

For Immediate Release - May 22, 2013

## **Patrick-Murray Administration Announces New Collaboration to Support Children of Military Families**

BOSTON – Wednesday, May 22, 2013 – The Patrick-Murray Administration today announced the creation of a collaboration to provide specialized training for early education and care providers to support the unique needs of the children of Massachusetts’ military families. There are currently more than 25,000 military-connected children living in the Commonwealth.

The initiative is a partnership between the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), the Massachusetts Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) and the U.S. Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD).

“Because of our commitment to providing the very best resources for our military families, our veterans and their families, Massachusetts leads the nation in veterans’ services,” said Governor Deval Patrick. “This specialized training will reinforce our commitment by recognizing the need to support the youngest members of our military families.”

“As our Administration continues to invest in early education, we need to ensure children in military families are not left behind in our schools,” said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray, Chair of the Governor’s Advisory Council on Veterans’ Services. “This initiative increases collaboration between veterans’ services and early education and care programs to provide the critical support for the children of our brave servicemen and women who have sacrificed their lives for our country.”

The Patrick-Murray Administration leads the nation in providing for our veterans. In 2012, Governor Patrick signed [“An Act Relative to Veterans’ Access, Livelihood, Opportunity, and Resources” \(VALOR Act\)](#), which created increased supports for veteran-owned businesses, Gold Star Families, military children and higher education access in the Commonwealth. As part of the VALOR Act, Massachusetts joined more than 40 other states as part of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. This Compact is a tool for schools to improve transition between schools for the children of military families. With most military children attending six to nine different school systems between kindergarten and 12th grade, through this compact, the Commonwealth is working to ensure Massachusetts’ military children have equal access to succeed in the classroom.

Members of the Executive Office of Education, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the National Guard are working together to implement the terms of the Compact as part of the State Council to the Interstate Commission on Educational Opportunities for Military Children, which was created by the VALOR Act. The Commission is expected to hold their first meeting this summer.

The agencies collaborated with Wheelock College and the Military Child Education Coalition to provide early educators with the latest research, skills and tools to develop strength and resiliency in military-

connected children so that they can meet the challenges of family deployment. The training will address topics such as grief, trauma and reintegration.

“As a veteran myself, I know first-hand that service to our country is a family commitment,” said Secretary of Education Matthew Malone. “The more we support the families who are supporting our servicemen and women, the stronger our Commonwealth will be.”

"Massachusetts is the national leader in veterans' services for many reasons, but none more so than the strong collaborations we have made to maximize our resources and provide world-class, comprehensive benefits to our service members and their families," said Secretary of Veterans' Services Coleman Nee. "This collaboration is another great example of how the public and private sector can come together to ensure we are creating innovative and meaningful programs to successfully serve the entire military family."

“This effort will help create the base of informed sensitivity and support the children of our servicemen and women need and deserve at a critical time in their young lives,” said EEC Acting Commissioner Tom Weber. “With more than 10,000 military-connected children from birth to age five in Massachusetts, this is critical work that will build a stronger citizenry and help ensure a prosperous future for the entire Commonwealth.”

Trainings are taking place this week: Wednesday, May 22 at Bridgewater State University and Thursday, May 23 in Shrewsbury.

For more information about the “Living in the New Normal: Helping Children Thrive in Good and Challenging Times” training, or to register, visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/department-of-early-education-and-care/news-and-updates/2013/regional-institutes-supporting-military-families.html>

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