



# MCB Hawaii EFMP

## The Exceptional 'Ohana

April 2026



### What is Autism?

Autism is a complex, lifelong developmental disability that typically appears during early childhood and can impact a person's social skills, communication, relationships, and self-regulation. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum condition" that affects people differently and to varying degrees.

While there is currently no known single cause of autism, early diagnosis helps a person receive the support and services that they need, which can lead to a quality life filled with opportunity.

#### Some Characteristics of Autism:

Persistent differences in communication, interpersonal relationships, and social interaction across different environments. Core features of autism must be present in early childhood but may not fully manifest until social demands exceed the person's capacity to cope with them, and challenges may be masked by learned coping strategies.

#### What this can look like:

- Repetition in language or movement, such as repeating the same word or sounds, hand flapping, or any repeated movement
- Atypical nonverbal communication, including avoiding eye contact, giving few facial expressions, or having monotone speech
- Prefers solitary or parallel play rather than engaging in associative or cooperative play with other children
- Extremely distressed by changes, including new foods or changes in schedule
- Preference for predictable, structured play over spontaneous or make-believe play
- Strong, persistent interest on specific topic, part of a toy, or item

To learn more about autism at every age, visit

<https://www.wpspublish.com/blog/how-does-autism-present-across-the-lifespan>

Contact Us:

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## Autism Acceptance for Kids:

### How to be a good friend to someone with autism

- Wave and say hi! If they don't say hi back it may be because they were thinking about something else, not that they don't want to be your friend.
- Be patient! Give them some time to get to know you.
- If you don't understand what they say, ask them nicely to say it again.
- If you see a friend get upset, give them some space. They might be having a hard time and we all experience difficulties some times.
- Ask your friend with autism what they like to do. Try some activities that they like and maybe you will like it too!
- People with autism can be great friends! Have fun and be happy that you have an awesome and unique friend!

*Talk about autism with your kids & discuss how they can be a good friend.*

## Youth Sports Builds Confidence and Connection

April, the Month of the Military Child, gives us the opportunity to recognize ways to promote growth in children. This month we would like to focus on an MCCS program that provides a way to build strong, confident and resilient military-connected youth. MCB Hawaii Youth Sports is one of those programs. It's not just about playing games, it's so much more. Youth sports help to instill discipline, build character, as well as lifelong memories.

Playing sports is a proven way to build resilience. It helps children navigate challenges such as setbacks, losses, and demanding practices in a supportive environment; youth develop perseverance, emotional regulation, and confidence—skills that directly contribute to overall wellness and healthy development.

Youth Sports also fosters social bonds – meaningful connections to installation and local communities for both youth and their family. With an array of sports to choose from and a community-driven approach, it's the perfect place for children to engage, learn and grow.

Learn more about [WARR-Semper Fit Youth Sports programs](#) and how to [volunteer](#) at your installation. There is something for every youth age 3 through 16.

Source: <https://hawaii.usmc-mccs.org/news/youth-sports-builds-confidence-and-connection>

# Celebrate Your Military Child

April is Month of the Military Child! Sponsored by the Department of Defense Military Community and Family Policy, this month celebrates military children of all ages by supporting and honoring them for the sacrifices they make.

Military children have a lot of challenges to overcome and stress to bear. Being the child of a parent in the military usually means having to deal with change on a regular basis, which can prove difficult for both younger and older children. There's frequent moves and relocations, which often means having to start a new school, make new friends, and get accustomed to a new state or country, and perhaps even a new language. When a parent is deployed, these brave children have to go months on end without one or both parents. There is also the added anxiety and concern for a parent's safety, especially if he or she is deployed to a country in turmoil.

This can be a lot for a child to take in, and by letting them know that we support them, they'll know that they are never alone in their journey as a military child.

Ideas to celebrate YOUR military child:

- ◆ Wear purple! Spread awareness of the sacrifices military children make, and let your child know you're wearing purple in their honor.
- ◆ Have a "date night"! Cook a special dinner together and get dressed up. You can even decorate to make the date more special.
- ◆ Write your child a letter or draw them a picture of what they mean to you!
- ◆ Simply spend time together. Even chores can be special moments when done together.



Military kids are like dandelions:  
They bloom where they are planted.



# Training & Events

For event registration, call us at 808-496-0290.

You can also email us at [mcbh.efmp@usmc.mil](mailto:mcbh.efmp@usmc.mil) or contact your case worker.

Please register at least 1 day prior to the event.

DATE	TIME	TOPIC	LOCATION
April 1	2:00PM– 3:30PM	Special Needs Forum will be held at 2:00pm.  Spring Scavenger Egg Hunt will start at 2:30pm following the Forum. Families will be given a map after the Forum.	BUILDING 219, CLASSROOM 106  NO Registration Needed  Scavenger Egg Hunt will be around building 219, 244 and end at building 220.
April 14	10:00 AM	Sensory-Friendly Storytime in Partnership with the Base Library—this Storytime incorporates songs and movement for the active child	BUILDING 219, CLASSROOM 106  NO Registration Needed
EVERY TUESDAY	8:30- 11:30 AM	EFMP Family support services available at a second location	MCBH Branch Health Clinic

**Mālama**  
To care for or protect

This month, we focus on the Hawaiian value of Malama - to take care of, tend, attend, care for, preserve, protect  
Malama kekahi i kekahi—Take care of one another.