



Developing a Local Parenting Awareness Month (PAM) 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

- Underage drinking/drug prevention 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**