

## **Section B-3 Family Care Plan**

The contents of this Toolkit have been developed to assist you in your efforts to support family readiness. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is current and accurate. However, because statutory and regulatory changes may have occurred since the publication of this Toolkit, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs cannot assume responsibility for its continued accuracy. Before taking any significant action based on the contents of this Toolkit, you should contact your Family Readiness Program representative or legal officer, as appropriate, to secure the most current information.

## **Family Care Plan**

Mission readiness dictates that you must be ready to deploy throughout the world on short notice, and your ability to meet this requirement is directly linked to prior family care planning. A Family Care Plan is required for all single parent service members and dual military members to ensure that family members are adequately cared for when you are absent due to military commitments. In turn, you will be more productive and feel less family-related stress knowing that your family is taken care of at home.

A viable Family Care Plan takes time, organization, and careful planning. It is much more than completing a form for your unit to meet the requirement. You are responsible for keeping your Family Care Plan current and for providing your family or caregiver all the necessary information and documentation needed in your absence. Family Care Plans should include pertinent information specifying how you want family business conducted in your absence. Taking time to develop a well thought out plan now will ensure that your family members will have the best resources and care during your absence.

Each military service has a form to meet your unit requirement for a Family Care Plan. In preparation for completing the form specific to your unit, consider the following recommendations and include applicable written provisions for:

- Short-term absences of 30 days or less (temporary duty assignment, training exercises, school, periods of annual training, and short-term involuntary recalls)
- Long-term absences of 31 days or longer (deployments, extended temporary duty assignments, schools, and long-term involuntary recalls)
- Caregiver documentation
  - Specific Power of Attorney
  - Documentation that caregivers agree to provide care and have been provided all necessary legal authority to do so
  - Should include proof that caregivers have been thoroughly briefed on the responsibilities they will assume
  - Should include procedures for accessing military and civilian facilities and services and specific legal documentation needed (i.e. Medical Power of Attorney)
  - Arrangements to ensure the self-sufficiency and financial security of family members
  - The Family Care Plan should address possible situations and be sufficiently detailed to provide for a smooth transfer of responsibilities from the parent to the caregiver.
- Arrangements for child care, education, medical care, and family activities (sports, clubs, scouts)

- The Family Care Plan should outline the legal, logistical (housing, food, transportation), educational, financial, and religious arrangements for the care of the family.
- Ensure that your family members have current ID cards and are enrolled in DEERS.
- Logistical arrangements should include plans for relocation of the family, if necessary.
- Provide information on medical care (TRICARE or civilian health care plan) and the name and telephone number of the primary care manager, pediatrician, and dentist.
- Provide a list with the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of relatives, neighbors, and friends.
- Provide a list of military and community resources with points of contact and telephone numbers.
- Prepare a complete and current unit information sheet with the name and address of the military unit; commander or commanding officer; first sergeant or command chief, command enlisted advisor; and supervisor's name and telephone number, and the Family Readiness Program point of contact and telephone number. An example is included.
- If you are a single parent or dual-military couple with minor children, you should designate a person, who in the event of your death or incapacity, will assume temporary responsibility for your children until a legal guardian arrives or is appointed by a court with jurisdiction.
- Keep your Family Care Plan up-to date. Update it regularly so that the information remains current.

Most importantly, take this responsibility of having an accurate and complete Family Care Plan seriously. It is not just a piece of paper required by your unit. It represents the personal care and attention your family needs and deserves.

### **Communication about Family Care Plan**

It is imperative that you keep the lines of communication open between your unit, family, caregiver, and specific agencies (medical, legal, education, religion). Share your Family Care Plan and discuss it thoroughly. Be proactive. Visit the medical facility, the schools, the bank, and your church and talk directly to them about their legal requirements. This will increase the likelihood that they will honor your Power of Attorney.

**Discussion Points with your Caregiver/Provider**

It is never easy to leave your family whether it is for a short-term or long-term absence. Families have their own unique routines, traditions, schedules and dynamics. The more your caregiver knows about your family dynamics, the smoother the transition will be during your absence. Even if your caregiver or provider is a family member, the items listed below are important to discuss in detail. Include your children in the discussion. Their viewpoint is critical to the open communication and efficient transfer of responsibility from the parent to the guardian. Use this list as a start point and add to it to fit your family's needs:

- Personal Routines – discuss meal time, night time routines, and basic family schedule.
- Comfort and Personal Items – discuss special toys, pictures and personal items that will comfort your children.
- House Rules – negotiate acceptable bedtimes, TV viewing, chores and snacks, and include your children in the discussion.
- Discipline – discuss your philosophy and recommend acceptable rewards, and consequences for misbehavior. Ask your caregiver how he or she handles situation where discipline and limit testing is involved.
- Special Activities – share holiday traditions and discuss special activities and events, which are acceptable. If you will be away for a birthday, discuss the celebration and plan for gift giving.
- Allowances and Finances – discuss purchases, allowances, and spending money.
- School – discuss how you will both communicate with teachers.
- Communication
  - Give your caregiver suggestions for talking with your children about your absence and return.
  - Make a plan for how often you will keep in touch by writing, calling, and e-mail.
  - Discuss ways that your children handle changes and how to talk to them about their frustration, anger, and disappointments.