



**PCSing?**  
Pointers for Families  
of Individuals with Disabilities



**STOMP**

*Specialized Training Of Military Parents*

**Working Together for Military Families of Individuals with DisAbilities!**

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STOMP -A Project of Washington PAVE

## **PCSing? Pointers for Families of Children with Disabilities**

Transfers are a part of every military member's career. For some families these transfers can occur as frequently as every 18 months. For all families there is an enormous amount of work involved with the transition but for families with a child with special needs there are even more things to consider, remember and arrange. Frequently it can take families between 6-12 months to get all their usual services going once they relocate. Being informed about where you are going and what and who is there to help you is key. Planning ahead, starting the networking process before you start the journey and asking the right questions can aid a smoother transition and enable the process to move along more quickly once you arrive at your new home.

### **Before you leave:**

**1. Appropriate assignment?** Be *sure* that the duty station to which you have been assigned is equipped to deal with your child's special needs. *Do your own checking* to see what is and what is not available there. Here are a variety of resources available to help you with this:

- EFM Connections at <http://www.efmconnections.org>
- Air Force Crossroads (for all branches) <http://www.afcrossroads.com>
- The Standard Installation Topic Exchange Service <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/>
- The STOMP listserv, an exchange of information and resources for military families everywhere! Send a blank email to [STOMP-subscribe@topica.com](mailto:STOMP-subscribe@topica.com) to join.

**Remember:** *The information you are looking for may not be at the forefront of these resources, you may have to dig a little deeper to find what you are searching for, follow links to local resources and discover what is out there. Last but not least, call the STOMP office! We will find some information for you and may be able to provide a link to another family or group at the receiving installation.*

**2. Contact the receiving EFMP** office to touch base and to let them know you will be arriving and what your needs may be. They may be able to provide you with some contacts or information to help you in your transition. Will you require respite care or specialized day care while you search for/move into housing? Perhaps they can help with that or direct you to someone who can.

**3. Laws and regulations:** Are the schools run by local school districts or DODEA? Establish which and start learning about the laws and regulations, which apply at your new location before you leave.

**For DODDS or DDESS schools:** Contact STOMP for copies of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and relevant regulations. (Please note that the Act and not the regulations are utilized within the DODEA system).

**For local Schools:** Contact your receiving State's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) for a copy of the Federal and State regulations regarding education. They may also be able to provide you with information on state resources such as Medicaid/SSI etc. Find PTI contact details at <http://taalliance.org/PTIs.htm> or call STOMP at 1-800-5PARENT (v/tty) for referral.

**Remember:**

- a. There are changes in qualifying criteria for special education from state to state and again when moving to and from DODEA schools. Parents need to be aware of this in relation to their own child's unique needs and challenges and know their rights. Having regulations available to you and contacting your PTI can help you advocate for your child.*
- b. When moving from state to state or to or from DODEA schools, the school is not obligated to implement your current IEP. However, the IEP should be considered, as it is probably the most detailed written educational information that they have access to and they will use it to evaluate your child's eligibility and to resume the IEP process in the new location.*

**4. Contacts:** Obtain all the contact numbers you will need on arrival at your new location. Unfortunately, you must have arrived at the duty station in order to apply for many things. This means adding these contacts to the huge list of things to do within the first few days at your new duty station. Remember that you will be extremely busy trying to find housing etc. and won't have the time or inclination to be digging out all those numbers. You should have the following information ready to start calling and visiting on arrival:

a. Local SSI/Medicaid office

b. Local Department of Developmental Disabilities/Dept. of Mental Retardation/Mental Health office. This may be called something different from state to state, find out what it is called before you move-different states have different things to offer so it could be worth checking into.

c. Local School Districts

d. Local Support Groups: While this may be the last thing on your mind at this time, contacting these local groups can provide you with a great deal of information upfront. Speaking with other parents, who may have the scoop on local schools/housing/doctors etc. is ultimately the best resource available to you.

**5. Medical and Educational Records:** Be sure that your documentation is on order and update your home file. Include all relevant documentation. Here are some ideas:

\_\_\_ Birth certificate

\_\_\_ Immunization records

\_\_\_ Social Security Number

\_\_\_ Medical records

\_\_\_ Pictures

\_\_\_ School records (IEPs and any relevant evaluations)

\_\_\_ Samples of child's work and other accomplishments

\_\_\_ Communication logs/correspondence

\_\_\_ Non-academic activities the child is involved in

\_\_\_ Videos of child in home and school setting (especially useful for children who may have more than average challenges transitioning)

\_\_\_ Anything that provides an accurate description of your child

**Remember:**

a. ***Hand carry*** these records to your next duty station.

b. *If going overseas, make an additional copy, which you can send to your home of record for safekeeping.*

c. *For some children, moving can impact their performance and interaction at school. These records should include anything that may provide an accurate reflection of their abilities. The more detailed the better!*

For more information, contact the STOMP office and ask for the Home Files/Records Information Packet.

**6. Supplies:** If your child is on medication and/or requires regular medical supplies/equipment, such as supplemental feeding supplies and/or equipment, please ensure you have a good supply to take when you leave. It may take some time to even obtain a new prescription, never mind to establish a supplier and what if you

do not find one with the products you need right away? Take at least one month's supply of everything in addition to what you will require while enroute and/or on leave before arriving at the new duty station.

**Remember:** *Hand carry all medications.*

- 7. Medicaid and SSI:** Eligibility for both Medicaid and SSI varies from state to state. Leaving a state eligible for both does not guarantee eligibility for either in the new state. Similarly, non-eligibility in one state does not mean there is no way for you to become eligible in a new state. Please be aware that eligibility does not carry over from state to state and you must reapply in your new state. For more information on either SSI or Medicaid eligibility please contact our office to request a fact sheet.

A note for individuals receiving monthly SSI checks: As you move, you may continue to receive SSI checks from your eligibility in your last state. Please be aware that as states frequently subsidize SSI payments and your housing situation alters, along with your relocation allowance and other income variations, it is very possible that the payment you receive is inaccurate and could be for several months. You should be aware that you *might* be asked to repay what is paid to you during this time. Should this happen to you, please contact our office on notification, for assistance with your response.

### **Going overseas?**

**SSI:** Eligible individuals can continue to receive SSI overseas. However, you must have received at least one check while living in the United States before going overseas. This means that US Citizens that are born overseas with disabilities are unable to apply for SSI until they have been resident in the US for one month. After receipt of their first check, they can go overseas and continue to receive SSI providing they remain financially eligible.

**Medicaid:** Unfortunately, Medicaid is not available overseas. Medicaid can be a huge benefit to families who have a child with a disability and families who utilize many Medicaid programs may need to think carefully about how an overseas assignment/life without Medicaid may impact their family.

**DDD/DMRDD:** Again these types of services are not available to families overseas.

**State Early Intervention Services:** Are not available overseas. Instead military families with eligible children are served through the EDIS (Educational and Developmental Intervention Services) program, which is available through DoD and the Military Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs). For more information about EDIS, visit <http://mfrf.calib.com/snn/eis/who.cfm>.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act:** Section 504, which allows many students educational accessibility does not apply outside the borders of the United States. Parents who have children with 504 Accommodations Plans or any parent of a child with a disability need to understand this and what it means for their children before embarking on an overseas assignment.

**Remember:** *If going on an overseas assignment, think carefully about all the implications of living overseas with your child. Check into accessibility laws in the country you will be living in. What kinds of resources are available in the local community? Are their support and resource groups? Think ahead, considering your child's prognosis and what your family needs may be throughout your tour, not just at the time of departure.*

**On arrival at your new duty station:**

1. Once you have established where you will be living, go to your local school to enroll your child. Take their shot records and a **COPY** of their current IEP to include in enrollment information. Find out who the Director of Special Education is for your district for future reference.
2. Call DDD/DMRDD/DMH to let them know you have arrived in the area and to ask what is available.
3. Call SSI/Medicaid office to set up an appointment and/or to find out what you need to do to apply.
4. After enrolling with TRICARE at the new installation, make an appointment for your child with Pediatrics. They can then give you the referral you need for a developmental pediatrician or any other specialty you may require. It is really important that you do this as soon as possible. Just getting an appointment in a regular pediatric clinic can take some considerable time, to get a specialty appointment may take much longer...by the time you see a doctor who can make a referral for evaluations for your TRICARE therapies and wait on a provider waiting list, you could be looking at a several month wait for therapies. You can speed this process up by making those early calls, following up paperwork and asking to take cancellations at the last minute wherever possible.

If at any time during your transition, you have questions or concerns, please call the STOMP office at 1-800-5PARENT (v/tty). We would be happy to assist you.