



# SUPPORTING FAMILIES Throughout the Lifespan



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS

The Office of Developmental Programs is pleased to announce our acceptance into the national **Community of Practice: Supporting Families throughout the Lifespan.**

Pennsylvania ODP is joining with 15 other states in an initiative to transform state policies and practices to better support families of individuals with intellectual disability and/or autism. The goal of the collaboration is to support families in ways that maximize their capacity to facilitate the achievement of self-determination, integration and inclusion in all facets of community life for their family members.

The Community of Practice in Pennsylvania will be carried out through six to eight designated regional collaboratives. Later this spring, ODP will introduce the concepts to Administrative Entities and then follow with an invitation to apply to join the statewide initiative. The ODP will be looking for Administrative Entities that are interested in developing a collaborative with individuals, families, supports coordinators, providers, and a wide range of community organizations in their communities to build supports for families.

Information about the national Community of Practice can be found at [www.supportstofamilies.org](http://www.supportstofamilies.org).

As Pennsylvania prepares to launch this initiative, many exciting plans are coming together across the systems that support people with intellectual disability and/or autism. A major element of the Community of Practice involves supporting families' needs for information at all stages of life relating to their family members' disability, planning for a full and meaningful life, and an understanding of services to attain and support that vision. In addition, the ability to connect with other families is vital for many reasons and through all of life's transitions and stages. The newly-created **PA Family Network** will serve these two critical roles in Pennsylvania's Community of Practice. Under the leadership of Vision for Equality, the PA Family Network will provide family workshops and networking opportunities throughout the Commonwealth, led by trained Family Advisors, all of whom have family members with disabilities. Watch for information from the PA Family Network, contact by email at [PAFamilyNetwork@visionforequality.org](mailto:PAFamilyNetwork@visionforequality.org), or call 1-844-PAFamily (1-844-723-2645).

For more information on Pennsylvania's Community of Practice, contact Nancy Richey, Family Policy Specialist, [c-nrichey@pa.gov](mailto:c-nrichey@pa.gov).