

# Exceptional News

## Exceptional Family Member Program

Personal Services Center, Camp Foster  
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## Handwriting Tips to Start the School Year!!

Handwriting is an important skill used every day. In fact 31-60% of a student's school day is spent in activities requiring fine motor skills. Paper and pencil tasks account for 30-50% of that time. *McHale and Cermak (1992)*. Other Studies have indicated 12-21% of students demonstrate handwriting difficulties. *Rubin and Henderson (1982)*

With handwriting being such an important part of your child's school day, you may be wondering what you can do to help make handwriting a more enjoyable part of your child's education.

Here are a few tips to make handwriting a success:

### Letter Formation

It is important for children to learn the correct way to make letters- starting from the top. Starting letters at the bottom results in habits that are difficult to break as a child gets older. Students who start letters at the bottom in earlier grades may produce the same quality of work as those who start from the top. However, in later grades, starting letters from the bottom begin to impact quality and speed

### Appropriate Grip

Holding a pencil or crayon correctly is a skill that is taught. Children's grasp patterns develop as they grow. While it is developmentally appropriate for a toddler to hold a marker or crayon with a fist grasp. As your child gets older, encourage him/her to hold the crayon with dynamic tripod or quadrapod grasp. To make a tripod, imagine making an "o" with the index finger and thumb, holding the pencil with the pads of these two fingers and the pencil resting slightly on the middle finger. The pencil should be angled so that it is pointing over the child's shoulder. The quadrapod grasp, which looks very similar to the tripod except the child's middle finger is also on the pencil and the pencil is resting slightly on the ring finger.

### Body Mechanics

The position of your child's seat and table height may also impact the quality of writing. The chair should be at a height where your child can rest his/her feet on the floor. The table surface should be high enough so that the child can comfortably rest his/her elbow on the table without leaning over. Encourage your child to sit upright and maintain a good posture while writing. This will prevent fatigue and improve overall quality of written work.

Jennifer Schrage, OTR/L  
EDIS Occupational Therapist

McHale, K. & Cermack, S. (1992). Fine motor activities in elementary school: Preliminary finding and provisional implications for children with fine motor problems. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 46, 898-903.

Rubin, N., & Henderson, S.E. (1982). Two sides of the same coin: Variations in teaching methods and failure to learn to write. *Special Education: Forward Trends*, (9)4, 17-24.



## THANK YOU!

A huge THANK YOU goes out to everyone that was involved in making the Exceptional Summer Series a HUGE SUCCESS!! Without your support we could never make it happen!

## Exceptional News

### Fall 2009

#### Upcoming Events:

- Coffee & Tea, October 1st  
MCFTB Building 5677, 1st Floor,  
0930-1030 NEW LOCATION!
- Coffee & Tea, November 5th  
MCFTB Building 5677, 1st Floor,  
0930-1030
- International Adoption Workshop, November 10th, 0900-1600
- IEP Notebooking Workshop,  
November 18th, 0900-1300

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## Problem Solving with FOCUS



### What is FOCUS?

The FOCUS Project (Families OverComing Under Stress) is a resiliency-building program designed for military families and children facing the multiple challenges of military life and deployments. FOCUS works with families to strengthen communication, problem solving, and goal setting skills to help them better manage the stress and challenge of the military lifestyle.

### What is Resiliency?

Resiliency is the ability to effectively cope with, adapt to, and overcome adversity, stress, and challenging experiences.

### FOCUS helps build Family Resiliency by:

- Increasing parents' and children's understanding of how different family members might react to wartime stress
  - Helping families to identify and build upon their existing strengths and positive coping strategies
  - Helping service members and family members improve communication, and better understand how each were affected by deployment
  - Working with families to help them better support one another in dealing with the stressors that can arise from long separations
  - Assisting couples to work more effectively as a team in parenting their children before, during, and after deployment
- Increasing parents' skills in dealing more effectively with some of the common emotional and behavioral reactions that children can have when experiencing stress

Within our Military lifestyles everyday stress is inevitable and preparing children to manage stress appropriately can help them learn to take an active role in their world. Military children experience many challenges, and having some control over themselves and their environment can help children learn to feel competent and secure.

Military families with Special Needs encounter especially unique and complicated challenges. It can sometimes feel overwhelming, and it is normal to dread even small problems that arise when you feel like you do not have the appropriate tools in your tool box to deal with the ever changing military life. Learning to solve problems effectively can give families some control over a difficult situation and help them find feasible solutions.

Invite your children to think and use their natural problem solving skills. Be patient while you encourage children to look at problems from different perspectives, and let them know you are there to support them. You can help foster problem solving not so much by providing special materials or specific activities, but by having a responsive, accepting attitude along with plenty of time and patience. Although it may seem easier to jump in and solve your children's problems for them, creating opportunities for children to initiate and solve their own problems and to test out possible ideas and solutions helps them learn the skills they need to manage future challenges while facilitating feelings of confidence and competence.

Children are natural problem solvers; they have countless opportunities in their daily lives to participate in decision making. Children use problem-solving skills when they experiment and investigate, when they select toys, and when they play. The opportunities for children to grow in their problem-solving abilities is directly impacted by a parent's encouragement and support.

There are many approaches to problem solving. The SNAP Model is a tool we use at FOCUS. The ability to solve problems can be broken down into separate but related parts: When you break larger problems into smaller parts, they become easier to understand and to solve.



## Problem Solving with FOCUS (continued)

### Problem Solving is a SNAP!

Step 1: **S**tate the problem

Step 2: **N**ame the goal

Step 3: **A**ll possible solutions

Step 4: **P**ick the best one and try it out

Help your child identify the problem in age appropriate terms. Help them to be specific and concrete. You may have to direct them to the heart of the problem. Often a problem can be broken down into smaller parts. If it is a family goal/problem all family members should come to an agreement about what the problem actually is. Help them to identify if the problem is changeable and within their control. At FOCUS we assist families with the necessary skills to break down the problems. The following is just one tool we use:

#### **State the problem**

Identify only one problem, clearly stated in one sentence.

#### **Name the goal**

In this step, help your child identify the desired outcome.

Ask them, "how will you know the problem is solved." Make sure the goal is realistic and achievable. The next step is dependent on the clarity of the identified goal.

#### **All possible solutions**

Brainstorm many possible situations, from the ridiculous to the practical. Include both positive and negative solutions. Write down all ideas and make sure not to squelch or edit the possibilities. If your child is having difficulty coming up with ideas, you may prompt them by asking, "What are some of the WORST things you could do?" This should give rise to a host of ridiculous and amusing possibilities. Then ask them, "What are some of the BEST things you could do?"

#### **Pick the best one and try it out**

Choose the best one or two solutions out of the list they generated. You may have them simply rank order the individual solutions or systematically go through each, eliciting their views on the "up side" and "down side" of each. Your child should try out this solution and discuss the outcome together. Remind your child that problem solving is like an experiment in that some solutions may not work as planned. They should continue to use SNAP problem solving until a solution is effective.

For further information about FOCUS please contact us at 645-6077



## Books, Books and More Books. Check it Out!

Did you know that EFMP has a library full of books that can provide you a wealth of knowledge on a variety of topics?

If you are seeking more information on the gluten free diet, ADHD, child-hood seizures along with many other topics, please stop by to take a look at the books available. All you need to do is stop by o centers and check it out!!!



## *Your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)*



It's that time of year again. School is back in session! Our children are getting used to their new surroundings – the classroom, fellow students, and their new teacher. Their teacher is doing the same, times 20 or more. This time of year can be a little difficult for a child who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as the routine is new and supports and modifications may take a little time to get put in place.

Now that school has been in session for several weeks, it is time to pull out your child's IEP (that big packet of paperwork) and review it. What kind of supports/modifications is your child supposed to have in place? Do you see this happening – and do they appear to be working? Remember, when you and the team sat down to hammer out the IEP, you all did the best you could based on what you knew then about your child. Now that the new school year has begun, do you see things working well?

This is a good time to contact your child's teacher. If the two of you can make time for a short meeting – it's good to get to know one another. You can make sure that the teacher is aware of the IEP. You'll also want to ask your child's teacher their opinion on how things are working. If you both agree that things are going great, you can walk away smiling. If either of you thinks things are not so great, now is the time to see if you can make some adjustments. You may or may not need to call the team together for a meeting to do this. Whether adjustments are needed or not you have started a dialogue with your child's teacher. You will want to keep this dialogue open all year.

At some point during the year – now or later – you will be invited to an IEP meeting. This is where you discuss whether your child has been meeting his/her goals and looking at the future. The meeting can seem intimidating. If you would like support, your EFMP caseworker can attend the meeting with you. Sometimes it helps to have an unbiased party at the table.

The EFMP office knows that the IEP process can be daunting – so they have set up a workshop for you on November 18<sup>th</sup> (0900 – 1300) to learn all about it. The workshop is called: **IEP Notebooking** and although it sounds like scrapbooking, it is much more than that. The first part of the workshop will be learning about the IEP process. Then, you will work on building an IEP notebook. Participants will be provided with a three-ring binder, dividers, and more. You should bring your child's IEPs, medical reports, a large photo of your child, and any and all information you want to keep with the IEP. Being organized will help you when you attend meetings. We believe this workshop will be quite popular, so call to reserve your seat now at 645-9237.

### **Breast Cancer Awareness Month Events**



#### Zumbathon

Saturday, Oct. 17, 2009

0930-1130, Foster Fieldhouse

Plenty of fitness, fun, prizes & breast cancer education! Free *Breast Cancer Awareness Goody Bags* to first 100 participants!

#### Sunrise Yoga

Saturday, Oct. 24, 2009

(Rain Date: Sat, Oct 31, 2009)

0600-0800, USNH on Camp Lester, Front Parking Lot

Enjoy 2 hours of relaxing yoga, prizes, breast cancer education & a beautiful sunrise!

Free *Breast Cancer Awareness Towels* to first 100 participants!

### **Diabetes Awareness Month Events**



#### *"Stop Diabetes!"*

*Information Booths & Free Goody Bags:*

Nov. 13 & 20, 2009

Camp Foster PX, Nov. 13 (1030-1330)

Camp Foster Commissary, Nov. 20 (1030-1330)

For more information or to register for an MCCA class or consultation, call 645-3910 or e-mail

[Kimberly.beard@okinawa.usmc-mcca.org](mailto:Kimberly.beard@okinawa.usmc-mcca.org)

For more information or to register for a USNH class or consultation, call 643-7906 or e-mail

[Elizabeth.Merrill@med.navy.mil](mailto:Elizabeth.Merrill@med.navy.mil)



## *October is...National Breast Cancer Awareness Month*

### American Cancer Society's 10 Healthy Lifestyle Guidelines

1. **Maintain a healthy weight.**
2. **Eat five or more servings of fruits & veggies daily, eat whole grains, reduce saturated fat and cut down on red meat.**
3. **Get plenty of exercise. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week.**
4. **Limit your drinking to occasional or no alcohol.**
5. **Decide carefully before starting or continuing hormone replacement therapy. Long-term use of HRT after menopause may increase breast cancer risk. Discuss all options with your doctor.**
6. **Learn about medical conditions that you have or are at risk for developing and control all chronic health conditions.**
7. **Schedule your health checkups on time.**
8. **Avoid tobacco products and secondhand smoke.**
9. **Practice stress management.**
10. **Get enough sleep each night. Sleep helps to recharge your immune system as well as give you the energy you need each day.**

## *November is...American Diabetes Month<sup>®</sup>*

“Stop Diabetes!” Visit: [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)



- ~Nearly 24 million Americans have diabetes.
- ~Another 57 million people have pre-diabetes and are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes.
- ~One out of every 3 children will face a future with diabetes if current trends continue.
- ~Since 1987, the death rate due to diabetes has increased by 45%.
- ~About 60-70% of people with diabetes have mild to severe forms of nerve damage that could result in pain in the feet or hands, slowed digestion, sexual dysfunction and other nerve problems.
- ~The rate of amputation for people with diabetes is 10 times higher than for people without diabetes.
- ~Two out of three people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke.
- ~Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness among adults.
- ~Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure.
- ~The total national cost of diagnosed diabetes in the U.S. is \$174 billion.
- ~The cost of caring for someone with diabetes is \$1 out of every \$5 in total healthcare costs.



## Autism Specialists on Okinawa

DoDEA Pacific employs two autism consultants, Jill Kleinheinz and Margaret Murray, who provide consultation services for the students who have been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Services include but are not limited to the following:

- Provide interventions for students identified with ASD within the school, home and community environments
- Assist teachers in developing educational programs to meet the diverse needs of students with ASD
- Provide teachers and parents with the most current research and best practices in the field of autism
- Facilitate trainings for educators, families, and community members regarding successful strategies and best practices when working with students with ASD
- Provide disability awareness lessons to peers

Maintain a lending library of current books, DVDs, and videos covering a variety of topics within the field of autism

If you would like to request assistance from the autism consultants within the home and/or community settings, please contact the Case Study Committee (CSC) Chairperson at your child's school. Only students with a current medical diagnosis of ASD are qualified to receive these services. Additionally, if you have general questions regarding autism and your child or would like to check out materials from the lending library, you may contact Jill or Margaret via phone or email:

Jill Kleinheinz, 644-5783, [jill.kleinheinz@pac.dodea.edu](mailto:jill.kleinheinz@pac.dodea.edu)

Margaret Murray, 644-5902, [margaret.murray@pac.dodea.edu](mailto:margaret.murray@pac.dodea.edu)



## Diversity and Girl Scouting

"Diversity has been a core value of Girl Scouts since its founding in 1912. At a time of segregation and before laws promoting civil rights were passed, our founder, Juliette Gordon Low, ensured that African-American, American Indian and Hispanic girls were able to become Girl Scouts. She led efforts to make Girl Scouting available to girls who lived in rural and urban areas, to girls who were rich, middle class and poor, and to girls who were born in this country as well as immigrants. In the 1940's Girl Scouts of the USA made a priority of including girls with disabilities." Kathy Cloninger CEO, Girl Scouts of the USA.

In celebration of lat month's 19th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we honor Girl Scouts around the nation and world who share their lives with other girls and adults and teach by example.

An estimated one-fifth of the U.S. population is directly impacted by disability. Ask a girl today if embracing diversity is part of her life, and you'll discover that if she's a Girl Scout, her answer will be yes. Girl Scouting's mission is to build girls of Courage Confidence and Character who make the world a better place. In fact, a girl's Girl Scout troop may be the first setting she learns to welcome and appreciate girls of other cultures, races, religions, and abilities. The friendship and caring of girls with varying abilities can be found all around the country and even overseas. USA Girl Scouts Overseas-West Pacific serves girls of military members all over Okinawa, South Korea and Mainland Japan. For more information on the program or to learn how to lend a hand please contact Robin Miller @ 645-2323





### Reminders

Update your EFM case every two years.

Please contact the EFMP office before PCSing to ensure your EFM case is transferred.

Processing respite reimbursement claims takes at least 2 weeks. Please ensure hourly logs are accurate.

We now have TWO case workers,  
\*Wendy Haylett , Camp Foster PSC,  
Bldg 445, 645-9237  
\*Sandra Beecher , Camp Courtney  
PSC, Bldg 4425, 622-9794

### Helpful Phone Numbers

CYTP Resource & Referral  
(childcare reservations) - 645-4117

EDIS - 634-2740/2747

EFMP (USMC) Manager, Admin Asst.,  
Caseworker or Training & Outreach  
Specialist, Camp Foster - 645-9237

Camp Courtney Case Worker - 622-  
9794

Housing Liaison (USMC) - 634-0114  
PSC Foster 645-2104/2106

### Additional Information

Enrollment forms are available online:  
[www.mccsokinawa.com/efmp](http://www.mccsokinawa.com/efmp)

Materials for past workshops are also  
located online. Go to EFMP CD and se-  
lect PAST Events.

If you would like to receive EFMP Events  
announcements via email, please call the  
EFMP office at 645-9237.



**STARTING OCTOBER 1st!!!**  
Coffee & Tea with EFMP will be held at MCFTB  
building 5677, 1st floor.

Come by and meet some of the providers and gain some  
knowledge from others that also walk in your footsteps.

Exceptional Family Member Program  
MCCS Personal Services Center  
MCB Camp Foster  
Bldg 445  
645-9237

Monday through Friday  
0730 - 1630

\*except on federal holidays\*

