



For Immediate Release
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2021 Military Special Education Survey Findings

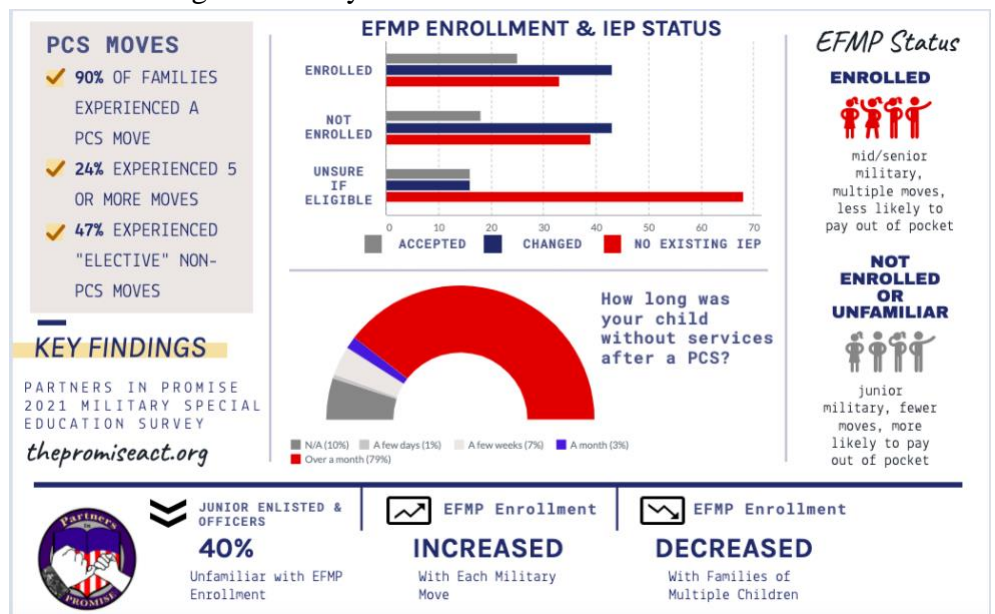
The average military child changes schools three times more than their civilian counterparts, experiencing gaps in education delivery.¹ However, the issues faced by special needs families are not as straightforward and largely undocumented. In order to examine what military families with children in special education are experiencing, Partners in PROMISE conducted its second annual Military Special Education Survey. The purpose of the survey was to examine what aspects of the military lifestyle have an impact on military special education children’s ability to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The outcome measured was the absence of (in)formal complaint and/or due process filing by military families. Numerous variables were examined including location, military career level, branch of service, number of military moves, Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) enrollment, and special needs diagnosis. Of the six primary independent variables, two produced statistically significant results.

Military families with children who have special needs are less likely to file complaints based on type of cited disability and more likely to file based on their military career level. Secondary findings showed that familiarity with EFMP and enrollment status had an impact on the special education experience.

According to Chief Operating Officer, Jennifer Barnhill, **“a key takeaway from Partners in PROMISE’s 2021 Military Special Education Survey is that the choice to file a complaint does not follow a geographical, economic, or logistical pattern. Families who choose to file do so despite, not because of, external circumstances.”**

Responses also revealed a relationship between EFMP enrollment status and special education delivery with those who were enrolled being more likely to have an established Individualized Education Plans (IEP)s.

“It is clear that there is a relationship between EFMP enrollment and special education delivery,” said Barnhill. **“However, it may not be tied to the program itself, but rather connection to a community that helps to close knowledge gaps.**



This is something we are excited to dig into later this year in our 2022 survey.”

Partners in PROMISE’s 2022 survey will seek to learn more about military families who do not choose to file complaints, how PCS moves impact special education, especially in those who are pre-diagnosis. Partners in PROMISE hopes to uncover how these experiences that are unique to the military lifestyle impact the delivery of a free and appropriate public education for our military students.

“We know families are suffering during COVID. We want you to know that we hear you because we are you” said Michelle Norman, founder and Executive Director of Partners in PROMISE. “Our team is made up of military spouses, the majority have at least one child in special education. Data can feel impersonal, but for us it is about our children and nothing could be more personal or motivating than that.”

Survey Findings: <https://thepromiseact.org/2021-survey/>

Press Kit:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YC3zrDjuZOzKULkOPCGFwwGfAcvLj1im?usp=sharing>

About Partners in PROMISE

Partners in PROMISE was founded in January 2020 by four mothers to Protect the Rights Of Military children In Special Education (PROMISE). Focusing on a strategy of educating and advocacy, Partners in PROMISE is the link between special needs families, established military service organizations, the Department of Defense, and legislators, working towards collaborative solutions to complex problems.

ⁱ "All About Dodea Educational Partnership". 2020. *Dodea.Edu*. Accessed November 20. <https://www.dodea.edu/Partnership/about.cfm#:~:text=As%20military%20families%20transition%20from,frequently%20than%20non%2Dmilitary%20families>.

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