



UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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PERSONNEL AND
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The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House
Washington, DC 20515-4901

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Enclosed is the combined biennial report required by Section 584, National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2000, "Support for Expanded Child Care Services and Youth Program Services for Dependents," codified at sections 1798 and 1799 of title 10, United States Code. This report describes initiatives that use the authorities of Section 584 to support the expansion of child care and youth program services, support the integration of children and youth of military families into the civilian community, make more efficient use of DoD facilities and resources, and support partnerships with schools and other youth services organizations.

Sincerely,

David S. C. Chu

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Richard Gephardt
Minority Leader





Department of Defense

*“Support for Expanded
Child Care Services and
Youth Program Services
for Dependents”*

Report to Congress

*Pursuant to Section 584 of
National Defense Authorization Act
for Fiscal Year 2000*

BACKGROUND

Section 584 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65), "Support for Expanded Child Care Services and Youth Program Services for Dependents," codified at Sections 1798 and 1799 of title 10, United States Code, requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a biennial report on the exercise of the authorities set forth in that section. The four key objectives of the authorities are: to meet the needs of members of the armed forces or employees of the Department of Defense (DoD) for child care services and youth program services; to support the integration of children and youth of military families into civilian communities; to make more efficient use of DoD facilities and resources; and to establish or support a partnership or consortium arrangement and other youth services organizations serving children of the armed forces.

Subsections 1798(a) and 1799(a) provide the authorities to meet the above objectives. Under subsection 1798(a) the Secretary of Defense may provide financial assistance to an eligible civilian provider of child care services or youth program services that furnishes such services for members of the armed forces and employees of the federal government. Under subsection 1799(a) the Secretary of Defense "may, under certain specified circumstances, authorize participation in child care or youth programs of the DoD, to the extent of the availability of space and services, by children and youth under the age of 19 who are not dependents of members of the armed forces or of employees of the DoD and are not otherwise eligible for participation in those programs."

INTRODUCTION

DoD recognizes the importance of child and youth programs to the quality of life (QoL) of the Total Forces. Each military Service operates programs within DoD standards to ensure consistent, affordable, quality child care and youth programs that also meet the mission requirements are offered to DoD families. Military life places unique demands on families, with frequent changes that may affect children's sense of security. Military assignments often require that parents work temporary duty, extended duty and non-traditional/unpredictable hours, all of which create stress on the family unit. DoD programs must respond to these non-traditional schedules and provide activities and environments that provide stability for children and youth.

PROCESS FOR PROVIDING TEST PROGRAMS

The DoD implemented expansion of child care and youth programs at selected locations through a test process. General implementation strategies are provided in this report. Each Military Service and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) submitted proposals to DoD for approval prior to initiating any program or service under Section 584 authorities. Once a proposed test had been approved, any other Military Service/Defense Agency could use that approval to test the same type of program at locations under their command. The test program resulted in expanded availability of quality, affordable child and youth services to additional patrons both on and off the installation. Feedback from each Service/Defense Agency identified as the primary agent for testing and evaluation provided lessons learned to use in expanding, modifying, or eliminating the test initiatives under Section 584.

Programs included partnerships with state, local and private organizations to open sports teams, classes and services to non-DoD youth, providing child care for National Guard members and retirees, and subsidizing child care space in civilian accredited child development centers (CDCs) and licensed Family Child Care (FCC) homes.

Installations increased youth participation in classes and workshops, youth sports and specialty events, and social and educational activities with minimal cost. Two overseas locations integrated local host nation children and non-DoD civilians into youth team sports. This initiative maximized sports field capacity, resulted in economies of scale, and promoted friendships between the transient military families and local youth. The partnerships improved relationships with local host nation officials and youth sports clubs, resulting in an integration of military youth into the local national youth soccer clubs.

For National Guard participation in child development programs (CDPs), staff initiated programs using a variety of venues including CDCs, summer camps, and FCC homes. Programs offered extended duty care for children, provided hourly care during military briefings, and offered care in school age programs. Providing child care proved to be key in boosting parent attendance at briefings.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, Services immediately reviewed and updated Mobilization and Contingency (MAC) plans. As part of this update effort, they used Section 584 to provide installations with the flexibility to partner with local civilian communities to respond to emergencies or catastrophic events by increasing the child care availability.

Installations also formed partnerships with local school districts. These included placement of DoD children in preschool programs using state funds and also using vacant space at military CDCs for DoD and non-DoD children. Other initiatives provided access to before- and after- school programs, increased summer camp space for civilian partners, and offered limited openings in the CDCs for grandparent sponsors. Local school systems operated before- and after- school programs for DoD personnel. Home-schooled children were given access to facility resources such as the youth center gym and youth computer lab during hours when regular participants were in traditional classrooms.

A partnership in Miami, Florida, provided child care spaces in local accredited CDCs for children of DoD personnel. The command provided financial assistance to the centers under the authority of section 1798(a) of title 10, United States Code. An installation formed a partnership with two local chapters of the Boys & Girls Club of America to provide developmental and recreational programs to military and DoD civilian youth.

Another test program approved the establishment of local community FCC homes in northern Virginia and Maryland under the oversight of a military CDP. This expanded child care services to DoD families living and working in the National Capitol Region, Washington, D.C., through formal Memoranda of Understanding between the military installation involved and state child care licensing agencies. To fully implement this test, the CDP added a training and curriculum specialist, limited the number of children in homes to meet military standards, and instituted monthly monitoring visits. The test also established a three-tiered FCC provider certification process that tied professional advancement to increased child care subsidies paid to the provider.

POSITIVE IMPACTS

The overall effect of the legislative authority expanding children and youth programs has been positive. Military youth were more willing to participate in programs when they were able to bring friends with whom they attended schools. More importantly, installations were able to fill teams and programs that lacked members, increasing the positive opportunities for all youth. By providing additional teams, military participants were offered more experience and skill levels and game cancellations were reduced. One of the most positive impacts was the ability to offer additional teams for older girls. Installations increased the pool of potential instructors, coaches and volunteers from the parents of non-DoD civilian participants.

The economic impact of opening programs to community patrons has allowed some children and youth programs that charge participation fees to break even. In

return, local community people gained access to quality programs that were not available to them in the past. Partnerships established under the aegis of the legislation have not only allowed military children to enjoy increased opportunities for interactions with local community children, but have also supported their assimilation into a more diverse community.

CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

Although most of the increased use of programs was positive for DoD, the Military Services discovered various obstacles that delayed or prohibited implementation. The increased security following the crisis of September 11 closed bases to many potential patrons. Completing background checks for those staff or volunteers not directly related to the military installation was difficult. The numerous contracts with FCC providers and modifications to those contracts under test programs, combined with the Contracting Officers' Representatives need to visit multiple sites, added to staff workloads. There was a continuing challenge to provide information to National Guard members about available programs and services due to their geographical separation from installations. Civilian CDCs were not always eager to do business with the federal government and improving public relations must be part of any future planning.

Many DoD patrons refused to enroll their children in programs that did not meet the quality standards they were accustomed to on the installation. Many sports leagues off-installation do not require the same health and safety precautions as DoD and do not require that coaches be trained and certified. However, insisting on compliance with standards can only assist the total community in raising the bar and improving safety for all youth.

OVERALL LESSONS LEARNED

The Military Services learned many lessons in the expansion of child and youth programs under Section 584. One key is to involve all applicable installation agencies, especially security and legal staff, early in the planning process. This ensures a formal plan concerning access and liability issues. Overseas, coordination with local national ministries is imperative to ensure compliance with Status of Forces Agreements. Parameters of enrollment, eligibility, and allowable changes or adjustments must be clearly established by installation program and command staff. Feedback from DoD parents indicates they appreciate that youth sports programs follow the National Alliance of Youth Sports standards; however, education is necessary for parents of civilian youth who may not be aware of military requirements, policies, and behavior on installations.

Key to expanding programs for youth is providing them information in a timely manner. Registration of youth, including phone numbers and email addresses, assists with this. Publicizing the programs and activities through the local schools, local newspapers, television, and radio increases participation. Success is contingent upon ensuring that systems and procedures are in place to give priority to DoD youth in all aspects of programs prior to expanding to include civilian youth off the installation.

The greatest impact of extending child and youth programs to the local civilian community is on small and remote military locations where the expansion of the customer base enhances the efficient operation of these programs. Where services can be delivered to more customers at very little or no increase in overhead expenses, both the military community and the local community patrons benefit.

SUMMARY

The DoD believes that our initial efforts have met the intent of the legislation and strongly support the continuation of the authority as an effective and major force for expanding military child and youth programs and assisting civilian programs in increasing overall standards and oversight. DoD is committed to disseminating the expertise that has been gained through delivery of quality programs. Section 584, which allows the military to work in partnership with local communities, is an extremely important tool to meet the challenges of our current world conditions. The test programs have demonstrated the Military Services and Defense Agencies can offer quality care for isolated children and youth without having to create an on-site facility and offer care for those in lower income categories who may not otherwise be able to afford it. Another positive outcome of this legislation is that school-age children can receive care in neighborhoods in which they live and attend school.

Military parents have come to expect a certain level of quality developmental programming and often are disappointed in the level of quality off the installation. As a result of implementing the authorities granted in Section 584, partnerships demonstrated the need for the military to reach out to help other programs achieve their full potential and raise the quality of child and youth programming.