Registrations are now open for the fifth annual Quantico Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Special Olympics Fun Field Day Meet, which will take place at Butler Stadium on Saturday, April 22nd, from 1000-1300. Volunteers and athletes can complete registration at www.goo.gl/yjSEou, or by calling 571-931-0524. The event is a non-competitive athletic event for ages three to adult, who are enrolled in EFMP or have a diagnosed intellectual or developmental disability. It is open to the community, and each activity can be easily adapted to the individual athlete’s level of comfort. No prior experience, practice, or physicals needed! In addition to the athletic portion of the day, there will also be a Special Needs Resource Fair, featuring both base and community partners who support individuals with special needs. Sparky the Fire Dog, McGruff the Crime Dog and the Quantico Fire Department will also be featured. In the event of rain, the event will move indoors at the Barber Physical Activity Center.

This year, the Quantico Single Marine Program (SMP) is participating in the event in conjunction with the SMP Days of Service. Volunteers run water to athletes, oversee each activity, and each athlete is assigned a volunteer “buddy” who supports and encourages them throughout the event. Parents and family members also join in the fun, celebrating every bit of success. Throughout the meet, music plays, as teams (participants grouped by age) rotate through each activity. During the closing ceremony, each athlete is awarded a participation medal.

Mr. Christopher Tucker, Management Assistant in Civilian Manpower at TECOM, has volunteered for two years, and for the third year in a row, will take up the microphone as the Master of Ceremonies. “The impact of the Special Olympics on the athletes and volunteers is truly immeasurable. Personally, my first year, I went out hoping to leave an impression on someone’s life, and I hope I did. But, I left that field with such a strong impression on my life that I have come back for my 3rd consecutive year.”

For further information, interested parties may contact the Quantico EFMP Office at 571-931-0524 or by emailing Quantico-EFMPOffice@usmc-mccl.org.
Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move season is fast approaching. Maybe you’ve only been at the current duty station for a short time, or maybe you’re holding orders, but chances are, you’ll be facing another PCS move, eventually. Moving with a special needs family member can add stress to the situation.

One sentence sums up the wisdom of many military families: “Proactive is better than reactive.” You know a move is coming. You may not know when, or where you’ll be heading, but you know it’s coming.

What can you do, proactively, to be prepared?

- Communicate with your EFMP caseworker. As soon as you know orders are pending, let the caseworker know. Your family caseworker can assist sponsors and families with relocation. From connecting the family with the gaining installation’s EFMP office, to confirming updates, the caseworker can assist.
- Make sure your EFMP enrollment paperwork is current. Making sure you have accurate information in the DD Form 2792 (Medical Summary) and 2792-1 (Special Education/Early Intervention) will help the staff at EFMP Headquarters to evaluate the needs of the EFM and the capabilities of the potential gaining location effectively. If you know you’re likely to have PCS orders in hand in the next six months, start this process as soon as possible.
- Request complete copies of treatment records from current providers to hand-carry. For your students, you’ll also want a complete and up to date copy of their school record and any Individual Education Program (IEP) paperwork. (This is different from the “official transcript”. Schools will send the official transcript to a new school after you’ve enrolled your child, but the record will include a wider range of information, including samples of work, which can facilitate the best placement of your child at a new school.)
- Request a 90 day supply of any prescription medication taken regularly by your EFM(s). This will allow you some time to get settled and request an appointment with the EFM’s new Primary Care Manager or specialty provider before running out of your medication.
- If you are being packed and moved by movers (at government expense), you will have a weight limit based on the service member’s rank. If the EFM in the household has necessary medical equipment, the equipment does not count against the weight limit. (This information is located in the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) Ch5, Para 5192.)
- Think about your transportation plan. If you need to drive, plan out the trip. Think in advance about needed services along the way. If you’re flying, you’ll want to think about how long the EFM will be able to handle staying seated during the flight. One great resource, within the U.S., is the Transportation Security Administration’s website. It includes information for “special procedures” including assistance for those traveling with disabilities. The url is: https://www.tsa.gov/travel/special-procedures. Passengers can also request assistance from a Passenger Support Specialist through the toll free TSA Cares line or email box. The email address is TSA-ContactCenter@tsa.dhs.gov and the phone number is: 855-787-2227. Additional information can be found at: https://www.tsa.gov/travel/passenger-support.
- If you need special accommodations with hotels or other lodging facilities, call ahead. Make note of any confirmation numbers, and include the date and time of your call, and the name of the person with whom you spoke. These will help you smooth over any unexpected glitches at hotels.

A PCS move can be stressful, especially with an Exceptional Family Member (EFM), but a little prior planning may help it go much more smoothly.
Navigating... Summer Camps

The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the United States Department of Defense of the linked websites, or the information, products or services contained therein. For other than authorized activities such as military exchanges and Morale, Welfare and Recreation sites, the Department of Defense does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations.

School is almost over, and you may be thinking about summer camps. Disabilities don’t have to stand in the way of a camp experience. When considering camps, start by talking with your child. First, and foremost, are they ready for summer camp? Are they comfortable being away from you? Is this something that interests them? How independent are they? Do they have some self-advocacy skills? If a camp experience is in your child’s future, include your child in the selection process. If this is their very first camp experience, try something as low key as a local day-camp. If you’re preparing for an overnight camp, your child may have a friend that would be interested in attending at the same time. Often going to camp with a “buddy” can make the experience less daunting.

If you do a simple internet search for “camps”, you’ll find an overwhelming selection. Narrow your options by focusing on location or theme, budget, and the type of camp you want your child to attend. According to the American Camping Association, the average residential (overnight) camp will cost over $80 a day, and day camps run more than $40 daily. Really look at what the camp includes. Some have baseline prices, with additional fees for premium activities. You’ll also want to consider the location of the camp and the length of time your child will be required to stay, safety policies, emergency procedures, and counselor to camper ratios. Encourage your child to share any concerns. This should be a very exciting time for your child, you, and your family.

Your local installation may have summer camp and youth programs as well. As a military family, you may be able to take advantage of camp programs that are low or no cost to military families. The links below may be useful in your search.

www.operationwearehere.com has a lengthy list of camps specifically for military kids, some of which are free!
www.Veryspecialcamps.com/ provides a list of camps based on the type of disability supported or the state in which the camp is located. Another database with a similar function is available at: http://www.kidscamps.com/camps/u.s.a.-specialneeds-camps.

Another option may be to look at national organizations that support specific conditions and look for camps or camp directories. The National Hemophilia Association, as an example, has information about camps for children with bleeding disorders. Also, remember to inquire with organizations like your local YMCA, which may offer discounts to military families.

When inquiring about camps, you should know that The American Disabilities Act (ADA) Title III addresses public accommodations and services operated by private entities, and this includes most summer camps. It includes the following provisions.

• Prohibits places of public accommodation from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. Public accommodations include privately-owned, leased or operated facilities like hotels, restaurants, retail merchants, doctor’s offices, golf courses, private schools, day care centers, health clubs, sports stadiums, movie theaters, and so on.
• Sets the minimum standards for accessibility for alterations and new construction of commercial facilities and privately owned public accommodations. It also requires public accommodations to remove barriers in existing buildings where it is easy to do so without much difficulty or expense.
• Directs businesses to make "reasonable modifications" to their usual ways of doing things when serving people with disabilities.
• Requires that businesses take steps necessary to communicate effectively with customers with vision, hearing, and speech disabilities.

These provisions are regulated and enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice. Further information is available through www.ada.gov or through the ADA National Network (funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research, at http://adata.org/.

We know the system. We can help.
"I forgot to charge my phone." Can you imagine having an emergency, and your cell phone is dead? Most of us keep our cell phones charged, and some even carry batteries and chargers with them to make it through the day. We don’t think twice about these actions, because a dead cell phone is no more useful than a paperweight. As people, though, we may forget to “recharge” ourselves, especially when we’re busy taking care of others on a regular basis. Caregivers need to make time, regularly, to “recharge”. Consistent self-care can make an enormous difference. Taking care of yourself is a necessity, if you’re going to be able to take care of those around you.

Caregiver fatigue symptoms may include symptoms similar to those suffering depression, ranging from withdrawal from family and friends, and changes in sleep and eating patterns, to irritability, exhaustion, substance abuse and feelings that present a danger to self or others. While many of us have occasional moments of exhaustion or “blues”, it’s time for concern when these are ongoing problems.

How do you start practicing “self-care”?

• Find a way to take a break. New mothers hear it all the time. “Sleep when the baby sleeps.” If nothing else, when you can, nap. A nap of just twenty-minute nap is amazingly restorative. Can’t sleep during the day? Consider a few minutes of meditation.
• Are you eligible for Respite care? Families with an EFM with certain levels of need (LON 3 or LON 4) may be eligible for reimbursement for some part of the costs of up to 20 hours of “Respite care” each month. Talk with your caseworker about whether or not you’d be eligible for this.
• Take a realistic look at your schedule. How do you spend your days? You may realize that some of your time is used on tasks that can be delegated to someone else.
• Prioritize your workload. Some things have to be done. There’s just no way around it. When you prioritize all of the tasks that you have, you may find items on the bottom of the list that can be done less often, or skipped altogether. Make time for you, for things you love to do, for the things that allow you to feel recharged.
• Be your own best friend. If you had a friend who was in your situation, what would you tell your friend? Often, we are kinder to our friends than to ourselves.

Whether it’s reading a book, taking a walk, or enjoying a hobby, it is important to make time for yourself. Give yourself permission to thrive, not just survive. For further information, Military One Source has a fact sheet about Self-Care at: [http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/EFMP-FactSheet-AGuideToHealthyCaregiving.pdf](http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/EFMP-FactSheet-AGuideToHealthyCaregiving.pdf)

Self-care is critical for caregivers, and can support you in thriving, not just surviving. Take care of yourself, and recharge!
Your EFMP Family Caseworker can assist you in a wide variety of ways. Forms, information, resources, and referrals are just the start. Make your EFMP caseworker one of your first responders, not your last resort.


3. Military One Source — [https://www.militaryonesource.mil/](https://www.militaryonesource.mil/) is a great resource for information on all sort of topics that affect military families, to include making successful PCS moves. This includes special information regarding PCS moves with children. Check out their great EFMP resources, which can be downloaded, or in some cases, ordered, at no charge.

4. If your child is in a Department of Defense Dependents School (DoDDS), the following site has the Notice of Procedural Safeguards for all DoDDS special needs students’, families, and parents. [http://www.specialed.eu.dodea.edu/Parent%20Rights%20June%2008.pdf](http://www.specialed.eu.dodea.edu/Parent%20Rights%20June%2008.pdf).

5. If you are in the U.S., every state has at least one Parent Information Training Center for parents of children with disabilities, and many have Community Parent Resource Centers as well. You can find information to help you locate these resources, at Parent Center Hub: [http://www.parentcenterhub.org/](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/).

6. Emergency preparedness is important for every family, and including the needs of a special needs family member may require extra planning. You can find great information on how to build a special needs emergency plan at: [https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/news/events/PrepMonth2014/Pages/special-medical.aspx](https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/news/events/PrepMonth2014/Pages/special-medical.aspx)

7. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) may be able to offer some assistance, especially in U.S. airports. The official website ([https://www.tsa.gov/](https://www.tsa.gov/)) includes information about their programs to assist passengers with special needs, including Passenger Support Specialists who can assist in the airport, and the TSA office. One tip, contact TSA Cares via email ([TSA-ContactCenter@tsa.dhs.gov](mailto:TSA-ContactCenter@tsa.dhs.gov)) or phone: 855-787-2227, at least 72 hours before you plan to travel for direct support.