



EFMP

Exceptional Family Member Program

Henderson Hall Marine Corps Community Services

July 2025



Hello, **JULY**

Summer is in full swing, and we're bringing you the latest updates, resources, and events for Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) families in the DMV area.

Whether you're looking for support, activities, or ways to connect with the community, we've got you covered. Stay tuned for upcoming workshops, local gatherings, and helpful tips to make the most of the season. Let's make this July one to remember!

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MEET THE TEAM

Welcome to the Team

EFMP TEO Specialist: Carly Brashear

About:

Carly joins the Henderson Hall EFMP team as our new Training, Education, and Outreach (TEO) Specialist. With a background in Occupational Therapy, Carly has experience in Air Force Family support roles in both EFMP medical and School Liaison Programs and military non-profit work with Wounded Warrior Project. Carly brings a passion for empowering families and delivering accessible, engaging resources to our community.

Fun Fact:

Carly loves to travel, hike and camp-- but only if her dog can come! Her dog has sniffed out adventures in over 11 countries! While Carly struggles to pick a favorite trip, her furry co-pilot made its preferences loud and clear: bounding through the Italian Alps like a mountain legend and digging up beach treasures in Slovenia.

Contact:

carly.brashear.civ@usmc.mil
(703)-693-5353



FOURTH OF JULY: SENSORY TIPS



For many, the Fourth of July is a day of excitement—parades, fireworks, and festive gatherings. However, for individuals with autism or other sensory concerns, these traditional celebrations can sometimes be overwhelming due to loud noises, unpredictable schedules, and crowded spaces. The good news? With a little planning and creativity, you can craft a holiday experience that ensures everyone enjoys the festivities in a way that feels comfortable and fun. Whether it's opting for quieter activities, creating a sensory-friendly space, or exploring autism-friendly community events, there are plenty of ways to make Independence Day both enjoyable and inclusive!



Here are some ideas to create a sensory-friendly experience:



Plan ahead: Reviewing the schedule and expectations can help reduce anxiety.

Choose quieter activities: Opt for alternatives like glow sticks instead of fireworks, or a backyard celebration with close family.

Create a safe space: Have a designated quiet area with sensory-friendly items like noise-canceling headphones or weighted blankets.
Attend autism-friendly events: Some communities offer modified celebrations with lower noise levels and sensory accommodations.

Here are some helpful resources with tips for an autism-friendly Fourth of July:

- Autism Society – Offers practical suggestions for making Independence Day celebrations more inclusive, including sensory considerations and safety tips.
- ACES – Provides strategies for preparing children with autism for the holiday, including noise-canceling headphones, social narratives, and alternative celebrations.



UPCOMING EFMP EVENTS in the DMV

Hosted by EFMP Family Support Joint Base Andrews

EFMP-FS Adaptive Kayaking and Paddleboarding

Saturday, July 19th from 0900-1100

Free! Registration open now! EFMs and their immediate family members (adults and kids 6+) are invited to learn to paddle board or kayak with adaptive assistance from instructors from Live Water Foundation! Open to all service branches and retirees! <https://jba-mfrc.timetap.com/>



Hosted by Family Support EFMP Fort Meade

Sensory Playgroup Craft Time Calming Sensory Bottle

When: July 10, 2025

Time: 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Location: Potomac Place Community Center, Potomac Place 4998 Shea St., Fort Meade, MD 20755

Registration required: Scan QR code, online registration form

<https://forms.osi.apps.mil/r/zzALEddgaV>, email fershalla.laing-hodgeman.1@us.af.mil or liesa.jacobs.civ@army.mil, or call 301-677-5662/5734 to sign up for this event. This event is open to all EFMP Families, DoD ID cardholders, and DoD Civilians

EFMP Family Bowling Night Recreational Opportunity for Families Enrolled in EFMP

When: Third Friday of the month

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Location: The Lanes on Fort Meade, 2788 MacArthur Rd, Fort Meade, MD 20755

Registration required: Scan QR code, register online at

<https://forms.osi.apps.mil/r/UPwbuaMYkX>, email usarmy.meade.usag.mbx.acs-efmp@army.mil, or to sign up for this event. This event is open to EFMP enrolled Families.

Fort MYER



FIRE STATION

Join Henderson Hall EFMP for a sensory-friendly visit to our local fire station. Go behind the scenes to tour the firehouse, meet the firefighters and get up close to the fire trucks.

Saturday, August 9

9:30 - 11:30 AM

Registration ends on August 8 at 5 PM.



**REGISTER
HERE**



Bldg. 415, Sheridan Ave., Fort Myer, VA 20319



For more information:
703-693-5353 or email at:
efmphh@usmc-mccs.org

**MARINE &
Family**

Open to all ages and all DoD ID cardholders (not only EFMP enrollees) We are committed to providing reasonable accommodations upon request. Please contact us at 703-693-5353 at least one (1) week in advance of the event.



Information for Families of Students with Disabilities

Join us for a live, virtual training event, Critical Decision Points for Families of Children with Disabilities. The purpose of this training is to assist you in understanding the following:

What are some of the keys to your child's academic success?

What decisions will you have to make regarding your child's educational path?

At what point will you be making these decisions? In this training, we refer to these as critical decision points.

What information will you need so that you can make the most well-informed decisions for your child?

Part One will be held on Wednesday, July 9, 2025, from 6-8 p.m. Part Two will be held on Wednesday, July 16, 2025, from 6-8 p.m. This is a two-part training. You will need to attend both sessions to receive all the information. There is no cost to attend this training.



United Through Reading

United Through Reading is a non-profit with a mission to keep service members and veterans connected with their families when apart. Whether the separation is due to deployment, TDY or training exercises, everyone can be a part of the bedtime routine. Service members record themselves reading a high-quality book at a UTR Story Station location, UTR community event or utilizing the free UTR app. Families are then sent a free copy of the same book so children may read the story along with the recording. Families can select picture books like Sandra Boynton's "Barnyard Dance" all the way to chapter books like Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol." The biggest benefit of UTR's story recordings is that it allows children to access their parent (or uncle, grandma or adult sibling) any time they need, without the need to coordinate different time zones or poor internet connections. Visit the [website](#) to learn more.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Did you know you may be able to receive free, developmentally-appropriate books mailed to your home every month from your child's birth until age 5? Many community libraries, counties, and other charitable organizations across the United States have partnered with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to make sure children are exposed to high-quality books right from the start. To see if your current address is supported by the Imagination Library, check your zipcode at this [link](#).



Virtual EFMP Knowledge Nugget

8 July , 1130-1200: Establishing Permanent Dependency

Free to attend. Learn about establishing an incapacitated status for a child within the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Contact efmphh@usmc-mccs.org to register.

22 July , 1130-1200: Recreation Inclusion Opportunities

Free to attend. The National Capital Region has a plethora of accessible recreation opportunities from wheelchair basketball to adapted climbing. Tune in to learn about them and laws on inclusion. Contact efmphh@usmc-mccs.org to register.



Virginia

Virginia Family Fun-Filled Day

When: Saturday July 19th, 2025

Time: 11:30 AM

Location: Clemyjontri Park, 6317 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA

Join Apex Social Group for a fun, inclusive, and FREE family day at **Clemyjontri Park in McLean, VA!** Children of all abilities are welcome to enjoy carnival games, connect with others, and explore this colorful, accessible space designed for play and celebration. 🦋 ☀️



Maryland

Pathfinders For Autism

Looking for engaging and supportive events for your family? Pathfinders for Autism offers free educational and recreational activities designed to empower and connect families in the autism community. From interactive workshops to fun outings like yoga, sailing, and baseball games, there's something for everyone. Register today and create meaningful experiences with your loved ones- Virtual and In Person Events Available. Explore their website to browse options!

Location:

Website: <https://pathfindersforautism.org/register-for-events/>

Location: 235 Schilling Circle, Suite 103 Hunt Valley, MD 21031

Contact: (443) 330-5370



Brendan Sailing

Summer Sailing Programs

Location: Annapolis, MD, and St. Mary's City, MD

Contact: (443) 995-6375; info@brendansailing.org

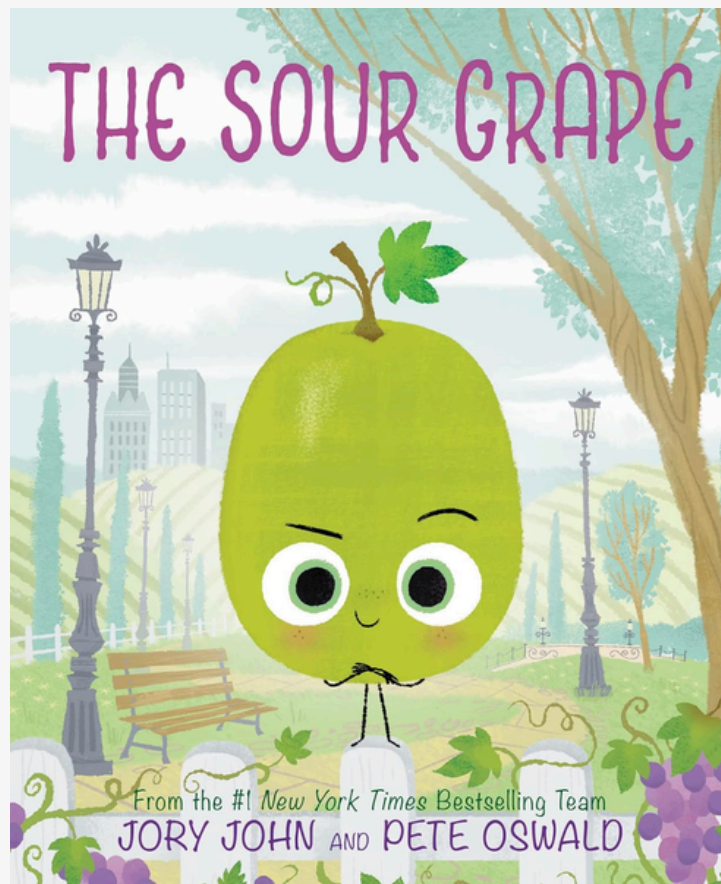
Website: <https://www.brendansailing.org/>

Ages: 11-18

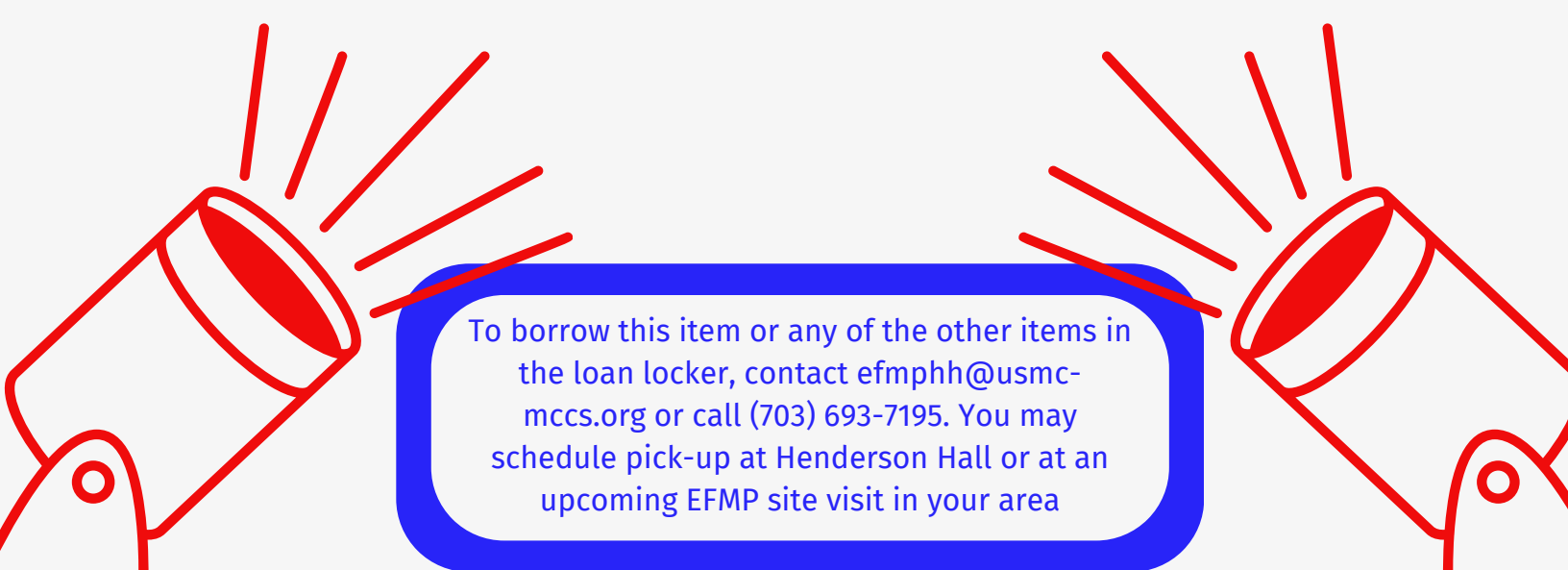
Dates: Annapolis Day Camp: Session D: July 7 - July 11; St. Mary's College of Maryland, MD: July 21 - July 25

Since 2005, Brendan Sailing has been helping children with learning differences to realize success. Our programs are led by U.S. Sailing certified instructors who work with individual students to discover their individual learning styles. The Brendan Sailing Curriculum covers an introduction to the sport of sailing including the parts of the boat, maneuvers, navigation, and the Rules of the Road that follows the National On-Water Standards. Our instructors use a hands-on approach to teach sailing and seamanship, with emphasis on building self-confidence and social skills, while developing basic sailing skills.

Overnight session campers will have the opportunity to stay on-site in St. Mary's College student housing, eat meals in the dining hall, and build confidence through the independence they experience while staying on campus. No sailing or boating experience is necessary for either the day or overnight sessions. Scholarships available.



Grape holds grudges! Borrow this funny, beautifully-illustrated children's book and read about Sour Grape's journey to forgiveness and compassion. A great starting point for a number of social-emotional skills, this book is ideal for ages 4-8.



To borrow this item or any of the other items in the loan locker, contact efmphh@usmc-mccs.org or call (703) 693-7195. You may schedule pick-up at Henderson Hall or at an upcoming EFMP site visit in your area

Sensory Friendly Activities across the NCR

LEGO Discovery Center Sensory-Friendly Mornings

\$26.99 per person. You may be eligible for one free ADA caregiver ticket. Enjoy the LEGO center from 1000-1100 with reduced lighting and music. This event is held the first Wednesday of every month. For all ages. [Link](#).

Accessible Adult Fans of LEGO Nights

Ages 18+ only. Enjoy the LEGO center from 1800-2000 with reduced lighting and music. This event is held the Wednesday of every month. For adults with special needs or sensory differences.

Sensory Sundays at the B & O Rail Museum

\$20/adult, \$12/child. AD is free. First Sundays in select months. Environmental accommodations (no music, low lighting, quiet areas, increased signage for areas with sound effects), sensory-friendly events (kids craft, train ride, and tour) and resources (sensory kits, social stories, and community table) will be available. [Link](#)

Morning at the Museum

Free. Dates and Smithsonian museum vary. Registration required. Sensory-friendly program for children, teens, and young adults who are neurodivergent and their families. Participants enter the museum early and explore at their own pace. [Link](#)

Alamo Drafthouse Cinema

Alamo for All program is active in both Northern VA and DC. All shows on Tuesday before 2:00 p.m. are sensory-friendly. Additional shows are available on weekends.

AMC Theatres

Second and fourth Saturdays for family-friendly movies and Wednesday evenings of every month offer sensory-friendly showings

Children's Museum of Virginia

Portsmouth, VA. Reduced number of visitors and adapted programs/exhibits.

Note: Second floor currently under construction. Held the second Sunday of every month. [Link](#).

Kennedy Center

Price varies. Lower lighting during entire performance, reduced sounds, and designated quiet area of theater. Guests are welcome to talk and move throughout performances. Website includes scripted stories to talk about an upcoming visit. [Link](#).


Regal Movies

My Way Matinee Program offers sensory-friendly showings as the first show on Saturdays on select Saturdays.

Philadelphia:

Sesame Place

Sesame Place Philadelphia is the first theme park to be designated as a Certified Autism Center. Sesame Place offers a low-sensory room, low-sensory parade viewing, and specially-trained staff.



What happens if an exceptional family member doesn't live with their sponsor?

To be eligible for EFMP, service members must have at least 51% custody of dependent family members in the case of separation or divorce. There are some circumstances a service member may live separately from family members enrolled in EFMP. In those cases, it's helpful to know who manages each case.

Deployed Service Member: EFMP case will remain with the original duty station family support office

Geographically Separation (AKA "Geo-batching"): EFMP case will follow the service member. For example, if the family lives in California but the service member is stationed at the Pentagon, the EFMP case will be managed by Henderson Hall EFMP

Continuation on Location (COL): If a family is approved for COL to ensure continuity of care for a family member, the service member will PCS to the next station but receive BAH for where the family is stationed. The EFMP case will follow the service member.

In all cases, family members may attend events offered by any EFMP Family Support offices regardless of branch. Branch-specific case management and paperwork will be managed by assigned office

HH EFMP Services

- Family support/non-clinical case management
- Informal Assignment Screening
- EFMP Attorney Assistance
- Resources and Referrals
- Support at IEP/IFSP meetings
- Respite Care Reimbursement Program
- Eligibility and enrollment for Tricare ECHO
- Transition Assistance (PCS, EAS)
- Workshops and Training
- Lending Library
- Loan Locker
- Family Needs Assessment



DISCLAIMER:

The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Defense, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, gift suggestions, or organizations imply endorsement by the USMC.

Henderson Hall EFMP is committed to providing accessible, inclusive events and services. Please contact us with concerns or suggestions

efmphh@usmc-mccs.org

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