



EFMP Exceptional Family Member Program

Henderson Hall Marine Corps Community Services

December 2024



Happy Holidays!

FROM HENDERSON HALL EFMP



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CREATING A SENSORY-FRIENDLY SEASON

SUPPORTING SENSORY NEEDS THIS YEAR



The holiday season brings celebrations, lights, music and unfortunately, many opportunities for overstimulation. With some careful pre-planning you can set your family up for success.

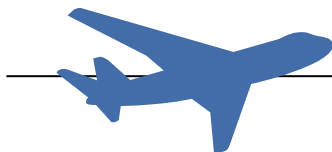
- Routine: Preserve your routine as much as possible, especially meal and sleep times. You can prep your loved ones for unavoidable changes in routine by talking about it ahead of time. You may benefit from using visual aids like a picture schedule or a scripted story.
- Food: A holiday party is not the ideal time to try a new texture or taste. Packing safe snacks, drinks or even meals is a good idea to support a sensory-seeker or sensory-avoider.
- Calm Area: Establish a safe place for your loved one to go if they are overstimulated. This could be their own bedroom or even a cardboard box or blanket fort with comfy seating and dim lighting. More and more public events are including a sensory-friendly space. Consider calling ahead to find out what will be available. For many events, including all events on Henderson Hall, you may request reasonable accommodations in advance.
- Sensory Tools: Some sensory-friendly venues offer sensory tools to borrow during events but individuals will likely do best with their own tools they use consistently and know well.



As you consider ways to celebrate, keep an eye out for sensory-friendly events across the National Capital Region this holiday season. Typically this might include sensory-friendly Santa Claus visits (like [Santa Cares](#)), performances (like at the [Kennedy Center](#)) or shopping hours.

At times it may be best to decline invitations, attend for only short time frames or avoid stressful environments altogether. For example, online shopping or store-pickup can help you avoid the last-minute crowds with your loved one. Finding short-term care can also be a good solution for important events that could be too difficult to attend, like a sibling's recital. Remember, EFMP-enrollees with a level of need (LON) of 3 or 4 may qualify for the EFMP respite care reimbursement benefit. Contact your family caseworker to learn more.

Individuals with sensory differences may react differently to temperatures. It's important to monitor your loved one's temperature for signs of being too cold (especially if they don't tolerate outerwear) and for signs of overheating in layers of jackets and scarves. Be intentional about layering so it's easy to adjust based on the environment. This might look like sweat-wicking base layers or compression garments. Try reading scripted stories together if it's hard to keep gloves/hats/jackets on and make sure to model using those same items yourself. You may need to set time limits on outside play. You may want to bring the cold inside with some ice or snow sensory play so your child can explore more freely-this works for both sensory-seekers and sensory-avoiders!



If you think you or a loved one may need accommodations when traveling by air, consider consulting the TSA Cares website. It provides information on screening processes and available accommodations for medical needs including mobility aids, internal medical devices and invisible disabilities. This site also includes information on traveling with children, liquid restrictions and nursing infants, and military travel.

You may inform TSA agents about medical conditions verbally, by presenting medical records or by using a TSA Notification Card. Notifying a TSA agent does **not** eliminate the need for screening. Alternative screening may be provided, especially if an individual

is not able or does not wish to go through the Advanced Imaging Technology machine (AIT).

If you contact the airport at least 72 hours before your flight, you may be able to secure a TSA Passenger Support Specialist to assist you. Passenger Support Specialists receive specific training in disabilities and communication. Use of a Passenger Support Specialist is recommended when a passenger is a child with medical or developmental disabilities, has internal or external medical devices that may impact screening, has a service animal, is traveling with medical liquids above the limit and/or has difficulty following verbal or written instructions. The Passenger Support Specialist does not provide expedited screening. Airport wheelchairs are provided by individual airlines, not by TSA.

PRECHECK

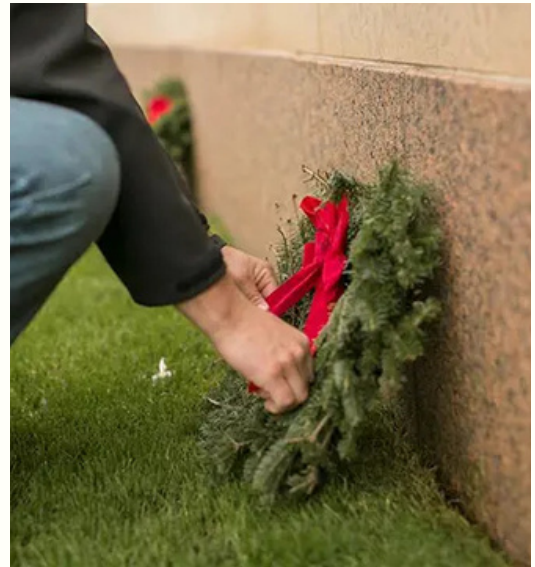
Did you know? AD military members and DOD Civilians can receive [TSA PreCheck](#) for free. Children under 12 may accompany a parent or guardian in the TSA PreCheck lane without restriction. Children ages 13-17 may accompany them if their boarding pass indicates PreCheck

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA



at a nearby cemetery including Arlington National Cemetery, where the tradition began over 30 years ago. Identify a participating location by using the [search tool](#). For more information, visit the charity [online](#).

Annually thousands of volunteers place millions of wreaths on veterans' headstones in local, national and military cemeteries across the nation. This year, December 14th has been designated Wreaths Across America Day by Congress. The charity's mission is to "Remember the fallen, Honor those that serve and Teach the next generation the value of freedom." Individuals and families can participate in "wreaths in" and/or "wreaths out"



2025 TRICARE CHANGES



Beginning on January 1, 2025 there will be several changes to Tricare. The Tricare East Region will continue to be managed by the Humana Military contractor. The Tricare West Region, however, will change from Health Net Federal Services, LCC to TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corporation.

Additionally, 6 states that are currently in the East Region will move to the West Region (Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas and Wisconsin). To prepare for these changes, ensure your family's information is up-to-date in DEERS. You can subscribe to [email alerts](#) to get regular updates.

Virginia

03 DEC, 17 DEC, 1730: Dungeons and Dragons Adventure League

Free. Fort Belvoir, VA. Join the library's gaming meetups. If you have never played before or are a seasoned campaigner, this meet up will be a great way to learn about the game and find new members to join your party. The Adventure League play is targeted to characters level 1-4, but higher level players are welcome to join with a pre-made Level 1 character. Volunteer dungeon Masters also welcome. For more information, 703-805-4244.

05-08 DEC, 1930-2200: Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins

Price varies. Fairfax City, VA. Enjoy a humorous, heartwarming play celebrating Hanukkah. Best for children ages 6+. December 5th performance includes ASL interpreting.

11 DEC, 1730-1930: Sensory-Friendly EFMP Movie Night

Free. Little Hall, Quantico, VA. Exclusively for EFMP-enrolled families. Enjoy the Polar Express and learn about Little Hall theater's assistive equipment. Santa/Gunny Claus will be present and crafts will be provided. Registration required: [Link](#)

Virtual

10 DEC, 1130-1200: Knowledge Nugget: Inclusive Recreation and Accessing Community Resources

Free. Come and learn about accessing the wealth of resources available in the National Capital Region and how to find new resources when you PCS to a new location. 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.

13 DEC, 0900-1700 CST: Free Suicide Prevention Training

Free. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course will include Conversations on Access to Lethal Means (CALM). Offered by the Veteran Spouse Network through Blue Star Families. Course requires two hours of pre-work. Registration required: [Link](#)

24 DEC, 1130-1200: Introduction to EFMP & Respite Care

Free. What is the USMC Exceptional Family Member Program? Who is eligible and what are the benefits and requirements? How do you enroll in the program? This workshop will discuss why the EFMP exists, and how it can help you to support and advocate for your exceptional family member. The Respite Care Reimbursement Program is available to eligible EFMP-enrolled families. This workshop covers the Respite Care Reimbursement Program guidelines, eligibility, and the application process. This is an essential briefing if you will be utilizing this USMC EFMP respite care subsidy program. Contact efmphh@usmc-mccs.org to register.

Maryland

03 DEC, 1830-2000: [Navigating the Ins and Outs of Special Needs Financial Planning](#)
Free. In-person at Frederick, MD or virtually. Registration required. [Link](#).

5 DEC, 1000-1130: [FAP/EFMP Sensory Playgroup](#)
Free. Fort Meade, MD. Exclusively for EFMP-enrolled children and their families. Join Fort Meade EFMP Family Support and FAP on the first Thursday of the month. [Link](#).

18 DEC, 1730-1900: [EFMP Family Bowling Night](#)
Free game with \$2 shoe rental. Join EFMP Family Support on the third Wednesday of the month for bowling fun with other EFMP-enrolled families. Registration required. contact 301-677-5662/5734.

19 DEC, 1100-1230: [JBA Lego Club](#)
Free. Joint Base Andrews. Library. Every 3rd Thursday join other master builders to create LEGO fun. For more information: [Link](#).

Washington, D.C.

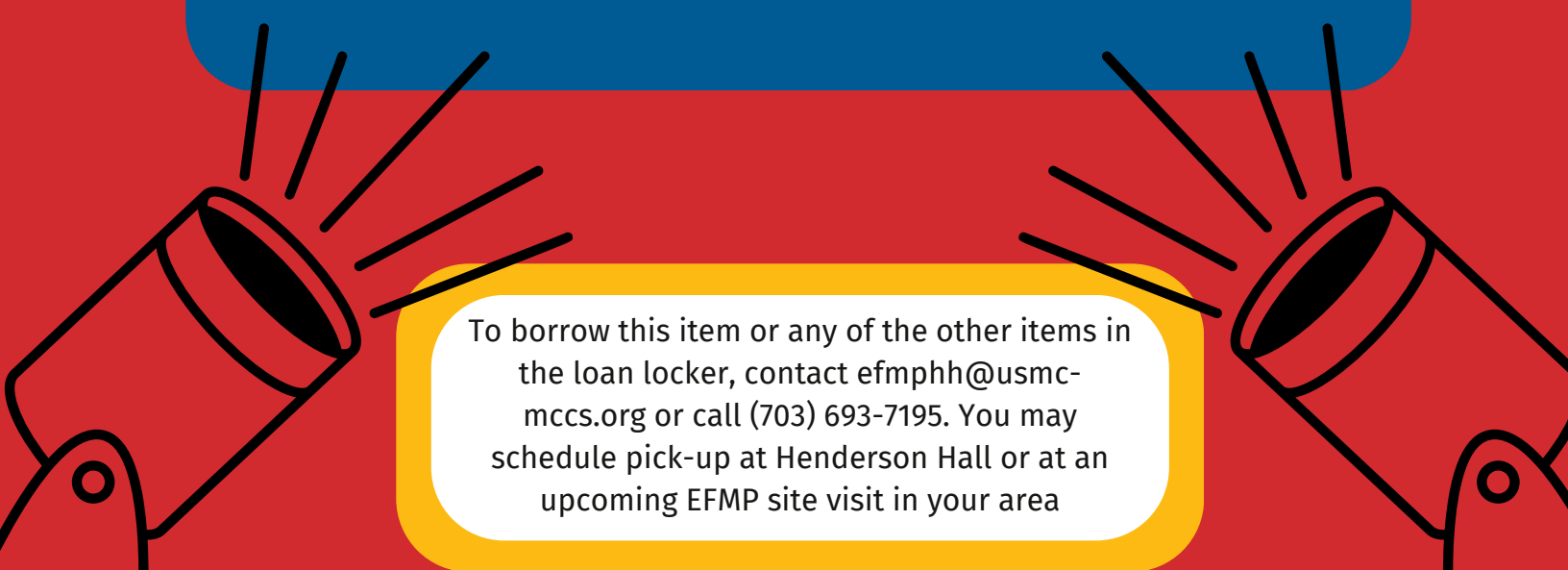
04 DEC, 1100-1200: [Strong Start Community Playgroup](#)
Free. Francis Gregory Library. For ages 0-12 months. The community playgroups are facilitated by early intervention professionals and provide a family-centered, child-interest driven environment for children to interact with their same-age peers, while families receive information about early intervention related topics. RSVP on [Eventbrite](#) or contact Christopher Chapman at 202-741-0792.

21 DEC, 1200-1400: [Shape of Soap Workshop](#)
Free. Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum. In this engaging workshop participants will learn to craft beautiful, colorful, and scented glycerin soaps using a variety of molds. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned creator, this workshop is perfect for all levels of learning. Limited spots, reservation required: [Link](#)

26 DEC, 1200-1400: Umoja (Unity): Kwanzaa Opening Program
Free. Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum. Storyteller and griot Mama Ayo will open the week-long celebration with a traditional candle-lighting ceremony, pouring of the libation paying homage to African ancestors, and share on the history of Kwanzaa. She will talk about the first principle of Kwanzaa, Umoja (unity), and the importance of unity in families and communities. [Link](#).



The Henderson Hall Loan Locker has some sensory items available to check out and try in the comfort of your own home. This includes child-sized weighted vests. Weighted vests are a fairly common sensory intervention, particularly for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. Weighted vests should be used under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist to ensure they are having a therapeutic benefit and to ensure the weight is appropriate for the size of the child. Use of inappropriate weight can lead to injury.



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

\$25.99 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

\$24.99 per person. 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 is a Special Needs Trust?

A Special Needs Trust can be an important part of planning for the financial future. The trust allows you to save money for a family member with an intellectual/developmental disability *without* affecting their ability to receive public benefits (i.e., SSI or Medicaid).

For more information, see the [ARC of Northern VA Beginner's Guide](#) or speak with Henderson Hall's [Personal Financial Management Program](#).

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

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