



PCS Season...Now What?

Navigating a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Move with Special Needs in Mind

PCS moves come with unique challenges, especially when you're supporting a child with disabilities or special health care needs. From school transitions to continuity of care, early planning helps reduce stress and ensure your child receives the services and support they need.

Get Organized — Your Essential PCS Binder

Staying organized is your greatest asset during a PCS move. Having both paper copies and digital backups of critical documents will help avoid delays or loss of information. These records are essential when enrolling in a new school, establishing medical care, or applying for services.

What to Include in Your PCS Binder:

- Your child's **most recent** IEP or 504 Plan
- Copies of medical records and a current medication list
- Vaccination records
- Birth certificates and Social Security cards
- Diagnostic evaluations, assessments, and therapy summaries
- Contact information for current healthcare providers, specialists, therapists, and school staff.



([Schoolquest](#): a resource from the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) to help parents of military-connected children manage the process of school transitions more effectively.)

Withdrawing from Your Current School

- **Notify the school early:** As soon as PCS orders are received, or earlier if possible; inform your child's teacher, counselor, and special education staff about your upcoming move.
- **Continue updating PCS Binder** while gathering key documents during your child's school withdrawal.
Reminder: Public schools cannot require proof of citizenship to withdraw a student.
- **Special education and health care documentation:**
 - Request the most recent IEP, 504 Plan, and any evaluation reports
 - Obtain recent progress updates and a summary of services received
 - Gather medical records and emergency care plans
- **Coordinate with support systems**
 - Meet with the school counselor and special education coordinator
 - Contact your School Liaison Officer (SLO)
 - Connect with the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) coordinator (if applicable)
- **Plan for academic continuity**
 - Discuss any credit transfer or graduation requirements
 - Ensure current staff are available to consult with staff at the receiving school

Enrolling in the New School

- **Research school options**
 - Explore district schools, magnet programs, charter schools, and other local options
 - Understand residency requirements and application deadlines
 - Check graduation/transfer requirements
 - Ask about touring the school
 - Military One Source can assist with schools around the installation
- **Know your resources**
 - Get connected with your local [Parent Training and Information Center](#)
 - Familiarize yourself with the [Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission \(MIC3\)](#)
 - Check out [Military One Source](#) for information on enrollment, placement and attendance to help your student with PCS transitions.
- **Schedule your enrollment appointment**
 - Complete required forms in advance
 - Understand what documents/plans need to be implemented (seizure, asthma, allergy (epi), health plan)
 - Bring your student's portfolio, including:
 - Unofficial transcript
 - IEP or 504 Plan
 - Medical history and care protocols
 - Recent evaluations and education plans
- **Engage with school staff early**
 - Meet with your child's new counselor, principal, and any special education personnel
 - Clearly communicate your child's needs and review initial class placements
 - [Painting the Big Picture](#) (Birth - grade 7)
 - [Student Snapshot](#) (Grade 8 - Adulthood)
 - Don't hesitate to advocate if placements or services appear inappropriate. Doing so early helps prevent service gaps
 - Schedule a transition IEP meeting to discuss comparable services and transition to the new school

Throughout this process, if you have any questions or concerns, reach out to ECAC and be connected to a Parent Educator:



[Online Form](#)



ecac@ecacmail.org



1-800-962-6817

When a student transfers to North Carolina from another state or country with an existing IEP or eligibility documentation, the school team must convene to determine how to provide comparable services. This involves reviewing existing records, gathering any necessary additional data or assessments, and determining eligibility under North Carolina's specific guidelines (if attending a North Carolina Public School).

For Dodea specific guidance please visit dodea.edu.

The Comparable Services Plan (CSP) document should be the first step in this process and is used to enter the student's out-of-state eligibility information into ECATS. During the initial referral meeting, the team should discuss how comparable services will be delivered and document this plan in the Prior Written Notice (PWN).

Please note: An NC IEP and Consent for Services are not required until the student is officially found eligible under North Carolina's criteria. More information can be found [HERE](#).