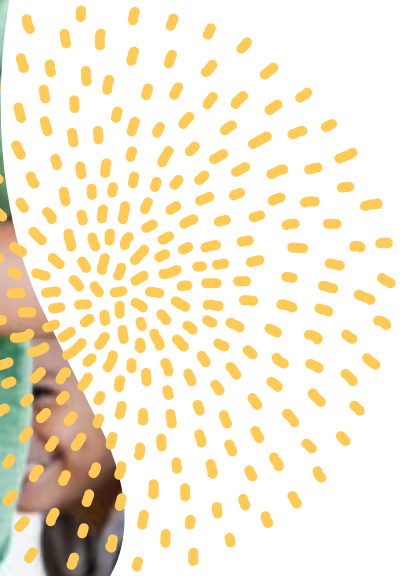




**National
Children's
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*The Force Behind
Children's Advocacy Centers*



When Your Client Has a Connection to the Military

**WHAT CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS
NEED TO KNOW**

When a family comes to your Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC) for help, you won’t always be able to tell at a glance if they have a connection to the military. If they do have a connection, that connection can affect what services are available to the family and which agencies should be involved in the case. Screening for military affiliation at intake is the first step your CAC must take to ensure comprehensive and coordinated services for military families. And to effectively identify these families, you must also understand the various types of military affiliations that families can have. This fact sheet shows how your clients may be connected to the military and what key considerations are for each affiliation type.

Overview of U.S. Military Branches

The U.S. military has six branches: the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard. The Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Space Force are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense (DOD). The Coast Guard falls under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) during peacetime and can serve as part of the Navy’s force in wartime. Each branch of the military except the Space Force has a reserve component. In addition, our nation is served by the National Guard, which is federally funded but organized and controlled by the states. The National Guard falls under the DOD.

Military Branch	Branch Responsibilities ⁱ
Army	The Army is the largest and oldest branch of the military. The Army defends the land mass of the U.S., its territories, commonwealths, and possessions. It does so through providing forces and capabilities for sustained combat and stability operations on land. The Army also provides logistics and support to other branches.
Marine Corps	The Marine Corps maintains ready expeditionary forces, sea-based and integrated air-ground units for contingency and combat operations, and the means to stabilize or contain international disturbance. The Marine Corps is an immediate response force that can be used to overwhelm the enemy.
Navy	The Navy maintains, trains, and equips combat-ready maritime forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas. The Navy is America’s forward deployed force and is a major deterrent to aggression around the world.
Air Force	The Air Force provides a rapid, flexible, and—when necessary—lethal air and space capability that can deliver forces anywhere in the world in less than 48 hours. It routinely participates in peacekeeping, humanitarian, and aeromedical evacuation missions.
Space Force	The Space Force is the newest branch of the armed forces, established in 2019. Organized under the Department of the Air Force, the Space Force organizes, trains, and equips personnel in order to protect U.S. and allied interests in space and to provide space capabilities to the joint force.
Coast Guard	The Coast Guard provides law and maritime safety enforcement, marine and environmental protection, and military naval support. Activities can include patrolling our shores, performing emergency rescue operations, containing and cleaning up oil spills, and keeping illegal drugs from entering American communities.



Service member terminology

Members of the military are referred to differently depending on which branch of service they are in. Using the correct terminology matters and is a way to demonstrate respect and build rapport. Familiarize yourself with the accurate way to refer to the service members with whom you work.

Service Member Termsⁱⁱ

Soldiers	Members of the Army
Marines	Members of the Marine Corps
Sailors	Members of the Navy
Airmen	Members of the Air Force
Guardians	Members of the Space Force
Coast Guardsmen	Members of the Coast Guard
Guardsmen	Members of the National Guard
Reservists	Members of the Reserve



Military Affiliation Typesⁱⁱⁱ

Active duty

What does it mean? A person who is active duty is in the military full-time. Active-duty members are available for duty 24 hours per day, 7 days a week (with the exclusion of leave or authorized time off), and can be deployed at any time. A person on active duty may serve in any of the six military branches. They may live on a military installation or in the community. Individuals in the Reserve or National Guard are not full-time active-duty military personnel, although they can be deployed and activated under certain circumstances.

What do CACs need to know? Active-duty service members have access to the fullest array of military services and resources, including health care coverage through TRICARE and access to Family Advocacy Program (FAP) services. If a CAC client is active duty or a dependent of an active-duty service member, military criminal investigative organizations (MCIOs) may be involved in the investigation, and FAP will likely be involved with reporting, assessment, and services. Active-duty service members (and activated reservists) can be required by their Command to participate in FAP services. If the family your CAC is working with is active duty-connected, coordinating with military partner programs is essential to ensure the family has access to all the services available to them and that the civilian and military system response is well-coordinated and non-duplicative.



Reserves

What does it mean? Each branch of the military, except for the Space Force, has a Reserve component, and each Reserve is under the command of their respective military branch. The purpose of the Reserve is to provide and maintain trained units and individuals to be available for active duty in the armed forces when needed. This may be in times of war, in a national emergency, as the need occurs based on threats to national security, and even to fill vacancies in critical roles and positions. They can be called upon to serve either stateside or overseas. The primary job of the Reserve is to fill the gaps in stateside service positions when active-duty forces are deployed overseas. Reservists are required to participate in training drills one weekend a month and two weeks per year. If reservists are on active-duty orders for more than 30 days, they may be eligible for certain DOD services and benefits.

What do CACs need to know? If the reservist is activated or on active-duty orders at the time of CAC services, time of report, or time of incident, or if the maltreatment occurred on a military installation, military programs such as FAP or an MCIO may be involved in the family's case. Eligibility for services can depend on many factors. Your local FAP partners can assist you with determining if military partners should be engaged as part of a multidisciplinary team and what DOD services may be available to support the Reserve family.

National Guard

What does it mean? The National Guard consists of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard, and the National Guard Bureau is a joint bureau of the Army and the Air Force. The National Guard is federally funded but organized and controlled by the states and may become federalized and deployed during wartime. During local emergencies such as storms, floods, or other disasters, National Guard units assist communities. As with the Reserve, the National Guard requires training drills one weekend a month and two weeks per year. Guardsmen are given veteran status if they have served for 30 consecutive days in a war zone.ⁱⁱⁱ

What do CACs need to know? As with reservists, guardsmen and their families may be eligible for FAP services, and MCIOs may become involved in a case in certain circumstances. Eligibility for services can be dependent on many factors, and local FAP partners can assist you with determining if military partners should be engaged as part of a multidisciplinary team and what DOD services may be available to support the National Guard family.





Military dependents

What does it mean? A military dependent is a person who has a relationship to a military sponsor and is entitled to certain benefits because of that relationship. Some family members, such as a spouse, biological child, stepchild, or legally adopted child, are automatically entitled to dependency status. Other family members may become military dependents under certain conditions and after a special review. Examples include a parent or parent-in-law, grandparent or grandparent-in-law, a grandchild, a disabled child over the age of 21, or a sibling, niece, or nephew for whom the service member is the legal guardian.^{iv}

What do CACs need to know? Military dependents may be eligible for DOD services and resources, including health care coverage through TRICARE and access to FAP services. If a CAC client is a dependent of an active-duty service member (or activated reservist or guardsman), an MCIO may be involved in the investigation, and FAP will likely be involved with assessment and services. Unlike active-duty service members, dependents cannot be mandated to participate in FAP services. If there is a military dependent in the family your CAC is working with, explore coordination with military partner programs to ensure the family has full access to the services available to them and that the civilian and military system response is well-coordinated and not duplicative.

Veterans and retirees

What does it mean? A veteran is defined by the Veterans Administration as “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.” Some veterans may receive compensation and benefits from the military depending on the circumstances of the conclusion of their military services. Service members who serve for 20 or more years are eligible for retirement with compensation and benefits. Active-duty members that have served less than 20 years but meet other criteria, such as disability requirements, may also be eligible for benefits, compensation, or retirement. Guardsmen and reservists who have completed 20 years of qualifying service and reached a minimum age are eligible for retirement as well.

What do CACs need to know? Individuals who served in the military may identify as veterans or retired service members. The benefits and services available to individuals of either status are dependent on a complex set of criteria and can be difficult for community service providers to determine. Unless the incident occurred on a military installation, it is unlikely that an MCIO will be involved with an investigation involving a veteran. Veterans, retirees, and their dependents may be eligible for FAP services, depending on a variety of factors. Your local FAP contacts can help you determine if the client is eligible for FAP services based on the specific circumstances.

Sources

ⁱU.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs, [Veterans Employment Toolkit Handout, Structure and Branches](#)

ⁱⁱU.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs, [Veterans Employment Toolkit Handout, Terms and Lingo](#)

ⁱⁱⁱU.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs, [Veterans Employment Toolkit Handout, Active Duty vs. Reserve or National Guard](#)

^{iv}Stuttgart Law Center, [Becoming a Military Dependent Information Paper](#)

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