From the Director's Desk - "Thank You For Your Service" - by Suzanne Bowers

The following statistics, according to DoSomething.org, illustrate some of the very real challenges that military children and their families face while serving our country.

That’s right! I said, that they (children and families included) serve our country. It is not just the active duty soldier who is ensuring our freedom, but also each and every family who lives the life.

- Military families relocate 10 times more often than civilian families -- on average, every 2 or 3 years
- Since 2001, more than 2 million American children have had a parent deployed at least once.
- More than 900,000 children have experienced the deployment of one or both parents multiple times.
- Children in military families experience high rates of mental health, trauma, and related problems. About 30% reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks during the past 12 months. Nearly 1 in 4 reported having considered suicide.
- 37% of children with a deployed parent reported that they seriously worry about what could happen to their deployed caretaker.

Combine the challenges illustrated by these statistics and the challenges of just being a kid today and we should all have a new appreciation of the sacrifices that our soldiers AND THEIR FAMILIES go through every day for our freedom.

So PEATC wishes to say again, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!
In April we celebrate the Military Child

Latino Corner by Arianna Sweeney

"Esposas de miembros militares que no hablan inglés sufren más estrés durante el tiempo de su despliegue"

Es el caso de Josepha Matos, comenta que su esposo ha sido destinado a sitios diferentes cuatro veces. La familia de Oscar y Josepha Matos viven en Haymarket, Virginia y tienen seis hijos. Josepha dice que para ella ha sido extremadamente difícil cada vez que su esposo es destinado porque ella no maneja y tampoco tiene dominio del idioma. Ella se queda sola cuidando a todos los niños y a veces las cosas se complican porque uno tiene asma, dice vivir en las montañas y les toma alrededor de una hora llegar a la tiende de abarrotes más cercana. Las cosas se complicaron aún más cuando Oscar Matos fue gravemente herido en su última misión, el describe haber sentido que su cuerpo y una de sus piernas volaron en distintas direcciones.

John Howard, encargado de una organización sin fines de lucro llamado Operation Homefront, menciona lo difícil que es la situación para las esposas de los miembros militares, especialmente para las esposas extranjeras que no hablan el idioma. El hecho de tener al padre de familia estacionado en un lugar lejano crea mucho estrés. La organización de Operation Homefront ayuda a familias militares indefinidamente con ya sea cosas para bebés, computadoras y hasta muebles para la casa.


"More Stress for non-English Speaking Military spouses during deployments"

This is the case for military wife Josepha Matos, her husband has been deployed overseas four times. The Matos Family lives in Haymarket, Virginia and they have six children, one of them with severe asthma. Josepha explained how difficult it has been to take care of all the children, especially because she does not drive and speaks very little English. Josepha tells they live far away in the mountains and it takes about an hour to get to the closest grocery store. Things got even more complicated when her husband got severely injured in his last deployment. Oscar said, he was running and then he felt his body and one of his legs went in different directions.

John Howard, with the non-profit Operation Homefront mentioned how difficult it is for families of military members when in situations like this one. He stated to be even more difficult for foreign-born spouses, especially if they do not speak the language. Operation Homefront helps military families with ongoing needs including baby items, computers and furniture.


PEATC On Demand and In the Spotlight by Leslie Edwards - "How Early Relationships Set a Strong Foundation For School and Life"

Every parent knows that no two children are alike; different genes, different temperaments, and different experiences assure this. What is the same for all children is the impact that early experiences and relationships have on their development, and ultimately their readiness for school. Social and emotional skills develop within the context of relationships, beginning at birth, and set the foundation for how each individual will experience relationships over the course of his/her lifetime. This Webinar will help parents and caregivers gain greater understanding about ways they can support healthy social and emotional development from an early age, and what this may look like for children with challenges related to ADHD, spectrum issues, and learning disabilities. To access this Webinar paste this link into your internet browser: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OM7mwaSNIW
Mental Health Corner by Caroline Gentleman - "Adjusting to Change for the Military Child"

We are ushering in the warm promise of spring and the symbolic rebirth the season brings. The children in our lives are a reminder that life and growth are constant. Just as plants need sun and water to grow properly, our children need nourishment and protection to develop and grow properly. This month is dedicated to child abuse education; awareness and activities aimed at preventing abuse.

Reflect for a moment on the stressful points in your own life. Children sense and absorb when their parents, caregivers, and providers are stressed and irritated. A child's reaction to this situation might be exhibited it in a number of ways: he may not respond to a situation as an adult would; he may not have the ability to process the situation; he may mirror an adult's aggravated mood; he may have stomach pains or nightmares; and he may not be able tell you what is bothering him.

These stressful times have the potential to increase the likelihood of abuse to occur. Those who care for children should be aware of the signs and take action before abuse can occur. Child abuse can be physical or emotional and can be the result of deliberate effort or due to oversight and neglect. Children are notoriously touted to be resilient, but a traumatic event in a child’s life can greatly increase the likelihood that he will experience a mental health crisis down the road.

Consider the child living the military life. While relocation can be a positive in terms of giving the child new experiences and friends from many places, the frequent changes can be unsettling. For a child who has special needs these changes may be upsetting and confusing as well. While all children need to feel reassured about changes like these, it is especially true for military and special needs children.

What can you do to aid your child in these times of transition?

- When a change is coming explain it to the child on the level HE can comprehend. Don’t over explain.
- Mark an upcoming change on a wall calendar. This will help him understand the time frame.
- Revisit the topic on his time. You can ask but he may not be ready to talk when you ask.
- Let him take a few special items with him; ones not packed so he knows he still has them.
- Do your homework. Have necessary paperwork in order, forms, transcripts anything needed for a new school. If you are more relaxed and confident he will take the cue from you. Show him pictures of where you will be.
- In a new home, arrange his room as closely to how it was before. If age appropriate, let him pick a paint color or new sheets.
- Facetiming or skypeing can keep a child feeling connected to family and friends elsewhere.

These times of adapting to new locations are stressful for parents as well as children. If you find your daily responsibilities becoming overwhelming, it’s time for a break; call a friend, take a walk, or maybe just sit outside with your child. Enjoying your child is one of the best things you can do for each of you.

Remember there is help and support. The National Parent Helpline can connect you to support in your area. There are many groups out there, even anonymous lines if you just need to talk. Your place of worship or local family services can refer you as well. All you need to do is ask.

http://www.nationalparenthelpline.org/find-support
Early Childhood Corner by Lakeshia Yancey - "Quality Childcare for Military Families"

Obtaining quality child care is important to all families. This can be even more important when you are a military family. Families are sometimes tasked with moving from state to state, leaving family, friends, and familiar child care providers behind. This can be a big transition to a young child. Fortunately there are child care options through military installations, with professionals that are trained to make this a smooth transition for children and their families.

The Department of Defense (DoD) has created several programs to provide military families with quality, affordable child care.

**Child Development Centers** On your installation, you'll usually find one or more Child Development Centers (CDC), which typically offer care for children from six weeks to five years of age. In a center, children with special needs will be placed with other nondisabled children in their age group.

**Family Child Care** Family Child Care (FCC) homes, also known as child development homes, may be a good choice if you have a child from infancy to twelve years of age. Providers care for a small group of children in their own home, which may be either on or off the installation.

If you are a parent of a child with special needs there is a program dedicated just for you. The Exceptional Family Members Program (EFMP) is your go to place for resources in regards to finding the best option of placement for your little one. Different branches have also developed programs to help determine the best placement and support for children with special needs in the child care setting.

- **Army Special Needs Accommodation Process (SNAP)**
- **Marine Corps Special Needs Evaluation Review Team (SNERT)**
- **Navy Special Needs Review Board (SNRB)**

If you need to obtain child care that is located off of an installation or your installation does not offer child care then families can visit Child Care Aware of America website (http://www.naccerra.org/) to find community center options. To help educate you on quality child care PEATC has created a fact sheet entitled, “What does quality look like?”

You can download the Quality Childcare fact sheet at: http://www.peatc.org/peatc.cgi?template=parent_info_resources
**PEATC Workshops and Events - April 2015**

**Tuesday, April 7, 2015** - "Is my ADHD Student Ready for College AND Success?" webinar, 11:00 am, presented by Dr. Jon Thomas, co-hosted by PEATC and NoVaDC CHADD. Please register at: https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/s/registrations/new?cid=2wlnho62ccav.

**Thursday, April 16, 2015** - Transition: Families Pave the Way workshop, from 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm at E.C. Glass High School, 2111 Memorial Avenue, Lynchburg, VA 24501. Please contact Carolyn Martin, Parent Resource Coordinator at (434) 515-5180 or martincb@lcsedu.net to register.

**Thursday, April 16, 2015** - Understanding Special Education workshop, from 10:00 am - 12 noon, at the Bristol Virginia Public Schools Office, 220 Lee Street, Bristol, VA 24201. Presented by PEATC/TASK. Please register by April 8 to Lisa Richard at (276) 821-5638/lrichard@bvps.org or Patti Cettin at (276) 979-0408/taskforkids@hotmail.com.

**Saturday, April 18, 2015** - Friendship Building Strategies workshop, from 10:30 am to 11:30 am, at the "Abilities In Action" Special Ed. Expo, Culpepper County High School, 14240 Achievement Drive, Culpeper, VA 22701. Please contact Petrina Thomas at (540) 825-0621 ext.2131 or PT9255@culpeperschools.org for more information.

**Saturday, April 18, 2015** - The Journey to Adulthood: Puberty and Sexuality workshop, from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm at the "Abilities In Action" Special Ed. Expo, Culpepper County High School, 14240 Achievement Drive, Culpeper, VA 22701. Please contact Petrina Thomas at (540) 825-0621 ext.2131 or PT9255@culpeperschools.org for more information.

**Saturday, April 18, 2015** - Culmore Multicultural Day 2015, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Woodrow Wilson Library, 6101 Knollwood Dr., Falls Church, VA 22041; PEATC will participate as an exhibitor. For more information, call the Fairfax County Park Authority at 703-324-8514 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks.

**Saturday, April 18, 2015** - PEATC Play Group (for children through age 5), 1:00 - 2:30 pm, space is limited, so please register no later than APRIL 11, 2015 at 703-923-0010 or partners@peatc.org. More information at: http://www.peatc.org/newsmanager/news_article.cgi?news_id=658&no_popup=0.

**Thursday, April 30, 2015** - The Journey to Adulthood: Puberty and Sexuality workshop, 6:00 - 8:00 pm, sponsored by The Fredericksburg Area Council on Transition (FACT), at Employment Resources Inc. (ERI), 404 Willis Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. RSVP to one of the following:
- Caroline County Parent Resource Center (804) 633-7083
- Spotsylvania County Parent Resource Center (540) 582-7583 Option 6
- Stafford County Parent Resource Center (540) 658-6710
- Fredericksburg City Schools Parent Resource Center (540) 372-1127 ext. 2531
- disAbility Resource Center (540) 373-2559
- Employment Resources Incorporated (540) 372-6710 ext. 117