Department of Defense School-Age and Youth Programs

Family Policy/Children & Youth

# Background

The military services offer a wide variety of high-quality child and youth programs in structured developmental settings on and off the military installation to provide for safe, age-appropriate activities. Department of Defense school-age care programs are offered for children, kindergarten to 12 years of age, before and after school, during holidays and summer vacations. Emphasis is placed on school-age care programs that meet community needs, reinforce family values and promote the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of children.

School-age care programs may be provided in DoD youth centers, child development centers, on-and off-base schools or other suitable facilities, such as community centers. Each of the military services has developed ongoing partnerships with nationally recognized youth development organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H Youth Development and YMCA. These community-based organizations offer well-established, research-based programs that are affordable and easily accessible to service members. Strong partnerships with local school systems provide additional support to children or youth with a deployed family member.

# Program highlights

**Today, DoD continues to be committed to youth by providing consistent guidance and stable and dynamic programs in more than 350 youth programs worldwide.**

* **Partnerships -** The Department of Defense promotes positive youth development by designing programs to recognize the achievements of youth and developing partnerships with other youth-serving organizations, such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and 4-H, that offer a variety of resources.
* **Whole-child programming -** Programs for teens and pre-teens vary from installation to installation, but are governed by a consistent DoD instruction. All programs prepare young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences that help them become socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively competent. Programs usually include physical fitness and sports, arts and recreation, training in leadership, life skills and career/volunteer opportunities, mentoring, intervention and support services.
* **Instructional programs** that provide opportunities to develop new skills and learn in hands-on, informal settings. Programs cover a wide range of topics including photography, woodworking, science and technology, gardening, health and safety.
* **Recreational sports programs** are typically offered through the installation youth center. A year-round program of team sports provides numerous opportunities for youth to challenge themselves physically while developing life skills of good sportsmanship and the value of teams.
* **Recreation programs tied to individual interests** and skills, such as golf and tennis. These programs may be offered through a variety of Morale, Welfare, Recreation and services facilities such as the golf course, bowling center and youth centers.
* **Educational and youth development programs** are focused on citizenship, character building, public speaking and leadership.

# Eligibility

Programs serveall active duty, National Guard and reserve service members; DoD civilians and their families.

# Program availability

Worldwide

# Additional information

* MilitaryINSTALLATIONS directory: <http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil>
* Military OneSource: 800-342-9647 or online at <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>