



# The Exceptional Advocate

A newsletter for military families with special needs

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## The Non-DoD Schools Program

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**B**eing assigned to a duty location outside the United States is an opportunity that many Department of Defense (DoD) families embrace. Exposure to a new culture, climate and experiences can be an exciting, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. When service members or DoD civilian employees are assigned to a location outside the United States and are accompanied by their school-aged children, it is important to be aware of the educational options before the permanent change of station (PCS) move.

Many DoD locations outside the United States do not have a Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) school within the commuting area. Support and funding for the education of authorized, command-sponsored, school-aged family members of DoD families assigned to these locations are handled through the Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) at DoDEA. NDSP supports a variety of options for school-aged children ranging from home school programs, online or virtual schools, to public and private schools. Approval for enrollment in a non-DoDEA school must be obtained from the DoDEA NDSP office before enrolling.

### Register for the Non-Department of Defense Schools Program

Upon receipt of assignment orders to an overseas location where there is no DoDEA school, contact the NDSP liaison or point of contact (POC) at your

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# EFMP at your Service

## Athletes with Special Needs Compete in Sport Festival

**W**eeks of practice and hard work paid off for members of Scott Air Force Base's (AFB) Special Olympics Team, "Team Scott." During the Outdoor Sports Festival in Decatur, IL on Sept. 8, members of Team Scott competed against athletes from across the state of Illinois and won a silver medal, four gold medals and a fifth place ribbon for individual skill golf and softball events. The Outdoor Sports Festival kicked off with opening ceremonies and a parade to the Decatur Civic Center followed by individual competitions, an awards ceremony, dinner and a dance.

Team Scott's participation was a collective effort and partnership between the Scott AFB Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and a local nonprofit organization that helps people with disabilities. Team members represented both organizations throughout training and competition.

Participating in the Sports Festival was a first-time experience for many of the athletes. Family members, active duty service members and service providers coached the athletes during the months leading up to the competition. "It's amazing to see how far our athletes have come," says EFMP Family Support

Specialist Brenda Reed, who coordinated the team's participation along with Alice Howe, a parent of one of the athletes. Reed stresses the importance of consistency and not giving up when it comes to practicing for athletic competitions. The team persevered and made it to the competition to showcase their athletic abilities despite weather-related challenges.

As a word of advice for other installations interested in coordinating a Special Olympics team, Reed emphasizes the importance of establishing a good working relationship with the Special Olympics director in the local area.



# Transitioning to Adulthood Workshop

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On Oct. 3, Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) San Diego's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) hosted a one-day workshop on Transitioning to Adulthood. "This was a pilot workshop created for parents who had questions about their child's future. Transitioning to adulthood can be overwhelming and daunting, so I wanted to provide a roadmap to help families feel more prepared for the future," said Anna Nguyen, EFMP Training and Education Outreach Specialist and coordinator of the workshop.

Guest speakers representing several organizations provided expertise and insight on education, legal rights, health care, housing and recreation options for people with disabilities. Bringing in guest speakers brought a more personal perspective and subject matter expertise that

parents appreciated, said Nguyen. One of the workshop highlights was guest speaker Derrick Dudley, a student at San Diego State University and president of the college's Student Ability Network. He shared his personal journey to adulthood as an individual with a disability. Marine Corps Attorney Karen Taylor discussed legal rights and how those rights are impacted and change when a child turns 18. A representative from Transition Resources for Adult Community Education (TRACE), the educational support network in the San Diego Unified School District, provided information on how the program assists young adult students with disabilities during the transition period from high school to adulthood.

Employment options and supports offered through the San Diego area ARC Community

Employment Services (ACES) program were also discussed, and a representative from San Diego State University's Student Disability Services talked about disability accommodations for college students. Participants also learned about housing and independent living options, health care planning, and therapeutic recreation services offered by the San Diego Parks and Recreation Department for individuals with special needs.

Although many of the resources and programs discussed during the workshop were specific to the San Diego area, Nguyen said families with permanent change of station orders also received assistance with locating resources at the new location.

At the end of the information-packed workshop, attendees came up with a list of action items or transition-related goals to complete based on the thoughts and ideas that they jotted down during the day. MCRD San Diego EFMP offers one-day workshops twice a year on a variety of topics. For more information about upcoming workshops, contact MCRD San Diego EFMP at 619-524-8031.



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## CALL TO ACTION: Tell us your story for a chance to be featured in The Exceptional Advocate

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Everybody has a story. What's yours? Have you overcome disability-related adversity or become a disability advocate? Are you dealing with unique challenges associated with your family member's disability?

If so, how do you handle them? We want to know. We are looking for military families enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program who would like to be featured in an upcoming issue of *The Exceptional*

*Advocate*. To be considered, submit your request by clicking [here](#). In the subject line type, "EFMP Article Idea." Your story may be chosen for an article in an upcoming issue of *The Exceptional Advocate* eNewsletter.

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gaining command/new location. The NDSP is divided into three regions: the Americas, Europe and Pacific. Specially trained instructional systems specialists (ISS) are assigned to these regions and support students with both regular and special education needs. The NDSP ISS will provide information on available schooling options at that location and the authorized education allowance for the location. For additional information on enrollment, visit the [NDSP](#) website.

### Reach Out to Instructional Systems Specialists

When a child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or other special needs, the process of identifying educational options is thorough and extensive. The ISS goes to great efforts to locate appropriate schools or educational opportunities for children in the NDSP. Parents need to know all of the available options to make informed decisions about their children's education. NDSP encourages parents to initiate overseas screening early on and stresses the importance of reaching out to the designated ISS who can help guide them through the process of selecting the school that will best suit the needs of their children. It is imperative that parents understand that an overseas education is often quite different from what they are used to in the United States. Knowing this upfront is helpful in making a positive adjustment.

The NDSP ISS is the best resource for families with children that have special needs who are considering or are moving to locations without DoDEA schools. The ISS is there to help families ensure that their child's needs can be met. As with any type of transition, appropriate coordination is critical. If an accompanied,

overseas duty assignment is in your future, start the screening process as soon as possible to determine your child's eligibility for DoDEA services, and reach out to your NDSP ISS who is ready, willing and able to assist. Their contact information is on the NDSP website.

### Differences in Schools Outside the United States

Parents of children with special needs who may be attending non-DoD schools outside the United States should be aware of the following:

- The only local option in some locations may be private schools or schools operated by the host nation. In some cases, the educational options available are taught in the local language of the host nation.
- Unlike the education system in the United States, the host nation and private schools do not follow the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and are under no obligation to provide special education services or accommodations.
- International schools approach special education differently than schools within the United States. Many schools do not offer inclusion services. Even if the need for special education services is identified, that does not mean that the services will be provided in the assigned location or that they will be provided in the same way as they might be within the United States.
- School curricula may be different; some schools promote exploratory curriculum unlike the more traditional curriculum in the United States.
- Some schools will not accept children with special needs.
- Prospective students may be required to take and pass an entrance exam for admission at some international schools.

- Sports programs accommodating special needs may not be available.

### Enrollment in the Exceptional Family Member Program

If a family member has a disability or special need, enrolling in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) will ensure that the new assignment is coordinated. This means that a determination will be made as to whether the medical and educational needs of family members can be met at the new duty assignment before accompanied travel is authorized. NDSP personnel will determine the availability of services for the education of authorized command-sponsored dependents of military members and DoD civilian employees assigned to overseas areas where there are no DoDEA schools available within a commuting distance.

### Resources

Visit the [NDSP](#) website for registration information, processing inquiries, NDSP sponsor orientation, contact information and other resources.

## DID YOU KNOW



The National Resource Directory (NRD) is a website that connects wounded warriors, service members, veterans, their families and caregivers to programs and services that support them. Visitors to the NRD website can search for national, state and local services, and find information and resources on a variety of topics including, benefits, housing, caregiver support, job search assistance and more. Visit [www.NRD.gov](http://www.NRD.gov).

# NOVEMBER



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY



# Isabel Hodge – My Assignment to the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities – Part 1

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## Background

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the Presidential Panel on Mental Retardation to gather information about national efforts around preventing and ameliorating mental retardation. Through their inquiries, the group learned about the appalling conditions people with mental retardation and other disabilities were subjected to in state and private institutions. The findings of this group launched a movement towards home and community-based living that is still going strong today. Information presented by the group to President Kennedy resulted in a package of legislation that was initially designed to grow community level services to support individuals with developmental disabilities (DD).



Today, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, or “DD Act,” is comprehensive legislation that ensures individuals with DD and their families have access to community-based services and supports to promote opportunities for independence, productivity and inclusion through culturally competent programs. The DD Act establishes four grant programs:

- [University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service \(UCEDDs\)](#) (est. 1963)
- [State Councils on Developmental Disabilities \(Councils\)](#) (est. 1970)
- [State Protection and Advocacy Systems \(P&As\)](#) (est. 1975)
- [Projects of National Significance \(PNS\)](#) (1995)

## My Assignment

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Community Living, [Administration for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(AIDD\)](#) is the agency responsible for the funding and oversight of the four grant programs.

The AIDD is led by Commissioner Sharon Lewis, a dedicated long-time advocate for individuals with disabilities and a mother of a child with special needs. Commissioner Lewis requested that I join AIDD’s staff after we worked together at the [Building a National Agenda for Supporting Families with a Member with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Wingspread Family Support Summit](#) held in March 2011 at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wis.

The summit was a small gathering of diverse national and state disability leaders and the perfect opportunity for me to represent military families with special needs and help guide the direction for national policy reform in the area of family support.

In June 2011, I left the DoD Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs

(OSN) and began my 12-month assignment to AIDD in the Office of the Commissioner (OC). The OC is the policy office for AIDD, which means we were responsible for policy analysis, budget processes, performance measures, interagency collaboration, legislative issues and responding to HHS document clearances and letters from constituents.

I was confident with the wealth of knowledge I had acquired as an installation Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) coordinator, EFMP specialist and OSN program analyst. And, I knew that with my experience as military spouse and veteran having “walked-the-walk” advocating for my own son and for others for almost two decades I had something to offer AIDD. While I did have experience to offer, I also had a lot to learn.

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*According to the 2011 Demographics Profile of the Military Community there are 1,984,450 total Active Duty family members and 62.9 percent are children (under age 22).*

You’re probably wondering why someone with my experience would feel so inept when starting at AIDD. First, it was a little bit of anxiety. Don’t we all feel that when we’re starting a new job? Second, my past work experience with EFMP had made me very aware of and knowledgeable about the issues facing children under 21. I knew about early intervention, special education and TRICARE

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# Spotlight On: National Family Caregivers Month

**N**ovember is National Family Caregivers Month. More than 44 million Americans are responsible for providing care for a parent, spouse, child or relative who is chronically ill, disabled or elderly. In any given year, caregivers work an average of 20 hours per week providing care for their loved ones, doing everything from shopping, cooking and cleaning, as well as bathing, dressing and giving medicine. Women make up approximately 75 percent of caregivers; many report feeling emotionally, physically or financially strained.

Family caregivers can easily become overwhelmed with juggling the demands of balancing everyday obligations and caregiving responsibilities. The emotional and physical strain associated with caregiving is called caregiver stress.

Signs of caregiver stress include feeling sad, angry or overwhelmed; getting too little or too much sleep; eating too much or not enough; and losing interest in activities that were once enjoyable. When caregivers neglect their own physical and emotional health, they become more susceptible to illness and depression.

If you or someone you know is experiencing caregiver stress, you are not alone. Here are suggestions to help reduce some of the stressors associated with family caregiving:

1. Take care of yourself. Healthy eating and regular exercise is good for your heart and will help relieve stress. Physical activity can also improve your mood, physical strength and overall well-being. Start with short exercise breaks throughout the day.

2. Talk to other caregivers. It may be helpful to speak to other adults who can relate to your feelings and the stressors associated with caregiving. Sharing resources, tips and experiences with other caregivers can be a much needed source of emotional support.
3. Do something for yourself on a regular basis, like scheduling a time each week to visit a friend, go to a movie, or spend time on a personal hobby.
4. Find caregiver support in your community.
5. Talk to your health care provider if you are feeling overwhelmed or depressed.

## Ways to Show Your Appreciation for a Family Caregiver

The National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA), a non-profit organization, suggests the following ways to show appreciation for a family caregiver:

1. Offer a few hours of respite time to a family caregiver so he or she can spend time with friends or simply relax.

2. Send a card of appreciation or a bouquet of flowers to brighten up a family caregiver's day.
3. Encourage local businesses to offer a free service for family caregivers throughout the month of November.
4. Help a family caregiver decorate for the holidays or offer to address envelopes for holiday cards.
5. Offer comic relief! Purchase tickets to a local comedy club, give a family caregiver your favorite funny movie, or give the gift of an amusing audio book to listen to while doing caregiving activities.
6. Find 12 different family photos and have a copy center create a monthly calendar that the family caregiver can use to keep track of appointments and events.
7. Offer to prepare Thanksgiving dinner for a caregiving family in your community so they can just relax and enjoy the holiday.
8. Help a family caregiver find information and resources on the Internet or to locate a local support group.



## Resources

**Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)** – Speak with an EFMP family support representative at your installation for assistance with locating caregiver resources.

**Military OneSource Consultants** – If you are having trouble coping with the strain of taking care of a family member and find that your physical and emotional well-being is suffering, there are resources available to help.

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# Tips for Family Road Trip Success

Every year, families from all over the country load up their cars and head for their Thanksgiving holiday destinations.

Help make your next road trip a more pleasant experience for the entire family by giving these tips a try:

1. Make sure your car is road ready. Get your car serviced prior to your trip. A car break down is guaranteed to disrupt your travel plans.
2. Talk to your children about the trip ahead of time. Tell them where the family is going, how you will get there and what to expect. Show pictures of family and friends you will be visiting.
3. Plan the route. Make a note of the location of rest areas along the way and expect to take frequent stops for bathroom breaks.
4. For long trips, consider traveling at night or very early in the morning. Spread the trip out if necessary, and spend the night at a hotel, rather than attempting to get to your destination in one day.
5. Request an [accessible hotel room](#), if necessary, when making reservations.
6. Have your children rotate seats at rest stops. A change of seats may help cut down on arguments between siblings and provide a change of scenery.
7. Take turns sitting in the back seat while your spouse or another adult is driving.
8. Play games. Don't forget about those old favorites games like "I Spy," the license plate game, or "Go Fish" to help pass the time.
9. Encourage your children to draw or write about their road trip experience.

10. Reward your children for good behavior. Small inexpensive toys, healthy treats, or a small reward of their choice can be a pleasant, unexpected surprise for children.

## What to Bring

The following items may be helpful to have on hand during your family travels:

- portable DVD player, headphones and lots of DVDs that your children will enjoy
- audiobooks and CDs with sing-a-long songs
- noise canceling headphones if you have a child with sensory issues
- tablet, portable game or educational toys
- activity bag for each child with small inexpensive toys, crayons, coloring books and sensory toys
- disposable wipes and/or hand sanitizer
- swimwear, just in case you happen to stay at hotel with a swimming pool ( this is a great way for the kids to use up some of their energy!)
- healthy snacks
- cooler for drinks, snacks or medication that needs refrigeration
- blankets and pillows
- car emergency kit
- lots of patience

## Think "Safety"

In the haste of preparing for a long road trip, be careful not to overlook details to help keep your children safe.

1. Be extra cautious when stopping at rest areas and restaurants, especially if your child has a tendency to wander.



2. Reinforce safety rules with your children about not talking to strangers/people they don't know.
3. Explain to your children where they should go, and what to do if they get separated from you.
4. Have your child wear an identification or medical alert bracelet. Include your mobile number and not your home number. If they will not wear a bracelet then consider putting labels inside their clothing or shoes. These tips are not only helpful for individuals with medical conditions but those with communication disorders.
5. Think of your next family road trip as a adventure and family bonding experience. Embrace the time with your family, play games and enjoy the scenery.

## Resources

### Military Temporary Lodging

— If your family will need hotel accommodations during the trip, check to see if a military installation with temporary lodging facilities is on your travel route. In most cases, military lodging is available to active duty military members and their family members, as well as retirees, Reserve and Guard members, and DoD civilians. Rules vary by branch of service and by individual lodging facility. Researching options and making reservations early is recommended. For more information on military lodging visit the [Defense Travel](#) website.

# Compassion Fatigue



Family members are often the primary caregivers of individuals with disabilities. These responsibilities, combined with a caregiver's own daily activities, create new and sometimes-uncomfortable roles within relationships. Poor communication and the pressure of providing care can lead to resentment, frustration, and anger.

Compassion fatigue is a form of caregiver burn out resulting from the lack of a healthy balance between meeting personal needs and the needs of a family member with a disability. Common signs of compassion fatigue include:

- loss of satisfaction with providing care
- mental and physical fatigue
- anxiety, sadness, or irritability
- difficulty concentrating
- insomnia
- loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- increased headaches, stomachaches, and illness
- declining performance at work

- encourage the use assistive devices such as wheelchairs, access bars, and extension tools to reduce dependency on the caregiver
- find assistance with caregiving duties through respite care
- organize information about medications, appointments, location and maintenance of care-related equipment, legal/financial information, and emergency contacts to ease transition to respite caregivers

Contact the installation's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) office for more information on respite care and other caregiver support.

## Managing Compassion Fatigue

There are many ways to manage compassion fatigue by reducing stress. Recommendations include:

- consider the care receivers' needs and wishes and research the condition to learn what changes to expect, level of care required, and available resources
- work with the care receiver to establish routines for daily activities such as getting up in the mornings and going to bed in the evenings, bathing, dressing, meals, and wound care

**MilitaryOneSource.mil**



EFMP support is available for military families with special needs. For more information, please contact your installation EFMP office or visit [MilitaryOneSource.mil](http://MilitaryOneSource.mil), an official Department of Defense website.

# Employment, Volunteer and Education Resource Fair

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October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). In recognition of this awareness campaign, on Oct. 10, Joint Base Lewis McChord's Army Community Services (ACS) Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), hosted an Employment, Volunteer, and Education (EVE) Resource Fair at the Madigan Medical Mall.

Expanding upon the NDEAM theme – "A strong workforce is an inclusive workforce what can YOU do!" resource fair organizers, Katrina Boutwell and JBLM EFMP Specialist, Jacqueline Kelly, crafted the resource fair theme, "An Inclusive Workforce begins with an inclusive community." Generating support and participation from organizations both on and off JBLM was no problem. In fact, some vendors had to be turned away because of space limitations at the venue. Participants in the fair included representatives from JBLM ACS Employment Readiness, JBLM Volunteer Corps, Child and Family Assistance Center (CAFAC), Community Alternatives for People with Autism: Keystone, Left Foot Organics (a horticultural therapy program), PAVE: Community Inclusion Program HUB, Goodwill, Disability Service representatives from three colleges and several other exhibitors.

More than 300 visitors attended the day-long event, including students with special needs from the local school district, and families with special needs enrolled in the EFMP. Being the first fair of this type, organizers had no idea of what to expect with regards to the event turn out, they used a variety of promotional methods to get the



word out around the installation and in the local community, as well as reaching out to other Services and veteran's programs. Ms. Boutwell and Ms. Kelly are very pleased with the outcome and the positive feedback.

Although JBLM EFMP hosts quarterly resource fairs, this was the first of its kind dedicated to serving transitioning teens and adults, which make up 30–40 percent of the EFMP population at JBLM, says Ms. Kelly. With many ACS EFMP programs being geared towards children, teens and adults tend to be a somewhat underserved segment of the Exceptional Family Member (EFM) population. This year, more efforts are being made to focus on this age group, and National Guard and Reserve members who often lack the support network available to active duty members because of their dispersed geographic locations, says Ms. Kelly. "We are doing our best to reach out to them (National Guard and Reserve Members) to make sure all of our information and our resources are available to them as well."

Plans for next year's resource fair include a larger venue to allow

for more vendors, agencies and programs. Coordination with more school systems in the JBLM area so that more students with special needs can attend the fair next year is another goal for the future.

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Military OneSource special needs specialty consultants are available to provide information and referrals on a wide range of issues. This is a free 24-hour service available to all active duty, Guard, and reserve members (regardless of activation status) and their families. Free face-to-face non-medical counseling sessions (and their equivalent by phone or online) are also available. Call 800-342-9647 or visit [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil).

**Department of Health and Human Services** – For more information and resources for family caregivers, visit the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](http://www.hhs.gov) website.

*Content Source: Healthfinder.gov, Women's Health.gov and National Family Caregivers Association.*

# Spotlight on: American Diabetes Month®

November is American Diabetes Month®. "A Day in the Life of Diabetes," is the theme being promoted by the American Diabetes Association to raise awareness about how people's lives are being impacted by the disease. Diabetes affects nearly 26 million Americans. Chances are somebody you know has diabetes. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Diabetes Information Clearing House (NDIC), diabetes can lead to several serious conditions including heart disease, stroke and kidney failure.

Diabetes occurs in three forms: type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes. To fully understand what diabetes is and how it affects the body, you need to first understand the basics of how the body processes and uses glucose. Much of the food you consume is broken down into glucose, a form of sugar, which the body uses as a source of fuel. The pancreas produces insulin, which helps to distribute the glucose from the blood to the cells in our body. When too little insulin is produced, glucose is not properly distributed and the body lacks the energy it needs to function. Many people are unaware that they have diabetes until damage has already been done to the body. It's important to become familiar with the signs of diabetes and speak to your health care provider at the first sign of any of the symptoms.

## Type 1 Diabetes

The onset of type 1 diabetes is sudden. It can occur at any age but is more prevalent in children, adolescents and young adults. Type 1 diabetes occurs when there is too little or no insulin being produced in the pancreas. Daily doses of insulin are vital for a person with type 1 diabetes. When undiagnosed or

left untreated, diabetes can cause a person to lapse into a diabetic coma. Symptoms of type 1 diabetes include increased thirst and urination, constant hunger, weight loss, blurred vision and extreme fatigue.

## Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is the most prevalent type of diabetes. It is typically associated with age, obesity, a family history of diabetes, a previous history of gestational diabetes, physical inactivity and certain ethnicities. Diagnoses in children and adolescents are becoming more common. In type 2 diabetes, the body becomes resistant to insulin and blood glucose levels become elevated.

High blood glucose can have several adverse effects on the body. It can cause heart and blood vessel disease, which can lead to heart attacks and strokes. A person with diabetes can also lose vision or go blind. Nerve damage and poor circulation are also associated with diabetes, which can cause foot problems and sometimes lead to amputation. Unlike type 1 diabetes, the onset of type 2 diabetes is gradual. Symptoms may include fatigue, frequent urination, increased thirst and hunger, weight loss, blurred vision and slow healing of wounds or sores. Some people have no symptoms.

## Gestational Diabetes

Gestational diabetes occurs in 3 to 8 percent of pregnant women in the United States and is caused by pregnancy hormones or a shortage of insulin. Some ethnic groups are more prone to this type of diabetes. Uncontrolled diabetes can cause pregnancy complications. Birth defects are more common in babies born to women with diabetes.



## For More Information

### Helping the Student with Diabetes Succeed: A Guide for School Personnel

— A comprehensive resource guide that helps students with diabetes, their health care team, school staff, and parents work together to provide optimal diabetes management in the school setting.

[The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights](#) — Provides detailed information about the civil rights of students with hidden disabilities (including students with diabetes), under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Consult your health care provider to learn more about how to lower your risk for diabetes.

If you need to make lifestyle changes to prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes or need help managing existing diabetes-related health conditions, visit the [National Diabetes Education Program](#) website, for help making a plan or for to find tools to help reach your goals.

The [National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse \(NDIC\)](#) web site is another resource for information.

*Content Source: National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC), The National Diabetes Education Program, and The American Diabetes Association*

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and military-related issues because families routinely asked for help in those areas. However, I did not have nearly the same level of confidence when it came to issues involving adults who wanted to live a self-determined life independently in the community after spending years in institutions or in group homes. It was a new area for me, but it was interesting and relevant for

me personally, since my son was just preparing to transition out of high school and into competitive integrated employment.

One of the first meetings I attended at AIDD was the [President's Committee for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities](#). The first intern I supervised was a self-advocate and college student who was visually impaired, hearing impaired, used a wheelchair and had a personal nurse and an

interpreter. My first major task was conducting a qualitative and quantitative analysis of over 4,000 public comments and testimonies and writing a report based on that analysis and other reports. The analysis was the biggest challenge I had faced in more ways than one...

*In next month's issue, learn more about Isabel's assignment to AIDD, her successes and challenges, and how her experience benefited military families with special needs.*



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Exceptional Family Member Program



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