

Advocacy

Family Leadership



Family leadership is based on the belief that parents are the most knowledgeable about the needs of their family and children.

A parent leader may be a parent, grandparent, relative, guardian, foster-parent or anyone else who may be in a parenting role. Parent leaders are strong advocates for themselves, their children and other families in their community. There are many ways to be a leader and many reasons parents may want to become leaders. It could be that they want to help other parents overcome challenges similar to their own. Some parents may want to volunteer at their school or community or act as role models and mentors for other parents.

Parents with leadership roles in their community and other settings may become confident and assertive. They may transfer their leadership skills to other areas of their lives, such as advocating at the local and state level to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Training and practice is necessary for parents to develop leadership skills. Many state agencies and community organizations provide opportunities for parents to learn these skills. Helping families become advocates and leaders is an important first step to make systems work better and improve child and family outcomes.

Family TIES of Massachusetts provides information, referral, and parent to parent support for families of children with special health needs or disability and their professional partners. We also provide information about Early Intervention (EI) and maintain a complete list of EI Programs in Massachusetts.

The information provided on the back page of this sheet is not a complete list of the resources that may be available. For information about community based programs, resources and local support groups, please call your Regional Coordinator or our toll-free line 800-905-TIES (8437).

We publish an annual *Directory of Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Special Needs*. The Directory is always listed as the first place to look for resources on our Topic Sheets!

Call us if you would like a copy of the directory mailed to you. A pdf version of the directory is available to download on our website www.massfamilyties.org. You can also find the phone number for the Family TIES Regional Coordinator for your area on our website.



Information and Resources

Family TIES Resource Directory:

- Under *Advocacy*

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Programs:

- Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project (EIPLP)
<https://eiplp.org/>
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health Family Initiatives
<https://www.mass.gov/family-initiatives-programs>

Federation for Children with Special Needs:

- Parent Consultant Training Institute (PCTI)
<https://fcsn.org/ptic/parent-consultant-training>
- Massachusetts Family Voices
<https://fcsn.org/mfv/>
- Family and Community Engagement Team (FACET)
<https://fcsn.org/facet/>
- Recruitment, Training and Support Center (RTSC)
<https://fcsn.org/rtsc/>
- Massachusetts Special Education Parent Advisory Councils (MassPAC)
<https://fcsn.org/masspac/>
- Advanced Parent-Professional Leadership in Education (APPLE)
<https://fcsn.org/apple/>

Statewide:

- Family TIES of Massachusetts – Family Advisor
<https://www.massfamilyties.org/family-advisor-program/>
- Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change Family Leadership Series (MFOFC)
<https://mfofc.org/training/family-leadership-series/>

National:

- Family Voices
<http://familyvoices.org/>