



MCF
maryland coalition of families

Family Focus

Supporting MCF Families: Essential Back-to-School Tips for Children with Mental Health Challenges

Back-to-school season can be a challenging time for the families we support at MCF. For a child with a mental health disorder, it means adjusting to new routines, classrooms, teachers, and challenges. For parents and caregivers, it involves ensuring that those who work with their child understand their unique needs.

To help with this transition, our partners at the Child Mind Institute have compiled a list of valuable tips to help start the school year off right, whether or not your child faces challenges at school.



[Read the article
here](#)

For 25 years, our Family Peer Support Specialists have helped families navigate this difficult time of year and helped them connect with resources that they and their child need. Your financial contribution helps ensure that parents and caregivers have the support from someone who has been there too. Donate today!



We're here because we've been there too.

Your Support Makes Our Work Possible.
Please consider making a donation to MCF today.

[Donate here](#)

You Matter, Too: Self-Care for Caregivers During the Back-to-School Season

While this time of year can be exciting, it can also be overwhelming. At MCF, we understand the importance of self-care and want to offer practical tips to help caregivers navigate this busy season with a sense of balance and well-being.

Prioritize Your Mental Health: The transition back to school can bring a range of emotions, from excitement to anxiety. It's crucial to acknowledge and address your feelings. Consider setting aside a few minutes each day for mindfulness to help manage stress. Remember, taking care of your mental health is just as important as supporting your child's well-being.

Establish a Routine: A consistent routine can provide stability and reduce stress for both you and your child. Create a family calendar that outlines daily activities, school events, and important deadlines. Having a visual schedule can help everyone stay organized and prepared. Make sure to include time for family activities and self-care in your routine to ensure you're nurturing your own needs as well.

Set Realistic Expectations: Back-to-school season often brings a flurry of new demands and responsibilities. It's essential to set realistic expectations for yourself and your family. Avoid overloading your schedule with commitments and prioritize tasks that are most important. Identify key contacts at school, such as your child's teacher for daily academic and behavioral issues, the school counselor for emotional support and individualized plans, and the school nurse for health-related concerns. Knowing their roles will help you turn to the right person when issues arise.

Stay Connected: Maintaining social connections can be a great way to alleviate stress and find support. Reach out to friends, family, or support groups to share experiences and advice. Sometimes, just talking to someone who understands your challenges can make a significant difference. Our family peer support specialists are also here to offer guidance and a listening ear.

Seek Support if needed: If you're feeling overwhelmed or struggling to manage stress, don't hesitate to seek professional support. This can provide valuable tools

and strategies to help you cope with the demands of the back-to-school season. Remember, asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. **Family peer support can be a vital part of your self-care routine.**

-you-
MATTER

Building Stronger Communities: MCF's Stephanie Hutter-Thomas Graduates from Appalachian Leadership Institute



MCF is proud to announce that Stephanie Hutter-Thomas, our Director of Peer & Organizational Development, has recently graduated from the Appalachian Leadership Institute. This intensive nine-month program focuses on leadership and economic development for public, private, and nonprofit leaders in the Appalachian region. Graduates gain new skills and insights to enhance their efforts in strengthening Appalachian communities. Equipped with these new abilities and expanded networks, these leaders will continue to make impactful contributions across various sectors, including civil service, healthcare, tourism, and beyond.

September is Recovery Month: What to Expect from MCF

September is just around the corner, and we're preparing for Recovery Month with a variety of events and resources designed to support and uplift. At MCF, we're dedicated to helping families support their loved ones on their recovery journey, and this month will focus on raising awareness and sharing valuable insights.

Look forward to engaging workshops, support groups, and community events that will be coming your way. We'll also be rolling out new resources and sharing inspiring success stories that highlight the strength and resilience of those in recovery.



Be sure to check our upcoming newsletters and social media for more details. Let's

come together to support one another and make this Recovery Month impactful! If you have any questions or need more information, don't hesitate to reach out. Together, we can make a difference!

Get Connected! Stay Informed!

Online and In Person Support Groups

MCF offers many support groups to provide a safe space for you to learn, share and receive compassionate help. All are facilitated by trained Family Peer Support Specialists who have dealt with similar challenges in their own families. Groups are free for all participants and are held on different days of the week and different times of day. Find one or more that can work for you and join us soon!

[Find a Support Group](#)

Workshops, Trainings & Other Events

MCF offers a wide range of events, trainings and workshops for families who have a loved one with mental health, substance use or problem gambling challenges. Events are held in communities across the state or virtually and are offered at no cost to participants. Visit our website to learn more!

[Past and Upcoming Events](#)

MCF Employment Opportunities

MCF is growing, and we have employment opportunities that might be perfect for you or someone you know! We currently have openings in many areas of the State. Please check our website for a complete list of openings.

- **Program Manager (Remote Worker - Must Live in St. Mary's, Charles, or Calvert County)**
- **Program Manager (Remote Worker - Maryland)**
- **Family Peer Support Specialist (Remote Worker - Must Live in Cecil or Charles County)**
- **Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use (Remote Worker - Must Live in Baltimore City or Alleghany/Garrett County)**

[Employment Opportunities](#)



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