“If our children were enrolled in public school before the COVID-19 Crisis, now that their public school is now closed, are they now considered homeschool students?”

Students enrolled in public schools who are being taught virtually or through other means with parent support are not considered homeschooled students. They are still public school students learning in their homes. Which means, since they are not a registered homeschool (most states require some form of registering), they are not a homeschool and do not need to worry about meeting state homeschool laws. This also means that when they move to a new state, they are still protected by the Interstate Compact since their child is in public school. If a parent chooses to dis-enroll their child from public school and establish a homeschool within the rules of the state they are residing they can. However, when they move their child would not be covered by the Interstate Compact.

“If we PCS during COVID-19 and the schools at our new duty station are closed so that we cannot register, what will this mean for our children as far as getting credit for completing the school year?”

This has become an issue in some states. Due to the method in which schools were closed, schools may not have been permitted to enroll new students for a time. We understand that schools will be working with the families caught in this situation individually on a case by case basis. Clearly, this will be handled differently in each district. We encourage parents to be patient as it may take a week or two due to staff reductions and limited support on school campuses. Our best recommendation is for parents to start at the district level when seeking information, as many schools may not have any staff on site, but the district offices will likely have skeleton staff available to answer questions of this nature. Additionally, parents may want to consider contacting the sending school before they leave to see if their child can continue attending the sending school virtually until the receiving school can accept them. Ideally, all schools will work with families to make this possible. However, it is likely that it will depend on how military-friendly the school district and community is.

(A special thank you to Rollie Sampson, District Military Liaison for Moore County Schools, Moore County, North Carolina for providing us with this important and timely information.)
MCEC COVID-19 Resources for PARENTS

FAQ by Parents of School-Aged Children

“We’re scheduled to move soon. What should we expect to see when our kids change schools in terms of interstate cooperation?”

Each state, and sometimes even each district, has their own set of rules. Good to know is that the Military Interstate Children’s Compact helps transitioning military families. Each state has a MIC3 Commissioner and a State Statute that will specify how the Compact is addressed in that state. Before moving, we recommend that parents print off the Compact for their state to better inform school districts about what the Compact addresses for military students. This is particularly important for school districts that are not close to military installations. Some districts may not be aware of the Compact.

We also recommend that you consider compiling and maintaining an Academic Portfolio that you hand-carry to your next duty station. This portfolio should include all their academic information along with personal information and extracurricular activities.

“The school district and teachers didn’t send any materials. We’re basically already on summer break. We’re scheduled to move during the summer. How can I make sure that my child isn’t going to fall behind?”

Gaps in learning is a concern. Right now, many children are missing content and possibly key concepts. In some instances, families may not realize what their children have missed until they move to a new duty station and start school. If you find that your child has learning gaps, reach out to the new teacher(s) as quickly as possible and ask for help and resources. Teachers may suggest additional resources, lessons or tutoring to fill the learning gap.

Since you know you will be moving soon, we recommend being proactive. Check out websites like Parent Toolkit, find out grade level expectations and Milestones or research the state’s Department of Education website for resources and tips.

As your current school does not provide any lessons, we suggest that you use online enrichment or educational content to supplement your child’s education. You can find a list of grade-level resources on the MCEC website. Additionally, reading daily is one of the most important and effective ways that contribute to a child’s future academic success. Growing Great Readers is a free webinar that offers a variety of tips and resources for military families. Also, check out the MWR library system for eBooks and audiobooks options.

Connect with your School Liaison Officer before you move.

For More Information: Parents@MilitaryChild.org
“Where do I start? I have 4 kids. Their schools have gone to online lessons. I’m totally overwhelmed.”

Rest assured: you are not alone. Many parents share your concern and frustration. Stick to a routine. Children thrive on routines because they know what to expect. When we go through changes and face uncertainty, these simple routines will help bring stability and predictability back to our lives. Stick to regular times for waking up and going to bed and having meals, snacks and playtime.

We suggest coming up with a schedule that fits the needs and age of each of your school-aged children. You may want to mirror a similar schedule that they had in school, or use a schedule builder to come up with a schedule that better fits your needs. Keep in mind that younger children may only be able to focus on a task for 10 or 15 minutes. Color-coded schedules are a good visual, so each child can easily see what to do at what time. Post it somewhere visible like the refrigerator.

A schedule helps kids stay on track and feel a sense of accomplishment after they are done. Be sure to work on this schedule together with each child to help them learn planning and time management skills. Consider using apps to set a reminder for tasks or use a notepad.

Incorporate daily activities and breaks into your schedule. Create an activity list with your children that is tailored to your family’s needs and wants. Include everybody in coming up with ideas for managing chores and fun activities.

Make sure that you also make time for yourself to unwind.

“My child has received online lessons from the teacher. It’s basically just busy work. I’m so frustrated. I think they’ll just call this year a wash.”

Switching from face-to-face to online teaching and online learning in a matter of days leaves little time to adjust for both teachers and students.

Consider reaching out to the teacher and state your concern. Depending on your child’s needs, ask for additional resources or suggestions on supplementing the current lessons. We also suggest checking online enrichment or educational content to supplement your child’s education.

You can find a list of grade-level resources on the MCEC website or use websites like Khan Academy for additional learning and resources.
“We don’t have a laptop. I worry that my 3rd grader is missing so much content. Do you have any suggestions?”

Reach out to your school. Teachers and schools are aware that some kids in their classrooms don’t have access to the internet. Let schools know if there’s a problem with technology. Some school districts offer help by printing off packets for students that parents can pick up at pre-arranged pick-up points or “distribution centers.” Some schools provide laptops, especially for kids in the upper grades. In other areas, the school district has helped locate technical support for students who do not have access at home. In some cases, local nonprofit organizations have helped bridge the gap and have found technology solutions for students so they can continue working on schoolwork from home. Many teachers provide their phone numbers to families who don’t have internet access and where students are completing assignments on paper, so students can ask questions.

If you are an Army family, AER may be able to help. AER just expanded financial assistance to non-Title 10 Soldiers.

Learning can have many platforms, not just virtual. Everyday hands-on activities are a great opportunity to expand learning. Think about cooking, for example. Children get practice in reading recipes, meal planning, doing math such as measuring and calculating, and they watch science unfold as ingredients change form and mass. Another idea is using games like Monopoly that incorporate reading, math and critical thinking.

One of the best activities is to make sure that your child reads every day. Reading is one of the best ways to support healthy brain development, language and listening skills, build memory and problem-solving skills. Consider checking with your MWR library system for eBooks and audiobooks for everyone in the family.

“Virtual learning is not working for us. My child is frustrated and overwhelmed.”

Adjusting to learning online takes time. For children who have a hard time adjusting to learning online, consider coming up with a schedule that includes regular breaks. Sit together with your child and come up with a structure to fit the needs of your child, including what to do during the breaks. You may want to build in incentives to help keep your child on track.

Consider building in hands-on activities to incorporate math, writing and reading like meal planning or cooking, playing games or Science at Home by using everyday household supplies.

Also consider reaching out to the teacher to discuss options for your child.
MCEC COVID-19 Resources for PARENTS

FAQ by Parents of School-Aged Children

“We’re scheduled to move. Our current school is not doing much in terms of providing lessons, whereas the new school my child will be moving to has switched to online learning. We’re worried that my child will fall behind.”

Reach out to your school. Explain the situation and ask if the current teacher can provide lessons. You can also reach out to the new school or district. Explain that you are a military family moving on official orders. State your concern and ask for resources and help. Go to the new state’s Department of Education website to find out standards and information. Also look at websites like Parent Toolkit or Milestones to find grade level expectations.

In the meantime, use online enrichment or educational websites to supplement, for example, by checking the MCEC resources under “For Parents,” where you can also find a list of websites to use for preK-grade 5. Ensure that your child continues to read every day. Also, consider watching the webinar on Transitions: What Every Parent Needs to Know that has many tips on helping military-connected students with transitions.