

# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:  
Navy

## A Participant Evaluation of the U.S. Navy Parent Support Program

Kelley, M. L., Schwerin, M. J., Farrar, K. L., & Lane, M. E. (2007). A participant evaluation of the U.S. Navy Parent Support Program. *Journal of Family Violence*, 22(3), 131-139. doi:10.1007/s10896-007-9062-6

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Navy New Parent Support Program (NPSP) aims to improve participants' parenting skills, reduce their parenting stress, and help the Service Members to concentrate on their jobs. The purpose of the study was to evaluate participants' perception of NPSP. Results revealed that parents who took part in NPSP were highly satisfied with the program.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- The majority of participants (over 90%) reported that the program reduced their parenting stress, improved their parenting skills, and increased their sense of community.
- Most participants (91%) also believed that the program enhanced their health, safety, and quality of life.
- Approximately three quarters of the participants reported that the program increased their military readiness, and 36% of participants indicated that the program increased their willingness to remain in the military.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Organize support groups for new parents so that they can freely talk about child rearing concerns and support each other
- Design evidence-based parent education curricula, and make them accessible to military families
- Collaborate with civilian parent education programs in order to offer military parents with more options that are useful and accessible

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Recommend professional development courses for professionals about the unique challenges faced by military families with young children
- Continue to support parent education programs to increase military parents' parenting skills, and increase their family well-being in general
- Raise awareness about the importance of early childhood education for children's development

This product is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with The University of Minnesota.



# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



## METHODS

- The NPSP program evaluation surveys were distributed to all experienced program users, which were defined as people who had used the program more than once, or regarded themselves as familiar with the program.
- The survey asked questions about customer satisfaction, organization outcomes (e.g., increased concentrated on the jobs), and whether it met its primary objectives (e.g., reduce parenting stress).
- Response rate was not indicated in the article.

## PARTICIPANTS

- The sample included 821 parents who were experienced users of the NPSP program.
- Most of the participants were either Active Duty Navy Service members (32%) or spouses of Active Duty Navy Service members (54%).
- The gender, race/ethnicity, and average age of the participants were not reported in the article.

## LIMITATIONS

- People who used the program regularly or scarcely may have different perspectives in the program, however, such information was missing in the results.
- The program was targeted at parents with young children, however, the average age of the participants' children was not indicated in the research.
- The response rate was not provided in the article, therefore it is unclear what percentage of program users actually completed the survey.

## AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Examine whether participating in the program frequently will benefit the participants more than participating only once or twice
- Investigate what types of participants (e.g., parents' and children's ages, family income) benefit the most from the program
- Collect longitudinal data to examine the impact of the program over a longer period of time

## ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



For more information about the Assessing Research that Works rating scale visit:  
<https://reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu/content/assessing-research-that-works>