



Dear Parent/Self-Advocate:

You are invited to apply to the **MARYLAND PARENT LEADERSHIP/ACTION NETWORK** for families of students who have developmental disabilities.

- Are you interested in learning how public policy is made?
- Do you want to change how your local school system educates students with developmental disabilities? Do you want to promote local change to increase inclusive education practices?
- Do you want to promote opportunities for students with disabilities to participate and succeed in general education classes in their neighborhood schools?
- Are you willing to partner with other parents and self-advocates from the central Maryland area to improve the way that students with disabilities are educated in their neighborhood schools?

If your answer is **YES** then, this **MARYLAND PARENT LEADERSHIP/ACTION NETWORK** is all about YOU!

The goal of this project is to increase the advocacy and leadership skills of parents of children with developmental disabilities and for students, age 18 – 21 with developmental disabilities, so that they can effect change at a community and statewide level to support the meaningful participation and inclusion of students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools.

Participants will be:

- Parents from the Harford, Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Calvert, Charles, Anne Arundel Counties and Baltimore City who have children with developmental disabilities.
- Self-advocates (individuals with developmental disabilities) who are between the age of 18 and 21 from those same local areas.

Your Opportunity and Your Commitment:

1. **A series of leadership training sessions**

Parents and self-advocates will gather monthly for three weekend sessions between April and June, and again for three weekend sessions in the fall between September and November to receive intensive training on a wide variety of topics related to statewide and local systemic change and special education.

- Sessions will begin at noon on Fridays and continue into the evening, resuming on Saturday morning and adjourning at 4 pm on Saturday afternoon.
- Meals and hotel accommodations will be provided.
- Sessions will be held in the central Maryland area.

Attendance at all sessions is mandatory.

2010 DATES:

April 23 - 24

May 21 - 22

June 11-12

Summer Meeting (Last week of July)

September 24 - 25

October 22 - 23

November 12 - 13

Cumulative Activity/Graduation TBD

Leadership training retreats will include discussions, web-based learning, small and large group learning, independent research and application, as well as video and audio resources. Each session will combine information and direct experience with field-work or homework between sessions. Professionals in the field, parents, and individuals with disabilities will provide information, personal insights, and strategies for collaboration and systemic change in each session. Each session will include presentations from "the field" and will be followed by a field-assignment in which participants will be expected to observe, gather data, and find information or other work to contribute to their **Action Group**.

2. Action groups

As a member of the Leadership Network, you will also be a member of an Action Group!

As a part of this project, local Action Groups will form in four counties. Leaders who live in these counties will join with other parents and self-advocates from these counties to strategize how to promote local and statewide change. These **4 Action Groups** will be in: **Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties.**

Participants from the leadership series who live in these jurisdictions will act as local leaders and will, with ongoing assistance from MCIE staff, organize with other parents and self-advocates. The Action Groups will develop specific targets and a plan of action for promoting local change to increase inclusive education practices and opportunities for students with disabilities to participate and succeed in general education classes in their neighborhood schools.

One regional Action Group, composed of **Leadership** participants who live in areas outside of the four targeted (above), will identify an area to effect change at the regional or state level. This regional group will develop a plan with ongoing assistance from MCIE staff, to increase and improve practices that can be applied across jurisdictions or statewide.

Each Action Group will meet once/month at a time and date that is convenient for the group.

An application is attached. Each application will be reviewed for basic criteria. Eligible applicants will be asked to interview with the project staff.

For more information, contact the project coordinators: Selene Almazan: selene@mcie.org or Carol Quirk: cquirk@mcie.org.

Thank you so much for considering applying to our first **PARENT LEADERSHIP** program. We look forward to hearing from YOU!

Carol Quirk, Ed.D.
Co-Executive Director

Selene Almazan, Esq.
Co-Executive Director



Maryland Parent Leadership Series

Parent APPLICATION

The **Maryland Parent Leadership/Action Network** is a program of training and support for parents of children with developmental disabilities and for students, age 18 – 21 with developmental disabilities, so that they can effect change at a community and statewide level to support the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools.

The **Leadership Series** is a program in which participants will learn new information, acquire skills, and apply those skills through field assignments and action groups. Six sessions will be held from noon on Friday through 4 pm Saturday on weekends in April, May, June, September, October, and November. A summer activity will also be planned. Each session will include presentations from “the field” and will be followed by a field-assignment in which participants will be expected to observe, gather data, and find information or other work to contribute to their local or regional **Action Group**.

Part 1: Applicant Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

County of Residence: _____

Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Daytime phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Email address: _____ Cell phone: _____

What is the best way to contact you? (check one or two)

Day phone ___ Evening phone ___ Email ___ Cell phone ___

___ I am the parent of a child under the age of 21 who has a disability

___ My child (children) with a disability attend(s) a public school in Maryland

___ It is my neighborhood school

___ It is not my neighborhood school

___ My child (children) with a disability attend(s) general education classes

Is there any other information you would like to share about your child’s classroom/school experience?

First: We want to let you know about what you can expect by participating in this series and what is required for you to maximize your participation in the Leadership Series.

Each of the six engaging and interactive sessions will run from noon on Fridays through 4 pm on Saturdays. Meals and hotel accommodations will be provided. Sessions will be held in the central Maryland area.

DATES of Sessions:

April 23-24	September 24-25
May 21 – 22	October 22 – 23
June 11-12	November 12 – 13
Summer Activity (Last week of July)	Graduation (to be determined)

Participants can expect:

- *To become connected to a growing community of leaders in the area of social justice for people with disabilities and full inclusion in schools and communities.*
- *To learn and be able to use effective strategies that promote and support change.*
- *To learn and practice specific strategies utilized by effective leaders.*
- *To learn about best practices in inclusive education, inclusive communities, effective employment, and transition for individuals with disabilities.*
- *To be able to participate and be supported in Action Groups as participants work towards systemic change.*
- *To work hard and have fun!*

What we expect from you:

- ***Attend and be present for every session.***
- ***Arrive on time and stay for the duration of the session.***
- *Participate in all learning experiences provided by the Series, both during sessions and between sessions in the form of homework and field assignments (approximately 5 hours/month outside of the Leadership Series).*
- ***Collaborate with other learners to complete assignments and final projects.***
- *Complete evaluations of each session and the complete series when requested.*
- *Plan to stay overnight on Friday during two day sessions to maximize your participation and learning as well as network with others.*
- *A contribution of \$250 toward tuition. An application for scholarship and tuition assistance is available. **No one will be denied for their inability to contribute.***
- *Join a local **Action Group** (residents of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery and Prince George’s counties) or the regional Action Group (all other applicants) and attend monthly meetings (approximately 2 hours/month) and be an ACTIVE participant in these groups!*

Prior experiences as a parent- or self-advocate are not necessary!

This application will not be used for limiting or excluding any applicant from consideration on a basis prohibited by local, state, or federal law. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation in the application and/or interview process should notify a representative of the organization.

Next: We want to get to know you, so please answer to following questions. Be honest, be creative, and tell us what you really think!

Part 2: Applicant’s Background Information:

This Leadership Series is both a wonderful opportunity for growth and learning **and** a big commitment of time and energy for its participants and the group leaders. We aim to choose applicants from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. We hope to provide Maryland with new parent- and self-advocate leaders who will be a force of positive change in special education practices.

Family profile:

<i>Child’s name</i>	<i>Child’s age</i>	<i>Disability that impacts you and your family</i>

Is there other information that you’d like to share about your family? (If you need more space, use the reverse side)

Please type the answers to each question on a separate page with as much detail as needed for us to make a decision.

1. What motivates you to apply?
2. Although not required, do you have any prior experiences with advocacy? (if yes, please explain)
3. What do you believe are the characteristics of an effective leader?
4. Have you had any prior opportunities to be in a leadership role? (If yes, please explain and share what you have learned)
5. What skills do you have that can contribute to effective leadership and advocacy?
6. What personal characteristics do you have that might be barriers to effective communication, leadership or advocacy?

7. Many people will apply to participate in this **Leadership Series**. Why should we choose you?
8. Are you committed to working for systemic change beyond advocacy for your own child and why?

Part 3: Letters of Recommendation

Please submit two letters of recommendation from people who can testify to your commitment to this program and your ability to offer leadership to other families who have children with disabilities in Maryland.

Examples of appropriate recommendations: leaders in the disability community, school professionals, service providers, members of other groups to which you belong, community organization members, etc.

Letters of recommendation should be mailed to the following address:

Parent Leadership/Action Network
Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education
7484 Candlewood Rd.
Suite R
Hanover, MD 21076
Phone 410.859.5400
FAX 410.730.8331

E-Mail: selene@mcie.org

ALL Applications and Letters of Recommendation are due: March 8, 2010 by 12 noon

Interviews will be set up by March 15, 2010.

Notification of acceptance will be sent by March 31, 2010.

If you have any questions or if you need assistance in completing this application, please contact:
Rebecca Mondonedo at 410.859-5400 or by email: rmondonedo@mcie.org.

Thank you!

The MCIE Parent Leadership Series is made possible through collaboration with and funding from the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council.