

Exceptional Family Member Program



ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE
ACS
Real-Life Solutions for Successful Army Living

Fort Drum, New York

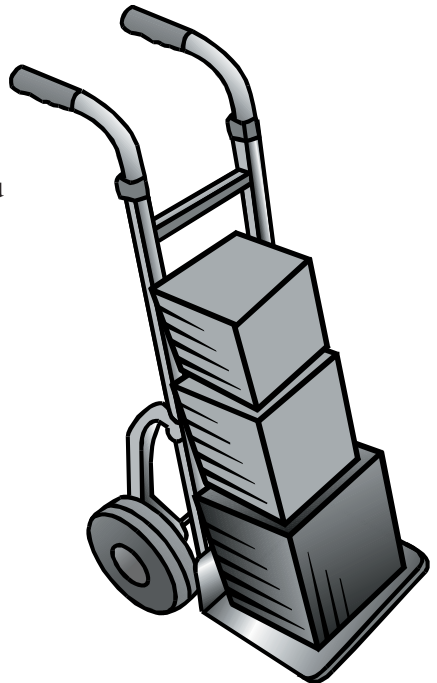
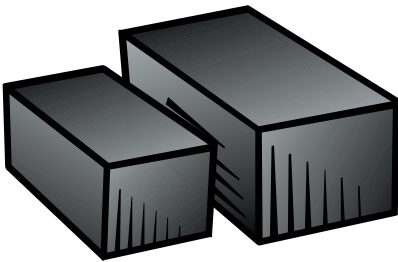
Moving to a new location disrupts your life. For any Family this can be a time of chaos. There is new adventure, but also maddening confusion.

Everything and everyone is somewhere, but where? You have to unpack and reorganize your home and your daily routine. You have to make new friends, meet new neighbors and establish new systems of support and help.

A Military Family changes duty stations quite frequently. For a Military Family with an Exceptional Family Member (EFM) who has special needs, the confusion can be particularly stressful. To avoid some of the less desirable “adventures”, it may be a good idea to map out a strategy before you move. This is especially important regarding school and your EFM special education needs. The checklist that follows gives some suggestions for smoothing the transition from one duty station to the next. The information presented here has been adapted from the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) document, “A Parent’s Guide, Planning a Move: Mapping Your Strategy.”

The most important step is to start early.

As soon as you know or are seriously considering moving to a new state, you can start to get ready. You may not know which town or school district you will live in, but as long as you know the state, you can begin.



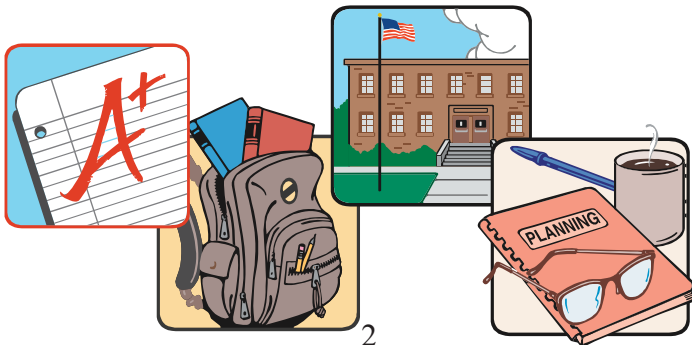
Checklist

Use this list to check off each task as you complete it. Cross out any tasks that do not apply to your Family.

- Get a notebook to keep track of everything you've done or will need to do.
- Get a large sturdy folder which closes securely in which to transport the EFM's records.
- Keep this guide with your notebook and folder for easy reference.

Review your educational home records file. You should have the following information on the EFM.

1. Birth Certificate
2. Immunization records
3. Relevant medical records
4. School records:
 - Academic achievement reports (tests, report cards, transcripts)
 - Psychological evaluations
 - Physical and/or occupational therapy, speech evaluations
 - Current and past IEPs
 - Behavioral/social evaluations
 - Vocational evaluations (interests, skills, aptitudes)
5. Samples of your child's work and other accomplishments
6. Communication logs (phone calls made and received from school officials)
7. Correspondence (letters sent and received from school officials).



What do I do First?

1. Contact school officials at your present duty station.
 - Request an IEP update meeting if your IEP is about to expire. The next school system is required to provide services on the basis of the current IEP until it completes a new evaluation and IEP.
 - If a triennial is due this year, contact the current school and request the triennial be completed at least 6 weeks before your moving date.
 - Ask to see your child's confidential and cumulative folders of school records. Make changes and update this file. Ask for removal of any records that are no longer appropriate.
 - Obtain copies of all records.
 - Sign a permission slip to release all records to the new school.
 - Express appreciation for the services given to your child.
2. Ask your child's current teacher(s) to write a letter of introduction to the new teacher(s) which describes your child, the child's strengths, areas of weakness and successful approaches to working with him/her.
3. Has your child had a physical this year? If not...
 - Visit your pediatrician and have this done at least 6 weeks before you move.
 - Update all vaccinations, check to see what is needed at the next state and have a complete record of all your child's shots.
4. Does your child take any prescription medication? If so...
 - Get copies of the medical reports.
 - Have at least a one-month supply, or more, of any medications before you move.
5. Does your child see any civilian doctors? If so...
 - Get a complete set of medical records from these physicians to take with you.
 - Contact your child's dentist, make any necessary appointments and also get copies of those records to take with you.

6. Ask each doctor, dentist, social worker, therapist, etc., the works with your child to write a letter of introduction to the new care provider which describes your child, your child's strengths, areas of weakness, and include any other information that may be helpful.
7. Duplicate all school records.
8. Duplicate all medical and dental records.

What Comes Next?

When you know where the next duty station is:

9. Contact NICHCY, 1-800-695-0285, for a State Resource Sheet. Identify which state sheet you need.
10. Call or write the State Department of Education, Special Education Division, and request a policies and procedures guide. Pay special attention to eligibility requirements to be prepared when you arrive.
11. Contact the local ACS-EFMP:
 - a. Make an appointment to review the Standard Installation Topic Exchange Services (SITES) of your next duty station.
 - b. Provide the following information so the local ACS/EFMP can coordinate your move with the next post:
 - 1) Your name and the name of your child.
 - 2) The date you will be arriving.
 - 3) Your child's current educational placement and the support services he/she is receiving.
 - 4) Whether you plan to live in post housing or in the community.
 - 5) Any other information about your child or Family circumstances that may be helpful.
12. Contact the School Liaison Officer.

Questions to ask about the new post:

EFMs may qualify for priority placement in housing. Each post has policies and procedures for placement, inquire early to be sure that you have all the paperwork when you arrive.

- a. How do we get authorization for priority assignment to post housing?
 - b. Is there a sponsorship program that links Families with similar needs and concerns about EFMs?
 - c. We need child care. How do we enroll the EFM in this service?
 - d. What information can be sent that describes the process for entering special education services. Is there a parent handbook?
 - e. Whom should I contact when we arrive at the new location?
 - f. Should I bring school and/or medical records or send them ahead?
 - g. What is the name of the school my child will attend if we live on post/in the community? Does it have special education services that are needed? What related services are available nearby?
 - h. What is the procedure for visiting schools or observing class rooms before the actual move?
 - i. What are the names, addresses and phone numbers of the local parent support groups?
 - j. Does the ACS/EFMP provide any services for Families? (support groups, recreation, parent education/training, etc)
12. Contact the Director of Special Education in the local school system.
- Give the same information as in #11b.
 - Ask about questions d - i from above.
13. Contact the Parent Training and Information Center for your new state. The address and phone number will be on your state resource sheet from NICHCY.

14. Get in touch with the EFMP-Hospital point of contact at the new assignment.

Questions to ask:

- Are there services available for the EFM?
- What are the clinic schedules?
- When can I make appointments?
- Will I need referrals? If so, can I use referrals from the current duty stations?
- Are there waiting lists for services and how long is the wait?

15. Contact local parent and disability and advocacy groups. Ask for their insights about schools, staff and programs:

- Other topics to discuss may include day care, respite care, recreation, medical facilities, etc.

16. If your child is in a vocational program, or plans to be next year, contact the current school to have a vocational assessment completed.

- Students working in sites identified or supervised by the special education team or community services board will need records of work placement, work experience, accommodations, transportation, etc.
- Ask the student's current work supervisor to write a letter of introduction which describes your child, the child's strengths, needs and the most effective strategies for job success.

17. Call the Social Security office toll-free line, 1-800-772-1213 or TTY for the deaf, 1-800-325-0778, to find out about SSI benefits in your new state.

Just Before You Leave...

18. Inform the new ACS-EFMP Coordinator that you are leaving for your new assignment.

19. Visit the medical facility at your present assignment:
- Inform the Hospital-EFMP Point of Contact that you are leaving.
 - Request your EFMP records to hand carry to the new post.
 - Pick up your medical records to hand carry also.

EFM medical records are to be hand-carried between duty stations.

OR

Sponsors of EFMs are to hand carry medical records between duty stations.

20. Duplicate all records. You should have two sets of records.
21. Put all records in a safe place so they will not be packed or lost (you could put them in the car right now or put them in your hand luggage).

When you finally arrive...

22. Contact School Liaison Officer for school information.
- Take all school records and the current IEP.
 - Visit the classroom where your child has been assigned.
 - Make an appointment to meet with the special education staff at the new school.
23. Visit the ACS-EFMP to obtain information about Military and local community services and resources.
24. Visit the Hospital-EFMP Point of Contact to notify them you have arrived:
- Take all medical records and EFMP files.
 - Deliver records to the Hospital-EFMP Point of Contact.
25. Call the Social Security Office to inform them of your new address and to make an appointment to file for benefits in your new state.
26. Contact support groups that you are interested in to inquire about dates/times of meetings.

27. Additional tasks:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Finally...

Talking to a parent group or disability organization of Families like yours may be useful. There is also a parent organization just for military Families. Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP) can provide military Families with information about their rights and responsibilities for achieving appropriate educational services for their children wherever they may be located in the United States or overseas.

STOMP PROJECT PAVE
6316 South 12th Street
Tacoma, WA 98465
1-800-5-PARENT
252-565-2266
www.washingtonpave.com

If you are moving overseas or returning to the US from overseas, ACS-EFMP will have information. Remember...

*Take care of yourself -
Stress can be an enemy when you are trying to get things done!*



**For information on EFMP
contact:**

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