



## HOW CAN PAC HELP?

- Listening to families talk about what they need and what they are concerned about.
- Encouraging parents' natural ability to speak up for their children and families.
- Educating parents on system acronyms, processes, their rights as parents and the rights of their children.
- Attending meetings such as school, court hearings, case reviews, and team meetings.
- Helping parents share information with professionals that only parents can provide from living with, and relating to, their children.
- Being there for parents so they do not feel alone when facing difficult times with their children.

Parent Advocacy Connection is free to families involved in Service Coordination.

PAC parent peer supporters have empowered over 6,000 Ohio families since 2005.

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To find out if your county has this program, please contact:

NAMI Ohio  
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or  
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PAC Coordinator  
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**Parent Advocacy Connection**

*Ohio's Parent Peer Support Program*

Parent Advocacy Connection educates, encourages, equips and empowers families to partner with System of Care professionals in promoting access to services that are family and youth centered, community-based, comprehensive, and culturally competent.



**Parent Advocacy Connection has a proven record of supporting families through crisis and helping them learn to advocate for their own children.**

Since its beginning in 2005, PAC has been committed to helping families through crises and equipping parents to advocate for their children.

It is PAC's belief that no parent should have to go it alone. Most of the PAC peer supporters are parents themselves who know firsthand how it feels to be scared, angry, confused and frustrated. PAC supports families as they try to seek help through multiple systems—Juvenile Justice, Child Protective Services, Education, Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

PAC does not represent children or act as surrogates for them—it helps those who are the foremost experts—parents—to become better advocates for their own children and to access services for their own families.

Each parent peer supporter receives up to 60 hours of training in multiple systems each year, and must be mentored by experienced peer supporters before working independently with families. In addition PAC parent peer supporters must pass a background investigation check (BCI) every two years.

PAC adheres to strict boundaries and confidentiality agreements and has a complaint procedure in place to insure our high standards.

**Q Who can receive a PAC parent peer supporter?**

*A Any family in Ohio who has a child or youth involved with their county Family and Children First Council can have a parent peer supporter. PAC has parent peer supporters in counties throughout the state.*

**Q Who are PAC parent peer supporters?**

*A Highly trained parents with lived experience in the community who become peer supporters because of their desire to assist other families in learning how to advocate for their children with special needs.*

**Q How is Parent Advocacy Connection funded?**

*A PAC is administered by NAMI Ohio through a grant from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and the Department of Job and Family Services.*