

Developing a Local Parenting Awareness Month Coalition

PARENTING AWARENESS MONTH COALITIONS — an opportunity to mobilize communities to support their citizenry in their role as parents and caregivers.

PURPOSE: Local PAM coalitions bring diverse people and resources together, for a focused and systematic approach to increasing parent education and involvement in the community.

FUNCTION: In a PAM coalition, individuals and organizations retain their identity but agree to work together to achieve local Parenting Awareness Month goals, during the March initiative or year around.

POSSIBLE FUNCTIONS FOR A PAM COALITION:

- ❖ Setting local priorities.
- ❖ Planning events.
- ❖ Providing a forum for community issues or concerns.
- ❖ Creating awareness about or ensuring ready access to parenting education and resources.
- ❖ Working with the media.
- ❖ Getting information to local organizations.
- ❖ Involving more parents and community members.
- ❖ Advocating for policies that support parents.

POSSIBLE COALITION MEMBERS:

- ❖ Parent organizations and networks
- ❖ MCRUD and Safe Communities coalitions
- ❖ Faith communities
- ❖ Businesses
- ❖ Civic organizations and clubs
- ❖ City councils and county commissions
- ❖ Local public health, mental health, social services, substance abuse services
- ❖ 4-H and other MSU Extension programs
- ❖ Youth organizations
- ❖ Law enforcement, judicial systems, juvenile justice
- ❖ Neighborhood organizations
- ❖ Child welfare organizations
- ❖ RSVP and other senior citizen programs
- ❖ Schools kindergarten through college
- ❖ Health care providers and hospitals
- ❖ Child care centers
- ❖ Community leaders
- ❖ Local media.

CHARACTERISTICS OF COALITIONS THAT WORK:

- ❖ Clearly defined and agreed upon Operating procedures; democratic decision-making.
- ❖ Clear and agreed upon goal—both short term and long term.
- ❖ Facilitative leadership and delegation of responsibility.
- ❖ Meaningful roles for everyone; clear definition of roles.
- ❖ Processes for bringing closure, for evaluating efforts, and for revising or renewing mission and goals.
- ❖ A coordinating “headquarters.”
- ❖ Good communication—within the coalition and with the community.
- ❖ Responsiveness to community input.
- ❖ A working relationship with media.
- ❖ A collaboration mentality, which includes:
 - **Focus** – setting aside turf issues to accomplish a common goal.
 - **Trust** – believing others will do their part and do it well and will let you do yours.

As you develop a local PAM Coalition, consider the following –

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— **Margaret Mead**

“It's amazing how much can be accomplished when it doesn't matter who gets the credit.”

— **Anonymous Wise Person**