

DoD Schools Raise Age Requirement

Young military children who thought the first day of school was imminent may not have to worry about reading, writing and arithmetic until next year because of a change in entrance age requirements.

The new rule, which goes into effect July 2009, requires that students reach the pre-established age by Sept. 1. Students must be 4 years old to enroll in pre-kindergarten or the Defense Department's Sure Start program. Kindergartners must be 5, and first graders, 6. Under current rules, children have to reach the above ages by Oct. 31.

The Department of Defense Education Activity made the change after research showed that 36 states require kindergartners to be 5 by Sept. 1 or earlier, Marc Mossburg, chief of curriculum for DoDEA, said. "This was done nationally for a variety of reasons, but it basically gives most kids a sure start in kindergarten and first grade," Mossburg said. "We did make the choice to align ourselves with the nation. We're trying to keep pace with the nation and trying to make sure our military kids have that advantage."

DoDEA's decision to implement the change also was, in part, an effort to ease the transition of students who start in a defense school, but then transfer to a public school, Mossburg said. "We wanted to make sure that our kids, if they go to kindergarten and they transfer to a first grade in the States, that they are ready to enter that first grade," he said.

Consequently, students who have completed a year at an accredited kindergarten and then transfer to a DoDEA school can enroll in first grade regardless of whether they meet the age requirement, Mossburg said. For more information, visit www.dodea.edu



Disney World in Florida

Disney Parks Honor Military

America's military personnel can go to Disney theme parks in 2009 for free—or close to it. With the "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" offer, active and retired U.S. military personnel, including active members of the United States Coast Guard and activated members of the National Guard or Reservists, can enjoy complimentary, multi-day admission into Disney's U.S. theme parks, great rates at select Walt Disney

World and Disneyland Resort hotels, and additional special ticket offers for family members and friends.

Through June 12, 2009, each active or retired member of the U.S. military can receive one complimentary three-day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" ticket valid for admission to both Disneyland and Disney's California Adventure parks. During the offer period, active or retired U.S. military personnel also may make a one-time purchase of an adult or child three-day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute Companion" ticket for up to five family members (including spouse) or friends for the price of an adult 1-Day Park Hopper ticket.

Through December 23, 2009, each active or retired member of the U.S. military may obtain one complimentary five-day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" ticket with Park Hopper and Water Park Fun & More options. This ticket is valid for five days of admission into the four Walt Disney World theme parks, plus a total of five visits to a choice of a Disney water park, DisneyQuest Indoor Interactive Theme Park or certain other attractions. During this offer period, active or retired U.S. military personnel may also make a one-time purchase of up to a maximum of five, five-Day

"Disney's Armed Forces Salute Companion" tickets for \$99 per ticket, plus tax, for family members (including spouse) or friends. Although this ticket for family members and friends does not include either the Park Hopper or Water Park Fun & More options, this ticket can be upgraded to add either such option, or both, for an additional \$25, plus tax, per option.

Both locations are also offering special rates on lodging on a space-available basis.

For more information on these offers, or to make reservations, contact the ITT office on your installation. Information is also available at www.disneyworld.com/military.

VetCam Connects Families

U.S. military troops deployed overseas can now use their Web cams to talk with their families back home, without having to download software packages that may not pass muster with command cybernet security requirements.

The American Legion now offers "VetCam," a free Web cam service that enables service members and veterans to talk face-to-face on their personal computers with friends and family. Once VetCam users register online, they can connect with two Web cams and use the service 24/7 from any Internet connection.

"Web cams have been around for a while, but many required downloading software to make them work," said David K. Rehbein, national commander of The American Legion. "We want our troops, our veterans, and their families to be able to enjoy the pleasure of talking face-to-face with their loved ones - anywhere in the world - with just a couple of mouse clicks.

To initiate the service, a user needs a Web cam or computer with built-in Web cam. Then, just register and start communicating. Once registered, simply log in at any time to connect. For more information, please visit http.vetcam.ncbintl.com ●