

School Liaison Officers: What They Do and How to Find One
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00:00:01 Hello and welcome. My name is Crystal Dvas Mahaney, director of advocacy and legal analyst at Partners in Promise. Thank you for joining me today as we talk about school liaison officers, commonly known as SLOs. In the next few minutes, I'll explain what they are, what they do, and how you can connect with one to support your children's education. What is a school liaison officer? A school liaison officer is a dedicated professional who serves military families by connecting them to local school systems and community resources.

00:00:31 Every installation has an assigned school liaison, and their services are completely free for military families. Think of them as your direct link between the military community, the schools your children attend, and the resources your family needs. So why are SLOs so important? Military life is full of transitions. Families move every few years, often across states or even overseas. These moves can disrupt children's learning, social circles, and access to services. School liaison officers exist to ease those transitions.

00:01:05 They serve as the primary point of contact for school-related matters. They represent and inform command, and they coordinate directly with local schools. Their goal is to make sure military kids have every opportunity to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. SLOs wear many hats. Here are some of the most common ways they help families. They identify barriers to academic success and work with schools and communities to find solutions. They build partnerships between the military and local educators.

00:01:41 They encourage and support parental involvement, helping parents advocate for their child's needs. They educate school staff and communities about the unique challenges military children face, like frequent moves and deployments. And they provide families with the tools and resources needed to overcome obstacles that come with military life. In short, they are problem solvers, advocates, and connectors, making sure that no child falls through the cracks. School liaison officers also tailor their support to individual needs.

00:02:14 If your child has an IEP or 504 plan, they can introduce you to local special education directors or counselors and help you understand the services available in your district. If you homeschool, they can point you toward local co-ops, resource groups, and state requirements. And if you're preparing for a PCS, they'll guide you through the process, helping you organize school documents, understand enrollment requirements, and prepare your child for the transition. They aren't just there for the move-in moment.

00:02:44 They continue to be a resource throughout your time at a duty station. Finding your school liaison is easier than you might think. Start with Military OneSource at installations.militaryonesource.mil and search for the school liaison program. You can also reach out to your installation's family support center or simply ask your chain of command. When in doubt, ask. SLOs are there to answer your questions, guide you to the right resources, and stand with you through the challenges of navigating school systems.

00:03:14 In closing, school liaison officers are one of the most valuable resources available to military families. They are advocates, connectors, and problem solvers who make school transitions smoother and ensure military children thrive. Whether you're moving across town or across the world, your SLO is there to help every step of the way. Thank you so much for listening, and remember, support is always just a question away.