



# Parent/Professional Advocacy League

Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL) is the leading public voice for families whose children have emotional, behavioral and mental health needs in Massachusetts. PPAL's goals are to support families, nurture parent and youth leaders and work for systems change. Our many programs focus on helping families and youth strengthen their knowledge and skills and ensure that their voices are part of every system that provides services to them.

## Did you know?

- Parents most want information about school supports and mental health diagnoses.
- Parents say other parents and family organizations provide the most reliable information.

## Information

For more information about training:  
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For general information:  
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## Contact

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## Advocacy



Advocacy ranges from proactively working to get care for a single child to creating change to benefit many children and their families. It can include working on single issues or system wide changes. Our advocacy includes strategies such as building partnerships and talking to decision makers. It also includes teaching families the tools they need for better results for their own child as well as sharing their experiences to effect change.

## Family Support



Family support offers parents the necessary support to maintain hope and to help access formal services and natural community-based support. PPAL staff share a history of similar experiences raising their own child, youth or young adult and they know about practical, possible solutions. Family support can include information and referral, system navigation, targeted assistance and support groups. Support provides emotional connection, knowledge and new skills.

## Youth



Youth voice is a powerful catalyst for change. Youth MOVE Massachusetts, a youth-led initiative, brings youth together and provides youth-to-youth support and leadership. Youth-led support is offered weekly. Youth gain the skills to speak to providers, families and professionals about what helps and harms. Youth learn the skills to share their stories safely, share activities and speak at events.



## Training

PPAL offers a wide range of trainings for families, youth and professionals across the state.

Workshops for parents are designed to improve knowledge and skills to better access services and navigate a complex system. Trainings for youth are designed to offer youth new skills such as dealing with crisis or telling your own story. Professional trainings include family engagement strategies and youth engagement.



## Outreach

Families come from many cultures and various experiences. Some are looking for information about schools, services for children and community supports. Others are interested in connecting to other parents. PPAL's multicultural outreach program is designed to connect with families, offer training, information and help. Staff are from diverse cultures and understand the challenges of raising a child with mental health needs.



## Juvenile Justice

PPAL staff has expertise to help families whose youth are involved juvenile justice. We provide information, guidance and one to one support. Our program includes assistance in understanding services and strategies and help to put those services in place to divert the youth in the community from more serious involvement. PPAL offers training to law enforcement and first responders who encounter youth with mental or behavioral health needs.



## Communication

PPAL connects with families and professionals through its website, publications and social media accounts. PPAL's tipsheets, reports, newsletters and videos capture the family and youth experience. PPAL's materials are designed to support individual families, enrich community knowledge and advocate for system change.



## Research

Family driven studies work to capture the experience of families whose children have mental health needs. Topics are chosen that are important to families, families collaborate in developing the questions and take the lead in evaluating the results. Findings are disseminated in media that are accessible to families. Results are often used to advocate for changes that benefit families and youth.



## Transition

Families whose youth are transitioning to adulthood face enormous changes. PPAL offers training and support that can help families understand and navigate the services and challenges that they may encounter. Support groups for parents of transition age youth and training to increase knowledge, answer questions and create networking are offered regularly.