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ETHICS PAPER

DOES THE CURRENT SCHOOL SYSTEM PREPARE
MILITARY CHILDREN FOR AN ETHICAL LIFE?

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Does the current school system(s) help prepare military children for an ethical life?

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Military values are used daily when it pertains to soldiers. But for the most part, are our children being taught values at our schools? Children spend eight hours or more in the school system each day. They are subjected to environmental influences that mothers and fathers cannot control. Our ultimate trust resides in the teachers. How do the teachers of military children develop little Johnny to act in accordance with an honest value system? This is a problem facing military children daily. Should we have to pay money to send our children to private schools or should we be afforded the opportunity to have our own schools supported by the Department of Defense? Some installations have DOD Schools. Some don't. It is critical to foster an environment where children can learn values by way of association and assimilation. It would be in the best interest of the United States Government to incorporate DOD schools for all military families.

With the institution of DOD schools for all installations our children could learn the value of honesty, loyalty, integrity, personal courage, and respect. We must have schools that set moral standards, model right behavior, punish and reward students for their actions, nurture caring relationships, and develop students' moral identities by providing them with stories and histories that give direction to their lives.

Currently soldiers are deploying more often, Because of this parents are more dependent on the school system. State Texas school system concentrates more on the No Child Left Behind Act, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), thus limiting religious expression and recreational learning activities such as recess.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires teachers to concentrate solely on teaching basic fundamentals such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. It does not encourage or teach morals. The NCLB Act appears to decrease life learning by not teaching basic values. It is unethical not to teach values because this helps children develop into responsible citizens.

The State of Texas uses the Texas Assessment of Skills (TAKS) test to influence the way we teach our children. The children are constantly bombarded with information pertaining to standardized testing. They lose out on subjects that enhance creativity and critical thinking skills. Countries such as Japan and Korea allow their children to work on and through hypothetical and empirical situations (practical situations or conditions taken as grounds for action). Their curriculum develops children to think outside the box. If the Texas school system would allow our children to work on projects with other students their work ethic would increase and the experience would promote learned values such as honesty and integrity.

The local school systems limit the religious fundamentals that our country was built on. The divine guidance of God is everywhere. An example of this is, "In God We Trust." The public school system is considering altering the Pledge of Allegiance, which states, "Under God" and has stripped away the right of school prayer. Soldiers' lives

depend on the rights to worship under some form of God. Their children should have the same rights wherever they are. Limiting or losing God in our school system breaks down the basic essentials of the value system.

Our children are also deprived of substantial recess time. The public school system often prohibits them from participating outdoors because of weather (too hot), playground depletion (drug needles, crack pipes), lazy teachers, child predators, and security concerns. As a result our children have become sedentary, which could lead to self-esteem problems as well as never knowing the power of play. If the schools were located on the Military Installation I doubt that these problems would exist.

Does the current school system(s) help prepare military children for an ethical life? In today's Army (Killeen, Texas), it does not. The teachers are detached from what it is to be a member of the military or their offspring. They are not in tune with our way of life and the values we try and instill in our children. The Department of Defense should stand-up on-post schools and encourage prior service military to become teachers. DOD should also better oversee how local school districts hire teachers. DOD oversight of the Troops to Teachers program could help with this massive undertaking and make this effort work.

Values are not **INHERITED!** Children pattern themselves after their parents. While we live the Army Values, Values will extend to our children. Who is a better choice to lead future Soldiers, than the offspring of Soldiers?

Department of Defense schools at every Installation and every grade level will help us raise our children while we are deployed or prepare to deploy. As a result, our children

may one day lead future Soldiers while displaying the ethical beliefs they have learned through the school system as well as their parents.

CONCLUSION

With respect to the system in place, the system has to change to enhance the ethical basis for our children. The schools must be accountable for their actions and ensure our children emulate a solid ethical school system as well as teachers.