



EFMP Exceptional Family Member Program

Henderson Hall Marine Corps Community Services

September 2024



Thank you!



Thank you to all of our families who attended the Henderson Hall EFMP Firehouse tour-We had a total of 70 individuals attend. Children got up close to the Joint Base Fort Myer-Henderson Hall firemen, trucks and equipment.

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LONG-HAUL

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



Any Marine knows a successful mission doesn't happen overnight. It requires planning, re-evaluation and putting in the work to complete each mission objective. A successful future for an individual with disabilities is no different. It requires taking the time to define what a successful future looks like for that individual, re-evaluating based on health, technology and interest changes and putting in the work early to both identify needed resources and establish those resources. Many families have been thinking about this for years, since both IEP and IFSP meetings often begin by asking the family their hopes for their child in the future but it can often be overwhelming. Luckily, there are plenty of supports available to help families build an

individualized plan with clear objectives to guide the vision for their loved one's future. For example, Parent's Place of Maryland is hosting [Guiding the Journey](#), a multi-session parent leadership training in September and October specially focused on transition and future planning. The Arc's Center for future Planning has a step-by-step [Build Your Plan Tool](#).

One of the most important time-sensitive decisions a family needs to determine is the individual's capacity for decision-making in different areas of life. If a guardianship or conservatorship is anticipated, the process should begin before the individual turns 18. Other options that preserve an individual's rights should always be considered.



These can look like power of attorney for healthcare or financial concerns or an advance directive to address healthcare wishes. To learn more about supported decision-making agreements, including the continuum from least restrictive to most restrictive, visit [The National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making](#) or join an upcoming live training through [Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services](#). Henderson Hall EFMP also has a Knowledge Nugget on 9/24 on Establishing Permanent Dependency (call 703-693-5353 to register).

Financial planning is another crucial piece of the future puzzle. You might consider opening an ABLÉ Account or a Special Needs Trust to protect your love one's assets and exploring available public benefits like Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Medicaid. If your own retirement is coming up, you may want to consider making your child the beneficiary of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). If you would like to learn more about your options for finances, consider joining [Trust Talk Tuesday](#) hosted by the ARC of NOVA, reaching out to Henderson Hall's Personal Financial Manager (703-614-6950).

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Plan ahead, especially as you approach transitions like the age of majority and leaving school
- Reach out to the experts including your special education team, service providers, EFMP caseworker and state or national disability organizations
- Reach out to peers for personal experience and recommendations
- Regularly re-evaluate how the plan is meeting your family member's needs in terms of health, safety, finances and independence



ABLE To Save

Have you heard of ABLE Accounts? This tax-free savings account for individuals with disabilities was signed into law in 2014. ABLE accounts cover qualified expenses that keep the account owner healthy and independent. These expenses may even include food and housing. Anyone is able to deposit money into the account (up to \$18,000 per year) where it can grow without taxes or affecting eligibility for public benefits like Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP) or Medicare up to certain limits. For example, up to \$100,000 in an ABLE account will be disregarded as a resource when determining eligibility for SSI.

This can be an ideal tool to save for your loved one's financial future and it can be used in conjunction with a Special Needs Trust (SNT).

While a person can open an ABLE account at any age, current laws require their disability began *before age 26*. In January of 2026 the age of eligibility will change and individuals will be able to open an account if their disability began before the age of 46. This will expand eligibility to an estimated 6 million more individuals with disabilities, including over 1 million veterans. To learn more about ABLE accounts, including first-hand experiences, visit the [ABLE National Resource Center](https://www.ablenrc.org).

ABLE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

www.ablenrc.org

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

AT can be classified as “high-tech,” “mid-tech” and “low-tech.” High-tech is usually the most versatile and often requires training to use. Low-tech does not require batteries. Mid-tech is somewhere in-between, with some electronic component but typically an easier learning curve.

Categories of AT

Assistive Alternative Communication

(AAC): This might look like an application on a sound-generating device (high-tech) or a choice paper-based board with pictures (low-tech).

Cognition/Learning: This might look like a live scribe pen that transcribes written and verbal information into the cloud (high-tech) or a visual timer (mid-tech).

Vision: This might look like a magnifying glasses (low-tech) or screen reader software (high-tech).

Hearing: This might look like a flashing light to indicate a phone call (mid-tech) or an amplifier (mid-tech).

Mobility: This might look like a power wheelchair (high-tech) or a prosthetic (mid-tech).

Assistive Technology (AT) is the umbrella term for any equipment, devices or items used to support independence and health for an individual with disabilities. This means AT can be as complicated as an eye-gaze device for communication or as simple as a pencil grip. Thanks to the Assistive Technology Act of 2004 every state receives federal funding to manage a state Assistive Technology Project. AT programs offer education, evaluations and trial devices/loans. Many AT programs also offer re-use programs where unneeded AT can be donated, refurbished and redistributed. While the program may not be located close to your residence or duty station, some programs have satellite locations or may offer to mail items. To find your state assistive technology program, visit [AT3 Center.com](http://AT3.Center.com).

The [Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program \(CAP\)](#) provides AT for DOD employees with disabilities. Non-DOD federal employees are eligible to receive a Workplace Disability Needs Assessment through CAP, but AT procurement will go through their own agency.



Virginia

September-October, 0900-1700: Free Admission Great Country Farms

*Free for AD and veteran families with ID **only on non-holiday weekdays**.* Bluemont, VA. Enjoy the splash pad, year-round mazes, farm store, 18 hole putt-putt and farmer ninja course. Additional fees for U-pick fruit. For more information: [Link](#)

02 September, 0800-1400: Fairfax City Labor Day Car Show

Free, donation encouraged for the benefit of Life with Cancer. Bring the kids and feast your eyes on over 250 show cars. Food vendors will be onsite. For more information: [Link](#)

14 September, 1000-1600: NOVA Family Fair

Free. Vienna, VA. Kids will love the Great Zucchini comedy Magic Show, glitter tattoos, face painting, touch-a-truck and child-friendly Pilates class. For more information: [Link](#)

26 September, 0900-1530: Baby Boot Camp

Free. Henderson Hall. Learn the basic “dos and don’ts” of baby care with the Henderson Hall New Parent Support Program. Offered the 4th Thursday of every month. This course is recommended for parents in their third trimester. For more information and to register, call 703-614-7204.

28-29 September 1000-1700: Occoquan Arts & Craft Show

Free. shuttle is \$8/each or 2 for \$15. Peruse the work of 250+ artists while you enjoy live music and food vendors. Kids can stop by the Imagination Alley to create their own art. For More information: [Link](#)

Virtual

06 Sept, 1000-1130: 7 Simple Strategies for Sibling Support

Free. Hosted by Fairfax County Public Schools. Learn common issues siblings of children with disabilities experience and 7 strategies to minimize sibling concerns and maximize opportunities to build bonds with siblings. Registration required: [link](#).

10 Sept, 1130-1200: Knowledge Nugget: Intro 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? Answers to these questions and more, including information on the USMC EFMP Respite Care Reimbursement program. Contact efmphh@usmc-mccs.org to register.

17 Sept, 1000-1130: Trust Talk Tuesday From ARC of NOVA

Free. Small group discussion on futures planning and Special Needs Trusts. Registration required: [link](#)

24 Sept, 1130-1200: Establishing Permanent Dependency

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

Maryland

03 September, 1000-1130: Brandywine Starbucks Coffee Connect

Free. Brandywine, MD. First Tuesday of every month. Join Blue Star Families, order a free drink and relax with other military family members. For more information: [Link](#)

05 September, 1000-1130: Sensory Playgroup

Free. Fort Meade, MD. Open to EFMP-enrolled children and their families. Join FAP and EFMP on the first Thursday of every month for sensory stimulation activities. For more information, call Fort Meade EFMP (301) 667-5590.

08 September, 1400-1900: Vietnamese American Society Mid-Autumn Festival

Free admission, vendors on-site. Silver Spring, MD. Join VAS for an evening of family-friendly fun, mooncakes and lanterns. Events will include the lion dance, singing performances, moon bounce and face painting. For more information: [Link](#).

20-21 September: The Great Navy Campout

Free for first 25 families. Solomons, MD. The first 25 families to register through September 16th will receive a free primitive family campsite. To register, call 410-326-2924/27.

21 September, 1800-2000: The Great Navy Campout Movie Night

Free. Solomons, MD. Anyone with base access is invited to attend a campfire and outdoor movie screening of Kung Fu Panda 4. Free s'mores kits for the first 75 guests to the campfire and free bag of popcorn to the first 75 guests to the movie. For more information: [link](#).

Washington, D.C.

12 September, 1900-2100: Book Talk-Crafting Paper Flowers with Emily Paluska

Free. National Museum of Asian Art. Author Emily Paluska will discuss her debut book. Create your own ginkgo branch keepsake. Register [here](#).

14 September, 1930: Movie Night in the Park with Spy Kids

Free. UDC Amphitheater. Outside food and drink permitted. Closed captioning/subtitles will be used and there are limited, first-come, first served areas reserved for individuals with wheelchairs. Register [here](#) to receive weather cancellation notices.

20 September, 1800-2000: Family Bingo Night

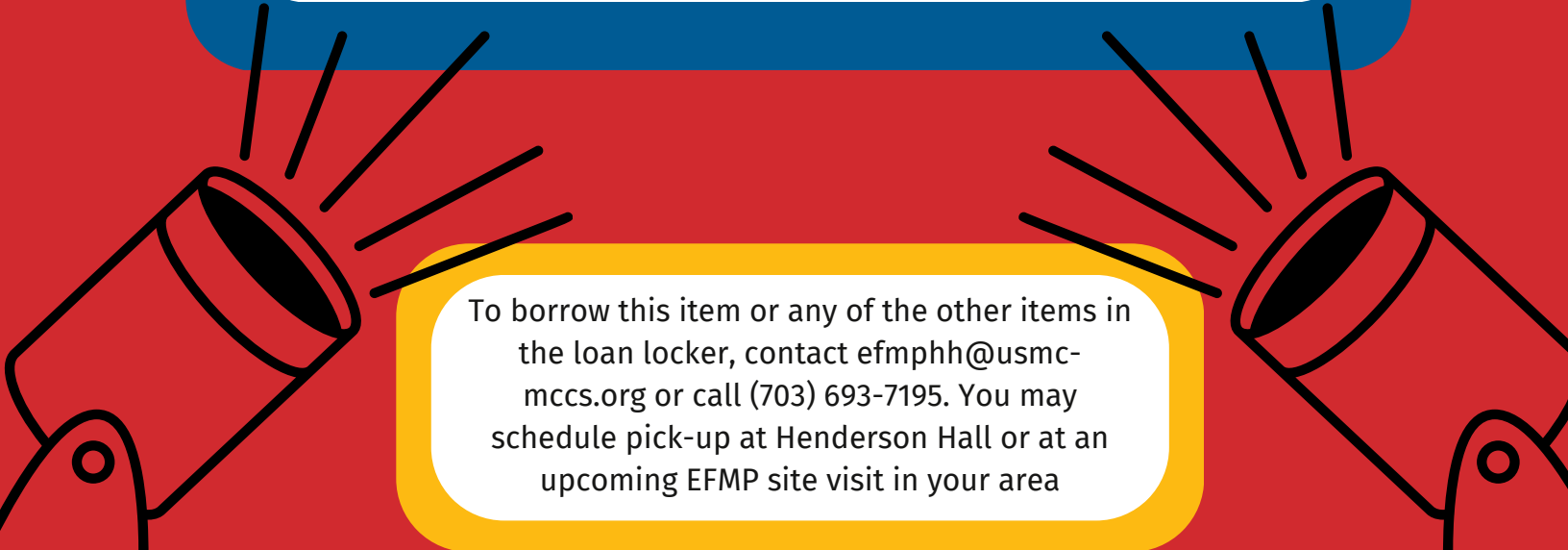
Free. JBAB. Enjoy bingo fun with the whole family at the MFRC building. Registration required prior to September 18th. Register here: [link](#)

28 September, 1600-1730: Hill Family Biking-Tiny Streets 2 Ride

Free. Go on a 4+ mile bike ride on several of the one-block streets on the Hill followed by free ice cream. If your bike needs some TLC, be sure to go a little early for help. Register [here](#).



The Henderson Hall Loan Locker has some assistive technology you can trial for your family in the comfort of your own home. Items in the locker include different pencil grips and a slant board. These items may be suggested by a special education teacher or an occupational therapist to support handwriting skills. Other items in the locker include sensory AT like weighted blankets, weighted vests (should be used under guidance of OT) and alternative seating.



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 (New!)

\$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 Continuation on Location?

Continuation on Location (COL) may be requested when there is documented substantial risk to an exceptional family member if medical care or educational services are transferred due to a Permanent Change of Station (PCS). When executing COL, The family remains at the current duty station while the Marine executes current PCS orders as a geo-bachelor. The benefit of approved COL is that a Marine may receive the higher of the two Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and the Marine may also be eligible for family separation pay.

If you think an upcoming PCS may significantly impact your family member's medical care or educational services, reach out to your family caseworker as soon as possible after orders are in hand. COL requests need to be submitted *before* executing PCS orders. Approved COL is not guaranteed.

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

(703) 693-7195

1555 Southgate Rd.

Bldg. 12

Arlington, VA 22026

