

From the Desk of the School Social Worker...

Supporting Military Families
In Honor of Veterans Day on 11/11/12

Of the 100,000 military children in Florida, Volusia County has approximately 1,154 military children, which ranks it as the 17th largest county in Florida. The majority of the Volusia County military population consists of Army and Navy active duty, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve.

Deployment can be stressful and challenging for children and families, particularly with ambiguity and uncertainty, role strain, financial stress, anxiety about loved one's safety, problems in communication, and loss of closeness/intimacy. Reintegration presents its own challenges also, as there are adjustment issues for the military member and family members, which may be further complicated by emotional problems or physical injury.

Strategies that help military families through the deployment/reintegration process include communication pre, during, and after employment; social support from family friends; maintaining normal routines; reducing/eliminating media violence exposure; and allowing children to "warm up" and adjust to the returning parent. Refer to "Helping Children Cope with the Challenges of War and Terrorism" at www.7-dippity.com/other/op_hcc.html.

The **Interstate Compact** provides uniform policy between participating states to resolve challenges military children face moving between school systems, including minimizing school disruption for military children during transition and deployment. The Articles of the Compact address enrollment (educational records, immunizations, and kindergarten and first grade entrance age), placement and attendance (course and educational program support, special education services, placement flexibility, and absences related to deployment activities), eligibility (enrollment and extracurricular participation), and graduation. For more information or assistance, refer to the website www.Fldoe.org/military or contact the School Liaison Officer for North Florida at (904) 778-2236 or by email at dawn.m.mills@navy.mil.

Eligibility under the Compact includes children of active duty members of the uniformed services, National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders, and members or veterans who are medically discharged or retired for one year. **If your family meets eligibility, please contact your school's registrar to update school records**, in order to assist in appropriate identification of students and provide supports to your family.