

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A FAMILY MENTOR?

Among the derived benefits of a family mentor are:

- (1) a reduction in family isolation (increased socialization),
- (2) an enhancement of family functioning,
- (3) a reduction of inappropriate services or placements for the child.

Equally important is the fact that the provision of a mentor provides opportunities for the parent or caregiver to enrich his/her own growth and development.



**Louisiana Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health Inc.**, a parent run organization, is deeply committed to the provision of community based programs which are family focused and supports families in their role as primary caregivers to their child or children with emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges. Toward this commitment, the Louisiana Federation of Families is proud to present this state-of-the-art mentoring program for utilization.

*Mentoring has been identified by Louisiana families as an important support service necessary to continue successfully caring for their child at home. This support program*

*represents another major milestone in Louisiana in addressing the needs of families.*

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## LA Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

*Strengthening the  
voices of children,  
youth and their  
families*



## Louisiana Family Mentoring

## WHAT ARE FAMILY MENTORS?

"Webster" defines a mentor as a "trusted coach or guide". A mentor is a person who has a sincere desire to enhance the success of others.

There is a growing awareness of the importance that mentoring contributes to personal and professional development.

The role in caring for children with emotional, behavioral and mental challenges has evolved in the last decade from that of passive bystander to that of full decision-making partners with service providers. The emphasis on deinstitutionalization puts the family or caregiver at the center of service delivery. Shifting from the residential care model to home and community-based services demands family involvement in all stages of service: planning, delivery, coordination, and evaluation.

The family/caregiver copes with the day-to-day problems of the child's emotional and behavioral challenges and at the same time, attempts to negotiate complex ser-

vices from mental health, education, social service agencies, and sometimes juvenile courts. Lacking adequate information, skills, credibility, or resources to manage the child or to negotiate the necessary services within the community, the caregiver frequently fails to secure services from providers even when the child is eligible for the service. For these families and children a family mentor would be a great asset and benefit in developing positive, personal growth.

The family mentor is a trained and supervised family peer who serves as a guide, coach and teacher for a family with a child who has an emotional, behavioral or mental challenge. The purpose of the family mentor is to empower the parent or caregiver to become an effective advocate for that child. In a successful mentoring connection, the mentor and the parent/caregiver must both **want** the relationship to work and be willing to commit time and energy to the process.

**Strengthening and supporting families in the community is a core belief of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. We recognize and believe that the potential for positive growth lies within each family.**

## WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE FAMILY MENTOR?

The goal of the Louisiana Family Mentor is **"to create an opportunity for empowerment to parents and caregivers who seek to be effective, active advocates for their child and family in securing self-sufficiency"**.

Family mentors will assist parents/ and caregivers in successfully identifying and accessing appropriate resources and supports, which are necessary for personal and family empowerment.

If you are interested in the services provided by a Family Mentor contact:

**Louisiana Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health**

at:

**1-800-224-4010**

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