



Parent Certified Peer Specialist FAQs

What is a Parent Certified Peer Specialist?

Parent Certified Peer Specialist (CPS-P) – A parent or legal guardian (in a permanent relationship for at least 3 years) of a child who is living with a mental health, substance use or a co-occurring diagnosis who provides support to other parents who are raising a child with similar behavioral health conditions.

The Parent CPS-P offers emotional support, shares knowledge, skills and supports family empowerment through providing information regarding the nature, purpose and benefits of all services; providing interventions and support; and providing overall support and education to a caregiver to ensure that he or she is well equipped to support the youth in service.

Can I get certified if I am not the biological parent or legal guardian?

No. The *personal experience of being legally responsible for the health and wellbeing of a youth/young adult living with a mental health or substance use condition* is what makes this certification and service unique.

Can I get certified if I'm the grandparent?

Yes, if you are functioning in the parental role and can (provide verification that you have legal guardianship).

Can I get certified if I am a foster parent?

No. We are seeking individuals who have completed adoption and are in a permanent family relationship with full responsibility for health and wellbeing of the child.

Can I get certified as a Parent CPS if I have provided services to families for several years?

No. We honor the contribution that you have made to families. However, we require individuals that are the biological parent or legal guardian.

What are the required qualifications?

- Candidates must be the **parent or legal guardian** of a child living with mental illness, substance use and/or co-occurring diagnosis (the child can have multiple diagnoses); and must
- Be individuals seeking employment as a Certified Peer Specialist-Parent, or who are currently working in that role, and will provide 20-40 hours per week of direct parent peer support.
- Be experienced navigating complex public health or child-serving systems of care;
- Have a high school diploma or GED.
- Provide (1) letter of reference (please include contact information);

Can my child be an adult?

Yes. We understand that recovery from mental health and substance use can be a life long journey and everyone is different. Parents often continue supporting their children into adulthood and we support meaningful family connection that strengthens wellness and recovery.

Will the training teach me about the different diagnoses?

No. The Parent CPS training teaches participants to skillfully and strategically use their lived experience with raising a child with BH challenges to help others. Parent CPSs are **not** counselors, caseworkers or clinicians.

How much does it cost?

There is no cost to candidates who are accepted into the training. However, candidates are responsible for their own travel expenses.

How long is the training?

The Parent Certified Peer Specialist training is **5** consecutive days

Do I have to take a test to get certified?

Yes. Every candidate is required to take and pass a test to get certified.

Checklist:

How can I determine if I'm ready to participate in the Parent Peer Specialist training?

- You have strong communication skills.
- You have strong problem-solving skills.
- You have strong writing skills.
- You have strong listening skills.
- You have navigated the Georgia behavioral health system of care without formal training.
- You can find services for your own family.
- You support others taking the lead in their own decisions.
- You have the desire to support other parents raising children living with mental health and substance use challenges without judgement.
- You have accepted all parts of their own personal story and can use both the successes, failures and challenges with raising a child and accessing services as a tool for helping others.
- You have the ability to help your own family in crisis.
- You have the ability to manage your own personal bias.
- You have the ability to meet people where they are in their journey.
- Readily communicate that there are many pathways to wellness and recovery.
- You can easily identify strengths in others.
- You have compassion and appreciation for the unique stories that other families bring.
- You desire to become a part of the behavioral health service system.
- You can find appropriate resources and build professional and community partnerships to assist families in building nature supports.
- You value helping other parents increase in their knowledge on mental health.
- You can advocate to inform the system beyond your own story to inform system change for the benefit of other families and children.

If you answered YES to (15) or more questions, you may be ready to participate in the peer specialist training at this time.

Does going through the training guarantee me a job?

No. Receiving the Parent Peer Specialist certification does not guarantee a job. Individuals are required to seek employment independently.

What type of place might I work at once I become a CPS-P?

Opportunities for employment may be available at any of the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities DBHDD, Child & Adolescent provider organizations i.e. Community Service Boards (CSB), Family Support Organizations (FSO)

Will I be drug tested?

No. We do not drug test for the training. However, most employers require a criminal background and random drug testing.

How do I apply for the Parent CPS Training?

Contact Dana McCrary, Parent & Youth Peer Specialist Coordinator, at cpsparent.youth@dbhdd.ga.gov