

CLASSROOM TOOLKIT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Hi there!

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your decision to support the Teal Up initiative.

Military children navigate frequent relocations, school transitions, and extended separations from loved ones, all while showing incredible adaptability and courage.

Your commitment to raising awareness and fostering understanding in your classroom or youth space helps ensure these children feel recognized, supported, and celebrated.

Thank you for joining us in honouring military children and for helping to build a more inclusive, compassionate, and resilient community.

With sincere appreciation,
Shannon Chapman
Co-Founder, Teal Up Initiative
#TealUp



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TEAL UP CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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WHAT IS TEAL UP?

Celebrating Military Children in April

April is the **Month of the Military Child**, a time to recognize and celebrate the strength, resilience, and unique experiences of military children across Canada.

In the Shilo area, military students are woven into classrooms throughout multiple schools, and, unlike most children, military kids grow up in families that move frequently, often leaving behind friends, schools, and activities. They also experience long separations from parents or caregivers due to deployments, training, or military exercises.

Despite these challenges, military children continue to **adapt, grow, and succeed**—and this resilience deserves to be celebrated!

This year, **we invite everyone to wear teal in the month of April** to show military children that we see their strength and appreciate their experiences.

**TEAL UP FOR
MILITARY KIDS!**



TEAL UP CLASSROOM TOOLKIT

To support educators in acknowledging and honouring military children, we have created this **Teal Up Classroom Toolkit**

This toolkit is a **low-prep, engaging resource** filled with activities that can be incorporated throughout the month of April.

Each activity comes with **grade-level recommendations**, but feel free to adapt them based on the needs of your students.

These activities promote themes of **resilience, adapting to change, healthy relationships, and emotional regulation**—important skills for all students, whether they are from a military family or not.

This toolkit is designed for flexibility!

You can use it:

- **During morning meetings or circle time**
- **As a transition activity when a prep class is rescheduled**
- **As part of literacy, art, or wellness lessons**
- **During reading buddy programs**
- **Anytime you want to foster community and empathy in your classroom!**

Note: Some materials and information in this toolkit have been adapted from various educational resources.

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TEALUP

Classroom Activities

Grades
K - 2

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - K TO 2

Dandelion Breathing

Mindfulness Activity

Why dandelions?

Dandelions are the official flower of military children because, like them, they can take root and flourish anywhere.

This breathing exercise helps students visualize their strength while practicing mindfulness.

Instructions:

- 1 Imagine holding the biggest, fluffiest dandelion in your hand.
- 2 Take a deep breath in and hold it for a moment.
- 3 Slowly blow out, imagining your breath carrying the dandelion seeds into the air.
- 4 Watch the seeds float and dance as you exhale.

Try pairing this activity with a real dandelion (if in season) or use cotton balls to represent seeds!



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - K TO 2

Cotton Ball Dandelions

Hands-On Craft

Materials Needed:

- Green Pipe Cleaners
- Cotton Balls

Instructions:

- 1 Give each student one cotton ball and one pipe cleaner.
- 2 Have them twist the pipe cleaner around the cotton ball to create a dandelion stem.
- 3 Gently pull the cotton ball to make it look fluffy like a dandelion in seed form.

Bonus:

- *Add beads to the stem—each bead can represent a time the student practices dandelion breathing.*
- *Use the dandelion as a painting tool by dipping it in paint and stamping a picture!*



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - K TO 2

"I Can't... Yet!"

Growth Mindset Activity

All children, and especially Military Children face **many changes**, but through those challenges, they have the opportunity to develop a **strong growth mindset**.

This activity helps students recognize that **learning takes time** and that "**I can't**" is just "**I can't... yet!**"

Instructions:

- 1 Ask: Who knows how to tie their shoes?
- 2 Discuss: Did you always know how? What was it like learning?
- 3 Brainstorm: As a class, list 5 things students can do now that they once couldn't.
- 4 Create a class poster: "Things We Can't Do... Yet!"
- 5 Throughout the month, cross off things students learn to do!

Host a "talent show" where students showcase a new skill they've learned!



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Classroom Activities

Grades
3 - 5

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - 3 TO 5

Cactus Friends vs Flower Friends

Healthy Friendships Lesson

Military children often move and have to make new friends in different schools.

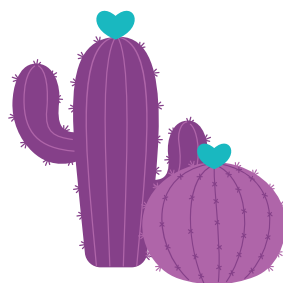
This activity teaches students about different types of friendships and what makes a kind, supportive friend.

Materials Needed:

- Printable Cactus & Flower Templates
See Resources
- Crayons or markers
- Types of Friends Slideshow
See Resources

Instructions:

- 1 Hand out the cactus and flower templates for students to cut and colour.
- 2 Go through the **Types of Friends** slideshow.
- 3 **Discuss:** What makes a cactus friend? (Someone who is prickly or hard to connect with.) What makes a flower friend? (Someone who is kind and welcoming.)
- 4 Encourage students to reflect on their own friendships.



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - 3 TO 5

Pom Pom Dandelions

Art Activity

Students can create beautiful dandelion paintings that symbolize military children's resilience!

Materials Needed:

- Canvas or paper
- Acrylic paints (blue, teal, white, green)
- Pom Poms & popsicle sticks (for stamping)

Instructions:

- 1 Create a serene background using soft blue and green paint. Let dry.
- 2 Paint a green dandelion stem.
- 3 Dip pom poms in white paint and stamp them onto the canvas to form the dandelion fluff.
- 4 Use a fine brush to add floating seeds to symbolize movement.

Bonus:

- *Discuss how dandelion seeds travel—just like military families!*



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - 3 TO 5

“What Can vs. Can't I Control?”

Emotional Regulation Lesson

Military children experience many things out of their control, such as deployments, moves, and family separations.

This activity helps students focus on what they can control.

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper & markers

Instructions:

- 1 Brainstorm examples of things that change (e.g., moving, a parent leaving on deployment).
- 2 Divide the class into groups:
 - Two groups list things they CAN control (e.g., attitude, effort, kindness).
 - Two groups list things they CAN'T control (e.g., weather, school changes).
- 3 Discuss as a class and create a visual to remind students to focus on what they can control.



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Classroom Activities

**Grades
6 – 8**

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - 6 TO 8

Positive Affirmation Bracelets

Self-Esteem & Friendship Activity

Military children often move to new locations and have to make new friends frequently.

This activity encourages students to build resilience and celebrate healthy friendships by creating positive affirmation bracelets for themselves and a friend.

Materials Needed:

- Printable bracelet templates (or strips of cardstock)
See Resources
- Markers, coloured pencils, or stickers

Instructions:

- 1 Explain that students will create a bracelet with a positive affirmation for themselves and one for a peer.
- 2 Have them choose from three template designs or make their own.
- 3 Decorate one bracelet for themselves with a meaningful phrase (e.g., "I am strong," "I can do hard things," "I belong").
- 4 Create a second bracelet for a friend or classmate with an encouraging message.
- 5 Discuss the importance of kind words and self-belief in difficult times.

Optional: Use string and letter beads to create wearable friendship bracelets instead of paper ones!



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - 6 TO 8

Splash Paint Dandelions

Creative Art Project

This fun and creative activity symbolizes resilience through art! Students will use fly swatters to paint dandelions, representing how military children are uprooted and grow wherever the wind takes them.

Materials Needed:

- Long fabric sheets (blue or teal)
- Acrylic or fabric paint (white, yellow, green)
- Fly swatters (one per student)
- Paintbrushes (optional)
- Protective covering for tables and clothing
- Paper plates or paint trays

Instructions:

- 1 Cover workspaces and have students wear old clothes or aprons.
- 2 Lay fabric flat on a protected surface.
- 3 Using a paintbrush, create a green dandelion stem. Let it dry.
- 4 Dip the fly swatter into white paint and press it onto the fabric to create the fluffy dandelion head.
- 5 Add details like drifting seeds using small paintbrushes.

Bonus:

- *Display the finished artwork in a hallway or classroom to celebrate military children!*



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - 6 TO 8

What is Resilience?

Discussion & Hands-On Demonstration

Military children are often described as resilient, but what does that really mean?

This activity helps students understand how resilience works through discussion and a hands-on demonstration.

Materials Needed:

- Elastic bands (one per student)
- **Video:** "Resilience – But What Is It?" *See Resources*
- **"The Hugging Tree: A Story About Resilience"** by Jill Neimark *(optional) See Resources*

Instructions:

- 1 Ask: "What does resilience mean to you?"
- 2 Depending on the grade level, either:
 - Read *The Hugging Tree* and discuss its message.
 - Watch the short resilience video and talk about key takeaways.
- 3 Give each student an elastic band and demonstrate how it stretches and returns to its original shape.
- 4 Discuss: "How does this relate to resilience?" (*When we face challenges, we stretch, but we find ways to bounce back.*)
- 5 Ask students: What makes military children resilient? What makes YOU resilient?

Optional: Create a class list of ways students can build resilience in their daily lives.

TEALUP

Classroom Activities

**Grades
9 - 12**

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - 9 TO 12

Dandelion Poems

Creative Writing & Reflection

A dandelion-themed poem can symbolize resilience, change, and growth—just like military children experience.

Materials Needed:

- Paper or notebooks
- Pencils, pens, or markers
- Dandelion-themed printouts or images
- Sample dandelion poems for inspiration

Instructions:

- 1 Begin by discussing the characteristics of a dandelion—how it grows anywhere, spreads its seeds, and thrives despite challenges.
- 2 Show pictures of dandelions at different stages (blooming yellow flowers, fluffy seed heads).
- 3 Read a short poem or descriptive passage about dandelions to inspire students.
- 4 Brainstorm descriptive words and phrases related to dandelions (e.g., "golden petals," "floating seeds," "swaying in the breeze").
- 5 Encourage students to write their own dandelion poem, focusing on themes of resilience and change.
- 6 Students can decorate their poem pages with dandelion illustrations or designs.

Optional: Have students present their poems aloud or compile them into a class poetry booklet!

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - 9 TO 12

Graffiti with Positive Affirmations

Community Art Project

Creating graffiti-style art with positive affirmations is a great way for students to express themselves and uplift others.

Materials Needed:

- Large poster paper or canvas
- Acrylic paint in various colours
- Paint markers for fine details
- Protective gear (gloves, aprons)
- Sample positive affirmations
See Resources

Instructions:

- 1 Discuss the power of positive words and how they affect our mindset.
- 2 Brainstorm motivational affirmations (e.g., "I am strong," "I am capable," "I can do hard things").
- 3 Have students plan their design, sketching out ideas.
- 4 Paint a background colour that makes their affirmation stand out.
- 5 Use bold lettering to write their positive message.
- 6 Add shadows, highlights, or doodles to make it unique!
- 7 Display the artwork in the classroom or school hallway as a visual reminder of resilience and strength.

Bonus:

- *If painting is not an option, students can create digital graffiti art using a design app!*

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - 9 TO 12

Vision Boards

Goal-Setting & Aspirations Activity

Creating a vision board helps students visualize their dreams, goals, and future aspirations.

Materials Needed:

- Poster boards or large cardstock
- Magazines, newspapers, and printed images
- Scissors & glue
- Markers, stickers, and washi tape

Instructions:

- 1 Explain: A vision board is a visual representation of goals and dreams. It helps keep people motivated and focused on what they want to achieve.
 - 2 Have students take a few minutes to think about their personal and academic goals.
 - 3 Ask questions like:
 - What are your short-term and long-term goals?
 - What makes you happy and excited?
 - What do you want to achieve in the next year?
 - 4 Provide magazines and printed images for students to cut out pictures, words, and phrases that represent their aspirations.
 - 5 Encourage creative layouts—there is no right or wrong way to design a vision board!
 - 6 Have students present their vision boards to small groups or the class.
 - 7 Encourage students to keep their vision boards in a visible place as a daily reminder of their goals.
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Resources

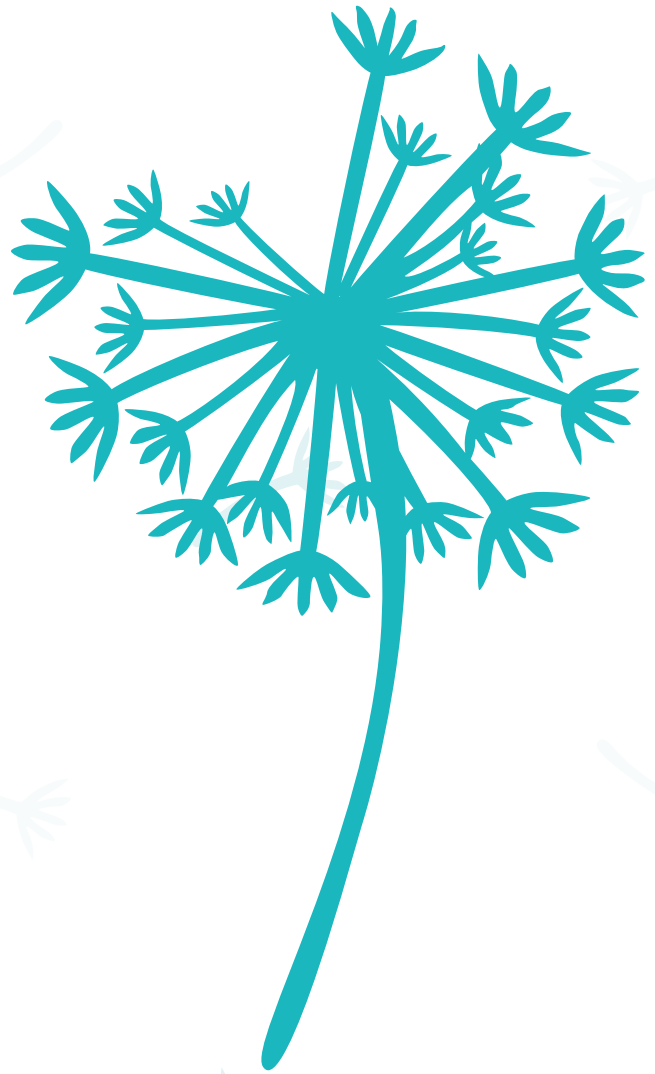


RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS & CLASSROOMS

Supporting Military Children in Canadian Classrooms

This **Resources Section** offers **additional tools, readings, videos, and activities** to help you better understand and support military children in your classroom.

Whether you're looking to expand your own understanding, introduce your students to the life of a military child, or build inclusive classroom discussions, these **carefully selected resources** can support your planning and teaching throughout the **Month of the Military Child**—and beyond.



TEAL UP FOR MILITARY KIDS!

RESOURCES

General Information on Military Life & Military Families

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)

A career in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is a commitment to serving and protecting Canada at home and abroad. Military members train extensively to develop and refine the skills needed for combat, peacekeeping, and disaster response.

The CAF is composed of three main operational elements:

- **Royal Canadian Navy** – Maritime operations and security
- **Canadian Army** – Land-based defence and combat operations
- **Royal Canadian Air Force** – Air and space defence, logistics, and search-and-rescue

Military Life & It's Impact on Families

Relocations & Postings

CAF members are frequently posted to new locations, often every 3–5 years. These moves support career progression but require families to adjust to new schools, jobs, and communities.

Training & Deployments

Training and deployments take military members away from their families for weeks or months at a time. This commitment ensures operational readiness but can be challenging for loved ones.

Imposed Restriction (IR) & Separation

In some cases, military members move to a new posting without their family due to education, financial, or medical reasons. This arrangement, known as Imposed Restriction (IR), allows families to stay in one place while the member serves elsewhere.

Support for Military Families

The Canadian Armed Forces Family Covenant recognizes the sacrifices made by families and reinforces the CAF's commitment to providing resources and services to support them.

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Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs) across Canada play a key role in supporting families throughout these transitions.



Military families may face challenges related to:

- Finding employment after a relocation
- Accessing childcare and education
- Coping with deployments and separations
- Navigating healthcare and mental health support

RESOURCES

Books & Read-Alouds Featuring Military Children

This is a carefully curated list of books and picture books that highlight the military child experience, resilience, and themes of change, friendship, and family connections.

These stories can be used to spark classroom conversations or serve as the focus for reading buddies, circle time, or literacy blocks.

All of the books listed to the right and more can be found for free on the CFMWS website, the QR code to the left or the link below:

<https://cfmws.ca/support-services/families/children-youth/storybooks-for-military-children>



Online/Digital Books

● **D is for Deployment: Ann Raps it Up**

By Marg Rogers

Military life comes with unique challenges for our families. For instance, serving members are often called away for extended lengths of time for military operations. In D is for Deployment the main character, Emma, unpacks difficult emotions and helps the reader understand that tackling the deployment cycle together can help a family deepen their bond.

● **Joey's Mom is Going Away**

By Nathalie Connoly

Joey's Mom is Going Away supports children who are separated from a parent. Using text, illustrations and activities the story takes children into Joey the beaver's world as he copes with his mother's absence.

● **My Mom is a Soldier**

By Shawn Belisle

My Mom is a Soldier for parents and educators of military children ages 4 to 8 years is intended to educate and support children during the often emotional and stressful posting season.

Classroom Tool Kit Resources

● **The Hugging Tree: A Story About Resilience**

By Jill Neimark

<https://www.jillneimark.com/hugging.php>

Alone on a mighty cliff by the sea, a tiny tree struggles to grow and thrive. She is nurtured by the sea, sun and moon, and becomes home to a family of loons. But winter icestorms and bitter cold break her boughs and roots. Will she survive? Find out how the hugging tree grows until she can hold and shelter others.

The resilience of the Hugging Tree calls to mind the potential in all of us: to thrive, despite times of struggle and difficulty. To nurture the little spark of hope and resolve. To dream and to grow, just where we are.

RESOURCES

Videos

● **Resilience – But What Is It?**

5 Ways to Build Resilience

By Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust

We all face challenges and we all find ways to overcome them. Resilience is ordinary not extraordinary. We all have it to larger or smaller degrees. We want to help build awareness of this and support young peoples capacity to do positive and realistic things to support themselves. So push yourself, set new goals, overcome a hurdle.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FDyiUEn8Vw>

Slide Deck

● **Cactus Friends Vs Flower Friends**

Types of Friendship Slide Deck

Created by Teal Up

This activity teaches students about different types of friendships and what makes a kind, supportive friend.

<http://shilomfrc.shor.tn/friendship>



RESOURCES

Positive Affirmation Bracelets

I AM STRONG

I AM RESILIENT

I AM BRAVE

I AM SMART

I CAN DO HARD THINGS

IT'S OK TO MAKE MISTAKES

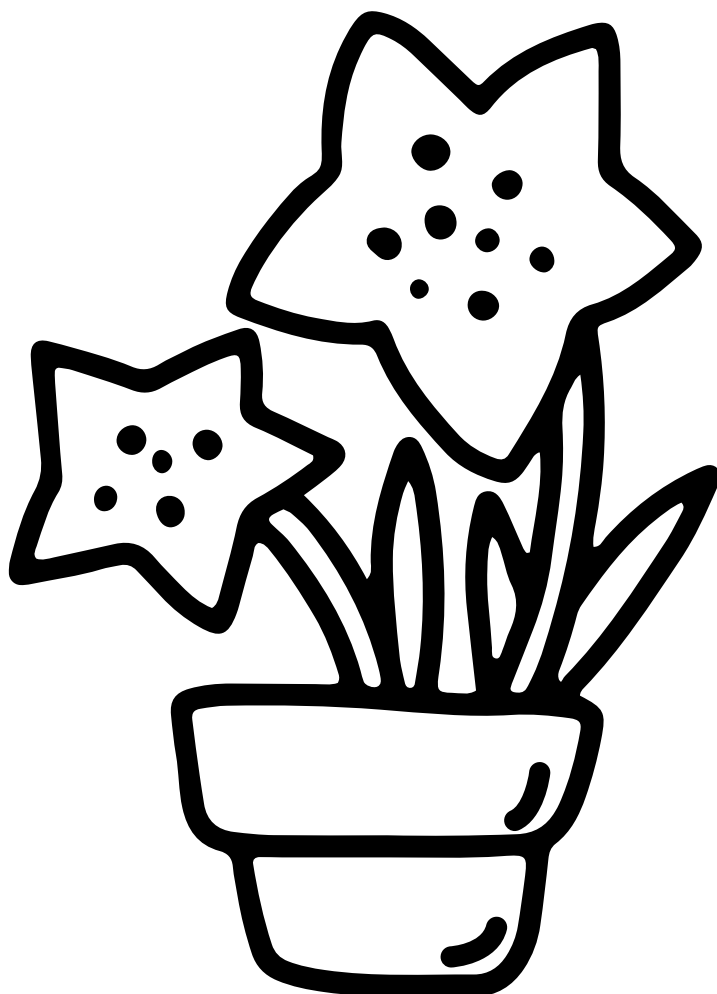
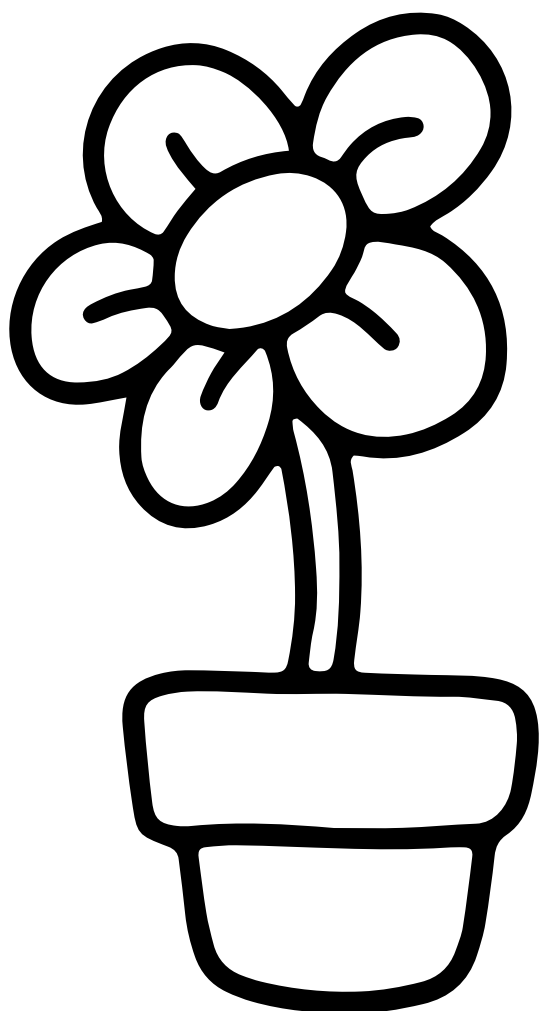
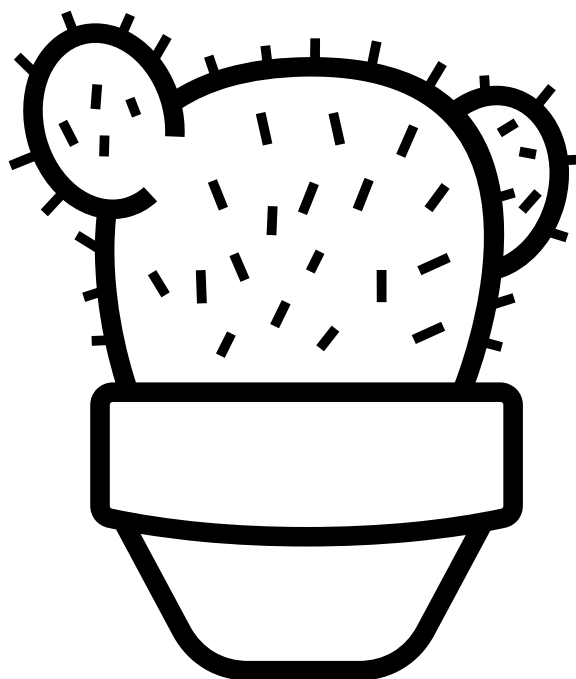
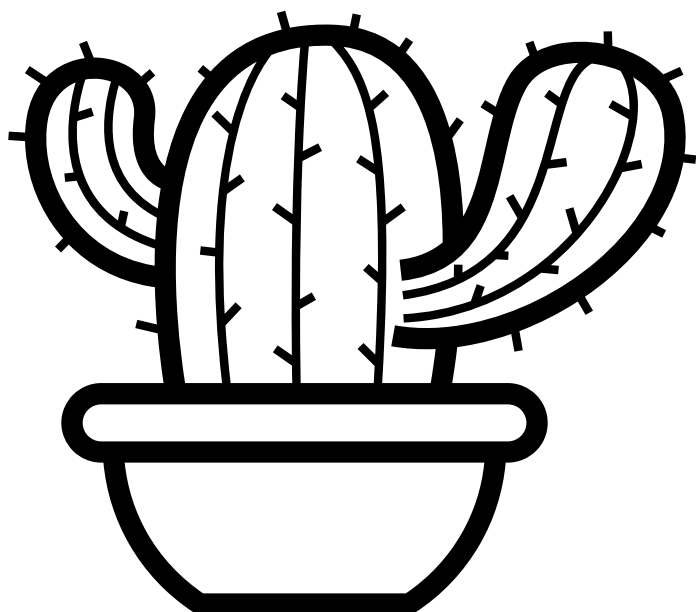
TEAL UP

I AM



RESOURCES

Cactus & Flower



THANK YOU

Thank you so much for participating in the 2024 Teal Up Classroom Toolkit!

This resource was proudly created by the **Shilo Military Family Resource Centre**.

This is our third edition of the **Teal Up Classroom Toolkit**, and we would **love to see how you and your students are using it!**

If your class creates artwork, projects, or displays inspired by this toolkit, we'd be thrilled if you could share photos with us.

Please **tag us on social media using #TealUp** or **email your photos directly to tealup@shilomfrc.ca** so we can highlight your students' creativity in future editions.

To share feedback or photos, please email: tealup@shilomfrc.ca

Thank you for supporting military children and helping us celebrate their strength and resilience!

