

What Is Our Responsibility, As Parents, To Our Children and to Society?

If we see war as futile in solving world problems, have we made that clear to our children? In what ways? How can we, as parents, set an example of what sort of world we want to see?

What if we brainstormed with our children, whatever their ages, about what they hope their future will hold, and what it will take to get there?

What if, *at the same time*, we spoke to them realistically of our concerns about living under a government devoted to war-making, both under Democrats and Republicans?

How could we protect our family members and our larger communities from a military draft?

What might we have to do, as parents and family members, to help our youngsters as they decide to resist our government's war-making?

As parents, we judge ourselves on how our children fare in the world. We are concerned for their well-being, and naturally we hope they will choose courses in life which reflect our values.

How is it, then, that so many young people in the U.S. have been recruited into the military, when polls show that the war in Iraq is unpopular and widely regarded as illegal and inhumane?

Are We Allowing Others, Such as the Military, to Make Decisions about Our Children?

When You Do The Math, War Money For College Doesn't Add Up.

Well-meaning activists sometimes demean poor people by suggesting that joining the military is the only way they can attain a college education.

Paying for college is hard, but there are alternatives – the Fund for Education and Training (FEAT), work/study programs, living with parents instead of in a dorm, low-tuition community colleges, need-based scholarships at private colleges, scholarships for children of union members – that don't require registering for the draft. And if the price of college is enlistment in the military, or the risk of being drafted, should we tell our children that college is worth that price?

What message do we send our children when we tell them graduating from a prestigious college is more important than living out their values? What message does this send to people worldwide about Americans' priorities? Is America really more enlightened, or do we have a superior way of life, because a higher percentage of our population goes to college? What is the message if we tell our children to compromise their beliefs to get college aid, but aren't willing to make comparable sacrifices in our own way of life to save money for our children's education, such as postponing major purchases, taking out loans of our own, or selling our car(s) and switching to public transportation?

*for more information, or to arrange a house party
or a presentation to your group, contact:*

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Parents and The Draft

Nurturing Our Children by Supporting Their Resistance to War

**Are you confident that
your children would tell you
if they were talking to
military recruiters?**

**Are you uncertain
about where you stand
on getting involved
in your children's resistance
to wars and war-making?**

As Caring Parents, We Need to Watch Out for Our Children.

If We Fail to Do So, the Military Will Be Happy to Take Over.

So how do we do so when most of us have been well-schooled to obey orders, whether from teachers or bosses, the IRS or the military?

It comes down to communication. Lots of it. As Cindy Sheehan, whose son died in Iraq after enlisting in the U.S. military, has said, "We need to be getting to the soccer moms with babes in arms."

It's never too late to go to our kids, explain why we might have felt uncomfortable having such a conversation with them before, and talk about what they might do if they don't agree with war as a means to "solving" conflict. Let them know that they aren't alone in not wanting to fight, kill, and die at someone else's command, and that we'll support them if they choose to resist the military and the draft.

What If My Kid Acts Aloof, Or Sees No Problem With The Military Or The Concept Of War?

Unlike some other species, human children emerge from the womb immature, and need years of guidance and protection. Military recruiters are trained to take advantage of teen-aged immaturity. Most teens don't have the time or experience fully to appreciate all the forces that lead governments into war. It's up to us to help make sure they see the implications of the choices the military offers them.

This Is Our Chance, and Our Children's. Let's Not Blow It!

We need to sort out our own values and give our kids a list of things we are willing to do to support their resistance. (For some of the things young people themselves can do, and have been doing, to resist the draft, see <<http://www.Resisters.info>>.) Here are some of the things we can do as parents:

- "Opt-out" of having our children's contact information turned over to military recruiters. See <<http://www.LeaveMyChildAlone.org>>.
- If we wouldn't accept or pass on solicitations for our children to join a dangerous, violent, cult, why accept mail for them about military recruiting or Selective Service? Protect our children against military recruiters' lies by throwing away their junk mail, hanging up on their phone calls, and shutting the door on them if they come to our homes.
- Make it as hard as possible for the Selective Service System to draft or recruit our children into the military. Don't help them find our children, register them, or induct them.
- Throw away Selective Service junk mail and threats. Don't accept SS mail for our children, or give the SS their forwarding address. Don't sign for any registered letters from the SS, the Department of Defense, or the Department of Justice. (No one ever has to accept mail for someone else, and no one has to talk to the Feds. Anything we say can, and will, be used against us, and against our children.) Tearing up an induction notice could be considered a crime, but it shifts the risk of prosecution (however small that risk may be) from our children to ourselves.

- Don't make it easy for the military: Make them track our children down individually to order them to register, and track them down again individually to order them to report for induction. No one can be prosecuted without either signing for a letter telling them to register or report for induction, or being found by the Feds in person and served with a notice.
- Let our children know that they're not alone in resisting draft registration. Over the last 25 years, millions of young people have not registered with Selective Service, or have "unregistered" by moving without telling the government. Many who registered will resist, or will simply ignore an induction notice.
- Help our children understand that not all valuable learning has to occur in a college setting. Help them find apprenticeships or other non-college learning opportunities.
- If our children are thinking of joining the military, or registering for the draft, to get money for college, find ways we can finance their education without leaving them indentured to the Pentagon. Consider offering to have our children live with us for a few extra years while they work to save up money for tuition. Instead of making them sign up for the draft to qualify for student loans, consider taking out loans ourselves for their education, that don't have military strings attached.
- Consider taking some of the same risks, in our anti-war actions, that our children take in resisting military recruiting and the draft.
- Speak out. Organize. Talk to our friends and neighbors about the threat to our children. Let the politicians know that we won't let the military take our children without resistance.