

# WI FACETS VOLUNTEER PARENT LEADER

**BACKGROUND:** The WI FACETS Parent Training and Information Center 5-year grant includes objectives aimed at increasing the network of knowledgeable, effective Parent Leaders to serve in their communities. At least twenty Parent Leaders will be identified and trained annually, with a goal of 100 Parent Leaders available to support Wisconsin parents of children with disabilities by 2006.

**PARENT LEADER REPORTS TO:** WI FACETS Center Coordinator

## **REQUIREMENTS TO BE A PARENT LEADER:**

- Strong desire to support parents of children with disabilities.
- Completion of WI FACETS' Parent Leader Orientation Training.
- Initial and annual recommendation by Center Coordinator.
- Ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with respect, appropriate behavior and intent on positive partnership-building with schools and community.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality.

## **DESIRED COMPETENCIES:**

- Parent Leader understands and provides information to parents and others about the special education process, including federal/state laws, FAPE and IEP process.
- Parent Leader understands and provides information to parents and others about assessments, transition, procedural safeguards and mediation.
- Parent Leader understands and provides information to parents and others about effective transitioning (as, in-school, B-3, changes in levels, and high school to community).
- Parent Leader understands and provides information to parents and others about resources related to the education of children with disabilities.
- Parent Leader uses effective verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to support positive and collaborative interaction with parents and educators.
- Parent Leader shares information with parents and others about WI FACETS services.
- Parent Leader is sensitive to cultural differences of families and educators and seeks out information on how to related effectively to diverse groups.
- Parent Leader understands and empowers parents using early conflict resolution skills, including creative problem-solving, partnership-building skills.
- Parent Leader provides individual assistance and in-person support to parents.
- Parent Leader does outreach and demonstrates presentation skills (training), especially in rural and culturally diverse communities using nontraditional methods.
- Parent Leader provides leadership to parents to help build community capacity (strong networks of parents, schools and community leaders).
- Parent Leader possesses an understanding of group facilitation and demonstrates these skills to address the needs of those requesting support (including establishing and facilitating support groups for parent to parent peer support).
- Parent Leader represents parent perspective on advisory boards and local/state policy-making groups.
- Parent Leader participates in policy- making and school reform efforts, demonstrates knowledge of special education issues (as, school finance, charter/choice schools, state improvement plan).
- Parent Leader informs Center Coordinator of services provided as a Parent Leader and the results of those efforts. (Outcome data is reported to OSEP to support continued Parent Leader activities.)

## **ROLE OF PARENT LEADER:**

### I. Parent Support

- A. Empower parents
- B. Individual assistance
  1. Identify parent needs through consultation
  2. Receive referrals from WI FACETS for parents requesting assistance with school issues.
  3. Phone/Email - information, referrals, awareness of community, state, national resources
  4. In Person - 1:1 individually or accompany parent to meetings (as, IEP) with mentoring support by WI FACETS staff as needed
- 5. Assist parents with mediation.**
- C. Parent Training
  1. Arrange workshops
    - Make contacts to schedule WI FACETS training with school and community groups
    - Promotion to parents, schools and others, including media and non-traditional outreach
  - 2. Co-train/Train Alone WI FACETS workshops: Basic Rights; IEP; IFSP; Transition; Mediation.**

### II. Facilitating Partnerships

- A. Build networks with parents, school personnel, community leaders, organizations and groups, especially those serving rural and culturally diverse communities.
- B. Model effective strategies for partnerships
- C. Build strong community capacity
  1. Assist with local needs identification/development/review of strategic plan for Center.
  - 2. Support emerging parent leaders.**
  - 3. Secure local grant funding for parent and community support network activities.**

### III. School Reform

- A. Know and inform parents about special education issues surrounding school reform, including choice and charter schools.
- B. Know and inform parents about participating in development, monitoring of school improvement plans.**
- C. Participate and take leadership roles on local or statewide advisory boards, councils to shape policy and programs at the decision-making level.**
- D. Support parents to take participate and take leadership roles.**

### IV. Parent Support Groups

- A. Help identify, organize and** facilitate culturally relevant local support groups.
- B. Have knowledge **and use** nontraditional outreach methods.
- C. Provide parent to parent peer support.

**LEVELS OF SERVICE:** Level 1, Level 2, Level 3

## **WI FACETS PROVIDES:**

- Mentoring support from Center Coordinator via email and phone (toll-free) to help with cases and WI FACETS-related activities.
- Annual Parent Leader training.
- Access to WI FACETS' resource/reference library (books, audio & videotapes).
- Opportunity to qualify for financial support to attend additional training.
- Opportunity to qualify for financial support to serve on local & statewide councils/task forces and attend meetings representing the parent perspective.
- Opportunity to qualify for financial support related to provision of individual support to parents.