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## Inclusive Education

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# Inclusive Education

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## Introduction

Maine Parent Federation (MPF) is Maine's federally funded Parent Training and Information Center through the Office of Special Education Programs. It is Maine's Family to Family Health Information Center through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and is the Statewide Family Network through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. MPF assists families of children with different abilities in navigating all systems of care. Their services and resources are provided free to all families and there is no qualifying criteria to access any of the programs.

MPF's peer-to-peer model (Family Support Navigator System) is funded through a state contract under the Maternal and Child Health Block grant. Families receive a wide variety of information, education, referral, training, advocacy and a range of family supports.



## Project 1 : Empower The Learner (8 – 18 years)

- Empower The Learner**
  - The Empower the Learner (ETL) Profile - Adapted Version was designed for neurodivergent learners so that they ...
  - can share the story of who they are using any medium - photos, videos, drawings, etc.
  - can better understand and share strengths and challenges for learning
  - can share talents, interests, goals, hopes and dreams!
- Youth-Led**
  - Who I Am
  - How I Learn
  - What I Aspire To Be
  - Develop a multi-media tool which includes an online book, a printable book, and a 'one pager' that can be shared with providers and educators
- Outcomes**
  - Self-Advocacy
  - Strength-Based
  - Person Centered
  - Autonomy & Empowerment

## Project 2 : LD 2166 (Post-Secondary)

- LD 2166:** An Act to Establish a Grant Program to Increase Postsecondary Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorder
  - In – person testimony
  - Outreach to legislators
  - Grant research
  - Grant writing
- Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) Maine Alliance:** Working to establish more postsecondary and employment options for young adults with Intellectual Disabilities
  - IPSE meetings
  - Develop tracking documents

## Conclusions

As a parent/family advocate, I joined the NH-ME LEND program because I have a six year-old boy who was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ADHD and non-specified depressive disorder. He is beautiful, funny, brilliant, loving, complicated and more. I wanted to learn as much as I could to be able to understand and best support him as well as others like him. Through my placement with Maine Parent Federation I observed and worked alongside leaders in the education field, developed my own leadership skills and learned about the importance, impact, and ongoing need of inclusive education for children and young adults with disabilities.

Inclusive education is crucial because it promotes diversity, acceptance and equity. Accommodating the needs of students with different abilities fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance and encourages collaboration among peers. Students can learn from one another. Students, regardless of their varying abilities have a right to access quality education alongside their peers, promoting social integration and reducing stigmatization. Inclusive education empowers all students to reach their full potential and fosters a culture of respect, empathy and understanding.



## References

<https://www.mpf.org/>  
<https://empowerthelearner.com/>

