

## DoD FAMILY CARE PLAN POLICY EXPANDS

by CPT Mike Gilbertson

One of the most important considerations when it comes to family readiness is to ensure that a Soldier's family is taken care of during drills, annual training, mobilizations and deployments. A Family Care Plan (FCP) is very important for all military families, and is especially critical for single parents and dual military parents.



The Department of Defense (DoD) expanded its FCP policy to encompass a wider population of military parents in DoD Instruction 1342.19, Family Care Plans (7 May 2010) at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/134219p.pdf>. The new policy requires military parents with custody of children from a previous relationship to file a FCP. This

instruction expands the requirement to have a FCP and emphasizes the need to involve the noncustodial, biological parent in the process early on. It requires commanders and supervisors to ensure that service members and DoD Civilian Expeditionary Workforce (CEW) personnel provide the name of the noncustodial, biological parent, if not named as the caregiver, along with that person's consent in the FCP. If the noncustodial, biological parent does not consent, then the service member or DoD CEW employee should visit their local legal assistance office to discuss the associated risks and best courses of action, and document the absence of such consent in writing.



Service members who fail to produce a FCP may be subject to disciplinary or administrative action that may result in separation from the Service.

Additionally, while not required, contract offices should encourage contractors serving in officially designated contingency operations to have a current FCP which designates their choice of guardian(s) for permanent care of their dependent family members.

More information on family care plans is available on the Military OneSource website at: <http://myarmyonesource.com/News/2010/04/MilitaryOneSource> or on the Military Homefront website at: <http://myarmyonesource.com/News/2010/04/MilitaryHomefront>.

*To initiate a family care plan, see your Company Commander or First Sergeant. Assistance in completing the powers of attorney for your family care plan is available at the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center Legal Assistance Office on a walk-in basis. If you have legal questions pertaining to your family care obligations during deployment make an appointment to see a legal assistance attorney at the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center by calling DSN 483-8848 or Civilian 0631-411-8848. We're here to help!*