**New Parents Support Program: B-3 Resource for Military Families**

Introducing the New Parent Support Program, a resource for all military parents with a child aged birth to three (B-3) years. The New Parent Support Program may be a real lifesaver for our military families who have a child with a disability. Like some state or community-based family services, trained nurses, therapists, and social workers provide services privately in the family's home. The program offers the following for military parents:

* Training and information to improve parenting skills
* Assists and supports parents’ capabilities to care for their infant or toddler,
* Services to reduces any stress related to being a new parent, caring for their child, etc.
* Trained practitioners to help parents cope with military life

The New Parent Program, a Department of Defense program, is designed to reduce family stress and increase the service member’s ability to do his or her job. The providers are not part of any Child Find or IDEA Part C Early Intervention Program.

**Who can use the New Parents Support Program?**

“Expectant parents and parents of children from B-3 who are eligible to receive treatment in military medical treatment facilities on either a fee-paying or a non-fee-paying basis.” This means:

* Active duty families
* Retiree families
* Reserve and National Guard Families when the service member is called to active federal duty

Eligible families don’t have to be first-time parents. They can already have children and may need some extra help when a new baby arrives, or when family life gets overwhelming with multiple children. The New Parent Support might also be helpful for the at-home parent during deployment, adjusting to a service member’s return from deployment, or when relocating to a new duty station.

**What are the key points of the program?**

* Voluntary
* Free
* Intensive, home-based visitation services by nurses, social workers and therapists
* Appointments made at the family’s convenience
* Numerous access points for help:
  + Family can contact the program directly OR
  + Referral from physician, chaplain, other military counselor, child center staff, or service member’s command

In addition, New Parent Programs offer parent education with titles like:

* + - Scream-free Parenting
    - Mindfulness Meditation for Calmer Parenting
    - Dad 24/7
    - Baby Boot Camp
    - Infant Massage

Support groups for parents and play groups for toddlers may also be offered.

If you suggest the in-home New Parent Support Program to a military family, you may meet some reluctance. Family Advocacy, the program which offers New Parent Support, exists to prevent domestic and child abuse. Program staff are mandated reporters and can bring in a state’s child protective services if necessary. It’s understandable that some parents are reluctant to sign up for this benefit if they think it gives the impression one of them is an abuser. They may also worry that signing up for the program will affect the service member’s career for the same reason.

Of course, as a parent center your knowledge of community-based resources will be very helpful for military parents especially if they are reluctant to use the New Parent Support Program.

Some resources which may be well known or a part of your parent center include:

* [Parent to Parent (P2P](http://www.p2pusa.org/parents/)
* [Family to Family Health Information Centers (F2FHIC)](http://familyvoices.org/affiliates/)
* [Parenting Education Networks, Organizations, and Programs by State](http://npen.org/professional-development/parenting-education-networks-organizations-and-programs-by-state/) (National Parenting Education Network)
* If the family are first-time parents, you might suggest new parent education classes at a local hospital if they are free to the public.

**To find New Parent Support at installations in your state,** call the main phone number listed for the Family or Community Center listed on our [interactive MAPS](https://branchta.org/maps/), or create an internet search for “New Parent Support Program <Name of Installation>”.

* Reserve families should contact their branch of service’s nearest installation for eligibility and other information.
* National Guard families should contact their Family Assistance Center to determine their eligibility and get more details. (Find your state’s main contact number for Family Assistance on our [interactive Maps](https://branchta.org/maps/) or have the family [find a service provider.](file:///C:\Users\Tracy%20Kahlo\Downloads\find%20a%20service%20provider))

For a more in-depth look at the Family Advocacy Program, check out [this article](https://www.militaryonesource.mil/-/the-family-advocacy-program) on Military OneSource.