

## Navy Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Respite Care Frequently Asked Questions for Families October 2024

**\*\*\*As of 1 October 2024, all EFMP Enrollment Verifications listed below will be completed by Child Care Aware® of America through HQ Navy EFMP until such time that the Navy Family Assessment and Accountability System (NFAAS) is updated to reflect the new Level of Need, allowing Sponsors to then submit their own verification for the program.\*\*\***

### PROGRAM QUESTIONS

#### 1. What is the Navy's EFMP Respite Care Program?

**ANSWER:** The Navy's EFMP Respite Care Program is a program that provides temporary relief to Sponsors (military service members) responsible for regular care of eligible dependents with disabilities ranging from moderate to profound. Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC), Child & Youth Programs (CYP) contracts with Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) to administer the EFMP Respite Care Program. This program is available as a benefit to Navy Sponsors who are enrolled in the Navy Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) with a child that meets the prescribed eligibility criteria. EFMP Respite Care provides parents the opportunity to rest and rejuvenate with peace of mind, knowing their EFM child will be well cared for.

#### 2. Where is the program available?

**ANSWER:** Navy EFMP Respite Care is available throughout the United States.

#### 3. Is enrollment in the Navy's EFMP Respite Care Program automatic once a Sponsor is enrolled in EFMP?

**ANSWER:** No, EFMP Respite Care is a stand-alone benefit program. Eligibility must be verified with Child Care Aware® of America by the Sponsor. Participation in this program is voluntary. In addition, **there may be a wait list for respite care.** Navy Sponsors should contact Child Care Aware® of America's toll-free number, **800-424-4426 ext. 317** or go to [www.childcareaware.org](http://www.childcareaware.org) for more information.

#### 4. What do families receive through the EFMP Respite Care Program?

**ANSWER:** Effective 1 October 2024, Sponsors not previously enrolled in EFMP Respite Care who have an eligible child(ren) assessed at Level of Need (LON) 3 or Level of Need (LON) 4, will receive 20 or 32 hours per month per family, respectively.

Sponsors who are currently utilizing the EFMP Respite Care benefit will continue with no changes to their respite care benefit of 40 hours per month per family until 30 September 2025 as long as the family continues to maintain their eligibility.

Respite care is provided by well-trained, and background screened providers and is monitored by the local partner agencies. Sponsors can use respite care services by approved providers in the family's home, or a licensed and accredited family child care home or an off-base child care center.

**The Navy anticipates full implementation of the EFMP Respite Care Program utilizing the Level of Need standardization of hours on 1 October 2025.**

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5. What if a Sponsor has two or more EFM children, how many hours of care would they receive? Do all EFM children receive care at the same time?

**ANSWER:** Respite care hours are allotted per family, not per EFM: **the household may not exceed their authorized hours of care per month**. Sponsors who have more than one eligible EFM and they are assessed LON 3 and LON 4, respite care hours will be authorized for the highest level of need as long as that child remains eligible.

Sponsors who have more than one EFM child may split their hours so that they can spend quality time with each child, or as necessary to take a child to medical appointments. However, each time a Sponsor schedules care, no matter how many children are present, the hours are deducted from the family's authorized total. As a general rule, care for all children should be simultaneous. The intent of respite care is to give the parent(s) a break.

6. What if my family is offered enrollment from the wait list, is care for my non-EFM children included?

**ANSWER:** EFMP Respite Care hours are for the eligible EFM child(ren) only.

### FAMILY ELIGIBILITY

1. Who is eligible for the Navy's EFMP Respite Care Program?

**ANSWER:** Active-duty Sponsors, or Reservists on active-duty orders, who are current in their enrollment in Navy EFMP with a child (birth through 18 years) assigned a LON 3 or LON 4 are eligible for EFMP Respite Care. Sponsors who are currently utilizing the EFMP Respite Care benefit will continue with no changes to their respite care benefit of 40 hours per month per family until 30 September 2025 as long as the family continues to maintain their eligibility.

**The child must reside with the Sponsor.** The exception is a Sponsor who is geographically separated from the family for reasons such as a short-term course, remote tours, or for stability of the child's medical/educational needs. If a Sponsor divorces/separates and does not have at least 50% physical custody of the EFM child, the Sponsor is no longer eligible for respite care, nor is the parent with whom the child is **residing**. In cases where a dual-military family divorces, the Sponsor that is enrolled in EFMP **and** has at least 50% physical custody of the child is the one who is eligible for EFMP Respite Care.

Reservists must submit a copy of their orders to verify their status as active duty serving on active orders. When activated, the Sponsor will receive priority enrollment from the wait list. Sponsors will remain eligible only while on active-duty status. It is important for Reservists to plan ahead of orders to begin the enrollment process.

2. Is a Service Member of another branch (Army, Air Force or Marine Corps) stationed at a Navy base eligible?

**ANSWER:** No, only active duty Navy Sponsors are eligible. If a Navy Sponsor is stationed at another Services' base or post, they are still eligible for the Navy's EFMP Respite Care Program.

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3. What happens if the EFM child is placed in a Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) for an undetermined period of time? Does the child get removed from the wait list or lose their respite care if they are enrolled?

**ANSWER:** If the child is on the wait list, they are not removed but the “Need for Care” date will reflect the expected return date of the child in the Sponsor’s home. The Sponsor maintains their original call date and is placed on the Projected Need wait list. The Sponsor must contact CCAoA once they know when their child will return home.

If the Sponsor and EFM child are currently enrolled and the EFM child is expected to return within 90 days, the Sponsor and EFM child can remain enrolled but inactive. If the Sponsor has another eligible EFM also in the home, only the child who is in the RTF is inactive until they return home.

If the EFM child is expected to be in the RTF over 90 days, the Sponsor is dis-enrolled. However, the child can be placed on the wait list with a projected need for care date for priority enrollment once the child returns home. Meaning the child would get the next available space. They are not automatically re-enrolled.

4. What if a Sponsor is a single parent and deploys or has other military-related obligations that take them away for extended periods of time? Can they be enrolled? Does the guardian receive respite care?

**ANSWER:** Yes, a single Sponsor can be enrolled with a child who is living with a person acting in loco parentis on behalf of the child’s eligible sponsor who must leave the area temporarily to fulfill a military obligation. This includes their ex-spouse or other legal guardian.

An eligible Sponsor may designate another adult to act as in loco parentis for their dependents when he/she must leave the area temporarily to fulfill a military-related obligation (e.g., deployment, temporary additional duty [TAD], temporary duty [TDY], medical treatment). When acting in loco parentis, the designated adult temporarily takes on the role of the child’s lawful parent, assuming the obligations and duties of a legal guardian in the absence of the authorized sponsor. In this arrangement, the children must reside with and be supported by the person acting in loco parentis.

Please note the Sponsor must be the custodial parent, with primary custody. Proper guardianship paperwork must be submitted for any guardian other than the child’s legal parent.

5. Can a Sponsor eligible for Navy EFMP Respite Care also use another respite care program (e.g., Tricare ECHO)?

**ANSWER:** Yes. If the Sponsor is otherwise eligible, receiving other external respite care services does not dis-qualify the Sponsor from participating in the EFMP Respite Care Program.

If the family is dual Active Duty in two different branches of the military, the family is only eligible to receive respite care from the service in which the child is enrolled in EFMP. The family may not receive respite care from both branches of service.

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### EFMP ENROLLMENT VERIFICATION

#### 1. How is a Sponsor's enrollment in the Navy's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) verified?

**ANSWER:** The Sponsor has access to the Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS) through which the EFMP enrollment information is stored. There are three options to submit this verification: 1) the Sponsor can download the PDF auto-generated EFMP Enrollment Letter from NFAAS; 2) the Sponsor can take a screenshot of the EFMP page on a computer or through the mobile app that must include: the Sponsor's name, child's name, category, and last EFMP update; or 3) request assistance from their EFMP Case Liaison who can also download the EFMP Enrollment. The Sponsor must provide a current EFMP enrollment letter that is generated within 30 days of the enrollment offer and acceptance.

CCAoA does not have access to NFAAS; therefore, it is the Sponsor's responsibility to provide documentation of their continued eligibility when requested.

#### 2. What if a NEW Sponsor inquiring about EFMP Respite Care does not have a current EFMP update?

**ANSWER:** Sponsors self-certify their eligibility to be placed on the EFMP Respite Care wait list. A Sponsor's EFM child can be placed on the wait list with an expired EFMP enrollment; however, they CANNOT be enrolled in the EFMP Respite Care Program with an expired EFMP enrollment. It is the Sponsor's responsibility to ensure their EFM child's status remains current.

#### 3. What happens if a Sponsor on the wait list is offered enrollment before the EFMP enrollment update is processed? Can they be enrolled?

**ANSWER:** If the Sponsor is offered enrollment before the EFMP status is updated, the family cannot be enrolled in the EFMP Respite Care Program. If the Sponsor is working on their EFMP update, they can defer their offer so they can complete the EFMP update. The family is moved to the Projected Need wait list with their original application date and their "Date Care Needed" is adjusted. If the family does not complete the EFMP update within the prescribed timeframe or provide confirmation of extenuating circumstances, they are removed from the wait list.

#### 4. What if a NEW Sponsor's EFMP enrollment for their child is below a LON 3 or LON 4?

**ANSWER:** An eligibility criterion for the Navy's EFMP Respite Care Program is an assigned LON 3 or LON 4. Navy Sponsors with an EFM child assigned a LON 1 or 2 are not eligible to receive respite care for that child.

#### 5. How do Sponsors know when their EFM updates are due?

**ANSWER:** NFAAS provides incremental email reminders to the Sponsor's email listed in that system regarding EFMP enrollments that are coming due starting at six (6) months in advance of the due date. EFMP updates that are required by Navy every three years are completed through the Exceptional Family Member Program Military Treatment Facility Coordinator.

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When a Sponsor is enrolled in the EFMP, their enrollment letter will state if they are eligible for respite care and for how many hours per month. The EFMP Enrollment Letter states updates are required every three years from the date of enrollment. Sponsors have access to NFAAS where EFMP enrollment information is maintained, and the enrollment letter is available to download. The next enrollment due date is listed on the bottom of the child's EFMP Enrollment Letter.

When a Sponsor is enrolled in the EFMP Respite Care Program, they receive reminder notices from the partner agency or CCAoA starting at six (6) months prior to their update, which include a notification that services will be disrupted if the update is not completed and verified by CCAoA prior to their expiration.

### 6. What happens if the EFMP update is processed before the expiration date of the current enrollment?

**ANSWER:** For NEW Sponsors enrolled after 1 October 2024 using the Level of Need: Once the EFMP enrollment is completed, this supersedes the previous assigned level of need and expiration date. If the level of need remains LON 3 or LON 4, there is no change to a family's eligibility as long as they continue to meet all other eligibility criteria. However, if the new enrollment results in the child's level of need being downgraded to LON 2 or below, the Sponsor would no longer be eligible for the EFMP Respite Care Program for that EFM child as of the date the enrollment was processed and new LON assigned.

For existing Sponsors currently receiving the EFMP Respite Care benefit: Sponsors who are currently designated CAT 4 and CAT 5 received a letter from PERS-456 EFMP Branch detailing the changes and providing the application timelines. Sponsors currently receiving respite care will be re-evaluated using the new standard eligibility criteria based on the EFM's level of need. If the level of need assigned to the EFM enrolled in respite care is below LON 3, the existing Sponsor will continue to receive their current benefit until 30 September 2025 as long as they continue to meet the remaining eligibility requirements.

Sponsors are responsible for tracking their EFMP enrollment packet until completion through PERS-456. The processing time varies. The EFMP enrollment process can be tracked through this system allowing the Sponsor to monitor their child(ren)'s EFMP enrollment. In addition, the local EFMP Case Liaison is listed for the Sponsor's convenience.

The Sponsor's is responsible for downloading a copy of the EFMP Enrollment letter and sending a copy to their partner agency or CCAoA as soon as possible so that their information can be updated.

### 7. How often is a Sponsor's EFMP enrollment verified by CCAoA?

**ANSWER:** Sponsors must submit an EFMP enrollment letter (per eligible EFM child) prior to enrollment in the EFMP Respite Care Program, when an EFMP enrollment update for their child is completed, and at least annually upon recertification to continue receiving respite care services.

Sponsors receive a "Certificate of Approval" for no longer than a period of one year. Before a Sponsor's approval is extended for an additional year of service, the eligibility is reconfirmed. Once the EFMP status is verified, the Sponsor is issued a new "Certificate of Approval".

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Between 1 October 2024 and 30 September 2025, CCAoA will contact HQ EFMP to confirm the eligibility for any Sponsor who is unable to download their EFMP enrollment letter reflecting their category prior to 1 October 2024 and prior to their level of need re-enrollment.

### 8. What is the process for a Sponsor enrolled in the EFMP Respite Care Program when CCAoA verifies EFMP updates?

**ANSWER:** Sponsors receive email reminders regarding their expiring EFMP status. Once the EFMP enrollment is updated, it is the family's responsibility to submit the EFMP Enrollment Letter to confirm they are still eligible. If a Sponsor submitted their EFMP paperwork and it is still in process, the Sponsor is made temporarily inactive NTE 60 days pending CCAoA's confirmation of their new update.

If a Sponsor is temporarily inactive during their NTE 60-day period and they contact CCAoA because their update was processed, respite care cannot be reactivated without confirmation that the update was processed, and the level of need did not change to below a LON 3. If there is a delay in submitting the EFMP Enrollment Letter, i.e., due to holidays, weekends, etc., as long as the child's LON remains a 3 or 4, the Sponsor can resume care and CCAoA will update their information once the EFMP Enrollment Letter is received. However, the Sponsor is responsible to pay for any respite care the Sponsor uses while their EFMP status is expired.

\*\* Sponsors receiving respite care as of 1 Oct 2024 will be re-evaluated using the new standard eligibility criteria based on the EFM's level of need. If the level of need assigned to the EFM enrolled in respite care is below a LON 3, the Sponsor will continue to receive their current benefit until 30 September 2025 as long as they continue to meet the remaining eligibility requirements.

### 9. What happens if a Sponsor currently enrolled in the Navy EFMP Respite Care Program has a child whose EFMP status expires? Can they continue using respite care?

**ANSWER:** No, once a child's EFMP status expires, they are no longer eligible until such time as their LON/eligibility is reconfirmed by CCAoA. Respite care services for that child are made temporarily inactive NTE 60 days. The child's eligibility must be confirmed by the end of the 60-day period, or the Sponsor is made permanently inactive. Prior to dis-enrollment, CCAoA will evaluate any extenuating circumstances provided by the Sponsor and/or other professionals that may prevent the Sponsor from updating, e.g., extended hospitalization of child.

If the Sponsor has another eligible EFM child in the program whose EFMP status is still current, the Sponsor can continue to receive services for the child(ren) whose EFMP status is current.

### 10. What if a Sponsor does not know who to contact to start their EFMP enrollment update?

**ANSWER:** Sponsors can reach out to their local EFMP Case Liaison (who is also listed on the EFMP tab in the Service Member's NFAAS account). The EFMP Case Liaison assists Sponsors with information on the process and provides information on who / where the MTF EFMP Coordinator is located. The Sponsor submits the updated enrollment paperwork to the MTF EFMP Coordinator.



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Additional information about locating your EFMP Liaison is available at  
[https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family\\_readiness/fleet\\_and\\_family\\_support\\_program/work-and-family-life/exceptional\\_family\\_member/efmp\\_liaisons\\_and\\_mtf\\_coordinators.html](https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/work-and-family-life/exceptional_family_member/efmp_liaisons_and_mtf_coordinators.html).

### PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY

#### 1. Where can a Sponsor receive respite care?

**ANSWER:** Sponsors can use their respite care hours in one of the following ways:

- 1) In their own home with a trained, background-screen provider,
- 2) In licensed and NAFCC accredited (or equivalent) or CDA-credentialed Family Child Care Home,
- 3) In a licensed and nationally accredited (non-DoD) Child Care Center, or
- 4) In a special center that provides care to children with special needs.

#### 2. How can a family get to know the provider before they receive in-home care?

**ANSWER:** Participating Sponsors have the opportunity to meet each prospective provider in their home (or at a neutral agreed upon location) before care occurs. The provider meets the parents and the child so that parents can assess whether their child seems comfortable with the provider. The provider goes over the individual likes and dislikes of the children who are receiving respite care and the best ways the parents find to interact with their children. If parents are uncomfortable with any aspect of the meeting with the provider, they may request other provider referrals. This request for additional referrals can come at any time.

Once respite care begins with selected providers, parents are not required to leave the home. They may, and are encouraged to, remain at home for initial appointments to continue to observe the interactions and continue to show providers any specific care needs or strategies for their child(ren).

#### 3. Who are the providers that come into a Sponsor's home to provide respite care?

**ANSWER:** In-home providers are the preferred source of respite care for most Sponsors because children are often most comfortable in their own home. In-home providers are recruited by local agencies working with Child Care Aware® of America. In-home providers are also available during evening and weekend hours when centers and licensed homes are not typically operating.

In-home providers must complete the following pre-service requirements prior to being referred to Sponsors:

- 1) CPR Certification
- 2) First Aid Certification
- 3) Child Abuse & Identification, Prevention & Reporting Training
- 4) Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Training
- 5) Medication Dispensation Training
- 6) State Criminal Repository History Check
- 7) Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Fingerprint Check
- 8) Child Abuse & Neglect Registry Check
- 9) National Sex Offender Registries Check

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In addition, pre-service training must be updated annually or maintain current certification. Providers receive annual in-service training in a variety of special needs topics including working with children with Autism, handling challenging behavior, etc. Providers are recruited with varying levels of education and experience to benefit each family's needs.

#### 4. What if a Sponsor wants a preferred provider i.e., someone they already know or a relative with whom their child is familiar? Can this person be their provider?

**ANSWER:** Yes. A Sponsor may use a friend or a relative for respite care. This "preferred provider" may apply to be a provider with the partner agency. This is a perfect scenario because the provider, child and parent already know each other, and parents feel secure with this provider. All providers, even those pre-selected by or related to the family, must complete all pre-service training and background check requirements (listed above). A preferred provider cannot live with the Sponsor or be financially dependent on the Sponsor. They must also be at least 18 years of age and have a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent.

### MISCELLANEOUS

#### 1. How do a provider and Sponsor know when they can start care?

**ANSWER:** When a Sponsor selects an "approved" provider (one who has completed all required pre-service criteria), the agency confirms and completes the selected provider's information section on the family application. This requires the "start date" for care which is when care can begin. The update to the application is submitted to Child Care Aware® of America and is processed within 5-7 business days. Each Sponsor and provider receive a "Certificate of Approval" and attendance sheet per child via email once the Sponsor has made their provider selection.

"Certificates of Approval" are issued for periods no longer than one year, but the period can be shorter. It is important that Sponsors review the certificate information and dates. Annual recertification for each Sponsor is in the month they were entered in our system. EFMP updates that are due within the certificate year would affect the approval dates as well.

For example,

- 1) A Sponsor applies January 4, 2023 (application entered in our system)
- 2) The Sponsor selects a provider on February 3, 2023
- 3) Their child's EFMP paperwork is due by December 15, 2023 of the same year
- 4) The certificate start date would be February 3, 2023 (when the provider was selected), but the end date would be December 15, 2023. As long as the EFMP update has been completed and verified by Child Care Aware® of America before that date, the certificate schedule would be extended but only through January of the following year which is their recertification month.
- 5) Child Care Aware® of America will then reach out to the Sponsor at least 60 days prior to their recertification date (November 2023) to provide instruction on how to recertify their Sponsor for another year of service. The email would detail what documents need to be submitted to CCAoA via email or fax: 1) updated EFMP Letter from NFAAS dated the same date as the recertification



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email from CCAoA or later; 2) most recent LES (within 30 days), financial information may be redacted; 3) copy of Annual Recertification Statement signed by the Sponsor and each line initialed (attached); spouse signature accepted when Sponsor is deployed. The notification will reiterate the timeframe to complete this process, as well as consequences for not taking necessary actions. If all documents are received and completed within the 60 days prior to recertification, the new certificate dates would be January 4, 2024 – January 3, 2025.

**If a Sponsor does not complete the process before their recertification date, then the Sponsor is made inactive, cannot use care, and is responsible for payment to their provider for any care used after their certificate expired.**

### **2. How often are site visits completed for the EFMP Respite Care Program?**

**ANSWER:** Partner agencies are required to conduct quarterly site visits during respite care. If a provider works with multiple families, each Sponsor must receive a site visit at least once a year. In addition during one quarter, the partner agency must conduct a mid-year discussion with both the Sponsor and provider.

### **3. What happens to a Sponsor's respite care service if the Sponsor dies while on active duty?**

**ANSWER:** If a Sponsor currently enrolled in the EFMP Respite Care Program dies while on active duty, the Navy approves a minimum of a **1-year** transition during which time the family can continue to receive respite care. Any exception or extension to this timeline can be approved by request to the Navy Child & Youth Programs.

### **4. What if a Service Member retires? Can the family still receive care through the end of the certificate date?**

**ANSWER:** Navy EFMP Respite Care is for Active Duty Sponsors; however, the Sponsor is eligible NTE a 60-day transition period once the Sponsor retires. The Navy EFMP Respite Care Program is a stand-alone program through HQ Navy Child and Youth Programs (CYP) and is not available after retirement, as other services families might receive as retirees, e.g., Tricare. If the EFMP enrollment is due to expire during this transition period, the EFMP expiration date will be extended in the CCAoA system to align with the end of the 60-day transition period after the Sponsor's retirement date. Respite Care services must occur at the duty station where the Sponsor retired; respite care will not be re-established in another location after retirement.

### **5. What happens if a Sponsor receives PCS orders while enrolled in respite care?**

**ANSWER:** As with other services offered by Child & Youth Programs, the Sponsor must re-enroll in the new location which includes being placed on a wait list when applicable. If a Sponsor receives PCS orders, respite care services in their current location ends once the Sponsor leaves the area. However, once a Sponsor knows they are relocating, they can contact CCAoA to get on the wait list for their next location.

Sponsors who PCS move/relocate prior to 1 July 2025 (and were receiving 40 hours of care) may apply for the EFMP Respite Care Program at their new location, under their previous status, and continue to be

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eligible for 40 hours of respite care until 1 October 2025. However, for Sponsors who PCS move/relocate after 1 July 2025 and apply for the EFMP Respite Care Program, eligibility will be based upon the new Level of Need.

### MISCELLANEOUS FOR SERVICES OUTSIDE CALIFORNIA

#### 1. What happens if a family exceeds their authorized hours per month?

**ANSWER:** Sponsors are responsible for paying their provider any hours used over the authorized amount by the EFMP Respite Care Program. Child Care Aware® of America emails the Sponsor informing them that CCAoA is unable to pay for hours used that exceed the approved monthly amount. If the provider is not compensated within the timeframe specified, the Sponsor's respite care services are temporarily suspended for thirty (30) days. If at the end of the 30-day suspension the provider has not been compensated, notification is forwarded to Navy CYP for review and guidance regarding the Sponsor's continued enrollment in the EFMP Respite Care Program.