

## **PANEL TWO: Parents Lead the Way (1960-1974)**

### **FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Overview:** This panel explores how parent advocacy in the 1960s-1970s transformed disability services in Missouri. Students will learn about grassroots organizing, the power of collective action, and how ordinary citizens can change laws and systems.

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#### **FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN (Ages 5-10):**

##### **1. Talk about working together:**

- "The panel shows parents working together to help their children. Can you think of times when our family worked with other families to solve a problem?"
- "What does it mean to 'organize'? Why is it easier to make change when people work together?"

##### **2. Simple concept of advocacy:**

- "Parents in this story created preschools and camps because those things didn't exist. Have you ever made something new because you needed it?"
- "Why do you think it was hard work to start these programs?"

##### **3. Understanding community support:**

- "The panel mentions 'bake sales' and 'church basements.' Why do you think neighbors helped?"
- "How can communities take care of people who need extra help?"

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#### **FOR TWEENS/TEENS (Ages 11-17):**

##### **1. Discuss organizing and activism:**

- "These parents were told their children couldn't learn. Why do you think they didn't accept that answer?"
- "What courage would it take to challenge doctors and start your own programs?"
- "Can you think of other times in history when people were told 'no' but organized to create change anyway?"

##### **2. Connect to modern advocacy:**

- "Parent advocacy organizations still exist today. Why do you think parents need to stay organized even after laws like IDEA passed?"
- "What issues do you care about? How might organizing with others make a difference?"

##### **3. Understand policy change:**

- "Senate Bill 40 let communities vote to tax themselves to fund disability services. What does it mean when neighbors vote to help each other?"

- "Why might it be important that this was local control (counties) rather than decided in Jefferson City?"

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### FOR FAMILIES WITH PERSONAL CONNECTIONS:

If your family has been involved in disability advocacy, or if you're currently receiving services from organizations that started during this era, this panel tells part of your story.

#### Conversation Starters:

- "Many of the services we use today—like United Services for Children—grew from parent organizing in the 1960s-70s. How does knowing that history affect how you think about these programs?"
- "The DDRB (Developmental Disabilities Resource Board) that helps fund services in St. Charles County was created because of Senate Bill 40. Did you know our neighbors voted to support these programs? How does that feel?"
- "These parents organized because they refused to accept 'no.' Are there times when our family has had to advocate for what we needed? What did we learn?"

#### For Current Advocates:

- "If you're involved in parent advocacy today—through support groups, advisory boards, or activism—you're continuing the work these parents started. What issues are you working on? How are your strategies similar to or different from the 1960s-70s organizers?"

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### INTERGENERATIONAL CONVERSATIONS:

If you have older family members who lived through this era, consider asking:

- "Do you remember when children with disabilities weren't in schools?"
- "Did you know families who were part of parent advocacy groups?"
- "What was it like when attitudes started changing?"

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