

Parents as Teachers (HB 49) is good for Alaska's military families

Passing HB 49 will greatly help our military families with the sacrifice and stress they face with frequent moves and deployment.

HB 49 could help 8602 active duty children in Alaska between under the age of 5, plus the children of active members of the guard and reserve.

1. Parents as Teachers helps families cope with deployment

- Military deployments take a toll on families, especially those with young children. Behavior is a key communicator for very young children, so being prepared for potential behavioral changes, and having places to turn to and ideas to try with the youngest members of military families is crucial to 'dealing' with separation that's part of many terms of service for our military families.
- Families parenting singly because of deployment often struggle with regimented, school-based programs because of financial and scheduling constraints. Providing parents with resources to create a learning environment in any situation helps their children gain the fundamentals needed to enter school at par with their peers.
- The Parents as Teachers social evenings offer isolated parents an excellent opportunity to form connections with other families. Social time also helps parents develop support networks necessary for dealing with deployment, frequent moves and other stresses unique to military families.

2. Parents as Teaches helps reduce barriers facing children of military personnel as they transition from one school system to another.

- The average military family student will move from six to nine times from kindergarten to 12th grade. When parents are equipped to engage in their children's education, they can better stabilize their families through the moves and help their children transition through difficult changes.
- While the armed services has done much to ease the transition for children of military personnel, there is much that can be done at the state and local levels to ensure that these children are afforded the same opportunities for educational success as other children.

3. Parents as Teachers had been operating on Fort Wainwright for years, but is now gone. Staff say that the Parents as Teachers system is essential for helping Guard members and their families cope with the stress and confusion of deployment and the absence of a loved one.

Information based on conversations with specialists on education for military families, including the United States Department of Defense, DUSD (Military Community and Family Policy), Alaska National Guard, Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Alaska's Congressional Delegation, Fort Wainwright Parents as Teachers program, Anchorage School District Liaisons for Military Families, and elementary schools serving military families. (Pursuant to the prohibitions set forth in 18 U.S.C. 1913, the Joint Ethic Regulations, Part 6-202, 5 C.F.R. 2635, and DoD Directive 1344.10, active duty members of the military are not permitted to engage in lobbying on legislation.)