

November is the Month of the Military Family

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Wisconsin Commissioner for the Education of Military Children

“Military families exemplify the courage and resolve that define our national character. For their country and their loved ones, they rise to the challenges of multiple deployments and frequent moves — spouses who care and provide for children in their partners’ absence, kids who make new friends and leave known comforts behind. They are the force behind the force, patriots who support their family members in uniform while enriching the communities they call home.”

This quotation from President Barack Obama’s 2017 proclamation for November, the Month of the Military Family, summarizes the special challenges military families face. Every family has challenges, but military families have unique challenges that all of us need to be aware of. Schools play a special role in the lives of all families and often school personnel are the first individuals families connect with in the civilian community. It is important that educators increase their understanding and responsiveness to military families joining our communities.

During a national meeting in October, I listened to a panel of parents and children discuss the challenges of frequent moves from city to city and state to state. Families became very emotional as they discussed the stress of moving into a new community with no family connections - trying to find the best neighborhoods, the best schools for their children, learning the “culture” of the community, finding jobs for the non-military members (spouses, children). These families did not venture into discussing the added stress of having a family member frequently deployed to distant locations and daily facing threats to their lives.

We have thousands of military families in Wisconsin, including both active duty and members of the Guard and Reserve. Too often we do not recognize those families and may not be prepared to respond to their needs as a family. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is working to increase the awareness of the large numbers of military families who have children in our schools, and to increase understanding of the challenges they face. Members of the [Wisconsin State Council for the Interstate Compact for the Education of Military Children](#) are working with others to increase awareness and improve support for families. Schools need to understand that they are often the first and best connection between the families and the community; they are essential to our success in Wisconsin.

We invite you to explore and share the resources included with others. Finally, please share the ways you celebrate the Month of the Military Family and how you are striving to meet the needs of military families. Your insights and input will help others.

[WI DPI Educational Opportunities for Military Children](#)

[National Military Family Association](#)

[Department of Defense - Military Family Resources](#)

[Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs - Service Member Support](#)

[Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs - Family Readiness Support Services](#)

[Military One Source - Resources for Families](#)

[Ten Ways to Recognize Military Family Appreciation Month](#)