



Military Child Education Coalition®

**For the sake of the Child**

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# Mission



MCEC supports all military-connected children by educating, advocating, and collaborating to resolve education challenges associated with the military lifestyle.

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**Professional Development**



**Kaci McCarley**  
**Program Manager**

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**98% of Professionals**

**Indicate they believe military-connected children encounter additional stressors or challenges as a result of the military lifestyle.**

MCEC Education Survey, 2020

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## Exceptional Military-Connected Students




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## *Presentation Introduction*





Exceptional children who are military-connected face unique challenges. Today we will discuss specific barriers students with special needs face, strategies for supporting them as they transition from school to school, how to strengthen relationships with students and families, and the power of collaborative teamwork.

Exceptional children are defined as those who qualify for special education services or gifted education services to maximize their individual potential.

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### Agenda

- Consider the amplified education challenges for exceptional children who are also connected with military service.
- Explore the unique dynamics and implications associated with transitions, placement, and synchronization of services.
- Share resources and increase our understanding of how schools can support exceptional military-connected students.

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There are nearly **2 Million** military-connected students whose parents serve now.

And over **2 Million** whose parents are Post-911 Veterans.


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CHAT: Tell us about your experience with military-connected students



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Implications of Military Service



- Extended times of separation from a parent due to service obligations
- High mobility rates: active-duty families move every 2-3 years
- Academic and social challenges
- Adjustment to new curriculum and instructional methods
- Elevated stress finding a new peer group

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## Exceptional Military-Connected Students

Are particularly impacted by mobility, and each move entails a level of complexity in resetting family life activities that other families will not encounter.

Education of the Military Child in the 21st Century, 2012

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## Restart with Each Move

- **Build new support systems**
- **Secure needed services & resources**
- **Establish new relationships**



<https://www.travis.af.mil/News/Photos/gphoto/200211558/>

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## Variations and Waiting Lists




**Programs and services available to students with special needs will vary from state to state and district to district.**

**Wait times for accessing some services may be extremely long.**

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## Added Challenges Due to COVID-19

- **Stress caused by ill family members or friends**
- **Stress caused by economic concerns**
- **Stress caused by disruption in regular routine or the switch to remote learning**
- **Stress caused by possible regression and/or loss of academic and functional skills**
- **Difficulties with wearing (and removing) a mask**
- **Sensory issues associated with wearing a mask**
- **Communication difficulties for children with exceptional needs**
- **Frustrations or behavioral issues arising from the need to wear a mask (reminders, etc.)**

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## Resilience and Beyond

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### Moving Beyond Resilience Toward Full Potential

Level of Functioning

Time

Adverse Event

Thriving

Resilience (recovery)

Survival with Impairment

Succumbing

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## Student-Driven Assignments

**Their Voice,  
Their Choice!**

**Build intrinsic  
motivation,  
independence, and  
creativity!**

<https://www.aravis.af.mil/News/Photos/gphoto/200211588/>

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## Project Based Learning



<https://www.travisof.mil/News/Photos/gphoto/2002115586/>

- Investigate Real World Problems
- Build Critical Thinking Skills
- Encourage Inquiry and Skepticism
- Embrace the Arts

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## Strengths-Based Approach: A Paradigm Shift

- Avoid deficit model planning
- Use student abilities to help improve areas of challenge
- Build assignments around what the student can do
- Help students identify and leverage their strengths - all children have strengths and abilities




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## Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**
- **Appropriate Evaluation**
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**
- **Parent and student participation in decision making**
- **Procedural Safeguards**




<https://www.brown.af.mil/News/Photos/ggphoto/202211588/>

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>

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## 504 Plan (Section 504 of the Rehab Act)



- **Children with disabilities can be eligible for classroom accommodations under Section 504**
- **The definition of a disability under Section 504 is broader than under IDEA**
- **A 504 Plan reduces barriers and provides access to the learning environment**
- **Disability must substantially limit one or more major life activity including learning and behavior**

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/disability.html>

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## MIC3

**MIC3** | MILITARY INTERSTATE CHILDREN'S COMPACT COMMISSION

**What Is the Compact?**

The Compact addresses the unique challenges of military children and their frequent relocations. It allows for uniform treatment as military children transfer between school districts in member states.

**Note: The Compact only applies to public schools.**




<https://mic3.net/>

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## Supporting Military-Connected Students




- Get to know families individually
- Provide consistency and social support
- Create a welcome team and buddy system
- Take advantage of military kids' leadership skills

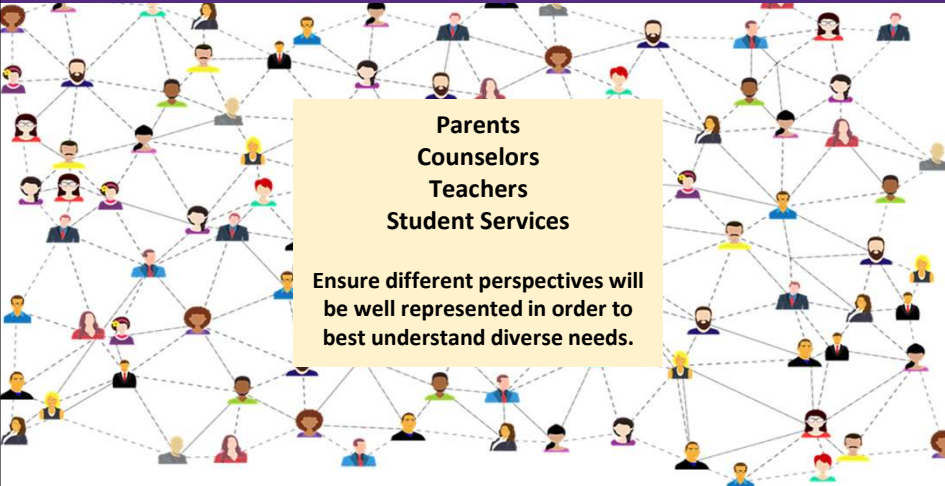
<https://www.travis.af.mil/News/Photos/gphoto/2002115386/>

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## A Network of Support




**Parents  
Counselors  
Teachers  
Student Services**

**Ensure different perspectives will be well represented in order to best understand diverse needs.**

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## Resources

Guide to Special Education Resources Ready Now

**Special Education Innovations by Area of Focus**

**Infant and Early Childhood, Families, Practitioners**

- [MOD System](#) (for infant-toddler educators and home visitors)
- [STEP UP AT](#) (Early literacy)

**Platforms for Special Education Practitioners**

- [Education Modified](#)

**Assistive Technologies**

- [AvenuePM](#)
- [Project Core](#)
- [myASLTech](#)
- [Reading and Writing Adventure Time](#)

**Early Learners and Grade School Students With or At Risk for Disabilities**


- [Capti-Voice](#) (Reading)
- [Early Reading Skills Builder](#) by Attainment Company (reading)
- [I-Connect](#) (self-monitoring)
- [KinderTEK](#) (Math)
- [Numbershire](#) (Math)
- [Railway Hero](#) (Math)
- [Speak Agent](#) (STEM)
- [TEACHLEY](#) (Math)
- [WEGO-RIITE](#) (upper grade school, writing)

**Learning and Assistive Technologies for Middle, High School, and Post-Secondary Students With**

<https://www.educationmodified.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ReadyNow.SpecialEducation.9.1.20.pdf>

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**Teamwork**

**Schools and Families**

As Partners in Remote Literacy Learning

Remote literacy learning is a collaboration among schools, families, and students.

**Schools Should**

Include information on how families can access

**Families Should**

Coach your child's literacy learning at home.

<https://improvingliteracy.org/brief/schools-and-families-partners-remote-literacy-learning>

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**Become a Member of the MCEC Community Today!**

<http://eepurl.com/i17zD>

**Free Membership and Receive our eNews Updates**

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