

# PARTNERS IN PROMISE 2021 KEY SURVEY FINDINGS [i]

# THE MILITARY CHILD SPECIAL EDUCATION CRISIS

©2021 PARTNERS IN PROMISE



## INTRODUCTION

The military lifestyle creates many challenges with providing consistency in education for children of active duty service members. These challenges are exponentially more difficult for military families with children with special needs. Although there are umbrella protections under federal and state laws, many military families are reporting that school districts are not providing the minimum support and services mandated by law for our most vulnerable children.

## MILITARY FAMILIES AND READINESS

Children with exceptional needs require specialized educational services, but when services are disrupted, the required parental advocacy increases. Increased stress impacts operational readiness. According to an armed forces and society study, male military members' work performance declined by 19 percent when under significant family-related stressors.[ii]. A stressed force is a less ready force. Although protections are in place via the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MiC3), because they are non-regulatory, the burden of advocacy falls on the shoulders of military parents.

## TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Partners in PROMISE conducted the most thorough study on the military special education population to date.[i]. Key findings highlighted how military PCS moves have a significant impact on special education:

- 90% of surveyed military families have experienced a move
- 79% of respondents said their child went without special education services for over a month after a military move

Additional delays in implementing Individualized Education Programs (IEP) are prevalent. Each delay sets students back emotionally, educationally and developmentally. Our survey data indicates that the following recommendations will alleviate the stress placed upon our service members and their families.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure advanced/remote school enrollment for military dependents with existing IEPs
- Allow active duty military dependents to maintain IEPs at a new duty station after a PCS for up to six months

## CONTACT

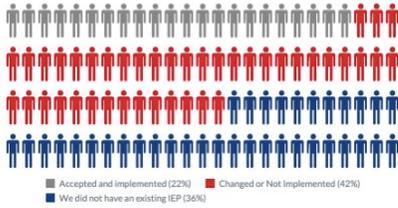
To learn more about Partners in PROMISE or our 2021 Survey findings please email [info@thepromiseact.org](mailto:info@thepromiseact.org)

Michelle Norman, Founder & Executive Director  
Jennifer Barnhill, Chief Operating Officer

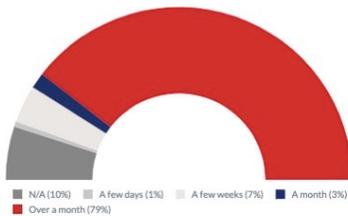
## SOURCES

- [i] <https://thepromiseact.org/2021-survey/>  
[ii] <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/1050341.pdf>

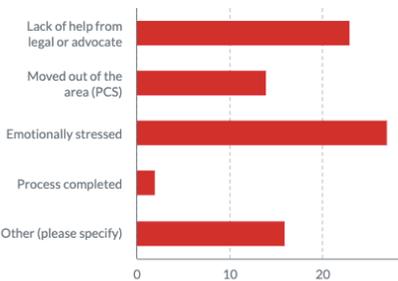
### Upon moving to my current duty station my child's previous IEP was:



### How long was your child without services?



### Why did you not continue your claim?



### "Fear and Anticipation" - An EFMP Story

"Parents walk a delicate line being a squeaky wheel and advocating. Do I bring muffins to lessen the blow before I lay into a director or just let it happen because she needs to feel the pain of failure to prompt change? How do I effectively communicate how painful it is to watch my son be miserable, unchallenged, and shuffled around? Every time we come down on orders I just know there's so very little I can count on. The fear and anticipation are daunting. I love being a military family. I love the new experiences of moving around. I love that my sons will grow up with a bucket full of different experiences. But I hate that they have had to be more resilient than most adults are capable of in a lifetime."

- Army Spouse [i]

## PRESS RELEASE AND ISSUE PAPER

<https://thepromiseact.org/wp-content/uploads/Press-Release-2021-Survey-Findings-Partners-in-PROMISE.pdf>

<https://thepromiseact.org/2021/01/partners-in-promise-mcec-special-education-issue-paper/>