Support for New Parents

Family Policy/Children and Youth

# Background

The Department of Defense recognizes the role a service member's family plays in overall career satisfaction and retention. Because of this, the DoD ensures that new and expecting parents have all the resources they need to raise healthy children. The
DoD offers assistance through the New Parent Support Program, a voluntary home visitation program that builds protective factors in families to promote optimal childhood development. Additional support and education for new parents are offered by installation Family Advocacy Programs, military and family support centers and
Military OneSource.

# Key points

* The New Parent Support Program is standardized across the services through DoD Instruction 6400.05, “New Parent Support Program.”­
* The New Parent Support Program uses an intensive, voluntary home visitation model developed specifically for parents whose life circumstances may place them at risk of abuse and neglect by:
* Promoting safe, stable and nurturing parent-child and co-parenting relationships
* Teaching warm and responsive parenting skills that guide positive behavior
* Developing strategies for dealing with common issues such as safe sleep, eating and feeding, toilet training and sleeping through the night
* Screening for developmental delays
* Assessing protective and risk factors
* Decreasing the negative effects of military related absences and other stressors on parenting
* Each New Parent Support Program staff member is a highly skilled professional in offering home visitation and most often are registered nurses or social workers. All staff must complete a criminal background check. New Parent Support Program staff are supervised by the installation Family Advocacy Program Manager. Additionally, the program is supervised according to the policies and guidelines of the contracted agency when professional contract home visitors are used.

# Eligibility

Services are offered to expecting parents and parents who have children 3 years old or younger (5 years old for the Marine Corps). Participation is voluntary and available to families who live both on and off the installation.

# Program availability

The New Parent Support Program is available at installations supporting family members worldwide.