

MacDill AFB

School Liaison Program (SLP) & EFMP Family Support (EFMP-FS)

Exceptional Student Education Assistance Processes

SLP and EFMP-FS staff assist families in **ALL** local school districts. However, most of our families are in Hillsborough County. As such, we primarily reference their sites below. If you're in a different school district, please initiate contact with the School Liaison Office for assistance.

New Individual Education Plans (IEP) or 504 Plans:

If you believe your child needs an IEP (or 504 Plan), begin by making the request in writing to your child's school and becoming educated on the process. **YOU** will always be your child's primary advocate.

- (1) Use this link to see the process start to finish, and Hillsborough County Public School (HCPS) contact information: <https://www.hillsboroughschools.org/Page/5129>.
- (2) Start educating yourself:
 - <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/ese-eligibility/>
 - <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/acronyms/>
 - Reach out to EFMP-FS at 6fss.fsh.efmp@us.af.mil for additional training resources.
- (3) If you have children (0-5), not in school, and suspect developmental delays consider early evaluations!

The **younger** kids are, the **easier** it is to establish services (if qualified) **Don't wait!**

<https://health.usf.edu/medicine/pediatrics/early-steps>

https://macdillfss.com/wp-content/uploads/RESOURCES_YOUTHDEVELOPMENT.pdf

PCSing to MacDill AFB Area with IEPs / 504 Plans:

Note: You are **ALWAYS** eligible to enroll your child in their zoned school based on where you'll be residing. The resources below do not negate that right, but rather offer additional resources for relocating families.

- (1) If you are relocating into the **HCPS district**, you have the option of **calling the HCPS CHOICE Line at 813-272-4692**. You will receive a call within 72 business hours.
 - a. Identify as a military family and they will assist you by providing IEP/504 Plan guidance.
 - b. They will create a ticket, provide you the ticket number, and gather the information.
 - c. HCPS District ESE staff will refer case to appropriate specialist to work with you.
- (2) Reach out to the **School Liaison Program Manager (SLPM)**, Ms. Venetia Waters, regarding school districts, home schooling, virtual school, and more! Find her here: <https://macdillfss.com/school-liaison-officer/>.
- (3) Check out additional transition resources for families:
 - https://www.hillsboroughschools.org/cms/lib/FL50000635/Centricity/domain/3243/pdf/Transfer_Process_IEP_and_504_brochure.pdf

MacDill AFB Internal ESE Assistance Process for IEP / 504 Plan Issues:

When a military ESE student is enrolled in a HCPS school and parents have concerns regarding services, follow the process below. **STOP** the process below when your case is resolved or move to the next step if issues continue.

Step 1: Family discusses concerns with school & attempt resolution. (Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal)

Step 2: Family contact base SLPM or EFMP-FS staff for guidance & resources.

Step 3: Family calls the CHOICE line, gets ticket number and is contacted by HCPS ESE staff within 72 business hours.

HCPS ESE will engage with the child's school as needed.

Step 4: Families follow up with base staff on outcome. If unresolved, they will refer further as needed.

Steps Explained: (we recommend electronic communication during these steps)

Step 1: Families should initially work with the school directly to resolve concerns. The recommended path is classroom teacher, ESE staff at the school, Assistant Principal, and then Principal.

Note: It is recommended for all communication to occur in writing or for verbal communication to be followed up with an email.

Step 2: If unable to resolve at the school level, families can contact either the School Liaison Program Manager or the EFMP Family Support staff and present the situation. Initially, we will provide resources for self-advocacy and other resources, along with a request that you follow Step 3.

Note: It may be that your case is one that we can refer directly to District partners if warranted (rather than go through Step 3). Send us a detailed email explaining dates, personnel you interacted with and sequence of events. SLPM and EFMP-FS staff will use discretion on whether step 3 is most appropriate or if case needs to be elevated sooner.

Note: **Air Force** SLPM and EFMP-FS staff **cannot** attend meetings. If you're from a Sister Service, they may be able to attend meetings virtually. If that's the case, we will provide you a warm handover.

Step 3: In this step, **call the Hillsborough County Public School (HCPS) CHOICE Line at 813-272-4692. You will receive a call within 72 business hours.**

- a. Identify as a military family and explain you need ESE related assistance.
- b. They will create a ticket, provide you the ticket number, and gather the information.
- c. HCPS District ESE staff will refer case to appropriate specialist to work with you.
- d. Normally, the case is resolved at this stage.

Note: Please reach out to SLPM or EFMP-FS if you are not contacted by the ESE Team or if the process is stalled for an unreasonable (to you) amount of time. We will follow up with our partners to ensure outreach and assistance.

Step 4: Advise SLPM and/or EFMP-FS staff on the status of your case (whether resolved or not). If you've attempted Steps 1-3 and the case is not resolved, advise SLPM and/or EFMP-FS Staff. It may be that we need to provide a warm handover to the base's EFMP Legal Team or your Service's legal resources (if a Sister Service family).

Note: **Air Force** EFMP Legal Team **cannot** attend IEP meetings. They can assist by reviewing IEPs, discussing your parent rights and steps you can take, assisting in drafting legal letters, etc. This can differ for Sister Services EFMP Legal.

Families in **other school districts**, please initiate the process through the School Liaison Program Manager.

Resolution & Advocacy Resources:

EFMP Family Support Office: 6fss.fsh.efmp@us.af.mil or 813-828-0122 / 0136

School Liaison Program Manager: venetia.waters@us.af.mil or 813-828-0146

APD Resource Directory: <https://resourcedirectory.apd.myflorida.com/>

Florida Alliance for Assistive Services & Technology: <https://faast.org/>

Florida Diagnostic Learning & Resources System Parent Services: <https://hillsborough.fdlrs.org/parent-services>

Florida Inclusion Network: <https://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/>

Florida Navigator: <https://navigator.apd.myflorida.com/ProgramSearch.aspx>

Florida Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice:

<http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/privateschooldirectory/>

Family Network on Disabilities: <https://fndusa.org/>; <https://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/psn/>; <https://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/dadvocates/>; <https://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/youth-advocacy/>

Southeast ADA Center: <https://adasoutheast.org/?s=IEP>

Step Up for Students Scholarships: <https://www.stepupforstudents.org/for-parents/special-needs/how-the-scholarship-works/>; <https://www.stepupforstudents.org/for-parents/special-needs/how-to-find-a-gardiner-provider/>

The ARC of Tampa: <https://www.thearctb.org/social-services-organization>

The Family Café: <https://familycafe.net/resources/>

Wright's Law: <https://www.wrightslaw.com/>