

The Arc Michigan Launches the Michigan Alliance for Families

The Arc Michigan has been awarded the Training and Technical Assistance Grant from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to support Michigan families of children from birth through 26 years of age who have disabilities or other special needs. This five year grant – the Michigan Alliance for Families – will implement a statewide system that will provide information, educational workshops in collaboration with several statewide organizations and initiatives, parent mentoring, and regional sites. The initial regional sites are Cadillac, which will cover Manistee, Mason, Lake, Wexford and Missaukee counties and Benton Harbor, which will cover Berrien County. Additional sites will be added during the grant.

This project combines the resources and expertise of two previous MDE grants, Family Information Exchange and Project PERFORM. The project staff includes parents of children and adults with disabilities.

Sandee Koski and Kelly Orginski are managing the Parent Mentoring and Regional Site Development. Families and professionals interested in these components should contact by email Sandee (sandee.k@arcmi.org) or Kelly (kelly.o@arcmi.org); or call (800) 292-7851 or (517) 487-5426; or mail 1325 South Washington Avenue, Lansing, Michigan 48910-1652.

Kay Moler is managing the Information Dissemination component. Families and professionals needing information should contact by email Kay (kmoler@arcmi.org); or call (800) 552-4821 (Michigan only) or (734) 994-8100 extension 1590; or mail 1819 South Wagner Road, P.O. Box 1406, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1406.

In addition to the Michigan Department of Education and The Arc Michigan, the organizational members of the Michigan Alliance for Families include: Association for Children's Mental Health; Autism Society of Michigan; Citizens Alliance to Uphold Special Education (CAUSE); Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators; Michigan Disability Rights Coalition; United Cerebral Palsy Detroit; United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan; Washtenaw Intermediate School District; Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services; and Wayne State University Developmental Disabilities Institute.

The Michigan Alliance for Families System Design Committee (SDC) advises the project staff on the direction and activities of the project. The Committee is seeking to add parents, family members, and adults 18-26 who are still in the educational system. Individuals with racial, ethnic, geographic, gender (we need dads!), disability, and socioeconomic diversity are being sought.

The SDC also has workgroups that anyone can join:

- Marketing and Branding
- Electronic Communications and Web Site
- Regional Site
- Parent Mentoring and Education

Stipends, child care reimbursement and mileage are available to parents, family members, and adults with disabilities on the SDC or workgroups upon request.

If you are interested in serving on the SDC or one of these workgroups, please contact the Michigan Alliance for Families Grant Coordinator, Ellen Sugrue Hyman at 800-292-7851 ext 105 or ellen@arcmi.org.