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**Operation: Military Kids  
Ready, Set, Go! Training**

Army Child and  
Youth Services

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# Army Child and Youth Services

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## I. WHO ARE WE?

Army Child and Youth Services is a worldwide system of programs and initiatives for children and youth, from birth to 18 years of age. Their intent is to support Soldier readiness and the well-being of Army families by reducing the conflict between military mission requirements and parental responsibilities.

This mission is about providing childcare and youth supervision options so Soldiers and the Army Civilian workforce can attend to their military duties without interruption and with the peace of mind that their families are being well taken care of while they are serving their country...at home and abroad.

The Army Child and Youth Services System supports the three Army Components:

- Active Army in 7 Regions, 24 states, 8 countries, and 3 territories (at 125 installations)
- Army National Guard in 7 Regions, 50 states, and 4 territories
- Army Reserve in 9 regions, 50 states, 3 countries, and 4 territories

Child and Youth Services for Active Army families are ongoing, with additional services provided during troop deployments. Some 450,000 Active Army children and youth are eligible to participate in ongoing programs, with thousands of Active Army children and youth eligible for additional deployment support services.

Child and Youth Services for Army National Guard and Army Reserve families are focused on:

- a. Support during the deployment cycle, i.e., when Soldiers are mobilized.
- b. Support during non-deployment periods of monthly or summer active service, i.e., drill weekends.

Based on their parents' mobilization status, some 250,000 children and youth are eligible for outreach services in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

### A. Child and Youth Services Support Structure

1. Headquarters Child and Youth Services (HQ located in Alexandria, Virginia)  
Provides oversight of Active Army Child and Youth Services on 125 installations and liaison support to Accessions Command, National Guard Bureau, and Army Reserve Headquarters.
2. Army National Guard Child and Youth Services (HQ located in Arlington, Virginia)  
Supports state and local Child and Youth ARNG services through ARNG Child and Youth Coordinators in seven Territories/Regions.

3. Army Reserve Child and Youth Services (HQ located in Atlanta, Georgia) Supports regional and local Child and Youth USAR services through nine Region Child and Youth Services Coordinators.

## II. WHAT DO WE OFFER?

### A. Army Operated Mission Support Services on Installations

1. **Full Day Care** Staffed with Army employees, childcare is routinely provided 10–12 hours per day in Child Development Centers and in networks of Family Child Care Homes operated by certified military spouses in their own homes. **Part Day Care** is provided for shift workers and enrichment. **Hourly Care** supports respite, meetings, and appointments.
2. **School-Age Services Programs** provide out-of-school options for children, generally in grades one through five or six, depending on local school configuration. Programs are located in centers or other on-post facilities, and include recreational activities, homework centers, technology labs, trips, Character Education, 4-H, and community service projects. Programs are offered before and after school, all day when school is out, and on weekends.
3. **Seasonal and Specialty Camps** offer high yield learning opportunities in a recreational setting.
  - a. **Seasonal Camps:** During summers as well as winter and spring school vacations, School-Age Programs incorporate camp in the middle of their program day, generally from 8am to 4pm.
  - b. **Specialty Camps:** These camps are organized with a specific focus/theme, and are generally geared to a variety of skill levels. They typically last 5 to 10 days, and have a separate sign up. Examples of specialty camps include computer camp and tennis camp.
4. **Middle-School Programs in Youth Centers** provide regularly scheduled out-of-school activities for youth from 11 to 15 years old who are too old for childcare and too young to drive or have a job. Programming includes: open recreation or “hanging out” time, trips and social events, community service opportunities through 4-H projects, Character Education activities, Teen Councils, Torch and Keystone Leadership Clubs, Home Work Centers, and tutoring sessions.
5. **Teen Centers** designed for youth ages 16 to 18 offer comparable opportunities. Many of these youth are involved in workforce preparation, teen councils, and mentoring younger children and youth.
6. **Youth Sports & Fitness Programs** include individual sports, team sports, leagues, and clinics. They emphasize sportsmanship, skill building, rules of the game, developmental fitness, and health practices.

7. **School Transition Services** provides school transition information for relocating families by showing them how to “navigate” the school system. Installation level initiatives include Partnerships in Education and enhancing installation/school communications.
8. **Instructional Classes or Lessons** are offered to complement and support the experiences children and youth have in Army Child and Youth programs and in schools. Instructional classes teach children discipline, problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution, game rules, social etiquette, and subject matter content.
9. **Web Support for Youth** Multiple web resources are available through which Army youth can access information pertinent to and supportive of the military lifestyle. The National Guard provides a link for youth within their Family Program website. The Army Reserve provides information, resources, and links for youth through the Army Reserve Family Program web portal. Real Teens Connected, available in 2006, will allow both on-post and geographically dispersed youth to post messages and receive responses from other youth via a web bulletin board.

#### B. Army Sponsored Mission Support in Local Communities

Child and Youth Programs and Services are offered for families who are geographically dispersed from Army installations. This includes, but is not limited to, independent duty assignments like those of Recruiters, ROTC Cadre, Corps of Engineers, and Army personnel working in Federal buildings. Options include childcare provided for National Guard and Army Reserve during weekend drills and their respective Youth Leadership Symposia and Teen Panel events throughout the year.

#### C. Army Operated Deployment Support Services on Installations

Garrison child and youth programs are offered to accommodate the unique needs of military families during alerts, mobilization, deployment, extended travel, and relocation. Childcare options include extended hours childcare, hourly care, short term respite care, childcare during Rest & Recreation (R&R) leave, care during unit functions, and family reintegration in Army operated/sponsored childcare settings.

#### D. Army Sponsored Deployment Support Services in Local Communities

1. **Operation: Military Child Care** is a nationwide Department of Defense/Military Service initiative to support the childcare needs of geographically dispersed parents who are mobilized/deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism and for Soldiers mobilized in Title 10 status. These services are offered where families reside.

2. **Operation: Child Care** is a voluntary local community effort to support National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers (and their families). Childcare providers across the country have shown their willingness to support the troops by contributing thousands of volunteer hours of free childcare during Soldiers' two weeks of leave from deployment. This program enables Soldiers to take care of personal business or to spend time alone with their spouse while they are home from supporting the Global War on Terrorism.
3. **Operation: Military Kids** is a nationwide, community-based initiative aimed at responding to the needs of youth whose parents have been mobilized/ deployed through the National Guard and Army Reserve. This multi-organization partnership creates community support networks for military-connected youth, collaborates with schools to ensure personnel are attuned to the unique needs of these students, and educates the public on the impact of deployments on Soldiers, families, children, and the local community.

#### E. Army Operated and Sponsored Deployment Support Services On and Off Installations

1. **Operation: Purple Camp** is offered through the National Military Family Association with corporate funding. These summer camps were created as an opportunity for youth from all branches and components of the military to come together to learn tools that assist them in coping with deployments. By participating in team building and recreational activities, the youth can share their experiences with one another and connect with someone who has walked in their shoes. National Guard and Army Reserve Child and Youth Services staff work directly with camp leaders and parents to ensure that their youth attend these camps.
2. **Military One Source** provides referrals for all kinds of family assistance, e.g., childcare, financial issues, employment concerns, individual and family counseling, etc.
3. **School Transition Support** was created to raise awareness of school personnel concerning challenges military children face during deployments. They work with educators and educational organizations to coordinate training opportunities and informational resources for teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators. Army-sponsored School Transition programs are listed below:
  - a. **Transition Counselor Institutes (TCI)** are held for elementary, middle, and high school guidance professionals in order to teach them about the unique needs of military students and how to support them.
  - b. **Student-2-Student (S2S)** is a school-based sponsorship program composed of students, advisors, and school liaison officers. The focus of this program is to support students who are transitioning between school systems.

- c. **Special Education Leadership Institutes (SELI)** are offered to school personnel. This is a series of sessions developed to promote awareness and to increase the availability of professional educators who understand the challenges associated with transitioning mobile, military-connected students with special needs.

### **III. LINKING UP...Key Contacts for OMK Team Leaders**

#### **A. Operation: Military Kids**

Information on staff contacts for OMK national partners is attached. Additional information is available on the following websites: [www.usda-army-ydp.org](http://www.usda-army-ydp.org) and [www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org).

#### **B. 4-H State Military Liaisons**

Each state has a 4-H State Military Liaison point of contact for OMK. A list of these contacts by state is attached. Additional information is available on [www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org).

#### **C. Operation: Military Child Care**

For more information, contact the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies at [www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org).

#### **D. Operation: Child Care**

For more information, contact the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies at [www.childcareaware.org](http://www.childcareaware.org).

#### **E. US Army Installation Child and Youth Services**

4-H/Army Youth Development Coordinators are assigned to each Army Region to support installation child and youth programs, including OMK initiatives in communities “outside the gates,” for children/youth of Active Duty Soldiers. A list of these contacts is attached.

#### **F. National Guard Child and Youth Services**

National Guard Child and Youth Coordinators are assigned to support state and community outreach services, including OMK initiatives, for children/youth of activated and deployed Service Members. A list of these contacts by state is attached.

#### **G. Army Reserve Child and Youth Services**

Army Reserve Child and Youth Specialists are assigned to support state and community outreach services, including OMK initiatives, for children/youth of activated and deployed Soldiers. A list of these contacts by state is attached.

## **IV. LINKING UP...OMK CONTACTS FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH**

### **A. State 4-H Military Liaisons**

Each state has a State 4-H Military Liaison point of contact for OMK in that state. A list of these contacts by state is attached. Additional information is available on [www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org).

### **B. Military One Source**

This Department of Defense Family Assistance Program refers individuals to OMK State Team Leaders. Military One Source can be contacted by phone: 1-800-342-9647 or online: [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com). User ID: military, Password: onesource.

## **V. LINKING UP...OMK CONTACTS FOR ARMY CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES STAFF**

### **A. State 4-H Military Liaisons**

Each state has a 4-H State Military Liaison point of contact for OMK in that state. A list of these contacts by state is attached. Additional information is available on [www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org).

### **B. 4-H/Army Youth Development Specialists 4-H/Army Youth**

Development Specialists are assigned to each Army Region to support installation child and youth programs, including OMK initiatives in communities “outside the gates,” for children/youth of Active Duty Soldiers. A list of these contacts is attached.