Making a Difference for Youth in Military Families: Youth Development Programs, Social Relations, Vulnerabilities, & Resilience

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The University of Georgia
Family and Community Resilience Laboratory
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Guide to the Talk

• Introduction to the study

• Answer the following questions:
  – What is the role of youth development programs for youth well-being?
  – What are the program participation patterns of these youth?
  – What do we know about youth who are not involved in youth development programs?
  – What are the implications for youth social relationships?

• Discussion of next steps of research
Survey

- Personal and family demographics
- Military characteristics (e.g., parental rank)
- Program Involvement
- Social Networks
  - Social provisions
  - Relationship quality: peers, family, and community
- Adolescent Well-being
  - Academic functioning and school enjoyment
  - Emotional well-being
  - Problem-solving and coping strategies
  - Personal efficacy
Survey Screenshot: Program Participation

U.S. Army Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS) Programs you Attended

Now we would like to know about the CYSS programs that you take part in. Remember, when you see 'CYSS' in this survey, think of the people and things you do with Youth/Teen Center (Y3) or at the school-age, youth, middle school and teen centers. We will ask you about four different program areas. We are especially interested in what you think of these programs.

School of Arts, Leisure and Recreation

First, we would like to ask you about your involvement during the past year in any programs or camps that are related to music, dance, theater, arts, or crafts. Remember, these are for programs that are sponsored by CYSS. (Please choose all of the following programs that you participated in over the past year.)

- GHES: Infinite School of Arts classes: arts and crafts, dance, painting/drawing, photography, woodworking, ceramics, scrapbooking, fiilm making, web design, performing arts, puppetry, vocal music, instrumental music, creative writing, etc.
- PROPS (Performances, Recitals, Orchestration, Plays & Stagecraft)
- Art EDGE
- Art, Recreation and Leisure related 4-H Clubs
- Art, Recreation and Leisure Camps
- Field trips – to art galleries, museums, planetariums, zoos, etc.
- BOCA/4-H Photo Contest
- BOCA Fine Arts/Digital Arts Exhibits
- I do not use these types of programs

CONTINUE
Program you attended most often.

1. SKIESUnlimited School of Arts classes: arts and crafts, dance, painting/drawing, photography, woodworking, ceramics, scrapbooking, film-making, web design, performing arts, puppetry, vocal music, instrumental music, creative writing, etc.

1a. In the past year, how often did you attend SKIESUnlimited School of Arts classes: arts and crafts, dance, painting/drawing, photography, woodworking, ceramics, scrapbooking, film-making, web design, performing arts, puppetry, vocal music, instrumental music, creative writing, etc. when it was offered?

- Every time it was offered
- Most times it was offered
- Occasionally when it was offered
- Rarely when it was offered

1b. How was participating in SKIESUnlimited School of Arts classes: arts and crafts, dance, painting/drawing, photography, woodworking, ceramics, scrapbooking, film-making, web design, performing arts, puppetry, vocal music, instrumental music, creative writing, etc. helpful to you? (Choose every answer that is true for you)

- I got to exercise
- I learned a lot from it
- It made me feel more grown up
- It improved my grades in school
- It made me look good to colleges or employers
- I learned how to make better decisions
- It kept me out of trouble
- It increased my stress
- It helped me get a job
- I expressed my emotions
- I got to spend time with other military kids
- I got to be a leader
- It made me feel proud and connected to the Army
- I got to go on field trips
- It was NOT helpful in any way
- I spent time with my friends
- I got a lot of one-on-one attention
- I spent time with adults who like
- My parents or teachers were proud of me for participating
- It was NOT enjoyable in any way

1c. What made SKIESUnlimited School of Arts classes: arts and crafts, dance, painting/drawing, photography, woodworking, ceramics, scrapbooking, film-making, web design, performing arts, puppetry, vocal music, instrumental music, creative writing, etc. enjoyable? (Choose every answer that is true for you)

- It was interesting
- We went on field trips
- I felt respected
- I spent time with my friends
- I felt like I could be myself
- I made new friends
- My parents or teachers were proud of me for participating
- I spent time with adults who like
- I got a lot of one-on-one attention
- It was NOT enjoyable in any way

1d. How did you find out about SKIESUnlimited School of Arts classes: arts and crafts, dance, painting/drawing, photography, woodworking, ceramics, scrapbooking, film-making, web design, performing arts, puppetry, vocal music, instrumental music, creative writing, etc.?
Customize your survey’s appearance by dragging and dropping shapes to create your own banner or press CONTINUE to proceed to the next question.

Seconds Remaining: 71

Drag and drop the available shapes to create your own banner. Press continue when you are finished.
Demographics ($N = 1,036$)

- 50.3% female participants
- Racially diverse sample

- European American (38.7%)
- African American (18.8%)
- Hispanic/Latino (11.7%)
- Indian/AK or HI Native (5.5%)
- Multiracial (15.5%)
- Other (9.8%)
Age

- Mean age: 13.39 years
  - 72.4% were 11 to 14 years old
  - 27.6% were 15 to 18 years old

Grade

- 5th (10.7%)
- 6th (22.0%)
- 7th (20.3%)
- 8th (14.7%)
- 9th (12.2%)
- 10th (8.7%)
- 11th (5.4%)
- 12th (5.9%)
School Background

• School Type
  – Public school off post (62.5%)
  – Public school on post (16.9%)
  – Department of Defense school (11.6%)
  – Home school (5.9%)
  – Private school off post (3.1%)

• School Transitions in Past 5 years
  – 64.3% changed schools 2+ times
  – Average of 3.7 transitions in the past 5 years
Family Environment

• Family Structure (who they live with)
  – Both their mother & father (67.3%)
  – Single parent (10.9%)
  – Stepfamily (17.3%)
  – Another relative (1.1%)
  – Other type of family structure (3.4%)

• 95.7% had a sibling
Military Context

• Parental Rank
  – 72.4% Enlisted
  – 27.6% Officer

• 8.1% - More than one parent in the military

• 18% - Parent currently deployed to a combat zone
What is the role of youth development programs for youth well-being?

 Asked about CYSS program involvement:

1. Arts, recreation, and leisure
2. Life skills and citizenship
3. Sports, fitness, and health
4. Academic support
General CYSS Program Involvement

• 65% (n = 673) participated in one or more of the CYSS program areas

• Number of program areas that were attended

- 1 (44.4%)
- 2 (27.8%)
- 3 (16.0%)
- 4 (11.7%)
Arts, Recreation, & Leisure Programs

- 47.7% of CYSS participants engaged in an arts, leisure, or recreation program

- Of those, 92.2% perceived the program as beneficial in some way
  - Namely, academic & physical health benefits
## Arts, Recreation, & Leisure Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Well-Being</td>
<td>I got to exercise</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Well-Being</td>
<td>I learned a lot from it</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It improved my grades in school</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It made me look good to colleges/employers</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Well-Being</td>
<td>I got to spend time with other military kids</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It kept me out of trouble</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It made me feel proud &amp; connected to the Army</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Well-Being</td>
<td>It lessened my stress</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It helped me forget my parent is deployed for a while (^a)</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It made me feel more grown up</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I got to be a leader</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I learned how to make better decisions</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I expressed my emotions</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No perceived Benefits</td>
<td>It was NOT helpful in any way</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Life Skills & Citizenship Programs

• 54.7% of CYSS participants engaged in a life skills or citizenship program

• Of those, 91.2% perceived the program as beneficial in some way
  – Particularly, academic benefits
## Life skills & Citizenship Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Well-Being</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Well-Being</strong></td>
<td>I got to exercise</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Well-Being</strong></td>
<td>I learned a lot from it</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It made me look good to colleges/employers</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It improved my grades in school</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Well-Being</strong></td>
<td>I got to spend time with other military kids</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It kept me out of trouble</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It made me feel proud &amp; connected to the Army</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Well-Being</strong></td>
<td>It made me feel more grown up</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I learned how to make better decisions</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It helped me forget my parent is deployed for a while ^</td>
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<td>I expressed my emotions</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.8%</td>
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Sports, Fitness, & Health Programs

• 61.8% of CYSS participants engaged in a sports, fitness, or health program

• Of those, 97.6% perceived the program as beneficial in some way
  – Namely, physical health & academic benefits
### Sports, Fitness, & Health Programs

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Well-Being</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Well-Being</td>
<td>I got to exercise</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It made me look good to colleges/employers</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It improved my grades in school</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Well-Being</td>
<td>I learned a lot from it</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It made me look good to colleges/employers</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
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<td>14.5%</td>
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<td>I learned how to make better decisions</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
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<td>16.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I expressed my emotions</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No perceived Benefits</td>
<td>It was NOT helpful in any way</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
32.5% of CYSS participants engaged in an academic support program

Of those, 87.6% perceived the program as beneficial in some way

- Particularly, academic and social well-being benefits
## Academic Support Programs

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<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Well-Being</strong></td>
<td>I learned a lot from it</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It improved my grades in school</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It made me look good to colleges/employers</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Well-Being</strong></td>
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What are the program participation patterns of these youth?

Participation differences were examined by:

- Sex – Boy vs Girl
- Age – Early vs Late Adolescents
- Parental rank – Officer vs Enlisted
- Housing location – On vs Off Post
- Deployment status – Deployed vs Not
- Garrison location – Inside vs Outside the U.S.
Program Participation Patterns: Who is More Involved?

• Arts, Leisure, & Recreation
  – Girls, Early adolescents, Youth of enlisted

• Life Skills & Citizenship
  – Girls, Older adolescents, Youth outside U.S.

• Sports, Fitness, & Health
  – Early adolescents, Youth outside the U.S.

• Academic Support
  – Early adolescents, Youth of enlisted, Youth with deployed parent, Youth outside the U.S.
What do we know about youth who are NOT involved in youth development programs?

Non-participant = Youth not involved in a CYSS or a non-CYSS program
Non-Participants

• One in ten ($n = 112$) did not participate in a formal program in the past year.

• General trends
  – Slightly more likely to be boys and those who live on post
  – These youth participants generally reported lower overall levels of individual well-being
Non-Participant Well-Being

- Poorer academic functioning
- Lower levels of coping skills
- Less self-efficacy
- Lower levels of social support
In Other Words...
Program Participants Reported Better:

- **Academic Functioning**
  - Grades
  - School Enjoyment
- **Coping**
  - Solving Problems with Family
  - Engaging in Demanding Activities
  - Seeking Spiritual Support
- **Efficacy**
  - Initiative
  - Persistence
- **Social Provision**
  - Attachment
  - Social Integration
  - Reassurance of Worth
What are the implications for youth?

Programs make a difference
Next Steps in Data Analysis

• More Programmatic Studies
  – Does the *intensity* of program participation matter for youth outcomes?

• Contextual studies
  – Exploring risk factors for military youth
  – Identifying protective factors
Conceptualizing Risk

• Additive
  – Each risk factor uniquely influences outcomes

• Cumulative
  – The collection of risk factors influences outcomes

• Interactive
  – Relative effect of normative and military risks on outcomes
Conceptualizing Risk

Additive Effects Model

Cumulative Effects Model

Interactive Effects Model
Influence of Risks on Adolescent Outcomes

Cumulative Family Risk

Conceptualized as:
- Number of School Changes
- Current Parental Deployment
- Parental Rank
- Adolescent Social Isolation
- Parent Marital History
- Minority Status

Mental Health: Depression
- .068 ***

Cognitive Outcomes: Grades
- -.119 ***

Mastery: Efficacy
- -.135 ***

Multiple Dimensions of Adolescent Outcomes
Identifying Protective Factors

Cumulative Family Risk ➔ Affectional Ties ➔ Mental Health: Depression
Cumulative Family Risk ➔ Affectional Ties ➔ Cognitive Outcomes: Grades
Cumulative Family Risk ➔ Affectional Ties ➔ Mastery: Efficacy

Measure of Social Provisions:
- Reliable Alliance Subscale
- Attachment Subscale
- Social Integration Subscale
At the End of the Day…

• Programs matter
  – Physical, Academic, Social, & Emotional Well-Being

• Clear implications for program development and intentionality

• Disengaged youth should be a matter of concern

• Failing to account for the social life of youth prevents us from understanding youth outcomes
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