

DENNIS K. ORTHNER, Ph.D.
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Brief Biography



Dr. Dennis K. Orthner is Professor of Social Work and Public Policy and Associate Director of the Jordan Institute for Families at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Orthner is currently serving as the Evaluation Director for a federally sponsored program to develop and provide Essential Life Skills for Military Families to military active and reserve component families across the nation. He previously served as Director of the National Demonstration Program for Citizen-Soldier Support, a community capacity building effort to support military personnel and families in the National Guard and Reserves. He is also examining the consequences of welfare reform for children in school; assisting in the evaluation and reorganization of military family and child support services; working with Israeli colleagues on new models of building effective human services; and working on performance based programming in both private and public sectors. He directs the multi-year Family Strengths Project, attempting to identify the factors that are associated with family risk and resilience. In support of these efforts, Dr. Orthner has presented testimony before the US, House and Senate Armed Services Committees, US Senate Caucus on the Family; and the US House of Representatives Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families. He has worked with the US Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Defense on work and family related issues. He served on the National Advisory Board of the National Military Family Association.

Dr. Orthner began his work in support of military personnel and family issues in 1977. He recently developed a series of reports for the U.S. Army on the adjustment of military families to separations, deployments and relocations. He has also recently co-authored with civilian and military colleagues reports and instruction manuals for the U.S. Air Force that are designed to promote military family and community resilience through coordinated interagency strategies. This work has been recognized by military leaders across the military branches and is serving as a model for the reorganization of support services to better respond to the needs of military personnel, families and communities.

Dr. Orthner received his Ph.D. degree in Sociology from Florida State University in 1974. He came to the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill in 1988. He also conducted policy research in Washington, DC for SRA Corporation in the early 1980's. Dr. Orthner served as the Chief Scientist for the Army Family Research Program, directed the Center for Work and Family Issues at the University of Georgia and established the Human Services Research and Design Laboratory at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill. He has served as a consultant to local, state and national organizations working on performance based management systems. He has also worked on public policy concerns with numerous organizations including The Army Research Institute, The Conference Board, The Center for Law and Social Policy, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy. He has been a visiting lecturer at West Point and the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Dr. Orthner has published extensively in areas of his research and consultation. He is the author or co-author of several books including, Families In Blue (1980), Intimate Relationships (1981), Youth in Transition (1987) and The Organization Family (1989). He has authored over 100 research publications in numerous professional journals. He is listed in Who's Who in America (2009), American Men and Women of Science, the Directory of Distinguished Americans, Outstanding Young Men in America, and others.