Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS)

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DoD's System of Care

- Childcare is delivered through multiple systems including installation-based child development centers, school-age care facilities, and family child care homes.
- Community-based child care delivery systems support families who are unable to find care on the installation or who are geographically dispersed.
- Each day approximately 200,000 children, ages six weeks to 12 years, receive full-day care, part-day care, hourly care, part-day preschool, and before and after-school program support at over 300 locations worldwide.

By the Numbers

- **Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) reports:**
  - **55 percent of single members & 34 percent of married members with children 13 years & younger routinely use child care so they and their spouses can work.**
- **DoD maintains a core inventory of more than 775 child care facilities and 3,500 family child care/child development homes:**
  - **More than 50 percent of all of the child care provided is for children under the age of three.**
  - **The need for child care fluctuates and the DoD child development system of care must remain flexible and responsive to these changing needs.**

Demand for Child Care

Child care demand is influenced by multiple factors including:

- **The lack of child care for children under the age of three in the community**
- **An increased number of infants following deployments, a 'mini-baby boom'**
- **A potentially greater need in areas of high troop concentration**
- **Changes in child care demand based on troop movement/realignment and changes to mission requirements**

Demand for Child Care, con't

- At many locations, the demand for child care exceeds the availability of care resulting in waiting lists and associated wait times
- The current system for maintaining the waiting list numbers may not accurately reflect unmet demand:
  - Duplicative entries in high concentration areas
  - Maintaining names of children who no longer require child care
  - Under-reported numbers as families seek other options for care where the wait time is shorter

A Solution - MilitaryChildCare.com

This new website helps bring our child care request system into a new era of technological support:

- **The launch follows more than 18 months of development and pilot testing.**
- **The website will enable military & DoD civilian families to conduct a customized search for services, find comprehensive information on child care programs worldwide, request care, and monitor their status while they wait for an offer**

Implementation

- **Implementation is based on three key factors:**
  - **Service branch**
  - **Geographic locations**
  - **Time required for installations to transition from the current system to the new website**
- **The process utilizes a phased, zone-approach across the Services:**
  - **Site will be fully operational for all service members and DoD civilians by September 2016.**

Challenges - Installation care

- **Staffing challenges:**
  - **Delays in filling positions in part due to background check and adjudication processes.**
  - **Competition for qualified staff**
  - **Hard to fill**
- **High need for costly infant care**
- **Changes to installation housing resulting in more families living off-installation**
- **Transportation issues for school-age programs**

Challenges - Community Care

- **Child care of comparable quality is limited:**
  - **DoD's 97% of programs nationally accredited compares to the civilian rate of 8-10%**
  - **State requirements for child care vary widely**
- **Data from 2014 Child Care Aware® of America's *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care* report shows child care remains costly:**
  - **Annual costs for infant care can be as high as $14,508; annual costs for center-based care four-year-old can be as high as $12,280**
  - **DoD sets fees based on total family income and does not charge more for infant care**

Potential Legislative Relief

- **National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2006, Pub. L. No. 109-163 § 2810 (2006) authorized the use of Operations and Management (O&M) funds for minor military construction:**
  - **The authority originally expired in 2007, but was extended until 2009, when it was allowed to expire**
  - **The Services utilized the authority to add over 8,000 child care spaces**
  - **This authority provides the Services the opportunity to fund or renovate child care facilities in a more agile and time-sensitive fashion than the Military Construction (MILCON) process**
- **Re-authorization recommended by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission**

State - level Efforts

DoD initiated a multi-faceted effort focused on expanding the child care capacity of local communities to support geographically dispersed military families:

- **This initiative is designed to improve awareness and availability of quality child care utilizing existing local, state, and federal resources**
- **DoD monitors improvements in the quality of child care through an evaluation of child care licensing standards and states' efforts to develop and improve quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) that are compatible with research-based indicators of quality.**
- **Resources provided through the land grant university cooperative system include on-line and face-to-face training (train the trainer and direct care training)**
- **An evaluation component is included in the initiative**

Quality Initiatives

Robust efforts support quality programs:

- **Provide oversight**
- **Support staff professional development**
- **Support to families**

Quality Assurance

In early 2013, DoD Office of Family Policy & the Military Services' Children and Youth Program staff began the process to establish a common framework for inspection standards:

- **Standardized criteria improves the effectiveness and standardization of unannounced inspection processes and standards**
- **This process creates a more robust DoD inspection program.**
- **Efforts are ongoing through the work of a multi-Service team of subject matter experts**

Staff Professional Development

The Virtual Lab School (VLS) is DoD's digital training platform for all staff employed within the DoD Child Development Program:

- **Developed in collaboration with Ohio State University**
- **VLS updates the current paper training modules being utilized by the Military Services**
- **It augments the training provided by in facility trainers**
- **VLS utilizes a multi-faceted approach to training by utilizing print, video, audio and activities to engage varying levels of adult learners**

Supporting Children with Special Needs

Support to staff working with children with special needs is provided through a contract with Kids Included Together (KIT):

- **Training and coaching staff increases their ability and confidence in supporting children with special needs**
- **Technical assistance provides staff opportunities for specialized training to meet specific challenges**
- **Additional support provided through webinars and a call center manned by an inclusion specialist**

Supporting Behavioral Health

The Military and Family Life Counselor (MFLC) program supports the Department of Defense Education Activity schools and local education agencies:

- **MFLC(s) are master's or doctorate level, licensed and credentialed counselors who have undergone a criminal history background and fingerprint check.**
- **Provide non-medical, short term, situational, problem-solving counseling services**
- **Provide consultation, training and educational presentations/workshops to program faculty, staff, parents and children**

Second Language Exposure

DoD collaborates with George Washington University to develop the Second Language & Culture Exposure for Children and Youth Project:

- **The project is designed to enhancing language and cultural capabilities within the Child & Youth programs.**
- **A dynamic website provides training and program materials related to language and culture opportunities for children (up to age 5)**
- **Anticipated completion is early Fall of 2015**

Supporting deployment and resilience

- **Sesame Workshop's *Talk, Listen, Connect* initiative, a military outreach program launched in 2006, provides support and significant resources for military families with young children:**
  - **As a result of ongoing collaborative efforts, resources for military families are available through Military OneSource and https://www.familiesnearandfar.org/resources/**
- **Coming Together Around Military Families (CTAMF) is a DoD-sponsored initiative with *ZERO TO THREE* that supports military families with very young children:**
  - **CTAMF increases awareness of the impact of trauma, grief and loss on very young children through specialized training and support for the professionals who support military families**
  - ***ZERO TO THREE* materials are available from Military OneSource at www.militaryonesource.com**

Military Family Life Project Longitudinal Study

- **Project Overview:**
  - **The Military Family Life Project (MFLP) is the first representative, longitudinal survey of Active duty spouses to understand the experience of military family life across time. The survey was conducted in 2010, 2011, and 2012.**
- **Key Findings Related to Spouse Education / Employment:**
  - **Impact on Spouse Satisfaction with Military Life -**
    - **Spouses who become unemployed have lower levels of military satisfaction**
  - **Impact on Support to Stay on Active Duty -**
    - **Spouses with better financial status have higher levels of support**
    - **Spouses with more stress have lower levels of support**
    - **Spouses with more depressive/anxiety symptoms have lower levels of support**

* The full report of the Military Family Life Project will be released in late March.

** The study was sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Military Community & Family Policy and administered by the Defense Manpower Data Canter.

C&Y Resources

http://www.bgca.org/meetourpartners/Pages/MilitaryPartnership.aspx - *Mission Youth Outreach* which allows geographically dispersed Active, Guard, and Reserve youth to attend a local Boys & Girls Club at no cost to the family

http://www.trevorromain.com/category/military/uso/ - *Trevor Romain* DVDs/books part of deployment kits designed to support families with children who have a family member deployed with the U.S. Military

www.sittercity.com/ - Sittercity helps you find experienced babysitters and nannies in your area. And with features like detailed profiles, background checks, references and reviews, we make the process safe and easy

www.tutor.com/military - Eligible military service members and their dependents can work with a certified, professional tutor or career specialist online 24/7 to get help with homework, studying and test prep. Service members may also get help with resume writing and job searching

http://militarychild.org - A non-profit, world-wide organization, the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)'s work is focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition

http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/funded-projects/military-families/ **-** A DoD-sponsored initiative in collaboration with the ZERO TO THREE, a national nonprofit organization that informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers

https://www.familiesnearandfar.org/login/ - Sesame Street Free resources and tools for military families

http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/tlc - Military families, Sesame Street salutes you and supports you! *Talk, Listen, Connect,* offers you strategies and resources to help your children through difficult periods of transition and separation that can come with military service. And don't forget to check out Military Families Near and Far, a special Web site where your family can create, communicate, and stay connected

http://militaryk12partners.dodea.edu - The grant program provides resources to military-connected local educational agencies (LEAs) to develop and implement projects

http://www.stayingstrong.org - Online tool that supports military parents for addiction, as well as a section for educators

www.militaryparenting.org - A new online course, developed by the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs, that provides military parents with the tools they need to strengthen their existing parenting skills and reconnect with their families. Many of the techniques in the course are specifically tailored to address the unique challenges of military life.

http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/index.xml - The mission of the *Future of Children* is to translate the best social science research about children and youth into information that is useful to policymakers, practitioners, grant-makers, advocates, the media, and students of public policy.