



## School Transitions among Adolescent Children of Military Personnel: A Strengths Perspective

Strobino, J. & Salvaterra, M. (2000). School transitions among adolescent children of military personnel: A strengths perspective. *Social Work in Education*, 22, 95-107.



*Surveys of 6,382 children (age 10-18) of military personnel aimed to assess their experiences with school in general as well as with school transitions. Adolescents reported average to above average grades, high participation in extracurricular activities, supportive school environments, and active parental involvement.*

### Key Findings:

- Students reported getting primarily A's (37-48% depending on subject area) and B's (29-34%).
- Students reported high levels of involvement in a range of extracurricular activities.
- Students reported an average of five school transitions.
- The majority of respondents attended public schools (60%) and reported a positive, supportive school culture.
- Students disagreed (43%) or strongly disagreed (38%) that school was unsafe.
- Many parents (31% for mothers, 42% for fathers) had college degrees or more; their children reported that their parents were frequently involved in their school work and activities.

### Implications for Programs:

- Programs could incorporate strengths-based approaches in assisting students transitioning to a new school. Programs may develop outreach efforts to welcome new military youth to the school and area.
- Programs could work in their communities, helping classroom teachers and new arrivals communicate. Programs could help generate cooperative connections between schools, parents, and the military.

### Implications for Policies:

- Policies could be implemented to encourage a systemic digital portfolio that would document child(ren)'s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral achievement in previous academic institutions.
- Policies could dedicate funding to school transition programs, supporting students in successful transitions when military families relocate.

### Avenues for Future Research:

- Research incorporating non-self-report measures may be helpful.
- Longitudinal research could identify how school transitions are related to long-term outcomes.
- Research in an updated cohort involving OIF/OEF military personnel could be illuminating.



## Background Information

### Methodology:

- 16 United States and 6 international U.S. Military installations from all branches were identified; 20% of potential students responded to the research invitation.
- Students completed surveys either in small groups or via mail.
- Surveys asked questions about demographics, school achievement and involvement, school culture, and family factors.

### Participants:

- 6,293 adolescent children of military personnel, ages 10-18 years old, representing four branches of the Armed Services (Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps).
- 52% female, mean age=13.4 (SD=2)
- 56% White, 30% Other, 14% Black
- 60% attended non-base public school, 19% public, on base, 12% military on-base.
- Average number of schools attended =5.14 (SD=2, range=1-10+).

### Limitations:

- These analyses used only self-report measures, and this could be biased, especially in the case of grades.
- Scant demographic information was reported, impairing the ability to generalize.
- No analyses were performed regarding how school transitions related to any academic or other outcomes.

## Assessing Research that Works

Research Design and Sample				Quality Rating:	★ ★ ★
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	
The design of the study (e.g., research plan, sample, recruitment) used to address the research question was....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Research Methods				Quality Rating:	★ ★ ★
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	
The research methods (e.g., measurement, analysis) used to answer the research question were...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Limitations				Quality Rating:	★ ★ ★
	Excellent Minor Limitations (★★★)	Appropriate Few Limitations (★★★)	Limited Several Limitations (★★★)	Questionable Many/Severe Limitations (★★★)	
The limitations of this study are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implications				Quality Rating:	★ ★ ★
	Excellent (★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★★)	Questionable (★★★)	
The implications of this research to programs, policies and the field, stated by the authors, are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications					
				Overall Quality Rating	★ ★ ★