



Exceptional Living Abroad

Quarterly Exceptional Family Member Program Newsletter from Fleet & Family Support Centers of Navy Region Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia



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When it comes to special needs, OCONUS families face extra challenges in finding resources and community.

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Making a move can be difficult, especially for children with special needs. How school liaisons can help.

Changes in EFMP: What You Need To Know Now

Budget act increased support to families with special needs. What you'll see: greater coordination of services for families; more support in assignments.

Established in 1987, the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) is a DoD-wide mandatory program for active duty families with special needs. EFMP coordinates assignments so family members are located where they can receive the care and services they need.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2010 (NDAA10) expanded EFMP even further. Family members' needs will be considered when moving from state-to-state and not just overseas. Service members can be stabilized at locations for four years, and community support for families is being expanded.

NDAA10 also established the Office of Community Support for Military Families

with Special Needs (OSN) under the Secretary of Defense to identify & address gaps in services, giving families a voice at the highest levels.

More immediately visible to families are new staff in all Fleet and Family Centers (FFSCs). Every FFSC now has an EFMP Liaison to assist in educating communities and commands about the program. FFSC EFMP Liaisons work directly with families to answer questions and connect families with resources to improve quality of life.

FFSC EFMP Liaisons also assist in connecting families with CONUS resources before a PCS move. The network of liaisons can share information about schools, medical and special services in



communities worldwide, helping ease the process of transition that can be extra challenging for families with special needs.

NDAA10 also mandated that families have access to case management to assist in setting goals, coordinating providers and resolving problems in accessing care. The Navy has launched an online system in NFAAS to assist families in enrolling and supporting their ongoing needs. EFMP families can request case management assistance by contacting your FFSC EFMP Liaison.

Learn more about EFMP benefits and resources by contacting your FFSC EFMP Liaison, MTF EFMP Coordinator or Command EFMP POC.



Now Available: Download the Educational Directory for Children with Special Needs

Information on educational services for children on the autism spectrum and other learning/developmental disorders. Published by DoD Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs.

Online at:
apps.mhf.dod.mil/efmp/directory

Resources for Families Overseas

More than 100,000 military families (nearly 20,000 in the Navy) have members with special needs. This includes spouses, children, or dependent parents who require special medical or educational services.

Community resources that we take for granted at home are often limited overseas. Families need extra help in accessing information and guidance, and making connections with a community of people dealing with similar challenges becomes even more important.

Online Resources

Navy Region EURAFSWA EFMP facebook page

Useful news for OCONUS families, connection with people sharing similar challenges. <http://on.fb.me/EURAFSWAEFMP>

Military Homefront EFMP Section

Download the DoD Special Needs Parent Toolkit with tools to help military families navigate the maze of medical and special education services, community support, and entitlements.

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/tf/efmp>

Military One Source

Special needs consultants are available to discuss medical, psychological and education resources available to military families returning to CONUS. **Skype or call +1 800-342-9647.**

Exceptional Advocate

Online DoD newsletter for military families with special needs.

<http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/efmp/news>

Homefront Connections

Online community for servicemembers, families and support personnel. Create a free account, log in and visit the EFMP space for discussions & resources.

<https://apps.mhf.dod.mil/homefrontconnections>

OCONUS Travel Resources

- Downloadable accessible travel guides to Europe & Middle East destinations. www.accessinlondon.org
www.accessinparis.org www.accessinisrael.org
- Traveling in Ireland with physical challenges.
www.accessibleireland.com
- Free travel tips and guides for children with a range of learning or developmental disabilities.
www.autisticglobetrotting.com

Local Connections

Naples

- Special Needs Parent Support Group meets 3rd Wednesday each month. Email mark.r.johnson@eu.navy.mil.
- ADHD Support Group meets 1st Wednesday each month at Naples Elementary. Email coleen.byrnes@eu.dodea.edu.

Rota:

- Rota Special Children Community. Email RotaSSC@gmail.com.

Souda Bay:

- EXELIXI Educational and Psychological Diagnostic Center. Phone 2821-0-20370

To recommend other online or local resources useful to OCONUS families, email EFMPLiaison@gmail.com or call DSN 314 626-6951.



“How do I know if my family is eligible?”

EFMP covers most chronic medical or psychological conditions. Still not sure? Take this quiz and contact your MTF EFMP Coordinator.

Many families are surprised to find that they are eligible for EFMP. “I had always thought EFMP was for really severe disabilities,” said Lisa Smith, Senior Spouse Representative for NAVFAC. “I didn’t know that these services were available for such a range of issues. It really takes the stigma out of this.”

Per OPNAVINST 1754.2D, enrollment in EFMP is mandatory when an eligible condition is identified. Many benefits are available, including flexibility in assignments coordination, housing priority, and special services or equipment that may not otherwise be covered by Tricare. EFMP also offers case management to assist families in helping set goals and coordinating services from all providers.

So how do you know if you’re eligible?

Take this quiz. If you can answer yes to any question, consult with your doctor or child development specialist to evaluate whether you may be eligible.

Within the last 5 years, have any of your DEERS-enrolled dependents had:

1. A medical or physical condition that lasted or will last longer than 6 months (including but not limited to asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, cerebral palsy, seizures, chronic pain, migraines, etc.)?



2. A psychological condition (including but not limited to anxiety/depression, PTSD, bipolar disorder, etc.) that lasted or will last longer than 6 months?
3. A developmental condition (including but not limited to autism, speech impediment, ADHD, learning disability, etc.) that lasted or will last longer than 6 months?
4. Do you have a child who is currently registered with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Section 504 plan, or was registered on one within the last 2 years?

If you think you may be eligible, contact your Command EFMP POC or MTF EFMP Coordinator to arrange a discussion with your physician. The privacy of your information is assured under OPNAVINST 1754.2D.

If you are eligible for enrollment, a team of support personnel including your Command EFMP POC, FFSC EFMP Liaison, and MTF EFMP Coordinator are available to assist you

with program information and resources to support your needs.

Learn more about the enrollment process and EFMP benefits online at <http://bit.ly/NavyEFMP>.

Community. Connection.
News you can use.

facebook

<http://on.fb.me/EURAFSWAEFMP>

You Are Accountable

To comply with instruction & ensure smooth transitions, sponsors must:

Contact your MTF EFMP Coordinator to enroll all family members with chronic medical, mental health, or educational conditions requiring special services.

"Planning ahead is the key to career success. Every military family has to make hard choices sometimes, but with EFMP, your career counselor and detailee can help you find the right opportunities that give you the flexibility to make sure your family's taken care of while you focus on success in your mission."

*Robert L. White
CNREURAFSWA CMDCM*

Update the DD 2791 and/or 2792-1 every three years or when changes in the enrolled condition or family member status occur.

Update your EFMP status 12 months prior to projected rotation date.

Disenroll from EFMP when family status changes, medical or educational needs no longer exist, or the family member no longer lives with you.

In short, service members – not commands – are responsible for enrolling family members and staying up to date. Failure to do so can affect assignments and even trigger UCMJ punitive measures.

Friendly Faces. Helping Hands.

Your FFSC EFMP Liaison and MTF EFMP Coordinator help you navigate the system and connect you with resources to improve quality of life.

Fleet and Family Support Centers across Navy Region EURAFSWA have friendly, knowledgeable EFMP Liaisons trained to help families find resources, solve problems and coordinate services.

You can also request case management to help your family establish goals or assist in addressing problems.

FFSC EFMP Liaisons are always available



to answer questions, share resources or simply listen. The privacy of your information is assured.

MTF EFMP Coordinators are the knowledge experts for enrollment and program status updates. Your guide through the system, there is no question that they can't get an answer to, and they want to work with you

to ensure your application goes smoothly.

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Bahrain enrollment/disenrollment/status updates, contact LT Joe Santinoceto, USNH Sigonella EFMP Coordinator

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The School Liaison Program

PCS season is right around the corner. Liaisons help you know *before* you go.

Frequent relocations are part of the military lifestyle. The military child will likely change schools eight to ten times during a parent's military career. Making the transition to an unfamiliar new school can cause anxiety and stress for parents and their children.

School liaisons (SL) are located at most major military installations. While the function of the SL may vary between installations, they generally help families, educators and commands understand how frequent relocations, deployments and

separations impact children's ability to receive a quality education.

The SLs act as a link to the installation commander, local school personnel, and military families. SLs help school personnel address issues related to transition and the military lifestyle by providing information, referral, training, and resources.

For families relocating with a school aged child, the SLs provide important information regarding local schools and available services. They are knowledgeable

about the issues school-aged children face when relocating and can provide tools to help families ease this transition. The SLs can be a great help navigating the special education system as they work closely with the Exceptional Family Member Program family support personnel.

If you need information about schools, educational resources, services, or tips for easing the transition, contact a SL. Visit militaryinstallations.dod.mil for contact information for the nearest installation school liaison.



For folks with school-age kids, the school transition is probably the largest stress factor in a move OCONUS. Often those concerns are amplified when you have a child with special needs. Contacting a SLO at the new location is one of the best ways to relieve that stress, because we know the local contacts for addressing special needs. We are happy to make the contacts for families.

Parents are always relieved to know that DoDEA is compliant with the Interstate Compact on Education for Military Children and adhere to incoming Individualized Education Plans and 504 plans. Schools may undertake further assessments as necessary, but the initial response is to provide comparable services and implement the differentiations established by the sending school.

“The SLO should be at the top of your list when you get your orders. Early planning is key to a good transition.”

Pam O'Connor, School Liaison Officer, NSA Naples

Mythbusters!

Research shows people who know the facts about EFMP see it as a helpful tool for families and service members. Myths keep people in the dark, preventing families from planning ahead for success.

Myth 1: EFMP kills careers.

The Facts: EFMP does not prevent career advancement. Many Master Chiefs and Admirals have been and are enrolled in EFMP. Your records are never seen by review boards – only your CO and EFMP POC.

Myth 2: I won't get the assignment I need if I enroll.

The Facts: Career counselors and detailers work with EFMP to target assignments that support career development. EFMP does not eliminate sea/shore rotations, keeps you worldwide deployable. Service members always have the option of taking unaccompanied assignments. The Navy now has 5 hub installations for homesteading & sea/shore rotations.

Get the facts online at <http://on.fb.me/EURAFSWAEFMP>