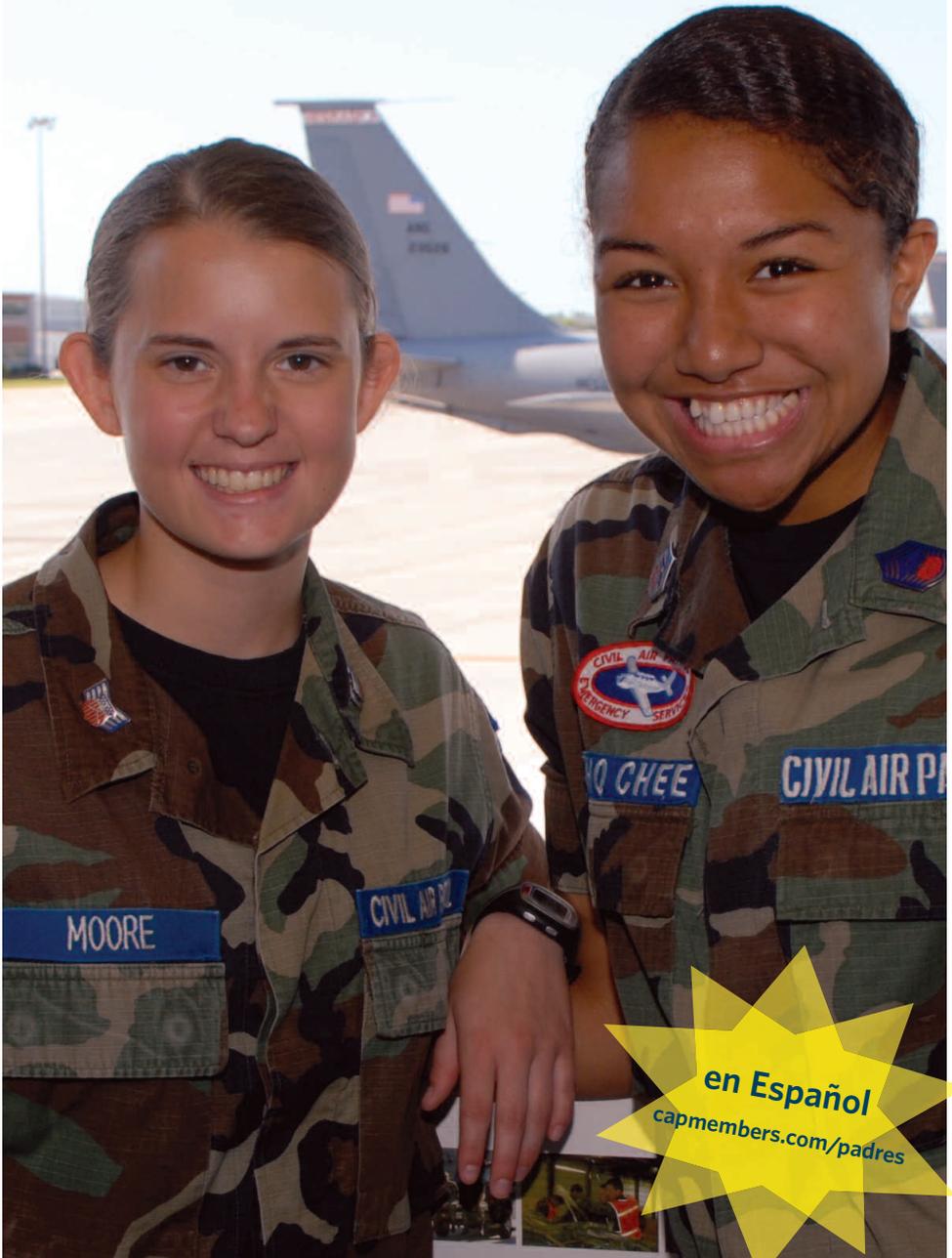


PARENTS' GUIDE *to the* CIVIL AIR PATROL CADET PROGRAM



en Español
capmembers.com/padres



The CAP Core Values

- ★ INTEGRITY
- ★ VOLUNTEER SERVICE
- ★ EXCELLENCE
- ★ RESPECT

Key Traits of Cadet Life

- ★ THE UNIFORM
- ★ AEROSPACE THEME
- ★ OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD
- ★ CHALLENGE
- ★ FUN

The Cadet Oath

"I pledge that I will serve faithfully in the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program and that I will attend meetings regularly, participate actively in unit activities, obey my officers, wear my uniform properly and advance my education and training rapidly to prepare myself to be of service to my community, state and nation."



THANK YOU for supporting your son's or daughter's membership in the Civil Air Patrol's Cadet Program.

Through their experiences as CAP cadets, young people develop into responsible citizens and become tomorrow's aerospace leaders.

CAP is the volunteer, nonprofit auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. Its three missions are to develop its cadets, educate Americans on the importance of aviation and space, and perform life-saving, humanitarian missions.

This guide provides an overview of the Cadet Program. To learn more, visit capmembers.com/parents, or speak with your local squadron commander.

Overview of the Cadet Program

To fulfill its goal of developing young people into responsible citizens and aerospace leaders, the Cadet Program is organized around four program elements.

As cadets participate in these four elements, they advance through a series of achievements, earning honors and increased responsibilities along the way.

For more information about how cadets progress in CAP, see the “Stripes to Diamonds” page at capcadets.com.



Cadets learn to lead and conquer challenges as a team.

Leadership

CAP introduces cadets to Air Force perspectives on leadership through classroom instruction, mentoring and hands-on learning. First, cadets learn to follow, but as they progress, they learn how to lead small teams, manage projects, think independently and develop leadership skills they can use in adult life.



*Where's the best place to study aerospace?
The cockpit.*

Aerospace

CAP inspires in youth a love of aviation, space and technology. Cadets study the fundamentals of aerospace science in the classroom, and experience flight first-hand in CAP aircraft. Summer activities allow cadets to explore aerospace career opportunities.

How Cadets “Rank Up”

- ✓ Pass open-book leadership test online, and a drill and ceremonies test
- ✓ Pass open-book aerospace test online
- ✓ Pass physical fitness test
- ✓ Participate in a character forum
- ✓ Participate actively in unit activities
- ✓ 8 weeks’ (56 days’) elapsed since previous achievement
- ✓ Have demonstrated the attitudes, behaviors, and skills identified as the achievement’s “Leadership Expectations”
- ✓ Optional: review board or feedback meeting
- ✓ **Recognition:** Additional stripe, ribbon, more challenges, and excitement

This is a simplified checklist. Requirements vary at certain steps in the program. See “Stripes to Diamonds” at capcadets.com.



Being a cadet means getting yourself into shape and growing stronger.

Fitness

CAP encourages cadets to develop a lifelong habit of regular exercise. The Cadet Program promotes fitness through calisthenics, hiking, rappelling, volleyball, competitions and other activities.



Cadets don’t just honor America, they solidify their character.

Character

CAP challenges cadets to live their Core Values. Through character forums, cadets discuss ethical issues relevant to teens. Chaplains often lead the discussions, but the forums are not religious meetings. CAP also encourages cadets to promote a drug free ethic in their schools and communities.

Participation & Expectations

We ask cadets to strive to achieve certain basic goals during their first year. While school and family obligations take priority over CAP, cadets make a solemn promise to participate in the program and give it a fair try. It's okay to be absent sometimes, but here is some background for parents about those expectations and how to support your cadet in the program.

- Cadets will attend weekly squadron meetings and one special "Saturday" activity per month, if available. It's important to arrive on time and to let someone know about an absence.
- Cadets are expected to complete achievements and advance through the cadet program. This requires independently studying leadership and aerospace materials and taking online tests outside of meetings. Many squadrons also communicate through email. Thank you for allowing your cadet sufficient internet access to complete these tasks.
- Cadets are encouraged to attend encampment, the highlight of a cadet's first year. An encampment is usually an

overnight experience, 1-week in duration, held in the summer or over winter break.

- If your cadet participates in special activities such as the Cyber Patriot team, color guard, or drill team, they are making a commitment to that team. Discuss the time requirements for participation beforehand with your cadet and local leaders.
- Many young people participate in multiple after-school activities. Be aware that when other commitments result in the cadet showing up late or missing meetings, that could affect their role in the squadron and eligibility for special activities.



At the academically-rigorous Civic Leadership Academy, cadets study the federal government and explore careers in the public service.

Flightplan *for a* Great First Year

- ❑ Attend weekly squadron meetings regularly.
- ❑ Attend one “Saturday” event per month, if available.
- ❑ Complete Achievement 1 within 8 weeks of joining CAP.
- ❑ Attend the week-long, overnight encampment.
- ❑ Complete the Wright Brothers Award by the end of the first year.
- ❑ Recruit a friend and make lots of new friends, too.



Many cadets receive their first flight in an airplane, thanks to CAP.

Flying

CAP's volunteer pilots share their love of flying with cadets. Through orientation flights in powered aircraft and gliders, cadets experience flight first-hand.

While aloft, cadets handle the controls during the noncritical stages of the flight. CAP's pilots are licensed by the FAA, follow a syllabus for each flight, and ensure the flight is conducted safely.

Cadets may also receive orientation flights in military aircraft. Orientation flights are free to cadets.

for more ► [capmembers.com/flying](https://www.capmembers.com/flying)

Preparing for Bright Futures

To help cadets plan for an exciting future, CAP offers college and flight scholarships on a competitive basis. While they are not obligated to join the military, cadets who enlist in the Air Force can enter at a level higher than other recruits (E-3) if they earned the Mitchell Award as a cadet.

The service academies and ROTC also look favorably on CAP experience. About 8% of Air Force Academy cadets are former CAP cadets, and the Academy's Preparatory School sets aside at least one slot for CAP cadets annually.

for more ► [capmembers.com/scholarships](https://www.capmembers.com/scholarships)

Cadet Membership



Wearing the Air Force uniform challenges cadets to a set high standards for themselves.

Annual Dues

Cadets' annual dues vary by location. Additionally, cadets may be charged fees to cover meal and lodging costs at special activities.

Because CAP is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, membership dues, donations and other CAP-related expenses may be tax deductible.

Cadet Welcome Kit

Shortly after joining CAP, cadets receive a Welcome Kit in the mail. The Welcome Kit includes a special guide for new cadets, leadership and aerospace textbooks, and other resources to help cadets get started in CAP.

for more ► capmembers.com/newcadets

Uniforms

The Air Force-style uniform is a symbol of the Core Values, inspiring cadets to think of themselves as young leaders.

Cadets are responsible for obtaining a BDU (camouflage) uniform as soon as possible. The local squadron may be able to provide BDU items for free. Approximate cost: \$150

Upon completing Achievement 1, CAP provides cadets with a voucher for the dress "blues" uniform. Again, some articles may be available for free locally. Approximate cost: \$150, less a \$100 voucher.

When a cadet outgrows a uniform or leaves CAP, we ask families to turn those items in to the local squadron so other cadets might use them.

for more ► capmembers.com/newcadets

Safety & Adult Supervision

CAP is a safe, positive environment where cadets can grow and learn. The Cadet Program uses an age-appropriate, military-style training model that challenges young people.

While our program is regimented, we do not tolerate any form of abusive behavior or hazing. Our youth protection strategy was updated in 2015, using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Preventing Child Abuse

Here's what you should know about how we keep youth safe:

- Every CAP adult leader has been fingerprinted and passed a criminal background check.
- Every CAP adult leader has been trained in how to mentor youth in a positive way, and in how to be alert for signs of inappropriate relationships.
- Every CAP activity (with a few, rare exceptions) will be supervised by at least two CAP adult leaders.
- We structure our activities so that opportunities for isolated, one-on-one contact with cadets are minimized.
- Your local squadron will announce cadet activities via a web calendar, so you can know what events are upcoming.
- You'll be given written information each time a special activity is held, and be asked to sign a permission slip.
- If an adult leader is transporting a cadet, at least one other person will be in the vehicle.
- While older, experienced cadets act as servant-leaders over younger, new-comer cadets, they always do so under adult supervision.
- Each cadet has a "wingman" for peer-to-peer support and safety.
- We teach cadets to look out for their wingman's safety and we tell cadets that if they think inappropriate behavior is occurring, they are to tell any trusted adult, without fear of retaliation.



"I'm a detective who specializes in crimes against children. CAP's safety training is well researched and put together. The issues of grooming and how it takes place are spot on. I'm proud of how serious CAP takes this issue."

Capt Jim Schilling, CAP
Minnesota

Our Philosophy *for* Developing Youth

CAP treats cadets as *young adults, not children*. The Cadet Program instills a sense of personal responsibility and self-discipline.

When cadets use their chain of command to ask questions about cadet life or to get help with a problem, they learn self-reliance.

Therefore, the cadet experience works best when cadets —*not their parent*— take responsibility for preparing their uniforms, navigating their way through promotion and award requirements, registering themselves for special events, and the like.

Freedom to Make Mistakes

CAP is a safe place to learn. Our program is carefully designed to develop your cadet as a leader.

An important part of that process is the ability to try a new skill and perhaps be less than fully successful at first. A cadet may be reluctant to “stretch their wings” if parents are watching.

Please allow your cadet to grow and develop as they work with their fellow cadets and their adult mentors. Parents who hover too closely often inhibit the very successes they hope to see in their cadets.



Cadets learn self-reliance in an atmosphere of mutual support.

Homesick Cadets

At overnight activities, it's normal for cadets to be homesick at first. Limiting contact between cadets and parents, versus reaching for “the world's longest umbilical cord,” —the cell phone— helps cadets overcome their initial nervousness.

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises parents not to make “pick-up” arrangements as a hedge against homesickness because that approach can undermine the cadet's confidence and independence.

School Comes First

Cadets are required to maintain “satisfactory progress” in school, as determined by their parents or guardian. The self-discipline that CAP builds typically results in improved grades at school. We support cadets by emphasizing that school takes priority over cadet activities.

An Invitation to Participate

Parents are welcome to observe all CAP activities. There are no secret meetings.

CAP can always use more adult volunteers. If you are willing to serve occasionally as a chaperone or driver, consider joining as a Cadet Sponsor Member.

If you are interested in participating more fully in CAP's emergency services, aerospace education or cadet program missions, consider joining as a Senior Member.

for more ► capmembers.com/parents

Parents' Committee

Parents can support the cadets in their local squadron without officially joining CAP by serving on a parents' committee. Some ways parents can help include:

- asking area businesses to make financial or in-kind donations
- organizing a carpool system
- planning an awards night or pot luck dinner
- helping the squadron connect with local civic groups
- serving as a guest speaker
- spreading the news about CAP and helping recruit new members.

Addressing Concerns

As a parent, any time you have a question or concern, please contact the local squadron commander. CAP takes parents' concerns very seriously.

If local leaders are unable to resolve an issue to your satisfaction, your wing (state) leaders will gladly address your concerns.



"I joined just to get the CAP driver's license so I could help drive the kids, but two and half years later I'm a full-fledged active member."

Melanie Niedfeldt, Utah

Testimonials

"I made my first solo flight at a CAP encampment."

ASTRONAUT ERIC BOE
Texas



"One of the big things [about being a cadet officer] is learning to think on a higher level."

CADET EVAN TODD
Ohio



"I joined just so I could get the CAP drivers' license so I could drive the kids, but two years later, I'm a full-fledged active member."

1ST LT MELANIE NIEDFELDT
Utah



"What really helped me become an Air Force fighter pilot was the discipline and leadership training I experienced in CAP."

CAPT. JEFF PIXLEY, USAF
California

"The feeling of being up in the air and looking down, of being in control of the plane, if only for a moment, is absolutely amazing!"

CADET PAIGE BARDEN
Michigan



"I liked the rappelling. I did something I thought I couldn't do!"

CADET LYDIA JUDGE
Maryland