



The Special Needs Program

This document captures information regarding the Special Needs Program from the following web pages in a readily printable format:

Main Page: http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/special_needs.asp

Frequently Asked Questions: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cg111/special-needs-faqs-new.asp>

Main Page - Special Needs Program (SNP) Video:

Please view the [Introduction to the Special Needs Program video](#) (select the .wmv file at the top of the webpage).

Frequently Asked Questions:

I. SNP OVERVIEW

1. What is the Special Needs Program (SNP)?

The [SNP](#) provides a comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to community support, housing, medical, educational, and personnel services for Coast Guard families with special needs.

2. What are some examples of medical, physical, psychological, and educational special needs?

Special needs span a broad range of conditions. To determine if your dependent family member's special need qualifies for enrollment in the [SNP](#), please contact your [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS).

Some examples by category are:

Medical → Diabetes, Cancer, Asthma/Allergies, Migraines, Anemia, Prematurity

Physical → Wheelchair Use, Use of Assistive Technology Devices (communication devices, hearing aids, etc.)

Psychological → Depression, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Autism, Substance Dependence

Educational → Use of an [Individualized Family Service Plan \(IFSP\)](#) or an [Individualized Education Plan \(IEP\)](#)

This does not represent an all-inclusive list.

3. How does the SNP help me?

Efforts are made to ensure that you, a sponsor with a dependent family member(s) with special needs, are assigned to duty stations where access to, and availability of, medical and community special needs services are validated.

4. Is the SNP similar to the Department of Defense's (DoD) Exceptional Family Members Program (EFMP)?

Yes, the [SNP](#) is comparable to the [DoD EFMP](#), but not identical.

5. Where can I find SNP Policy?

Please review [COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1754.7B](#).

6. SNP Points of Contact

Information about the [SNP](#) may be obtained by contacting the Office of Health, Safety, and Work-Life (HSWL) Family Resource Specialist (FRS). A [point of contact list](#) details the Districts/Regional Practices, Areas Served, Family Resources Specialists, and Regional Managers. You may also access a full roster of [Work-Life Staff](#) sorted by field office.

II. ENROLLING IN THE SNP

7. Is enrollment in the SNP mandatory?

Yes, for active duty service members, PHS officers serving with the Coast Guard, and reserve members on active duty for 181 days or more who have dependent family members diagnosed with medical, psychological, physical, or educational special needs.

8. Who is eligible to enroll in the SNP?

Active duty service members, PHS officers serving with the Coast Guard, and reserve members on active duty for 181 days or more who have dependent family members diagnosed with medical, psychological, physical, or educational special needs. The dependent family member with special needs must be enrolled in the [Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System \(DEERS\)](#) and reside with you (unless you are on an unaccompanied tour).

9. My dependent family member with special needs has a temporary condition (6-12 months), should I enroll?

Certain medical conditions may warrant temporary enrollment. Contact your [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS), and he/she will coordinate with the Senior Medical Executive (SME) for a final decision.

10. How do I enroll my dependent family member with special needs?

For new enrollments and enrollment updates, the [Family Member Medical Summary, DD Form 2792](#) (for medical, psychological, and physical conditions) and [Special Education/Early Intervention Summary, DD Form 2792-1](#) (for educational special needs) must be completed by the family member's health care provider or school personnel, respectively, and submitted by you to the servicing [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS). No additional medical documentation is required.

11. What happens if I fail to enroll?

If you willfully fail to enroll, update enrollment information, or knowingly provide false information regarding a special needs status, you may be subject to disciplinary action or other adverse administrative action, per your unit commanding officer in consultation with the servicing legal office. Additionally, your refusal to provide accurate information may preclude successful entry approval for overseas locations, command sponsorship,

access to healthcare services, may require you to pay for family members' relocation expenses, and/or may separate you from the service.

12. Is my enrollment confidential?

Personnel involved in the implementation of the [SNP](#) ensure the information available to them is treated according to all relevant Coast Guard and federal regulations. Information concerning enrollment in the [SNP](#) or data used in this program is not made part of your service record. All information related to the [SNP](#) is strictly confidential with access only by authorized personnel who have the need-to-know. Any sensitive enrollment information maintained in an electronic database is protected and physically secured.

III. UPDATING SNP ENROLLMENT

13. How do I update the status of my dependent family member with special needs?

First, please contact your [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS). Depending on the change in status, you may need a new [Family Member Medical Summary, DD Form 2792](#) (for medical, psychological, and physical conditions) and/or [Special Education/Early Intervention Summary, DD Form 2792-1](#) (for educational special needs). These forms must be completed by the family member's health care provider or school personnel, respectively, and submitted by you to the servicing [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS). No additional medical documentation is required.

14. Who is responsible for updating my status within the SNP?

You are! Ultimate responsibility for the update of enrollment information rests with the US Coast Guard member.

15. How often am I required to update my SNP status?

[SNP](#) enrollment updates for each family member enrolled in the program are due every three years or in conjunction with the submission of your e-resume, if you are tour-complete. Exceptions to this timeline (i.e., instances requiring an update) are as follows:

- There is a change in medical or mental health related diagnosis, or a new diagnosis develops;
- There is a change in early intervention or special education needs; or
- If an update is due at the time of a projected rotation time (it must be initiated at least 9 months prior to that date).

16. What happens if I fail to update my SNP status?

If you willfully fail to enroll, update enrollment information, or knowingly provide false information regarding a special needs status, you may be subject to disciplinary action or other adverse administrative action, per your unit commanding officer in consultation with the servicing legal office. Additionally, your refusal to provide accurate information may preclude successful entry approval for overseas locations, command sponsorship, access to healthcare services, may require you to pay for family members' relocation expenses, and/or may separate you from the service.

IV. DISENROLLING FROM THE SNP

17. When do I disenroll my dependent family member with special needs from the SNP?

Remove your dependent family member with special needs from your enrollment if:

- Special medical, psychological, special accommodations, or educational services are no longer required for the family member, as validated by a health care provider or school official;
- Medical and mental health conditions are in remission for a minimum of three years with no more than routine primary care needed;
- The dependent child is no longer your dependent, or does not reside with you which would affect your availability for worldwide assignment, unless enrollment in the [SNP](#) is required for a program for which the dependent is otherwise qualified, such as [TRICARE Extended Care Health Option \(ECHO\)](#).
- There is a divorce, loss of custody, or death of the family member with special needs (BAH/dependency status in [Direct Access](#) is verified by the servicing [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS) to confirm dependency information). In cases involving child custody issues, you must send a memo to the [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS) requesting disenrollment from the [SNP](#). Information provided in the memo must be verified by the [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS). The memo should include the following information:
 - First and last name of the family member with special needs and his/her relationship to you;
 - Type of document cited (divorce decree or custody order signed by a judge, or other official documentation that shows change in dependency status);
 - Effective date of the change in dependency status; and
 - Information on who has residential custody of the child with special needs.
- If you have residential custody of your child with special needs for 30 percent of the time or less, annually, you are not required to enroll in the [SNP](#), or you may disenroll by producing appropriate documentation;
- Separation from a spouse with special needs is not grounds for disenrollment from the [SNP](#). Disenrollment because of divorce can only be completed upon final termination of the marriage; or
- Retirement, discharge, or transfer to reserve status (for less than 181 days) will prompt automatic disenrollment from the [SNP](#).

18. How do I disenroll my dependent family member with special needs?

First, please contact your [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS). Depending on the change in status, you may need a new [Family Member Medical Summary, DD Form 2792](#) (for medical, psychological, and physical conditions) and/or [Special Education/Early Intervention Summary, DD Form 2792-1](#) (for educational special needs). These forms must be completed by the family member's health care provider or school personnel, respectively, and submitted by you to the servicing [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS). No additional medical documentation is required.

V. CATEGORIES OF SPECIAL NEEDS

19. Why did we decide to assign categories to special needs conditions?

We did so to provide transparency and realistic expectations regarding duty assignments for Coast Guard members enrolled in the SNP and to preserve resources associated with relocating families whose needs cannot be met in certain geographic locations.

20. What is taken into consideration when categories of special needs are assigned?

We assign categories of special needs not only to help us identify service members whose family members have medical, psychological, physical, or educational special needs, but also to take into account the severity of special needs, availability of medical services in the duty location, and accessibility of support services (specifically, driving distance or time to obtain medical services).

21. Who determines the categories of special needs?

Coast Guard Senior Medical Executive (SME) assigns a category to the special needs conditions based on the information provided by the family member's physician or school personnel on DD forms 2792 and/or 2792-1, respectively. It is essential for the service members to keep the SNP enrollment information up to date in order for the SME to make accurate determination.

22. Am I going to be re-located by the Coast Guard, if I am currently not stationed in a location that is listed as appropriate for category 4 or 5 conditions but my family member's special needs meet the criteria for category 4 or 5?

If medical services are currently available for your family member with special needs at your duty location, you will not be relocated until your next rotation.

23. How long will it take to categorize all cases?

The process to assign categories to all current special needs cases will take about one year from the promulgation of the policy (ALCOAST....).

VI. PRIVACY

24. Who reviews my enrollment forms?

The [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS) forwards your enrollment forms to the Senior Medical Executive (SME) for verification of eligibility for enrollment. As warranted, the FRS will verify educational eligibility for enrollment by reviewing the dependent's [Individualized Educational Plan \(IEP\)](#) or [Individualized Family Service Plan \(IFSP\)](#).

25. Is my enrollment confidential?

Personnel involved in the implementation of the [SNP](#) ensure the information available to them is treated according to all relevant Coast Guard and federal regulations. Information concerning enrollment in the [SNP](#) or data used in this program is not made part of your service record. All information related to the [SNP](#) is strictly confidential with access only by authorized personnel who have the need-to-know. Any sensitive enrollment information maintained in an electronic database is protected and physically secured.

26. I don't want to be contacted (with the exception of the triennial update) by my Family Resource Specialist, how do I opt out of contact?

Upon enrollment, you may decline routine contact from the [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS) by completing the [Family Support Declination, Form CG 1754S](#). You must still contact the FRS (or the FRS will initiate the contact) to update enrollment information every three years. You cannot decline the FRS's involvement in the process of assessment of available special needs services for assignment purposes.

27. Will enrolling in the SNP affect my orders?

Enrollment does not preclude you from sea duty, normal sea/shore rotation, unaccompanied assignments, standing watches, performing normally assigned duties, or temporary duty (TDY) assignments in support of Coast Guard-wide individual augmentation or contingency response operations. The availability of services is validated in the proposed duty location.

28. Medical, psychological, physical, or educational services are not available to my dependent family member with special needs, what do I do?

First, contact your [Family Resource Specialist](#) (FRS). He or she will work with you to see that the needs of your dependent family member are met. Please note, the [SNP](#) is an assignment process tool that allows for efforts to be made to secure the availability of medical and community support services, but it cannot validate the quality of those services.

You may be eligible for a [humanitarian \[HUMS\] assignment](#) (COMDTINST M1000.8, Military Assignments and Authorized Absences, Chapter 1.B.11); please contact your [Family Resource Specialist](#) for more information.

VII. FAMILY RESOURCE SPECIALISTS and SENIOR MEDICAL EXECUTIVES

29. What is a Family Resource Specialist (FRS), and how can he/she help me?

Your [FRS](#) provides non-clinical case management, and is able to:

- Coordinate your [SNP](#) enrollment, update, and disenrollment in collaboration with the Senior Medical Executive and Regional Manager;
- Determine your eligibility for enrollment based on the presence of educational special needs;
- Maintain and share comprehensive, accurate, easily accessible, and up-to-date information on military and civilian special needs resources;
- Assist and refer you to access available resources in the local civilian and military communities;
- Maintain regular contact with you by phone, email, or face-to-face meetings on an “as needed” basis, but not less frequently than one time per calendar year. If you complete the [Family Support Service Declination Form, CG Form 1754S](#), the FRS will maintain contact at least once every three years to update enrollment information and consult with the assignment officers on availability of special needs services for your family members during reassignment;
- Provide timely coordination of transition services with a receiving FRS and other appropriate Coast Guard personnel, including but not limited to the Housing Officer, Child Development Center (CDC) Director, Transition and Relocation Manager, etc.;
- Provide timely transfer of case records (within 15 calendar days from the time FRS learns you are being transferred to a new unit);
- Provide timely case closures (within 15 calendar days from the time FRS learns about your ineligibility for enrollment); and
- Coordinate with Commandant (CG-1112) and [Coast Guard Mutual Assistance \(CGMA\)](#) for availability and approval of Respite Care Grants.

30. What can my Family Resource Specialist NOT help me with?

Your [FRS](#) cannot:

- Engage in clinical case management (e.g., coordination and/or follow up on medical treatments, etc.);

- Engage in individual or family counseling;
- Perform home visits to your residence;
- Attend [Individualized Education Plan/Individualized Family Service Plan](#) meetings on behalf of children; or
- Enforce enrollment in the [SNP](#).

31. What is a Senior Medical Executive (SME)?

A senior medical professional within the Office of Health, Safety, and Work-Life Regional Practice who is responsible for reviewing [Family Member Medical Summary DD Form 2792](#) to determine your eligibility for enrollment into or disenrollment from the [SNP](#).

32. SNP Points of Contact

Information about the [SNP](#) may be obtained by contacting the Office of Health, Safety, and Work-Life (HSWL) Family Resource Specialist (FRS). A [point of contact list](#) details the Districts/Regional Practices, Areas Served, Family Resources Specialists, and Regional Managers. You may also access a full roster of [Work-Life Staff](#) sorted by field office.

VIII. SNP REFERENCES/FORMS

33. SNP References

The following references provide details of the Coast Guard [SNP](#):

- [COMDTINST 1754.7B](#) – SNP Policy
- [ALCOAST 136/13](#) – SNP Policy & Procedure Clarification for Use of Email in the Management of Special Needs Records
- [DD Form 2792](#) – Family Member Medical Summary (for medical, psychological, & physical conditions)
- [DD Form 2792-1](#) – Special Education/Early Intervention Summary (for educational special needs)
- [CG Form 1754S](#) – Family Support Declination

IX. RELATED INFORMATION

34. Where can I learn more about Tricare ECHO and USCG Respite Care?

[Tricare ECHO](#) and [USCG Respite Care](#) (offered by [Cost Guard Mutual Assistance](#)) are separate programs that offer services to dependent family members with special needs, if approved.

35. What is respite care?

A service intended to reduce stress placed on a caregiver of a person with special needs by providing temporary rest periods for the caregiver. Coast Guard respite care grant program is sponsored and administered by the [Coast Guard Mutual Assistance, Inc.](#) in accordance with the CGMA Manual.

36. Related Websites

The following web sites provide information related to the Special Needs Program:

- [AIRS](#) - Alliance of Information and Referral Systems

- [The Arc](#) - Leading advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families
- [Alzheimer's Association](#) - Alzheimer's facts, support, and research
- [Autism Society](#) - Autism education, advocacy, services, research and support
- [CARE.com](#) - Access to babysitters, nannies, child care, and senior home care providers
- [CGMA](#) - Coast Guard Mutual Assistance provides respite care grant for qualifying Coast Guard families with special needs
- [Education Directory](#) – DoD Education Directory for Children with Special Needs
- [Exceptional Parent Magazine](#) - A resource for special needs community
- [Juvenile Diabetes Association](#) - Diabetes facts, support, treatment, and research
- [National Cancer Society](#) – Cancer education; find support and treatment
- [OCONUS Directory](#) – DoD Directory on Early Intervention, Special Education, and Related Services in OCONUS Communities
- [STOMP](#) - Specialized Training of Military Parents, a federally funded Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center established to assist military families who have children with special education or health needs
- [TRICARE](#) - A health care program serving Uniformed Service members, retirees and their families worldwide
- [WRIGHTSLAW](#) - Special education law and advocacy

37. SNP Points of Contact

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