

ARTICLE

How to Create a Family Care Plan for Caregivers

2 minute read • June 6, 2024

Whether it's a deployment or training, sometimes your military career will take you away from your family. For single parents and dual military couples, that means you have to have arrangements in place to care for your family members. A family care plan is a tool to help you anticipate and plan for the care of your family members while you are away. Your family care plan is a guide for caregivers, providing important details about child care, school, medical care and family activities.

An official family care plan is required for military members, and it must be kept up to date. Find your service's family care plan guidance below:

- [Army Family Care Plan](#) ↗
- [Marine Corps Family Care Plan](#) ↗
- [Navy Family Care Plan](#) ↗
- [Air Force Family Care Certification](#) ↗

Key elements of a family care plan

Communication is key. Talk with your provider and consider including additional information in the plan based on what your caregiver will need to know while you are away — especially if he or she does not have a military background and is unfamiliar with military life. You may want to invite your caregiver to observe your family routine prior to your leaving. Here are some tips to help you build your family care plan:

- **Outline arrangements for daily activities.** What does your routine look like? Make a schedule of the week's events, including school day start and end times, any afterschool activities and child care details. Include upcoming school, social or family gatherings.
- **Give details for family rules and behavior.** What rules does your family already follow? Let your caregiver know as much as possible about how your family life works, including parenting responsibilities and rules. Write down specific details for mealtimes, bedtimes, discipline, and duties or chores around the house children might have.
- **Provide medical information.** What medical considerations does your caregiver need to be prepared for? List details about family physicians, medications and vitamins, allergies, immunizations, hospitals and regular appointments.
- **List close contacts and other resources.** Who in your network will support your caregiver? Provide names, addresses and telephone numbers of relatives, neighbors and friends, doctors and dentists, military and community resources, and the military unit and family readiness program points of contact.
- **Note locations of important documents.** What documents will your caregiver need? These include wills, insurance papers, birth certificates and powers of attorney.
- **Explain the importance of dependent ID cards.** Check the expiration date on your family members' ID cards and make sure they are registered in the [Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or DEERS](#) ↗.
- **Finances.** How will you handle financial aspects? Explain any necessary information about financial matters that need to be handled while you're away.

Legal assistance offices can help with other important documents

Your installation [legal services office](#) ↗ provides free assistance for a wide range of circumstances, including support with drafting these other important documents:

- **Power of attorney:** This legal document authorizes your caregiver to make parenting decisions on your behalf for a specified period of time, including decisions related to medical care. This document is required in your family care plan.
- **Military ID cards:** Make sure each family member aged 10 or older is registered in the [Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or DEERS](#) [↗](#), and has a current ID card. Your caregivers don't get their own ID cards while caring for your family.
- **Agent letter of authorization:** Caregivers can access on-installation facilities such as [commissary and exchanges](#) to support care of your family members, but they must have a letter of authorization signed by the commanding officer of the installation. You can request this letter through the [ID card office at your installation](#) [↗](#). Explain to the caregiver how to use installation services.

Military resources for your caregiver

Make sure your caregiver knows about these military resources that are available while you are gone:

- Military and Family Support Centers provide non-medical counseling and life-skills development and are found on most military installations. Visit [MilitaryINSTALLATIONS](#) to find the contact information for your [local Military and Family Support Center](#) [↗](#).
- The [Morale, Welfare and Recreation Program](#) on your installation offers activities and includes child development programs and after-school care for children and teens.
- Military OneSource provides assistance 24/7 and will direct you to a number of other resources. Call 800-342-9647, [use international calling options](#) or [schedule a live chat](#).

A family care plan is an important document. It outlines activities for the safety and well-being of your family members when you are away. Take advantage of the resources available to assist you in preparing a comprehensive family care plan.

THIS ARTICLE IS FOR

Extended Family or Friend, Family With Special Needs, National Guard, New Service Member, Parent, Reserves, Service Member, Spouse

SERVICE BRANCH

Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, National Guard, Reserves

TOPIC

[Preparing for Deployment](#)