



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON, DC 20380-1775

IN REPLY REFER TO:

CMC-MR
25 JAN 2001

WHITE LETTER NO. 02-01

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: All General Officers
All Commanding Officers
All Officers in Charge

Subj: THE EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM (EFMP)

Ref: (a) MCO P1754.4A

1. Our way of life can be challenging and stressful to our families. This is particularly true for families who have special needs such as severe medical conditions or special educational learning requirements. The EFMP helps to identify families with special needs and assists them in seeking necessary support. Misconceptions and concerns continue to be pervasive about the EFMP as it relates to a Marine's career progression. Your help is needed to spread the truth and dispel these perceptions.

2. I am concerned that our Marine families are under-enrolled in the EFMP. Of the approximately 4,400 Marine families currently enrolled in the EFMP, 3,900 families are enrolled because of children with special needs. The Department of Education estimates that 10 percent of all children will be identified as having physical, learning, or emotional disabilities requiring special education services or special medical rehabilitative services. If that 10 percent is applied to our Marine community, then we have the potential for over 10,000 children enrolled in the program. But, children are not the only affected population. The spouses and relatives who make up our families can have similar needs.

3. There are numerous misconceptions regarding program enrollment. Some of these misconceptions include: "I will be labeled, and my service record will be flagged;" "I will be forced into assignments that will hinder promotions and career opportunities;" and "As an EFMP sponsor, I am not deployable." These and other negative perceptions regarding EFMP are not true. Marines enrolled in the EFMP have always received equal consideration for promotions and compatible assignments. Leaders, at all levels, need to not only be aware of EFMP, but actively refer Marines who may need the EFMP when they become aware of families with special needs.

4. Enrollment in this program is mandatory, but because misconceptions about the EFMP persist, some Marines do not voluntarily come forward to be enrolled. Failure to enroll creates undue stress on the families with special needs on a daily basis and specifically when they are ordered to new duty stations that cannot support the special medical or educational needs of the family member resulting in either unmet needs or immediate reassignment and another PCS. We as leaders need to promote the EFMP in its true light and we must insure proper screening of our Marines' needs prior to them executing PCS orders.

Subj: THE EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM (EFMP)

5. The details about the EFMP can be found in the reference. Read it and make your Marines aware of the program. The future for our families with specialized needs can only become brighter as we both recognize and emphasize our obligation in this regard. Please accept this on behalf of a family with firsthand knowledge and experience....mine.


J. L. JONES