# Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services

November 2015

# CYSS CONNECTIONS

## Monthly Highlights

Military Family Appreciation Month
National Scholarship Month
◊◊◊
Veterans Day - November 11th
Thanksgiving - November 26th

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## Looking For Child Care

Do you worry about childcare? Are you stressed about not knowing exactly what to look for in a care service? Finding and selecting child care can be a difficult and overwhelming task. More and more, research tells us that our children's healthy development depends on safe and positive experiences during the first few years of life. If you are a parent who works during these early years, choosing good child care is one of the most important decisions you will ever make for your child. Equipping yourself with information on how to begin your search and what steps to take can help ease the tension.

### Review Types of Care

Child care centers care for children in groups, and all states require centers to be licensed. The definition of licensed child care varies by state or territory, and does not ensure quality, but it does set minimum health, safety, and caregiver training standards which centers must maintain. All states inspect centers at least once a year.

Family child care providers offer care for children in the provider's home. Although requirements vary from state to state, most require Family child care providers be regulated if they care for more than four children. Most states require providers to have a criminal records check and/or child abuse and neglect clearance. Many states also require pre-service and/or on-going training, and inspect Family child care homes annually or on a random sample basis.

In-home caregivers provide care for children in the child's home. They include live-in and live-out nannies and housekeepers. Most states do not regulate in-home caregivers, but some states regulate nanny-placement agencies. Sometimes parents choose relatives, friends or neighbors to care for their child. This type of care is often called "Kith and Kin" care and can take place in the caregiver's home or in the child's home. Sometimes parents arrange to work different shifts, so that one parent is always available to care for the children. Many states do not regulate care provided by relatives, friends, and neighbors.

### Start Early

Start looking as far in advance as you can. No matter what type of care you are considering - a child care center or care in someone else's home - finding the right child care option can take some time. Getting in to the child care of choice may also take time. Be sure to add your child to a waitlist if there is one available.

(continued on next page)

CYSS MISSION

*To support readiness and quality of life by reducing the conflict between military mission requirements and parental responsibilities.*

**This information has been provided by Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services.**
**For more information on resources and programs, please visit: ARFP.org/CYSS**

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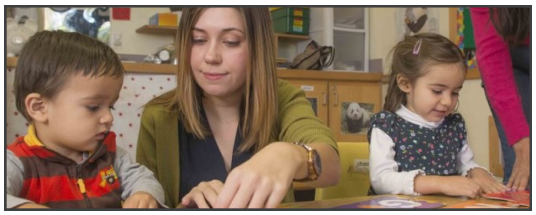


**Make a Call**

Begin your search by calling your local experts! No matter what your military status might be: Active Guard and Reserve (AGR), Troop Program Unit (TPU) or Mobilized/Deployed, Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services (CYSS) staff can assist with locating child care and resources for children and youth. CYSS staff will research and provide facts about child care, connect with contacts, and provide child care options in your area that may meet your needs.

One great resource your CYSS specialist will provide is your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency (CCR&R). Through your local CCR&R you can request the licensing requirements in your area, get information about complaints and licensing violations for the centers you are interested in, and check your status to see if you qualify for any child care financial assistance programs.

**Visit and Ask Questions**

Visit the child care options you are considering, either centers or Family child care homes, before you decide which one is best for your Family. Find out about these key indicators of quality: adult to child ratio, group size, caregiver qualifications, turnover, and state accreditation. Call each child care program and schedule an appointment for your visit. Once you are there, stay for at least an hour to watch activities, check the surroundings, and ask questions. Researchers have identified 13 research-based guidelines to think about when choosing a child care program. View the guidelines at **http://bit.ly/1rmdoJy**.

**Know Your Budget and Make a Choice**

Child Care Aware, **childcareaware.org**, is a great resource offering a wide range of resourceful tools online for parents. Take advantage of the Child Care Aware Budgeting Child Care Options calculator. It allows Families to examine their financial situation both with and without the cost of child care. Factors such as cost of child care, work related expenses, monthly bills, and savings or retirement contributions are all included in the calculator. Families will be able to get an idea of their monthly budget and how child care will impact that budget. To access the **Budget Child Care Options Calculator** please visit **childcareaware.org**. This service also provides guidelines to help measure the quality of child care home or center. View the guidelines at **http://bit.ly/1GM3dpX**. This will help to evaluate the providers and make the best choice for your child and Family.

**Stay Involved**

The work isn't over when you find good care for your child. You and your child's caregiver are partners now. Schedule parent-caregiver meetings regularly and ask questions, offer to volunteer time when needed (like participating in clean up days or fixing broken toys), and visit your child at child care (read a book aloud and join in for special events). Visiting and participating in events at your child's provider sends a strong message. It tells your child and your child's caregiver that you think what your child is doing and learning is important.

Though the process may be stressful and long, your CYSS specialist can offer help along the way. They can also provide information on alternate child care options that may be available to eligible Service Members. The Army's Fee Assistance Program assists qualifying Army Sponsors (eligible service members or civilian employees) with the cost of off-post child care when on-post child care is not available, or you are an eligible geographically dispersed Sponsor, Recruiter, or Sponsor of a School Age child. The benefit is available to children from birth through 12 years of age of an Active Duty Soldier, Activated Army National Guard, Activated Army Reserve or Department of Army Civilian Sponsor.

If you are interested in more information about the Army Fee Assistance Program or any other child care options, please contact your local CYSS specialist listed on the back page of this newsletter.

Compiled from **childcareaware.org** and **gsa.gov** by Carlisha Martin, Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group

# Motivating Kids To Get Fit

With childhood obesity increasing at staggering rates, parents and caregivers must play an active role in protecting children's health. According to the CDC, childhood obesity has more than doubled in children (6-11 years) and quadrupled in adolescents (12-19 years) in the past 30 years. Though eating healthy foods is a key factor in maintaining their overall well-being, this must be balanced with regular physical activity.

Children who are physically active on a regular basis will reap enormous benefits. Studies have shown that they are less likely to become overweight, have a decreased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, have reduced blood cholesterol levels and lower blood pressure, have higher self-esteem and reduced incidences of depression and anxiety, build strong bones and muscles, and remain more attentive in school.

Now that we know why children need to be active, it's time to get them up and moving. Here are a few tips on how:

**Focus on fun.** You don't have to call it "exercise," just consider it an activity. Find out which ones your child likes and encourage those.

**Limit TV and computer time.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than "two hours of daily media exposure" for children ages two and older. When they are watching or clicking, make sure they take breaks and move around.

**Schedule play dates.** The key word here is "play." Have your child get together with a friend and play a game of tag, race down the block, or kick a ball around.

**Get fit as a Family.** Create funny dance moves. Put up a net and shoot hoops. You could also visit a zoo, play miniature golf or enjoy other activities where a lot of ground is covered on foot.

**Choose fitness-oriented gifts.** For your child's next birthday, consider giving him or her a jump-rope, mini-trampoline, hula-hoop — something that will encourage movement.

**Clean up.** Chores don't have to be a bore. Sing a silly song with your child as you both wipe tables and counters. See how long both of you can hold a funny face while folding and putting away clothes. Older kids can help wash the car. On a hot day, this can turn into water play.

**Skip the mall.** Go to the playground. Sure, most malls have kids' play areas. But, when the weather is nice, enjoy a local park or playground instead. Fresh air always does a body good; especially a little one.

**Be a model of fitness.** It's much easier to motivate kids to be active, if you lead an active lifestyle. Whether you follow a structured fitness program or are lucky to get in some morning stretches, let them see you moving. It will likely inspire them to do the same.

**Encourage walking or biking whenever feasible.** This is easy to accomplish if you live near stores, libraries or other places you visit regularly. If you live in a remote area, establish a safe route to tour on bike or on foot with your child.

**Be a fitness advocate at your child's school.** Do you know how much physical activity your child gets at school? Now's the time to find out. If you don't like the answer, gather support from other parents to enforce positive changes.

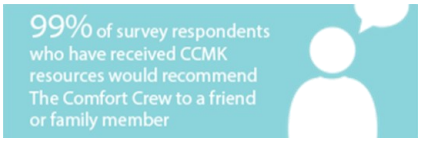
Fitness With a Twist, Charlotte, NC

Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services (CYSS) offers programming through local events and partnerships with the YMCA, 4-H, and Boys and Girls Clubs of America that will help keep your children moving. Army Reserve Families have access to clubs, recreational activities, Family outings and more. Visit arfp.org/CYSS for more information on how to get involved, or call your CYSS specialist listed on the back page of this newsletter. You can also keep an eye out for the next CYSS Youth Enrichment Program: Fitness With a Twist. This program focuses on the importance of children and Families being active, and practicing healthy habits starting from the inside out.

Compiled from pbs.org/parents/food-and-fitness/sport-and-fitness/motivating-kids-to-get-fit/

# THE COMFORT CREW for Military Kids

Military Families experience many unique and challenging situations. The Comfort Crew for Military Kids (CCMK) was created to make sure that military Families have the best resources available to help them through the tough situations like deployment, reintegration, reintegrating with an injury, losing a parent in war, and other challenges that the community faces.




The Comfort Crew Programs combine customized in-person live experiences, animated DVD's, guided journals, and an online web-portal to help youth through the situations they experience as a military youth in an extremely efficient and effective manner. Each Comfort Crew piece uses a unique blend of humor and personal stories to open youth up to talking about the "tough stuff." These distinctive edutainment experiences allow us to talk about serious subjects in a way that is accessible to children. The Comfort Crew Programs are provided to military Families completely FREE of charge. All Comfort Crew Kits are designed to support children ages 6-12.

How Does It Work and What Are the Programs?
Simply fill out a form online at comfortcrew.org/militaryheroes.html and indicate the resources you'd like to request either for your Family or a Family you know. The Comfort Crew team will be in contact within two days to obtain the remaining information needed to fulfill your request.

## BRINGING FAMILIES BACK TOGETHER

The Bringing Families Back Together program is designed to work on both the deployment and reintegration experience by giving children and Families the tools to deal with this challenging situation. (Resources: With You All the Way! Deployment Kit Together Again! Reintegration Kit)

## FALLEN HEROES

The Fallen Heroes program gives children the tools and strategies to understand the emotions that they're experiencing and not only cope with the loss, but also thrive and find a purpose in the aftermath of war. It also serves to make sure that they know they're not alone in this difficult time so that they both feel connected and supported. (Resources: Memory Box)

## WOUNDED WARRIORS

Military children have a difficult time processing the experience of a parent coming home wounded and don't know how to communicate these feelings. Our Wounded Warrior resources help military youth and their Families pave the way to building quality, thriving, Family support systems. (Resources: Taking Care of You! Support for Kids of Injured Heroes)

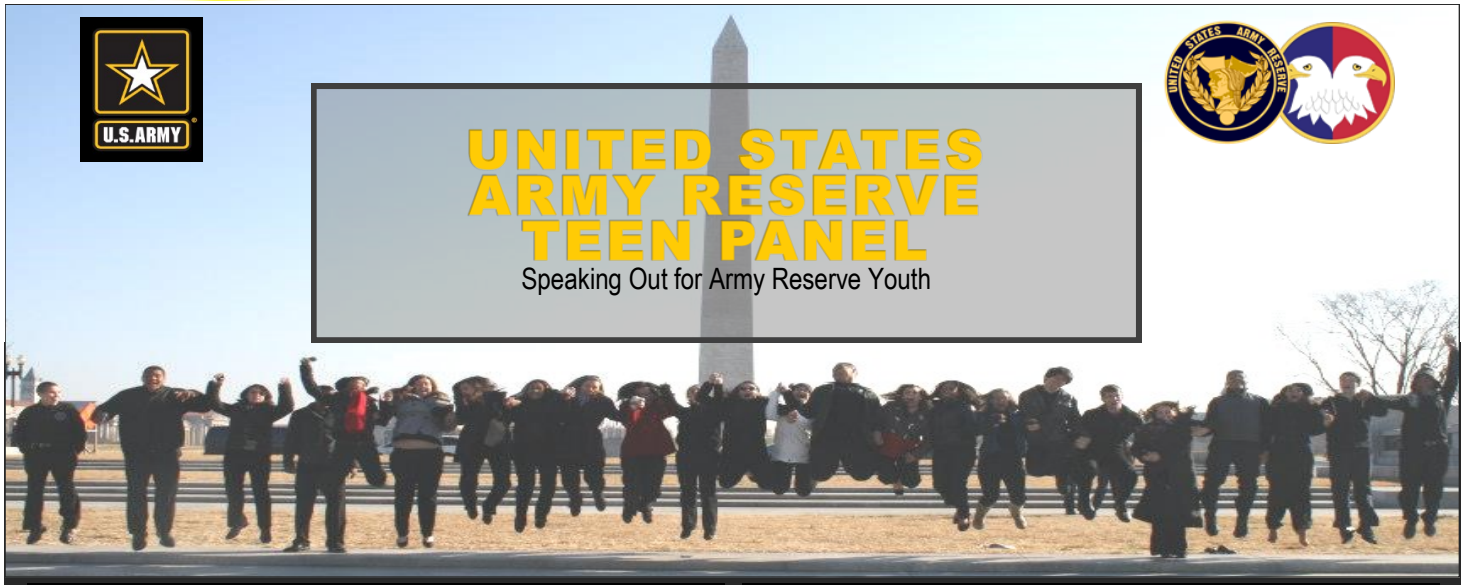
## NEVER ALONE NETWORK

The vision of the Never Alone Network is to create in-person live experiences that serve to connect and support military youth. With it, we will build peer to peer support systems that remain intact even when the military youth are displaced and forced to move to a new location.

Visit comfortcrew.org for additional information on the programs highlighted above, or contact your CYSS specialist on the back page of this newsletter for assistance.

## Command/unit updates

# THE SPOTLIGHT




### What do panel members do?

- Participate in Teen Issue Forums
- Serve as junior advisors for Command Teen Councils and regional Youth Leadership, Education and Development (YLEAD) programs
- Volunteer at events such as Family Readiness Group meetings, Family Days, and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Programs (commit eight hours per month)
- Establish partnerships between AR youth and leadership
- Participate in service learning projects
- Receive training in leadership and teen resilience

### What are the requirements?

- Enrolled in 9th, 10th, or 11th grade
- Maintain a 2.5 or better GPA
- Be a dependent of an Army Reserve Soldier
- Serve a two year term
- Commit to attend up to three meetings per year
- Ability to represent and voice Army Reserve children and youth issues and find solutions

### How do I apply?

- Visit arfp.org/cyssprogram.php#artp to download an application packet
- Applications will be accepted through 30 November 2015
- Check us out on facebook.com/ARTeenPanel

### Who do I contact with questions?

Kendra Edwards Waters, CYSS Youth Services Manager
Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group
kendra.edwards3.ctr@mail.mil or 770-754-9900 ext 506

Ann Nacino, CYSS Specialist
Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group
xania.d.nacino.ctr@mail.mil or 562-936-7633

## Command/unit updates

# THE SPOTLIGHT

JOIN US

# TEEN COUNCIL

Up for a challenge? Ready to build your resume, have fun and make a difference? Accept the challenge and have your voice heard by representing the children and youth of the Army Reserve! Command Teen Councils are looking for youth between the ages of 13-17 to serve as leaders within their command and the community!

The Teen Council's goal is to empower youth with the core values of leadership, service and resiliency. They aim to promote high standards of learning through curricula, resources and activities. Each well-qualified candidate is chosen based on a thorough selection process evaluating their experience, dedication and willingness to speak on behalf of AR children and youth.

Through this opportunity, youth will gain public speaking and leadership skills, work on professional and personal development skills, experience workshops on communication, and develop effective strategies and implement solutions for issues they face as Army Reserve youth. It's a great way to connect with youth from your command and across the country. Don't miss out on this experience...contact us today! Any of the specialists listed on the back page are ready to speak with you.

### BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- Serve a two-year term
- Attend up to four meetings annually/travel paid for face-to-face meetings
- Provide at least four hours/month with military and/or community activities
- Work with fellow teens to develop innovative opportunities
- Attend local/regional command youth events as assigned
- Inform Army Reserve leadership about the needs of youth

### BASIC QUALIFICATIONS

- Command-connected youth
- A member in good standing in the military and community
- Enrolled in the 8th-11th grade for the 2015-16 school term
- Maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or higher

## Community Events

NOVEMBER 2015

**Please note that events listed in this newsletter, with the exception of AR CYSS events, are not endorsed by the Army Reserve and are provided only for community awareness.**

# What's Happening in Your Neck of the Woods...

| Name of Event | City | State | Dates | Age Group | POC/Website |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15th Annual Veterans Day Parade and Red White and Blue in the Park Festival | Gulfport | MS | 7 Nov | ALL | www.gulfcoast.org/visitors/events/index.cfm?EventID=4488 |
| Veterans Day Parade and Freedom Walk | Vicksburg | MS | 11 Nov | ALL | www.visitvicksburg.com/events/details.aspx?id=7451 |
| CYSS Youth Enrichment Program: Under Construction | Fort Knox | KY | 14 Nov | 6-12 years | Shiann Arnold, CYSS<br>Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group<br>shiann.j.arnold.ctr@mail.mil |
| CYSS Youth Enrichment Program: High School and College Readiness | Fort Belvoir | VA | 14 Nov | 13-18 years | Jasmine Hart, CYSS<br>Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group<br>jasmine.d.hart.ctr@mail.mil |
| CYSS Youth Enrichment Program: Speedometry | Fort Knox | KY | 20-21 Nov | 8-11 years | Shante Ellis, CYSS<br>Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group<br>shante.ellis.ctr@mail.mil |
| CYSS Youth Enrichment Program: Babysitter Certification Course | Fort Jackson | SC | 5 Dec | 13-18 years | Christopher Dempsey, CYSS<br>Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group<br>christopher.j.dempsey.ctr@mail.mil |
| USS Jackson Commissioning | Gulfport | MS | 5 Dec | ALL | Bob Hawley<br>601-500-2562<br>ussjacksoncommissioning@gmail.com |
| Military Child of the Year Nominations (Reserve Category) | Nationwide | all | thru 11 Dec | 13-18 years | www.militarychildoftheyear.org |

**YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN CHECKING THE FOLLOWING LINKS REGULARLY FOR EVENTS IN YOUR AREA:**

**CYSS Events:** arfp.org/cyssstatecamps.php

**4-H:** 4-h.org

**YMCA:** ymca.net/

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## Resources and Web Links

# For Deployed, AGR, Wounded, Ill, Injured or Fallen Soldiers

**Army Fee Assistance** is provided by General Services Administration (GSA,) working with those who serve in the military find and afford child care that suits their unique needs. Through the fee assistance program, Families are eligible to receive monthly fee assistance to help offset the cost of child care in their communities.
Visit: http://financeweb.gsa.gov/childcare_portal

**Army Respite Care** will provide the Family between 8 to 16 hours of hourly child care each month for each of the eligible children. Parents can use this time to run errands, attend appointments, or just take some well-deserved time out for themselves. The Army recognizes the challenges and extraordinary stress the parents and their Families may be experiencing, and wants to help support them in meeting their unique child care needs. Eligibility: Deployed; Temporary Change of Station; Unaccompanied Permanent Change of Station; Temporary Duty; Wounded, Ill or Injured Status; Survivors of Fallen Warriors.

**Our Military Kids** provides grants for K-12 youth dependents of overseas deployed National Guard and Reserve personnel or severely injured Service Members. Visit: ourmilitarykids.org/

# For Various Duty Statuses

**Army Reserve Family Programs** provides programs, training, services, resources, youth programming and camping opportunities to Army Reserve Families. Visit: arfp.org/

**Military OneSource** provides an online library, web resources, and non-medical counseling to military Families.
Visit: militaryonesource.mil/

**Military Kids Connect** (MKC) is an online community of military children (ages 6-17 yr. olds) that provides access to age-appropriate resources to support children from pre-deployment, through a parent's or caregiver's return.
Visit: militarykidsconnect.t2.health.mil

**Zero to Three** has information and resources for parents of infants and toddlers. A new phone app, Babies on the Home Front, provides Military and veteran parents with strategies for enhancing everyday moments with their child.
Visit: zerotothree.org/

**Military Child Education Coalition Military** (MCEC) is a non-profit organization focusing on academic and school-related needs of military-connected youth. Visit: militarychild.org

**National Military Family Association** has programs that provide military Families with camps, Family retreats, and healing adventures during deployment, reintegration, and coming together after an injury.
Visit: militaryFamily.org/

**America's Tooth Fairy** has several signature programs engaging caring dental professionals in providing donated services and oral health education and supporting initiatives that expand access to care for children in need.
Visit: ncohf.org/

**Give an Hour** is dedicated to meeting the mental health needs of Troops and Families, provides counseling to individuals, couples and Families, and children (on-line request for assistance). Visit: giveanhour.org

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**Family Programs Director**
Brenda McWilliams
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6160
Email: brenda.s.mcwilliams2.civ@mail.mil

Contact **Ms. McWilliams** for assistance with:
- Family Support Services
- Family Programs Training
- Family Readiness

**Family Programs Coordinator**
Belinda Parker
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6182
Email: belinda.k.parker.civ@mail.mil

Contact **Ms. Parker** for assistance with:
- Family Programs Training
- Policy and Guidance
- Command Consultation
- Teen Council

**Youth Services Specialist (YSS)**
Sheena Caston
Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6188
Email: sheena.r.caston.ctr@mail.mil

Contact **Ms. Caston** for assistance with:
- Command/Unit Support
- Weekend Events and Activities
- Child Care Resources
- Youth Programming
- Teen Council

**Youth Service Specialist (YSS)**
Jessica Gilmore
Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6190
Email: jessica.m.gilmore8.ctr@mail.mil

Contact **Ms. Gilmore** for assistance with:
- Command/Unit Support
- Weekend Events and Activities
- Child Care Resources
- Youth Programming
- Teen Council

## 412th Theater Engineer Command

facebook.com/412TEC

If you are not part of 412th TEC, contact one of the CYSS staff members above and we will connect you with the YSS or SSS in your area.

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