

WHAT YOU NEED  
TO KNOW ABOUT  
EFMP!

SPECIAL POINTS  
OF INTEREST:

- Mission
- New Logo
- New Staff

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# EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM

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## THE EFMP NEWSLETTER! INFORMING FAMILIES!

The Marine corps has transformed the EFMP Program to ensure that enrolled family members are provided a continuum of care, while providing the sponsor every opportunity for a successful career.

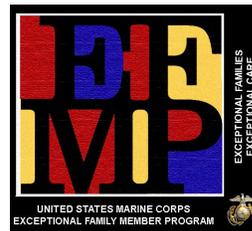
Efforts to improve have been on-going since 2007. The transformation began with a Functionality Assessment in 2007. The initial implementation began in 2008 with continued work since.

### 100% USMC STAFF

USMC staff consists of highly qualified Marine Corps employees.

At HQ, a dedicated group of professional, highly qualified individuals, passionate about the Marine Corps, Marine Corps families and individuals with disabilities, serve the EFMP. Enrollment, EFMP endorsements (like housing) and the informed assignment proc-

Enrollment has increased significantly due to the program's transformation. Currently there are almost 7500 families. There has been a in-



**EFMP has adopted a new logo that says it all. Exceptional Care for Exceptional Families!**

crease of \$11 million for the EFMP baseline budget. We have made great strides in improving the program. We still have work to do but families tell us that they see the difference.

USMC is in the final phase of a multi-year transformation and we have information that we need to make you aware of. This newsletter, directly from HQ, is designed to keep families in the know.

**USMC EFMP has been recognized as a premier DOD program!**

assignment process.

Our Assignment Coordinators have direct expertise in the continuum of care who review each proposed sponsor's orders to ensure that the needs identified on the DD2792, DD2792-1, and information provided by your Family Case Worker and YOU, are carefully considered!

EFMP welcomes Captain Meghan Harvey our new Manpower Liaison.





## EFMP Respite Care. We heard. you.

EFMP Respite Care Program is intended to reduce stress on sponsor families, by providing temporary rest periods for family members who care for those who have special needs.

All EFM Sponsors who request USMC EFM family support are eligible for a maximum of 40 hours of

respite per month, per family, at authorized re-imbursement rates.

What can Respite care be used for?

- It's intended to provide a break for the care giver.

What is Respite?

- Respite is short duration.
- Respite is for rest and relief.
- Respite takes care of the care provider.

*“EFMP Respite Care is my lifeline. I just can't get it all done any other way.”*

*USMC Spouse and Provider for two children with autism.*

**USMC EFMP  
RESPITE CARE**

*...taking care of  
the care provider*

## EFMP Respite Challenges.

When the need for respite services for families was identified, the Marine Corps quickly responded implementing two forms of respite care.

It was soon noted that additional guidance was required to ensure that respite services are implemented consistently and in a manner that works for families.

To assist, EFMP Program Managers have work together to discuss how to proceed. Changes in how reimbursement will be managed including more specific guidance regarding reimbursement amounts should assist families in their effort to access qualified providers. More change are anticipated and HQ EFMP will provide in-

formation.

HQ EFMP is aware of how important this service is for our families. It is our intent to safeguard this important service. We believe that the service should look the same from installation to installation. We believe that forms should be standardized to make the process easy and fast.



## A word from the Program Manager...

Let me begin with a hello to each of you. My goal is to be your advocate.

I was recently asked how I came to serve the EFMP? I am a retired educator with over 30 years serving children and families.

During my years as a direct provider, I served all disabilities and ages, but focused on direct support to children with autism and significant mental health issues. The last part of my career was as a district level special education administrator, specializing in programs for low incidence populations, crisis support and compliance. This role led me to support the most difficult of situations and spend more time than I ever thought possible in

the legal venue, in an effort to fix what was broken. I am a national level presenter and a graduate level instructor for two universities, training young teachers and administrators in the areas of special education law, characteristics of disabilities, methodologies for those with autism and many other critical topics.

Serving in districts with high military populations, I quickly became aware of the immense challenge you face. This led me to Headquarters as the first Senior School Liaison. I loved working with the School Liaison Program, but my interest and my background led me to connect with those involved in the EFMP. I was intrigued in the mission

and understood the need. What began as my effort to simply help, became my passion and my new career.

I was appointed as HQMC Exceptional Family Member Program Manager on 2 August 2009. It is an honor to be here and I sincerely believe that both my personal and professional paths have all joined to allow me to be a part of this amazing program. I am committed to ensuring that the needs of our families are supported.

Rhondavena LaPorte, M.Ed.

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*I'm an email, or phone call, away.*

## EFMP Respite Questions and Answers

***“Can my other children be served by the EFMP Respite Provider?”***

Yes, more than one child can be served. Rates will be adjusted accordingly so your provider may be paid more.

***“I also utilize Respite from another agency, does that count against my 40 hours?”***

No, another agency's service does not count against the hours provided through EFMP.

***“I have two children with disabilities, does that mean I get 80 hours per month?”***

No, EFMP policy ensures up to 40

hours total per family, per month.

***“There are two ways to access EFMP Respite; National and Installation. Does that mean I can use both and get 40 hours x two, and use 80 hours?”***

No, EFMP policy ensures up to 40 hours total per family, per month.

***“Can my respite provider be someone I know and trust?”***

Yes, Installation Respite allows for this and is a reimbursement program. In other words, you hire and fund, and then the local installation reimburses you. For some families, utilizing the services of a trusted friend or relative fits the need.

***“I need someone who is highly trained. I don't know anyone with the skills my EFM requires?”***

We understand. Some children require very specialized skills and training that cannot be found easily. Your local Program Manager can assist in this area. Please let us help.

***“When two children are served, does that mean that the 2 hours provided is calculated as 4 hours of service?”***

No, two hours are two hours, even if more than one child is provided for.

***“I am the care giver for my adult EFM. Can I benefit from respite?”***

While we know this is a need faced by some of our families, we are currently only authorized to provide care for children as opposed to care for adults. We are currently exploring how to support this important need.

# The Informed Assignment Process



When an MMEA or MMOA monitor determines a Marine's next duty location, the tentative orders are entered into Webmass. HQMC EFMP Assignment Coordinators, also at Headquarters but two decks away, can immediately view the orders and begin the investigation process first. All information available is reviewed, including the Family Case

Worker's comments and notes. Next, EFMP Assignment Coordinators begin to review services available at the proposed duty station. Decisions are based on the needs of the individual, but sometimes the input of the family is needed to be sure that the situation will be workable for them. In those cases, EFMP Assignment Coordinators pick

up the phone and call the families. We're proud of the extra effort it takes to make sure that we do the right thing for each family. Orders to locations that can clearly NOT meet the needs of the EFM are not endorsed. A new location is identified and the process begins all over again. And to those of you who answer our calls... Thank you!

The Informed Assignment Process.... a team effort!

*"Before we moved away from decisions based on categories, we thought we could only serve in a few locations. We feel like whole new worlds have opened up for us"*

## Heading OCONUS?

The purpose of an **Overseas** Screening (OSS) is to identify medical, dental, educational and potential duty limiting conditions or family members. Completing a screening will ensure that both the family and service member are qualified for overseas, operational duty and remote duty assignments.

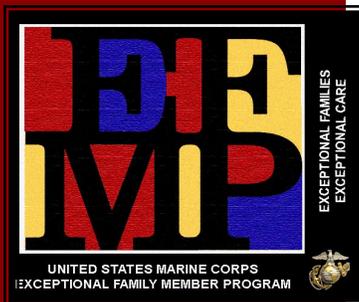
**Overseas** Screening (OSS) is critical if your EFM has special care needs. **DO NOT ASSUME** care is available. Last month alone over 12 families on Okinawa found themselves OCONUS with needs that could not be met. The majority of the families were not enrolled in the EFMP. If you, or a friend, has orders OCONUS, read the step-by-step guidance below:

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhrota/Staff/Documents/OSSProcessOverview.pdf>

## CATEGORIES AND WHY HQ EFMP DOES NOT BASE DECISIONS ON THEM

After much consideration and review of the long-term practice of assigning categories, many thought that something just wasn't as it should be. In the past, families were assigned in broad-brush categories and decisions were based on the categories as opposed to the individual needs of the families. For example, families identified as Category IV were not approved for overseas assignments.. The diversity of needs for our families didn't align with decisions associated with four broad categories. So, true to USMC philosophy, HQMC EFMP began to consider a new way ahead. Now ALL EFMP decisions are made with ALL EFM information available, including family input, when necessary. No longer will we make decisions based on categories. No matter how much easier and faster, it did not meet the needs of our families. decisions by category led to faulty decision-making. Now, when respite levels, housing endorsements or assignment decisions are determined, the entire file is reviewed including; medical information, educational information, information from local EFMP staff, information provided by families through correspondence or phone conversations.

In other words, we will call you if we have questions. You know the most about your EFM. You have input to decisions that impact you. **As they say, "Do not make decisions about me, without me."**



**EXCEPTIONAL FAMILIES  
EXCEPTIONAL CARE**

# Continuum of Care



EFMP assigns a Family Case Worker (FCW) to each enrolled Marine family, at a ratio of 1 FCW: 225 sponsors. The FCW helps during relocation, deployments and life events to ensure an EFM continuum of care; to help families gain access and availability to medical, educational and financial support services.

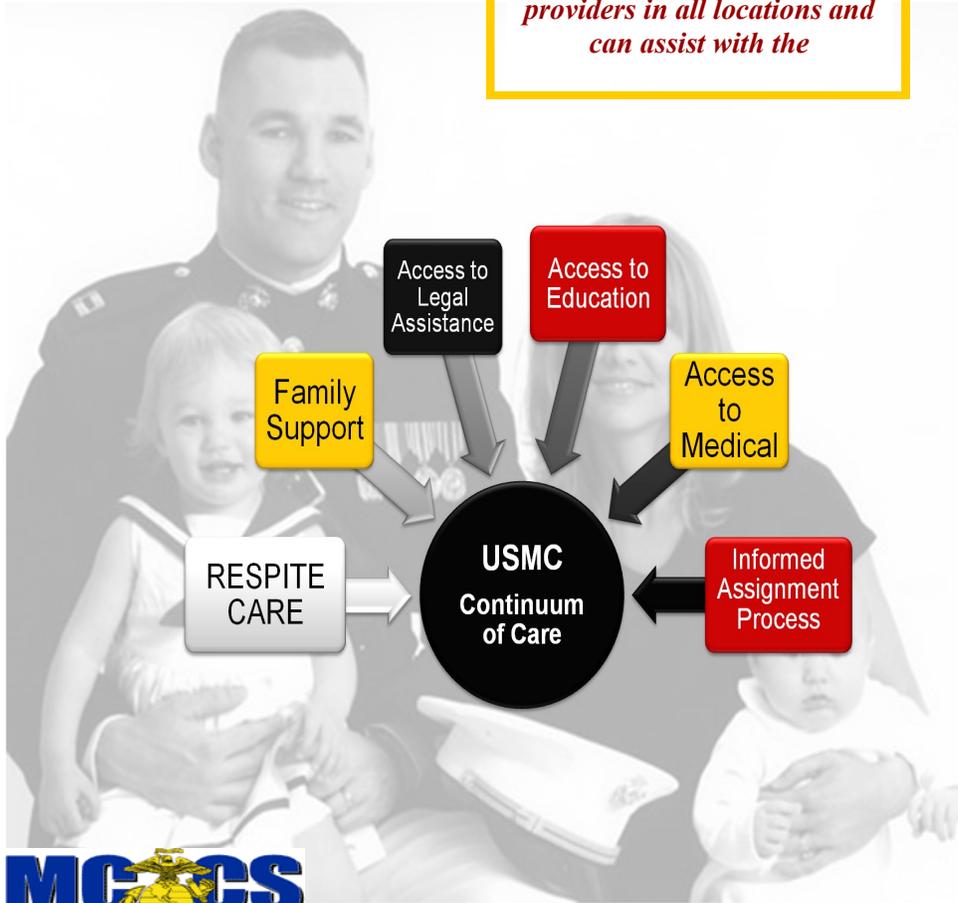
EFMP provides up to 40 hours of respite care per family, per month for enrolled Marine Corps families. The Marine Corps has chosen to underwrite this cost, independent of TRICARE Extended Care Health Option (ECHO), to afford families the full use of their ECHO provided benefit for needed therapies and equipment. To date, more than 250,000 hours of respite care have been provided to enrolled Marine Corps families. Direct family support and respite care have increased

the perceived value of EFMP which, in turn, has resulted in increased program enrollment and contributed to the effort to overcome past stigmas.

Per MARADMIN 348/09, we have established the Continuation on Location policy which addresses the need for continuity of care for families with significant special needs during the relocation period. This policy ensures that the Marine Corps assignment process is sensitive to EFM family needs and provides a steady and seamless continuum of care and remain in location, while allowing the Marine to meet his/her career obligations and move to the new location. As of 7 Jan 2010, four families have benefited from this newly formalized special consideration.

*Can't find the service in your new location? .... Call EFMP. We research providers in all locations and can assist with the*

To further support families, EFMP provides legal assistance. EFMP attorneys provide individual attorney-client representation for EFMP families, primarily to obtain benefits and services for the EFM under state and federal education laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and related disability laws and regulations benefiting individuals with disabilities. In addition to representation, EFMP attorneys provide advice on legal assistance issues unique to EFMP families, such as special needs trusts and landlord-tenant issues pertaining to disabilities and access.





### CHERRY POINT EFMP/ SEMPER FIT SWIMMING LESSONS

EFMP is collaborating with Health Promotion/Aquatics of Semper Fit to offer free swimming lessons. The lessons are scheduled in a

## Cherry Point EFMP and Semper Fit

series of four monthly sessions, which began on 23 Jan 2010 as a prerequisite to the next three sessions. Turnout for the first class was strong with 31 swimmers, ages 2-14. Registration was handled through the local EFMP office, while promotions and the event were handled by Semper Fit.

In 2007, EFMP's Functionality Assessment noted that Recreation Inclusion was an important goal. Since then, HQMC EFM Program Manager was invited to attend a National Conference on the subject with HQMC Semper Fit. There, the opportunity to speak to the needs of our members was provided. It was clear that USMC Semper Fit were strong advocates. Since then, the activity has increased. EFMP appreciates Semper Fit!!!

*My Family Case Worker is wonderful. She helped me stay calm and helped me to communicate what my child needed during my last IEP*

## What do Family Case Workers Do?

Did you know that your Family Case Worker (FCW) is provided to assist you. FCW's can help you navigate the system. This is particularly important for families new to a location.

FCW's can help you coordinate with various treatment agencies, track down resources and even attend important meetings with you; to ensure that you have the support that you need to advocate for your child.

For those families who have a child with special education needs, the FCW can attend IEP meetings!!!

Call your FCW today and discuss how they can help you navigate the system!

## Is your Update due? Why does it matter?

Updates are required, by policy. Policy matters but so does family.

Things change. Treatment needs change. EFM status changes.

It's hard for HQMC EFMP to determine what services your EFM requires when the information is years old.

Please help us help you. It's our job to make sure that the assignment is a good fit. We can only do so with good information.



**EFMP**

**Helps!**



# More about the Assignment Process



If you visited the HQMC EFMP Assignments section, you would hear the on-going collabora-

tion of HQMC EFMP Assignment Coordinators, Medical Screeners, Marines, spouses, doctors, therapists.....

*Is there a pediatric cardiologist in Yokota?*

*Could a 17 year old see a neurologist or does it have to be a pediatric neurologist?*

*There are no ABA Providers there?*

*One of the two, only, psychiatrists isn't taking new patients?*

*The seizures are stabilized?*

*They're having trouble getting that medication over there?*

*Should the Marine go unaccompanied?*

*My son just has seasonal allergies, that couldn't be a big deal, right?*

**POINTER:** Make sure that your doctor knows that you may be going OCONUS. Are specialists really required? Remember, if your doctor says it is required and it is not available, family members can not go? Could an Ophthalmologist provide care or does it HAVE to be a Pediatric Ophthalmologist? YES, IT MATTERS!

**Our goal is to get families to the new location if it is possible. That often means long hours on the phone with all involved.**

**What we've found is that, with your help, our Marine families can go many places that, in the past, we thought they could not go.**

HQMC EFMP Assignment Coordinators are nurses, Special Education Advocates, Social Workers.... Most importantly, they are Marine Corps spouses. To quote Denise Savoie, "If you've lived the life, you understand. It may be only 30 miles between A and B, but it can take many hours."

EFMP Coordinators take care of their own! That is YOU.

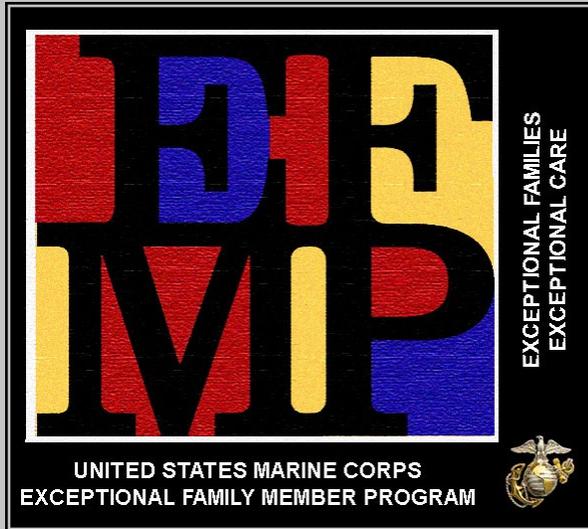


## EFMP Taking Care of Families



Military OneSource.com provides government and non-government resources useful to military families with special needs. Interested family members should visit Military OneSource (<http://www.militaryonesource.com>).

Military OneSource Counselors and Advisors stand ready to assist in this and all needs that military families encounter. Let them help. Their resources for disability support



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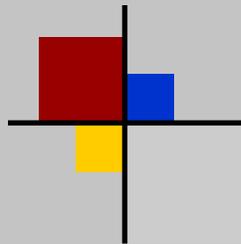
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## CMC attends 2009 World Congress on Disabilities

Mrs. LaPorte, HQMC EFM Program Manager, greets General Conway upon arrival.. General Conway's presentation included many details about USMC EFMP's transformation.

Needless to say, he impressed the audience. The attendees included all services and his speech drew many to take another look at what the Marine Corps is doing for families.



Mrs. Conway, one of EFMP's biggest supporters, took Haiden House in her arms within minutes of arrival. Haiden discussed his recommendations with Mrs. Conway and, while we have no idea what he said, we know he had great ideas.

