



## **Military Youth Project Literature Review**

### **September 2017**

#### **Overview**

This literature review summarizes articles, papers, and research that analyze and describe military families and their dependent children and the unique needs, risk factors, and resiliencies of this population. This literature was reviewed with a specific lens focusing on the ways in which these needs, risk factors, and resiliencies may or may not lend themselves to increased child welfare and juvenile justice system involvement for children and youth in military families. This review includes a brief section on conclusions from the research and a section with summaries of each piece of literature that was reviewed.

#### **Conclusions**

The literature reviewed for this research is quite diverse, as are the findings within each paper. However, broadly speaking, there were a number of important recurring findings and themes. With these in mind, the following conclusions can be made from this literature review:

- 1) Military youth face many academic obstacles and challenges, including frequent moves, absenteeism, and school disengagement;
- 2) Military families face heightened risk for child welfare involvement during deployment periods;
- 3) Military youth typically display more risk factors for juvenile justice involvement (such as carrying weapons or physical fighting) than their non-military peers;
- 4) Little to no data/research currently exists on the extent of military youth involvement in the juvenile justice system in Washington State or other states, despite these increased risk factors;
- 5) While military families face a number of increased social and economic challenges, children and parents both typically have access to a greater number of services than their civilian peers; and
- 6) While military children face many adversities, these children often develop great resilience in response to these challenges, provided they receive proper support.

#### **Literature Summaries**

##### Child and Youth Development

##### **1. Military Children from Birth to Five Years**

- Joy D. Osofsky, Lieutenant Colonel Molinda M. Chartrand (U.S. Air Force)
  - The Future of Children, 2013
- Because most research on military families has focused on children who are old enough to go to school, we know the least about the youngest and perhaps most vulnerable children in these families. However, we do know that things such as multiple deployments, which many families have experienced during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, may increase the risk that young children will be maltreated. The authors of this piece explain why young children, who depend on their parents for nearly everything, are particularly vulnerable. The authors recommend building and supporting resilience in young military children to mitigate the stress and vulnerability of the family and child.

## Child Welfare

### **2. Effect of Deployment on the Occurrence of Child Maltreatment in Military and Nonmilitary Families**

- E. Danielle Rentz, Stephen W. Marshall, Dana Loomis, Carri Casteel, Sandra L. Martin, and Deborah A. Gibbs
  - American Journal of Epidemiology, 2007
- This time-series analysis of Texas child maltreatment data from 2000 to 2003 examined changes in the occurrence of child maltreatment in military and nonmilitary families over time and the impact of recent deployment increases. Among military personnel with at least one dependent, the rate of child maltreatment in military families increased by approximately 30% for each 1% increase in the percentage of active duty personnel departing to or returning from operation-related deployment.

### **3. Predictors of Child Abuse Potential Among Military Parents: Comparing Mothers and Fathers**

- Cindy M. Schaeffer, Pamela C. Alexander, Kimberly Bethke, and Lisa S. Kretz
  - Journal of Family Violence, 2005
- This study examines the predictors of child abuse potential for at-risk fathers and mothers serving as active duty Army members and their spouses. Participants were 175 fathers (93% active-duty) and 590 mothers (16% active duty) of young children enrolled in an Army-sponsored home visitation program. Regression analyses indicated that there were both common and unique predictors of child abuse potential for mothers and fathers. Common predictors included depression, parental distress, and family conflict. Low family expressiveness was predictive only for fathers, whereas marital dissatisfaction, low social support, and low family cohesion were predictive only for mothers.

### **4. Child Maltreatment in Enlisted Soldiers' Families During Combat-Related Deployments**

- Deborah A. Gibbs, Sandra L. Martin, Lawrence L. Kupper, Ruby E. Johnson
  - American Medical Association, 2007
- This study examines the association between combat-related deployment and rates of child maltreatment in families of enlisted soldiers in the US Army who had 1 or more substantiated reports of child maltreatment. The authors look at a total of 1,858 parents in 1,771 families that maltreated their children and find that, among families of enlisted soldiers in the US Army with substantiated reports of child maltreatment, rates of maltreatment are greater when the soldiers are on combat-related deployments. Enhanced support services may be needed for military families during periods of increased stress.

### **5. Child Maltreatment in United States Military Families**

- Joel S. Milner
  - The International Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect, 2015
- This article describes the Military Family Advocacy Program and the military's definitions of and procedures for child maltreatment by military parents. The author also discusses studies on child maltreatment rate in the military, citing significant increases in child maltreatment

(especially neglect) by civilian parents during deployment periods and explains programs the military has developed to mitigate these findings.

#### **6. Fighting the Battle on the Home Front: Prevention and Intervention of Child Maltreatment for the Military Family**

- Wendy J. Travis, Richard E. Heyman, Amy M. Smith Slep
  - Child Abuse and Neglect, 2015
- The article describes the Military Family Advocacy Program and the process by which child maltreatment is investigated and responded to in the military. The piece describes military specific processes and also discusses MOUs with local child protective services and the replication of civilian programs such as nurse family partnerships. The authors use the specific example of the Air Force Family Advocacy Program to outline the processes and programs for responding to and prevent child maltreatment in military families.

#### Education/School

#### **7. Child Maltreatment and Military-Connected Youth: Developing Protective School Communities**

- Kris Tunac de Pedro
  - Child Abuse and Neglect, 2015
- The author of this article explains that even in school districts where military youth make up 3% or more of the total student population, civilian school professionals are not sufficiently trained to provide support and services to military youth and their unique educational and human service needs. Using examples of California-based school interventions and military youth research, this article proposes the creation of whole-school primary prevention approach to build protective school environments for military youth.

#### **8. Revolving Doors: The Impact of Multiple School Transitions on Military Children**

- S. Beth Ruff, Michael A. Keim
  - The Professional Counselor, 2014
- Of the approximately 1.2 million school-age children with military parents in the U.S., about 90% attend public schools. On average, these military children move three times more often than their civilian peers. Tensions at home, enrollment issues, adapting to new schools, and a lack of familiarity with military culture by public school professionals may adversely impact the academic, social, and emotional growth of these students. The authors recommend increasing awareness and utilization of community resources for military families and increasing staff training for and awareness of military youth issues in schools that serve military youth.

#### General Military/Youth Experience

#### **9. Children on the Homefront: The Experience of Children From Military Families**

- Anita Chandra, PhD, Sandraluz Lara-Cinisomo, PhD, Lisa H. Jaycox, PhD, Terri Tanielian, MA, Rachel M. Burns, MPH, Teague Ruder, MA, Bing Han, PhD
  - American Academy of Pediatrics, 2009

- This study examines how children from military families manage across social, emotional, and academic domains. After controlling for family and service-member characteristics, children in this study had more emotional difficulties compared with national samples. Older youth and girls of all ages reported significantly more school-, family-, and peer-related difficulties with parental deployment.

#### **10. Unlocking Insights about Military Children and Families**

- Anita Chandra and Andrew S. London
  - The Future of Children, 2013
- This study examines existing data and literature on military youth and concludes that there is currently a lack of sufficient, robust sources of data which is hindering the capacity to provide effective, targeted services to military youth. The authors make three recommendations: 1) major longitudinal national surveys, as well as administrative data systems (for example, in health care and in schools), should routinely ask about children's connections to the military; 2) questions on national surveys and psychological assessments should be formulated and calibrated for military children to be certain that they resonate with military culture; and 3) researchers who study military children should consider adopting a life-course perspective, examining children from birth to adulthood.

#### **11. When a Parent is Injured or Killed in Combat**

- Allison K. Holmes, Paula K. Rauch, Colonel Stephen J. Cozza (U.S. Army, Retired)
  - The Future of Children, 2013
- This research assesses evidence on how visible injuries, traumatic brain injuries, stress disorders, and death affect parents' mental health, parenting capacity, and family organization and discusses the community resources that can help families in each situation. The authors note that most current services focus on the needs of injured service members rather than those of their families. They call for a greater emphasis on family-focused care that supports resilience and positive adaptation for all members of military families who are struggling with a service member's injury or death.

#### **12. How Wartime Military Service Affects Children and families**

- Patricia Lester, Lieutenant Colonel Eric Flake (U.S. Air Force)
  - The Future of Children, 2013
- This article examines a range of perspectives that help us understand the environments in which military children live their lives, from the dynamics of the family system itself to the external contexts of the communities where they live and the military culture that helps form their identity. The authors conclude that policy makers can help military-connected children and their families cope with deployment by strengthening community support services and adopting public health education measures. They also call for better-designed, longer-term studies and more rigorous evaluation of existing and future support programs.

#### **13. Economic Conditions of Military Families**

- James Hosek and Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth
  - The Future of Children, 2013

- After a period of steady pay increases, service members typically earn more than civilians with a comparable level of education. Though service members are relatively well-paid, the military lifestyle takes a toll on the earnings of their spouses. Spouses' careers are regularly interrupted and more military spouses than comparable civilian spouses are either unemployed or work fewer hours than they would like, and military spouses overall tend to earn less than their civilian counterparts. Despite the military's relatively high pay, some service members and their families— particularly among the junior enlisted ranks—report financial distress, and a handful even qualify for food stamps. Moreover, precisely because military pay tends to be higher than civilian pay, families may see a drop in income when a service member leaves the armed forces.

#### **14. The Demographics of Military Children and Families**

- Molly Clever and David R. Segal
  - The Future of Children, 2013
- Reviewing data from the government and from academic and nonacademic research, the authors of this paper find several trends that distinguish military families. Compared with civilians, for example, service members marry younger and start families earlier. Because of the requirements of their jobs, they move much more frequently than civilians do, and they are often separated from their families for months at a time. And despite steady increases in the percentage of women who serve, the armed forces are still overwhelmingly male, meaning that the majority of military parents are fathers. Despite these distinguishing trends, the authors note that military families are still a strikingly diverse population with diverse needs that must be addressed with adaptive and flexible policies.

#### **15. Experiences of Military Youth During a Family Member's Deployment: Changes, Challenges, and Opportunities**

- Leanne K. Knobloch, Kimberly B. Pusateri, Aaron T. Ebata, and Patricia C. McGlaughlin
  - Youth & Society, 2015
- The deployment of a family member can be very distressing for military children, but it also can supply opportunities for growth. This study addresses calls for research on the changes, challenges, and opportunities facing youth during a family member's tour of duty. Participants were 33 military youth ranging from 10 to 13 years of age who completed one-on-one, semistructured interviews. They reported several changes to family life, challenges of deployment, and opportunities of deployment. The results advance theory, provide insight into children's experiences in their own words, and suggest practical guidelines for helping youth navigate a family member's deployment.

#### **16. The Parenting Cycle of Deployment**

- Ellen R. DeVore, PhD; Abigail Ross, MSW, MPH
  - Military Medicine, 2012
- Recent estimates indicate that more than two million children have experienced parental deployment since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. This article seeks to characterize the impact of the deployment life cycle on parenting roles among service members and at home partners/caregivers of dependent children. The authors describe a

“parenting cycle of deployment model” which discusses the critical and largely ignored processes of parenting in the context of deployment and war and the realities faced by parents serving in the U.S. military.

### **17. Exploring the Role of Social Connectedness Among Military Youth: Perceptions from Youth, Parents, and School Personnel**

- Kristin N. Mmari, Catherine P. Bradshaw, May Sudhinaraset, Robert Blum
  - Child Youth Care Forum, 2010
- This study employed 11 focus groups with military youth, parents, and school personnel working with military youth to better understand how youth and their families cope with stressors faced as result of living in a military family. Findings revealed that military youth are most worried about making frequent moves and having a parent deployed. However, youth and their parents who had better social connections to each other, their peers, and their neighborhoods appeared to make better adjustments to these challenges. School personnel reported that more military families needed to become aware of the services offered to help families cope effectively.

### **18. Impact of Deployment on Military Families With Young Children: A Systematic Review**

- Jennifer Trautman, Jeanne Alhusen, Deborah Gross
  - Nursing Outlook, 2015
- This systematic review describes the impact of deployment since 9/11 on the mental health of military families with young children, evaluates evidence-based interventions for military parents with young children, and identifies gaps in the science limiting our ability to support the needs of these families. Deployment was associated with increased parent stress, child behavior problems, health care utilization, and child maltreatment.

## Health and Well-being of Military Youth

### **19. Perceived Stress, Heart Rate, and Blood Pressure among Adolescents with Family Members Deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom**

- Vernon A. Barnes, PhD, Harry Davis, MW, Frank A Treiber, PhD
  - Journal of Military Medicine, 2007
- This study compared the impact of the 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom on heart rate (HR) and blood pressure (BP) and self-reported stress levels among three groups of self-categorized adolescents. The military deployed dependents exhibited significantly higher HR than other groups.

### **20. Wartime Military Deployment and Increased Pediatric Mental and Behavioral Health Complaints**

- Gregory H. Gorman, MD, Matilda Eide, MPH, and Elizabeth Hisle-Gorman, MSW
  - American Academy of Pediatrics, 2010
- This retrospective cohort study finds that children experiencing separation from a parent due to wartime military deployment have an 11% increase in outpatient visits for mental and behavioral health complaints, which contrasts with a general deployment-associated decrease in health care visits in all other diagnostic categories.

## **21. The Psychosocial Effects of Deployment on Military Children**

- Eric M. Flake, MD, Beth Ellen Davis, MD, MPH, Patti L. Johnson, PhD, Laura S. Middleton, PhD
  - Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics, 2009
- The purpose of this study was to describe the psychosocial profile of school age children during parental deployment utilizing standardized psychosocial health and stress measures, and to identify predictors of children at “high risk” for psychosocial morbidity during wartime deployment. Families in this study experiencing deployment identified one-third of military children at “high risk” for psychosocial morbidity. The most significant predictor of child psychosocial functioning during wartime deployment was parenting stress.

## **22. Adolescent Well-Being in Washington State Military Families**

- Sarah C. Reed, MPH, MSW, Janice F. Bell, PhD, MPH, MN, and Todd C. Edwards, PhD
  - American Journal of Public Health, 2011
- This study examines the associations between parental military service and adolescent well-being. In 8th grade, parental deployment was associated with higher odds of reporting thoughts of suicide among adolescent and higher odds of low quality of life and thoughts of suicide among adolescent boys. In 10th and 12th grades, parental deployment was associated with higher odds of reporting low quality of life, depressed mood, and thoughts of suicide among adolescent boys.

## **23. Resilience Among Military Youth**

- M. Ann Easterbrooks, Kenneth Ginsburg, and Richard M. Lerner
  - The Future of Children, 2013
- This paper argues that, to better serve military children, we must understand the sources of strength that help them cope with adversity and thrive. The authors stress that this resilience is not a personal trait but a product of the relationships between children and the people and resources around them. In this sense, military life, along with its hardships, offers many sources for resilience—for example, a strong sense of belonging to a supportive community with a shared mission and values. The authors recommend increased engagement in these sources of resilience by youth-serving programs and services.

## **24. Do Youth Development Programs Matter? An Examination of Transitions and Well-Being Among Military Youth**

- Evin W. Richardson, Jacquelyn K. Mallette, Catherine W. O’Neal, Jay A. Mancini
  - Springer Science Business Media, 2016
- The current correlational study examines the association between internal and external military family contextual factors (e.g., parental rank, having multiple military parents, school changes, living more than 30 min from a military installation, parental deployment, relationship provisions) and military youth well-being outcomes (i.e., depressive symptoms, anxiety, self-efficacy). Results indicated that military youth who reported more social provisions experienced fewer depressive symptoms and more self-efficacy. Youth who reported certain military risk factors were associated with decreased well-being.

## **25. Parentification in Military Families: Overlapping Constructs and Theoretical Explorations in Family, Clinical, and Military Psychology**

- Lisa M. Hooper, Heather M. Moore, Annie K. Smith
  - Children and Youth Services Review, 2014
- This article reviews select literature that describes unique aspects of the challenges, roles, and responsibilities that family members may face as a result of the military culture and military family system. A particular systemic construct and clinical process that may be especially relevant to military families is parentification. Parentification has long been linked with negative outcomes investigated in the family and clinical psychology literature. This article summarizes the overlap in constructs and theoretical frameworks related to parentification, which appear in the family and clinical psychology literature that may have transportability to the youth and family military literature base.

## **26. Military Youth and the Deployment Cycle: Emotional Health Consequences and Recommendations for Intervention**

- Chistianne Esposito-Smythers, Jennifer Wolff, and Keith M. Lemmon
  - Journal of Family Psychology, 2011
- This paper explains how stressors associated with the deployment cycle can lead to depression, anxiety, and behavior problems in children. Despite widespread acknowledgment of the need for emotional and behavioral health services for military youth, many professionals struggle with how to best respond and select appropriate interventions. The authors provide a review to guide service provision and the development of evidence-based treatments for military youth in particular and conclude with treatment recommendations for older children and adolescents experiencing emotional and behavioral health symptoms associated with the deployment cycle.

## Juvenile Justice and Family Law

### **27. Juvenile Issues on Military Installations: Sharing Control with Local Courts and Agencies**

- Mark E. Sullivan
- This paper describes the jurisdiction of juvenile justice issues for military youth, outlining the different types of jurisdiction across states and military bases and how this jurisdiction may apply depending on both the location and the nature of juvenile's offense. The author also describes memoranda of agreement (MOAs) used to weld together the authorities and resources of the military base and the surrounding city or county courts/agencies.

### **28. A Need for Training: Preparing Juvenile and Family Court Judges on Military-Related Issues**

- Shawn C. Marsh, PhD, Carlene Gonzalez, PhD
  - Juvenile and Family Court Journal, 2014
- This study was undertaken to better understand the training needs of judicial officers related to military issues. A snowball sample of judicial officers and court-affiliated stakeholders were asked to identify the most critical training topics regarding military issues in juvenile and family court, as well as rate the importance of 13 potential training topics. The highest rated training topics for judicial officers (N = 129) were the (1) Welfare of spouses and children, (2) Protocols to consider when selecting kinship care for children of deployed parents, (3) Mental and physical

health consequences of military service and deployment, (4) Reporting standards regarding Intimate Partner Violence or Family Violence, as well as implications for civil case investigation, and (5) Education support for children of deployed parents. Findings suggest a desire in the field for specific training on a multitude of issues related to serving/veteran men and women, spouses, and dependents. Recommendations for such trainings are discussed.

### **29. The Invisible Families: Child Welfare and American Indian Active-Duty Service Members and Veterans**

- Kathryn E. Fort, Peter S. Vicaire
  - The Federal Lawyer, 2015
- This paper address the unique challenges faced by Native American active duty service members involved in the child welfare system. The intersection of federal law, state law, tribal law, and military law creates complicated cases when Native American active duty service members become involved in the child welfare system. In these cases, Native service members can often be in the position of asking the state court to apply both the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. The authors note that tribes are in a critical place to provide services and specialized dockets for these cases and that attorneys must be attuned to the specialized needs of active duty and veteran families.

### **30. Mission Critical: A Call to Action for Juvenile and Family Courts, the U.S. Armed Forces, and Veterans Affairs**

- Hon. Janice M. Rosa
  - Family Court Review, 2014
- This article describes a historical disconnect between the courts and the military and discusses an innovative court program which focuses services and case processing on military families who are involved in family law proceedings in the civil court. The author concludes that there is an imperative need for the military and the courts to communicate about this topic and that the ease of implementation for this pilot program indicates that replication of the program is feasible.

### **31. Educating Family Court Judges on the Front Lines of Combat Readjustment: Toward the Formulation and Delivery of a Core Curriculum on Military Family Issues**

- Evan R. Seamone
  - Family Court Review, 2014
- This article examines the results of the first national survey of family court judges in which respondents ranked key concerns for cases involving military families. After describing potential approaches for delivery of this core curriculum, the article suggests three factors that will greatly enhance efforts to meet judges' needs: (1) awareness of key aspects of military culture that have a bearing on family functioning, (2) greater incorporation of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Veterans Service Organizations in family court cases involving military families, and (3) identification of best practices in family courts located near military communities which function as de facto centers of excellence. The

article draws on selected experiences and opinions of family court judges in North Carolina, Georgia, Hawaii, and Tennessee military communities.

### Support Systems and Programs

#### **32. Child Care and Other Support Programs**

- Major Latosha Floyd (U.S. Army), Deborah A. Phillips
  - The Future of Children, 2013
- The Department of Defense runs what is by far the nation's largest employer-sponsored child-care system. However, the authors note a few shortcomings of the military child care system. For one, demand for military child care continues to outstrip the supply. In particular, as National Guard and Reserve members have been activated during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the DoD has sometimes struggled to provide child care for their children. And force reductions and budget cuts are likely to force the military to make difficult choices as it seeks to streamline its child-care services in the years ahead.

#### **33. Promoting the Adaptation of Military Families: An Empirical Test of a Community Practice Model**

- Gary L. Bowen, Jay A. Mancini, James A. Martin, William B. Ware, and John P. Nelson
  - Family Relations, 2003
- This study used structural equation modeling to examine a strengths-based, community practice model to explore the relationship between formal and informal community-based social networks and family adaptation in military communities. "Sense of community" was examined as a critical mediating variable. Results provide support for the practice model. Several important insights were revealed about the strength and nature of pathways between components in the model. Results suggest that communities (including the workplace) can be important sources of tangible information and expressive support. Other important implications for community practice and research are discussed.

#### **34. Building Communities of Care for Military Children and Families**

- Harold Kudler and Colonel Rebecca I. Porter (U.S. Army)
  - The Future of Children, 2013
- The authors of this article recommend a public health approach of building "communities of care" for military youth in order to best minimize the risks that military children face and maximize their resilience. However, the authors also explain that several obstacles exist to harnessing the strengths of the communities that surround military families, the largest one being that military children and their families are often invisible within the many systems they interact with. They recommend increasing the capacity of both public and private systems to identify military youth and families and increasing the military-relevant knowledge of the frontline workers in these systems so they can best serve these families.

### Youth Behavior/Risks

#### **35. Weapon Carrying, Physical Fighting and Gang Membership Among Youth in Washington State Military Families**

- Sarah C. Reed, Janice F. Bell, Todd C. Edwards

○ Maternal and Child Health Journal

- This article examines associations between parental military service and school-based weapon carrying, physical fighting, and gang membership among youth in Washington State. The research utilizes data from the Healthy Youth Survey in 2008. The authors find that in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, parental deployment was associated with higher reporting of gang membership among girls and higher reporting of physical fighting and gang membership among boys. In 10<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> grade, parental deployment was associated with higher reporting of physical fighting and gang membership among girls and physical fighting and carrying a weapon among boys.