

A Family Partner's Role:

What is a Family Partner (FP) at The Parents' Place of Maryland (PPMD)?

A Family Partner:

- **Uses lived experience as a caregiver to support, educate, and empower families** of individuals with behavioral health needs, disabilities, or special health care needs.
- Uses their own experience to help families understand their choices, find resources, and get the support they need.

What Does a Family Partner Do?

A Family Partner looks at each family's individual strengths, goals, and needs, and:

- ✚ **Gives families the tools and information they need to make informed decisions and advocate for their loved ones** with behavioral health needs, disabilities, or special health care needs.
- ✚ **Supports families in exploring and choosing the options that best align with their strengths, priorities, and needs.**
- ✚ **Supports families in navigating systems, understanding processes and procedures, communicating effectively with service providers and teams, and accessing resources** at the local, state, and national levels, in areas including:
 - *Behavioral health:* mental health, substance use and problem gambling
 - *Disabilities:* special education (roles, rights and responsibilities),
 - *Special healthcare systems* (i.e., insurance, Medicaid and waivers),
 - *Good Samaritan* training and resources.
- ✚ **Supports families in preparing to participate in meetings** regarding their family members, including, but not limited to:
 - *Behavioral Health:* CFT (Child Family Team meeting); DJS (Department of Juvenile Services); DSS (Department of Social Services); LCT (Local Care Teams); LBHA (Local Behavioral Health Authority); transition from RTCs (residential treatment centers) and incarceration facilities
 - *Disabilities – Special Education:* FBA/BIP; Individual Family Specialized Plan (IFSP); Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings; transportation; truancy, school transitions, and discipline
 - *Special Healthcare:* Healthcare appointments, Medicaid, SSI, SSDI, and other available benefits and support services

What a Family Partner Does Not Provide

- ⊗ **Act as an Advocate:** Family Partners (FPs) do not speak for, or on behalf of, a family.
- ⊗ **Give Advice, Endorse, or Recommend:** Family Partners do not provide advice, endorsements, or recommendations regarding a family's individual circumstances.
- ⊗ **Act as a Content Expert:** Family Partners are not lawyers, medical professionals, or therapists. As such, they encourage families to seek appropriately qualified professionals when specialized expertise is required.