



## PROGRAMS OF THE STATEWIDE PARENT ADVOCACY NETWORK

The Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) is an independent non-profit organization committed to engaging parents and professionals as partners in improving the outcomes for infants, toddlers, children and youth. SPAN was established in 1987 as New Jersey's first USDOE-funded Parent Training and Information Center for families of children with special needs. Since that time, SPAN's programs and services have expanded as we increasingly recognized the impact that multiple systems - education (general & special), health care, mental health, and child welfare - have on families and children and the need for parents/caregivers to have a resource for information on navigating more than one system, in order to achieve positive outcomes for children. However, throughout our organization's history, our focus has continually been to engage parents/caregivers of children with the greatest need due to disability; poverty; discrimination based on race, sex, language, immigrant, or homeless status; involvement in the foster care, child welfare, or juvenile justice systems; geographic location; or other special circumstances.

SPAN partners with schools, school districts, state and federal government agencies, non-profit national, state and community-based organizations, institutes of higher education, and private foundations to provide training, consultative services, and technical assistance for families, schools, parent groups, community-based agencies and service providers who want to be effective in their roles in supporting children and families. SPAN also engages in public policy advocacy and systems change efforts, and is a member of local, state and national advisory councils and committees addressing issues affecting children and families, in the areas of education, health, mental health and child welfare.

# **EDUCATION**

## **NE-PACT/Region I Parent Technical Assistance Center Project (U.S. Department of Education)**

SPAN is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to provide technical assistance and support to federally-funded parent centers throughout the Northeast United States. The NE Parent Assistance and Collaboration Team (NE-PACT) also hosts an annual regional conference. Contact Diana Autin at 973-642-8100 x 105 ([Diana.Autin@spannj.org](mailto:Diana.Autin@spannj.org)) or Debra Jennings at 973-642-8100 x 106 ([debra.Jennings@spannj.org](mailto:debra.Jennings@spannj.org)), Project Co-Directors, or Carolyn Hayer, TA Coordinator, at 973-642-8100 x 102 or at [chayer@spannj.org](mailto:chayer@spannj.org).

## **Parent Training & Information Center (PTI) (U.S. Department of Education)**

SPAN's PTI staff provide information, training and technical assistance (on the phone, in person, and via email) to parents of children with disabilities and special health/mental health needs eligible for early intervention or special education services, or at risk of inappropriate referral to special education, ages birth to 21. The *Community Education Project*, coordinated by Geraldine Moore, [geraldine.moore@spannj.org](mailto:geraldine.moore@spannj.org) or 973-642-8100 x 118, provides in-person advocacy for families in Essex County's urban communities whose children are involved in multiple systems including education, health, child welfare, and/or juvenile justice. *El Club de Padres*, directed by Rosita Kardashian, provides training, technical assistance and advocacy for Spanish-speaking families and can be reached at 973-523-8404 x 41. Our county-based *Community Resource Centers* provide assistance to families through volunteer SPAN Resource Parents. For assistance, call our warmline, 800-654-SPAN, or contact our Legal and Technical Assistance Director Martha Brecher at 973-642-8100 x 114 or [Martha.brecher@spannj.org](mailto:Martha.brecher@spannj.org).

SPAN's family and staff development activities include workshops and seminars for parents and educators to build skills in accessing and delivering appropriate educational services for children. In addition, our workshops give parents the skills and knowledge they need to assume important leadership and advisory roles at the state, district or school level. SPAN is a Professional Development Provider under the NJ Department of Education. To request a workshop, contact Vivian DeWitt, Training Administrator, at 973-642-8100 x 116 or [trainings@spannj.org](mailto:trainings@spannj.org). For more information on workshops, contact Carolyn Hayer, Director of Parent and Professional Development, at [chayer@spannj.org](mailto:chayer@spannj.org) or 973-642-8100 x 102.

# **EDUCATION**

## **START (Statewide Technical Assistance & Resources Team) (N.J. Department of Education)**

Regional staff provide training and support to parents of children with special needs to establish and/or strengthen existing local district parent support groups. Regional conferences and teleconferences are held regarding inclusion and transition to adult life. Joint parent-professional workshops are conducted in collaboration with the Learning Resource Centers on topics such as inclusion, IEP, literacy, and parent-professional collaboration. Contact Dianne Malley, Project Director, at 856-397-5294 or [dmalley@spannj.org](mailto:dmalley@spannj.org).

## **Transition to Adult Life Projects (IOLTA N.J. State Bar Foundation)**

Staff provide information, training, and technical assistance regarding transition to adult life services to parents, youth with disabilities, and professionals who work with youth, with a special focus on youth in the child behavioral health and/or child welfare systems. An interactive CD has been developed for youth with special needs; mini-guides, brochures and fact sheets have been developed for families on Transition, Transition to Post Secondary Education, and Transition to Employment; and fact sheets have been developed for health professionals on transition, their role, and resources for families and youth/young adults. Contact Alice Hunnicutt, Project Director, at 973-642-8100 x 101 or [transition@spannj.org](mailto:transition@spannj.org).

## **Inclusive After-School Champions for Immigrant Youth with Special Needs (NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities)**

SPAN is funded by the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities to pilot a project to increase and enhance the inclusion of immigrant and other underserved youth with special needs in multi-site after-school programs in high poverty, high immigrant communities. For the first year, we are developing Inclusive After-School Champions with three multi-site programs in Paterson: the Boys & Girls Club, the Paterson "Y", and the Paterson Community Development Corporation. Project staff will also provide on-site training and technical assistance to families and after-school staff, and work to develop youth leadership. Contact Alice Hunnicutt at 973-642-8100 x 101 or [transition@spannj.org](mailto:transition@spannj.org).



# HEALTH

## **Family WRAP (Wisdom, Resources, Advocacy & Parent-to-Parent Support)**

### **(N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services)**

SPAN's Family WRAP project encompasses *Project CARE* (Family Resource Specialists housed at county Special Child Health Services Case Management Units providing information and support to families of children with special health care needs); *NJ Statewide Parent to Parent* (linking parents of children with special needs to other families for emotional support and information on resources); and *Family Voices* (advocating for children with special health/mental health needs in the healthcare system). Targeted parent-to-parent assistance is available to families whose infants are in the NICU; families of children with deafness, hearing loss, or deaf-blindness; families of children with mental health challenges; and families of children in the child welfare system. SPAN facilitates *PASS (Parents and Agencies Supporting Siblings)* to provide fun activities and networking for siblings. Contact Patricia Paraskevacos, Project Director, at 973-523-6778 x 19 or at [projectcare@spannj.org](mailto:projectcare@spannj.org); Malia Corde, Project Coordinator for Parent2Parent at [parent2parent@spannj.org](mailto:parent2parent@spannj.org); or Lauren Agoratus, Project Coordinator for Family Voices, at 800-654-SPAN x 110 or [familyvoices@spannj.org](mailto:familyvoices@spannj.org).

## **Family-to-Family Health Information and Resource Center (F2F)**

### **(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services MCHB)**

SPAN's Family-to-Family staff provide information, training (county-based and teleconferences), and technical assistance (on the phone, in person, and via email) to parents of children with special health/mental health needs regarding access to health insurance and health services, and partnering with healthcare professionals, including ensuring access to a "medical home." Staff work with families to engage them in public policy advocacy around health issues including Time to Care (paid family leave and paid sick days); NJ Health Care Coalition (universal health care); and Horizon Watch, among other issues. Call our health warmline, 800-654-SPAN x 110 for Southern Regional Project Co-Coordinator Lauren Agoratus ([familyvoices@spannj.org](mailto:familyvoices@spannj.org)) or 800-654-SPAN x 112 for Northern Co-Coordinator Shirley Johnson [Shirley.johnson@spannj.org](mailto:Shirley.johnson@spannj.org) or contact project director Mercedes Rosa at [mercedesrosa1@yahoo.com](mailto:mercedesrosa1@yahoo.com) or 973-642-8100 x 210. Rosa also coordinates SPAN's *Culturally Competent Outreach and Support Project*, which focuses on identifying, piloting, and bringing to scale effective strategies to work with, support, and build the leadership of, diverse families of children and youth with special healthcare needs.

## **Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health Chapter**

### **(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services MCHB)**

Staff provide information, training, and technical assistance for families of children with mental health/behavioral needs in the education, human services, child welfare, and juvenile justice systems. SPAN also supports the development of social problem-solving skills in children and youth and promotes mental health through this project. Contact Alice Hunnicutt, Project Director, at 973-642-8100 x 101 or [transition@spannj.org](mailto:transition@spannj.org).

# **HEALTH**

## **CHIPRA Immigrant Outreach & Enrollment Project (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services CMS)**

SPAN is a partner with the NJ Hospital Association in this project funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers on Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to identify, reach out to, and enroll, eligible immigrant children into NJ's Family Care health insurance system in 7 counties: Bergen, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Middlesex, and Passaic. In addition, SPAN will connect immigrant families to the web-based Spanish translation program, Traducelo Ahora. Contact Mercedes Rosa, Project Director, at [mercedesrosa@spannj.org](mailto:mercedesrosa@spannj.org) or 973-642-8100 x 191.

## **Increasing Access to Prenatal Care for Underserved Families (N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services)**

SPAN is a partner with the Gateway Northern Maternal and Child Health Consortium in this project funded by the N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services to identify, reach out to, and engage underserved pregnant mothers with pre-natal care, to reduce the rate of pre-term births and low birthweight babies in Essex County. Contact Shirley Johnson, Project Coordinator, at [Shirley.johnson@spannj.org](mailto:Shirley.johnson@spannj.org) or 973-642-8100 x 112.

## **Healthy Adolescent Partnership/Health and Wellness Initiative (N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services)**

Staff work intensively with the Montclair Public Schools to implement effective social problem-solving, bullying prevention and intervention, and violence and substance abuse prevention programs in three middle schools and Montclair High School. Contact Joanne Aidala at 973-746-8515 or [jaidala@comcast.net](mailto:jaidala@comcast.net).

## **Integrated Community Systems of Care for Children with Special Healthcare Needs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services HRSA MCHB)**

SPAN is funded by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Maternal & Child Health Bureau to collaborate with the NJ Departments of Health & Senior Services, Human Services, & Children & Families, and the NJ Pediatric Council on Research & Education/American Academy of Pediatrics-NJ Chapter, to improve performance on the MCHB six core outcomes for children and youth with special healthcare needs and their families (CYSHCN). The goals of the project are to: (a) design and implement the leadership and infrastructure to achieve and sustain an integrated, community-based system of services for CYSHCN and their families; (b) increase focus on the unique needs of YSCHN, including health care transition, in systems of care serving NJ youth; (c) improve access to family-centered, coordinated, comprehensive care for CYSHCN through medical homes that are part of an integrated, community-based system of services; and (d) improve active participation of families of CYSHCN in all aspects of their children's care and systems change and improvement activities. This is a 3-year project. Contact Jennifer Bolden Pitre, Project Director, at [jbpitre.span.nj@gmail.com](mailto:jbpitre.span.nj@gmail.com) or 856-681-6492, or Malia Corde, Medical Home Component Director, at [parent2parent@spannj.org](mailto:parent2parent@spannj.org) or 908-537-4673.

# **LEADERSHIP**

## **Early Childhood Parent Leadership Development Project (N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services ECCS Grant)**

Training and support is provided to families of young children to help them become more effectively engaged in local and state policy activities regarding early childhood, including the Build NJ for Early Learning initiative, the Early Care and Education Coalition, the Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant activities, the NJ Child Care Advisory Council, the regional Maternal-Child Health Consortia, and the early intervention system, including Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives and the State Interagency Coordinating Council. Contact Denise Bouyer, Project Director, at 973-642-8100 x 108 or [dbouyer@spannj.org](mailto:dbouyer@spannj.org).

## **SPAN Support Parents (N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services)**

Parents interested in providing emotional support and connection to resources to other families participate in a 2-session orientation designed to develop their peer advocacy and support skills. Support parents commit to being connected to families and providing support at least three times. Support parents receive ongoing training and support as they volunteer to assist other families. Contact Malia Corde, Project Coordinator of NJ Statewide Parent to Parent, at [parent2parent@spannj.org](mailto:parent2parent@spannj.org).

## **SPAN Resource Parents (U.S. Department of Education)**

Parents interested in supporting other parents participate in an intensive 6-session training on laws and effective education advocacy for children and youth at risk or with disabilities or special healthcare needs. Active SRPs receive ongoing training and support as they volunteer to assist other families. Contact Martha Brecher, Legal and Technical Assistance Director, at [martha.brecher@spannj.org](mailto:martha.brecher@spannj.org) or 973-642-8100 x 114.

## **Parents Engaged in Public Policy (PEPP)**

Staff provide training and support to families of children with and without special needs, and organizations serving children and families, on effective strategies to be engaged in public policy aimed at improving services for children and families. Contact Peg Kinsell, Public Policy Director, at 201-724-4454 or [pkinsell@spannj.org](mailto:pkinsell@spannj.org) for more information.

## **Parent Leadership Development Institute (PLDI)**

Staff provide an intensive, 8-session training for families of children with and without special needs in Abbott districts and/or in schools in need of improvement. Families learn about federal and state laws guaranteeing their right to participate in their child's education and in school improvement; what makes a good school; effective instruction and assessment; positive behavior supports and school environments; ensuring effective services for students with limited English proficiency and/or special needs; parent-professional collaboration strategies; and how to plan and implement school improvement plans consistent with federal/state laws and school reform research. Contact Debra Jennings, Executive Co-Director, at 973-642-8100 x 106 or [debra.jennings@spannj.org](mailto:debra.jennings@spannj.org).

# **LEADERSHIP**

## **Youth Leadership Development Project (Fee for service)**

Modeled after Partners in Policymaking, this project provides a series of 5 intensive full-day workshops for youth with disabilities, their parent(s), and a professional who works with them. The self-advocacy and leadership skills of youth with disabilities and special health care needs are strengthened while their parents and professionals learn how to support youth self-advocacy and leadership. The project is also working to develop a statewide Kids As Self-Advocates (KASA) chapter in New Jersey and district KASA chapters in targeted districts. Contact Alice Hunnicutt, Project Director, at 973-642-8100 x 101 or [transition@spannj.org](mailto:transition@spannj.org).

## **Culturally Competent Outreach and Support Project**

Targeted and intensive information, training and support is provided to underserved families, including families of color, speaking languages other than English, and/or low-income, to build their capacity to advocate for their children and family, support other parents, and participate in public policy advocacy on issues such as education, child welfare, human services, and health. With support from the IBM Foundation, SPAN also assists Spanish-speaking families to access English-language websites and to communicate effectively with educators, administrators, health professionals, and other child- and family-serving professionals to advocate on behalf of their child through *Traducelo Ahora*, a high quality web-based Spanish language website and email translation program. SPAN trains child- and family-serving agencies on use of *Traducelo Ahora* so they can share it with the families they serve. Over 150 organizations and 5,000 parents around the country have benefited from *Traducelo Ahora*. Contact Mercedes Rosa, Project Director, at [mercedesrosa@spannj.org](mailto:mercedesrosa@spannj.org) or 973-642-8100 x 191.

## **Family Councils**

In collaboration with Parents Anonymous of New Jersey, three county Family Support Organizations (Atlantic, Essex, and Monmouth), and the New Jersey Alliance of Family Support Organizations, SPAN recruits, trains and supports family leaders to provide input to county and state agencies across issues that impact children and families, including family support/prevention, child welfare, and child behavioral health programs and services. Contact Diana Autin, 973-642-8100 x 105 or [Diana.autin@spannj.org](mailto:Diana.autin@spannj.org).

## **Immigrant Parent Leadership Development Project (Four Freedoms Fund)**

A partnership with the New Jersey Immigration Policy Network, this project provides training and leadership development to immigrant parents of children receiving bilingual education services and assists them to develop district Bilingual Advisory Committees to improve education and services for students with limited English proficiency. The project is funded by a collaborative of foundations committed to empowering immigrants. Contact Diana Autin, 973-642-8100 x 105 or [Diana.autin@spannj.org](mailto:Diana.autin@spannj.org).

## ***CHILDREN, FAMILIES & HUMAN SERVICES***

### **Education & Health Rights for Children & Youth in Child Welfare & Juvenile Justice (N.J. State Bar Foundation)**

With funding from the N.J. Bar Foundation, SPAN provides county workshops and periodic teleconferences on the education and health rights of children and youth and their families in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems for families, advocates, Court Appointed Special Advocates, county Care Management and Family Support Organizations, Family Success Centers, DYFS and Juvenile Justice staff, and others involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Teleconferences are recorded and materials are housed on SPAN's website for access 24/7. Contact Vivian DeWitt, Training Administrator, at 973-642-8100 x 116 or [vdewitt@spannj.org](mailto:vdewitt@spannj.org) for information on upcoming workshops. Contact Carolyn Hayer, Director of Parent and Professional Development, at 973-642-8100 x 102 or [chayer@spannj.org](mailto:chayer@spannj.org) for additional information on the workshops.

### **NJ Inclusive Child Care Project (N.J. Department of Human Services)**

Staff and consultants provide information, training and technical assistance regarding the inclusion of children birth to age 8 in typical preschool, child care, and after-school programs. The project provides on-site training and consultation to child care and after-school providers on strategies to effectively include young children with disabilities and special health care needs, especially young children with challenging behaviors. The project also provides in-person and on-line training to Information and Referral staff of the county Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies on strategies to communicate effectively with families, red flags in child development, and resources and rights of families of children with special needs. Contact Denise Bouyer, Project Director, at 973-642-8100 x 108 or [dbouyer@spannj.org](mailto:dbouyer@spannj.org).

### **Partnership for Family Success Training & Technical Assistance Center (N.J. Department of Children and Families DPCP)**

Through a collaboration between SPAN, Parents Anonymous of NJ, the NJ Alliance of Family Support Organizations, and Family Intervention Services of NJ (fiscal agent), the Partnership for Family Success provides training and technical assistance to the Family Success Centers and Differential Response Pilot sites to strengthen their capacity to provide family-centered, strengths-based support and empowerment to families. SPAN's Family Success Regional Coordinator, Markisha DeVille, provides support to Essex County Family Success Centers. She can be reached at 973-642-8100 x 117 or [mdeville@spannj.org](mailto:mdeville@spannj.org). The Partnership for Family Success also has an Advisory Board composed of parents and staff of Family Success Centers that provides input into the activities and evaluation of the Partnership. Contact Diana Autin, Governance Board, Partnership for Family Success, at [Diana.autin@spannj.org](mailto:Diana.autin@spannj.org) or 973-642-8100 x 105 or Penny Dragonetti, PFSTTA Director, at [pdragonetti@fisnj.org](mailto:pdragonetti@fisnj.org) or 973-596-9300.

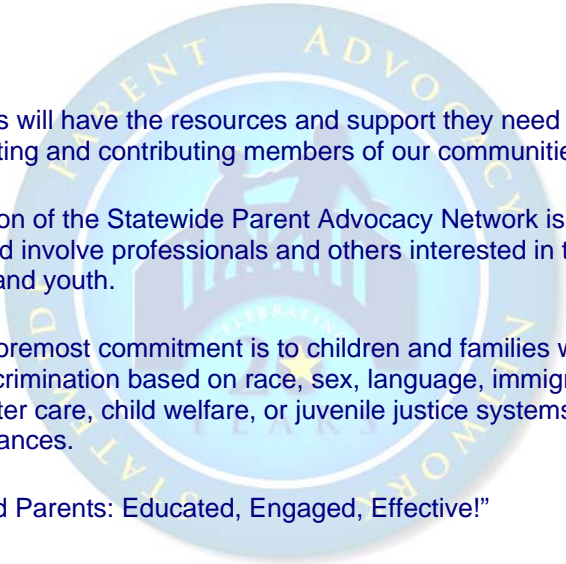
## ***CHILDREN, FAMILIES & HUMAN SERVICES***

### **Military Family 360 Support Project (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ADD)**

With funding from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, SPAN provides intensive, on-site training, technical assistance, support, and leadership development across systems (education, health, mental health, human services, child welfare) to military families on the South Jersey mega-base combining Fort Dix (Army), McGuire (Air Force), and Lakehurst (Navy) for the next five years. Contact Peg Kinsell, 201-724-4454 or [pkinsell@spannj.org](mailto:pkinsell@spannj.org).

### **Violence Prevention/Family Strengthening Project (Fee for Service)**

Staff and consultants provide training and support to families on strategies to strengthen family communication and help children avoid violence and substance abuse. The project facilitates Strengthening Families and Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities intensive workshops. SPAN also participates on the NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, with SPAN Executive Co-Director Debra Jennings co-chairing the Task Force. Contact Sh'corah Yehudah, Project Coordinator, at 973-642-8100 x 113 or [vpc@spannj.org](mailto:vpc@spannj.org). Ms. Yehudah also provides training on *cultural competence/cultural reciprocity* for school districts, state agencies, and community-based organizations seeking to work more effectively with diverse families.



**VISION:** All families will have the resources and support they need to ensure that their children become fully participating and contributing members of our communities and society.

**MISSION:** The mission of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network is to empower and support families and inform and involve professionals and others interested in the healthy development and education of children and youth.

**PRIORITY:** SPAN's foremost commitment is to children and families with the greatest need due to disability; poverty; discrimination based on race, sex, language, immigrant, or homeless status; involvement in the foster care, child welfare, or juvenile justice systems; geographic location; or other special circumstances.

**MOTTO:** "Empowered Parents: Educated, Engaged, Effective!"

*SPAN*

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