

## New Jersey Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)

SPAN is the *New Jersey Parent Information and Resource Center* for families of all children, and the *Parent Training and Information Center* for parents of children with disabilities and other special needs.

SPAN houses *Family Voices-NJ* and *Statewide Parent to Parent*, and is a member of the *Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health*, the *National Coalition of Advocates for Students*, the *National Parent Network on Disabilities*, the *National Network of Partnership Schools*, the *National Coalition of Education Activists*, *Communities Can!*, *Family Support America*, and the *National Black Child Development Institute*.

For more information, visit: [spanadvocacy.org/content/about-span](http://spanadvocacy.org/content/about-span)

# Technical Assistance Family Leadership Project

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The Department of Health, Healthy Starts and Transitions Unit received an award of \$10,000 from the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) to enhance family engagement and leadership efforts across the state.

AMCHP is a national resource, partner, and advocate for state public health leaders and others working to improve the health of women, children, youth, and families, including those with special health care needs. As part of AMCHP's commitment to serve as a national resource for members and to support state efforts to build successful maternal and child health (MCH) programs, it collects, reviews, and disseminates emerging, promising, and best practices from public health programs across the United States so that effective models can be shared and replicated among the MCH community.

The Healthy Starts and Transitions Unit, which houses the Title V Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program, will receive technical assistance from AMCHP to enhance our parent leadership program for Washington State. The Washington program will take various elements from the New Jersey Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) model. The SPAN program has the great distinction of being recognized by AMCHP as a best practice program.

This award provides a great opportunity to enhance family participation (FP), which plays an essential role in state Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) programs. Family members volunteer, advise and are employed by state Title V MCH CYSHCN programs and bring unique insight and experience to the planning process.

The family leadership project will give our team opportunities to:

- Spend a day with SPAN leadership in Newark, New Jersey, to learn about best practices and to discuss how we can adapt the programs to the needs of Washington State. (A team of Washington State community partners are currently evaluating the needs of our state and planning the meeting with SPAN.)
- Join a statewide meeting of New Jersey Parent Advocacy groups, where MCHB Administrator Dr. Lu is scheduled to speak
- Receive a visit from a consultant specializing in family leadership who will spend a day with Washington community partners facilitating a discussion about how our state would benefit from a more robust statewide system to connect parents to leadership opportunities across the state.
- Have current training curricula evaluated
- Create a "library" of parent leadership and training materials

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