



US Army Policy on Enlistment with Dependents

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U.S. ARMY

Army Policy on Enlistment with Dependents

Policy is gender neutral & disqualifies sole parents from Regular Army (RA) enlistment:

"An applicant does not meet dependency requirements if the applicant has no spouse but has custody of one or more dependents under the age of 18, (Waivers may be considered for the Reserve Components (RC))."

AR 601-210, Active and Reserve Components Enlistment Program

- The waiver for RC enlistment is based on the applicant presenting a valid Family Care Plan (FCP), thoroughly documenting how they can provide care for their Family members when military duties prevent them from doing so—the FCP is subject to careful review and scrutiny by their gaining commander
- Policy has been in place for the RA since at least 1975—not intended to require relinquishing custody—prohibits Army representative from advising, implying, or assisting an applicant to surrender custody for the purpose of enlistment
- Does not apply to serving single Soldiers/dual military members who become parents—It is in the best interests of the Army to retain these Soldiers to capture the Army's investment in their recruitment, training and experience, as well as to benefit the Soldiers, provided the Soldiers can continue to perform their duties
- However, serving single Soldiers/dual military members who become parents can only continue to serve with a valid FCP. Most FCPs have proven effective, though not without hardship and great sacrifice for those involved



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CURRENT POLICY

- Has minimal impact on the Army's ability to recruit highly qualified applicants
- Allows Soldiers' successful transition from civilian life and permits them to spend much of their first term of active duty without their dependents in order to complete initial entry training, deployments & other overseas assignments
- Prevents undue hardship on new sole-parent Soldiers separated from their dependents due to the economic pressure of maintaining separate households on the relatively low pay of initial entry members--these financial pressures ultimately negatively impact both Soldier performance and Army readiness.
- Minimizes added sole parent attrition—already a big impact on unit readiness
Though FCPs are normally effective over 43,000 Soldiers from FY02-FY15 left active duty before their term of service ended due to their being unable to care for their dependents while in service--over 8% of all Army attrition
- RC waivers can be problematic--Army Reserve sole parent waivers FY07-FY10 had over twice the initial entry training attrition of their peers due to failed FCPs
- The Army plans to maintain the policy to minimize added first term attrition and other negative effects on unit readiness and to ensure applicants are positioned to succeed in their demanding military duties