



Kansas: Operation Military Kids

Inspires Learning, Improves Health, and Strengthens Resilience Among Military-Connected Youth and Families in Kansas

There are many challenges unique to military families. In addition to the separation of deployment and prolonged absences, military-connected families must often cope with uncertain employment, frequent transitions, and sacrifices of time and continuity with family. Few civilians understand or acknowledge these sacrifices. Still, military youth and families persevere and live out the values of duty, selfless service and courage. During tough times, however service members and their families may rely on support systems through family, friends, and their community. These support systems are crucial to the well-being of the military family.

Kansas: Operation Military Kids (OMK) is the outreach component of the Institute for the Health and Security of Military Families. Kansas: OMK was formed nearly 15 years ago as a unique support system to especially help military families. Kansas: OMK partners include the Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Army Reserve, AmeriCorps VISTA, Boys and Girls Club, American Red Cross, K-State Research and Extension 4-H Youth Development, the Kansas State University School of Family Studies and Human Services, and the Institute for the Health and Security of Military Families.

The Institute for the Health and Security of Military Families at Kansas State University addresses health and resiliency of military personnel, veterans and their families. The institute conducts research and leads initiatives that focus on military families. The institute's work addresses the complex effects of war time service on the long-term health and well-being of American veterans and military personnel and their families.

What Does Kansas: Operation Military Kids Do?

- Raise community awareness of issues faced by military kids.
- Build community capacity to deliver state and local outreach services.
- Implement outreach services.
- Educate people and organizations about the effects of military deployments, downsizing, and life.

How Does Kansas: Operation Military Kids Do Its Work?

- School-based resilience groups (PAWs — Parents Around the World)
- Community Education (Awareness to Action, Little CHAMPS) and capacity building (Joining Community Forces)
- Day camps, weekend retreats/"lock-ins"
- Community events, family nights, training and professional development for working with military audiences
- National Guard and Reserve youth leadership development

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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