

## Operation: Military Kids

### Goals:

- Create state and local community support networks for military youth when parents are deployed
- Use state, community and military resources to connect children and youth and their families with helpful people and organizations in their hometown.
- Deliver a wide range of recreational, social, and educational programs for military youth living in civilian communities
- Acknowledge the strength and sacrifice of military kids as everyday home front heroes through Hero Packs and special recognition events
- Support military kids coping with the stress of knowing their deployed parents may be in harm's way
- Educate the public on the impact of the deployment cycle on service personnel, families, kids and the community as a whole

Operation: Military Kids offers support for military kids through the following elements:

#### Hero Packs

Hero Packs are presented to geographically dispersed military kids who have a deployed parent to thank them for their service and courage. The packs are assembled and added to by local community groups. They are distributed at various events, including MOB briefings, holiday parties and other youth activities by local community youth.

#### Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK)

SOMK is a speaker's bureau where youth are given the opportunity to speak out about having a loved one deployed. Trainings are held throughout the year equipping youth to speak out and to allow them to have fun with other military youth. SOMK participants are available to speak at various community events, including school functions, scout meetings, Legion Conventions and more.

#### Mobile Technology Lab (MTL)

The MTL is a computer lab that may be used throughout the state and is available at events for military kids to stay connected to their deployed loved one. The MTL may be used in a variety of ways, including creating Zoom Albums, SOMK presentations, greeting cards, banners and more.

#### Youth Activities

OMK partners with community organizations to offer many youth activities throughout the year to provide support for military kids. The frequency and kind of activity varies by state. You may find OMK day camps and workshops, as well as providing youth programs at FRG meetings, holiday parties and military family days. Activities may include using the MTL, making crafts, playing games, going fishing and a variety of other activities that allow kids to grow and learn while having fun and meeting other military kids.

#### Babysitter Training

Periodic sessions are held equipping older youth and adults as babysitters with an insight to the unique needs of military families.

#### Community Awareness Training (Ready, Set, Go!)

Trained OMK partners go out to community groups, schools and conferences to help build awareness around the issues that military youth face. At these trainings participants learn about the deployment cycle, how kids are affected by deployment and ways that they can help support military youth in their organization and community. Trainings may be tailored for specific audiences or for the community at large.

#### State Operation: Military Kids Teams

State Operation: Military Kids Teams are lead by State 4-H Military Liaisons, meet regularly throughout the year and may include partners from the Cooperative Extension Service, various military branches, Joint Family Support Assistance Program, the American Legion Family, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs, the State Department of Education, and the State's Child Care Resource & Referral Network. This team works together to plan and provide support and resources throughout the state for military kids from all branches of service through the OMK program.

To make contact and find out more about Operation: Military Kids contact the State 4-H Military Liaison or Operation: Military Kids Program Director (contact information found elsewhere in this binder) in your state or visit [www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org) and select "State Information" from the menu.