

Office of Special Needs Program Content Guide

The following established style guidelines reflect the long-standing practices of developers and editors of content for the Office of Special Needs area. They are consistent with rules and guidance outlined in the *Associated Press Style book* and reflective of Office of Military Community and Family Policy style and usage preferences.

DO

- Keep the wide audience range in mind. Include adults with special needs as well. Stress that the program is for military family members of all ages with special needs.
- Use person-first language. For example, people are defined by their accomplishments and not their disabilities. “Ray Charles was a famous musician who just happened to also be a person who was blind, ”versus“ Ray Charles, a blind musician.”
- Focus on positive outcomes, services and supports.
- Target acquiring knowledge, personal empowerment and self-advocacy.

DO NOT

- Make assumptions.
- Tell people how they feel.
- Tell people what they should, need to, must, ought, can’t or won’t do.
- Focus on the negative, the struggle or the challenge.

FORMATTING

- Keep bullets to five or fewer for each section.
- Less is more. Be concise.

GENERAL

- Keep sentences short.
- Insert transitions between paragraphs.
- Make sure headings match body text.
- Include conclusion at the end of the article.

Preferred Terms	As opposed to
Office of Special Needs or OSN	Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs
EFMP Resources, Options and Consultations	The EFMP ROC; ROC
EFMP Military Family Support providers	EFMP Family Support Staff
Families with special needs	Special needs families; exceptional families
Individual or family member with a disability	Disabled individual or disabled family member
Intellectual disability or developmental disability	Mental retardation
Families enrolled in EFMP	EFMP Families