



Supporting Military Families with Special Needs

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About Us

We Are

Partners

In PROMISE

Protecting the Rights Of Military children in Special Education

and disability communities to ensure they receive equal access to an education. We develop data-informed solutions that equip parents, inform leaders and enable military students to thrive.

We promote the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion by advocating for the futures of our military children with unique and diverse backgrounds and needs.

What We Do

- **Equip parents**
 - Educate parents on SPED law: *IEP & EFMP Binders, Free webinars with experts, and parent training and checklists*
 - Connect families to resources: *EFMP Coalition, resource partners*
 - *Provide data for positive educational outcomes*
- **Inform leaders**
 - Conduct research
 - Drive policy decisions
 - Improve existing support systems
- **Enable Students to Thrive**
 - Self-advocate
 - Expand Post-secondary opportunities



Our Inspiration

- 19 year old daughter with 21 disabilities including cerebral palsy, ADHD, and anxiety
- Family has been geographically separated for 3 years with 7 deployments
- Parents forced to pursue legal recourse to advocate for appropriate education
- Severe mental, fiscal and emotional burden over 6-year battle, \$220K+ in attorney/advocate fees



BLUF: What is EFMP?

- A program that assists military families with special needs
- Special needs includes:
 - Specialized medical and dental care
 - Developmental requirements
 - Special education requirements
 - Accessibility/Adaptive equipment
 - Assistive technology
 - Specific mental health condition
- Military helping their own



But what about Special Ed?

If you thought navigating
TRICARE was hard...

Special education **amplifies**
stress levels



Special Education 101

- Federal Law - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Signed in 1974 and reauthorized in 2004
- Entitles eligible students with disabilities a **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**
- Individualized Education Programs (IEP) is the vehicle for delivery



Policies vary by state: Families must learn state laws each PCS



Inconsistent Supports & State Policies

- Advanced enrollment not assured
- IEPs not standardized or portable
- Special Education assistance not consistent through EFMP
- All States implement IDEA differently
- MIC3 does not offer additional protections for SPED
- Military Student Identifier data not available for students in SPED
- SPED Outcome data in general not standardized
- Highly-mobile families repeat this cycle every 2-3 years

The Result



MILITARY CHILDREN
WHO ARE NOT
PREPARED FOR LIFE
AFTER SCHOOL
YEARS



MENTALLY,
PHYSICALLY AND
OFTEN FINANCIALLY
EXHAUSTED FAMILIES



***DECREASED
MILITARY
READINESS AND
RETENTION***

Families don't
know...

what they don't
know

2021 Survey Results

PCS Transitions

- Parental advocacy
- IEP support
- Remote enrollment

90%

Families experienced a PCS move, 24% experienced 5 or more moves

62%

Families pay out of pocket for special education services

Knowledge and Service Gaps

- Special education protections
- IEP support

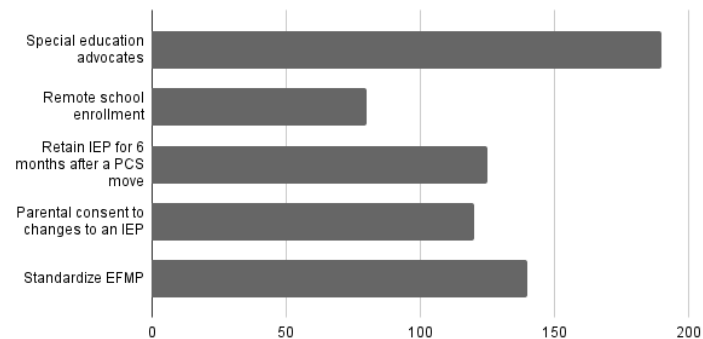
79%

Families were without services for over a month

Filing a Claim

- Support for stressed families
- Additional study on why families chose NOT to file a claim

Which of the following would most significantly help your child?



2022 Survey Findings:

Barriers to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

REAL delays in special education timelines and access to special education services

5.75

is the average number of months families wait for special education services after a PCS.

23

average MONTHS military children wait from identification to receiving special education services

Experienced an IDEA Timeline Violation

55%

we asked families how long they waited to receive an eligibility determination & special ed services. 55% waited over 60 days for each milestone.

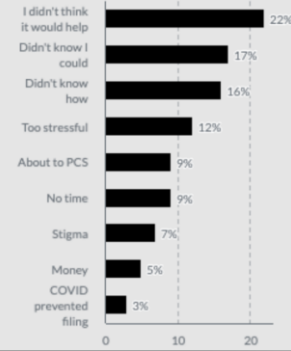
PERCEIVED lack of recourse when a special education conflict occurs

Total Who Chose NOT to File a Complaint, but Wanted to

74%

Reasons for not filing included, lack of time in location, money, stress involved

Why Did You NOT File a Complaint?



Parents have **lost confidence** in the military and civilian systems that are tasked with supporting the educational needs of their children

UNKNOWN relationship between access to information and positive education outcomes

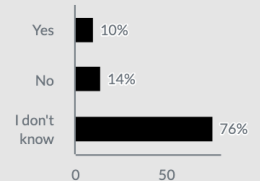
33 states Offer "advanced" enrollment with military orders.

Of those who have not used advanced enrollment

78%

live in a state where it is available.

Does your installation offer special ed legal support?



2023 Survey Findings

63%

of parents report their school recognizes the educational impact of their child's diagnosis (es)

54%

of military special education families report their child's IEP did not support their long-term educational goals

58%

STANDARD
DIPLOMA

30%

NON-STANDARD
DIPLOMA

% of students who are on track to achieve their educational outcome goals

- If students are improperly placed in special education programming, they may not receive adequate educational support
- If IEPs do not help students achieve their outcomes, traditional special education systems may not work for military students
- If students' standardized testing participation is not tracked and reported, military special education students may be falling through the cracks.
- Special education parents want to serve and need help to reduce the stresses caused by navigating the special education world

78%

of parents & students express being stressed by the special education system -- YET, their experiences do not have a significant impact on their family's desire to continue serving

WE



DATA

but stories complete us

“We had a school get rid of supports without a plan to fade them, and then had to ‘collect their own data’ when my son started suffering and we wanted them back. This process took a year and a half before they had the ‘data’ to reinstate the support. My argument was that the incoming out of state IEP was all the data that they needed. While all of this was happening, my son exhibited new extreme behaviors that we’d never seen before. His regression is still evident to this day.”

“IEPs are supposed to be transferable, however each school district does not have the same support. It takes me two years of fighting to get a solid IEP. It’s implemented for 6 months and then we move, only to start the process all over ago.”

“Our daughter has faced major learning gaps, teacher ridicule and embarrassment, labeling her as a bad kid and enabling bad behavior because she didn’t have adequate services.”

SPEAK UP



Results of Elevating and Advising

- **NDAAs Wins**
 - EFMP Standardization
 - Special Education Attorneys
 - GAO Studies/Reports/Data collection on SPED
- **Federal Wins**
 - Joining Forces Top 3 initiative
 - Department of Education Guidance on highly mobile children in Oct 2022
- **State Wins**
 - MIC3 Military spouse/families representation

Data-informed solutions is key!





Become an

Advocate

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Questions?



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