

## **Military Families Who Homeschool & the PiP Homeschooling Report**

Partners in PROMISE Rough Transcript

October 8, 2025

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Hello everyone, and thank you for joining me today. My name is Crystal Dvas Mahaney, director of advocacy and legal analyst at Partners in Promise. Today I'll be walking you through our research and insights on military families who homeschool, with a focus on the Partners in Promise homeschooling report released just this summer. Together, we'll explore who is homeschooling, why families choose this path, the unique challenges they face, and the policy recommendations we believe can help. Let's start with the definition.

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According to the National Household Education Survey, a child between the ages of five and 17 is considered homeschooled if their education happens primarily at home and if they are not enrolled in a public or private school for more than 24 hours a week. The Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy describes homeschooling as parent-directed education in the home as an alternative to being schooled at a recognized institution. In our 2022 Partners in Promise survey, we discovered that about 10% of respondents reported homeschooling their child. That's higher than the national average. We wanted to understand this trend more deeply, so we examined the reasons families homeschool, the challenges they encounter, the strategies they found helpful, and the advantages they see in choosing this path.

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So why do military families homeschool? Some of the top reasons we found include stability during frequent PCS moves, flexibility for family time and therapies, avoiding inadequate or unsafe school options, the ability to customize curriculum, emotional and behavioral support for children, and in some states, financial supports that make homeschooling more accessible. One of our most important takeaways is that every family does it differently. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Let's look a little bit more at the key survey findings.

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We found that 10% of families with children with disabilities chose homeschooling during the 2021-2022 school year. Twenty-one percent of homeschool students had an IEP while 11% had a 504 plan. And encouragingly, 76% of homeschoolers were on track to earn a standard high school diploma. These numbers show that homeschooling is not just about preference. It's also about access, needs, and opportunities.

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We also looked into some of the advantages of homeschooling as well as some of the challenges. Some of the advantages included consistency during relocations, customization to disability needs, flexible schedules for therapies and medical care, emotional and behavioral support, and in some cases, financial support at the state level.

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Some of the challenges that remain include varying state laws and requirements, reduced access to IEP or school-based supports, healthcare deserts near some military installations, limited socialization opportunities, and the burden parents face when it comes to training, instruction, resources, and compliance. This truly paints a picture of homeschooling as a viable option, but also a complex one. Based on these findings, Partners in Promise made several policy recommendations.

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We recommended adding homeschooling provisions to the Military Interstate Children's Compact, also known as MIC3. We recommended expanding EFMP support for homeschool families, creating a central resource database specifically for homeschooling, and lastly, improving TRICARE access to specialty providers. Together, these recommendations recognize the legitimacy of homeschooling while addressing the gaps military families face.

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To close, homeschooling can be a viable option for military-connected families, especially those raising children with disabilities, but it comes with challenges that require recognition, resources, and advocacy. With better planning, collaboration, and thoughtful policy changes, outcomes for these families can improve significantly. Partners in Promise is committed to ensuring every military child has access to the education they need to thrive, whether that's in public schools, private schools, or through homeschooling. Thank you for joining me today and for taking the time to learn about this important issue.