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Joint Base San Antonio and Pre-K 4 SA Announce First-of-its-Kind Partnership to Support Military Families

SAN ANTONIO (July 30, 2024) – Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA), a vital military installation with over 80,000 service members and civilian personnel, and Pre-K 4 SA, a nationally recognized early childhood education program, have partnered to address the critical need for child care options for military families.

“The partnership between the City of San Antonio, Joint Base San Antonio and Pre-K for SA represents a significant step forward in supporting our military families,” said Brigadier General Russell D. Driggers, Commander of Joint Base San Antonio. “By ensuring our service members’ children have priority access to high-quality early education, we’re not only investing in their future but also enhancing military readiness. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) demonstrates San Antonio’s commitment to our military community and families, addresses a critical need, and allows our personnel to focus on their mission, knowing their children are receiving excellent care and education.”

JBSA currently faces a significant child care shortage, offering only 990 slots, with just 65 available through at-home care. This disparity is further compounded for families with special needs children, where specialized care near their homes is scarce.

“This MOU is yet another example of Military City USA®’s commitment to solving the military’s and Department of Defense’s most pressing challenges by ensuring that families have access to affordable, high-quality early learning and childcare,” said Mayor Ron Nirenberg. “Approximately 85% of our military families don’t live on a base; they live in our communities. Our common goals will expand availability of childcare, care for children with special needs, support military members’ unique mission hour requirements, all at off-installation childcare centers or home providers.”

Pre-K 4 SA is a voter-approved, comprehensive early childhood program aiming to transform the city’s educational and workforce landscape within a generation. Through the Early Learning Shared Services Alliance, powered by Pre-K 4 SA, this powerful network of child care centers and family care providers is dedicated to creating the best early learning programs for all families across San Antonio by aligning to high-quality standards.

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The partnership includes:

- **Expanding Access to High-Quality Care:** JBSA and Pre-K 4 SA will work together to identify new ways to connect military families to child care options, focusing on expanding the network of Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) providers. These providers, with a 3-star or higher Texas Rising Star (TRS) rating, will offer specialized care, extended hours, and weekend availability to meet the unique needs of military families.
- **Streamlined Information Sharing:** A strong line of communication will be established between JBSA child care resources and Pre-K 4 SA. This ensures families have easy access to information on child care options on and off base.
- **Investing in Child Care Professionals:** Specialized training will be offered to child care professionals, on and off base, to further enhance the quality of care available in San Antonio.
- **Supporting Military Families Holistically:** Pre-K 4 SA supports and empowers families by connecting them with community organizations that provide critical services. In addition to these wrap-around services, Pre-K 4 SA will participate in JBSA's Workforce and Transition Alliance.

"This strengthened partnership between JBSA and Pre-K 4 SA directly aligns with our strategic goal of building a strong and equitable early learning ecosystem in San Antonio," said Dr. Sarah Baray, Pre-K 4 SA CEO. "We are further elevating the quality of care for all children in our community by connecting our Early Learning Shared Services Alliance members with MYCCYN and creating upward mobility for child care professionals. Pre-K 4 SA is honored to serve our military families by ensuring they have access to the nurturing environment and opportunities they deserve."

JBSA and Pre-K 4 SA entered into the formal partnership in July 2024, but have been collaborating for several years to expand resources and increase access to high-quality early learning to military families with young children.

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Photos of the MOU signing are attached.

City of San Antonio – Vibrant & Thriving

San Antonio is a vibrant city with a thriving economy, deep cultural heritage and communities that are compassionate, inclusive and proudly diverse. It is the seventh largest city in the United States and one of the strongest fiscally managed cities in the country, nurturing entrepreneurship, encouraging investment and funding infrastructure. The City fosters partnership and growth opportunities in aerospace, bioscience, cybersecurity, green technologies, healthcare, and information technology. San Antonio's famed River Walk and the Alamo are the top tourist attractions in Texas, and its historic missions are a designated World Heritage Site – the first and only in Texas. Proudly called Military City, USA®, San Antonio is home to one of the largest populations of active-duty military and veterans, as well as mission critical commands, including military medicine, cybersecurity, pilot training and basic training. For more information, visit SanAntonio.gov and follow @COSAGov on social.

Pre-K 4 SA

Pre-K 4 SA is a comprehensive early childhood initiative aimed at changing the education and workforce trajectory of San Antonio in one generation. Pre-K 4 SA offers full-day prekindergarten for 3 and 4-year-olds living in the City of San Antonio. Pre-K 4 SA is free for qualifying students and accepts tuition-paying students. Breakfast, lunch and two snacks are included and free transportation is available to all students. Pre-K 4 SA has four Education Centers located throughout the city, and the Gardendale Early Learning Program, the first Pre-K 4 SA innovation site, was made possible through a partnership with Edgewood Independent School District. This program creates greater capacity for high quality early education with Pre-K through 2nd grade classrooms. Visit www.prek4sa.com for more information.