

Special Education Advocacy & Legal Support for EFMP Families

Air Force

Q1: How are your Service's EFMP Family Support staff able to assist families with special education concerns?

A1: EFMP-FS staff have several ways to help:

1. Internal process with Hillsborough County School District for troubleshooting.
2. Providing families with training resources and advocacy related information.
3. Providing warm handovers to various entities for complex cases.

Q2: Can EFMP-FS attend IEP meetings with families (even if virtually)?

A2: No, we are not permitted to attend any meetings with EFMP families. Air Force School Liaison Program Managers cannot attend the meetings either.

Q3: If so, are there any circumstances under which you wouldn't be able to attend and what would those be?

A3: Not applicable.

Q4: What legal support is available to EFMP families?

A4: MacDill AFB has attorneys that can assist EFMP families. They can assist with: IEP reviews and related information, education disputes and remedies, understanding parental rights, and drafting documents. They cannot represent families in meetings or legal proceedings. They can assist all families stationed at MacDill AFB; however, a referral to Sister Service attorneys can be considered if more services are available to families through them.

For Exceptional cases, MacDill AFB attorneys can and will also refer military families to the ABA Military Pro Bono Project (the "Project"). The project provides a means for active-duty servicemembers facing personal civil legal matters to be connected to volunteer attorneys when their legal needs require services beyond what can be provided by legal assistance offices. The Project has an online portal that allows case-handling judge advocates and civilian attorneys to refer financially-eligible servicemembers to the Project, which then connects the servicemembers with volunteer attorneys. This usually pertains to E-7 and below; but exceptions can be made.

Army

Q1: How are your Service's EFMP Family Support staff able to assist families with special education concerns?

A1: Army EFMP staff can assist families with ESE related issues by discussing cases, reviewing related documents, and providing training and referrals as needed.

Q2: Can EFMP-FS attend IEP meetings with families (even if virtually)?

A2: Yes, they can attend meetings in a supportive role. This means they cannot intervene or actively participate during the meeting.

Q3: What legal support is available to EFMP families?

A3: Army EFMP families have full access to legal assistance, even if not at an Army base. Parents living in other locations will also have access to legal services tied to their special education rights. Through a partnership with the American Bar Association, Army legal representatives can now connect eligible families to a volunteer attorney. Legal assistance attorneys offer counseling, legal negotiation, and referrals to other professionals, among other services. Legal assistance attorneys advise on a variety of

cases, including; special education law, estate planning, family law, and civilian administrative, among other topics. Learn more here:

https://www.army.mil/article/246695/army_legal_assistance_available_for_efmp_families.

Coast Guard

Q1: How are your Service's EFMP Family Support staff able to assist families with special education concerns?

A1: By knowing the resources offered through the school district they are located in, and by seeking advice from their DoD counterparts. Providing warm handovers as needed.

Q2: Can EFMP-FS attend IEP meetings with families (even if virtually)?

A2: No, CG EFMP staff are not permitted to attend these meetings. **The Coast Guard Mutual Assistance Programs reimburses families up to \$500 for the use of an educational advocate.**

Q3: What legal support is available to EFMP families?

A3: Coast Guard District 7 Legal can answer questions, yes, for anyone who holds a DoD ID Card. They don't represent in court. CG families can be referred to the CG EFMP-FS and they will connect with their legal department for assistance and you can find contact information for District 7 here:

https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Legal/Legal_Assistance/Find-A-Legal-Assistance-Lawyer/.

Marines

Q1: How are your Service's EFMP Family Support staff able to assist families with special education concerns?

A1: USMC EFMP staff can assist families with ESE related issues by discussing cases, reviewing related documents, and providing training and referrals as needed.

Q2: Can EFMP-FS attend IEP meetings with families (even if virtually)?

A2: Yes, they can attend meetings in a supportive role. This means they cannot intervene or actively participate during the meeting.

Q3: What legal support is available to EFMP families?

A3: USMC attorneys at Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, and Marine Corps Base Quantico are available for EFMP families. They provide free individual attorney-client advice and representation. These specialized attorneys provide the full spectrum of legal assistance, including case review, consultation, meeting attendance, and legal representation in court. Learn more here:

<https://usmc-mccs.org/articles/marine-corps-is-expanding-legal-support-to-efmp-families/>.

Navy

Q1: How are your Service's EFMP Family Support staff able to assist families with special education concerns?

A1: They can provide guidance and review IEPs with the family. They also utilize the local PTI (Parent Training and Information Centers).

Q2: Can EFMP-FS attend IEP meetings with families (even if virtually)?

A2: Navy EFMP-FS staff CANNOT attend IEP meetings.

Q3: What legal support is available to EFMP families?

A3: They can assist families with items related to legal aspects of the IEP. However, they cannot attend meetings or represent families.