Some schools cultivate supportive environments for military children while others are more hands off and let children navigate the school system on their own. Regardless of the school culture, there are things parents can do to make their child’s experience at school more successful. This is especially important because teachers and principals are generally not trained to recognize the impact of the deployment cycle in the lives of military children.

Parents can get involved in several ways. They can take initiative to assist schools in learning about the needs of military families. This could include sharing some of the resources listed on the second page of this newsletter. Volunteering is another way to get support schools and also make connections. If military parents are part of PTO planning or on advisory boards, they can help raise awareness by suggesting simple things like a “heroes’ wall.” This is a practice that allows the community to honor service members, past and present, through the pictures of family members and friends who have served that kids post.

Effective communication from home to school is another important key. For example, parent-teacher conferences are not only a chance to learn how a child is doing academically but also an opportunity to communicate the talents, needs, and dreams of the child. Parents might consider writing down goals and making a plan for improvement after meeting with teachers. Taking an interest in what happens at school each day is a habit that communicates that school is important.

The nature of the deployment cycle means that military parents may need to choose a new school more frequently than most. This decision determines where the family will live and how much support the student will get during the transition. Here are some decision points and guidelines for parents to consider:

- What means the most to you, high test scores or a military friendly environment? Of course, the ideal is that you get both, but sometimes parents will have to make compromises in this area.
- Gather information from several sources to learn about potential schools. Two websites that provide this information are www.greatschools.org which rates schools on a scale from 1 to 10 or www.schoolsquest.org which is especially geared toward military families.
- Interstate guidelines have been adopted in 42 states so that uniform guidelines for military children who move between states can be applied to graduation and school progress. Find out more at www.mic3.net
- While 7% of military children attend schools specifically for families of service members, the large majority attend civilian schools. Making schools aware of the military families’ needs can be a starting point to foster understanding and support.

Your Preteen or Teen-Aged Child

- Is developing physically faster than at any other time in their life
- Is using various types of technology throughout the day (cell phones, Facebook, video games, etc.)
- Requires at least 8-9 hours of sleep a night
- Is experimenting with new behaviors and identities

Parent Tips:

“Remember as you advocate for your child that no parent is perfect. Meetings are sometimes missed, or papers lost. Talk to other parents, but trust yourself. Keeping a positive perspective can be a challenge when you are tired and frustrated. Understand that your child is not entitled to every intervention that he or she could benefit from, and that the healthcare and education professional you interact with can help you create positive outcomes for your child.”

—DoD Special Needs Parent Toolkit
Resources

Military Child Initiative, a best practices library for a variety of issues

Students at the Center, guides for those involved with military students
http://www.militaryk12partners.dodea.edu/studentsAtTheCenter/

School Quest, a resource for military families
https://www.schoolquest.org/

Tutor.com, free tutoring for military families
http://www.tutor.com/military

Student Online Achievement Resources, resources for military children and their parents
http://www.soarathome.org/

March2Success, college preparation skills and resources
https://www.march2success.com/

Scholarship Programs of the Fisher House Foundation, scholarships for military children and spouses
http://www.militaryscholar.org/

We have closed the recruitment phase of our current ADAPT study. Thank you to all military families for your interest, participation, and commitment.

We are preparing for the next phase of ADAPT, so please continue to visit our website and Facebook page for details.

To learn more about the ADAPT project, go to www.cehd.umn.edu/fsos/adapt.
For more information, you can call us at 612-624-4830 or e-mail us at adapt@umn.edu.

“Like” us on Facebook!

Contact Information:
Dept. of Family Social Science
University of Minnesota
Rm. 290 McNH
1985 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
ADAPT@umn.edu
612-624-4830

ADAPT NEWSLETTERS Volumes 1-17 are available at the ADAPT Website

http://www.cehd.umn.edu/fsos/adapt