



# Children's Mental Health Matters!

## Facts for Families Family Involvement in School-Based Mental Health

### Definition

Families who are well informed and supported are able to be stronger advocates for their children with mental health needs. Families who understand their own child's specific needs can assist school staff in developing the best strategies for classroom success. With family advocacy groups providing support, families can give one another coping skills and the benefit of their own experiences. Educators and school mental health providers who understand that families generally are the ones most knowledgeable about their own children will be more likely to find a returned respect and spirit of collaboration.

### Why Do We Care?

- ✎ Informed families are in a better position to help their children
- ✎ Positive family and staff interaction help to achieve overall positive school climate
- ✎ Children have more school success when families are involved in their education
- ✎ Schools with strong family involvement see greater student achievement
- ✎ School staff and families who work collaboratively for a student will be more likely to have student cooperation

### What Can We Do About It?

- ✎ Join advocacy and support groups for families
- ✎ Educate yourself about mental health diagnoses in children and adolescents
- ✎ Join PTA and other school committees
- ✎ Work in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation with school staff to ensure success for your child in school
- ✎ Learn more about PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support) programs or other positive school programs in your child's school
- ✎ Continue involvement into the middle and high school years

- ✎ Continue to advocate, in a positive frame of mind, even when things do not go the way you would hope

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### Resources/Links

Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health — a grassroots coalition of family and advocacy organizations dedicated to: Improving services for children with mental health needs and their families and building a network of information and support for families across Maryland. [www.mdcoalition.org](http://www.mdcoalition.org), 410-730-8267, Toll Free 1-888-607-3637

Mental Health Association of Maryland — Since 1915, the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) has been a leader in progressive programs resulting in more effective treatment, improved outcomes for individuals, increased research and greater public understanding of the needs of children and adults living with mental illness. <http://www.mhamd.org/> 410-235-1178, Toll Free 1-800-572-MHAM (6426)

NAMI Maryland – an advocacy organization for family and friends of people with serious mental illness, and people who have a mental illness. <http://md.nami.org/> 410-863-0470, Toll Free Helpline 1-800-467-0075

Learning Disabilities Association of Maryland – promotes awareness and provides support to maximize the quality of life for individuals and families affected by learning and other disabilities. [www.ldamd.org](http://www.ldamd.org)

# **Facts for Families**

## ***Family Involvement in School-Based Mental Health Continued***

CHADD/Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/  
Hyperactive Disorder Maryland Chapters —  
is the nation's leading non-profit organization serving  
individuals with AD/HD and their families.  
Local chapters are in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel,  
Baltimore, Harford, Howard, and Montgomery Counties.  
<http://www.chadd-mc.org/>

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
Facts for Families provides concise and up-to-date  
information on issues that affect children, teenagers  
and their families.  
[http://aacap.org/cs/root/facts\\_for\\_families/  
facts\\_for\\_families](http://aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/facts_for_families)

National Mental Health Information Center, SAMHSA  
Health Information Network— provides information on  
a multitude of topics.  
<http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/>

### **Reference**

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Handbook of School Mental Health: Advancing Practice  
and Research. A. Lever (Eds.) pp. 135-147. Kluwer  
Academic/Plenum Publishers: New York, NY.

**Adapted from Resources found on:  
[www.schoolmentalhealth.org](http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org) March 2009**