



Supporting Military Families Through Community Collaboration

A Scalable Model Rooted in Community

Presented by OCC Project & ELC of the
Emerald Coast

Welcome

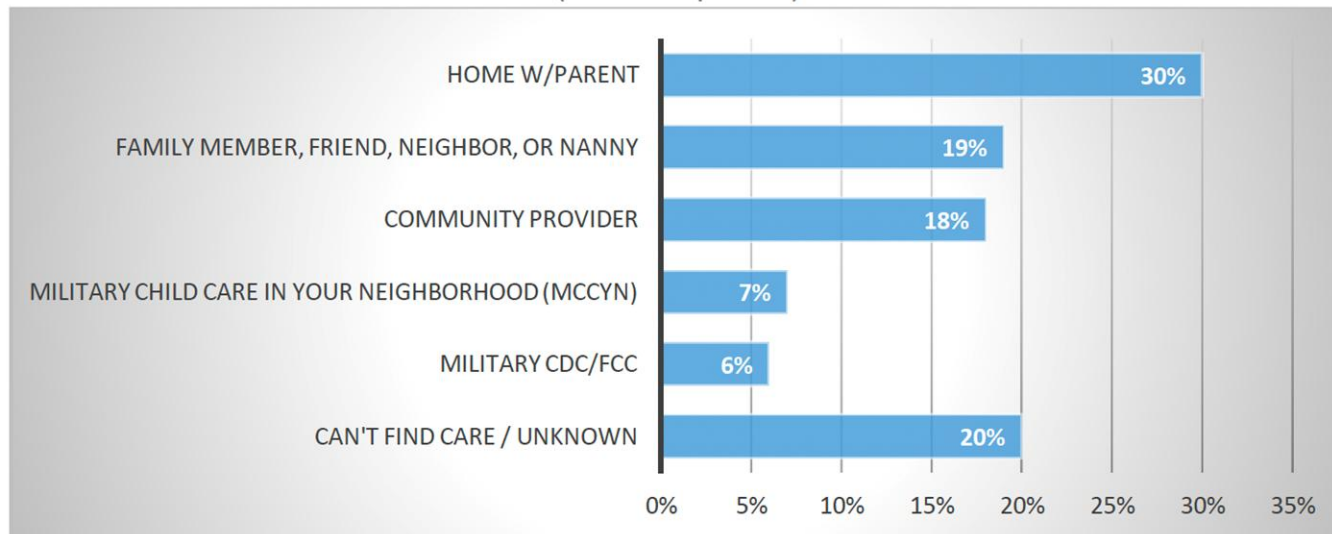
- ▶ Kayla Corbitt
 - ▶ Military Spouse
 - ▶ Founder & CEO of Operation Child Care Project (OCCP)
- ▶ Dana Hodges
 - ▶ CEO of Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast



Why Military Child Care Needs Are Different

- ▶ Frequent relocations and shift-based work complicate access
- ▶ Long CDC waitlists; limited trust networks
- ▶ 1 in 3 military spouses unemployed due to child care barriers
- ▶ Military programming is limited and exclusionary

Where Children with Unmet Demand are in Care:
(as of 1 Sep 2022)



HomeFront Help: A Proven, Scalable Pilot

Three-part strategy: Train, Fund, Support

Bring Trusted Caregivers back to the table

45 Helpers trained and vetted (Nov 24 - Sept 25)

30% of Helpers are Civilian

\$56,500 in family micro grants distributed; projected \$80,000 by Jan 2026

140 families served; 24% had no military affiliation

210 of the children served had special needs

4 Helpers left to work in licensed centers

What Families Told Us

"I have exhausted all available resources. I've contacted the Military Child Care (MCC) program, explored "Child Care in Your Home," and attempted to find care through Facebook, which unfortunately led to unsafe situations with unvetted providers. I've also contacted Family Child Care (FCC) providers on both Eglin and Hurlburt Air Force Bases, but none are available for extended hours. I've raised the critical need for extended-hour childcare options within the military, but was informed that securing funding for such a program would require a lengthy process involving the Pentagon. My only remaining options appear to be taking leave without pay or separating from the military, as schedule accommodations are not granted for individual circumstances."

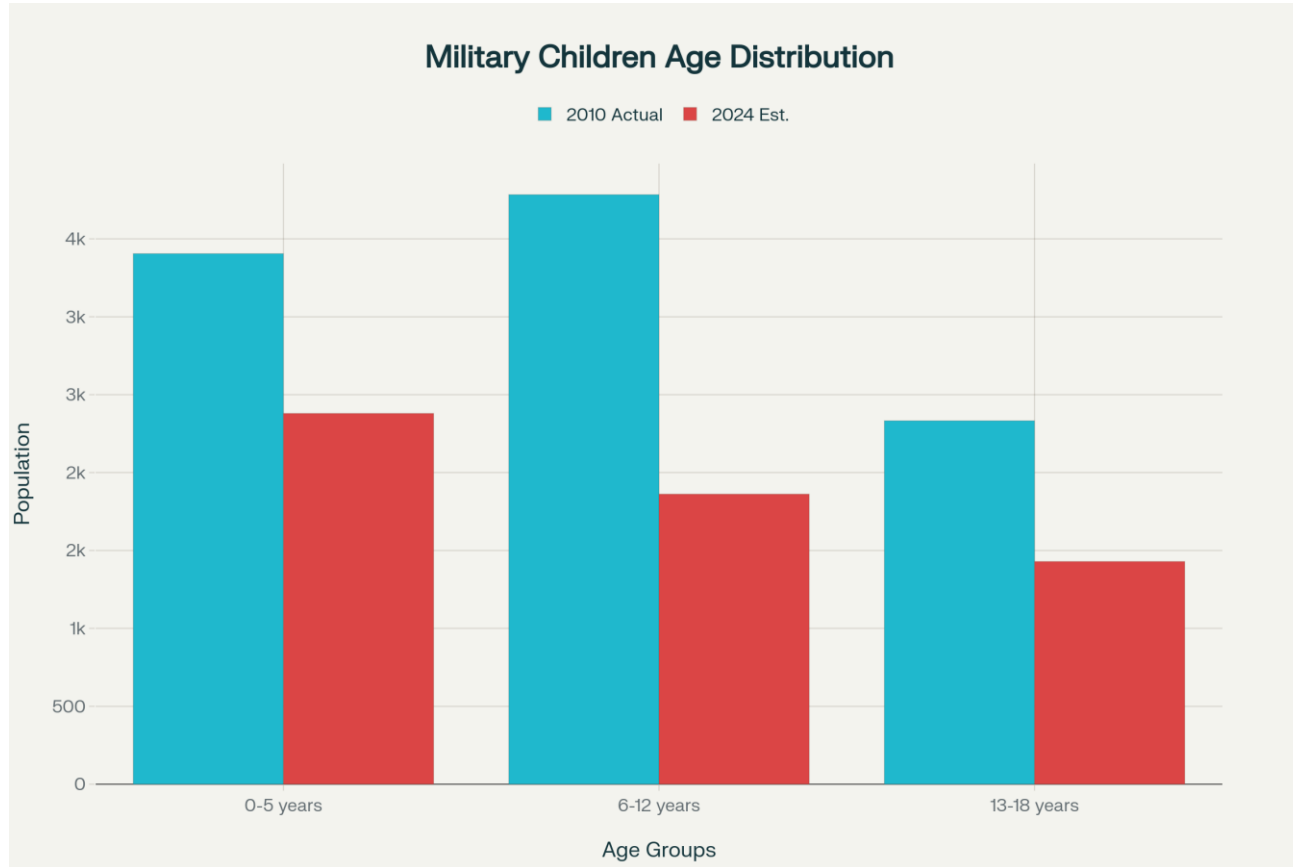
- ▶ 26.6% reported increased stress due to lack of care
- ▶ 21.5% experienced financial insecurity
- ▶ 17.7% noted impact on mission readiness

Okaloosa County: A High-Density, Under Resourced Region

- ▶ Severe gaps in early morning, weekend, special needs care
- ▶ Many informal care networks without safety metrics in place for families or caregivers

Population Category	Count	Percentage of Total Children
Total Active Duty Personnel	16,925	N/A
Active Duty Personnel with Children	5,890	N/A
Total Military Children (All Ages)	11,815	100%
Military Children Ages 0-5	4,785	40.50%
Military Children Ages 0-6	5,433	46.00%
Military Children Ages 6-11	3,887	32.90%
Military Children Ages 12-18	2,682	22.70%
Military Children Ages 19-22	449	3.80%

Hillsborough Comparison: Why One Size Doesn't Fit All



Insights from the Field



Trusted caregivers often used as gap-fillers, not primary care



Helpers are transient — ongoing pipelines needed



High transportation-related care requests



Need for tech to streamline access and resource sharing with centers

Where We Go From Here

- ▶ Colorado expansion began June 2025
- ▶ Continued cohorts in Emerald Coast through 2026
- ▶ Evaluate replication in other FL areas with dense military populations as pilots
- ▶ Focus on digital tools, cohort retention, and case management
- ▶ Explore substitute provider pipeline

Invitation to Statewide Stakeholders

Integrate	Integrate the HomeFront Help concept into regional child care planning
Collaborate	Collaborate on new pilot sites
Advocate	Advocate for funding recognition of trusted care models in conjunction with Early Childhood Education
Examine	Examine the military population in your region holistically, meet families where they are

Questions?

Flexible, trusted care is essential to mission readiness and Florida's growth



This model is working and can grow, personalized to each county



We are not reinventing care. We are redistributing trust