

Children and Youth

September/October

The American Legion Auxiliary's Children and Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans and military families.

Each unit mailing, I will be emphasizing key points from the National Program Action Plan. You can find this plan on the National American Legion Auxiliary website at alaforveterans.org. We will focus on supporting our children and youth in our communities, support our veterans and military children, support our American Legion Children and Youth programs, and I will offer other resources for your units.

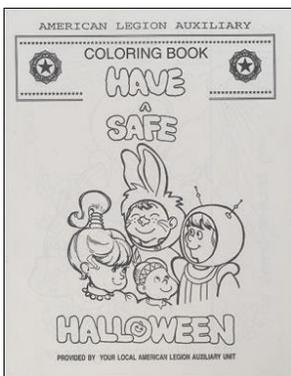
Please note changes to past programs under Children and Youth:

- The Star-Spangled Kids program is moving under the Americanism program.
- The company that manufactured and distributes the Josh Dogs has closed their operations.

These two programs will no longer be under this program.

Many people wonder why the American Legion family promotes the discussion of Halloween safety, because we should all be concerned for the safety of all children.

Most of the time when we think of safety for Halloween we think about the candy the children are receiving. Parents should also consider costume safety, but the biggest danger is car accidents. Halloween has been considered one of the deadliest days of the year for child pedestrian fatalities. A scary statistic, from the National Safety Council, is that children are more than two times as likely to be hit by a car and killed on Halloween than on any other day of the year. Ages most at risk on Halloween are children ages 12 to 15. This is the age many parents start to let them go out on their own.



Available from American Legion Flag & Emblem is the American Legion Auxiliary Halloween coloring book. You can order for 30 cents each or 50 for \$12.50.

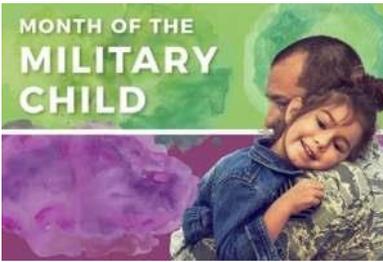
Order directly from www.emblem.legion.org.

Available from the American Legion is the Make Halloween a Fun and Safe Night brochure. This is a free downloadable brochure at www.legion.org.



April is the month of the military child. You may be thinking you are going from Halloween to April? Now is the time to start planning what your unit will be doing. This is a time to honor the sacrifices of our military children and families.

According to the Department of Defense there are over 700 military child development program facilities around the world. These facilities are welcoming around 200,000 children daily. There are 300 teen centers worldwide serving over 645,000 through a variety of educational and recreational programs.



Here are some more staggering numbers I found through the Department of Defense:

- Approximately 2 million military children have experienced a parental deployment since 9/11.
- There are currently 1.2 million military children of active duty members worldwide.
- Nearly 80% of military children attend public schools.
- The average military family moves three times more often than their civilian counterpart.
- There are nearly two million “total-force dependent children” including more than 900 thousand Army dependents, 400 thousand Air Force dependents, nearly 300 thousand Navy and approximately 118 thousand Marine dependents.

Purple Up! For Military Kids Day is April 15th

“Purple Up! For Military Kids” is a day for communities to wear purple to show support and thank military children for their strength and sacrifices.

Purple indicates that all branches of the military are supported; Air Force blue, Army green, Navy blue, Marine red, and Coast Guard blue all thought to combine as a single color, purple.

#MNALAPurpleUp



Way to Celebrate Purple Up!

- Wear Purple on April 15th
- Ask local officials and businesses to wear purple on Purple Up! day
- Ask local schools, sports teams, youth organizations, clubs, after school programs, and community organizations to recognize Purple UP! day
- Request local businesses, stores and restaurants post a Purple Up! message
- Share your activities and photos at our Department of Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary - **#MNALAPurpleUp**

Our military children bear a difficult burden that most children do not. They may not always understand what’s going on when their parents deploy or get re-assigned, depending on their age. They are not always willing to share with other friends or adults. We need to be available to support where and when we can. Due to privacy your unit would not be able to get names of students within your schools, but your unit can reach out to your school administration, counselors and social workers to let them know if there are needs for these students to contact your Children and Youth chairman or unit representative.

Next month I will be covering more programs that are available that your unit can share with schools to support our military children.

Robin Dorf
Children and Youth Chairman