Research indicates that military-connected children are at higher risk of physical, psychological, and behavioral health issues than their civilian counterparts and could be at potential risk for toxic stress. The COVID-19 pandemic has likely increased the potential for stress among military families, especially those whose service member(s) are on the front lines working to care for those who are ill.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
Virginia has over 80,000 military-connected students attending public schools in nearly all of the 132 school divisions.

**FYI!**
Not all military students will respond to stress in the same way. Resiliency is a learned behavior and is dependent on the parent’s and community’s ability to help students develop strong coping skills.

**CONSIDER THIS**
Research shows that during times of military deployment, transition, or other stressful situations, some military-connected adolescents may withhold their feelings.

**KEY FACTORS**
Consider the key factors and questions below that may affect a child’s emotional response to this crisis.

**PRIOR EXPERIENCES**
- Has the student had a history of anxiety or high levels of stress during past moves or in periods of parental absences?
- Does the student come from a single parent household? Or, are both parents service members?

**CURRENT & FUTURE EXPERIENCES**
- Has the student’s parent(s) been activated to support COVID-19?
- Is the family impacted by the Department of Defense “Stop Move” order? If so, is the family struggling financially or experiencing other related challenges?

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**
- Is the student in the care of someone other than the parents and without the support of a familiar social network?
- Does the student’s family have challenges accessing Virginia military installation supports (counseling, medical care, military aid societies, etc.)?
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS OF MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

1. Is the student’s parent(s) deployed or absent from the home as a result of their service to the military?

2. Does the student have preexisting conditions which make her or him more at risk given the current living conditions under COVID-19?

3. Has the student moved recently or is the family preparing to move?

4. Does the student have a strong social network?

5. What resources are available to the student from the: Military; Community; School; Religious Affiliations; and Sport / Service Affiliations.

IMPORANCE OF SELF-CARE

The mental health of students is intimately and inextricably linked to the well-being of their parents, guardians, and teachers. Stress is natural and inevitable during deployment, transition, and crisis situations such as this. Implementing your own self-care strategies and providing parents/guardians with tools to do the same is a critical component to safeguarding the mental health of students.

MILITARY-CONNECTED WELLNESS CONTROL PANEL

FOR STUDENTS & PARENTS
- MILITARY FAMILIES RESOURCES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN
- SIMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN
- MILITARY KIDS CONNECT
- NON-MEDICAL COUNSELING FOR MILITARY CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS
- STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES
- BRAINPOP VIDEO ON COVID-19

FOR EDUCATORS AND/OR OTHER CAREGIVERS
- GUIDE TO HELPING FAMILIES COPE WITH COVID-19 ENGLISH
- GUIDE TO HELPING FAMILIES COPE WITH COVID-19 SPANISH
- GUIDE TO HELPING FAMILIES COPE WITH COVID-19 CHINESE
- COVID-19 RESOURCES & TIPS FOR FAMILIES AND OTHERS
- CDC: CARING FOR CHILDREN
- MILITARY ONESOURCE: COVID-19 INFO FOR MILITARY COMMUNITY

FOR SELF-CARE
- THE MILITARY AND FAMILY LIFE COUNSELING PROGRAM
- CHILDREN COPING RESOURCES
- TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF
- COPING WITH STRESS DURING OUTBREAKS
- HEADSPACE