



Child Care

Issue

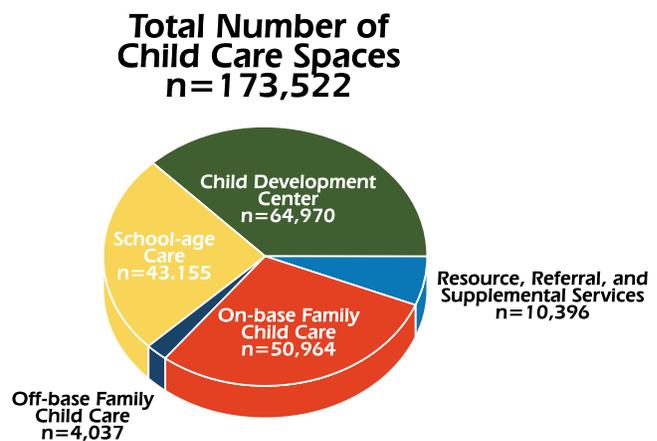
There are insufficient child care slots to meet the child care need. Waiting lists are long and finding alternative child care places a burden on families, especially dual military couples and single parents.

Background

As of March 2000, the Military Services had 173,522 child care spaces and were meeting 58 percent of the projected need for 297,635 spaces. The Department of Defense (DoD) has set a short-term goal of meeting 65 percent of the need by the year 2003 and, ultimately, 80 percent by the year 2005.

Current Status

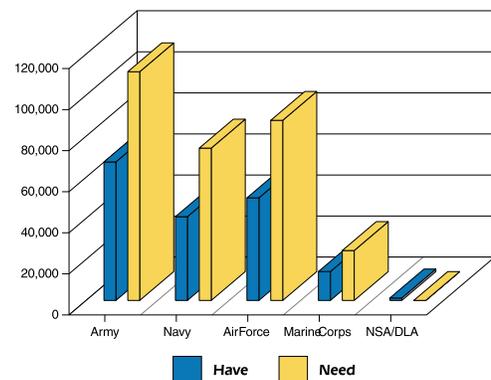
Recognizing the demand for child care and youth programs, Congress passed Section 584 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2000, "Support for Expanded Child Care Services and Youth Program Services for Dependents." The legislation provides flexibility to expand and enhance the current program. As a result, the Services have proposed that a variety of pilot tests be conducted.



Current Initiatives

All four Services have expanded their Family Child Care (FCC) programs to include off-base affiliations to certify providers who live in neighborhoods where a significant number of military personnel reside. Off-base providers receive oversight, training, and support from the military FCC program similar to on-base FCC homes. Approximately 250 off-base providers offer child care including extended care hours. Another alternative to expand care was initiated by the Navy to contract for spaces in qualifying child development centers (CDC). The process involved "buying down" rates so parents paid the same rate as they would have paid in an on-base center, and contracts were awarded in Norfolk and Jacksonville. The Army is exploring two innovative options to significantly expand availability of extended hours care. The first proposal offers a paradigm shift from a single certified FCC home to that of FCC group homes. This proposed option would allow two or more FCC providers serving 7 to 12 children to provide care in unoccupied quarters on the installation. A second proposed

Need for Child Care Spaces by Service





option establishes a formal relationship between a CDC and any FCC home(s) located nearby. Dubbed “Satellite Homes,” this arrangement would be used to provide early morning/early evening “wrap around” care. The Navy has initiated an innovative three-prong marketing strategy to improve the image of the in-home provider in the community; to recruit new providers to the field; and to increase enrollment in their Child Development Homes (CDH). The Services have initiated partnerships with the local schools to expand the availability of care in school-age programs. The U.S. Marine Corps has increased their endeavors to meet the needs of Independent Duty Personnel. They are currently conducting a needs assessment to determine the extent of the child care need and, upon completion of the assessment, will work with other Services’ resource and referral and FCC programs where available.

Issue

A lack of sufficient child care providers in Europe was highlighted. Staffing is part of the problem. The adequacy of compensation needs to be examined.

Background

Public Law and DoD policy require that the rates of pay for CDC caregiving staff be equivalent to rates of pay for other employees at the same installation with comparable training, seniority, and experience. The Department further requires salary increases to be tied to the completion of training milestones to ensure that higher pay would result in a higher quality and more stable workforce.

Current Status

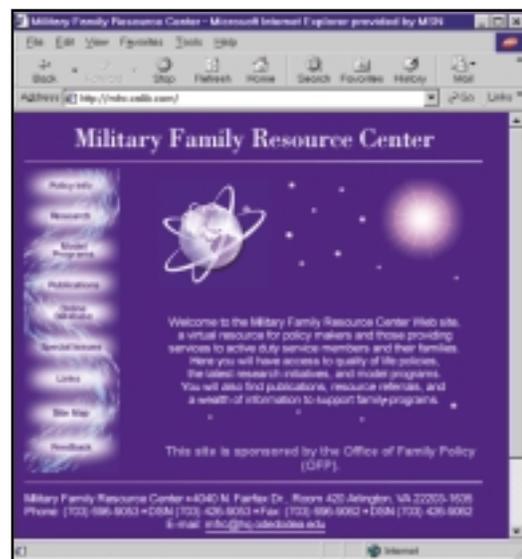
DoD uses a pay banding system for non-appropriated fund (NAF) employees. This gives managers the flexibility to increase an employee’s pay within the range to compete with local jobs and helps with recruitment and retention. However, despite this flexibility, it is a challenge to maintain and/or expand the supply of CDC staff in this highly competitive economy since caregivers now have a variety of job choices, with widespread opportunities offered in their local communities.

Today, a CDC caregiver with a high school diploma starts at nearly \$8.00/hour, approximately \$1.04 more than their civilian counterparts. Eligible staff also receive insurance, leave, and retirement benefits.

Current Initiatives

The Office of Children and Youth is working to formulate a DoD task force to study compensation issues and staff recruitment challenges. A two-year pilot program will be tested in the European theater. The test will apply Military Spouse Preference (MSP) to appropriated and non-appropriated fund positions without time limitation regardless of work schedule and excludes temp/term appropriated and NAF positions from MSP coverage.

Additional Information: <http://mfrc.calib.com>





Issue

DoD needs to consider subsidies for those who offer infant care. FCC providers have no incentive to accept infants because they can take greater numbers of older children and make more money.

Background

In 1989, Congress gave DoD the authority to provide direct cash subsidies to FCC providers. The intent was to provide child care at a cost comparable to the CDC program fees. Actual use of this authority has been sporadic until recently.

Current Status

Providing cash subsidies is now viewed as the most promising vehicle to expand availability of child care DoD-wide. The ability of an installation to offer direct cash incentives of this nature is a key to success.

Current Initiatives

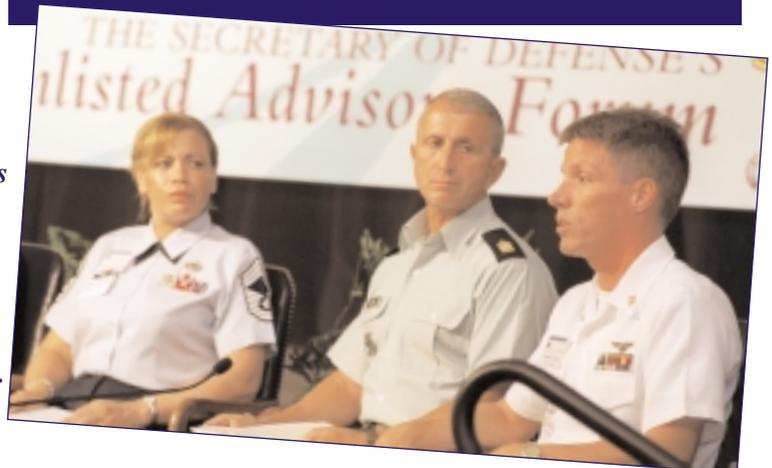
All of the Services are actively pursuing the use of direct cash subsidies as an incentive to FCC providers to offer specialized services, such as evening care, weekend care, overnight care, long-term care, care for children with special needs, and infant and toddler care.

“Our hours aren’t 8:00 to 5:00...and we need to extend those hours in child development centers so our children are taken care of while we’re at work so we can have peace of mind.”

—Navy Master Chief Petty Officer Donald Shaft

Issue

Operating hours of child development centers (CDC) need to be extended and incentives offered to FCC providers to extend work hours. Child care is not available during extended duty and shift hours, which causes a burden on the commands because single parents and dual military aren’t available for duty when the CDC is not open.



Background

Extended care can include evening, overnight, and weekend care, and short and long-term care during deployments, and care when a military member is temporarily assigned to another location.

Current Status

Centers across DoD operate 10 to 12 hours per day, Monday through Friday. Hours of operation are determined at the local level and are based on mission requirements, community needs, and availability of



funds. Installation commanders can extend operating hours to support such mission requirements as alerts, deployments, and physical training activities.

To accommodate irregular duty hours, DoD policy encourages the use of FCC homes. Depending on the need and location, anywhere from 25 to 65 percent of the certified pool of DoD FCC providers offer extended hours care.

Current Initiatives

DoD recognizes extended hours care as a necessary service on which more and more families rely. This, in part, is due to increased deployments and the demanding role of the military mission. The Office of Children and Youth plans to assess the scope and frequency of the need for extended hours care in the Department. The Air Force has implemented a pilot test at six installations to study the effectiveness of a subcontractor contracting with FCC providers to offer extended care to eligible parents.

Issue

There is a lack of consistency in the management of child care programs and policies among the Military Services. The Military Services handle many issues differently, for example, waiting lists, multi-child discounts, hardship rulings, costs, hours, payments to “hold” child care slots, availability of care during school recesses. This is especially noticeable in multi-Service geographic areas and can cause morale problems.

Background

The DoD develops the overarching policies and each Service in turn issues regulations and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the DoD policy. As a result, Service guidance varies based on Service and local circumstances.

Current Status

Installation commanders require flexibility in policy implementation in order to meet the unique needs of the local installation and mission.

Current Initiatives

The Military Services’ program managers meet routinely to discuss current issues and program implementation. Strategies to address policy guidelines in multi-Service geographic areas will be reviewed.

Additional information:

<http://military-childrenandyouth.calib.com>





Issue

More pre-teen and teen programs are needed for youth who are “too old for day care but too young to drive.” They prefer stimulating activities at physical locations that are separate from the youth center. Activities might include youth fitness centers, computer labs, summer activities, mentoring programs by older teens and transportation to off-base programs.

Background

There are approximately 300,000 youth ages 12 to 18 of active duty military members. Youth programs are offered in more than 400 youth centers and 300 locations worldwide. Traditionally, the Military Department’s youth programs have been primarily focused on social, recreational and athletic activities.

Current Status

Stakeholders from DoD and the Military Services, military youth, and private youth organizations engaged in a comprehensive planning process which produced the “Strategic Youth Action Plan.” The plan is DoD’s roadmap for addressing Departmental, Military Service, and national issues regarding youth as we move into the 21st century. The plan also guides youth programming from predominately recreational to developmental. The action plan can be accessed on the Military Children and Youth Web site at <http://military-childrenandyouth.calib.com>.



Current Initiatives

The Office of Children and Youth is committed to implementing the objectives included in the Strategic Youth Action Plan to ensure the issues of military youth, such as expanded programming and separate facilities, are properly addressed. DoD is in the process of drafting an instruction for youth programs and services that will provide overarching policy for this age group. All four Services sponsor teen forums that bring teens together to identify the issues that affect their well-being and give them a voice in the directions of their programs. Identified issues are then presented to the Service leadership by the teens. In the summer of 2001, DoD will sponsor a youth congress to bring together teen representatives from all Services in a joint teen forum. The Department and the Boys and Girls Clubs of American (B&GCA) collaborate to enhance and expand services for military youth. About 85 percent of our programs have been affiliated with the B&GCA. Affiliated programs receive technical assistance from B&GCA staff in program planning and training opportunities. DoD, B&GCA, Department of Justice (DoJ), and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) developed a partnership to address the unique needs of youth in military communities. The partners are working together to provide programs and training designed to deter at-risk youth behavior.

In addition, a community assessment process is in the design phase. The purpose of this assessment is to provide installation commanders with strategies to address significant problems. DoD sponsors a Web site: <http://dticaw.dtic.mil/mtom> to help preteens and teens make positive connections in their new community as they relocate. Military Teens on the Move (MTOM) is a collection of information for teens organized within six main topic areas: relocation, youth sponsorship, schools, installations, Internet use, and general topics (health, relationships, and careers). A Healthy Parenting Initiative was recently established in partnership with the Services, the Office of Military Community and Family Policy, and Virginia Tech University to develop military-specific parent resources for infancy through adolescence.