



Are you a parent or caregiver raising or who has raised a child aged 0-21 who has mental health, behavioral health, substance use or other kinds of challenges? Would you like to use your lived experience to help another parent who is in your shoes?

***Being a parent peer supporter may be for you!***



## What is Parent Peer Support?

Parent peer support is a parent/caregiver using their lived experience to support another parent/caregiver who is going through similar experiences. The goal of the relationship is to support the parent/caregiver to identify their goals and achieve them. This support may include helping professional providers listen to families and understand things from their perspective.

Parent peer support taps into the strength families have shown in negotiating many challenges, then uses those strengths to help them achieve what they want for their child(ren). It often focuses on dealing with systems, particularly school issues.

## Who Can Be a Parent Peer Supporter?

A parent peer supporter is a biological parent, adoptive parent, or caregiver with legal custody who is currently raising or has raised a child with these characteristics:

- The child is currently between the ages of 0-21, or was when they first began having challenges.
- The child has an emotional, social, behavioral, substance use disability or other type of significant challenge
- The child receives or received services in the mental health or a related system (for example, a child with an IEP related to behavior issues at school, a child with special health care needs who needs emotional support or a child in the juvenile justice or child welfare system who is dealing with trauma).

Parent peer supporters can be certified to provide parent peer support in the mental health system. There are also opportunities to provide parent peer support in systems other than mental health.

## What Do Parent Peer Supporters Do?

- Assist families in identifying resources for their children/youth;
- Help families navigate the various child/youth-serving systems;
- Advocate with families to get what they want for their children ;
- Assist parents in developing relationships with community partners;
- Educate providers and other employees on family-driven practice;
- Participate on local MAP Teams;
- Assist in responding to families in crisis;
- Support families in the wraparound/treatment process;
- Gather data from families, help with evaluation and serve on policy committees.

## How Do I Become a Parent Peer Supporter?

The Department of Mental Health certifies parent peer supporters in the mental health system. The training is virtual and is conducted by Families as Allies. It is appropriate for both those who want to become certified parent peer supporters in the mental health system and those who want to do parent peer support in other systems. The application for the training can be downloaded here: [bit.ly/CPSSApplication](https://bit.ly/CPSSApplication)

## Upcoming Trainings:

### CPSS Trainings and Registration/Documentation Deadlines:

**July 17-21, 2023** – Virtual Training  
(Application Deadline: **June 19, 2023**)

**September 11-15, 2023** – Virtual Training  
(Application Deadline: **August 14, 2023**)

**November 13-17, 2023** – Virtual Training  
(Application Deadline: **October 16, 2023**)

**January 8-12, 2024** – Virtual Training  
(Application Deadline: **December 4, 2023**)

**March 18-22, 2024** – Virtual Training  
(Application Deadline: **February 16, 2024**)

**May 13-17, 2024** – Virtual Training  
(Application Deadline: **April 12, 2024**)

## Who Should Take the Training?

Any parent or caregiver who is raising a child who has challenges and:

- Is interested in working for a community mental health center or another agency certified by the Department of Mental Health. Completing the training does not guarantee you a job, but it helps ensure you'll be ready for one.
- Is interested in doing part-time contractual work for Families as Allies. We are building our pool of contractual employees.
- Supports parents in any system. This training will strengthen your skills and help you network with other parent peer supporters.
- Would like to learn how to support other parents in their same shoes in any child-serving system. We currently have funds to pay training stipends to parents who are—or have been—involved in the youth court system and would like to learn how to support other parents going through the same thing.

Contact us at **601-355-0915** or **[info@faams.org](mailto:info@faams.org)** with any questions you have about parent/caregiver peer support.



## ***Do You Employ or Work with Parent Peer Supporters?***

# **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

If you are a person who works with parent peer supporters, such as a peer support supervisor, children's services director or MAP team facilitator, please call us at **601-355-0915** or visit **[www.faams.org/calendar](http://www.faams.org/calendar)** to find out when our next session of Conversation for Anyone working with Parent Peer Supporters is scheduled. At each virtual session we discuss current issues in parent peer support and get your feedback about how we can be most helpful to you. Those who are interested in establishing parent peer support in their organizations are welcome to attend as well.

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