



Kansas: Operation Military Kids

Family Resilience

Kansas families are resilient. This is especially true of Kansas military families. On top of typical, everyday demands, military families must endure the added burden of parental deployments and absences, frequent moves, and knowing their loved ones might be in harm's way. In spite of all those obstacles, research shows that most military families demonstrate resilience when facing these issues. Still, there are a lot of things friends and neighbors can do to integrate military families into the community and provide another layer of support. To bolster resilience among military family members, consider the following factors:

Children —

handle family stress better when they can understand and react to what is happening. They also draw strength from positive, nurturing relationships with parents and other adults.

- Offer high-quality child care.
- Support parents.
- Establish school programs that foster teacher-child relationships.
- Remind children they are part of a safe, welcoming community.

Teens —

often seek comfort beyond the family — in friends, activities, school, and jobs. They build resilience through self-reflection, group activities with other teens, and by making conscious, positive choices with the support of caring adults.

- Provide opportunities for involvement (e.g., service learning).
- Invite them to join social networks (e.g., clubs, organizations, teams).
- Educate adults who work with youth about military life, deployment, and resilience.

Adults —

set the tone for how the rest of the family acts and reacts. Resilient families rely on routines that promote togetherness, especially during difficult times. Parents are more likely to participate in activities that focus on the children or the whole family.

- Invite them to activities that involve the entire family.
- Inform them about available community supports.
- Include them in events that link them to the community.
- Include them in activities you organize at a variety of settings and times.

Everyone —

faces adversity at some point. The best thing you can do for a military family is to offer continuous friendship and consideration. Belonging to a supportive, interconnected community can make all the difference when facing adversity.

How You Can Help

- Establish a local Kansas: OMK team in your community or join the state team.
- Sponsor educational, recreational, and social events.
- Sponsor a family day out.
- Provide transportation to school activities, sporting events, or club meetings.
- Sponsor community covenant signings that publicly acknowledge the military-friendly nature of the community and its support networks.

Resources

Institute for the Health and Security of Military Families — www.militaryfamilies.k-state.edu

Military Child Education Coalition — www.militarychild.org

Military OneSource — www.MilitaryOneSource.com

Kansas National Guard — http://www.kansastag.gov/ng_default.asp

National 4-H Military Partnership — <http://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/>

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