The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) is a Department of Defense program that helps military dependents with special needs. The Coast Guard, which operates under the authority of the Department of Homeland Security has a similar program called the Special Needs Program, or SNP.

EFMP Family Support staff, along with an installation’s School Liaison Officer, are the primary points of contact for parent centers for holding installation-based trainings, access to meet with families on installations, and insider information about installation support programs and family engagement.

**Note**: although the purpose of the EFMP and the SNP are the same across all branches of service, there are some differences, explained at the end of the article. There may also differences by installation, such as the availability of respite care providers and funding.

EFMP Functions:

1. **Identification and enrollment** is a collaborative effort among military-connected health care providers and EFMP staff:
	1. Example: a child is identified as having a particular disability by the family’s regular medical provider who refers the family to the EFMP enrollment office.
2. **Military duty assignment coordination**: once a family member is enrolled in the program, future duty assignments for the military service member are considered in the light of that family member’s medical or educational needs.
	1. For example, if a child is enrolled in EFMP due to the need for speech and occupational therapy, the service member’s projected duty station will be screened to see if these services are available.

**Note**: although the family member’s needs are considered in the assignment process, military requirements may take priority for assignment decisions and there are no guarantees that services and supports are available at a new duty location.

1. **Family Support**: this is the EFMP function which directly serves EFMP families and is the most common point of contact for parent centers. Staff are civilians who work for the military. Contact information for EFMP Family Support is available on our [Interactive Maps](https://branchta.org/maps/).
	1. Provides non-medical case management
	2. Assists with navigating the Department of Defense medical, transport, legal, and counseling systems.
	3. Provides information about local civilian services and supports
	4. May arrange support groups, classes, and family events for the benefit of EFMP families assigned to their installation.
	5. On some installations, EFMP Family Support may also provide access and financial support for respite care.

**Who is eligible for EFMP?**
Active duty personnel with family members who have special health\* or educational needs may be eligible. National Guard and Reserve personnel with family members who have special health or educational needs may be eligible during the time period when the service member is called for active federal duty. For EFMP ROC (below), National Guard and Reserve family members may have a consultation without their service member being called to active duty.

 \*requiring specialized care beyond the level of their general practitioner

**Getting enrolled in EFMP:**

Enrollment typically begins with the family member’s health care provider. This can be either the primary care manager or a specialty care provider that is military-connected. For additional information regarding the EFMP, families can contact EFMP coordinators, EFMP liaisons, EFMP system navigators, or family resources coordinators depending on their branch of service. Coast Guard parents may contact a Family Special Needs Case Management Officer.

**Getting the most benefit from EFMP**

It’s important for families to contact the current installation’s EFMP Family Support Office in these situations:

* To update the child’s EFMP file every three (3) years
* The parent has new medical or educational information about their child
* The service member is assigned to a new duty station (PCS) to make certain that paperwork on the Exceptional Family Member is up-to-date and to facilitate services and supports through the new duty station’s EFMP Family Support office.
* Transportation needs for their child or youth enrolled in EFMP
* Issues with military services and supports, or expected services and supports are not available
* Finding resources at the state and local levels (including parent centers!)
* Accessing state and federal benefits for which the Exceptional Family Member may be eligible

Find contact information for EFMP Family Support staff on our [Interactive Maps](https://branchta.org/maps/), or [contact the Branch](https://branchta.org/contact/) for assistance.

**New EFMP ROC program**

EFMP Resources, Options and Consultations” (EFMP ROC) is a new program that provides military families who have members with special health or educational needs with enhanced services.  Special needs consultants are available by appointment, via phone or video at no cost, and there is no limit to the number of appointments families can make.

* Supplements installation-based EFMP Family Support
* Highly useful for remote families such as National Guard and Reserve. *The service member does* ***not*** *need to be called to active duty for these families to use EFMP ROC.*
* Extended-hour appointments add convenience
* Can be used for cross-referrals to EFMP Family Support when a family plans a move to a new installation

Families can ask for assistance with:

* Exploring education options
* Special Education-will refer families to Parent Training and Information Centers (new!)
* Healthcare and TRICARE (military) programs for individuals with disabilities
	+ -including local medical care and services—with the support of a dedicated TRICARE specialist
* Federal and state benefits for individuals with disabilities
* Connecting to military and other child care, support groups, in-home care, and deployment support options
* Special needs trusts and estate planning
* Referrals to legal help for disability issues

Military families can connect with EFMP-ROC through [Military OneSource](https://www.militaryonesource.mil) or by calling 1-800-342-9647.  Appointments can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Consultants have extended (evening) hours for appointments.

**Here are the designations for EFMP functions by branch of service:**

| **Branch of service** | **Name of Program** | **Services Provided** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **AIR FORCE** | **EFMP-Medical****EFMP-Assignments****EFMP-Family Supports** | **EFMP-M** includes medical information management and enrollment activities.**EFMP-A** includes comprehensive medical, educational, community support, assignment coordination, and housing accommodation activities.**EFMP-FS** includes community support through Airman and Family Readiness Centers, including financial and educational referrals, parent training, support groups, and relocation assistance. |
| **ARMY** | **EFMP-M****EFMP Family Support****Human Resources Command Compassionate Actions Branch** | **EFMP-M** The primary functions of EFMP-M include: enrolling identified families, conducting overseas screenings, and assignment coordination. **EFMP Family Support** includes case management services, support groups, educational classes, special education resources, respite care, and information and referral to local agencies. **Compassionate Actions Branch** – facilitates reassignments in the event that resources at a particular installation can’t support the needs of the family member enrolled in EFMP. |
| **NAVY** | **EFMP** | **EFMP** **liaisons** are the point of contact throughout the fleet for the enrollment process, individualized service plans, and overall case management. |
| **MARINE CORPS** | **Family Case Managers** | **Family Case Managers** are the point of contact for TRICARE, local school district special education offices, DoD systems, family advocates, and housing assistance related to accommodations. |
| **COAST GUARD** | **Special Needs Program** | **Special Needs Program Coordinators** are housed in the Office of Work-Life Programs.  This program is comparable to EFMP but not identical. |
| **NATIONAL GUARD** | **EFMP** | **EFMP** **liaisons** are the point of contact for the enrollment process, individualized service plans, and overall case management. |