



# Professional Learning Needs for School Personnel Who Support Military-Connected Students

[schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu](https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu)

How can the professional learning series, available on the **School Resources to Support Military-Connected Students** website, prepare school personnel to support military-connected students? Discover the rationale behind the selection of these professional learning topics.



## Supporting Military-Connected Students

- **Military-connected students who have a deployed Service member parent have an increased rate of problem behaviors** when compared to military-connected students whose Service member parent is not deployed (Moeller et al., 2015).
- Military-connected students who have a deployed Service member parent experience an **approximately 11% increase in outpatient mental and behavioral health visits and an 18% increase in stress disorders** (Gorman et al., 2010).
- **Teachers are the school professionals who spend the most time with military-connected students in the school setting.** They are well positioned to refer military-connected students for a consultation with their school counselor or school psychologist if they notice changes in behavior that are concurrent with the student's Service member parent preparing for deployment, deploying, or returning home from deployment. However, in order for teachers to recognize challenges their students may be experiencing due to a parent's deployment, they need to understand the deployment cycle and potential impacts it can have on military-connected students (St. John & Fenning, 2020).
- **Teachers should receive professional training on the deployment cycle in order to provide a supportive climate** that offers optimal opportunities for military-connected students to focus on academic tasks (Harrison & Vannest, 2008).
- **Less than 10% of educators report that they received training** on how to support military-connected students (Garner et al., 2014).





## Classroom Management

- **Teachers should receive instruction on how to provide consistent classroom management** in order to establish a supportive climate that offers optimal opportunities for military-connected students to focus on academic tasks (Harrison & Vannest, 2008).
- Military spouses who stay home with school-age children while the Service member parent is deployed **report a significant increase in their children experiencing discipline problems at school** (Rosen et al., 1993).
- Military-connected students who have a deployed Service member parent **experience an approximately 19% increase in reported behavioral disorders** (Gorman et al., 2010).
- Young (age 6-10) military-connected students whose Service member parent is deployed **experience a decrease in prosocial behaviors** (Rosen et al., 1993).
- Military-connected students who have a deployed Service member parent **may exhibit externalizing reckless behaviors** (Moeller et al., 2015).



## Socioemotional Learning

- **Teachers should receive professional instruction on utilizing communication skills** to foster mutual respect with their students in order to provide a supportive climate that offers optimal opportunities for military-connected students to focus on academic tasks (Harrison & Vannest, 2008).
- Approximately 32% of the children whose Service member parent recently returned from deployment and 25% of the children who have a deployed Service member parent **report having clinically significant anxiety symptoms** (Lester et al., 2010).
- **Students should be taught strategies** related to anger management, relaxation, and understanding feelings to optimize their opportunities to focus on academic skills (Harrison & Vannest, 2008).
- Military spouses who stay home with school-age children while the Service member parent is deployed **report a significant increase in children experiencing a variety of problems**, including sadness and attention-seeking behavior (Rosen et al., 1993).
- **Educators have identified frequent geographic transitions and Service member parent deployment as factors that may affect the socioemotional well-being of military-connected students.** Educators report increases in anger, sadness, and anxiety levels among some military-connected students; however, only 38% of respondents indicate they have the necessary skills to meet the emotional needs of military-connected students (Garner et al., 2014).



## Suicide Prevention

- Teachers should receive professional instruction on active-listening skills in order to provide a supportive climate that offers optimal opportunities for military-connected students to focus on academic tasks, (Harrison & Vannest, 2008) . Active-listening skills instruction is provided as part of this professional learning series.
- According to researchers, a stressful life event, one of which being the deployment of a Service member parent, often occurs before an adolescent attempts suicide (Smischney et al., 2014).
- Researchers have found that older adolescents with a deployed Service member parent were **1.5-1.75 times more likely to report having suicidal thoughts** compared to their peers who do not have a deployed parent (Reed et al., 2011).
- Researchers have found that adolescents who have an immediate family member who is a Service member are at **a greater risk for feeling sad or hopeless, experiencing depression, and having suicidal ideation** when compared to their peers who do not have an immediate family member who is a Service member (25% to 19%). Further, adolescents who have an immediate family member that is deployed have a 34% greater chance of experiencing suicidal ideation (Cederbaum, 2014).

### Additional Services

The Clearinghouse provides additional services and resources that may be of interest to school-based professionals who serve military-connected children and their families.

#### Technical Assistance

The Clearinghouse Technical Assistance (TA) specialists are available to support you with program selection, implementation, or evaluation in your work with military families.

[militaryfamilies.psu.edu/contact-us](https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/contact-us)

#### Program Search

The Clearinghouse has reviewed over 1,300 programs to determine the potential benefit to military families and placed them on the Continuum Evidence.

[continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu](https://continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu)

#### Program Implementation Toolkit

The Clearinghouse has created free, evidence-informed, easy-to-use resources to assist you through the program selection, implementation, and evaluation processes.

[militaryfamilies.psu.edu/resources/program-implementation-toolkit/](https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/resources/program-implementation-toolkit/)



**Do you have any questions about these resources? Contact us:**



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