**Temporary Caregivers of Military Children: Guide to Essential Information**

If you are a grandparent, other relative, or family friend taking care of children while their parent or parents are deployed or on other duty, this guide to essential information is intended to offer you help and resources. It contains useful information about military benefits that provide help with schools, medical care and supports and services for disabilities (sometimes called “special needs”). Medical care, supports and services include benefits for what some people call “invisible disabilities” such as ADHD, developmental disabilities including autism, learning difficulties, and mental health disorders. It also includes information on legal and financial assistance through the military and through civilian programs.

**Top Two Essential Documents:**

These two documents are necessary for you to act on behalf of the child in situations where a parent would usually act, such as giving permission for medical care or picking up a prescription, enrolling a child in school or daycare, and making decisions when the child’s parent cannot be in contact.

Whether you live near or far away from the family’s current installation, you will need:

1. **Military ID cards**: each child age 10 or older needs to be registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System and have a current ID card. Caregivers do not get their own ID cards and will need the child’s ID for installation access, medical benefits, and military-subsidized childcare.
2. **Power of Attorney**: a document giving an individual legal authority to act in certain situations on behalf of another individual. In these cases, the service member is giving a temporary authority to the designated relative or other caregiver (you) to care for their child.
	1. How a service member can get and send a Power of Attorney if they have already left for deployment: <http://wifeinthewildblueyonder.com/deployed-power-attorney/> (note-this is a blog post written by a military spouse, not an “official” document—but it has clear directions.)

**Documents to get onto the installation:**

If you live nearby, you may need to get onto the installation for a child’s school, medical care, child care, military-subsidized shopping, recreational programs, religious services, visits with friends, etc.

* The child’s military ID (needed for age 10 and above)
* Acceptable picture ID for you (contact Visitor Information at the installation for what is accepted)
* Power of Attorney giving you authorization to make decisions on behalf of the child in the absence of his or her parents (school, medical, child care, other situations requiring parental authority)
* Agent letter of authorization signed by the installation’s commanding officer. The military parent or parents can request this letter through the ID card office at their installation.

**What other documents might I need?**

* The child’s birth certificate (for school enrollment; may be needed along with the Power of Attorney in other situations).

* + [How to request a birth certificate for a minor child](https://traveltips.usatoday.com/copy-childs-birth-certificate-13276.html):

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[Documents for a Deployed Service Member’s Designated Family Caregiver](https://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-legal/legal/family-legal-issues/documents-for-a-deployed-service-member-s-designated-family-caregiver?inheritRedirect=true) -from Military OneSource: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-legal/legal/family-legal-issues/documents-for-a-deployed-service-member-s-designated-family-caregiver?inheritRedirect=true>

**Resources specifically for grandparents and other kinship caregivers and guardians:**

* [AARP.org](https://www.aarp.org/relationships/friends-family/info-08-2011/grandfamilies-guide-support.html)
* [Cooperative Extension System](https://articles.extension.org/category/family_caregiving_grandparents_raising_grandchildren)
* [Child Welfare Information Gateway](https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/parenting/relative/) (US Department of Health & Human Services)
* [Grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org/)
* [National Kinship Alliance for Children](http://kinshipalliance.org/)

**Military and Civilian Resources for Temporary Caregivers:**

Education

* [Military Parent Technical Assistance Center (Branchta.org): Education and Military Families](https://branchta.org/resource/education-and-military-families/)
* [Parent Centers in each state](https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/) <www.parentcenterhub.org> work with families of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities age birth to 26 and help parents and other caregivers participate effectively in their child’s education and development.

Childcare

* [Child Care Aware of America](http://usa.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespite/military-families/) (to locate military-subsidized and civilian child care)
* Call 2-1-1 to find out about local affordable child care options
* YMCA
* Before-and-after school programs through the local school district
* [Administration for Children and Families](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/archive/occ/occ/occ/parents) (US Dept. of Health and Human Services) child care programs that use federal money to offer lower-cost child care (Head Start is one such program)

* [State programs](https://childcare.gov/state-resources-home) <https://childcare.gov/state-resources-home>

Medical (including Autism Services and Respite Care)

* [TRICARE.mil](https://tricare.mil/)
* [Family to Family Health Information Centers](http://www.familyvoices.org/)
* [HealthCare.gov (Affordable Care Act Marketplace)](https://www.healthcare.gov/)
* [Medicaid](https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid-and-you/index.html) (military-connected children who are on TRICARE or other military health plans can be dually-enrolled in Medicaid and receive services through a state’s Medicaid Waiver Programs)
* [MedicaidWaiver.org:](http://medicaidwaiver.org/) non-government website with links and listings to Medicaid Waivers by state
* [Easter Seals](http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/living-with-autism/state-autism-profiles.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/) (for Autism resources, by state; also Respite Care)
* [State agencies on Developmental or Intellectual Disabilities](http://www.nasddds.org/state-agencies/) <http://www.nasddds.org/state-agencies/>
* [Parent Centers](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/) <www.parentcenterhub.org>
* [National Respite Locator](https://archrespite.org/respitelocator) (ARCH National Respite and Resource Center)

Financial Help with Living Expenses

* [Benefits.gov](https://benefits.gov/) is an official federal government website which can assist individuals to locate both federal and state programs for financial assistance, including healthcare, housing, public utilities, temporary cash and emergency disaster assistance.
* [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP](https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap)) previously known as food stamps
* [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)-](https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/women-infants-and-children-wic)supplemental foods, health care referrals, nutrition education for infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk

Financial Help for Children’s Activities

* [Activity Grants for Military-Connected Kids](https://branchta.org/activity-grants-military-connected-kids/):
* <https://branchta.org/activity-grants-military-connected-kids/>

Legal

* [Legal Resources for Highly-Mobile Military Families](https://branchta.org/legal-resources-for-highly-mobile-military-families/) <https://branchta.org/legal-resources-for-highly-mobile-military-families/> has information about low-cost, free, and fee-for-services legal help for situations involving military families and situations regarding disability issues. Includes a resource for locating the Bar Association in each State for other types of legal concerns.