The Impacts & Opportunities of Military Life for Military Children

Total Force Families

There are

**OVER 1.6 MILLION**
military children in the U.S.

**Total Force Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Duty</th>
<th>Selected Reserve</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>977,191</td>
<td>674,223</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Duty Have Children</th>
<th>Selected Reserve Have Children</th>
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<tr>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
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- Single, with children (4.0%)
- Married to a civilian, with children (30.1%)
- Dual-military, with children (2.4%)

- Single, with children (9.1%)
- Married to a civilian, with children (30.2%)
- Dual-military, with children (1.6%)

**Veterans Families**

A 2014 study estimated **2.1 MILLION** post-9/11 veteran children

**Unknown**

what proportion of veterans have children.

In collaboration with: ***BLUE STAR FAMILIES***
EXPERIENCES OF MILITARY CHILDREN

Can vary widely, but there are some commonalities.

COMMON ELEMENTS

Transitions
(Such as relocations, family reintegration, military to civilian transition)

RELOCATIONS
School & community transitions

56% active duty family respondents reported their oldest child is thriving at school.

FAMILY REINTEGRATION
Military to civilian transition

41% post-9/11 veteran respondents reported reintegration to family during military to civilian transition was difficult or very difficult.

Separations
(Can be due to training, schooling, deployment, etc.)

32% of active duty family respondents who had recently geobached reported doing so for their children’s education.

44% of active duty spouse respondents cited isolation from family and friends as a stressor.

NEEDS OF MILITARY CHILDREN CAN DIFFER BY:

- Military service (e.g., rank, branch, deployments)
- Military status (e.g., active duty, veteran)
- Family structure (e.g., dual-military, caregiving families)
- Child characteristics (e.g., age, gender)
- Child needs (e.g., special educational, age-related)
- Parent needs (e.g., mental health care, employment)
- Family characteristics (e.g., race, religion)

IMPACTS OF SERVICE ON MILITARY CHILDREN

TOP 5 IMPACTS OF DEPLOYMENT

Increased independence (33%)
Adaptability (29%)
Resilience (29%)
Personal growth (20%)
Increased pride (19%)

NEGATIVE

Worry (50%)
Separation anxiety (50%)
Difficulty sleeping/nightmares (39%)
Irritability (33%)
Aggression (20%)

SPOTLIGHT ON STRENGTHS

Parents report adaptability, openness, and kindness

“Our daughter is adaptable to new situations. She is able to transition into new routines and surroundings with ease.”

“My children respect and value cultures and regions that are new to them.”

“They have learned kindness since they know it feels to be the new kid.”

Greater sense of civic responsibility in parents linked to more positive impacts in children

IT IS ESTIMATED THE AVERAGE MILITARY CHILD WILL MOVE SIX TO NINE TIMES DURING THEIR K-12 EDUCATION.

Can vary widely, but there are some commonalities.
**IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH**

**IDENTIFICATION & EDUCATION WITHIN COMMUNITIES**

- Providers, educators, neighbors must first be aware of military-connected children within their community.

  Identification of military children can result in the following:
  - Improved connections to available resources and access to care
  - Encouraging community members to provide extra assistance to children and families during times of transition

- Need for increased civilian understanding of military culture and military child experiences to strengthen social support and sense of community belonging

  The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine recommends that DoD play a role in encouraging civilian understanding and focus on addressing stereotypes and misinformation.

To address gaps, **RESEARCHERS, POLICYMAKERS, AND PROVIDERS SHOULD FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING:**

- Children of veterans
- Long-term impacts of military service on children
- Children of Selected Reserve
- Children in caregiving families, blended families, dual-military families
- Military children with special needs
- LGBTQ+ military children
- Military children in racially/ethnically diverse families
There is a large body of research on military children. The following list of references is not exhaustive but includes some seminal and comprehensive articles that were used for this research brief: