

5 Things School Leaders Can Do To Offer Support

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The average military family moves three times more often than its civilian counterpart, according to the Department of Defense. This transiency often disrupts a military family child's friendships, academic progress, and sense of connectedness. School leaders can ensure that during the time military children are in their schools—however short that time—these students have a sense of stability and safety and stay on track toward graduation. Here are 5 things school leaders can do in the area of support.



Offer Support

- 1. Set up transition centers at schools.** Establish a place where military children—and their parents and guardians—can get together to talk about their emotional concerns. Have information about family support organizations and services available at the district office and in each school.
- 2. Hold parent workshops** periodically through the year that focus on helping students make a smooth transition into and out of the school. Invite representatives from local military family support organizations to speak at a PTA meeting.
- 3. Provide counselors trained specifically in helping military families deal with change, deployment and grief.** These counselors should understand the challenges of families who are in transition, who may be reluctant to ask for help in dealing with emotions, and who are hesitant to make connections that they will have to break two years down the road.
- 4. Keep records of the military parents' units and plans for deployment.** Check them regularly and let teachers and other staff know if a student's parent is preparing to deploy. That should be a signal for them to prepare to offer additional academic and emotional support if necessary.
- 5. Work with military school liaisons.** School liaison officers are members of the military who work with military commanders to help school-aged children of military parents succeed in school. They also work with local schools to provide caring adults to enhance the education experience. Educators can work with liaisons to promote parental involvement and ease military children's transitions into and out of schools.