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Army Child Care fees increase for the 2011-2012 school year

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SAN ANTONIO - Fees for Army child care and related child and youth programs increase between now and Dec. 1 as part of a phased program designed to reduce the impact of a changed Department of Defense policy.

The second step in a three-year program to align Army fees to the 2010 DoD fee policy, the Army child care fee policy for school year 2011-2012 increases most fees by \$4 to \$8 per week.

Despite the increase, Child, Youth and School Services “continue to be a great value for Army Families because of the quality of the programs, the support they provide for a military lifestyle and the fee assistance provided by the Army for all patrons in every income category,” said Mary Nelsen, of Parent and Outreach Services, with the Installation Management Command’s Family and MWR Programs.

Each year, DoD reviews fee ranges in all categories of child and youth service programs.

In 2010, the Army analyzed that year's DoD fee policy and worked to mitigate the financial impact on Army Families through an exception to policy. The DoD exception to policy established an Army-specific transitional fee structure for installations that would otherwise have significant fee increases. As a result, the DoD fee increase is being phased in over the next two to three years.

Depending on total family income, most fees for a full day of child care will increase by \$4 to \$8 per week in school year 2011-2012. Families with multiple children using child and youth services programs will receive a 15 percent discount for the second and each subsequent child enrolled.

Child care fees remain based on the total family income, not the military rank or civilian grade. Child care fees may differ from one installation to the next until the beginning of school year 2013-2014, when the phase-in process is complete.

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The National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRA) -- billed as the nation's leading voice in child care -- assists in ensuring families have access to high-quality, affordable child care. In 2009 NACCRA reported, "DoD ranks No. 1 on standards and oversight criteria. DoD stands alone as a model."

A U.S. Senate report in 2002, also noted that the Military Child Development Program is a model for the nation for providing high-quality affordable child care.

Civilian child care facilities charge a flat rate per child, while the Department of the Army subsidizes the cost military families pay. Parent fees cover less than half of the cost of child care and the Army pays the remainder.

"The military's systemic approach to child care continues to serve as a model for our nation's civilian child care needs. The military's child care improvements over the past 15 years offer significant lessons for the civilian child care sector," according to a 2004 National Women's Law Center report.

The Army maintains its commitment to provide quality affordable child care and youth programs by providing fee assistance to maintain prices that are lower than comparable non-Department of Defense child care facilities for all Army families using child care services.

The fee increase impacts all services associated with the installation child development center, school age care, part day preschool programs, hourly child care, CYS Services outreach programs, youth sports and Army community based child care programs.

Wounded Warriors, Warriors in Transition and Families of fallen Soldiers pay the lowest fee category available, and a 20 percent fee reduction is available for qualified Families while a Soldier or Department of the Army civilian parent is deployed.

For specific information regarding installation fees, parents should contact their local CYS Services program offices.

Photos on Flickr:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/familymwr/sets/72157627969871230/>

Story on Army.mil:

<http://www.army.mil/article/67871/>