

**Maine Parent Federation
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Parent Connection

Fall 2008 – Published Quarterly

From the Director's Desk:

MPF is Soliciting New Board Members!

Each year the MPF Board recruits new members. These members consist of parents, caregivers, educators, and others who are interested in volunteering at an agency that supports parents and families across the state. The majority of Board members must be parents.

Responsibilities of the Board members include program and budgetary oversight for all MPF programs. Meetings are held every other month in the Augusta area. The current Board is looking for individuals who have experience in general education and/or fundraising.

If you would like to volunteer as a MPF Board member, please send a brief letter of introduction explaining why you would make a great Board member to: Alexandra Richards, MPF, PO Box 2067, Augusta, ME 04338.

SAVE THE DATE!

Maine Parent Federation's 25th Anniversary & CELEBRATING THE FAMILY Conference

October 2 & 3, 2009

Wyndam Hotel, South Portland, ME

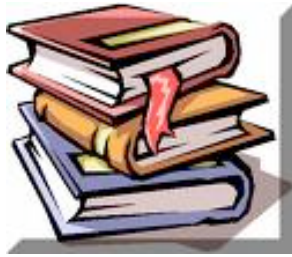
(Check our website for more information: www.mpf.org)

Join MPF's Maine State PIRC Team!

Job Opening in Western Maine

25-30 hours per week home-based position working with schools and families to increase parent involvement in children's education.

Contact the MPF office for more information at 1-800-870-7746 or send your resume to: MPF, PO Box 2067, Augusta, ME 04338.



What's New in the MPF Library?

- **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families** (Book or Cassette)
- **50 Activities and Games for Kids with ADHD**
- **The ADD & ADHD Answer Book** - Professional Answers to 275 of the Top Questions Parents Ask
- **Angry Kids, Frustrated Parents** - Practical Ways to Prevent and Reduce Aggression in Children
- **Arnie and His School Tools** - Simple Sensory Solutions that Build Success
- **The Bipolar Teen** - What You Can Do to Help Your Child and Your Family
- **Born on the Wrong Planet** - Written By a Woman with Asperger Syndrome and Tourette Syndrome
- **Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain** - (DVD)
- **The Bully, The Bullied and Beyond** - Help for Bullies, Victims and Bystanders (Grades 5-12)
- **Don't Be a Menace on Sundays!** - The Children's Anti-Violence Book
- **Don't Pop Your Cork on Mondays!** - The Children's Anti-Stress Book
- **Don't Feed the Monster on Tuesdays!** - The Children's Self-Esteem Book
- **Don't Rant & Race on Wednesdays!** - The Children's Anger-Control Book
- **Don't Despair on Thursdays!** - The Children's Grief-Management Book
- **Don't Tell a Whopper on Fridays!** - The Children's Truth-Control Book
- **Don't Fall Apart on Saturdays!** - The Children's Divorce-Survival Book
- **The Everything Parent's Guide to Sensory Integration Disorder**
- **Financial Literacy for Teens** – The Teen's Guide to the Real World of Money
- **Helping Your Anxious Child** - A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents
- **In The Shoes of Christopher** - A Story about a Bully and a Boy with OCD (DVD)
- **Is This Your Child?** - Discovering and Treating Unrecognized Allergies in Children & Adults
- **Is Your Child Depressed?** - Answers to Your Toughest Questions
- **A Mind Apart** - Understanding Children with Autism and Asperger Syndrome
- **Nurturing Your Child with Music** - How Sound Awareness Creates Happy and Confident Children
- **The Out-of-Sync Child** - Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Processing Disorder
- **Parent's Guide to Building Resilience in Children and Teens** – Give Your Child Roots and Wings
- **The Potty Journey** - A Guide to Toilet Training Children with Special Needs.
- **Raising a Sensory Smart Child** - Helping Your Child with Sensory Integration Issues
- **Stress Can Really Get On Your Nerves** - Witty, Wise Advice for Kids about Stress
- **Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew**
- **Understanding Girls with AD/HD**
- **What to Do When You're Sad & Lonely** - A Guide for Kids
- **What to Do When You're Scared & Worried** – A Guide for Kids
- **When Your Child is Cutting** - A Parent's Guide to Helping Children Overcome Self-Injury

To borrow materials, call 1-800-870-7746, or email dnewcombe@mpf.org. The complete list of library materials is available on our website at www.mpf.org.

If you have any current materials that you would like to donate to the lending library, please give us a call! We welcome donations as we have a limited budget for purchasing new materials.



New & Updated Information Packets

Maine Parent Federation has information packets available on more than 200 topics. These packets contain researched information, tips, local and national resources, and lending library material available at MPF. The following topics are some of our recently updated information packets:

Disability / Disorder Related Topics:

- ADHD – C.H.A.D.D. Fact Sheets
- ADHD – Instructional Strategies
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Developmental Delay
- Disruptive Behavior Disorder
- Learning Disability - Life Success: A Parent's Guide

General Topics:

- Advocacy
- Bullying
- Learning a Diagnosis for the First Time
- Transition: Pre-School to Kindergarten

Education-Related Topics

- Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Home Schooling
- Homeless – Education of Children in Homeless Situations
- NCLB – Parent Guide to “Making the NCLB Act Work”

.... and many more!!

If you would like to receive one of these information packets or would like to receive information on other topics, please contact Maine Parent Federation by:

- Phone: **1-800-870-7746** (ask to speak with a Parent Information Specialist)
- E-Mail: **parentconnect@mpf.org**
(Please provide mailing information)

These materials are free!

Activities for Families ‘On the Go’

“*On the Go*” is a set of **free** parent-child early literacy materials created by the Washington Learning System. These materials include activities designed for use outside the home, in the car, while walking, during bus rides, etc. The activities encourage early language and literacy development from birth through preschool, and are appropriate for all children.

The materials are designed to encourage parents to interact with their children while they are “*On the Go*” to facilitate language, early literacy, and positive parent-child interactions. The activities, as well as accompanying hints for each of the activities to meet the specific developmental needs of the child, are included.

To download materials, go to www.wlearning.com and click on the purple button that says “Free Parent Education Handouts” on the home page. Look for the “*On the Go*” file to download in PDF format.

Adapted from *FORUM, May-July 2008*, published by the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities.

All Maine Votes - 2008 Candidate Forum

All Maine Votes is a non-partisan coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to encouraging people with disabilities, and those concerned about disability issues, to exercise their right to vote.

This election year, *All Maine Votes* will host a public forum for candidates seeking election to the U.S. Senate and House, and for candidates for legislative leadership positions in Augusta, on Wednesday, October 15, 2008, from noon to 4pm at the St. Paul Center, 136 State Street, in Augusta.

This is your opportunity to ask questions and to learn candidates' views on issues of concern to the disability community.

Need more information? Contact Ross Doerr at the Disability Rights Center, 1-800-452-1948, or email rdoerr@drcme.org.



FREE WORKSHOP!

Your Child and Higher Education: What Parents Can Do To Make It Happen

Maine Parent Federation's GEAR UP project offers parents of high school students an opportunity to learn ways to support their children through high school and into the higher education program of their choice: a career apprenticeship, a trade certification, a two-year or a four-year college program. MPF GEAR UP staff and expert speakers from high school guidance, financial aid, career planning, and college admissions resources will cover the following areas in three weekly sessions of 1.5 hours each.

- *There is a college for everyone who wants to go.*
- *Steps to finding the best higher education match for the student.*
- *There is more financial aid available than you might think.*
- *Parents can help their child prepare for higher education.*
- *Higher education is worth the effort.*
- *Your child can be the "first in the family" to go to college.*

Classes and materials are offered **at no cost** to participants. Parents who attend will receive reference and background materials addressing many areas of higher education. MPF GEAR UP will offer this course through select Adult Education programs during the months of September, October, and November. Please visit our website, www.mpf.org, or call MPF GEAR UP at 1-800-870-7746 for more information.

October Is Parent Involvement Month In Maine



Once again, Maine Parent Federation's Maine State PIRC project (Parent Information & Resource Center) is working with Governor Baldacci to acknowledge October as *Parent Involvement Month* throughout the state.

The proclamation, first signed into affect by Governor Angus King in 2000, acknowledges parents as their child's first and most influential teacher, having hopes and goals for their children. It emphasizes a parent's role in supporting and encouraging their children's love of learning and a commitment to assure that their children arrive at school rested, healthy, and ready to learn.

The proclamation urges schools, parents, and communities to work together toward a common betterment of children and their educational success. Schools are encouraged to recognize the outstanding contributions parents make in fostering their children's love of learning and for the commitment parents make to be involved by becoming an intricate part of their children's school community.

The Maine State PIRC project is celebrating *Parent Involvement Month* by awarding a \$50 stipend to schools that hold a parent group activity. We encourage schools to make the most of this special month by organizing an event to further increase parent involvement at their school.

If you would like to receive further information about the Maine State PIRC project, or learn more about the parent group activity, please call Angela Burgess at 1-800-870-7746, or email aburgess@mpf.org to request an application for the \$50 stipend.



Welcome Back to School!

By Dominic DePatsy, Director of Instructional Support in Cape Elizabeth and President of MADSEC (Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities), and Katie Hawes, Director of Instructional Support in Gorham

We want to welcome ALL students and parents back to another year of school in our great state of Maine. We hope parents and staff are ready to improve student learning and for school staff to close the academic and behavior gap of our students at risk and with disabilities. We presented at the 15th Annual Education Law Conference on *Bridging the Gap Between Parents and Schools When Conflict Arises* and want to share some strategies, solutions, and common goals to use in the upcoming school year.

When working on behalf of the student all members of the team can support the process by:

- Keeping the student as the focus.
- Assuming positive intentions. All parties are working for the best interest of the student.
- Acknowledging that we are all advocates for students with disabilities.
- Establishing concrete realities of the student functioning that are based on data.
- Working backward from common future goals.
- Including the student in the process (i.e. student lead IEP meetings).
- Shifting ownership of the team to the student at appropriate times.
- Starting meetings by discussing student strengths and or transition planning.
- Respecting the student's voice in decision-making.
- Understanding that meetings can be emotionally charged due to differences in opinions about what is best for the student.

Team members can work on improving communication by:

- Asking questions and seeking out resources/methodologies and information from the school first.
- Attending IEP meetings with written questions, comments, concerns, and agendas.
- Going directly to the source when conflict arises, and working through the appropriate channels. The team should identify one primary contact person.
- Ensuring that all parties feel safe to share their opinions.
- Listening with an open mind.
- Being aware of body language, gestures, and other non-verbal communication.
- Presenting or attending frequent or regular information parent sessions.
- Returning phone calls, emails, and other correspondence in a responsible amount of time.
- Clarifying roles, purpose, and part of the team process.
- Building facilitation skills for all members of the team.

Some ideas for sharing resources are:

- Hosting information nights to keep parents and students abreast of changes and innovative programs.
- Including school personnel in parent group meetings.
- Providing educational sessions on a variety of topics using school-based or external resources.
- Developing parent/student handbooks.
- Using surveys or other data sources to increase communication and improve practices.

News from the Family Support Regional Coordinators

Region 1: Cumberland, York, Androscoggin & Oxford Counties

Theresa D'Andrea

1-800-515-2738 -- tdandrea@mpf.org

*Parents, Youth & Families in Cumberland County:
Your Voice is needed!*

MPF, in collaboration with the Department of Welfare Services, is seeking parents, caregivers, youth, and family members to be part of a panel discussion/presentation about services they receive in Cumberland County and to share how it is working.

Families will be asked to participate in a two-part process. The first meeting will be held on August 26 from 2-4 pm at the DHHS office on Marginal Way in Portland. This will be an organizational meeting to set goals and a format for the panel. The second meeting will be the panel presentation to service providers on October 2 from 9-11:30 am. The focal point of this meeting will be the panel presenters telling their stories. After the presentations, each panelist will meet in small groups to discuss questions. *Stipends available.* Call Theresa for more information.

Region 2: Waldo, Lincoln, Knox, and Sagadahoc Counties; and the Brunswick area

Beth Thomas

1-866-639-2804 -- bthomas@mpf.org

A new regional parent group is being discussed for the Bath-Brunswick area this fall. The hope is that this group will become more than a support group for families raising children with disabilities, but that it will give families a chance to look at obstacles to their children's prosperous future in their communities and to begin problem-solving together. Interested? Call Beth.

Independence Association of Brunswick and MPF's Family Support Program are hosting a series of informational meetings for parents and professionals on the topic of transition and life in this region's communities. We will meet in Bath on the third Thursday of every month from 6-8 PM. Location TBA. **First meeting is Thurs. Oct. 16th, 6-8 PM. Please call to sign up!**

Seeking dynamic moms and dads from Brunswick to Belfast to join our Parent to Parent program. This support program matches mentors with parents whose child has a similar diagnosis. Do you have a group of parents who'd be interested in this training? *Mileage and \$50 stipend offered.*

Region 3: Kennebec, Somerset, Piscataquis & Franklin Counties

Veronica Currier-Boucher

1-800-870-7746 -- vboucher@mpf.org

Call for information on Support Parent Trainings held at the Maine Parent Federation office in Augusta. *Travel reimbursement and stipend available.*

Region 4: Northern Penobscot, Northern Washington & Southern Aroostook Counties

Lori Jewell

1-866-797-2500 -- ljewell@mpf.org

Call Lori! Ask what MPF offers in this region.

Region 5: Southern Washington and Hancock Counties; and the Bangor area

Jackie Stanley

1-877-963-2588 -- jstanley@mpf.org

Monthly Family Support/Advisory Meetings

- ☞ *Hancock:* Special Children's Friends, Ellsworth, last Wed. of the month, 6:00 - 8:00
- ☞ *Bucksport:* Jewett Elementary School, first Thurs. of the month, 6:00 - 8:00, *From Emotions to Advocacy* study group and family support
- ☞ *Bangor/Hermon:* Friday evenings from 6:00 - 8:00 at a parent home in the Bangor area; support for families with critically or chronically ill children
- ☞ *Calais:* NADA office, call Jackie monthly for date
- ☞ *Jonesport/Beals:* A new group will be starting in September, time and location TBA
- ☞ *Washington County:* time/date/location TBA

Region 6: Northern & Central Aroostook County

Catherine Jandreau

1-877- 848-1253 or 207-834-7908

cjandreau@mpf.org

► **For Support Parent Training and information on workshops,** call Catherine.

HELLO DADS!

Are you looking for parenting support, child development information and/or fun activities to do with your family in the Augusta/Waterville area? Maine Parent Federation has ideas and programs for you!

Brandin Turner recently joined the *Parents As Teachers* (PAT) team as a Parent Educator and Fatherhood Advocate whose focus is on the needs and interests of fathers in our community. He also coordinates Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation's *Increasing Male Involvement* (IMI) initiative. The goal of IMI is to increase and support nurturing male involvement in children's lives. Brandin wears many hats at MPF. He visits families enrolled in PAT, hosts playgroups and monthly IMI meetings, and organizes a whirlwind of father-friendly events. Some of the recent activities included a trip to the Shrine Circus, kite flying at the Pine Tree State Arboretum, and family fishing and barbeque at the Birches Campground in Litchfield. In August, trips to Gray Animal Farm and the Portland Sea Dogs are scheduled, and many more activities are planned for later in the fall. If you are interested in participating in future activities, enrolling in PAT or getting involved in IMI, contact Brandin at 207-623-2144 or email: bturner@mpf.org.

What is Fatherhood Advocacy?

Fatherhood advocacy is not about becoming better fathers, instead it is about recognizing the importance of male involvement in a child's life at home, at school, and in the community. Research shows that an involved father may help a child become better able to face challenges, handle stressful situations, and improve their academic performance. These benefits stretch into adulthood with improved interpersonal relationships. Every father needs support and, as a Fatherhood Advocate, Brandin provides these supports through home visits, regular group meetings, and family activities that encourage father involvement. Fatherhood advocacy is about developing lasting male relationships with our children, our families, and each other.

~ Upcoming Events ~

4th Maine Autism Resource Fair

**Saturday, October 11, 2008
Augusta Civic Center**

Keynote: Dr. Vincent Carbone, BCBA

For more information, call 207-626-3042,
email asdresourcefair@aol.com or visit
www.MAEProject.org

Wells Elementary School Information & Inspiration for Parents & Teachers of Children with Special Needs

**Saturday, September 13, 2008
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

Featuring: Rick Lavoie, Educator & Author
Parent-to-Parent Connections
Round Table Discussions
Resource Fair

For more information, call 1-800-564-9696,
email support@somepa.org or visit
www.somepa.org

2008 Annual What Families & Youth Want Conference

**September 26 & 27, 2008
Ramada Inn
Odlin Road, Bangor, Maine**

This conference is *for, designed by and offered free* to youth and families with behavioral health concerns.

For more information, call 1-800-264-9224,
register online at www.gearparentnetwork.com
or call MPF for a brochure and registration form
at 1-800-870-7746.

What's New in Parent Training & Information?

Maine Parent Federation is pleased to offer the following new and updated materials for families. If you are interested in receiving any of these *free* materials, please contact MPF at 1-800-870-7746 (statewide) and ask to speak to a Parent Information Specialist or email your request to parentconnect@mpf.org. Be sure to include your name and mailing address in the email.

Fact Sheets

Four new fact sheets have been developed. Each fact sheet contains concise and useful information on topics of importance to families.

- *Early Childhood Mental Health Systems of Care*
- *What is Case Management?*
- *The Wraparound Process*
- *Raising Resilient Children*

Handbook

A revised and updated version of *Putting It All Together*, a handbook for families raising a child with a diagnosis of emotional/behavioral disability or Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED), is currently being printed. Give us a call to reserve your copy! The handbook takes the reader from what are the first signs of concern through asking the right questions, and then journeys into an overview of common disorders. Additional information includes therapy and treatment options, information and suggestions for families to help at home and school, supplemental security income, resources for families, and a glossary of terms and acronyms.

School Days Calendar

At the beginning of the school year, many parents make promises to themselves that this year they will be organized. This year they will keep track of their child's IEP progress, meetings, appointments and updates. Then, life intervenes. Like many resolutions you get busy, you promise to get caught up over the weekend, but then something happens and you lose track and you think, 'Well, maybe next year.' MPF has developed a *School Days Calendar* for parents to help them get on track and stay on track. The calendar includes a Notes section and an area to include a profile of your child. Each month includes tips and information for parents. The calendar may be just what you need to help you get organized---call today for your copy.

Handouts

MPF has a variety of IDEA 2004 topical handouts distributed by the Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers. Many of these handouts are available translated in Spanish, Hmong and Somali. The handouts listed here are available from Maine Parent Federation, or online at www.taalliance.org.

- Acronyms and Agencies (*also available in Spanish and Hmong*)
- Acronyms and the Law (*also available in Hmong*)
- Assistive Technology for Infants and Toddlers (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- Evaluation: What Does it Mean for Your Child? (*also available in Hmong and Somali*)
- Functional Behavioral Assessment (*also available in Somali*)
- Helping Your Child with Mnemonics (*also available in Hmong and Somali*)
- How Will I Know if My Child is Making Progress? (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- IEP Goals (*also available in Somali*)

- Informed Parent Consent for Pre-School and School-Aged Children with Disabilities (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- Learning About Special Education
- Parent Tips for Transition Planning (*also available in Hmong and Somali*)
- Planning Your Child's Individualized Education Program (IEP: Some Suggestions to Consider (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*))
- Prior Written Notice (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- Promising Practices-Fluency: Helping Your Child Read and Understand (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- Related Services (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- School Accommodations and Modifications (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- Simple, Inexpensive Devices Can Assist in Communication (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- Special Education: Evaluation & Reevaluation (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- Students' Perceptions of Instruction in Inclusion Classrooms: Implications for Children with Learning Disabilities (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- Third Party Payments
- Transportation and Children Who Have Disabilities (*also available in Hmong and Somali*)
- Understanding the Special Education Process (*also available in Spanish, Hmong and Somali*)
- Your Child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Three New Workshops on Transition

MPF is presenting a series of three workshops for parents on preparing for your child's transition into adulthood. If your child is receiving special education services and is approaching transition age, or is already transition age (14 and up), you don't want to miss these!

In the first workshop, *From Advocacy to Self-advocacy: Moving On and Letting Go*, participants will explore how to move from advocacy to self-advocacy and learn how to help their child take steps to become their own advocate. The second workshop, *Transition from High School: Taking Flight*, will show parents how they can help their child prepare for their future and explore ways to involve their child in the planning process. The final workshop, *A Panel of Experts*, focuses on issues related to transition and adult services. Workshops are two hours in length and held for three consecutive weeks.

This fall series will be held in three locations: Portland, Bangor and Camden. The schedule, times and locations will be posted on the MPF website (www.mpf.org) in the very near future. The workshops are open to the public and at **no cost** to attendees. All of our workshops are developed with the interests and needs of families of children with special needs and disabilities in mind.

Parent Leadership Series

The special education process can be an overwhelming experience for many parents. MPF is presenting a new *hands-on* series of workshops that will help parents organize their child's education file, use test scores to monitor their child's progress, recognize SMART IEP's and learn how to use the state of Maine Special Education Regulations. This six-week series will focus on using parent agendas to improve meeting outcomes, recognizing ways to resolve parent-school conflict early and developing a master plan for your child's special education services. We will use Peter and Pam Wright's book, *From Emotions to Advocacy*, as our textbook. The series will take place in Augusta and Portland. The schedule, times and locations will be posted on our website (www.mpf.org) in the near future or feel free to call the office at 207-623-2144 or 1-800-870-7746 for more information.

Spotlight Workshops

Do you find it difficult to leave your home or work to attend a workshop? MPF is now hosting Spotlight Presentations on a variety of topics via the telephone. These presentations are 1½ hours in length and run from 12:00 pm. to 1:30 pm. When participants register for the workshop, they will be emailed (or snail mailed) a PowerPoint presentation, then they call in and listen to the presentation over their telephone! It is a great way to attend a workshop without leaving your home or office. The following presentations are scheduled for this fall:

- **September:** *Spotlight on Special Education*
- **October:** *Spotlight on Transition Planning*
- **November:** *Spotlight on Conflict Resolution*
- **December:** *Spotlight on Why Can't Johnny be Goode at Home?*

The specific dates will be posted on our website (www.mpf.org) in the near future or call MPF at 1-800-870-7746 for more information.

We Support Maine's Military Families

With so many of our friends and neighbors now experiencing family separation due to military deployments, MPF is reaching out to help support them. For the past year MPF has been an active partner in Maine's "*Operation: Military Kids*", (OMK), providing information about disabilities, services, parenting issues, education and resources to military families.

In June it was our pleasure to participate in the 3-day Maine National Guard Family Readiness Conference and Teen Symposium. What an impressive gathering of dedicated and energetic Guard members, volunteers and family members! One message from the conference was that families and service members alike find adjusting **after the deployment is over** to be harder than expected. Just because the service member is back home without visible injuries, doesn't mean that family life goes on as before. For many families, that reintegration period (which may be lengthy for some) may be more stressful and challenging than the deployment itself.

Parent Training & Information Specialist Elizabeth Collins, MPF's OMK and STOMP representative, will continue to attend monthly parent meetings at Brunswick Naval Air Station to help support military families stationed there.

Please contact Elizabeth (1-800-870-7746) if you have questions or ideas related to military families. Two other great resources for military families who have children with special needs are:

*www.stompproject.org - "STOMP" is Specialized Training of Military Parents

* www.operationmilitarykids.org