DEFENSE COMMUNITIES
2024
NATIONAL SUMMIT

Child Care for Military Families: Challenges & Recommendations

April 8, 2024

Crystal Gateway Marriott
Arlington, VA

Introductions

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Founder & CEO
The Operation Child Care Project

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Military Spouse Liaison for
Washington State

Sally Velez
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Supporting the Child Care Needs of Military Families in Washington 2023 Report

2024 Military Child Care Challenges

UNFILLED CDC STAFFING

100% operational CDCs will add thousands of slots

RESOURCE AND DATA SHARING

Non-military entities can support current program gaps expanding military child care

FRUSTRATION WITH PROCESSES

Education & support to meet families where they are

BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Administrative cost, fees, and burdens overcome

Recommendation – Fill CDC Staffing Vacancies/Promote Specialty Caretakers

Ensure child care workers are treated and honored as “mission critical” in service to our military.

Increase competitive base pay, benefits, flexible hours, and guaranteed hours.

- 100% tuition waiver for CDC worker’s first child
- Connect to state and local benefits/resources and workforce initiatives.

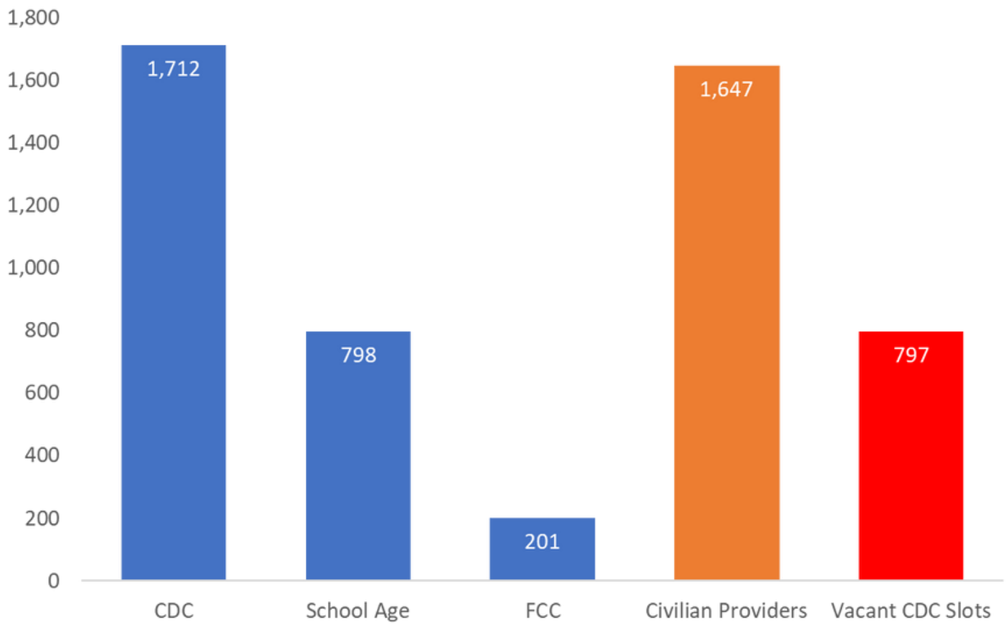
Increase CDC specialized staffing, including certified nursing assistants and behavior specialists, who can support the CDC workforce. Focus effort in high EFMP population areas.

Collaborate with employment support services inside and outside the gate to promote open CDC positions.

Celebrating CDC Works at Naval Station Everett

"Our children's cups are filled to the degree that the early educators' and childcare providers' cup is overflowing” Dr. Gilliam

Recommendation – Cross-Sector Resource/Data Sharing and Transparency



Military Supported Child Care Programs
Washington State 2023

Expand Military OneSource demographics data sharing on military families to installation and zip code level.

Military fee assistance (for civilian childcare) and Child Care In Your Home utilization at the state, installation, and/or zip code level.

Ensure state, local government, private partners, school districts, and civilian childcare providers are part of policy and program development discussions and that the DoD Childcare Summit continues annually with expanded involvement from state partners.

State and local childcare resources may be available to support military families. We need a holistic resource navigation approach and local training for installation teams.

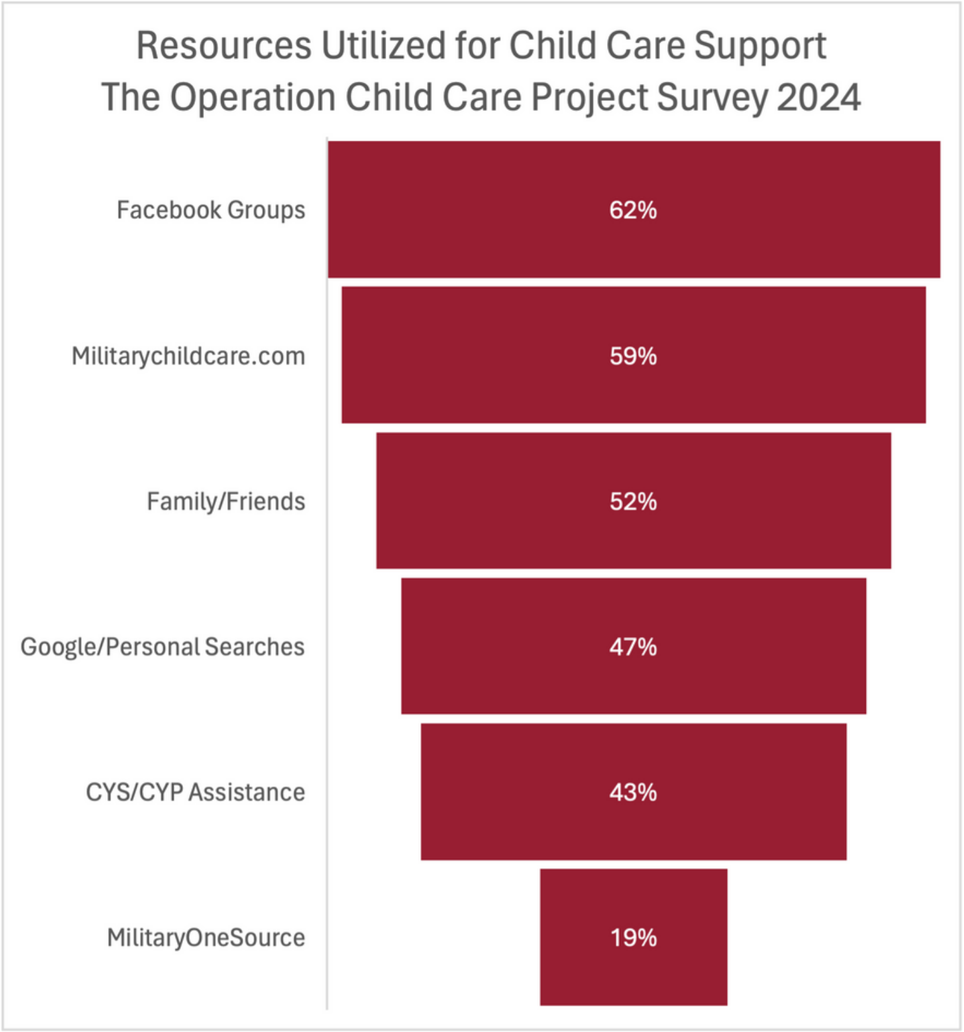
Recommendation - Deliver Comprehensive Child Care Support

Educate families on full-suite of options to meet every child care need.

Deliver end-to-end case management for individual families and leaders, engaging local community resources.

Publicly available timelines for anticipated care and fee assistance.

Utilize support data to inform training and identify needed programming updates.



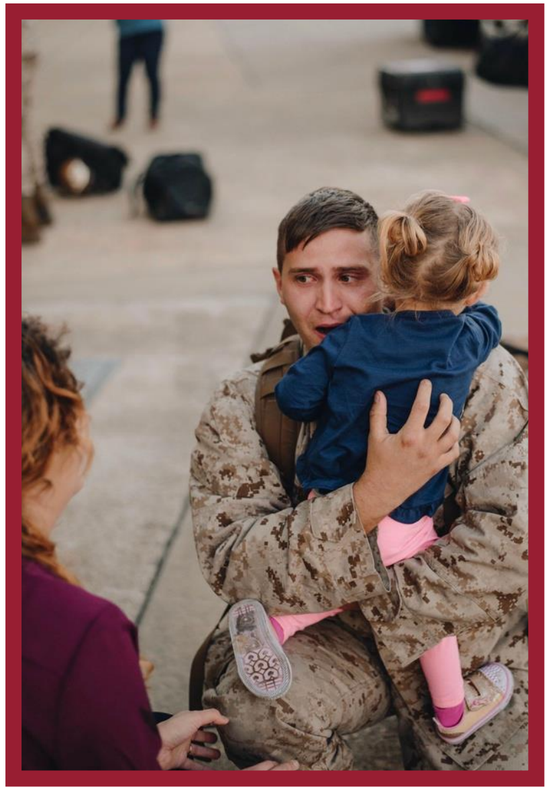
Recommendation – Establish a Basic Allowance for Child Care

Reduction and near elimination of:

- Administrative burdens on families and providers, as well as Federal, State, and Local helping agencies
- Expansive campaigns and staff needed to on-board and monitor child care centers and providers
- Attrition of service due to lack of financial support with onerous fee-assistance process
- Non-inclusivity with limited civilian participation in fee-assistance pilots and programs
- Costly staff and tech solutions to manage, maintain, and expand current offerings

Recommendation:

- Commission a study on cost and time savings related to elimination of administration
- Pilot a study implementing a Basic Allowance for Child Care to most financially at risk demographics within DoD. Examine not only the expansion of access but also military family quality of life impacts.



"The Department is committed to the preservation of a compensation and benefit structure that provides members with an adequate standard of living to sustain a trained, experienced, and ready force now and in the future. "

2023 DoD BAH News Release

Thank You

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Child Care Challenges & Recommendations Summary and Feedback Opportunity