



**Shield Tuition**  
*First in class* for private one-on-one tutoring

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Dear Sir/Madam

## **Department of Veterans' Affairs Education Schemes Guide**

We thank you for taking the time to download our Education Schemes guide.

### **About Us**

We are a veteran-based organisation and the leading service provider for one-on-one tuition for veteran children around Australia. We work closely with the aims of the DVA to address and improve the educational outcomes of veteran children.

We deliver tuition services under the Education Schemes (ES), a branch within the Department of Veterans' Affairs dedicated to providing school support to veteran children. Through our nationwide work with veteran families, we have extensive knowledge about the eligibility of ES, application process and additional entitlements that fall under the ES.

As we are a veteran run business, we understand and appreciate the complexity of the DVA, and we hope we can remove the red tape and confusion around your child(ren)'s entitlements by simplifying the process. Therefore, we have created this downloadable guide to help improve the awareness of the ES.

Shield Tuition pays our respect to all past and present members who have and who continue to devote their life to the Australian Defence Force. We thank you for your service.

Yours faithfully,

### **Kye Shield**

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## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a clear outline of what the education schemes are, who is eligible, how to apply, and what you can expect after you apply. We acknowledge the complexity of the DVA and so we aim to simplify the process of applying for the ES for you.

We would like to acknowledge that our organisation makes reasonable effort to ensure this information is accurate, however we are not the Department of Veterans' Affairs, nor do we have any specified advocacy training. We have developed our knowledge of the ES through our work with the ES delivering tuition for veteran children. This document is intended to be used as a guide and not as a matter of fact.

## What are the Education Schemes?

The education schemes are a branch of DVA that provide financial assistance and other support services to eligible children and dependents of former Australian Defence Force personnel who have died or been severely injured as a result of their service.

There are two schemes:

1. **Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES)** established under the Veteran Entitlements Act 1986
2. **Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS)** established under the Military and Compensation Act 2004.

However, the two schemes are collectively called the **Education Schemes**.



## Why Should I Apply for the Education Schemes?

We feel very enthusiastic about the great work the ES conducts surrounding the education of veteran children.

Serving in the Australia Defence Force has numerous impacts on the education of your children. The impact of postings, deployments and injuries are a few examples of these impacts.

We recognise the struggles of our veterans, however, we also appreciate that veterans want the absolute best for their children, and often times their support is understandably reduced because of their injuries. Veterans need to focus on their own health and wellbeing but can naturally worry their child's education may be impacted by their family/health circumstance. Furthermore, after taking more than 100 days for veteran's claims to be settled, it makes sense why less attention is then drawn to the education entitlements that arise after the claims have been settled.

The ES was set up to assist families and offer support for veterans whose capacity to support their kid's learning has been hindered. The ES not only offer financial support for your children, but it also opens up an avenue of support systems directed solely at improving your child's education.

One service we are heavily involved in is the "Additional Tuition" program within the ES. Here, children can be granted \$3,500 per child (per year) to dedicate to receive one on one school support after hours. This program helps address learning difficulties (one example) and ensure veteran children are receiving the same support as their playground counterparts.

However, these support systems only become available once your child has been approved for the ES. That is why we strongly advocate for all eligible veterans to apply for the ES. We have included the rates below if the veteran just wants to know their child's allowance and feel no need to read further.



## MRCAETS Rates

Age	At Home	Living Away From Home	Homeless
Primary School	\$326.40/year	n/a	n/a
Under 16 (in	\$67.50	\$558.50	\$646.00
16-17	\$399.20	\$646.00	\$646.00
18 and over	\$459.80	\$646.00	\$646.00

*Table 1. All rates are fortnightly except the primary school amount which is per year.*

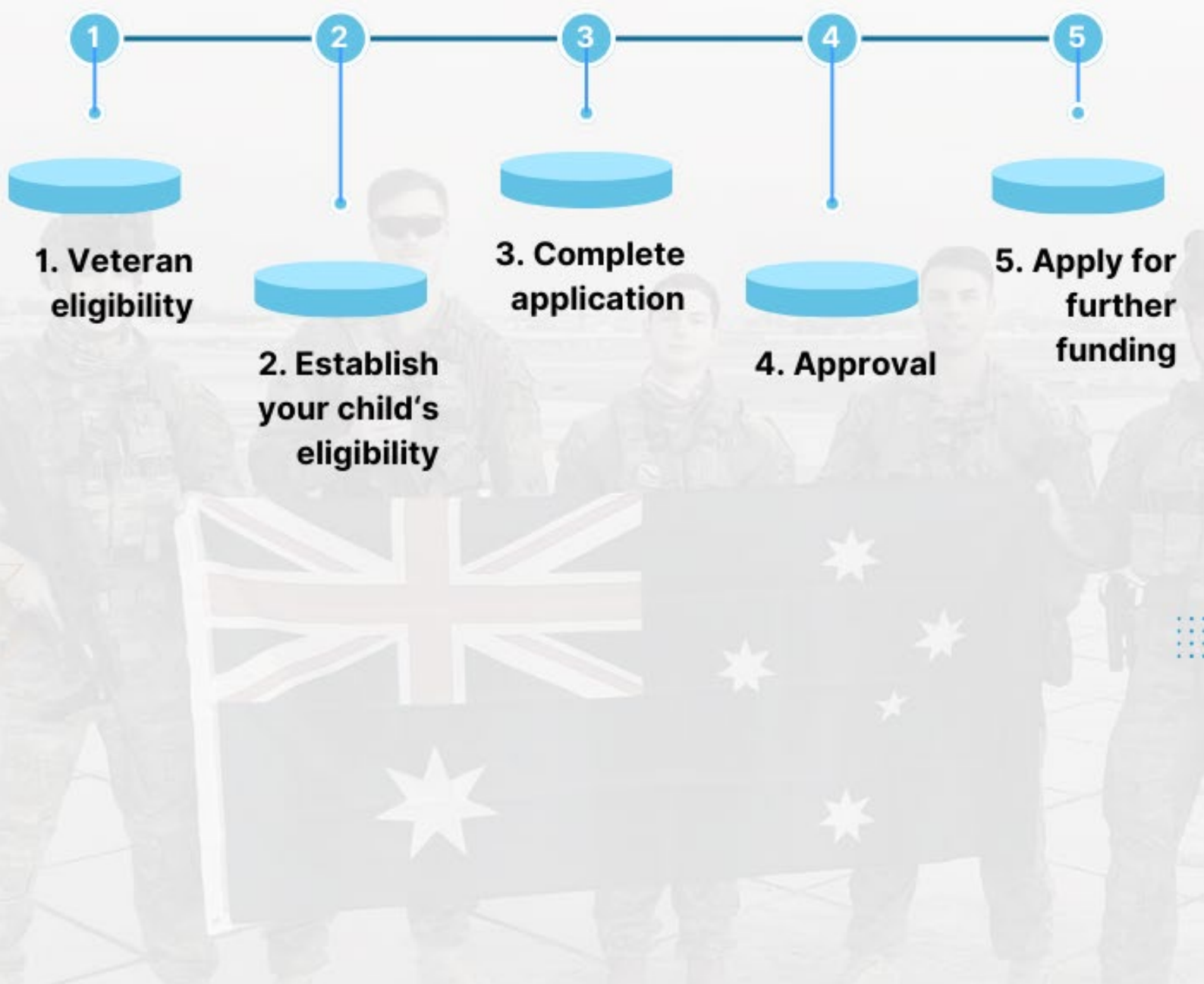
## VCES Rates

There is no difference between the VCES and MRCAETS rates, except the VCES has an additional rate for double orphans apart of the VCES (where the parent and the adopted parents of child have died).



# Our Guide to the Education Schemes

A step by step guide to applying to the education schemes.



## Step 1: Which Veteran Children are Eligible for the Education Schemes?

The eligibility of a veteran depends on the compensation that their conditions fall under. We appreciate many veterans fall under multiple schemes (VEA, MRCA and DRCA), however only 1 of the following needs to apply for a veteran to be considered eligible.

### VEA Eligibility:

The child of a current or former member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) who is receiving (or was receiving prior to their death) a Disability Compensation Payment:

- at the special rate (commonly known as **T&PI**);
- at the extreme disablement adjustment (**EDA**) rate;
- at an increased rate because of multiple amputations, or multiple amputations and blindness; or

The child of a current or former ADF member whose death was war or defence caused; or

The child of a veteran who was an Australian prisoner-of-war and is now deceased.

Also eligible are students whose veteran parent had operational service but whose death was not war or defence caused, where the student has also lost their other parent. This loss may be through death or where the surviving parent is not maintaining them.

A student who is the child or dependant of a Vietnam veteran but who does not qualify under any of the above criteria may be eligible in certain circumstances.

### Summary:

A veteran whose injuries from service result in a disability compensation known as T&Pi or EDA would allow them to apply for the ES. There are less common grounds to apply above (prisoner of war circumstances and Vietnam dependants), and if a veteran feels they meet the criteria above, but are still unsure, they should speak to one of our friendly staff to proceed with the application. We receive a lot of questions





about grandchildren, given many veterans under the VEA no longer have school aged children.

## Grandchildren of Vietnam Veterans

Within the *Veteran Entitlement Act 1986*, subsection 116CC stipulates that certain grandchildren of Vietnam Veterans can be determined eligible for the ES. Vietnam veterans or their children/ caregiver need to apply in writing to determine their eligibility before they can then submit an ES application. We have a form for you to submit to DVA to make the application easier. Importantly, grandchildren still need to be enrolled in fulltime education as mentioned in Step 2 and the child needs to be dependent on the Vietnam veteran. For example, if a Vietnam veteran was caring for a child full time because the parent was not maintaining them, the child would become eligible for the ES.

We encourage all Vietnam veterans to look into the Long Tan Bursary because some grandchildren are able to apply for some of their university fees to be covered if approved for this bursary.

## MRCA Eligibility

A dependant of a member or former member who:

- is eligible, or was at some point, for the **Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP)**;
- suffers an impairment that constitutes **80 or more impairment points**; or
- whose death was related to service.

### Summary:

A veteran who has been formally offered SRDP in the past, even if they did not accept it, is eligible to apply for the ES. Furthermore, a veteran with 80 or more impairment points (commonly known as PI points) is eligible. A veteran only needs to meet 1 of the criteria above to be eligible to apply.

## Eligibility Confusion

The main confusion around ES eligibility is when a veteran is receiving the general rate disability at or above 80%. This is cause for confusion because the MRCA



eligibility states a veteran can apply with 80 or more PI points, which is different to the percentage of generate rate compensation. Therefore, we encourage all veterans to review their PI determination if they under MRCA, or their determination under VEA to distinguish between the two different criteria for eligibility. Most commonly, veterans apply under VEA because they are T&Pi, and under MRCA because they have 80 or more PI points.

If you fall under VEA, the eligibility is more complex because there are grounds to apply in more unique circumstances, like being a dependent of a Vietnam veteran, or being a child, whose parent were killed because of operational service, so we recommend reaching out to us, or the DVA ES to establish your eligibility.

## Step 2: Which Children are Eligible for the ES?

A child must be enrolled in full time education from the first official year at school. A child who has completed school and is enrolled full time in education (university or Tafe) is eligible for the ES up to the age of 25. There are exceptions to the upper limit of the age bracket, but we have excluded these for simplicity.

## VCES Eligible Dependents

Veteran Children Education Scheme (VCES)

A child must be enrolled in full time education within Australia.

- (a) a child of the veteran or an adopted child of the veteran; or
- (b) a child who is a child of the veteran within the meaning of the *Family Law Act 1975*; or
- (c) any other child who is, or was immediately before the death of the veteran, wholly or substantially dependent on the veteran.

**Summary:** We have put together a summary of the types of children that are eligible for ES.

- Biological children
- Adopted children
- Step children, however, they must depend on the veteran economically for example, paying school fees).
- Stepchildren of a de facto relationship or same sex marriage where the child economically depends on the veteran.



Note that the parent who receives the allowance and the amount that is paid depends on the nature of the relationship. For example, in shared care situations, if the veteran is responsible for the child 40% of the time, they would receive 40% of the ES allowance.

## MRCAETS Eligible Dependents

Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education Training Schemes (MRCAETS)

A child of a member or former member is a child that is wholly or partly dependent on the member or former member, and can be:

- a biological son or daughter, an adopted son or daughter or a step-son or step-daughter of the member;
- a biological son or daughter, an adopted son or daughter or a step-son or step-daughter of the member's partner;
- a grandchild of the member;
- the member's brother, sister, half-brother or half-sister; or
- any child for whom the member stands in the position of a parent.

## Main Difference Between VCES and MRCAETS

The two schemes are very similar. One of the main differences between the two, are students who are under the VCES, are allowed to work full time and be enrolled in full time education. MRCAETS precludes students who elect to work on their own accord.

## What about Part Time Study?

Assistance under the Education Schemes to students studying part-time may only be provided where conditions beyond the student's control prevent them from studying full-time.

Situations in which part-time students may receive benefits are:

- the decision maker is satisfied that the amount of study that the student must complete in order to finish a course constitutes less than one year of full-time study;
- due to geographical isolation, the student is unable to take advantage of full-time study facilities; or
- the student needs to study part-time temporarily for health, economic or academic reasons but has shown ability to undertake full-time studies.



## What About Study Overseas?

For a child to be eligible for the ES, a student must be undertaking study within Australia, or have made application or been accepted to study within Australia.

The Commission may waive this requirement if the circumstances of the student are held to be exceptional. A medical condition that requires a student to be living in a certain area would be one example of when this rule is waived.

If a child has been accepted within a formal overseas exchange scheme, or recovered a scholarship to study overseas, the child is considered eligible and will receive the living away from home allowance.

## Step 3: Applying for the Education Schemes

There are two forms for ES. The forms can be completed on MyGov, or done traditionally by submitting the paperwork.

These need to be filled out and sent to:

Make sure to attach evidence of enrollment (school fees) and a birth certificate.

[educationschemes@dva.gov.au](mailto:educationschemes@dva.gov.au)

For children 16 and over: Form number: **D2566**

**Found here:**

<https://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/d2566.pdf>

For children under the age of 16: Form number **D2697**

**Found here:**

<https://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/dvaforms/d2697.pdf>

## How Long Can I Expect to Wait?

One of the most efficient sections of the DVA is the ES. Veterans can expect their ES paperwork to be approved or rejected, in most cases within 28 days. We cannot speak for all other branches within the DVA, but it is a pleasure to work alongside the



ES department, they are prompt, very enthusiastic about supporting children of veteran families and usually not backlogged with claims.

## Step 4: My Child has Been Approved, What Now?

We get a lot of questions about what the ES actually gives veterans. First and foremost, all children who are approved will receive an education allowance. The rates of the allowance depend on the age of the child and whether they live at home or away from home. The current rates (Feb 2024) are in the table below:

### MRCAETS Rates

Age	At Home	Living Away From Home	Homeless
Primary School	\$326.40/year	n/a	n/a
Under 16 (not including 16 years old)	\$67.50	\$558.50	\$646.00
16-17	\$399.20	\$646.00	\$646.00
18 and over	\$459.80	\$646.00	\$646.00

*Table 2. All rates are fortnightly except the primary school amount which is per year.*

### VCES Rates

There is no difference between the VCES and MRCAETS rates, except the VCES has an additional rate for double orphans apart of the VCES (where the parent and the adopted parents of child have died).

## Who is the Allowance Paid To?

### Primary Students

- family member who is entitled to receive the family tax benefit from Centrelink.

### Secondary School Students Living at Home 16 Years or Older

- paid to the family member entitled to receive the family tax benefit; however, it can be elected to be paid to the student.

### University/ or Tertiary Students

- to the student.

## What About Shared Care Situations?



For separated parents who share their child, the payment is distributed in the same way the Family Tax Benefits is. Refer to table below. ‘

<b>Custody – Percentage of Care</b>	<b>Shared Care Payment Percentage</b>
Less than 35%	0 %
35% to 47%	25% plus 2% for each percentage point over 35%
48 % to 52%	50%
53% to 65 %	51% plus 2% for every percentage point over 53%
More than 65%	100%

*Table 3. Payment rates in shared care situations*



## Step 5: What Other Entitlements Can I Get?

### Additional Tuition

Currently, students already approved for VCES or MRCAETS can receive **\$3,500** worth of 1 on 1 afterschool support with school. We are naturally very keen on this funding because we believe one on one support can reshape a child's academic journey.

Like all DVA applications there are multiple people involved, including the school, the teachers and the veteran. However, we simplify this process by completing your tuition papers for you, by engaging the school and then submitting to DVA. We have had positive feedback from veterans about the ease of process and the quality of tuition that is delivered; This brings our organisation immense pride.

Applications need to be made every year, and previous funding that was not used cannot be rolled over into the next year. If you do not use the funding in the year allocated, you will not be able to recuperate this lost funding. That is why all veterans in our program are placed on a specialised program to maximise the funding available and to cater for the unique situations of our veteran families.

A further \$2,000 can be granted by the commission in certain circumstances. These may include, if your child is severely behind and required tutoring that exceeded the allocated amount.

### Special Assistance

Special assistance is another funding available to students where there is an exceptional circumstance that is hindering a child's progress at school. You cannot access the special assistance form online; you have to ring the DVA to request the special assistance form. The form you need to complete is assessing whether a child's circumstance is likely to impact or will hinder their education.

The amount that can be granted is up to \$3,000.



## Frequently Asked Questions

The following is a list of the most common questions we get from Veterans.

### Can grandchildren receive financial support?

The short answer is no. However, there is a clause in the VEA that stipulates so grandchildren of Vietnam veterans who had operational service can receive support under the VCES. Any child who is dependent, whether that be a grandchild can receive the allowance if the veteran meets the normal criteria for the schemes. For example, if a Vietnam veteran was looking after a child and this veteran was TPI under VEA, the child would be eligible for the ES.

### My ex-partner (veteran) and I have no contact, can I still apply?

Yes. The ES will be able to process your application in most family circumstances. ex-partners DVA file number, but for the most part these applications can be done without any input from your ex-partner. We speak to a number of parents who do not arrange the ES paperwork because their relationship with their parent is complicated and it would cause more stress for them. We appreciate this situations are heart breaking but we want to reassure you that in most cases the parent can still apply. Remember the ES is about veteran children and so the ES makes reasonable efforts to approve a child even when their family circumstance is complicated.

### Is this the Eligible Young Person's payment?

No. Typically, most veterans have heard of the EYP payment which is \$104,291 per dependent when a veteran is assessed at 80 or more PI points. However, this is not related to the ES. The best way to think about the EYP payment is an additional amount of money to compensate a veteran/child for how their injuries will impact their ability to parent. For example, some members may be unable to take the footy down to the park and kick it with their child. We appreciate that no amount of money will compensate for this impact, but the EYP payment is the current compensation in place. There is a lot of controversy around this payment: who should receive it, who is it intended for, the kids or the veteran, and how can the money for the kids be safeguarded from the complexity of shared care situations? These questions are on a path to be more complex with the 2026 draft legislation.

### Are the education schemes allowance means tested?





No. Assets and income of the parent is not considered which is where the ES is beneficial for most kids who have just left school because Centrelink youth allowance is means tested. The age of independence is 22 at Centrelink which means veterans who are earning too much for their child to access youth allowance after school should go with the ES.

### Is the ES allowance taxed?

ES allowance is tax exempt up until the age of 16.

### Will ES allowance affect any Centrelink payments I receive?

Yes, when your child turns 16 you cannot receive both the Family Tax Benefit (Centrelink) and the ES allowance. You will need to decide which payment is in your best interest. Note, that a family is still eligible for the tuition, guidance and counseling even if they opt to receive the family tax benefit or if a child elects to take Centrelink payments.

### Can I use the tuition funding to help with the cost of school?

No. If the cost of school exceeds the ES allowance, you cannot apply for additional tuition and use this to help with school fees. The Additional Tuition and Special Assistance funding are paid directly to the provider and are intended for afterschool assistance.

### I have been paying for tutoring and have now been approved for additional tuition?

Only in this circumstance will DVA back pay you and not the tuition provider, provided the tuition was paid for in the same year as the approved DVA funding. DVA will not back pay prior years. They will not continue to reimburse you as they have certain requirements providers must fill, and if they are reimbursing you, they cannot regulate these requirements. We will always attempt to get a parent back paid for their prior tuition costs, even if they have used a previous provider.

### My child wants to commence tertiary study after school, what support is available?

There are numerous types of support to veteran children who want to complete tertiary study after school. Tertiary study are things like university degrees and



preparatory course for university. Even if your child is not yet at the stage of leaving school, it is good to be aware of the funding in advance.

Under MRCAETS, a child studying a tertiary course can receive yearly funding. A student will receive \$2,546 per year which is paid in two installments.

Furthermore, there are also scholarships that are offered by Australian Veteran's Children Assistance Trust which help provide funding to eligible veteran children who are studying tertiary courses.

This can be found here:

<https://avcat.org.au/>

## What is the Long Tan Bursary?

The Long Tan Bursary helps eligible children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans pay for their tertiary education. Each year 37 bursaries are awarded to successful applicants across Australia. Each bursary is worth up to \$12,000 over 3 years of continuous full-time study. The Long Tan Bursary scheme is named after the Battle of Long Tan, the best-known battle fought by Australians during the Vietnam war.

You will need to apply on the AVCAT website.

## Final Comments

We appreciate you supporting our organisation by reading and downloading the information we have created for veterans interested in knowing more about the ES. Like all government departments, the process can be tricky and unclear. We hope this guide helped clarify the ES and made clear all of the relevant information from the DVA website, policy manual and legislation in one place. We hope you takeaway a few keys things: the ES department within DVA are a pleasure to work with, there is education entitlements for veteran children and there is support beyond an education allowance available in the ES to help ES children with their schooling.

Yours faithfully,

Kye Shield  
Director

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