



# Military Community & Family Policy

## DoD Child Care Programs

*Office of Military Family Readiness Policy*

### Background

- DoD recognizes the importance of providing military families with access to quality, affordable child development programs, and is committed to meeting the increased demand for child care services
- Child care is a workforce issue that directly impacts the lethality of the Total Force.
- The DoD Child Development Program is the largest employer-sponsored childcare program in the country
- Child care availability (especially for children age 0-3) is a national issue that impacts civilian as well as military communities
- All DoD Child Care programs must be both accredited and DoD certified to operate
  - Accreditation must be accomplished by a nationally recognized entity
  - DoD certification requires a rigorous, unannounced, higher headquarters inspection as well as local inspections in the areas of fire, safety, health and sanitation

### DoD Child Care Program by the Numbers

- More than 700 brick and mortar facilities at 228 installations (includes Child Development Centers (0-5 years) and School Age Care (6-12years)).
- More than 1,000 Family Child Care Homes
- 160,000 child care spaces on a daily basis (includes brick and mortar, Family Child Care and community-based fee assistance)
- 57% of DoD child care spaces provide care to children under the age of three
- 98% of DoD child care facilities are nationally accredited as opposed to 11% of community based programs
- More than 20,000 direct-care staff members, of which approximately 1/3 are military spouses

### Priority for Care

- The current priority for care is outlined in DODI 6060.02 "Child Development Programs"
- A memo dated 19 March 2015 sent to the Service M&RA's titled "Policy Clarification for Priority 1 Access to Department of Defense Child Development Programs" outlines the order of precedence for Priority 1 Patrons
  - Children of combat related wounded warriors
  - Child development program direct care staff





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- Single Military Service members on active duty or dual active duty Service Member couples
- Active duty Service members with a working spouse (including a DoD civilian spouse)
- Single DoD civilian employees paid from appropriated funds (APF) or non-appropriated funds (NAF) or dual DoD civilian employee couples
- DoD civilians with a working spouse who is not a DoD civilian
- Surviving spouses of military members who died from a combat-related incident

### Child Care Program Staffing

- Increased efforts to recruit and retain staff
  - Concrete actions to improve hiring, retention and career progression
  - Child care needs of direct-care staff prioritize them for care
  - Child care specific job fairs in military impacted communities
  - Initiatives focused on increasing the capacity potential represented by family child care homes
  - Professional development being articulated into college credit
  - Tuition assistance for staff
  - DoD policy requires that 75% of labor hours be paid to direct-care staff must receive full benefits (sick leave, annual leave, health and retirement)
  - On average DoD direct care staff are paid at a higher rate than comparable civilian staff
  - Implementation of employee transfer programs in conjunction with PCS

### Background Checks

- Child care staff background checks are often cited as a hindrance to the hiring process
  - Child care staff are required to complete an FBI background check with fingerprints (normally completed with 48 hours), an installation Records Check (normally completed within 24 hours) and they must initiate a Tier 1 investigations (also referred to as the CNACI) prior to working with children
  - In September of 2018, the ASD(MR) signed a policy memorandum clarifying that once the above three steps were completed, direct-care staff are able to work with children under Line of Sight Supervision, or LOSS
  - The Department and other Federal agencies (OPM,OMB) are in the process of streamlining background check processes to better facilitate timely completion





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### Construction

- In 2008-2009, the Department engaged in a robust construction program resulting in the addition of approximately 13,000 child care spaces
- Funding for additional MILCON projects, to include child care facilities, must compete with mission-critical requirements
- The program cycle of a MILCON project can exceed five years, making it difficult to meet existing and emerging child care needs

### Expanded Hours of Operation

- In January 2016, the Secretary of Defense announced a series of family-focused initiatives
  - The initiatives directed child care programs to extend their operational hours to 14 hours a day based on family needs and mission requirements
  - All CDCs and SACs extend their operational hours on an as-needed basis as directed by the installation commander, and over 50 percent of installation programs routinely extend their hours
- Each of the Services meet the need for child care services beyond the traditional work day through the use of Family Child Care homes
- As mission requirements dictate, the Army and Navy utilize CDCs that are operational 24 hours a day/seven days a week designed to accommodate overnight care for mixed-age groups of children

### Community-Based Child Care

- Community-based child care may be utilized when care is unavailable on the installation
- Service and OSD funds are utilized to “buy-down” the cost of care when it exceeds the installation program fees
- Due to the challenges around quality care in community-based programs, the Department is engaged in several initiatives designed to increase quality
  - The Department is engaged with several states to standardize provider eligibility requirements for the Department's fee assistance program through an in-depth analyses of the state's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)
  - Pilot initiatives are currently scheduled for 2019 in Virginia and Maryland
- The Department works with the ASYMCA to provide respite child care for deployed families





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### Reserve Component Support

- Guard and Reserve military members on active duty orders are eligible to use child care services provided by the installation and are considered equivalent to the Active Component in the DoD order of precedence for priority
- Deployed Guard and Reserve families may access child care through the Department's community-based fee assistance programs

### Department-Wide Standardization

- MilitaryChildCare.com
  - Web based waitlist management system
  - Implemented across all Services
  - Allows military families to view all DoD care options at a particular duty station
  - Version 2.0 scheduled for launch in Spring/Summer of 2019
    - Will allow families to view DoD approved community based care options
- Inspection Management System
  - Web based platform utilized to conduct all higher headquarters inspections of child care programs
  - Implemented Service wide in 2018
  - Utilizes standardized inspection criteria for use by all Services
  - Tracks each step of the inspection process to include corrective action reports from installations, trends regarding inspection findings, and the DoD certification process
- Virtual Laboratory School
  - Web-based professional development platform for child care staff to include direct-care, trainers and managers
  - Developed in conjunction with Ohio State University
    - Includes research-based, evidence informed practices across multiple domains
    - Tracks all DoD staff through mandated training courses
    - Provides staff with specialized training in areas such as food service, gender safe spaces, inclusion of children with special needs, etc.
  - Available for use by all child care programs across the nation
- Early Learning Matters (ELM)
  - Research-based, evidence informed curriculum designed for infants through five-years





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- Developed in partnership with Purdue University
  - Promotes the development of the whole child and focuses on skills that bolster school readiness and life success
  - 50 weeks of daily activities for preschool-age children and 25 blocks of activities for Infants – Toddlers
  - Content aligns with NAEYC accreditation
  - Includes parent resources to support the child’s learning at home
    - Initial pilot by Air Force, USMC and Army with Air Force launching in 2019

### **For More Information**

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