

APRIL

Month of the Military Child



April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, a time to recognize and celebrate the important role military children play in the armed forces community. Sponsored by the Department of Defense Military Community and Family Policy, the Month of the Military Child is a time to applaud military families and their children for the daily sacrifices they make and the challenges they overcome. ECAC joins the Department of Defense and the military community in celebrating April as the Month of the Military Child with this special edition newsletter highlighting NC Military Children with disabilities and special health care needs and their families.

A Message from Nicole Bougie, ECAC's Military Outreach Parent Educator

Hello from [Nicole Bougie](#), Military Outreach Parent Educator. I began working for ECAC as the Military Outreach Parent Educator nearly a year ago. My focus is working with military families. It is a passion of mine to help military families. I would like to introduce myself



to those of you whom I have not yet had the pleasure to serve.

I am a wife of an active-duty military member and mother of two daughters, Kaitlyn, 17, and Makayla, 16. They are both currently in high school. Since starting school, the girls have attended 9 different schools in 5 different states. With this last move to North Carolina, we promised them both we would not move again until they graduate. It is a fact of military life that frequent transfers occur. Our journey through the frequent transfers has been very challenging. I hope to be able

to help others to avoid some of the negative experiences we endured.

Both of our daughters have had IEPs in most of the states in which we have resided. Kaitlyn has ADHD and her IEP process throughout her school years has gone well. Makayla, on the other hand, it was a vastly different experience. She was diagnosed as an infant with global developmental delays which was later changed to autism, with the addition of 18 other diagnoses such as asthma, celiac disease, epilepsy, and intellectual delays. She is social, verbal, and high functioning in some areas. Currently, she is generally functioning at a 5-year-old level. She began attending in-person school at age 3, and prior to that was receiving early intervention services. We lived in three different states prior to her third birthday. She had an IFSPs in each state. She has had an IEP in each school she attended to the present time.

Throughout Makayla's journey we have had to fight many battles with educators but we feel it has all paid off. Through the support of her medical team, her teachers, our extended family, and all of her other supporters, we count our blessings and believe that Makayla is living a meaningful and happy life. We realize Makayla may have reached her potential. If so, we are fine with that. We appreciate her great sense of humor, her infectious smile, and her strong hugs.

It truly does take a village to deal with all the medical, educational, insurance, and quality of life issues one must deal with when a family includes special needs children. I am working with ECAC to make sure that military families with special needs children know about the resources available to them and to help them navigate the various rules and regulations to obtain necessary services.



"Throughout our military journey, I have found that being educated on my child's rights educationally has been beneficial for her progress over the past couple of years."

NC Military Families Share their Stories



"Military life, with a special need's child, can be truly challenging."

[CLICK HERE TO READ ABBY'S STORY](#)

[CLICK HERE TO READ AMANDA'S STORY](#)



"9 schools. 5 states. This is my reality as a military child."

[CLICK HERE TO READ KAITLYN'S STORY](#)



April is Month of the Military Child. North Carolina plans to Purple Up! For Military Kids on April 16th. #purpleup #milkids #MOMC

As home to the 4th largest military population in the country, North Carolina works to be military friendly and offer critical support to military families. One such way is through the creation of the Military Liaison Counselor positions, which were stood up in 2008 to focus on the unique needs of military students in the educational setting. Military Liaison Counselors offer training to school system staff and provide direct support to military connected children and families in four North Carolina school systems where military installations are located: Craven, Cumberland, Onslow and Wayne. Moore County has added one of these positions through local funding. Military Liaison Counselors work in partnership with military installations (including School Liaisons and EFMP), community agencies, and area schools to advocate for military student needs, including military friendly policies and legislation, and provide outreach services to families as they transition in/out of our communities.

As well, each military installation provides support to K-12 students in and around their installation (catchment area) by employing at least one School Liaison Officer (some have more!). School liaison officers support their local military communities by acting as a bridge

between the military family and the local school systems. They are a wealth of knowledge on local services and resources in their communities and are adept at guiding school related issues to resolution for military families.

If you need information on local community schools and child services, your installation school liaison office or school system's military family counselor is a great place to start. For contact information, visit the [Military Support webpage](#).

*By: Jamie D. Joyner Livengood, MS, LCMHC, NCC
WCPS Military Liaison Counselor*



Purple Star schools

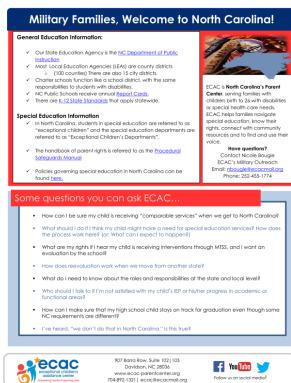
North Carolina Department of Public instruction launched the Purple Star program in 2019-20 as a way to recognize schools that demonstrate military-friendly practices and a commitment to military students and families. In its second year, the program boasts 288 schools achieving the designation, which includes several required activities, plus an optional activity, aimed at ensuring strong support for students of military families. These activities include the following: a staff member as a designated point of contact for military students and families; a designated central administration staff member supporting the point of contact in the school; the provision of annual professional development addressing special considerations for military students and families; a dedicated page on their websites for military family resources or links to the district's webpage with military family resources; a transition program to support inbound and outbound military students and families; and an optional activity, i.e. recognition of Month of the Military Child/Purple Up, Veteran's Day, Memorial Day or a military-connected service project. For more information, visit the [Purple Star webpage](#).

*By: Jamie D. Joyner Livengood, MS, LCMHC, NCC
WCPS Military Liaison Counselor*

Check out ECAC's resources specifically for NC Military families.



[ECAC Military Connection](#) is a closed facebook group created to provide a place for North Carolina Military families who have a child/children with a disability and/or special health care needs to get & give information and provide support to one another. We never want to feel alone on this journey. We know that military families have unique circumstances and challenges and hope this forum provides needed resources, support and encouragement. Any military status or branch of service (active or retired) are welcome to the group.



Military Families, Welcome to North Carolina!

Click [here](#) to find specific resources for NC military families, including information on early intervention, general education, special education, and more.

Have questions?

Contact Nicole Bougie,
ECAC's Military Outreach Parent Educator
Email: nbougie@ecacmail.org
Phone: 252-455-1774

Compact 101 Training for Military Families (NC)



FREE WEBINAR!

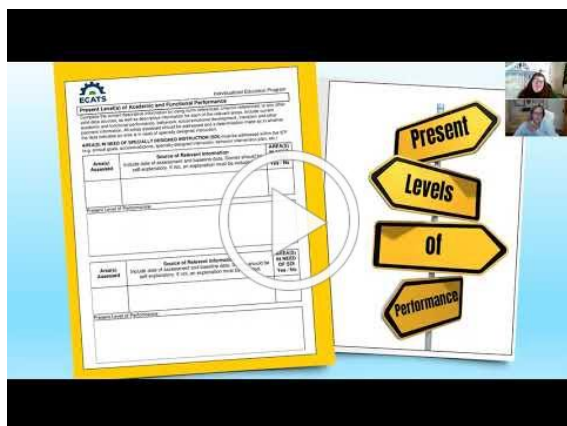
Compact 101 Training for Military Families (NC)

Monday, April 29th at 2 pm

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

In 2006, the Council of State Governments' (CSG) National Center for Interstate Compacts (NCIC), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense, national associations, federal and state officials, State Departments' of Education, and school administrators drafted the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The Compact provides for the uniform treatment of military children transferring between school districts and states by addressing key educational transition such as: eligibility, enrollment, placement and graduation. The Commission, composed of fifty member states and the District of Columbia, work in concert to help ease the transitions of military children as they transfer interstate between public and Department of Defense schools. In this introductory session, learn how the Compact works, state structure and implementation, rules and regulations, and how the Compact supports military students.

Recorded Webinars for NC Military Families



IEP Road Trip for Military Families



North Carolina Resources for Military Parents



The Dandelion

THE OFFICIAL FLOWER OF THE MILITARY CHILD IS THE DANDELION. WHY? THE PLANT PUTS DOWN ROOTS ALMOST ANYWHERE, AND IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO DESTROY. IT'S AN UNPRETENTIOUS PLANT, YET GOOD LOOKING. IT'S A SURVIVOR IN A BROAD RANGE OF CLIMATES. MILITARY CHILDREN BLOOM EVERYWHERE THE WINDS CARRY THEM. THEY ARE HARDY AND UPRIGHT. THEIR ROOTS ARE STRONG, CULTIVATED DEEPLY IN THE CULTURE OF THE MILITARY, PLANTED SWIFTLY AND SURELY. THEY'RE READY TO FLY IN THE BREEZES THAT TAKE THEM TO NEW ADVENTURES, NEW LANDS, AND NEW FRIENDS.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

