



## Personal/Family

### **SPECIAL FAMILY NEEDS**

The typical stressors of life can be significantly compounded for families having members with special needs. Developmental irregularities, chronic medical conditions, and special educational needs can create a significant imbalance between demands on the family and the family's ability to meet those demands. Special needs situations can be particularly stressful because many such needs are not expected to resolve and will influence family functioning for years. Lack of personal time may be a major concern of family members caring for someone with a chronic illness, and they may find it difficult to balance work and family responsibilities. Hospitalization of a child or spouse is a very stressful event for a family.

### **Signs Wingmen Should Know/Look For**

- Any indication that personnel or family members are not coping well, such as signs of stress, depression, or anxiety.
- Decreased work performance or changes in social functioning.
- Comments suggesting problems at home or difficulty meeting responsibilities.

### **Recommended Wingman Action**

- Encourage open communication so personnel feel comfortable discussing the family situation.
- Periodically ask how the family is coping and if medical and educational support needs are being met.

### **Leadership Considerations**

- In accordance with AFI 40-701, military members with family members that require special medical (including mental health) services and/or special education services **MUST** be referred to the Special Needs Coordinator (SNC) for evaluation and enrollment into the EFMP. Refer the Active Duty member to the Exceptional Family Member Program – Medical (EFMP-M) office.
- Allow adequate time for medical appointments and other obligations.
- Ensure dependent care plans and Special Needs Assignment Coordination (SNAC) files are updated as the family member's condition changes.
- Connect families with EFMP-Family Support for community support resources – local, state, and federal. Recommend use of EFMP Respite Care when needed by Airmen and families.