STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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A STUDY OF CRITICAL ARMY FAMILY PROGRAMS

BY

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United States Army

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ABSTRACT

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Current U.S. policy supports quality of life improvements for the well-being of the military and their family members. In spite of strong words of support by senior leaders, military policies seem to be failing. Many soldiers are leaving the Army for other careers owing in part to the inadequacy of family support programs and quality of life factors. This strategic research project addresses recent concerns expressed by soldiers and family members about quality of life and Army well-being. Most noteworthy, this paper examines two Army family programs that are of paramount concern to commanders, soldiers, and their spouses: Child Development Services and Youth Services, both components of Army Child and Youth Services. Issues regarding these programs include: increasing access to child care and improving Youth Services outreach efforts to Army adolescents. These two areas are examined in terms of significance, issues, and recommendations of how to improve these critical Army family programs.

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A STUDY OF CRITICAL ARMY FAMILY PROGRAMS

Current U.S. policy supports quality of life improvements for the well-being of the military and their family members. The National Security Strategy recognizes this support as a top national priority; "...we will continue to place the highest priority on programs that support recruiting, retention, quality of life, training and education."[1] Likewise, the National Military Strategy expresses similar support. "To recruit and retain people who meet high military standards, the quality of life for our military personnel must be commensurate with the sacrifices we ask them to make."[2] The Army Posture Statement for FY01 echoes the same support, "Manning the force is an integral part of our transformation strategy. It encompasses a commitment to the well-being of all the personnel that form the Army family -- its soldiers, civilians, veterans, and their families...."[3] Even combatant commanders are expressing strong words of support for quality of life programs and the well-being of service members.[4]

In spite of these strong words of support for quality of life and well-being programs, military policies seem to be failing. The data suggest that the current efforts to improve these programs to date have not satisfied service members' needs. "Many service members are leaving the armed forces for other careers owing in part to the inadequacy of military pay, medical care, family support, retirement benefits, and other quality-of-life factors."[5] Recent surveys of Army officers also show a growing discontent concerning these programs.[6]

Yet, if the Army hopes to recruit and retain soldiers and their families, then the Army must improve quality of life and the overall well-being of its force. Addressing concerns about captain attrition, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (VCSA) in 1998 stated, "...in the last 10 years, the voluntary attrition rate for captains has risen from 6.7% to an all-time high of 10.6%. If we, as senior leaders, don't take action now to turn this around we may not be able to meet our future requirements."[7] Addressing concerns about declining satisfaction among all ranks, researchers have indicated, "Recruiting, retention, morale, and readiness have all become problematic; in the long run, culture is likely to suffer."[8] The Army must collectively address QOL/well-being issues, the institutional aspects of the Army[9], if it hopes to improve Army recruiting, retention, morale and its very culture. And, among the most crucial QOL/well-being programs to address are the Army family programs.

This strategic research project addresses recent concerns expressed by soldiers and family members about quality of life and Army well-being. Most noteworthy, this paper examines two Army family programs that are of paramount concern to commanders, soldiers, and their spouses: Child Development Services and Youth Services, both are components of Army Child

and Youth Services (CYS). Issues regarding these programs include: increasing access to child care and improving Youth Services outreach efforts to Army adolescents. These two areas are examined in terms of significance, issues, and recommendations of how to improve these family services.

DEFINITIONS

QUALITY OF LIFE

It is difficult to come up with a clear and concise definition of quality of life (QOL). In fact, the Army has had many different definitions of "quality of life."[10] Generally, it includes the many lists of QOL programs and services that improve the living conditions and life style of soldiers and family members. Yet, current QOL programs and services simply do not encompass all programs and benefits that ensure the "well-being" of the Army.[11]

WELL-BEING

An academic committee from the U.S. Army War College recently produced a definition for "Army well-being". In fact, formulating and validating a definition for Army well-being and its programs was at the heart of the group's study. The committee defined well-being as follows: "Well-being is the personal-physical, material, mental, and spiritual-state of soldiers, civilians, retirees, veterans and their families that contributes to their preparedness to perform the Army's mission."[12] The well-being of the Army really encompasses all programs affecting individual and family life. The state of well-being includes those basic dimensions of life including: physical health and wellness, material sufficiency (financial, shelter), mental wellness (education, professional growth, self-esteem), and spiritual fitness.[13] Army family programs make up that component of mental wellness which promote family adaptability and family readiness.

ARMY FAMILY PROGRAMS

Army family programs are becoming more critical to meeting the demands by Generation X for more balance in their lives. Generation X, born between 1960 and 1980, want more family time and personal time too.[14] "Army family programs provide (that) support to help soldiers and their families balance the demands of military life, provide a forum for addressing well-being issues and help families handle the stress of deployment."[15] Family support programs further increase self-reliance thereby enhancing Army readiness. Army family programs, as identified in the Army Posture Statement FY01, include Army Child and Youth Services.[16]

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

RECENT MILITARY FAMILY RESEARCH

There has been significant research conducted the last 10 to 15 years concerning military families and the challenges they face. Much research has been done concerning family trends in the military, family housing, issues affecting the families of junior enlisted and junior officers, family adaptation to the military life style, and the impacts on families associated with the changing role of women in the military. Extensive research has also been done on family adaptation during deployments, child and adolescent mental health, domestic violence, financial management difficulties, family transition to civilian life, and those issues affecting the reserve component families. In June of 1999, the Military Family Institute published a compendium of all the major research that has been conducted. Under one cover, the book assembled the findings of some of our nation's best scientists concerning military family research along with the path to the future in their areas of expertise.[17] This publication sponsored by the Department of Defense summarizes all major studies and findings concerning the military family. It's extensive bibliography provides the research enthusiast with countless sources for more detailed investigation.

AMERICAN MILITARY CULTURE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

A study of U.S. military culture was completed in February 2000 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).[18] "This study describes how contemporary challenges and conditions are affecting U.S. military culture and, thereby the sustained effectiveness that is the ultimate goal of the institution."[19] The extensive CSIS team of experts examined current literature, reviewed survey data, sponsored conferences, held 125 focus-group discussions, and surveyed 12,500 service members to come up with their findings.[20] The team found "...that our dedicated people in uniform did not typically have high morale and revealed far less satisfaction from their service than one would expect.... Expectations for a satisfying military career are not being met."[21] The CSIS team also made recommendations for all of the military services (Services) to consider including the formation of a special task force on military culture to monitor issues and ensure implementation of policies.[22]

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE ARMY WELL-BEING STUDY

The U.S. Army War College completed a study concerning Army well-being. The study originated from a tasking from the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA). The study collaborated its findings among multiple agencies and through formal sensing sessions of volunteers from the Army Command and General Staff College, the Army War College, the Army Sergeants Major Academy, the Army Chaplains School, and with Adjutant Generals or Deputy Adjutant Generals from ten State National Guard Headquarters.[23] The study developed a framework of Army well-being programs and categorized them as essential, defining, or enhancing programs. The study assigned and prioritized well-being programs within functional tiers and performed an assessment of each major program. The study concludes with a set of recommendations for the CSA to consider concerning Army well-being.[24]

MILITARY FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

GROWTH OF THE MILITARY MARRIED POPULATION

Most noteworthy, the military has not been able to come to grips with a force composed of greater numbers of married people. Today 56 percent of service members in the U.S. Armed Forces are married, an increase from 46 percent in 1973. The expectation is that this trend toward more married service members will continue well into the future, a trend that really has positive aspects.[25]

GROWTH IN NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILIES

Demographics show a trend away from traditional families (families with non-working spouses) creating an expectation for even more family support services. "The 1998 DoD demographics show that 10.7 percent of the Army are single parents. For soldiers E1 to E5 the figure is 12.5 percent. Six percent are joint service, 63 percent of spouses are employed, with another 24 percent looking for employment. The data also shows [sic.] that the number of employed spouses has been steadily increasing since 1985."[26] Thus, there is a great demand among Army families for child/youth care and services.

TRENDS CALL FOR EXPANDED/ENHANCED FAMILY PROGRAMS

All demographic trends point to the need for greater attention being given to Army family programs. The Army is becoming older, better educated, more ethnically diverse, more female and more married.[27] Although there is an average of two children per family, the number of

families needing support is growing.[28] And, with more spouses working outside of the home, the Army must be prepared to better meet the needs and expectations for services by future generations or run the risk of having manning difficulties in the Army. But the positive benefits that come from a more married force will be worth any investment made.

BENEFITS FROM FOCUSING ON IMPROVING ARMY FAMILY PROGRAMS

Married service members are committed, more responsible, and more likely to remain in military service. "Service members are more likely to aspire to lifetime military careers and tend to demonstrate more pride and satisfaction to military service than their unmarried peers...."[29] If anything, the military should make all efforts to build their Army family programs to attract and retain families, especially with an all-volunteer force.

Manning an all volunteer force with an ever growing number of dependent children requiring care and services will be difficult to accomplish given the facilities, staffing, and funding of the Army's current child care programs. It is very important for the Army to reassess the status of current child care programs and policies and determine how to improve and expand them, better meeting present-day needs and those of the future.

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS/SERVICES

PURPOSE FOR EXAMINING CHILD CARE PROGRAMS/SERVICES

The purpose of this section is to explain current policies and programs affecting Department of Defense (DoD)/Army child care, to explore options to improve military families' access to child care, and make recommendations how DoD and the Army should proceed in funding future child care programs. In recent years, military personnel leaving the military have been critical of the Services for not doing enough to meet their family support needs. One such need is affordable, quality, and accessible child care. This section addresses these child care concerns.

WHY INVEST IN CHILD CARE PROGRAMS/SERVICES

1. COMMANDERS INCREASINGLY AWARE OF CHILD CARE ISSUES

Commanders in the field are becoming more aware of the need and concern for Army family programs, specifically for increased access to child care. Don Snider, a professor at West Point and a retired Army Colonel said, "...the provision of quality day-care is of more concern to many commanders today than is the issue of military training."[30]

2. FAMILY RESEARCH STUDIES CONFIRM CHILD CARE CONCERNS

This observation is further supported by research conducted through studies of the military family. For example, the Defense Science Board Task Force reported that among service members' top concerns is the availability of child care.[31] During the first two decades of the all-volunteer force many programs including child care were developed specifically to help families adjust to the military lifestyle.[32] Changes in the Armed Forces and society pose new challenges for military personnel and their families, thus requiring a reexamination of these programs with the intent to improve them to better meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's military family.[33]

BACKGROUND OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS/SERVICES

Child care within the military has experienced serious growing pains since the 1970s. Fortunately, these programs have worked through their problems and have emerged as the nation's leader in child care. The programs throughout the 1970's and 1980's grew slowly, had numerous problems, and operated out of substandard facilities. Congress held hearings in 1989 that led to the passing of the Military Child Care Act (MCCA). From that point on, military child care began to improve.[34] As a result of the progress made, President Clinton even recognized military child care programs to be a benchmark for the nation.[35] The National Women's Law Center and Congress have also praised the DoD child care programs.[36]

CURRENT ARMY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS/SERVICES

Today, the child care system within the Army includes many centers, programs, and varied services. These programs are encompassed within the Child and Youth Services (CYS) program. CYS provides a variety of programs for eligible children/youth. Child Development Services (CDS) provides child care options for infants and younger children. Family Child Care (FCC) homes supplement the Army's Child Development Centers (CDC). School-Age Services (SAS) programs provide before and after school activities for elementary school children.[37]

ACCESSIBILITY TO CHILD CARE IS OVERRIDING CONCERN

1. CDC/FCC SPACE SHORTFALL IN MEETING DEMAND

With such comprehensive programs and such resounding accolades of success, why are there the continuing concerns expressed about military child care? The issue is no longer with quality of care or necessarily about CDC affordability, but rather access to care. In 1998 the Army alone met only 59 percent of the child care demand. By 1999 the Army satisfied 62 percent of the need. The current DoD goal of 65 percent was not even reached due to the

reprogramming of child care funds.[38] As a result, many service members are then forced to seek child care within the civilian community in programs that are of less quality, inconvenient, and more costly.

2. DOD/ARMY SHOULD MEET FULL DEMAND FOR CHILD CARE

DoD and the Army must meet the demands of military families for greater access to child care. Without access to care, service members become disillusioned, ultimately affecting both the recruitment and retention objectives of the Army. This disillusionment is heightened with increased deployments and doing "more" with "less", making this a critical concern. Current trends put pressure on DoD and the Army to take immediate actions eventually ensuring 100 percent access to child care.

3. DOD/ARMY BUDGET REALITIES

This is not an easy task for DoD requiring substantially greater budgetary resourcing from Congress. By 2005, OSD expects all Services to meet 80 percent of the required demand for child care. That will cost the Army alone an additional $44 million per year.[39] To support the 100 percent objective across DoD, the bill to Congress would likely exceed $1 billion per year.[40]

OPTIONS TO IMPROVE CHILD CARE ACCESSIBILITY

1. INCREASE CDC/FCC SPACES

An option for increasing access to military child care is to increase both CDC and FCC spaces and provide subsidies for FCC care. Currently, the Services subsidize CDC costs on a one-to-one basis. However, military families generally pay the full cost of FCC care.[41] This option would allow for a subsidized FCC program. Resourcing the expansion of both CDC and FCC programs to accommodate a 100 percent objective would be costly. Due to fluctuating numbers of FCC providers, the full amount of the additional spaces would likely have to be accommodated through CDC expansion. Based on DoD estimates, an additional 256,000 child care spaces would have to be provided. It could cost billions of dollars in construction costs alone to meet the need for the additional spaces. Also, added operating costs would also have to be budgeted and approved.[42] This is assuming that DoD would even be able to hire more CDC care providers (CDCs currently have manning challenges overseas).[43] Nevertheless, this option would meet child care needs within the current system fostering a sense of community among military families who bring their children to the installation for day care.[44]

2. PROVIDE MATCHING FUNDS TO SUBSIDIZE OFF POST CARE

Another option for increasing access to military child care is to provide matching funds for military families unable to get CDC/FCC slots. The matching rate would vary based on the income/grade of the service member. However, DoD's matching payment would not exceed $3,926.00 per child per year, the department's average share of the operating costs to support a single CDC slot.[45] Like the first option, this option would also provide subsidies for FCC care. Unlike the first option, this option would eliminate the need for billions of dollars in additional CDC construction costs. This option could also be made immediately available or phased over time increasing the matching funds as budgets are increased. The subsidy would also encourage families to seek higher quality care outside the installation.[46] However, this option would not foster the sense of community achieved in the first option. Also, this option could be perceived as widening the gap between the compensation packages that DoD and the Army provide to single and married personnel.[47]

3. OPTION IMPACTS

Either option would negatively impact the resourcing of the military's core missions. Further subsidizing child care to a 100 percent access objective is expensive, costing DoD an additional $1B annually, not including the billions of dollars in construction costs if DoD were to elect the first option. That is money that could be budgeted for modernization, training, operational requirements, or other initiatives.

4. OPTION RECOMMENDATION

Based on cost comparison and immediacy of relief, DoD should adopt the matching funds option. Depending on the success of this option, DoD could, over time, expand CDC/FCC programs, if necessary. Nevertheless, DoD should continue with current plans to provide $350 million for CDC construction to accommodate an additional 25,000 children but earmark that money for overseas construction.[48] There child care options offered outside installations are very limited.

CHILD CARE CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, DoD and the Army must come to grips with the growing populations of married military personnel. Family programs such as child care are critical to retain military families in the Army and ultimately maintain readiness. DoD and the Army have made exceptional progress in improving the quality and affordability of child care. Yet, improvements

have not gone far enough in terms of meeting the access demands. The objective must ultimately accommodate 100 percent of the child care requirement. The best way to meet that requirement is for DoD and the Army to fund additional CDC construction overseas, but most noteworthy, to provide matching funds for military families unable to get CDC/FCC slots currently available at Army installations. Improving child care accessibility is a sound investment to ensure retention of families in the Army.

Family programs and services go well beyond providing child care for preschoolers and elementary school age children. Demands for middle school and teen programs and services must also be met. If the Army hopes to more likely retain a family for the duration of a military career, it must develop comprehensive programs to service all ages of children, from the infant to the high schooler. Yet, providing services to teenagers is perhaps the most challenging of all.

YOUTH PROGRAMS/SERVICES

PURPOSE FOR EXAMINING YOUTH PROGRAMS/SERVICES

The purpose of this section is to explain current policies and programs affecting DoD/Army Youth Services, to explore options to improve youth programs, and make recommendations how DoD and the Army should proceed in funding future youth programs. Military adolescents face unique challenges from their civilian counterparts. They go through frequent moves, separations from their military sponsors, along with the uncertainties of living in foreign places.[49] Their unique needs call for special attention within the Army family programs. Of particular concern, is that current Army Youth Services do not adequately meet the needs of military adolescents. This section addresses these youth program concerns.

WHY INVEST IN YOUTH PROGRAMS/SERVICES

1. TO IMPROVE YOUTH ADAPTABILITY AND FAMILY READINESS

Providing adequate youth programs are critical to ensure family readiness and adaptability to the rigors of military life. Also, these youth are most vulnerable to anxiety during deployment of a parent into harm's way.[50] Consequently, services for these youth need to allow them to connect with other military youth while countering the ill-effects of frequent relocations and separations. The Army's current youth programs attempt to provide such services.[51] Yet, family research studies confirm the need for improved services.[52]

2. MILITARY YOUTH ARE OUTSTANDING PROSPECTS OF RECRUITMENT

In spite of the rigors of military life, Army youth hold generally positive views of the military. Recent studies indicate that only about 9% of military youth felt that the military is not a good place to raise children and only 5% indicated they were very unhappy with the military life style.[53]

Consequently, military youth, having already adapted well to military living, make outstanding prospects for recruitment. This is particularly important as the pool of youth in the civilian sector have fewer and fewer connections to the military. The current force statistics show that over 56 percent of the enlisted force and over 70 percent of the officer force have or had a father who served in the military.[54] Much of the force joined the military being familiar with military life or through the encouragement and example of their parents. With a significantly downsized military, fewer and fewer civilian youth have any connection with the military service.

Therefore, it becomes even more important that the Army invests in Army youth programs, since military youth are likely to be more receptive to military service themselves. By building youth programs, strengthening dependent education, and creating supportive military communities, military youth will be more encouraged to pursue military careers of their own. Out of a sense of belonging and instilled military values, they will be drawn to their roots of childhood and youth experiences and want the same for their own families.

CURRENT ARMY YOUTH PROGRAMS/SERVICES

Current Army, youth programs are designed to enhance the well-being of the Army's youth. Programs are provided to build both physical and social development and a positive self-esteem. Programs also give military youth those self-reliance skills necessary to succeed in an adult world.[55] Programs include middle school and teen open recreation programs, youth sports, social activities, and supplemental services.[56]

YOUTH PROGRAMS/SERVICES NOT MEETING YOUTH INTERESTS

The overriding concern about Army youth programs, and all DoD youth programs in general, is that they don't meet the majority of youth's interests. Most youth have reported that they don't use youth centers/activities provided on installations. Many teens just do not feel that the Army's youth programs address their recreational activity needs.[57]

To better address the needs of the Army's youth, the Department of the Army published The Strategic Youth Action Plan that maps out future youth policies and programs. Most noteworthy, installations continue to pursue partnerships with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. This gives installations access to training programs, assistance, and enables youth to participate in Boys & Girls Club competitions and major events.[58] But the significant hindrance to improving youth programs is funding.

ARMY BUDGET REALITIES

The current youth program utilization rate and funding levels only support 20 percent of the Army's youth. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) has a goal of a 35 percent utilization rate to be met by all Services in the out-years, "although the increase is yet not funded".[59] To meet the goal, OSD would require an additional $9.5 million the first year, $13.1 million the second year, $17.5 million the third year, $22.4 million the fourth year and finally the fifth year would require an additional $27.4 million.[60]

OPTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUTH PROGRAMS/SERVICES

1. STATUS QUO WITH INCREASED FUNDING OPTION

Today's youth programs provide a valuable service and with this additional funding they could be improved through the upgrade/construction of facilities and expansion of current programs. Installation commanders, confronted with funding shortfalls, are hard-pressed to fund improvement and/or expansion projects of teen & middle school open recreation centers. Additional funding to improve these facilities is needed and would be welcomed. Likewise, additional funding would allow for expansion of services available to our youth which could include expansion of computer labs, tutor/mentor programs, youth counseling services, and those programs designed to build values and leadership traits among our youth and potential, future leaders of the Army.

2. COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS WITH SCHOOLS/COMMUNITIES OPTION

However, considering the disinterest in current Youth Services programs voiced by many military adolescents, DoD and the Army need to look beyond just adding funds to current programs that may not be all that effective. Having conducted a broad-based assessment of military adolescents, the Military Family Institute made several recommendations. Youth Services must increase awareness of their programs. They must involve youth in the planning of their activities. And they must increase efforts to involve females and the older teens.[61] All of

these recommendations can be implemented at minimum cost and through a more focused effort made by adult, volunteer leaders and the staffs of Youth Services programs throughout DoD and the Army.

The Military Family Institute made yet another recommendation that may be key to involving more military youth in Youth Services programs. The Institute recommends that Youth Services, "coordinate and, where possible, integrate activities on base or post with school and community activities."[62] Partnering with other youth organizations, schools, and community programs may extend the reach of Youth Services to more military adolescents.

DoD and Army youth programs are taking a big step forward in partnering through Boys & Girls Club affiliation. It is expected that by the year 2002 all Youth Services programs in DoD will be affiliated with this national youth organization.[63] This is a tremendous opportunity for military youth and will integrate DoD and Army youth programs with a reputable youth program in the civilian sector. But partnering should not end there.

Partnership efforts with dependent schools, potentially with civilian community schools, can extend the reach of military youth programs to more of the Army's adolescents while exposing civilian youth to an Army program. Youth Services can support or sponsor dances, service projects, tours, field trips, and activities in conjunction with schools. Youth Services programs have experienced staffs, volunteers, equipment and resources that schools may lack beyond providing academic programs. Youth Services programs may also be able to cooperate with schools in developing joint intramural sports programs or tournaments.

Youth Service programs may also develop partnerships with community programs and events as well, both in the military and civilian communities. They can cosponsor or support holiday or special events. They can also partner with other private organizations in the civilian sector such as: 4H Clubs, Big Brother/Big Sister programs, etc. The possibilities really are plentiful.

Increases in funding for Youth Services should be tied to an ability to reach out to more military youth (improving utilization rates), as well as providing quality services. Standards or objectives should be established to reach out to females and older teens especially who most need the benefits that come from Youth Services programs. An incentives-based funding program, beyond providing basic services, should be developed to encourage ingenuity in new program development and partnering to increase exposure of Youth Services to military youth.

3. OPTION IMPACTS

As was the case with funding child care options, funding either of the Youth Services options would negatively impact the resourcing of the military's core missions. Again, that is money that could be budgeted for modernization, training, operational requirements, or other initiatives. However, in contrast with the child care options the additional funding to improve Youth Services outreach efforts can be accomplished at comparably minimal costs, a cost that the Army and all of DoD can well afford.[64]

4. OPTION RECOMMENDATION

Based on being a more effective approach in funding Youth Services, rewarding installation Youth Services programs through successful, cooperative/partnership outreach programs is the most efficient way to expend additional DoD/Army resources. Of course, basic services should be provided across the board. However, Youth Services programs must become more creative and innovative in their approach to Army adolescents. An incentive-based funding program would encourage program expansion and new program development. The Army shouldn't just throw more money at youth programs that are not all that effective, but resource those programs that can demonstrate their effectiveness in reaching out to the Army's youth.

YOUTH PROGRAMS/SERVICES CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, DoD and the Army must come to grips with how to best meet the needs of Army Adolescents. This is important for promoting family adaptability and readiness, encouraging family retention in a career commitment to the Army, and enhancing the recruitment potential of Army youth. DoD and the Army have taken steps to improve the quality of their Youth Services programs. Most notably, installations are partnering with Boys & Girls Clubs to better meet needs of military adolescents. Further partnering with other private organizations, schools, and communities will extend the reach of Youth Services to yet more military youth. Increased funding should be provided to Youth Services but on an incentive basis to improve utilization of Youth Services. Funding to improve Youth Services outreach efforts is a sound investment in the Army's future.

SRP CONCLUSIONS

This strategic research project addressed those concerns often expressed by soldiers and family members about Child Development Services and Youth Services. The principal issues

regarding these programs include: increasing access to child care and improving Youth Services outreach efforts to Army adolescents.

Additional funding is required to expand both programs to improve the well-being of Army families. DoD and the Army should provide matching funds for military families unable to get CDC/FCC slots currently available at Army installations. Likewise, DoD should continue with current plans to provide $350 million for CDC construction to accommodate 25,000 additional children. That money should be earmarked for overseas construction due to limited child care options available outside Army installations. DoD and the Army should also continue with plans to provide additional funding to Youth Services. However, efforts must be made to ensure that money provides better exposure of services to Army adolescents and that those services better meet interests and needs.

Senior leaders from both DoD and the Army have pledged their commitment to improving the quality of life and the overall well-being of the Army. With recent dissatisfaction voiced by many soldiers, the Army must provide those funds necessary to make a noticeable difference in quality of life. Both DoD and Congress must support the Army's efforts to this end. If the Army, and DoD as a whole, hope, "to recruit and retain people who meet high military standards, the quality of life for our military personnel must be commensurate with the sacrifices we ask them to make."[65] Furthermore, with trends in the Army toward more married soldiers, more single parents, more joint service couples, and more working spouses, expanded Army family programs are particularly critical to meet needs. Yet, the investment in Army family programs is well worth it if it means attracting and then retaining quality soldiers and their families in a lifetime of service within the Army.

WORD COUNT = 5155

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