

Barbara Flis

Founder, Parent Action for Healthy Kids

Barbara Flis, Founder of Parent Action for Healthy Kids, insists that every parent has the power to make a difference. Barb is a parent guru, a published expert in advocating for children's health, and most importantly, a mother of two daughters. Her focus lies in connecting families, schools and communities on children's social, emotional and physical health. Areas of work include asthma, diabetes, sex education, mental health, school wellness programs, physical activity and nutrition. She designs and implements training and workshops for parents, teachers, school administrators, public health professionals and community-based organizations. Barb is a motivational speaker whose passion makes her a sought after presenter throughout her home state of Michigan and across the United States.

Barb cites her grass-roots PTA experiences as the first step on the journey that has led her to serving on an expert panel for the American Academy of Pediatrics to write guidelines for family and community involvement in health, mental health and safety in schools; being named chair of the schools committee for the Michigan Surgeon General's **Michigan Steps Up** Campaign; and a Michigan and Indiana core team member for the American Cancer Society Coordinated School Health Leadership Training Institute. In 2005 Barb was appointed by Michigan's Governor Jennifer Granholm to coordinate the **Talk Early & Talk Often** initiative which is designed to help parents gain knowledge and skills to talk to their middle school children about abstinence and sexuality. A tribute to Barb's work is evidenced by her recent invitation to Washington D.C. as one of ten participants to provide input in developing the First Lady's **Let's Move** initiative which is designed to reduce childhood obesity and raise a healthier generation of children.

Barb has been advocating on behalf of parents and children for more than fourteen years. Her "parent-to-parent" style in communicating has won her great praise and national media attention. Barb brings to educators and other key stakeholders at the local, state and national level, a unique parent perspective which has broadened collaboration between parents, communities and schools.