our Guard and Reserve members across the nation (page 36).

With nearly 25,000 service members per month transitioning from military to civilian life, MCEC has developed a new course to address the needs of their children. We are excited to offer "Serving Veterans Children through Transitions," to the wide-ranging group of professionals who support military kids (page 10) thanks to a generous grant from the Bob Woodruff Foundation.

We'll be offering that course along with additional professional development at our 18th National Training Seminar (NTS), June 27-29, in Washington D.C. Bringing together a coalition of partners working on behalf of our children, the NTS hosts leaders from across military, education, corporate and private sectors. Some of those great partnerships are highlighted (page 30) in this issue, and there is still time to submit other collaborations to be considered for the prestigious Pete Taylor Partnership Award.

It is incredibly gratifying to see so many working on behalf of the children we serve! I am always amazed and reassured by the generosity, energy, and creativity devoted to developing resources for military children. Thank you for all you do ...*for the sake of the child!*

Sincerely,

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

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



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Planning to Serve in the Military?

Physical, mental, and emotional fitness is required.

Common Conditions that Exclude from Military Service

BRANDON COLE, DO, MATTHEW WEEKS, DO, ERIC FLAKE, MD 

Many children receive medical diagnoses throughout childhood that are considered lifelong conditions. Often as children grow into adolescence and into adulthood, the symptoms of certain conditions may become less apparent or have less impact in their daily lives. Certain conditions can exclude individuals from military service even if a diagnosis was made in childhood, and the condition does not have a significant impact on the hopeful service member's function. Studies have identified that more than 60% of military-connected high school students consider a future of following in their parents footsteps and joining the military. As a result, it is important to highlight several common medical diagnoses made in childhood that currently either permanently exclude an individual from military service or can be exclusionary unless specific criteria are made.

1 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ADHD is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood affecting 5-10% of children. Approximately 30-50% of children with ADHD will struggle with their ability to focus or demonstrate hyperactivity into adulthood. ADHD will exclude someone from military service unless the following conditions are met:

- The individual has not required an Individualized Education Program (IEP) at school or work accommodations since prior to age 14 years.
- The individual has no history of mental illness in addition to ADHD.
- The individual has not taken more than a single daily dosage of medication or has not been prescribed medication for ADHD for more than 24 cumulative months after the age of 14 years.



- After the age of 14 years, when off medication the individual can maintain a grade point average (GPA) above 2.0 without school accommodations.
- The individual has documentation from a doctor that medication is no longer required.
- The individual must enter and pass service-specific training periods without ADHD medications.

2 Autism or any pervasive developmental disorder (ASD):

Autism is a social communication disorder affecting 1 out of 60 children. Autism or any other diagnosis that was previously labeled a pervasive developmental disorder such as Asperger's syndrome or pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified exclude an individual from military service. Currently there are no specified criteria that would give a person with one of these diagnoses entrance into military service.



- 3 Seizures:** Seizures are common in children. Many will have a seizure as a young baby, especially with a fever, and never have another. A history of seizures can exclude someone from military service if they occur after the 6th birthday unless the individual is free from seizures for over 5 years without taking medication for their seizures. The individual must have a normal sleep-deprived electroencephalogram (EEG) and be cleared by a neurologist while not taking any medication for seizure control. Seizures that occur prior to age 6 and do not require daily medication to control the seizures do not exclude someone from military service.
- 4 Airway hyper-responsiveness:** This includes the diagnosis of asthma and related conditions such as reactive airway disease, exercise-induced bronchospasm, or asthmatic bronchitis that is diagnosed or symptomatic after age 13 years. These conditions are common occurrences in many children and teenagers, and many times children will grow out of the symptoms as they age. If an individual in the last 3 years has not required controller or rescue medications (even Albuterol), has not had any acute episodes that required medical treatment, has not needed oral steroids, and has had normal spirometry (in the last 90 days), then they are eligible for military service.
- 5 Learning disorders such as dyslexia:** Many children suffer from learning disorders. As long as the individual is able to demonstrate passing academic work or successful job performance without requiring academic or work accommodations after age 14 years, they are eligible for military service.
- 6 Headaches, including but not limited to migraines and tension headaches:** These types of headaches are common and affect many people; however, they can be exclusionary from military service if they fit certain criteria. Headaches will exclude someone from military service if they are severe enough to disrupt normal activities, such as missing school or work more than two times per year over the last two years or if the headaches have required prescription medication more than twice per year over the last two years. If the headaches cause any neurological findings other than scotoma (an alteration in the visual field), they will exclude an individual from military service.
- 7 Hypertension:** Anyone with current or medically managed hypertension is excluded from military service. Hypertension is defined as a systolic blood pressure greater than 140 mmHg and/or a diastolic pressure greater than 90 mmHg. The elevated reading must be confirmed by a manual blood pressure reading and must be confirmed on 2 or more consecutive days.
- 8 Other mental health disorders** such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, anorexia/bulimia, and obsessive compulsive disorder can preclude someone from being eligible for military service. Additionally, obesity and sleep disorders also can prevent eligibility for military services.

The above conditions are some of the more common conditions that affect young people who may be considering military service. This list is taken from the Medical Standards for Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction in the Military Services, which was revised in September, 2011. These regulations can change with time but are current as of the print date of this article. This information extends to all military services (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard). **The complete list of exclusionary diagnoses can be found in the DoDI 6130.3.** These standards apply to all applicants for appointment as a commissioned or warrant officer, in the active or reserve, as well as any applicant who is initially enlisting for military service. These standards are also applied to candidates for appointment for Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) or admission to a U.S. Service academy. There is a waiver process for applicants who have an exclusionary condition but desire consideration for military service.

Anyone interested in military service but diagnosed with any of the medical conditions above that may impact their eligibility for military service should speak with a recruiter for further information on the enlistment process.



Military Spouse Finds Fulfillment in Cycle of Care

We'll be highlighting one of our Military Student Transition Consultants in each issue. Amanda Ebner is serving our students in San Antonio, Texas!



MCEC 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 Ebner has seen the results of MSTCs personally. "MSTCs are a God-send for military families. I didn't know about them when we were active duty and moving so much. I had heard of SLOs but not someone who physically helps not only myself but my children's transitions in and out of schools, houses, communities, states, and countries," shared Amanda. MSTCs are in place to help with the entry of military families and students from the time they come into a community until the time they leave for another station. "It's a continual cycle of care from the beginning to the end," said Amanda.

around burns, amputees, families that have been separated, we've even had a couple that have passed away." Amanda continued, "I feel like I can help these families with that because I did it as a spouse."

The needs of military families and students vary, especially between elementary, middle, and high schools. "You really have to build a relationship with students. Some students aren't sure or may not even know what the problem is," said Amanda. She explained that some students may have a parent with PTSD or TBI, but perhaps their family hasn't talked about it yet. "They may know something is wrong but they don't really know what's wrong," shared

“You really have to build a relationship with students. Some students aren't sure or may not even know what the problem is.”

Support and needs for students vary by demographic location. "In San Antonio we have over 21,000 military students, and I am the only MSTC in the area," explained Amanda. She is located on Fort Sam Houston, but serves families throughout the Joint Base San Antonio area. "If counselors or teachers from other school districts call, I set up an appointment and go meet with them," stated Amanda. "We also conduct surveys of military families so I can see what the needs are at the moment."

Amanda has had firsthand experience with the challenges facing the families of wounded veterans. Her husband is an occupational therapist and has taken care of wounded warriors his whole career. "We have been raised

Amanda. She wants her students to know that she is available as a resource in whatever way they need.

Amanda is a great addition to the MCEC Military Student Transition Consultant program. Her background as a military spouse and mother has given her the experience needed to provide military and veteran-connected families the varying levels of support they need.

Moving and adjusting to a new school can be challenging for military students. Military Student Transition Consultants are here to address your questions and concerns, and plays a pivotal role in establishing collaboration among school systems, education agencies, public and private youth services, community groups, and installation resources.

For more information about MSTCs, visit: www.MilitaryChild.org/MSTC

MSTC

military student
transition consultant™

A Military Child Education Coalition® Initiative

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I Am Grateful

Soldiers across the land, protect you and me.
Not only in America, but across the great blue sea.

They travel to protect their people. They travel to
defend the land. Little do they know, their families
fear the unplanned.

Children far and wide look up to their parents'
actions. Someday they may follow the path,
and share a common satisfaction.

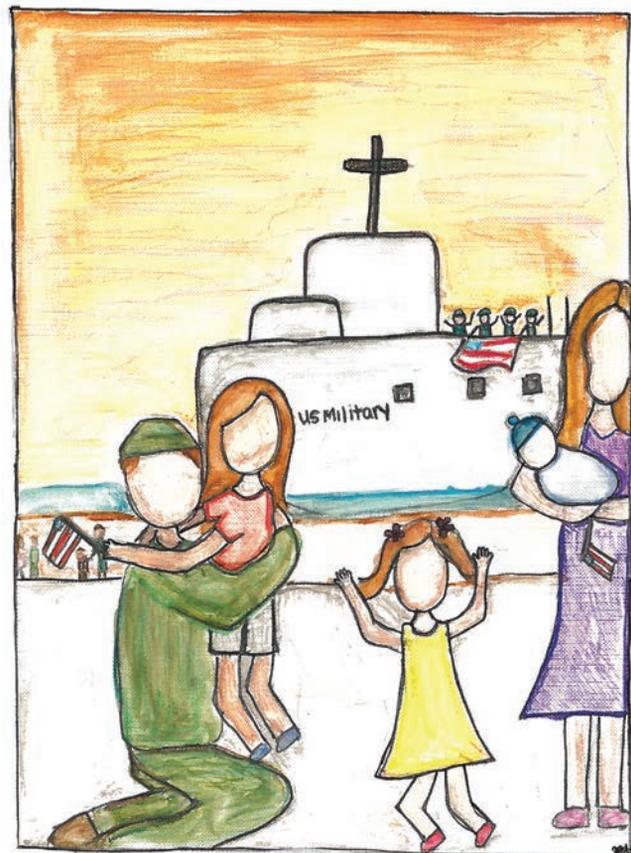
Welcoming soldiers home is emotional for all
attending. Saying goodbye is hard, but not an ending.

While children sit and roam, parents worry nightly.
But when my Dad came home, my smile had
shown brightly.

Fearless he can be, he proudly served our nation.
Though, I am grateful, to now have conversation.

Poem by Taylor, Grade 12 • Pleasant Ridge High School,
Leavenworth, KS • U.S. Army

Artwork by Abbey, Grade 7 • Virginia Beach Middle School,
Virginia Beach, VA • Civilian





Supporting Veterans' Children through Transitions

Over the next five years, more than 1 million service members will become Veterans and with their families begin their journey transitioning from military to civilian life.

FOR MANY VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES, reintegration is a complex, multifaceted process that involves finding a “new normal” in the realm of family relationships, wellness, and economic stability.

Thanks to a generous grant from the **Bob Woodruff Foundation**, MCEC has developed a new course designed to support Veterans' children through transitions. The course enables youth-serving educators, professionals, and parents to support the unique transition issues children face when their parents separate from the military, voluntarily or involuntarily.

This informative course explores and identifies the types of strengths and stressors faced by children of military service members as they relate to transitioning from military service to civilian life while coping with identified and/or unidentified combat-related illnesses of a parent. Course participants will have a statistically significant gain in professional insight, understanding, and access to resources that enhance the transition process for Veteran children experiencing the social-emotional impact of change.

Participants will earn CEUs while exploring the academic and social-emotional implications children may experience.

To learn more about this and other professional development courses, visit:

militarychild.org/professionals/programs

Learning Objectives:

- ▶ Explore and identify the academic and social-emotional implications for children and youth when their parents voluntarily or involuntarily transition from military to civilian life.
- ▶ Explore and identify the academic and social-emotional implications during military to civilian transition for children and youth whose military parents have died, been wounded, or have combat-related illnesses.
- ▶ Discover resources and integrate positive strategies to address implications of the military-to-civilian life transitions for children and youth.



Provider #: 1307336



Provider #: 6283



Provider #: 2586

Excellent Resources for Military-Connected Families

GREGORY LESKIN, PH.D. 

Director, NCTSN Military and Veteran Families
UCLA/Duke University National Center for Child
Traumatic Stress

Military children and youth learn how to thrive and adapt to change. An important part of being in a military family is adjusting to new situations, separations from friends and family, and moves to new locations. Sometimes military children face more difficult, and sometimes even stressful and traumatic experiences, such as the death or injury of a family member, motor vehicle accident, and natural disaster. Just like in the civilian community, military families and children can also experience physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Military families and children have many options to gain the support of helping professionals and peer specialists to prevent and address the physical and emotional toll of these traumatic stressors.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) Military and Veteran Families program proudly partners with the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) to offer resources and materials to help professionals and military family members. NCTSN is a national network of highly experienced clinical experts who provide evidence-based treatments to families and children who have experienced child traumatic stress. Serving military and veteran families is a priority for the NCTSN, including providing educational resources to help support military families and children. These materials can be viewed and downloaded from



the NCTSN Military and Veteran Families website. The materials are neatly organized into the following sections:

- Overview of Military Families and Children
- Military and Veteran Culture
- Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence
- Evidence-based Practices for Military and Veteran Families
- Military Families Across Service Systems
- Grief and Loss Issues
- Providing Services and Programs

The NCTSN website is home to a number of outstanding presentations, including TED talks and panel presentations, developed through a partnership with MCEC. These wonderful presentations serve as an important resource for mental health providers, educators, and policy makers supporting our service members, veterans, and their families.



Web Links

NCTSN Learning Center for Child and Adolescent Trauma:
<http://learn.nctsn.org/military>

NCTSN Resources for Military and Veteran Families:
<http://www.nctsn.org/resources/topics/military-children-and-families>

NCTSN Resources for School Personnel:
<http://www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/school-personnel>

For questions, please contact militaryfamilies@nctsn.org.

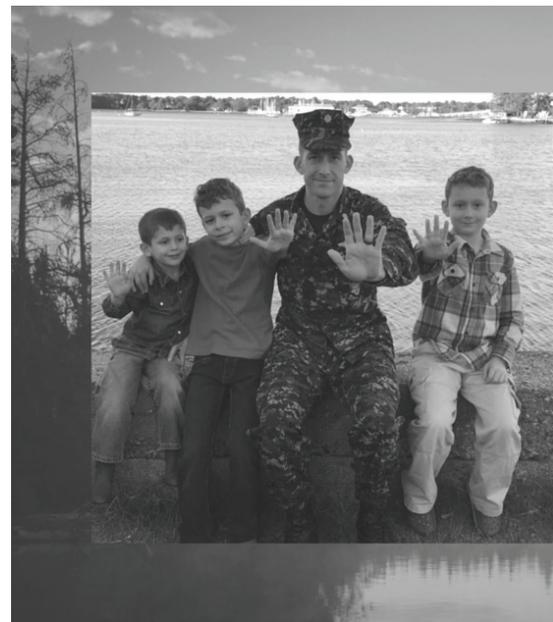


Military Families Can Help Change the Culture of Mental Health

BARBARA VAN DAHLEN, PH.D.
Founder and President, Give an Hour

Mental health isn't a military issue: One in five Americans has a diagnosable mental health condition (SAMHSA 2014). But the men, women, and families who serve our country face challenges, stress, and sometimes horrific trauma that place them at significant risk for the development of mental health struggles and emotional suffering. In addition, our military families are like all families: They bring with them family histories and life experiences that leave them either more or less vulnerable to the development of these challenges.

On March 4, 2015, **Give an Hour™** — a national nonprofit organization providing free mental health care to those who serve, their families, and their communities — launched a national initiative to change the culture of mental health in America. Called the *Campaign to Change Direction*, this effort brings together concerned citizens and communities as well as corporate, government, and nonprofit partners in a nationwide movement with the following objectives: *to create a common language about the signs of emotional suffering; to ensure that mental health is seen as having equal value to physical health; and to encourage all Americans to*





pay attention to their mental well-being and to the mental well-being of those they love.

Creating a common language that everyone can understand is a critical step in changing the culture of mental health in our country. Often our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and even family members are suffering emotionally and don't recognize the symptoms or won't ask

The Five Signs are withdrawal, agitation, hopelessness, decline in personal care, and change in personality.

There is a critical need to engage youth in this conversation. We know that one-half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, three-quarters by age 24 (NIMH 2005). Over 50 percent of students age 14 and older with a mental disorder drop out of high school — the highest dropout rate of any disability group (NAMI 2011). Not only are the youngest members of our

One in Five Americans has a diagnosable mental health condition



for help. By learning five key signs of emotional distress, we can reach out, connect, and offer to help. We can show compassion, caring, and a willingness to find a solution.

society directly affected, but they also represent an important voice in this effort. By reaching out to students, as well as teachers and administrators, the campaign will spark a discussion that will reduce suffering and save lives.

Culture change takes time, but we know what it looks like. There have been many successful cultural shifts in the last 50 years. There was a time when cars didn't have seatbelts, and no one talked about cancer publicly. Now every car on the road has seatbelts and air bags, and people wear their yellow wristbands and pink ribbons proudly. Not too long ago there were no "designated drivers," and communities all across the country lost far too many young people in drunk driving accidents. Now responsible young adults identify the person who will forgo drinking before the gash heads out to the party or bar.

Give an Hour and our partners in this collective impact effort will continue to do the heavy lifting as we grow this movement, but we can all do our part. We can all learn the Five Signs. We can teach our kids, start conversations with friends, and put posters up in classrooms, dorm rooms, offices, and community spaces.

Together, we can Change Direction. To learn more, visit www.changedirection.org

the campaign to
changedirection

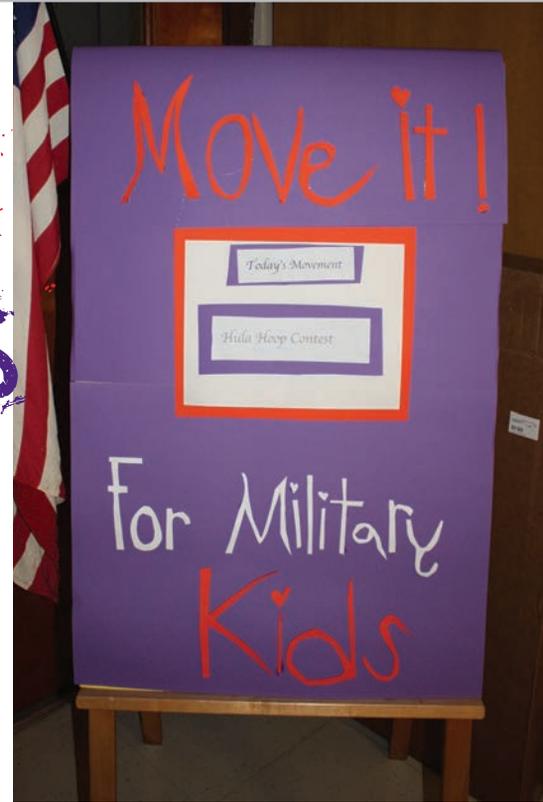
Pledge to know the Five Signs

If you recognize that someone in your life is suffering, now what? You connect, reach out, inspire hope, and offer help.

www.changedirection.org



MOVE IT! FOR MILITARY KIDS



Nutrition and exercise are critical elements in the growth of strong and healthy children. In the last 50 years, the prevalence of obesity in the United States has more than tripled in children ages 6 to 11 and doubled in children ages 2 to 5 and 12 to 19.

In October 2015, MCEC developed a *Move It! For Military Kids* Campaign to get kids moving. School districts, students, teachers, and others from all over the country participated in this effort. Participants pledged to run, read, bike, hike, do a headstand, or whatever activity they chose to support military kids.

Fire Island School District in Ocean Beach, N.Y., created a whole week of student activities to participate in the *Move It! For Military Kids* Campaign. Here is what their week looked like:



- MONDAY: PE's Top 10 Fitness Favorites
- TUESDAY: Mystery Hike
- WEDNESDAY: Yoga with the Principal
- THURSDAY: Boot Camp Challenge
- FRIDAY: Hula Hoop Contest



NICE WORK FIRE ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT!



MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Meet Jennifer!

Determination develops from resolve and purpose and is a characteristic of many military children.

Jennifer is an active sophomore in high school whose father is in the Marine Corps. She enjoys playing soccer and basketball for her school, and in her free time she enjoys surfing, paddle boarding, and hiking. Jennifer volunteers at a local home for the disabled and as a result has seen firsthand how much the nurses mean to the patients. For this reason, Jennifer plans to pursue a career as a health professional in the military to serve her nation and help people.

Jennifer likes being a military child because of the memories and experiences she has had. "Even though it may be tough sometimes, it is overall a good life," she shared. Jennifer has many support systems in place including her family, friends, teachers, and coaches, but life as a military child can still be challenging. "What I find challenging about being a military child is losing friendships and not having my father around most of the time," shared Jennifer. She continued, "What I love about being a military child is being able to experience different places and cultures, meet interesting people, and get to know different ways of life."



"Even though it may be tough sometimes, it is overall a good life."

Jennifer has moved three times and shared that she has access to many resources to help her with any challenges she may have. After high school, Jennifer plans on attending college and pursuing a career in the medical field.



Math

GLU STICK

Growing Learning Understanding

Learning Connections "Made to Stick" for Grades 3-5

Be your child's best advocate!



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Parent Trainer and Son Benefit from M&E Materials

Parent to Parent™ Program Manager, Judy Glennon, has been working with parent teams for almost seven years. She has taught parent trainers the skills and information needed to provide informative and interactive parent workshops to groups and organizations in local communities. One such trainer, Tara Gleason, was able to detect a learning disorder in her son as a result of the information she researched and learned from being a *Parent to Parent* trainer. Her candid letter to Judy and CEO, Dr. Mary Keller, demonstrates the struggle, detection, and journey of her son Cameron's learning disability.



Dear Mary and Judy,

Tonight I write to you not as a *Parent to Parent* trainer, but as a parent whose life has been changed from the content that I have had the honor to research, write, read and teach during my six and a half years with the *Parent to Parent* program. Today was a monumental day for our family. We learned through extensive testing at a specialized facility that my son Cameron has dyslexia at 5 years old. Typically, dyslexia is not diagnosed until second grade, by which point, in my experience while teaching elementary school, children have already endured years of frustration and educational struggles resulting in disliking learning and school. The doctor told us today that the early detection of this reading disability and the interventions that we will be able to put into place will literally change his brain functioning and will have a lifelong impact for him.

Last year, I was preparing to market our *School Transitions with Special Needs* workshop to a local school. I hadn't previously taught this particular workshop and in order to present its material appropriately I read through the extensive supplemental materials which we often use for handouts. During the process of that, I came across a paper about learning disabilities and a light bulb went off. As I read the words on the page, I realized that my own son showed the signs of having a learning disability.

My lifelong passion and focus has been on children, development and education. My previous background and the years of additional experience I've gained in working with parents and children in the early childhood age group, through teaching our workshops, alerted me early on that he operated differently than his peers, but I really didn't know more due to a limited exposure to special education. I immediately contacted his early childhood special education teacher and she affirmed my suspicions that she also believed he had a learning disability.

Throughout my time with *Parent to Parent*, I had the opportunity to partner with the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) program while presenting different workshops here at Fort Leonard Wood, Fort Knox and Fort Carson. That established relationship helped ease our transition and clear up misconceptions about EFMP as we joined the ranks of a group we never expected to be a part of. As parents with no family history of any child with exceptional needs, we really didn't know what to expect when we no longer were the leader, teacher or the trainer offering support to other families, but



we became the family in need of information and support. If I had not been a part of this program, the testing and screenings that we have been implementing for the past two years trying to identify his social and educational needs might have been delayed which in turn would have delayed his exposure to early intervention.

I could go into more detail about how all my children have benefited from our Early Literacy workshops as I practiced them when I joined my first team and tried to shift gears to teaching a younger audience with their parents. Each one of my children learned baby sign language as a direct result of our workshop, which lead to decreased fussiness and better communication. We have had smoother transitions because of our *Portfolios* and *Kindergarten Readiness* workshops. I have expanded my knowledge about education and child development through our *Preparing for the Journey* series and *Learning through Play*. Teaching and additional research for those workshops helped me identify other missed social milestones and weak bilateral coordination for Cameron along with positively impacting my ability to teach my two other children and better meet their early educational needs. The list could go on and on.

It is my belief that I am not alone. Our workshops have made a personal impact for each trainer as we journey through being parents of military impacted children. We each have a unique story to tell of how our children's lives have improved because of what we have learned during our time with the Military Child Education Coalition *Parent to Parent* program. I will forever be indebted and grateful.

As a parent I thank you for the hard work that you continue to do on a daily basis for military families. When I was writing my thesis in graduate school I wanted to write it about how multiple moves impacted military children. At that time there was not enough current research available to write on that topic. Now in 2015, we know that research is available. People are noticing and researching challenges military children face and working to find ways to serve our highly mobile students. The MCEC plays a big part in that. I look forward to continuing to partner with this amazing organization.

Thank you, thank you, thank you,

Tara Gleason

Bring the MCEC Parent to Parent Program to your Community!



Parent to Parent[™] empowers parents to be their child's strongest advocate on educational and social issues through informative and interactive parent workshops.

MCEC has developed a one-day Parent Education Seminar to provide a cost-effective way for all communities to access these workshops.

Parent to Parent trainers will come to your community with high-quality resources and strategies to aid your military and veteran-connected parents in supporting the children of those who serve us all.

Workshops Include:

School Transitions: What Every Parent Should Know

Building Resiliency Skills during Deployments and Transitions

Preparing for the Journey

Keys to Success in Elementary School

Chart Your Course for Success in High School and Beyond

Other workshop topics are available upon request. To discuss the needs of your community and funding, contact: Judy.Glennon@MilitaryChild.org.

Many resources are available online for parents through www.MilitaryChild.org, homeroom.militarychild.org, and www.schoolquest.org.



Push *through* the Change

A father and daughter reflect on a lifetime of experiences.



IN THE SUMMER OF 2013, LTC Eric M. Flake, M.D., FAAP, US Air Force, and his family moved to Washington state. Daughter, Sierra, began school at Steilacoom High School and wanted what most kids want, to make friends. “I love being a military kid,” shared Sierra. “It has made me who I am. I wouldn’t have these experiences and have met these people if we weren’t part of the military.” Her feelings, as expressed by her father, were an interesting phenomenon as Sierra wasn’t always that way. “Sierra initially didn’t have tendencies to want to move. When we left a friend’s house she would break down. If we left a situation she was happy being in, it was hard for her to transition. So it’s interesting now because something that could have been a weakness and

limited her became something, as she got older, she now thrives on and embraces,” shared Eric. Sierra’s life as a military child enabled her to develop skills of resilience and perseverance, something Eric noted was consistent was many of the skills military kids are able to acquire.

Sierra expressed that every move for her and her siblings had been difficult for unique reasons. “It takes about a year to settle in, and at about two years you start thinking that we’re going to move again and I have to let go.” Sierra continued, “But what these moves do for us is show us how to push through the change and make the best of the situation. Even though it’s hard, we cope with it.” Eric shared that most children will have difficulties early on with transitions, and each will

express it in different ways. “You want to protect your children, but you bring your family along with your career’s progressions,” said Eric. Eric and his family are thankful for the emotional support of other military families and their faith as well as other factors such as bonding over sports teams. “It hasn’t been without challenges, and we have needed to look outside of just our family unit and to those who can help make a difference and help define what this new normal is,” expressed Eric.

When Eric first mentioned the MCEC *Student 2 Student*® (S2S™) program to Sierra, she did not have a positive reaction to the idea. Sierra felt that she was older and more prepared for this move. “I thought ‘I don’t need their help making friends.’ I was convinced that they were going to feel like it was



a chore. I didn't want people to think they had to be my friend," expressed Sierra. Now as an S2S member, Sierra has made it her mission to make sure people know that the way she used to feel is no longer the case. "They are amazing people who actually really

believes communication and the ability to connect with your child is of utmost importance. "I feel the most rewarding thing as a parent is to be able to feel like that has happened." Eric continued, "We debrief and have meetings and huddles. In the day of electronics,

family members are your best friends, you get to bring your best friends with you when you move," shared Sierra. Her family uses everyday activities like walking the dog as an opportunity to talk about challenges, frustrations, and accomplishments. "There's been times of

"It takes about a year to settle in, and at about two years you start thinking that we're going to move again and I have to let go."

want to be there for students."

With five children and eight moves under the Flake family belt, Sierra has attended a DODEA, public, private, and homeschool. Eric explained that the challenges with moves are like climbing a mountain. "I think you get over the hill; then you have this beautiful view, and the empowerment of 'hey, I can do this' kicks in, and then you can take on other challenges," he shared. Eric

the need to develop the skills of communication and to be connected emotionally is the most critical piece for our military families."

When Sierra was younger, she wasn't the most enthusiastic about her family discussions. However, as she grew up, she felt the conversations helped build trust and a strong relationship with her family. "It's great to be a part of a family that I can trust, and when your

tears and frustrations where you feel like you're failing, but you push through the change. There are also times when you look outside the family," shared Eric.

Sierra and her dad are a part of a communicative, supportive family. They look both inside and outside of their family for support and use their challenges to their advantage. They are a model family for continued perseverance and determination.





Sesame Street

for Military Families

Transitions



For almost a decade, MCEC and Sesame Street® have partnered on challenges impacting military and veteran-connected children and their families. Sesame’s mission is aligned with MCEC in supporting educational opportunities for children while simultaneously addressing needs that resonate specifically within military communities such as deployment, separation, and transition. MCEC has participated on Sesame’s Advisory Committee addressing such challenges and both organizations have been vital in providing fundamental resources to the community.

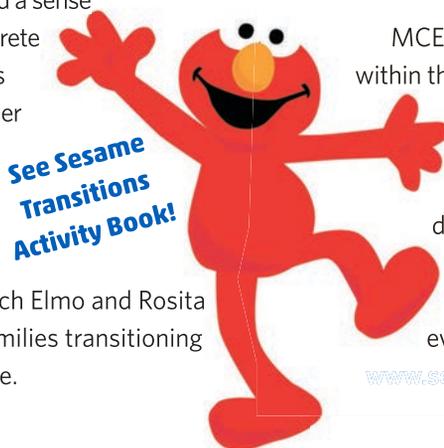
Sesame has recently introduced the Sesame Street for Military Families: Transitions initiative, a new, research-based resource packed with multimedia materials supporting families throughout milestones of military life. Sesame heard from families that they needed simple strategies to help children through multiple changes, such as moving and drastic changes in daily routines. They found there were many resources on this milestone for the military service member, but there was a gap—it was hard to find resources that spoke to children and the rest of the family.

Sesame convened an advisory board and conducted focus groups to help determine key needs and messages to engage families. They heard from experts and active duty members from all branches, spouses, veterans, child care providers, and other service providers in the military community. Parents wanted materials that conveyed a sense of optimism and provided concrete ways to help reframe change as an adventure, support each other through the transition, and keep communication open within the family.

Sesame developed and created new materials in which Elmo and Rosita present new resources for families transitioning from active duty to civilian life.

With funding from the Bristol-Meyers Squibb Foundation, Sesame created a suite of materials:

- **My Story, My Big Adventure Activity Book:** A printed kids’ keepsake book with interactive pages to support them in their transition and to help parents and kids to get engaged in conversation/activity around the transition and create excitement around it. Printable pages are also available on their Website.
- **10 New Videos:** Videos include an “It’s an Adventure” music video, Elmo’s interviews with kids, an animated piece, and parents sharing their experiences.
- **The Adventure Campaign:** a series of newsletters for parents and providers who sign up.
- **Implementation Toolkits:** to help partner organizations spread the word about these resources on social media, in newsletters and other communications, at meetings, and more.
- **Website:** www.sesamestreet.org/veterans is where all Transitions project content lives, including activities for kids, articles for parents, and videos. Additional multimedia resources on the topics of military deployments, multiple deployments, homecomings, injuries, grief, and self-expression can be found on ss4mf.org.



MCEC supports Sesame in addressing the challenges within the military community. Their new initiative provides interactive support and resources that speak to children and the family. Check out their resources for families transitioning from active duty to civilian life, in addition to their previous initiatives addressing milestones and life changes such as deployments, homecomings, injuries, and even grief. To view Sesame transition resources, visit:

www.sesamestreet.org/veterans.



Join us at the Military Child Education Coalition® 18th National Training Seminar

GRIT. DETERMINATION. PERSEVERANCE.

Military Kids: Tomorrow's Trailblazers.

GRIT is a product of passion and determination. **DETERMINATION** flows from resolve and purpose. **PERSEVERANCE** allows one to overcome obstacles. These characteristics or personality traits can produce resilience and contribute to strong character development, particularly in military- and veteran-connected children. Extended separations, repeated deployments, and multiple transitions create social-emotional and academic stress and challenges for our students. This year's National Training Seminar will feature nationally-recognized speakers and breakout sessions to provide effective practices to encourage character development, provide systems of support, and inspire educational practices to foster innovation in all military- and veteran-connected children. By providing the fundamentals to develop grit, determination, and perseverance, we will help our military kids become tomorrow's trailblazers.

NEW FOR 2016: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES!

Hear from experts on cutting-edge, research-informed topics addressing the challenges faced by our 4 million military and veteran-connected children.

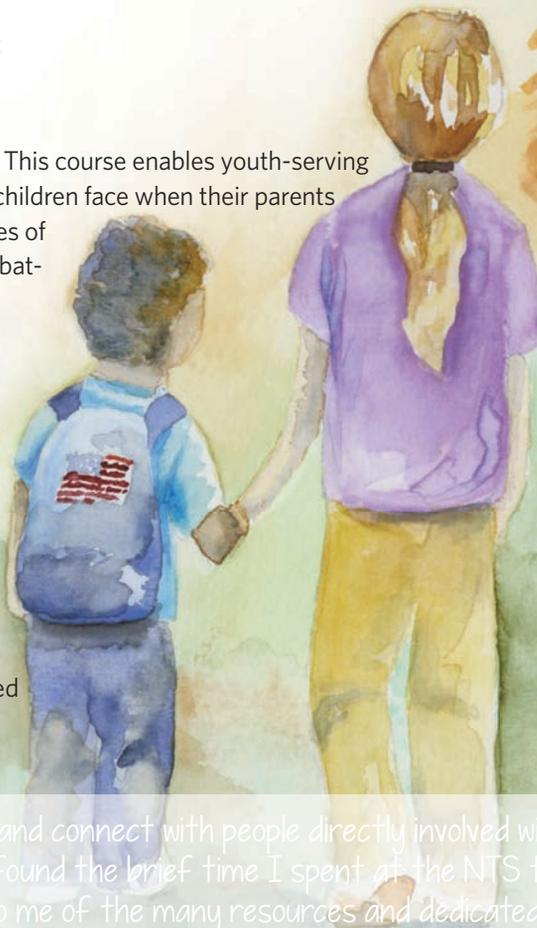
- Earn 6 clock hours of continuing education credits
- Network with professionals
- Fulfill your professional development requirement

Courses Offered:

Supporting Veterans' Children through Transitions™: This course enables youth-serving participants to support the unique transitional issues children face when their parents separate from the military. It will address the challenges of children whose parents have died or experienced combat-related injuries and illnesses.

Helping Military Children Discover Their S.P.A.R.C.: Strength, Potential, Aspirations, Resourcefulness, Confidence™: This course 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.

The Journey from "Welcome Home" to Now: Reunion, Reconnecting, Routine™: This course teaches professionals who support military-connected children and youth the challenges and joys that children face during a time of reintegration.

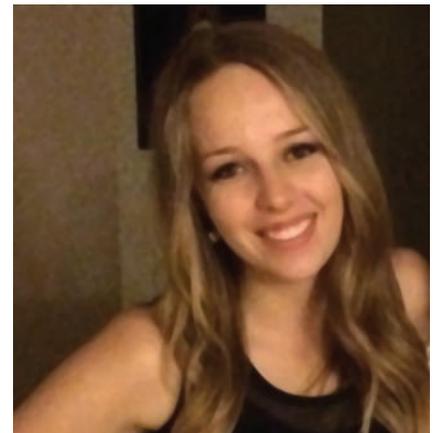


"I had the opportunity to meet, network and connect with people directly involved with military families. It was a valuable experience for our team. I found the brief time I spent at the NTS to be really informative, and it opened an awareness to me of the many resources and dedicated people who are working to help our military families." - NTS Participant



EXCEPTIONAL CHARACTER & COMMITMENT

Following the events of September 11, 2001, Lynnzie Leavitt’s father, who was Activated National Guard, deployed and landed in Iraq on her 12th birthday. “We had 2 weeks’ notice about his deployment,” shared Lynnzie. With only one other military-connected student in her school, it was a tough transition. Lynnzie felt as if no one around her knew what was going on about the war – or understood it. “Another National Guard unit in the area had recently returned from Afghanistan. I walked into the grocery store one day to see yellow ribbon magnets in the clearance bin. People just didn’t realize there were other soldiers in the community that were still deploying,” shared Lynnzie.



In 2008, when her father was in Afghanistan, Lynnzie learned that a large number of single soldiers were not receiving packages. She became involved with the National Honor Society and organized a fundraiser to send these soldiers gifts. “I put up a flyer about the project in a classroom. The teacher actually walked up to me and suggested that we do another project. He had heard about the transition out of Iraq and assumed all the soldiers were home,” explained Lynnzie. Frequent situations like that were the driving force behind her

college. In her junior year of high school, Lynnzie’s counselor told her about the Daniels Fund Scholarship, a four-year college scholarship for graduating high school seniors who demonstrate exceptional character, leadership, and a commitment to serving their communities. After writing eight essays over the Thanksgiving break, she got a call for an interview. “I told them that I was passionate about helping military families. I really just wanted to help people find and use the resources available to them – there are lots of resources that go unused

CT at the time, told her what a great military community Killeen had. Lynnzie explained that there was a small military community in Utah. She shared that it was different to live in a military community and be taught by professors who taught Veterans than to learn about them in a text book. “We lived in a small non-military community growing up, so I was excited to be in an area where there were a lot of military and in a school that supported Veterans.”

Lynnzie had family members in the area when she moved to Texas, but they had a

“BILL DANIELS WANTED TO SEND KIDS TO COLLEGE WHO WANTED TO MAKE A CHANGE IN THEIR COMMUNITY. OTHER MILITARY KIDS SHOULD KNOW THIS IS OUT THERE. IT CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR ME.”

involvement with the military community. Lynnzie contacted the National Guard Youth Program and began volunteering everywhere she could. “I love being with other military kids because I remember how isolated I felt. There are so many resources available, that shouldn’t happen,” shared Lynnzie. Lynnzie knew she wanted to work with military families to help them find resources in their communities. A first-generation scholar, she also knew she wanted to attend

because people just don’t know about them,” said Lynnzie. Her passion shone through because she received a full scholarship. “Bill Daniels wanted to send kids to college who wanted to make a change in their community. Other military kids should know this is out there. It changed everything for me.” She began her study at the University of Utah, but later transferred to Texas A&M University-Central Texas (TAMU-CT) after her uncle, who was attending TAMU-

permanent change of station (PCS) three months after she arrived. She remained in the area on her own. She hoped when she got to Texas she could focus more on Veterans and she has. She has volunteered at the USO frequently, but finding a job with part time hours has proved difficult. Lynnzie currently works full time at the courthouse in addition to being a full time student. Her hard work and motivation is inspiring and hopefully encourages others to follow their goals.



A Dual Military Family in Action

A testament to making a dual-military family work, Battalion Commander, LTC Lu Wilson, and her husband, LTC Ty Wilson, Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment/ Assault Response Prevention (SHARP) Program Manager, have four children under the age of 10. Recently relocated to Fort Carson, Lu and Ty are excited to be in a town that they feel “really embraces their military.”

“My dad was in the Air Force, but we weren’t on the move like other families. Ty’s father was a career Army Officer, and his mother always said, ‘33 years and 28 moves,’” shared Lu.

they were fortunate enough to bring their nanny from El Paso and have some of their friends from the last station relocate to Fort Carson as well, so the children still have the same friends and adults in their lives. “I also have family here, so their routine and lives are mostly the same.”

Lu was selected for a black book assignment this summer in the Washington, D.C., area so this will be the second move that her children will remember. “We will move this summer, and I anticipate that it will be a lot different for the kids as they are now at a stage of consciousness. They won’t get to take their friends and their tree house with them to the next station. It will be good, but the city effect will be new and a little bit more challenging,” said Lu.

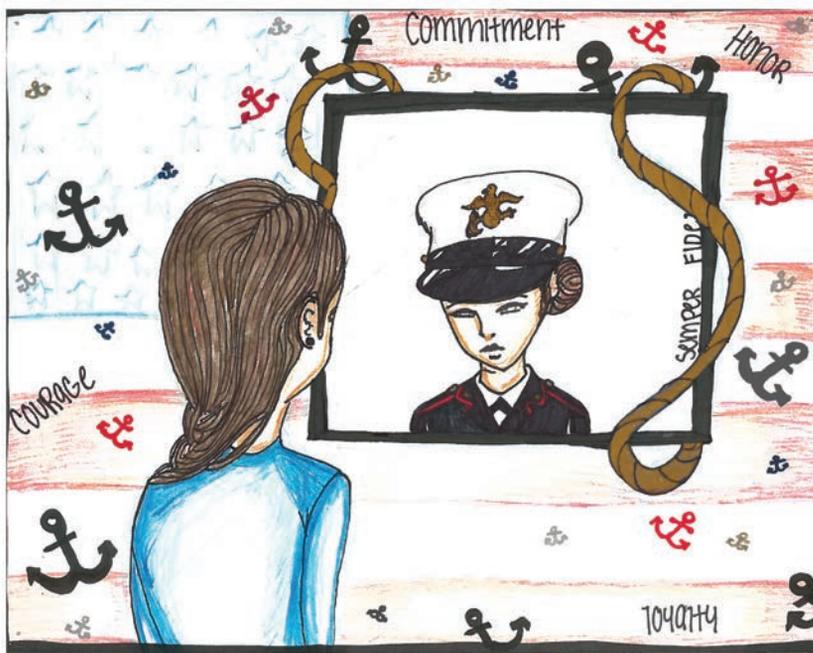
Military and veteran-connected children are inherently resilient.

Their changing environments create unique experiences within diverse cultures. “I feel like kids will respond to their environments. They will follow the lead of their parents. If we are hypersensitive and challenged by the circumstance, our children will be. If we get in stride and normalize the transition as much as possible, they will get in step,” Lu illustrated. She looks forward to the opportunity for her children to be “city kids” in the nation’s capital, as the majority of their lives they have resided in the South. “They have a healthy appreciation for hiking and exploring, but what will be really exceptional in their formative little brains is that

If we are hypersensitive and challenged by the circumstance, our children will be. If we get in stride and normalize the transition as much as possible, they will get in step.

With several moves already under their belts, Lu and Ty’s children haven’t been greatly impacted thus far because of their ages. “My kids are so little that they haven’t been fully aware of the changes. This last move was the first move that they can remember,” explained Lu. She went on to share that

they will be immersed in American culture and history. We can jump on public transit and go to the Smithsonian or the Capitol.” Lu continued, “They will really become true citizens and start understanding why we hold American values dear and why we are military servants.”



How the Marine Corps Prepared Me

NICOLE SMITH

Reprinted with permission from the author.

In some ways, the military helped prepare me to be a teacher. Here are some of the parallels I have found (not in a particular order of importance or relevance):

1. *You are always on duty.*

Although there are definite work hours, the work always creeps into personal life.

I used to shine boots, prep uniforms, work out, and look out for fellow Marines in my off time. I could also be called back to the base on short notice for some emergency. I am glad to say I am no longer called back to my work station with only an hour's notice. Now my work just follows me around, whether I am at school, at home, or at a family gathering. I find I need to quickly respond to a parent email, administrative question, or student concern. In order to be effective, teachers and military members know "you are always on duty."

2. *"Not my job" or "I did not have time" is not an acceptable excuse.*

Mission accomplishment is always a theme in the military. We all worked towards goals/missions at the platoon level, company level, and other levels so every action contributed toward the greater mission of protecting the U.S. Constitution against all enemies. Educators do not take an oath of service, but the dedication to a greater goal is always present in our daily actions. This goes beyond having a lesson planned for each day in class. I'm often humbled when I find out another teacher gave up his or her own time to help a new teacher develop a lesson during off hours, or stayed after school for an hour or two just to help another student, and then went home to finish the planning and grading for the next day. I know so many teachers who spend extra hours making phone calls, visiting homes, and contacting community organizations to advocate for kids and education.

I really don't like talking about my military service. I am definitely proud to have volunteered and served in the Marine Corps; yet my honorable discharge reminds me of so many who gave so much more. I am not a hero, but I have served with heroes.

It's still odd to be asked about my service. At least half of my friends have a connection to the military. To me, it's not special: it's life. If you truly believe in something, you don't talk about it, you act on it. That attitude led me to the Marine Corps in 2001. When I left the service after four years of active duty, I knew I wanted to stay true to my ideals and make a positive difference, but I wasn't sure how to achieve that goal.

It took years for me to settle on what I would do with my life to impact the world. After all, what's "impossible" to a Marine?

I realized education has been my passion since I was a child. I have pictures of myself tutoring my little brother, my 5th grade classmates, and even my fellow Marines in my MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) school. I am soft-spoken, but nothing makes me raise my voice louder than the education debate in America and the focus on symptoms of a problem, as opposed to the root of the problem (that's another article). My own convictions and background made the choice to become a teacher quite clear.

Fast forward several years after I earned my honorable discharge. Shortly after taking charge of my own class for the first time, I found myself using skills and mindsets I learned in the Marines. There are definitely some differences, but there are also similarities which may surprise you.

Artwork by Tia, Grade 9 • Bayside High School, Virginia Beach, VA
U.S. Marines



ps Me for *teaching*

3. A strong team is invaluable.

Both jobs call for new blood to bring energy and fresh perspectives. Experienced team members and leaders bring wisdom and guidance to direct new passions. In the military, a fresh-eyed private is excited and ready to prove himself. The wisdom of experienced sergeants or officers is there to help guide the private and his efforts to remain safe and be an effective member of the team. For beginning teachers, the excitement of reaching kids in new ways often puts a new spin on old practices. The expert advice and support of mentors and other teachers helps to add depth to those inspiring lessons. Experienced teachers are there to reassure new teachers after a less-than perfect day. Being a part of an effective team makes us all stronger. Because the strength of the team helps us achieve our goals, it's easy to see why high standards are the norm for teachers and service members.

4. People hold you to a higher standard.

Marines are taught that a Marine is always on duty, while upholding the highest standards of integrity and civility. I've seen Marines get in trouble for the appearance of unprofessional behavior, such as being impolite to civilians, even when they are technically off duty or even off base. These rules also apply to teachers, and even legal behavior does not always meet the standards of professionalism a teacher should uphold. Because of the inherent status as a role model, good teachers are careful about social media posts and public behavior. Effective teachers model professional behavior at all times.

5. The job isn't based solely on monetary compensation.

In the military, it is hard to find a reasonable salary for someone who voluntarily places her life on the line to protect the greater good. For educators, it is almost a requirement to work CEO hours for junior employee pay. Teachers believe the work is too important not to approach it with passion and purpose. Despite the sometimes misguided political decisions about compensation, benefits, and working conditions of public servants, our work is incredibly important.

6. Clear standards and consistency across borders create stability and security.

Whenever a service member steps foot on a new base, he knows there are orders, processes, and rules which do not change. These processes give a sense of security. This certainty also extends to family members of an active duty person. Until recently, the certainty of military dependents did not extend to school systems. Standards varied wildly from state to state, and a move between districts meant cultural changes and curriculum changes. I am glad we are now moving towards removing this type of uncertainty with the Common Core State Standards. Clear standards of what each student should know and be able to do at each grade level help to make sure all students receive the same high quality education across the U.S.

So there you have it, my take on the similarities between military life and "teacher life." Other similarities between active duty and teaching include: the need for situational awareness (or the need to have eyes in the back of my head); spectacularly sensational (and wrong) portrayals of my job on the big screen; and the need to realize my everyday actions greatly affect people outside of my immediate family and myself. I still push myself and those left in my care to be our personal best.

Lastly, **I'm proud to work with so many people who stress over how our children are treated, cared for, and educated.** I work with people who literally stay up late and wake up early to reach every child they can every day. I'm not sure if I'm anything special, but I am happy to say I still work with heroes.

Nicole Smith is a proud U.S. Marine Corps veteran, mother, and high school math teacher at Mooresville Senior High School in North Carolina. She has been teaching for two years and is a member of the Center for Teaching Quality Collaboratory. Connect with Nicole on Twitter @SmittyLovesMath.



The Evolution of Ladonna on PBS's *Arthur*

VANESSA WIEGEL
Coordinating Producer, WGBH Boston



SINCE 1996, children and their families have tuned in to PBS's *Arthur* for funny and authentic portrayals of childhood life. Kids see themselves in our characters, identifying with their challenges, hopes, and dreams. As such, our team has endeavored to feature a diverse array of characters with whom kids of different backgrounds and abilities can identify. A wonderful example of this can be seen with the character of Ladonna Compson.

The brainchild of *Arthur* head writer, Peter K. Hirsch, Ladonna is loosely based on an actual girl of the same name. Confident and adventurous, the real Ladonna loved the outdoors and often challenged the then 11-year-old Peter to arm wrestling duels (which she would always win). From this, Peter crafted and developed the character of Ladonna Compson, introducing her at the start of Season 16.

When we meet her, Ladonna is

just settling into her new hometown of Elwood City. While she initially struggles to make new friends, she soon gains her footing, winning over Arthur with her warmth, vivacity, and penchant for telling amazing stories.

In the episodes since, we have had the opportunity to further develop Ladonna's character and that of her family, which includes two brothers, an older sister, and a mother and father. Being the daughter of an army colonel,



KIDS SEE THEMSELVES IN OUR CHARACTERS, IDENTIFYING WITH THEIR CHALLENGES, HOPES, AND DREAMS. AS SUCH, OUR TEAM HAS ENDEAVORED TO FEATURE A DIVERSE ARRAY OF CHARACTERS WITH WHOM KIDS OF DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND ABILITIES CAN IDENTIFY.

I had always wanted to feature a military family on *Arthur* and pitched the idea during a brainstorm for our 18th season. Ladonna and her family were a natural fit for this, and so we expanded her backstory, revealing to viewers that her dad was a member of the Army Corps of Engineers in the two-part special “Shelter from the Storm.”

In the episode, Ladonna’s dad is called up when Elwood City is badly damaged by a passing hurricane. With no end

she focuses on helping others affected by the storm. Sensing her disappointment, however, Ladonna’s family and friends converge around her in a show of support and throw her a surprise birthday party. Ladonna is incredibly touched and her dad is even able to make a short cameo, much to Ladonna’s surprise and delight.

Through this episode, and others, Ladonna has become an important member of the *Arthur* family. She will continue to feature prominently in upcoming seasons, including in a new episode I recently wrote in which she helps a new student (and fellow military child) adjust to life in Elwood City. We sincerely hope that her grit, determination, and perseverance — characteristics possessed by so many military children — will serve as inspiration to all of our viewers, especially those in military-connected families. Additionally, we hope to shed light on the unique challenges faced by military kids and, in turn, empower our viewers to be better friends and classmates to those military-connected kids in their own communities.

As a final note, I would like to thank the Military Child Education Coalition and our longtime advisor Dr. Paula K. Rauch for their assistance in helping us bring the stories of military-connected children, like Ladonna, to families across the U.S. We look forward to continuing to spread awareness for this vital segment of our community in the years ahead.

...WE HOPE TO SHED LIGHT ON THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES FACED BY MILITARY KIDS AND, IN TURN, EMPOWER OUR VIEWERS TO BE BETTER FRIENDS AND CLASSMATES TO THOSE MILITARY CONNECTED KIDS IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.

date in sight, it is unclear if he will return home in time for Ladonna’s upcoming birthday. Though she puts on a brave face, Ladonna is secretly disappointed and decides she’s just not going to celebrate her birthday without him. Instead,

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FINDING YOUR *own* WAY TO SERVE



Vanessa Wiegel, coordinating producer for WGBH, grew up a military child. Her father served in the Army for 30 years and retired as a Colonel.

“LEADERSHIP AND SERVING OTHERS WAS INSTILLED IN ME AT A VERY YOUNG AGE,” shared Vanessa.

“My parents met the late Major General George Patton and his wife through the West Point Society soon after I was born” Vanessa explained. The general would invite Vanessa’s family, along with other West Point alums, for a picnic at their farm every summer. “In the house, there was a room filled with military photos, medals, and other memorabilia from the Major General and his father,

using media to both foster discussion on important topics, as well as touch people on an emotional level.” It was an easy decision for Vanessa to join WGBH because she grew up on the shows they produced and Vanessa believed WGBH created, “... important quality educational television.”

During her eight years at WGBH, Vanessa has most enjoyed creating children’s programming that connects

our characters or stories. For instance, one young mother wrote to us about the excitement and gratitude felt by her son when we introduced Carl, an Arthur character who has autism.” Vanessa went on to explain that, while she and the team write about funny topics, they also tackle serious issues such as autism, cancer, and depicting the lives of military children through the character of Ladonna.

“It’s so important to portray characters with whom kids can identify.”

the famed WWII General George S. Patton, Jr. “It made a very strong impression on me as a child and certainly helped instill the values of leadership and service to one’s country and others.”

As Vanessa got older she found her own way to serve. She entered college as a pre-med student but, during the course of her studies, discovered a passion for filmmaking. “I realized that I loved telling others’ stories and

with young audiences. “It’s so important to portray characters with whom kids can identify.” Vanessa continued, “Arthur is all about authentic, kid-relatable stories. Our characters are just like real kids. They make mistakes, learn, and grow from them.” For Vanessa, one of the most rewarding aspects of the job is receiving messages from young viewers and their families. “It’s so wonderful when we hear from fans about how they identify with one of



pbskids.org/arthur

“I came in while the team was developing this loquacious, clever, and highly imaginative character. Not long



after her debut episode, I pitched the idea of featuring a military family on Arthur. Ladonna and her family were a perfect fit, and so we developed her character further and gave her this backstory,” shared Vanessa. Vanessa hopes that military connected and civilian children alike will identify with Ladonna. “We want to provide military connected kids with a role model, as well as spread awareness to civilian kids and educators about how to better support these children.”

Vanessa relates to Ladonna in many ways. “She’s an over committer and wants to tackle every activity under the sun. We are very similar in that way.” Vanessa continued, “And, like myself, she’s very close with her family. You can sense the cohesion and how they support one another.”

Vanessa is an example of a successful, resilient military child who found her own way to serve others. “There is such an immense camaraderie and sense of purpose among military families,” shared Vanessa. Her sense of purpose has allowed military and veteran-connected children to see themselves in the character she helped develop and spread awareness about the lives of these children.

FINDING UNIQUE WAYS TO SUPPORT MILITARY FAMILIES

PAULA K. RAUCH, M.D. 

Director, Marjorie E. Korff Parenting At a Challenging Time Program
Chief, Child Psychiatry Consultation Service to Pediatrics, Massachusetts General Hospital
Family Team Program Director, Red Sox Foundation/MGH Home Base Program



PAULA K. RAUCH, M.D., a member of the MCEC Science Advisory Board, has been addressing the needs of children for over 25 years. She has been enthusiastic about raising the consciousness of military children and collaborating with various organizations to do so.

Advisor to the show, Dr. Rauch encouraged the show's representation of military children's needs. "It's great to be able to include a military kid and family in *Shelter from the Storm*," an *Arthur* episode. Rauch goes on to explain that

what is normal in a military child's life may not be in a civilian child's life. "Integrating Ladonna's story means that other kids who haven't had this experience are suddenly made aware, through Ladonna, what other kids in America are experiencing. **And for military kids, they see themselves represented instead of feeling like no one is seeing how they are making a sacrifice in sharing their moms and dads with America.**"

Rauch is the Family Team Program Director of the Red Sox Foundation/Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program. The Home Base Program is dedicated to healing the invisible wounds of war for Post-9/11 Service members, Veterans, and families through clinical care, fitness and wellness-based programs, community outreach, education, and research. "I focus on the impact of a parents' Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) on children," shared Rauch. "We are engaged in finding ways to support the resilience of military families, especially the children of those who serve." Staying Strong, an initiative of the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program, is a parent guidance website for military connected families that Rauch supports and believes is a vital resource.

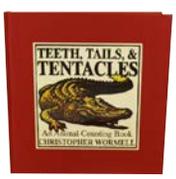
For resources, visit: www.homebase.org or www.stayingstrong.org



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MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Meet Calvin: GRIT AND HARDINESS IN ACTION

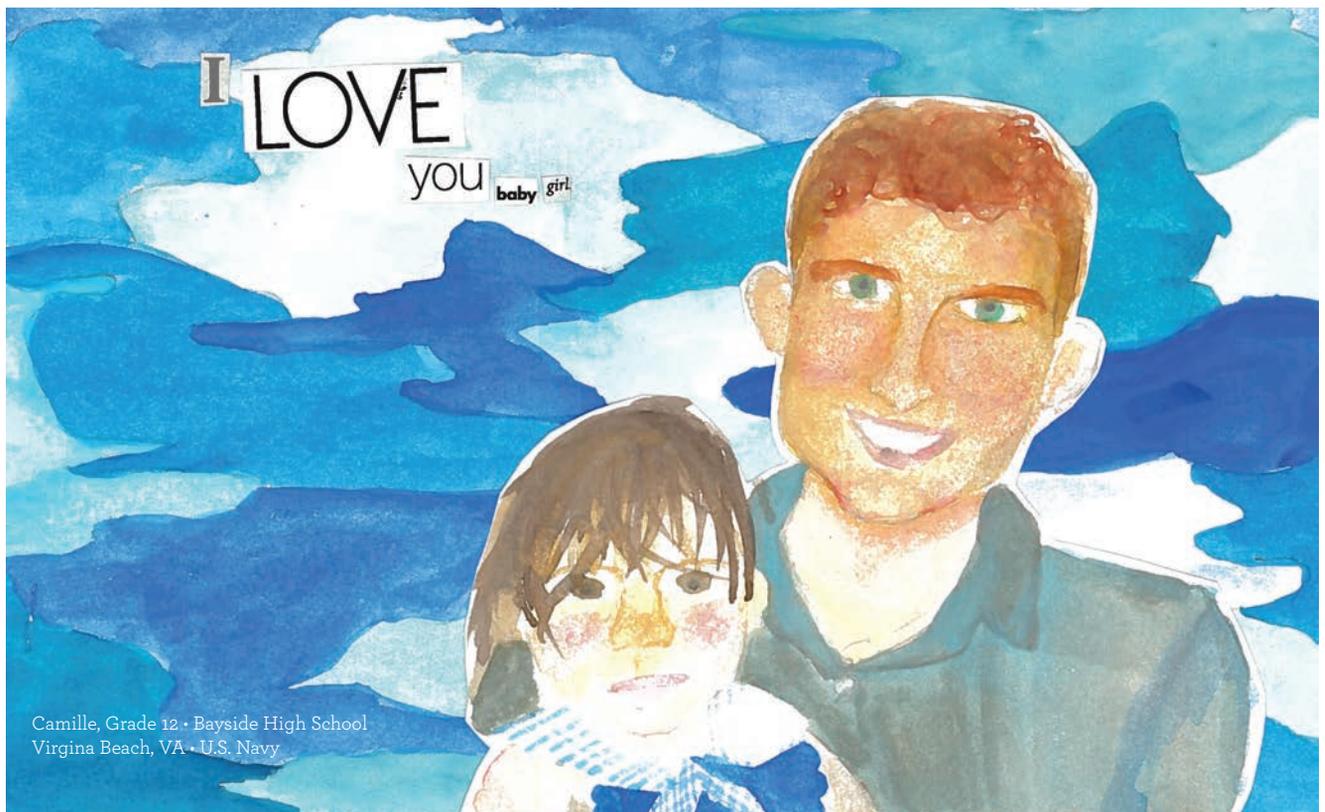
Calvin's dad has been a Marine for 26 years. Calvin spent 5th grade in North Carolina, 6th grade in Korea, 7th grade in Pennsylvania, and 8th grade in Hawaii; in total his family has experienced 13 moves. Calvin has been diagnosed with Dyslexia and Dysgraphia which makes moving academically challenging. His mom acknowledged, "It is very stressful. His school has an individual education plan and they do their best on his behalf." She continued, "His growth in the last year has been tremendous, but he's about to move again and I hope he doesn't take a step back."

Calvin loves being a military kid. "I like seeing how other people function differently. It gives me a different perspective and opens a door to a whole other world," said Calvin. He

finds moving difficult because, as soon as he gets used to a place, he has to leave again. Looking for the positive, Calvin adds, "My family is a big supporter and I put my energy and focus into excelling in soccer."

Calvin currently lives in Hawaii and has both civilian and military-connected friends. Noting the differences, Calvin said, "My friends don't move around as much as me. The most one of my friends has moved is 3 times." He enjoys the diversity of his friends, sharing that one kid is "definitely from Texas, you can hear the southern accent!"

Calvin is looking forward to graduating high school and going to college. His spirit is indomitable and reflects the grit and hardiness so often seen in military kids.





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- ▶ 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

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The Military Child Education Coalition® solely exists to help the military and veteran-connected child thrive in the face of transition and separation.

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The Power of Partnerships

The tremendous efforts of our 2015 honorees described below highlight the impact strong partnerships can have on a community. **Applications for the 2016 award can be found at www.MilitaryChild.org/professionals/programs/pete-taylor-partnership-of-excellence-awards**

MCEC presented the winners at the 2015 National Training Seminar in Washington, D.C. The Award recognizes successful partnerships and projects benefitting military children and is given in two areas: K-12 and, new in 2014, higher education.

PARTNERSHIP AWARDS

Outstanding Partnership Award - K-12 *Bay Area Education Alliance*

Since its inception in 2006, the Bay Area Education Alliance has had a strong partnership that is multi-faceted and mutually supportive in its purpose to enhance the educational experience/opportunities for over 2000 military-connected students and their families.

The Alliance focused on three objectives: Identify military students, parents, and those working with military families who could benefit from short-term, non-medical counseling services in schools; ensure military mentors in schools provide positive role models to students; and collaborate funds and resources, when applicable, to provide programs, services, and training in schools. The Alliance met these objectives by placing Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC) in 21 schools, increasing military mentorship, and collaboratively funding programs.



Exemplary Partnership Award – K-12 *Holloman Air Force Base/Otero STEM*

The Holloman AFB and Alamogordo Public Schools worked hard to attain an Educational Partnership Agreement (EPA). As a nonprofit organization, Otero STEM was developed to provide deeper access for collaborative Holloman AFB outreach efforts in the community and to help organize and provide additional financial and volunteer support for Holloman AFB STEM programs. The partnership increased involvement of mentors throughout the community, engaged local students in a variety of projects which has led to national recognition by the CyberPatriot Competition, and established Air Force STEM Fellows ranging from junior enlisted to senior civilian and military leadership who travel to school and after-school functions to give science demonstrations. These fellows helped increase enrollment in STEM programs by 100% over the previous year.



To learn more about the LTG (Ret) H.G. “Pete” Taylor Partnership of Excellence Award, visit: www.MilitaryChild.org/parents-and-students/programs/pete-taylor-partnership-of-excellence-awards



Recognized Partnership Awards – K-12

Madigan Adolescence School-Based Health Clinics



The Madigan Army Medical Center school-based health clinics were designed to promote the physical, behavioral, and emotional well-being of military-dependent adolescent students on the school campuses. The clinics provide a range of services including physicals, treatment of minor illness or injuries, routine immunizations, behavioral and emotional health treatment, as well as developmentally appropriate guidance and education on subjects such as nutrition and development.

Community Partnership: DoDEA South Carolina/Fort Stewart/ DoDDS Cuba School District and Fort Jackson



The Community Partnership Program is a vital overall school program for C.C. Pinckney Elementary School – DoDEA South Carolina/Fort Stewart/ DoDDS Cuba School District. It has a combination of both military and community partners who work diligently to create new and different math-related programs for their students. As a result of the positive student progress, an incentive store was established to support student reading achievement. Just like the Fort Jackson motto, "Victory Starts Here," C.C. Pinckney's mission to provide high student achievement and partnership opportunities for military families not only signifies "victory," but also embraces the idea that "real goodness happens at the local level."

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

Outstanding Individual Project Award – K-12

Wiesbaden Middle School and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Europe

Wiesbaden Middle School and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) created a partnership focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and 21st Century learning. This partnership was a commitment to attaining health and wellness, reducing the carbon footprint, developing healthy habits, and emphasizing leadership skills for a better tomorrow.



The USACE created a Community Outreach program that encompassed the entire learning community. Year-long professional development opportunities, off-campus student study trips, Go-To-Meetings classes with career specialists, "Take Your Child to Work Day," Earth Day events, lessons for cross-curricular areas, and promotions of volunteer STEM events highlight this partnership. These efforts helped students understand practical applications, set education and career goals, and promote digital learning.

Exemplary Individual Project Award – K-12

Mission Meadows: We Want You!

The Mission Meadows: We Want You! "Soldier adoption" program was designed to foster goodwill and demonstrate how much the soldiers are valued and appreciated by the administration, faculty, and students. This shared community relationship brings student curriculum standards to life by incorporating reading, writing, and communication skills. On a bi-monthly basis, the classes adopt two to three soldiers and participate in a variety of activities and events.





School District Guidelines for Implementing Rules of the

Interstate Compact on Educational



KAYE MCKINLEY, M.ED

Principal, Liza Jackson Preparatory School; Military Family Education Liaison, Florida Compact

Changing schools can be a huge ordeal for military families and military children. Education curriculum and education requirements can vary tremendously between states and between school districts. **For those reasons the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children is very important.** This Compact addresses inequities facing schoolchildren of military parents when they are required to relocate across state lines. Specifically, it allows the laws of the “sending” state to apply to transferring students from active duty military families in the schools of the “receiving” state for such policies as graduation requirements, Advanced Placements (AP), and age of student enrollment. The chart below will assist receiving schools with understanding the responsibilities we have in implementing the rules of the Compact. The chart represents some of the most frequently asked questions as military students enroll in their new school.

Artwork by Carmen, Grade 10 • Ramey School, Puerto Rico • Service Branch Unspecified

TRANSFER OF EDUCATION RECORDS AND ENROLLMENT	RECEIVING SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY
Unofficial or “Hand-Carried” Education Records	States shall enroll and appropriately place the student based on the information provided in the unofficial records pending validation by the official records, as quickly as possible.
Immunizations	States shall give thirty (30) calendar days from the date of enrollment. For a series of immunizations, initial vaccinations must be obtained within thirty (30) calendar days.
Kindergarten and First Grade Entrance Age	<p>Students shall be allowed to continue their enrollment at grade level in the receiving state commensurate with their grade level (including Kindergarten) from a LEA in the sending state at the time of transition, regardless of age.</p> <p>In order to be admitted into a school in the receiving state, such a student transferring from the sending state must provide the following data:</p> <p>Official military orders showing that the military member was assigned to the state (or commuting area) of the state in which the child was previously duly enrolled and attended school. If a child of a military member was residing with a legal guardian during the previous enrollment and not the military member, a copy of the family care plan, or proof of guardianship, as specified in the Interstate Compact, or any information sufficient for the receiving district to establish eligibility under this compact shall be provided;</p> <p>An official letter or transcript from the proper school authority which shows record of attendance, academic information, and grade placement of the student;</p> <p>Documented evidence of immunization against communicable diseases; and</p> <p>Evidence of date of birth.</p>



Opportunity for Military Children

GRADUATION	RECEIVING SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY
Waiver Requirements	<p>LEA administrative officials shall waive specific courses required for graduation if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed in another LEA or shall provide reasonable justification for denial.</p> <p>Should a waiver not be granted to a student who would qualify to graduate from the sending school, the LEA shall provide an alternative means of acquiring required coursework so that graduation may occur on time.</p> <p>If the receiving LEA requires a graduation project, volunteer community service hours, or other state or LEA specific requirements, the receiving LEA may waive those requirements.</p>
Exit Exams	<p>States shall accept: 1) exit or end-of-course exams required for graduation from the sending state; or 2) national norm-referenced achievement tests or 3) alternative testing, in lieu of testing requirements for graduation in the receiving state. In the event the above alternatives cannot be accommodated by the receiving state for a student transferring in his or her senior year, then the provisions of Article VII, Section C of the Compact shall apply.</p>
Transfers during Senior Year	<p>There may be cases in which a military student transferring at the beginning or during his or her senior year is ineligible to graduate from the receiving LEA after all alternatives have been considered. In such cases the sending and receiving LEA's shall ensure the receipt of a diploma from the sending LEA, if the student meets the graduation requirements of the sending LEA. In the event that one of the states in question is not a member of this compact, the member state shall use best efforts to facilitate the on-time graduation of the student in accordance with Sections A and B of Article VII of the Compact.</p>

PLACEMENT & ATTENDANCE	RECEIVING SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY
Special Education Services	<p>States shall initially provide comparable services to a student with disabilities based on his/her current Individualized Education Program (IEP); and</p> <p>States shall make reasonable accommodations and modifications to address the needs of incoming students with disabilities, subject to an existing 504 or Title II Plan, to provide the student with equal access to education.</p> <p>States may perform subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement and appropriate services. The receiving school shall follow any current regulations the receiving state has in place in order to comply with federal or state law.</p>
Absence as related to Deployment Activities	<p>A student whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined by the Compact, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the LEA superintendent or head of school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian relative to such leave or deployment of the parent or guardian. Notwithstanding the above, the LEA superintendent or head of school may provide a maximum number of additional excused absences.</p>

ELIGIBILITY	RECEIVING SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY
Eligibility for Extracurricular Participation	<p>State and local education agencies shall facilitate the opportunity for transitioning military children's inclusion in extracurricular activities, regardless of application deadlines, with consultation with the state high school athletic association, to the extent they are otherwise qualified. Application deadlines include tryouts, summer conditioning and other coach or district prerequisites.</p>

Information compiled through Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission resources in Lexington, KY; www.mic3.net



Data Matters:

Certificate Popularity Is on the Rise

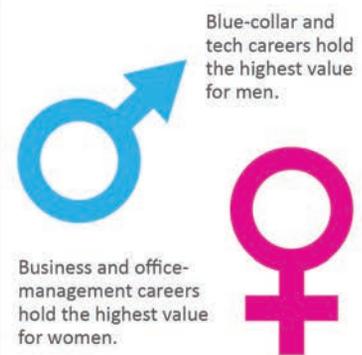
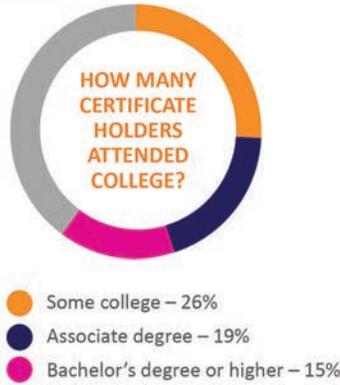
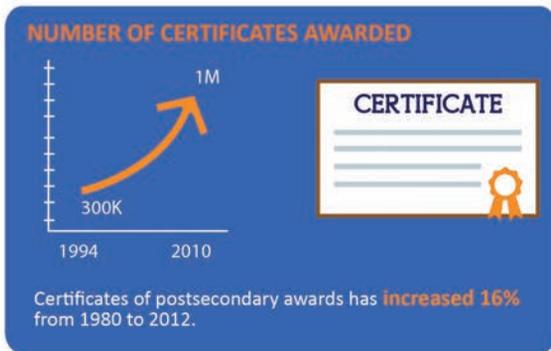
REBECCA L. WEBER
January 12, 2016

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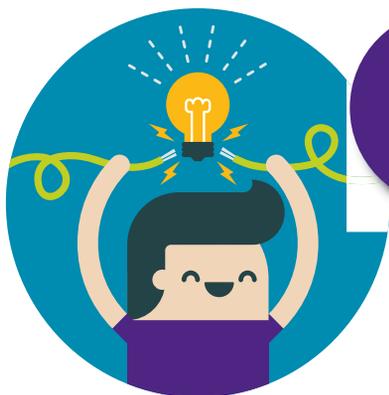
CERTIFICATE CRAZE



Sources: "Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees," by Anthony P. Carnelvale, Stephen J. Rose and Andrew R. Hanson; and unpublished data from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System; U.S. Census

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The Vital Addition of the Military Student Identifier in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)



Artwork by Breanne, Grade 3
Stone Street Youth Pavilion School Aged Care
Camp Lejeune, NC • U.S. Marines

More than 90% of school-age military-connected students in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve are in public school classrooms. The academic success as well as the attuned services for these children depend on a network of informed, supportive professionals who can respond effectively to their unique challenges.

For the first time in the history of our Nation, the military-connected student – who also serves – is recognized in our education policy. In December 2015, the members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives

No reliable, consistent, school-based data has existed on the academic well-being of these students – until now.

voted in favor of the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**. Senators Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray and Representatives John Kline and Bobby Scott were instrumental in the acceptance of the Act. The legislation, signed by the President

on December 10, includes a military-connected student identifier that will enable military leaders, educators, and elected officials at all levels of government to understand how military-connected children are performing in school. Despite the high number of military-connected students, with the vast majority in public school classrooms, no

reliable, consistent, school-based data has existed on the academic well-being of these students – until now.

“We know military-connected children move three times more often than their peers, creating the opportunity for disruptions, disconnects and gaps in education, in addition to the stress of having parents away from home for long periods of time,” said Dr. Mary Keller, president and chief executive officer of MCEC. “Without the military student identifier, educators and policy leaders have no way of knowing whether these students are faring well, keeping pace, or falling behind. The identifier will provide data to inform both educators and policymakers, enabling them to adjust programs, direct resources and adopt strategies that support these students and their military families.”

The military student identifier in ESSA applies to students with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces on active duty. The Military Child Education Coalition strongly supports the inclusion of students whose parents serve in the National Guard or Reserves as part of the ESSA reporting on military-connected students.

Teachers and school administrators are often unaware of military-connected children within their schools and classrooms and therefore may not be as attentive to the academic needs or the social and emotional well-being of these children. More accurate considerations of the amplified needs of these children will be possible via this landmark recognition of military-connected students.

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