CIRCLE of PARENTS™
Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.

Prevent Child Abuse
America

Final Report

Award Number:	*90-CA-1668*
Project Title:	*National Network of Mutual Support and Self-Help Programs in Partnership with Communities*
Grantee:	*Prevent Child Abuse America, in collaboration with the National Family Support Roundtable*

Executive Summary

The National Network of Mutual Support and Self-Help Programs in Partnership with Communities originated as a partnership of Prevent Child Abuse America, several regional and statewide non-profit organizations known as the National Family Support Roundtable and parent leaders dedicated to using the mutual self-help support group model as one of the means of preventing child abuse and neglect and strengthening families. Participants represented parent leaders and a variety of human service and prevention professionals including: executive directors, program managers and direct services staff.

Modeling the theoretical framework of mutual support and self-help groups for parent, including mutual respect, equal contribution and shared leadership, the national parent leader and representatives of the state and regional network organizations participated fully in the establishment and accomplishments of the national network. Participation included:
- Offering time, resources, materials, training and technical assistance services and expertise to achieve the goals and objectives of the project.
- Attending and actively participating in meetings, both by teleconference calls and in-person;

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- Substantially contributing to planning, problem solving and implementation of activities, and the evaluation model for the project; and
- Substantially contributing to reports and other communications, including reports of progress toward outcomes to members of the network, the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, colleagues in the field of family support and for publication in newsletters and other media.

Participants served on at least one of four committees: Infrastructure / Research, Capacity Building, Training and Technical Assistance and Parents as Leaders. Since 2001, these committees produced several processes and products primarily designed to enhance the capacity of the state and regional networks to support and expand self-help parent support groups within their respective communities. Some of these products include:
- Network standards and principles for self-help and mutual support groups
- A grant-making system to support local program development
- Grant-making and application systems to support the development of new state networks
- A quality assurance self-assessment process for state networks
- A group facilitator manual
- A children's program manual
- A training curriculum for trainers of support group facilitators
- Parent support group handbooks (in Spanish and English)
- Parent-developed outreach brochures (in Spanish and English)
- Parent tip sheets (in Spanish and English)
- A training and technical assistance delivery system
- A website
- A list serve
- An electronic resource library
- Parent leadership development materials, including a video conceptualized by and featuring parent leaders
- A participatory action research model for the project's evaluation

Several factors were essential to these accomplishments and the construction of the national network's infrastructure: committed individuals with a common vision, the availability of a wide variety of expertise among parent leaders, Roundtable staff and project staff; and years of successful program delivery by Roundtable organizations. Added to this, the willingness of participants to work in an atmosphere where every individual's contribution was valued took time, energy, consensus building skills and a great deal of patience. In the end, there was collective accountability and responsibility for the project's success. This made sustainability of the national network beyond the life of the project a critical and necessary pursuit. After exploring a number of options for this, the project was fully transitioned into its own non-profit organization by October 2004. The new organization took on the name developed for the project – Circle of Parents™.

Chapter I. Introduction

Background Information
In 1999, the National Family Support Roundtable (Roundtable) formed to meet the need of 17 state and regional entities providing self-help parent support to develop and share resources, support one another and expand the availability of parent-led mutual self-help support programs throughout the country.

Many Roundtable members had more than 20 years of extensive experience providing self-help parent support groups. They had been part of a national network that was no longer meeting their needs. But, they did not want to give up the relationship they had with one another. Members agreed to meet regularly by phone and email to continue working toward their goals and made plans to seek an administrative home to handle the logistics of communication. Members drew up ideas of what they needed from an administrative home to make the Roundtable more fully functional and sought prospective partners who shared similar goals and philosophies. Several potential national organizations were identified.

After some discussion the Roundtable and Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) agreed to collaborate during the spring of 2000 in seeking a newly-offered $500,000 four-year grant from the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect (OCAN), a division of the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. PCA America received the grant on behalf of the collaboration effective October 1, 2000.The project was staffed in 2001 when a project director, capacity-building coordinator, training and technical assistance coordinator and an administrative assistant were hired. The OCAN funding supported the development and operations of a national network of mutual self-help parent support programs, collaborations with CBFRS programs and other national entities, and the creation of new programs in underserved areas.

While this report focuses solely on the successes, challenges and lessons learned during four year of the project funded by OCAN, it is important to note that network also sought funding support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice (OJJDP). Through a legislative appropriation passed in October 2000, a grant in the amount of $300,000 was awarded in March of 2001. This funding is advocated for and renegotiated annually based on performance and need. Notwithstanding the administrative costs of PCA America, OJJDP resources are shared equally among the state and regional networks and support the expansion and enhancement of self-help parent support programs.

Overview of Methodology
 The evaluation model adopted for the project is detailed in Appendix A. Using a participatory approach, it was designed to include a process evaluation on the development of the network, a quantitative evaluation of the activities, and an in-depth qualitative evaluation of activities presumed to answer questions and detail more precisely the process and quantitative evaluation. Using the goals and objectives set forth

in the grant, outcomes were expounded upon, indicators were chosen and measurement tools were created. The research subcommittee of the infrastructure team, which was facilitated by a researcher from the National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research, was responsible for the development and oversight of the project's evaluation plan. The researcher was very involved in the activities of the network. This added a different perspective and level of expertise to the project, while also making it easier to gathering of process information.

One of the most important and challenging aspect of the research subcommittee's work was the creation of a tool to collect critical data from the state and regional networks. The reasons for this are explained later in the report. Other collection methods used for the evaluation of implementation objectives included progress reports from the state organizations funded to create new networks, progress reports from local programs funded with mini-grants, a self-assessment and action plan tool, training and meeting participant evaluations, minutes of meetings, maintaining an inventory of materials produced and attendance records for training and technical assistance events. Participant outcome objectives were assessed through interviews with state and regional network staff and focus groups with parent support groups.

Chapter II.   Process Evaluation

I.   Implementation Objective 1: *Establish an infrastructure to organize, operate and promote a national network of parent self-help support groups.*

A.   Projected Activities and Outcomes

Staffing and Work Team Composition: When the project began in October 2000, the members of the National Family Support Roundtable convened its first meeting with staff of Prevent Child Abuse America. Decisions that were made included the designation of work teams to carry out the goals and objectives of the grant. Modeled on the philosophical framework of shared leadership, mutual respect, shared ownership and inclusiveness that exists for self-help and mutual support groups, the teams were to be comprised of a diversity of members including parent leaders, PCA America staff and administrative and program staff of the Roundtable organizations, with a designated project staff member to coordinate each team's work over the next four years. These teams and their respective roles included:

- Infrastructure – Focused on organizational standards and procedures for the project; established memoranda of agreements, monitored project goals and development, assumed primary responsibility for the project's participatory action research evaluation model and provided direction to resource development activities.
- Capacity-Building – Addressed quality assurance and the enhancement of programs, supported the establishment of new statewide networks and devised marketing and communications strategies to promote the project and mutual self-help parent support programs.

- Training and Technical Assistance – Produced program manuals, developed training and technical assistance materials, maintained a national data bank of training and technical assistance resources, matched resources to the developmental needs of state and regional networks, and implemented a training of trainers for group facilitators.
- Parents as Leaders – Provided assurances that the "parent voice" is respected and valued, and that it informs the planning and implementation of all team and project activities.

In January 2001, the Project Director was hired by PCA America and, in turn, she developed job descriptions based upon the needs identified in the grant and hired a Capacity Building Coordinator, Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator and Administrative Assistant by the end of April 2001. Based upon their assets, interests and experiences, the coordinators were assigned to teams: the capacity building coordinator to the Capacity Building Team and Parents as Leaders Team and the training and technical assistance coordinator to the Training and Technical Assistance Team. The project director assumed responsibility for the Infrastructure Team.

Each team was to develop and implement a work plan and meet by teleconference call every 4-6 weeks to discuss and monitor their progress. Teams were also to report on and seek additional input into their designated tasks during monthly teleconference calls with the entire collaboration, defined as the project staff, the Roundtable organization staff members, parent leaders and specific PCA America staff from the departments of research, marketing and communications and advocacy. Teams also were scheduled to meet during in-person meetings of the entire collaboration, held at least once a year.

B.   Assessment Methods

The work and success of the teams and the staff were assessed through a variety of means. As typical in most organizations, the project staff developed performance expectations that were monitored through project staff meetings, participation in program department meetings and semi-annual performance appraisals. On the team level, work plans were developed based upon the goals and objectives set forth in the grant and minutes of meetings helped to gauge the progress in implementation. The work plans were generally evaluated and revised annually at in-person meetings of the entire collaboration or as necessary during the process of implementation.

C.   Successes, Barriers and Lessons Learned

Using a shared leadership model with a diversity of stakeholders participating in the work and the facilitation of designated project staff relative to establishing and operating the national network, the following are a few of the successes, barriers and lessons learned:

- Expansion of the work teams to include PCA America Healthy Families America (HFA) and chapter staffs occurred as the project began collaborating more routinely with the PCA America chapter network (which included many of the Roundtable

organizations) and HFA programs. The additional expertise proved beneficial to the project.

- To clarify and outline the roles and responsibilities of the members of the network with respect to the project, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was designed in the first project year by the infrastructure team with input and endorsement from the entire collaboration. It was deemed important that although PCA America was the designated grantee, the MOU should be an agreement signed by authorized representatives of Roundtable organizations and the PCA America President and CEO as equal partners. In other words, in honoring the project's stance on sharing leadership to implement the project's goals and objectives, the MOU would not serve that interest had it been designed as a MOU between each of the Roundtable organizations and the PCA America CEO.

- Another effort that helped to unite the members of the collaboration around common values was the development of a mission statement, core tenets, principles and network standards. This also helped to further define the model of self-help parent support groups to be adopted by the project.

- Early on in the project's first year, it was determined that there were varying interpretations as to what sharing leadership meant, especially as applied to the relationship among the professionals involved: staff and Roundtable organization members. (The concept was much clearer relative to the work of professionals alongside the work of parent leaders, as this was the model to be practiced on the group level.) Strategies were implemented to help each of the project's stakeholders come to some agreement as to what sharing leadership meant to this particular project. Most notably, at the very first in-person meeting of the collaboration, there was a presentation with materials distributed on shared leadership and consensus decision making. A second effort occurred about approximately 18 months into the project when there began movement towards developing a majority vote structure for approving policies and practices recommended by the teams. With more information provided about consensus decision making, and more reflection of how this could work during the process of a team's implementation of their work plan through frequent and intermittent input-gathering, the idea for majority voting was scrapped. It was agreed that a decision should be final when everyone "could live with it." This became the mantra of the project's shared leadership approach.

- The merging of the Roundtable informal group style of collaborating and shared decision making was divergent with PCA America's more traditional and formal structure of hierarchical management. To ease the tension this created, it was critical that all concerned engaged in open discussions. The development of organizational and flow-of-communication charts, as well as detailed written descriptions of the project further helped illustrate how using principles of shared leadership could be applied to the project in a way that would be mutually acceptable to all concerned parties.

- As the Parents as Leaders (PAL) team grew, it became policy to ensure that there were at least two parents leaders on each of the other teams. The PAL team developed into a venue for the parent leaders to support each other, share the accomplishments of the other teams they participated on, and make important contributions to the project outreach and parent leadership development activities.

Initially requiring a project staff member and 2-3 Roundtable organization members to move the team's work ahead, the PAL team currently operates sufficiently with just a staff member to coordinate its work.

- Towards the middle of the project's second year, it was recognized that the practice of having monthly teleconference meetings with the entire collaboration was unwieldy and often repetitive. Consequently, the project began having quarterly full collaboration teleconference meetings. This change was judged to be successful as long as the teams appropriately sought input while implementing their work plans through a combination of email messages and providing quarterly status reports. The latter also facilitated decision-making by the full collaboration during the quarterly conference call meetings by clearly identifying "action items."

- A second time-saving method for decision-making was the development of sub-committees for the teams that could devote undivided time to specific in-between team teleconference meetings. Examples of these sub-committees include the research subcommittee (infrastructure), the facilitator and children's manual development committees (training and technical assistance), and the request for proposals review committee (capacity building). As needed, these subcommittees called upon the expertise of members from other teams.

- An unintended consequence of using email to ensure that members were given ample opportunities to weigh in the work being produced as well as using it as a vehicle for sharing resources was an onslaught of email messages being sent to the entire collaboration daily. This left many either unable or disinclined to consume and respond to all of the information being exchanged in a timely manner. The initiation of the website and a list serve, to be discussed later, helped to organize and streamline the information-sharing process so that information needing responses could be identified and more likely attended to.

- At the first in-person meeting of the entire collaboration that included the project staff in June 2001, it was identified that the consensus building and decision-making process, while important, may render it difficult to make decisions that needed to be made quickly. Examples of this included responses to requests for information, grant application deadlines and unusual events. In addition, it was anticipated that there may be occasions when a team or the entire collaboration could not come to consensus on a decision. To address these two potential circumstances, a Steering Committee, comprised of parent leaders, and equal numbers of Roundtable organization members and PCA America staff, was created. During the course of the following 3½ years of the project, the steering committee convened only three (3) times, once to determine the structure and composition of a committee to address the relationship between the Roundtable and PCA America following the close of the project period, and twice to provide advice on handling special situations with an individual member of the collaboration. The infrequent need for steering committee meetings is remarkable given the amount of decisions that were made. Perhaps it is testament to time put into building consensus along the way as processes and products are being developed.

- As had been the case prior to the grant, it was important to the Roundtable organizations to continue the legacy of freely sharing resources with each other. This became the responsibility of the training and technical assistance (TA) coordinator.

She gathered materials from the Roundtable organizations, cataloged them and created a list for the organizations to use in search of needed resources. In the third project year, the development of a list serve enhanced the opportunity for organizations to share resources electronically. By the end of the fourth and final year of the project, an electronic resource library was created to sort and facilitate better access to materials. A member, which is the name the Roundtable organizations and parent leaders are now identified as, can upload materials they want to share and download materials that they need for their own purposes. These materials include marketing and outreach materials, evaluation tools and surveys, examples of newsletters, facilitator training curricula, parent leadership development resources and support group policies and procedures.

- At an in-person meeting in Dallas, April 2002, the entire collaboration engaged in a visioning exercise to continue earlier discussions about the nature of the relationship between the Roundtable and Prevent Child Abuse America outside of this grant project. It was agreed that a more formal relationship should be created.   The steering committee established a Partnership Committee that would determine the next steps and implement a work plan. It was important to the collaboration that the work group would be geographically representative, include Roundtable organization members who were PCA America chapters and those who were not, include parent leaders and be balanced with an equal number of Roundtable members and PCA-America staff. In addition, the committee would have representation from the PCA America board of directors. For the next two years, meeting often by teleconference call and occasionally in person, the committee became known as the Relationship Committee and evolved into the Transition Committee.

   This activity, which had the ultimate goal of sustaining and building upon the work of the national network, could easily be judged as one of the most challenging experiences of consensus decision making faced by the collaboration. There were many who believed that the project should remain a program of PCA America much the same after the project period as it was during the project period. There were also many who believed that it was best to transition the project into an independent organization. Over time, the transition committee studied these and several other options in-between. It provided frequent opportunities for input into its work from the entire collaboration and the PCA America CEO and board of directors. Eventually, the committee's options were limited by PCA America to converting the project into a non-profit organization which would either be a subsidiary or independent of PCA America. By July 2003, the transition committee agreed to the latter and made its recommendation to the entire collaboration. A few members of the Roundtable, particularly those who were also PCA America chapters, disagreed but there was sufficient consensus to move forward with the recommendation. The transition committee continued its work for the next several months and Circle of Parents (the name chosen by the collaboration for the project and the future organization) was incorporated as an independent non-profit organization in April 2004.

II.   Implementation Objective 2: *Create a national parent leadership team comprised of culturally and geographically diverse members*

A.   Projected Activities and Outcomes

To ensure that the project benefited fully from the value of having parent leaders involved in the implementation of the grant's goals and objectives, it was deemed imperative to establish a national parent leadership team. This team was designated to have primary input into the development of program materials, parent outreach and recruitment strategies, the identification of under-served populations, training protocols and the promotion of mutual support and self-help and parent leadership within and beyond the network. It was expected that members from the team would be recruited from Roundtable organizations that had strong parent leadership in their state or region. A structure and process would be necessary to achieve this objective.

B.   Assessment Methods

The actual organization of a national parent leader team, the development and implementation of a work plan and minutes from parent leader team meetings were used to assess this implementation objective.

C.   Successes, Barriers and Lessons Learned

- A committee comprised of Roundtable member organization staff and facilitated by the capacity building coordinator was organized to establish the first national parent leadership team. Their first task was to establish criteria and develop a process for recruitment and appointment of parent members. The process, established in June 2001, involves a form for Roundtable organizations to nominate parent leaders and an application for the nominated person to complete. By the end of the first year, eleven (11) parent leaders were in place and were assigned to teams. In order to make sure that each team had at least two parent leaders, it was not possible to base the appointments solely on the parents' stated interests.
- Initially the national parent leaders team consisted of only 5 of the 11 parent leaders. Shortly thereafter, it became apparent that the parent leaders on the other teams should also be part of the national parent leaders team to facilitate information-sharing and support among all of the parents leaders involved. Additional engagement and support strategies initiated by the parent leaders for parent leaders included a new member orientation, mentoring, the exchange of photos and contact information and phone follow-up outreach to parents who missed teleconference call meetings.
- To distinguish themselves from the national parent leadership team of another organization, the team re-named themselves the, "Parents as Leaders (PAL) team."
- Various members of PAL were invited to provide training and technical assistance on parent leadership and related issues for the staff and collaborating colleagues of Roundtable organizations, old and new. In addition, many of the PAL members

contributed to the development and implementation of the project's four (4) train the trainers' sessions for trainers of group facilitators.

- Various members of PAL also conducted workshops at multiple national conferences and meetings of behalf of parent leaders and the project. Sponsors of these conferences and meetings included PCA America, the Children's Bureau / OCAN and Family Support America.

- PAL had parent leaders on the national planning committee for the 2002 and 2004 national conferences of PCA America. In 2004, the PAL team was instrumental in influencing the inclusion of a parent leader workshop track, a 4-hour roundtable on parent leadership, and a national parent leader award – all "firsts" for PCA America.

- It was critical throughout the project to allocate adequate resources to support the participation of every national parent at national conferences and during in-person meetings of the entire collaboration or special subcommittees. This meant that the project covered fully transportation and lodging expenses and offered a daily stipend.

- To increase the efficiency by which Circle of Parents matches parent leaders with training and TA requests, the PAL team and PCA America's marketing and communications staff created a speakers' questionnaire and database.

- The PAL team was directly or significantly involved in the production of several materials produced by the project. These included: an outreach brochure to help attract support group participants and partnerships, a parent handbook for parents considering or participating in support groups, parent tip sheets and an illustration depicting the continuum of parent leadership roles. The tip sheets are available for downloading on the website and the voter's registration article was widely publicized during February 2003 in support of the first annual National Parent Leadership Month. The PAL team worked in conjunction with the Training and Technical Assistance or Capacity Building teams and the PCA America marketing and communications staff to accomplish these tasks.

- Although an original objective was to develop parent leadership guidebooks, the PAL team recommended instead creating a video on parent leadership. To accomplish this, the project contracted with a producer and the parent leaders helped to write the script and participated in the filming by consenting to interviews about their real-life experiences as parents and parent leaders. The video was distributed to the entire collaboration and all of the state leads of the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) federal program. It has become a frequently requested tool for encouraging discussions on the value of parent leadership to family support programs and policy.

- The PAL team added an unplanned objective to its work plan during the last election year. They prepared a non-partisan document to appealing to parents nationwide to register to vote and participate in the election process. The document was introduced during National Parent Leadership Month and distributed throughout the Circle of Parents network, PCA America chapters and HFA network. It was also published in *Family Support,* a magazine of Family Support America and reprinted in several state and local newsletters.

- The PAL team has struggled with growth and geographic and cultural diversity. At its peak, the PAL team had 13 members: two male and all Caucasian. Recent parent leader recruitment efforts emphasize the need for more diversity and ask that each

Roundtable organization (Circle of Parent member) attempt to identify at least one parent from its state / region to participate on the national level. What has emerged through this latest effort as well as the self-assessment responses, TA calls and site visits is that Roundtable organizations are not equally sophisticated on parent leadership. Some need more information about how to recognize leadership in parents and include them in roles beyond support groups. Others are in the early stages of developing parent as leaders for participation in statewide and national activities. Continued training and TA will need to occur using existing national parent leaders and organizations that are strong in this regard.

III.   Implementation Objective 3: *Create an external advisory committee.*

A.   Activities and Outcomes

The intent of this objective was to create a team of family support professionals, organizational / network development experts and corporate leaders to provide objective consultation and resources to the projects. The first action towards the fulfillment of this objective was to develop consensus on the specific purpose and role of an external advisory committee. The infrastructure team took the lead on this, developing criteria for advisory committee member and guidelines for the optimal use of the assets they could contribute to the project. It was also decided that the committee be referred to as the "Leadership Council."

B.   Assessment Methods

The achievement of this objective was to be measured by clarification of the role of the advisory committee, the recruitment and selection of members, the creation of guidelines for using the committee and the evidence of the committee's participation in the work of the project.

C.   Successes, Barriers and Lessons Learned

- The infrastructure team discovered that the intended role of the external advisory committee was described vaguely in the initial grant. Consequently, the team spent a great amount of time identifying the assets needed by the project that were not strengths among the members of the entire collaboration. This list of assets, combined with those that did in fact reflect the strengths of the network members, were integrated into a Leadership Council Member nomination form.
- Five leadership council members were recruited and approved by the network members. They included a strategic planning consultant, a CEO of a national non-profit serving youth, a school of social work educator, a human services professional for a child advocacy center, and a former director of children's services for the host agency of one of the Roundtable organizations.
- Although the guidelines encouraged the project teams to use the expertise of the leadership council, this never occurred to the extent it was expected. The need for their expertise seemed unnecessary for the work the teams engaged in. Additionally,

there was concern about ineffectively using the time of council members. A lesson learned may be to use existing relationships with external expertise among participants in the project as-needed, as opposed to establishing a formal council.

- On the other hand, four of the five leadership council members were brought in at various stages of planning for the future of the project and the relationship between the Roundtable and PCA America. Two were actively involved in the beginning of this process; in fact, one of them facilitated the process and several meetings. The other two became active as the project began to plan for a conversion to an independent organization. While this was the only major contribution of the leadership council, the expertise they contributed in the areas of strategic planning and organizational development was invaluable to this particular activity.

IV.   Implementation Objective 4: *Increase the capacity of state / regional network member organizations to create and promote mutual self-help parent support programs.*

A.   Projected Activities and Outcomes

There were several activities and desired outcomes associated with this implementation objective which were geared towards providing avenues for the network member organizations to promote their programs to parents and potential partners and to highlight their association with the national network. These activities included soliciting and encouraging the submission of abstracts for workshops at the PCA America and OCAN conferences, creating a name and brand identity for use on promotional materials, promotional activities through news releases, flyers, mass mailings, presentations, newsletters and other media; and establishing a website.

B.   Assessment Methods

Methods employed to assess the achievement of this implementation objective were primarily based upon whether the activity was completed.

C.   Successes, Barriers and Lessons Learned

- Staff of the state and regional networks associated with the project, parent leaders and the project staff conducted several workshops at national conferences and meetings of Prevent Child Abuse America, Family Support America, CBFRS (now known as CBCAP) grantees, the National Black Child Development Institute and the National Conferences on Child Abuse and Neglect sponsored by OCAN. A sampling of topics covered include:
    1. Building partnerships between parent leaders and professionals
    2. Parent leadership training
    3. Shared leadership among parents, professionals, organizations and collaborating partners
    4. A participatory approach to developing a research model for a network of mutual self-help parent support programs.
    5. Measuring outcomes for mutual self-help support programs

6. Using participatory methods to address the challenges of program evaluation
7. Outcomes of a shared leadership approach to building a national network of parent support programs
8. Promoting parent leadership through mutual self-help parent support programs
9. Merging traditional management styles with principles of shared leadership
10. Sharing leadership to prevent child abuse and neglect

- In addition parent leaders and network organization members were very instrumental in planning and implementing the Think Tank at the 2003 OCAN conference, "Formulating a Multidisciplinary Comprehensive Research Agenda for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment." This ensured that the parent perspective was included in examining desired outcomes and measures for child abuse prevention programs.
- Circle of Parents was one of ten national organizations recognized during the press conference at the same conference and was noted as a promising program by Commissioner Wade Horn of the Children's Bureau.
- To promote the value of mutual support and self-help for families and the state and regional networks operating the programs, the project director and a parent leader co-presented at one of the annual meetings of the PCA America board of directors.
- A significant development and success of the project was the development of a brand identity for the project. Circle of Parents™ was selected with a logo and tagline "Sharing Ideas / Sharing Support." The process for selection took almost a year and included testing of several potential concepts, names and logos using marketing research methodology. Coordinated by the capacity building team, ten (10) focus groups were conducted with parents from various urban, suburban and rural communities. The information gleaned from these groups combined with the input of the project's parent leaders and PCA America and Roundtable staff helped determine which of the concepts best represented the project and would be most appealing to attract parent participation, partnerships to support the implementation of groups on the community level and collaborations to assist the state, regional and national networks. Post-card size cards were distributed widely to announce the new name.
- The state and regional network members were granted the use of the brand identity on their on program, marketing and communications materials through letters of agreement. The brand was trademarked and, to protect it from potential distortions or otherwise improper use, a graphics standards manual was produced and distributed.
- While several of the state and regional networks have adopted the brand identity, some have chosen not to. This is primary due to the local communities' long-term identification with the brand they currently have, sometimes dating back 30 or more years.
- Not only was the Circle of Parents brand identity added to all program and marketing materials, it was critical to the attractiveness of a website created in September 2002. To help promote the state and regional networks, the website includes a colorful map and with each network's contact information and links to their websites. Links were

also created to the national clearinghouse, OJJDP (a second funding resource for Circle of Parents) and various existing or potential collaborating colleagues. It had 68 hits on its inaugural day. During the last six months of the project, the number of hits on the website averaged 23,171 per month with an average of 795 users.

- Updates regarding the Circle of Parents project were included in the SCOOP newsletter for Healthy Family America State Leaders and Chapter mailings frequently and as needed throughout the project period.
- The project routinely participated in the development of Child Abuse Prevention Month materials throughout the project period.
- At least twice annually articles about the project were written in the PCA America newsletter. *Lookin' Up* (circulation: 5,500) and the *Prevention Programs Spotlight* (circulation: 2,850). These existing formats were great vehicles for promoting the project to large audiences and were more cost-effective than creating a separate newsletter for the project as originally planned. (See Appendix B for a list of article titles and selected media and newsletter coverage.)
- Several of the state and regional networks include articles and briefs on Circle of Parents in their newsletters as well. Such newsletters are usually distributed statewide to a diverse group of stakeholders; some are targeted to parents, specific partners and colleagues or support group facilitators.
- The grant specified that the public awareness activities would reach 500,000 people annually, through publications, placements in newsletters, public awareness campaigns, trade publications, distribution of flyers, presentations, public service announcements and other activities. The state and regional networks usually met or exceeded this total.   During the last six months of the project, well over 2 million people were reached.

V.   Implementation Objective 5: *Create mechanisms for providing training and technical assistance to the state / regional network members and current and new mutual self-help parent support programs.*

A.   Projected Activities and Outcomes

Similar to the previous implementation objective, there were several activities and intended outcomes related to this one. Training and technical assistance (TA) provision was judged to be a critical activity to both support existing state and regional networks and prepare new organizations to develop networks in other states. This included a process of developing training and TA systems, along with creating the tools necessary to make them operational.

B.   Assessment Methods

The development of procedures and tools for training and technical assistance systems can be tracked in the minutes of meetings from the teams, primarily the training and technical assistance, capacity building and parents as leader's teams. The finalization of training and TA procedures and tools are apparent in the minutes of full collaboration

meetings. Another assessment measure is how successful the project was in the actual production and distribution of materials to the extent planned in the original work plan. Lastly, satisfaction and evaluation tools were used as mechanisms to get feedback from the users of training and technical assistance materials.

C.	Successes, Barriers and Lessons Learned

- It took several months to a year to develop training and technical assistance materials. Generally, the process would begin with the self-selection of members to form a subcommittee that would collect samples of materials / approaches from the state and regional networks, develop drafts of the procedures, handbooks, tools and / or manuals; provide regular reports or emails back to the larger team for feedback and input, give the OCAN Project Officer the opportunity for review, input and approval; and obtain final approval and sign-off of the content by the entire collaboration. Then the marketing and communications staff had to provide final editing and layout before the document was submitted for printing. This initially seemed exhausting but the time invested in the end seemed well worth the effort. In addition, lessons learned along the way with the production of the first set of material, improved the efficiency of production of subsequent materials.
- Early on in the project, the numbers, types and frequency of production for several materials were modified. For example, the original work plan called for the production and distribution of 2,000 facilitator manuals annually. However, the production of 8,000 manuals over the 4 year period seemed excessive given the estimate of the demand and the time and resources required to publish a quality product. In addition, there were no plans to create a children's program manual, which was something that the collaboration agreed was both of value to and a significant need of support group programs. Consequently, the work plan was adjusted to include the distribution of 2,000 facilitator manuals in the first year, followed by the distribution of 1,000 children's program manuals in the second year.
- In the third year, integrating feedback from users of the first edition, the facilitator manual was revised and an additional 2,000 were produced. In the fourth year, a similar approach was used to revise the children's program manual and an additional 2,000 of those were produced.
- It should be noted too that the demand for the children's program manual was significantly underestimated in year 2 of the project. The inventory of 1,000 manuals was exhausted within weeks. Parent support programs throughout the national network were clamoring for more. To address this, networks were asked to re-evaluate their stock of manuals and when possible, re-distribute them to networks that needed extras.
- An important feature of both the facilitator and children's program manuals is a section for local programs to submit their own materials and listings of community resources. To facilitate that, the manuals were 3-hole punched for placement in ring binders.
- The demand for the manuals was significant. Only 280 facilitator manuals and 190 children's program manuals are currently available at the national office.

- An unplanned addition to the work plan involved the production of parent tip sheets as a supplement to the facilitator manuals. These sets of sheets include helpful information about dealing with specific issues of parenting. The parenting tip sheets have enjoyed popularity beyond their use in parent support groups. Of 1,500 English versions and 1,000 Spanish versions, only 95 and 100 remain available. They have been shared at exhibits during conferences and are available for downloading from the website.
- 40,000 parent handbooks were produced; 30,000 in English and 10,000 in Spanish. Only 7,800 English and 1,100 Spanish handbooks are still available. These pocket-sized books were distributed to local programs through the state and regional networks as a tool to encourage and supplement a parent's participation in support groups. The content of the handbook was written by parent leaders. It includes information about what a mutual support group can do for parents, discipline, parent tips and goal setting. Actual parent experiences are also shared. There is room for the parent to personalize his / her handbook by inserting personal goals and important contact information.
- An assessment of training and technical assistance resources and needs in Year 1 and several subsequent surveys produced a prioritized list for technical assistance (TA) calls that was very congruent with items cited in the self-assessment tool. Initially, Circle of Parents participated in the series of technical assistance calla sponsored by PCA America's Chapter Services and HFA programs, but it became clear by Year 2 that calls of a more problem-solving and practical nature would have greater interest and benefit. The calls drew heavily from "home grown experts" – presenters were chosen who had experience with how issues would play out locally – and featured ample opportunity for questions and responses. Registrants submitted information about their experience and needs. Pre-reads and post-reads submitted by the speakers or by others on the call enriched the series. TA calls were evaluated by a sample of participants (see Appendix B). In the final 2 years of the project, TA calls were extended to CBFRS programs, and the PCA America chapters and HFA programs. This provided opportunities for networking among the various entities.
- The resources library was developed in Year 1 but was of limited use initially because it depended on electronic and hard copies for submission. We catalogued over 500 entries – newsletters, press releases, flyers, brochures, recruitment and training ideas -- that were then shared with members seeking ideas. After converting to an e-library in Year 4, members can now upload and download materials directly, and adapt them for local use.
- The first train the trainers (T3) was held at the end of Year 1. Its purpose was to increase the capacity of the state and regional networks to train new group facilitators and start new programs. Our goal was to train at least one person from every state who would then be available to train facilitators in their own states or others. The T3's have reached 60 trainers in all-but-one state and include Roundtable organization program staff, board members and leaders from Healthy Families America (HFA) Regional Resource Centers as well as state trainers. The training draws heavily upon the project's shared leadership approach and has grown increasingly participatory. Materials developed for the trainings now include a sample curriculum that can be adapted for local use as well as examples from state-

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generated materials. Trainers always include at least one parent.   A simple feedback loop has enabled national trainers to tailor the 2 ½ day event to meet the needs of participants, keep material fresh, and model both shared leadership and respect for participants. Participant evaluations were also completed. (See Appendix B.)

- A self-assessment process for reflecting on the operations of the state and regional networks was implemented by the fourth year of the project period. Although everyone could see value of this for the sake of accountability to the standards and principles established for the national network, some resistance was experienced. The capacity building team worked hard to balance the value of having a process with the concerns individuals had about using it.   It was also agreed to that the state and regional networks should be encouraged to use the process for their own benefit but that they would not be required to do so.

- The final self-assessment process was approved by the entire collaboration. (See Appendix B.) The state and regional networks were asked to try the process by February 2004. They were to complete the self-assessment tool, prioritize areas that they wanted to act upon and develop an action plan. The completed action plan tool would then be submitted to the project staff for the purpose of identifying key areas in which the state and regional networks may need training and technical assistance.

- Out of 27 active networks at the time, only eleven submitted action plans to the project staff. Several others reported lacking the time and resources to go through the process. While the participation was less than anticipated, some clear themes emerged as areas to be improved upon. This information gives the training and TA team some areas to focus on in the first year of the new Circle of Parents organization.

- In the last year of the project, a how-to guide for starting and managing state networks was written. A former executive director of a state network was retained as a consultant to assist in its development. The guide is reflective of models and practices in use by actual networks, as well as lessons learned from the start-up of new state networks that were added during the project period. It is available both in hard copy and on CD and has been distributed to the entire national network as an additional TA resource. It is also available to facilitate the development of new state networks by organizations joining Circle of Parents in the future.

VI.   Implementation Objective 6: *Strengthen relationships between the mutual self-help parent support programs and CBFRS (currently known as CBCAP), HFA programs and the PCA America chapter network and create 15 partnerships with other national organizations and systems to encourage the inclusion of self-help parent support programs as part of a continuum of prevention services*

A.   Projected Activities and Outcomes

The intended outcome of this objective was to develop partnerships on the program, state / regional network and national network levels to provide opportunities for program

expansion that resulted in an increase of 400 groups during the project period. Clearly, the PCA America chapter network, the CBFRS programs and the HFA were considered ideal and ready-made sources for partnership building. On the national level, it was anticipated that at least 15 partnerships would be formalized with other national organizations.

B.   Assessment Methods

A data collection tool, which to be submitted quarterly by the state and regional networks, was determined as the best method to track changes in the number of groups that resulted from the establishment of these collaborations. Other evidence of the success of this implementation goal would be meetings and letters of agreement between organizations.

C.   Successes, Barriers and Lessons Learned

- Challenges encountered with the data collection made it difficult for the project to count accurately track growth of programs from the very beginning of the project. From the start, the number of self-help support groups in the network appeared to be miss- counted as the information had been gathered quickly during the preparation of the grant and the network had not yet developed a clear and consistent method for collecting this information. The data collection tool created by the research subcommittee was intended to resolve this dilemma. Two major issues arose in the process. First, the tool was set up as an Access database. Many state and regional networks found themselves unprepared to input information. Eventually, a shift was made to allow networks to share date in a Word format. The second challenge involved definitions, wording and structure of the data collection tool. This improved as the state and regional network staffs were invited on several occasions to help the research sub-committee clarify the tool and make necessary adjustments.
- Within the last two years, the data collection system has become be more reliable. Data on the number of support groups from the end of Year 3 to the end of Year 4 suggests an approximate growth of 25%.
- The project's first attempt at establishing relationships with CBFRS programs was to send out information about the project to the lead agencies and encourage their outreach to the Roundtable state and regional networks in their jurisdictions. At the time, several of these relationships already existed. However, the project staff made sure that the Roundtable networks remained abreast of the CBFRS activity by sending out up to date summaries of their plans.
- Building upon an established relationship with Family Support America and the knowledge of the CBFRS program, the project became a resource partner of FRIENDS in the third project year. Engaging CBFRS leads and Roundtable network staff together in a series of needs assessment interviews helped to fortify the relationships between both parties. Circle of Parents is continuing its role in CBFRS (now CBCAP) as a resource partner for the new FRIENDS led by the Chapel Hill Training and Outreach Project.

- Research supporting the benefits of coupling parent support groups with home visiting programs and actual examples from the field were used to create an article for the *Prevention Program Spotlight* and the HFA SCOOP electronic newsletter, which is disseminated to over 4000 HFA state leaders. At the PCA America leadership conference in September 2003, this strategy was promoted in a presentation to HFA state leaders and Circle of Parents (Roundtable) executive directors. Several HFA programs have added Circle of Parents support groups through cross-training between HFA and Circle of Parents networks. Additionally, one of the HFA regional resource centers participated in the last train the trainer session for Circle of Parents and is planning to train more HFA programs on the model.
- The project benefited from already having ten of the original Roundtable networks also serve the role as a PCA America chapter. This, as well as frequent updates submitted in chapter mailings, eased the project's ability to attract new partnerships with chapters. Of 13 new organizations joining the project over the 4 years, seven were PCA America chapters. In addition, one organization was chartered as a chapter shortly thereafter, and when a chapter was closed in one state that was also a Roundtable network, the Roundtable established a partnership with a new organization that also became the new chapter.
- The project developed a collaboration with Parents Anonymous, Inc. and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention starting in the second project year. An outcome of this relationship was the development of a document describing both programs as a value to parents and joint outreach to the Family Advocacy programs of the Army. While this helped spawn some great and lasting partnerships with military bases on the state level, it became difficult for Circle of Parents and Parents Anonymous to develop more formal relationships with the military system due to issues of turf, confidentiality concerns due either to mixing civilian families with military families or having military families meeting with each other, and Defense Department rules and norms prohibiting them from endorsing particular programs. These issues were expounded on during a TA group conference call sponsored by the project and FRIENDS. This call also highlighted the military's strong position on partnering with evidence-based programs. Consequently, future work with the military to include self-help parent support programs will need to take this into account.
- Initial contacts were made with several other organizations to discuss potential collaborations, such as MELD, the National Indian Child Welfare Association and the National Council for Latino Executives but there were no concrete moves toward formalizing relationships. Some of this was due to the lack of resources available to develop and connect on a particular joint project.
- On the other hand, more in-depth conversations around collaborative relationships occurred with the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), the National Child Advocacy Centers, and the American Humane Association / Devereux Kids, Inc. (Front Porch Project). It is anticipated that these conversations will continue as Circle of Parents settles in as a new non-profit organization
- Lessons learned? Collaborations are easier to develop on the local and state level since the networks are in a better position to offer a concrete resource – parent support groups. Without monetary resources and concrete incentives or benefits to

offer on the national level, it was difficult for the project to achieve the goal of establishing 15 formal national collaborations.

VII.   Implementation Objective 7: *Identify and develop programs for underserved populations who may benefit from self-help parent support programs*

A.   Projected Activities and Outcomes

It was anticipated that the project would identify and conduct an analysis of the unique needs of under-served populations and communities in order to develop targeted outreach materials and propose effective program delivery models. It would support the expansion and sustainability of these programs through ten $1,000 mini-grants given to specific groups (via the state and regional networks) each year. In the end, this activity would increase participation in support groups by members representing a diversity of racial and ethnic groups and underserved populations such as fathers, parents with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities.

B.   Assessment Methods

The data collection tool for the project included a mechanism for tracking the types of "underserved" populations participating in support groups in the state and regional networks. A set of criteria, including information about the nature of the targeted and underserved population, was established to select support groups worthy of receiving mini-grants through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Semi-annual progress reports from the funded support groups provided information about the successes, challenges and lessons learned. Lastly, an interview of a sample of state and regional networks serving underserved populations and communities was conducted to gather information about promising practices in outreach and service delivery.

C.   Successes, Barriers and Lessons Learned

• Through the data collection process, it was recognized early on in the project that the variety of underserved populations and communities was expansive and unique to each state and regional network. Consequently, it was neither possible nor appropriate, for the national network to target all or any particular groups in the development of outreach and marketing materials. Special attention therefore was given to producing the logo and materials in a style conducive to attracting a wide variety of groups. Much of this was accomplished by conducting focus groups with parents representing a broad diversity of racial, ethnic, income, and gender groups, as well as differing types of communities.
• Some materials were translated into Spanish, the second most-used language in the groups operated throughout the network.
• The capacity building team developed and implemented criteria and a RFP process for mini-grants. The RFP and subsequent $1,000 grant awards were delivered through the state and regional networks since the project staff did not have direct

access to the local support groups. There were benefits associated with the networks' inclusion in the process. For one, the state or regional network's sign off gave credibility to the local group's application for the mini-grant. Secondly, the network's role added a level of accountability for the group's submission of progress reports and appropriate use of the funds when an award was granted. To this end, it was important that the state and regional networks signed the contract that accompanied the disbursement of funding.

- In all, there were four cycles of the $1,000 mini-grant program. Fifty-six support groups benefited from participation. Funding was used to help start or sustain support groups. In many cases, the support provided to local groups helped to keep them functioning and / or improved their attendance. There were a variety of strategies employed, including such things as:

  - o Purchasing educational material
  - o Providing free transportation
  - o Serving family meals or refreshments
  - o Supporting the addition of child care or a children's program
  - o Producing culturally relevant recruitment materials
  - o Offering specialized technical support and training to facilitators and parent leaders
  - o Starting new groups for special populations, including new parents, fathers, parents who are incarcerated, Spanish-speaking parents, rural families, low-income families, teen parents, non-offending parents of sexual abuse victims, grandparents and families of children with mental health or other special needs
  - o Purchasing play equipment and other supplies for children's programs
  - o Providing for the costs of educational field trips
  - o Translating materials into different languages

- In many cases the TA calls discussed earlier focused on working with underserved and other populations with special needs, as did sections of the facilitators and children's program manual.
- Interviews conducted with a sample of networks providing services to five specific underserved populations were completed in the Year 4 of the project. The successes, challenges and lessons learned are contained in a report entitled, "From Dads to Grandparents to Parents in Recovery: States' Experiences in Supporting Diverse Populations."
- Funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention provided an additional avenue for addressing underserved populations on the state and regional network levels.

VIII.   Implementation Objective 8: *Establish nine additional state network member organizations over the life of the project and provide TA support for their development.*

A.   Projected Activities and Outcomes

The goal of the project was to expand participation in the network and support group programs through the addition of nine (9) new state networks. The new networks would be given $25,000 grants for start up. They would receive training, site visits, TA and mentoring to help them successfully develop and implement an infrastructure necessary to start and sustain self-help parent support groups.

B.   Assessment Methods

Indicators of new state networks joining the national network included the number of grants awarded, the number of contracts signed with organizations responsible for establishing the network, new network participation in orientation sessions and the train the trainers, mentor relationships established and progress reports documenting the successes and challenges of establishing new state networks.

C.   Successes, Barriers and Lessons Learned

- The determination of potential applicants for the new state network required two critical steps. One included scanning the Parents Anonymous, Inc. website to ensure that there was no existing state network of mutual support and self-help organizations. The intent of this was to avoid duplication of effort and competition with other national networks of self-help parent support programs that employed a state network model. This task was challenging without the mutual cooperation of the two networks. Yet over time, the project and Parents Anonymous did implement a system of cross-referral for either parents seeking groups or organization seeking to start programs.
- The second step involved gathering data to identify organizations that were already statewide or had the capacity to develop a statewide network or programs. In the beginning, ten (10) potential states were identified but only half submitted applications.
- The creation of a list of benefits for joining the national network has been a useful tool for generating interest in the national network.
- A set of criteria for new state networks and a request for proposals (RFP) process were created to screen and assess applicants seeking approval to be new state network. It was helpful to develop a qualitative and quantitative review process.
- Even though the new state network RFP program was the primary responsibility of the capacity building team, it was helpful to include representatives from the Infrastructure, Training and TA and Parents as Leaders teams on the application review committee as that added to variety of expertise and perspectives in the evaluation and scoring of the applications submitted.
- The project was able to fund ten (10) new state networks during the project period with $25,000 grants. The vast majority of these networks began with no parent support groups at all. The provision of on-site orientation by staff and Roundtable members, the assignment of mentors from states with similar demographics, the sharing of resources and offers of support from peers in other state networks, the submission of quarterly progress reports that identified successes and challenges, (see Appendix B), the availability of TA via phone or email, and enrollment in the train-

the-trainers within months following affiliation with the national network were all strategies that helped the new state networks succeed. It also seemed to benefit the new state network when one of their staff joined a project team early on.

- It was helpful to the project to enter into contracts with the organizations funded to develop new state networks. These contracts (also used for the $1,000 mini grants) included provisions for progress reporting, expense reporting, disbursement of funds, data submission, termination of the contract and guidelines for the use of federals. Drafted by the project director, it was imperative to seek and use the counsel of an attorney before the contracts were finalized and released.
- In Year 2, the project brought on an existing statewide organization with a strong network of parent support groups, but without a demonstrated need for the $25,000 grant. This was an unexpected occurrence. The many lessons learned from this experience, attributable mostly to the input of the organization's executive director, helped shaped an application process for statewide organizations wishing to join the national network but without benefits of seed money. Two other organizations joined as new state networks through this process.
- Turnover in the leadership of state networks was an inevitable occurrence that the project did not plan for. However, teleconference orientation was provided to all new executive directors and program staff as necessary. A set orientation agenda is now in place.
- The closure of organizations that operated the state networks was also an event that the project did not plan for. In all three states where this occurred, new organizations to house the networks were quickly identified and brought into the national network. The combined efforts of the project staff, PCA America chapter and HFA staff, the closing state network and members of the remaining networks were instrumental in facilitating these transitions.

Chapter III. Outcome Evaluation

I.   Participant Outcome Objective No. 1

A   Statement of Outcome and Evaluation Process

Date of Interviews: August–September 2004

Method: All Circle of Parents groups were informed of and eligible to participate in focus group study. Stratified selection process of volunteer states/sites based on length of membership affiliation with COP program resulted in five states/sites--3 states selected from original 17 members, 1 selected representing "1st expansion", and 1 selected representing newest or 2nd expansion members. Staff persons conducting interviews were trained on instrument by principal investigator, Ching Tung-Wang, Ph.D., before administrating to focus groups (see Appendix B).. In addition, once on site or by telephone or email contacts, interviewers were

briefed by group facilitators on specific characteristics of group participants, e.g., issues of substance abuse/alcohol recovery, mandated attendance, special needs children, and so forth. Group facilitators were not excluded from interviews but those who remained were not required nor expected to answer questions. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interviews were analyzed for content and themes using NVivo software.

Participating States/Sites:

North Dakota (ND, 4 Female Participants); Tennessee (TN, 6 Participants 3 Female/3 Male); Washington (WA, 6 Participants 4 Female/2 Male); Illinois (IL, 15 13 Female/2Male Participants); Milwaukee (WI, 6 Female Participants).

Interviewers: Sue Campbell/Barbara Shaffer (ND), John Holton (TN, WA, WI), Ching-Tung Wang (IL).

Expected outcome: **Improved parenting skills, decreased isolation by providing a support network for parents and increased access to family support resources.**

B. Research Questions and Findings

Starter Question: Tell us the very first thing that comes to your mind with regard to your experiences with the mutual self-help groups.

- ❖ **Directions and Support:** Parents seeking new ideas/directions and non-judgmental support in raising kids.

- ❖ **Acceptance and Entertainment**: The group was fun, entertaining to attend and the people friendly (i.e., sense of family and camaraderie).

- ❖ **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**: Captures the experiences of grandparents, who suddenly because of uncontrollable life circumstances, found themselves in parenting role again. Initial experiences were that they have learned many new things. In particular, parents realized that they were not alone, that there were others like them.

- ❖ **Nothing Comes to Mind:** Parents were unable to articulate any experiences because they were new to the program, trying out and/or getting to know the program.

Question #1: What were your expectations when you first decided to come to the group? Have the group meetings met your expectations (and how)?

❖ **Unknown Expectations:** Unsure what to expect/or what Parent had in mind regarding the parent group. None the less, parents were seeking support and new ideas.

❖ **Expected an ADHD Support Group:** Expected an ADHD Support Group but could not find one in the community.

❖ **Positive Discipline:** Obtain different ideas from other parents regarding types of discipline styles.

❖ **Obtain Legal Child Custody:** Parent expected that the group/program would help him/her to obtain legal child custody.

❖ **Directions and Support:** Parents seeking new ideas/directions and support from others in the group. Hearing from others parents on how they have handled parenting experiences/situations. As a result, knowing they were not alone and feeling supported (i.e., non-judgmental support).

• **Negative Group Expectations:** Parents had negative expectations about the group's purpose, structure and composition (i.e., large group, group mandated by the court, lectured type, group design for teen parents), and expected group to be of no help and/or beneficial.

Question #2: Why do you continue to come to the group?

❖ **Establishing Friendships:** Parents continue to attend the group because of the friendships they have made and the fun they have together.

❖ **Hope for Meetings on Specific Topics:** More structured meeting/specific information.

❖ **Accomplishing Goals:** Coming to the parenting group for two parents was a goal that they wanted to complete from start to finish.

❖ **Adjustment to Life after Foster Care:** One parent attends the group as part of family counseling to cope with life after his children entered foster care system.

❖ **Learn to Parent Children as They Grow:** Parents attend groups to get a head start in preparing for parenting in advance and to learn about children. A few parents seeking direction on parenting older kids.

❖ **Direction and Support:** Parents seeking new ideas/directions from other parents and support.

❖ **Convenient Class Schedule:** Parents attends the group because the class schedule time is convenient.

❖ **Positive Change and Self Growth:** Parents continue to attend the group because they are learning more about them selves and how this self awareness can help them become better parents.

Question #3: What benefits did you get from the group that you would not have gotten if you didn't come to the group meetings?

❖ **Resources and Materials:** Resources and materials received are helpful and beneficial (i.e., handouts, books and paperwork, linking to community resources).

❖ **Positive Discipline:** Obtain different ideas from other parents regarding types of positive discipline. Learning that there are non-violent ways to deal with parenting situations. Getting help with anger management and improving communication.

❖ **Learn to Parent Children as They Grow**: The benefits that parents received by attending the groups are getting a head start for parenting in advance and to learn about children and parenting older kids.

❖ **Direction and Support:** Parents seeking new ideas/directions from other parents and support.

❖ **Positive Change and Self Growth:** The benefits that parents received by attending the groups were learning more about them selves and being more understanding and accepting to personality differences. Parents stated being more accepting to self change.

❖ **Provides Parents a Break:** Parents have some down time (i.e., it provides a break or some time away from the child).

Question #4: What's been least helpful to you by coming to the group?

❖ **No ADHD Information & Support Group:** Group is not ADHD/Not receiving enough information on parents w/ADHD children.

❖ **Everything has Been Helpful:** Everything has been helpful.

❖ **Time Out for Single Parents Don't Work:** Parents feel the groups are time consuming, especially for single parents who have less time. As a result, this adds more stress since they do not have time for themselves.

❖ **Limited Health Care:** Health Care is limited in state/community.

❖ **Corporal Punishment Class:** The class on corporal punishment was not helpful since it unrealistic and could be misinterpreted.

❖ **Inability to Offer Needed Solution:** The frustration and disappointment about not being able to help other parents with more specific and complicated problems, e.g., ADHD, Bipolar Disorder, and Autism**.**

❖ **Meeting Time is Short:** Parents indicated that meeting time is too short and they would like the groups to meet for longer time.

❖ **Group location Too Far:** Parents indicated group location is too far and they need something closer to their homes.

❖ **Expand Children's Programs:** Parents with children have limited access to the support group because the children's program may not be able to accommodate their children.

Question #5: It's the mission of Circle of Parent to prevent child abuse and neglect. With respect to that, what do you think about the mutual self-help group as a strategy for preventing child abuse and neglect?

❖ **Learning Non-Violence:** Getting help with anger management and not to loose control. Learning that there are non-violent ways to deal with parenting situations. Examples given of how this strategy helps prevent physical abuse.

❖ **Don't Know:** Don't know or unsure of the mission.

❖ **Prevents Neglect:** Parents feel that the strategy raises their awareness of what neglect is and how it can be prevented. At the same time, through this strategy, parents learned to recognize the potential for abuse (and neglect) in the child welfare system.

❖ **Does Not Help Abusive Parents:** Parents feel the class is not a good strategy to change the behaviors of abusive parents, specifically, those that "beat" their children already (i.e., physical abuse).

❖ **Prevents Emotional Abuse:** This strategy helps parents to better understand emotional and verbal abuse and how to prevent it.

Question #6: Are there anything else about your experience with the mutual self-help group that you'd like to share with us?

- ❖ **Parents Liked Day Care:** Parents liked the children's programs that the group provides while the parents are attending support group services. One parent thought the day care was beneficial to her daughter.

- ❖ **Standard Guidelines for Facilitator:** Ensure that facilitator is provided with standard guidelines for conducting both support groups for young children & teens.

- ❖ **Better Marketing of the Program:** Parents offered insight on how to market the program to attract all parents and making it more feasible to locate.

- ❖ **Engage Males in Program:** Observation made that the groups are predominantly comprised of females. Need to engage males in the group.

- ❖ **Like the Small Group Set-Up:** One parent liked the small group set-up.

- ❖ **Need Financial support:** Receiving financial assistance to care for their grandchildren. Grandparents would appreciate less restrictive financial resources from the child welfare system to support children they are raising.

Implications for Practice: Implications for improving support services based on parents' responses to focus group questions.

- ❖ **Help Grandparents in Child Welfare:** Child Welfare system needs to acknowledge that while grandparents may assume responsibility for grandchildren, they don't necessarily have the financial means to do so. The system needs to make financial support to grandparents caring for their grandchildren less restrictive.

- ❖ **Incorporate Communication Skills:** Parent suggested that Circle of Parents incorporate communication techniques or skills into the class session.

- ❖ **Make Sessions Longer:** Parents requested having or make class sessions longer (i.e., longer than 1.5 hours and or like a continuing education)

- ❖ **Mandated Court Classes Don't Work:** Parent stated that mandated parenting court classes are not interesting and that both, the facilitator and participants do not want to attend mandated parenting court classes. They were surprised to find out that Circle of Parents Meetings are offered for free. One parent indicated that he/she was willing to pay for the class if needed.

- ❖ **Provide More Activities for Kids:** Two Parents indicated a need to incorporate more activities for kids. For example, having play grounds, more activities for kids to do while parents are in session.

- ❖ **Publicity & Marketing of Program:** One parent commented that it was a good thing that the program changed its name from Parents Anonymous. He/she would have not attended the group because she/he did not want to be stereotype or labeled an abusive parent (as implied by "Parents Anonymous").

- ❖ **Needs ADHD Support Group:** Parent expected to participate in ADHD support group but could not find one in the community.

- ❖ **Offer Parenting Class in High School:** Parents suggested that Circle of Parents should be taken or be made available to all parents who are thinking or will be having children. (i.e., all parents and teen parents). Parents agreed to offer the class in high school.

Other Important Observation noted:

- ❖ **Negative Views toward Teen Parents:** In response to question 5, one Parent stated some negative opinions toward teen parents.

- ❖ **Q4 Facilitator Response:** Facilitator convinces parent that his/her parenting of an ADHD child is a resource to the rest of the group. Before, the parent is unaware of such a contribution she/he provides to the rest of the parents in the group.

- ❖ **Starter Question Courage and Dedication:** Parent is courageous and dedicated, according to facilitator in response to Starter Question.

II.   Participant Outcome Objective No. 2

A.   Statement of Outcome and Evaluation Process

Date of Interviews: August–September 2004

Method: The project was interested in determining whether there were benefits to organizing the state and regional networks under a national structure. To help answer this question, the researchers conducted interviews with a sample of seven (7) staff from four state networks and one regional network. The staff targeted included those that had direct contacts with project staff and responsibility and involvement in the operations of the national network. They included executive directors, program managers, trainers and other professional staff. A guide similar to the focus group guide for the parent groups was constructed for these interviews. (See Appendix B.) Staff persons conducting interviews were trained on instrument by principal investigator,

Ching Tung-Wang, Ph.D., before administrating to focus groups. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interviews were analyzed for content and themes using NVivo software.

Participating States / Regions:

The networks selected to aid in assessing this outcome objective represented a variety of entry points into the project and experiences with networks of mutual support and self-help groups.

- Washington State: entered the project in Year 2 as the first network to join without a $25,000 start-up grant, has a long-established history of operating a network mutual support and self-help parent groups., is not a chapter of PCA America,
- North Dakota: entered the project in Year 4 as the last network to join with a $25,000 start-up grant, had no history of operating a network of mutual support and self-help parent support groups, and exists as a chapter of PCA America.
- Georgia: Located in the Southeast region, an original member of the Roundtable, has a history of operating a network of self-help support groups, left the national network at the end of the grant, and is a chapter of PCA America.
- Milwaukee, WI: Located in the Midwest, is an original member of the Roundtable as a regional network, has a long-term history of operating a network, is not a chapter of PCA America.
- Illinois: Located in the Midwest, is an original member of the Roundtable as a state network, has a long-term history of operating as a network, and is not a PCA America chapter.

Interviewers: Sue Campbell (ND), Kathryn Harding (MLW), John Holton (GA and WA), Ching-Tung Wang (IL)

Expected outcome: **State and regional network member organizations are enabled to increase their capacity to develop and provide support and resources to local self-help parent support programs through a national network structure.**

B.   Research Questions and Findings

Starter Question: Tell us the very first thing that comes to your mind with regard to your experiences with being a member of the national network

- ❖ **Association and Connection:** For the most part, participants in the state and regional network staff interviews had positive views on their experiences with being part of a national network. For them, it brought a sense of connectedness

and national importance to the work of supporting parents through self-help groups.

- ❖ **Laborious:** Ownership of the process of building the national network's infrastructure and developing its materials and systems was recognized as important, in spite of the intensity and laborious nature of the work (largely attributable to the shared leadership process). Additionally, sharing leadership, while thoughtful, thorough and inclusive slowed the completion of tasks and accomplishments.

- ❖ **Intensity of the Work:** According to one interviewee, the achievements of the national network are "impressive, including the number of groups, development of curricula, materials, the creation of a logo, by-laws, and an infrastructure with little funding and primarily through telecommunications instead of face-to-face interactions. There is a richness of lessons learned over the last four years, which will be of extreme value to others that might try to develop national or regional networks for this type of work. Contribution from PCA America's staff was well beyond the funding received and would be instructive for future endeavors."

Question #1 – What were your expectations when you (first signed on this grant/first joined the national network/ first began participating in the work of the national network)? Have your expectations been met (and how)?

- ❖ **Fulfilled Expectations:**
  - ✓ The sharing of resources and support, the variety of expertise among network members, and the opportunities for networking were identified as expected and invaluable assets of the national network.
  - ✓ The development of training and technical assistance activities and materials, especially those associated with the train the trainers was an expectation that was met but the value of the information was greatest for the newer and less experienced networks.
  - ✓ Remarkable gains were noted related to the practice of shared leadership. Network A observed how the approach used for the project modified the manner in which PCA America conducts business. The executive director of this network was actively involved in the work with PCA America to help develop the transition plan.
  - ✓ Additionally, a significant progression in the integration of parent leadership into the work of the project and well as the activities of PCA America was noted. An example of this was parent leadership participation in the national conference planning and recognition parent leadership in summits and as a workshop track for PCA America's national conferences.

- ❖ **Unfilled Expectations:**
  - ✓ Research on program effectiveness and the identification of best practices and innovations was something that was anticipated by the state and regional networks but not met, according to many interviewed. One participant cited

the lack of adequate resources and the youth of the program as barriers. Recent efforts have been made to share outcome evaluations conducted by state and regional networks through the list serve and resource library.

✓ It was also expected the national network might result in better results in securing funding for the local programs. However, the economic down turn and decreased funding for child abuse and neglect prevention were cited as obstacles to this.

✓ To one interviewee, the model of the program seems stagnant. It was suggested that a critical look at the program model is needed to address the effectiveness of the program so that the program will evolve and innovate.

✓ Another interviewee hoped that the network would promote a healthy program. Some aspects of the model under Parents Anonymous were deemed as unhealthy (e.g., parent anonymity). Since the program focuses on family strengths, which is proactive and positive, the interviewee believes there should be no need for parents to keep their identity anonymous within the groups.

❖ **Unanticipated Events:**
   ✓ It was mentioned that in the beginning of the project it was not anticipated that the national network would become an independent organization, nor experience a tremendous reduction in funding.

Question #2 – By being part of the formalized Circle of Parents national network, what have been the benefits to you in terms of managing and operating or coordinating the mutual self-help groups at the state level?
Alternatively – How has been a member of the national network make you better able to do your job in your state?

❖ **Resources and Support:** Interviewees cited the development of materials, the sharing of resources and support and TA help through teleconference calls, emails, the list serve and resource library as functions of a formal national network made work easier on the local level.

❖ **Degree of Benefit:** The impact of the national network on the establishment, development and sustainability of actual support groups was a variable influenced by the state or regional network's experience, longevity and organizational capacity. One network, for example, noted the lack of resources in the organization impeded their success to establish support groups in spite of the national network providing "what was needed for developing the groups."

❖ **Promotion and Advocacy:** "A huge value to the state network can be measured in terms of the synergy created by the shared experience and the leverage of a national coalition to access policy makers and other stakeholders that can help the sustainability", according to a network staff member. Two networks cited the national network as key in offering assistance in advocacy efforts and developing relationships with legislators.

- ❖ **Learning from Each Other:** While one network did not use many of the materials developed during the project "because our programs had been around for quite some (i.e., over twenty years) before joining the national network," they found that they were to share expertise and lessons learned with some states with less mature programs.

- ❖ **Framework:** The project provided a framework in which the state and regional networks can do the work through coordination and training.

Question #3 – What are the challenges you have encountered in participating in the work of developing policies and procedures, program and training materials and / or the operating structure for the national network?

- ❖ **Time**: This was clearly a factor noted as a challenge by the participants in this study. That included the time involved in communications with the network through various media, including email, teleconference calls, meetings, etc., and the development of materials. The inclusion of the list serve was an attempt by the project to help people better manage communication and to segregate important or time sensitive information from other general correspondence. Trust built over the years also aided in the reduction of communications as project teams did not have to share the progress of the work as frequently with the entire collaboration. There was more willingness to wait until final drafts of materials or procedures were produced.

- ❖ **Limited face-to-face interactions:** This stymied the energy that can contribute to good dialogue and decision-making. Another individual commented that the teleconference calls with the entire network were challenging as it was not always easy to identify who was talking, to keep the discussions on track and prevent some people from dominating the conversation. In-person meetings were infrequent. Methods to address these concerns were put into place such as reducing calls with the entire collaboration from monthly to quarterly, submitting pre-reads and team status reports prior to the calls, asking people to identify themselves before they talked, scheduling at least one in-person meeting annually and holding in-person meetings for very important decisions such as the selection of organizations to receive grants.

- ❖ **Materials:** A lot of time was spent on redeveloping and creating new materials from scratch. Some of the materials were overrun by the rest of the group.

- ❖ **Narrow Focus:** A network expressed concern about the project's strong focus on parents in its name and policy development – "There is not enough on other family support components such as children's programming and help lines." The project did identify children's programming as an essential component to the success of parent support groups in its standards, included more child development information in manuals and developed a children's program manual

even though it was not originally planned. There has also been more attention given to this in the train the trainers' curriculum and TA activities. Clearly, more work can be done in this area and the new organization is set to look for new opportunities in family support beyond self-help parent support groups.

Question #4 – What's been least helpful to you by being a part of the national network?

❖ **Materials:** Materials developed by the network were of limited utility to at least one participant in the study because the state network already had satisfactory experiences with their own materials. For this type of circumstance, materials produced by the national network were intended to be supplementary to other materials. In addition, many materials such as the manuals were formatted so that the state and regional networks could adapt and localize them.

❖ **Name of the organization:** The naming of the project (and now the organization) as Circle of Parents is viewed by one network as an unnecessary barrier to caregivers who are not biological parents. Discussions surrounding the name, at the time of establishing the brand identity and later when deciding upon a name for the new organization, promoted the use of the term "parents" as anyone in a parenting role. The organization should explore ways to make this clearer so that non-biological caretakers feel that the networks programs have something to offer them.

❖ **Too Much Email:** The sheer volume of email can cause overlooking of important things.

❖ **Lack of Leadership on Program Level:** People are interested in the concept and model of self-help support but professional guidance from paid staff would be helpful in the beginning of the group to build momentum before transforming it into a purer form of self-help and internal leadership development.

Question #5 – Is there anything else about your experience with being part of the national network that you'd like to share with us?

❖ **Parent Leadership:** Viewed as one of the real strengths and potentials of the national network by viewing the roles of parents beyond leading parent support groups and looking at how to empower and build capacity for parents to become advocates for the needs of themselves and their children, and ultimately to be able to impact the *community* that affects them and their children. One network is starting to develop the "career ladder" for parents (i.e., a progression of career development / leadership training for parents so they start out as a participant in a support group, but gradually and progressively ascend to assume a leadership role in the group, to participate in learning to train other people, to participate on one of the regional boards, etc.). The Circles of Parent Leadership developed by

the Parents as Leaders team, in addition to the parent leadership development training for organizations and networks that is planned by Circle of Parents for their part in the CBCAP National Resource Center, may be beneficial to this network's activities.

❖ **Independent Organization for Circle of Parents:** There were several comments on the creation of Circle of Parents as an independent organization. Though the independence was not expected in the beginning, some feel positive about the independence but caution that Circle of Parents needs to stay flexible and mindful about meeting the needs of network members (including financial resources and best practices identification), which may constantly change because of the populations they are working with. It was suggested that the national office poll member states on a regular basis (i.e., annually or biannually) to ensure their needs are met. One interviewee commented, "A solid foundation has been laid for the national network in the last couple of years and the benefits for the members will become even greater as we move forward as an independent organization."

❖ **Shared Leadership / Consensus Building:** Some struggled with the shared leadership approach as it could be a hindrance to moving work forward on a national level when applied to every aspect of the work. Others observed that the network promoted discourse among members sharing a common belief who work together, face challenges together and help one another with struggles, all while bringing in varying perspectives.

❖ **Commitment:** Many expressed appreciation for the dedication and devotion of the people in the national network – "their belief in the approach of Circle of Parents, their devotion of time and their passion" as a network staff member commented.

❖ **Consistency and Common Thread:** Important that the network members are on the same page; there's consistency and common thread running through the work.

❖ **Collaboration:** There were also several comments on the benefits and the strength of the relationship between the National Family Support Roundtable and Prevent Child Abuse America. Network staffs expressed hope that the relationship will continue to flourish between PCA America and Circle of Parents. This was also a priority of the Transition Committee during its planning and the relationship does indeed continue.

❖ **Flexibility:** The national network is flexible to accommodate varieties of program model on the local level. For instance, some parent groups are parenting support and education. Group facilitators are there when groups get stuck. Extra efforts being put into children's programs to help children grow and develop.

❖ **Value:** Staff members commented on the value of mutual support and self-help programs to parents. A network leader summed it up well – the groups provide "support, help, a sense of belonging and nurturance for parents who are isolated and overwhelmed with multiple stressors. The concept of parent leadership builds the self-esteem of parents."

Project Staff Reflections on Shared Leadership

Although not part of the evaluation design, it might be helpful to include here some additional observations from the project staff, particularly on the successes and challenges associated with practicing shared leadership during the project. The following are some comments and lessons learned as expressed during a staff retreat with one of the researchers in the last month of the project.

❖ **Understanding the Concept:** Initially, shared leadership is a hard concept to understand – particularly when you are working with other organizations that do not share the same philosophy nor have experience with this type of leadership concept. This may be particularly true for hierarchical organizations that may have a difficult time giving control and decision-making power over to the group. In-person meetings definitely facilitate trust building that is so important to shared leadership, but these were not always feasible to do since much of Circle's meetings needed to take place via e-mail and conference calls.

❖ **Turnove**r: Changes in member organization staff and bringing on new organizations also posed some challenges of engaging them in the shared leadership process. The new organizations were attracted to group model, not necessarily the shared leadership methods used to grow and develop the national network. It will be important to emphasize and educate new individuals / new organizations on the shared leadership model early on.

❖ **Work Plans:** It's important to have a timelines, plans and schedules to help keep things moving and remind people of the end goal.

❖ **Trust:** Getting buy-in incrementally allows trust to build and have individuals involved at each point along the way – at least initially. As trust was developed, this became less important.

❖ **Communications:** Limiting information sharing to things that are critical information helps to avoid overload on communications.

❖ **Decision Making:** Create a clear approval process that ensures people are aware that there input is valuable early on as decisions (at least some) will cannot be re-visited later with out unnecessary delays in decision-making. It may be helpful to create a template / flowchart of the decision-making process.

❖ **Subcommittees:** Creating subcommittees expedited the work on specific tasks and it was helpful to have the larger group trust the decisions made within the subcommittees.

❖ **Parent Involvement:** Engaging parents from the outset brings a unique set of challenges, some of which you may also encounter in working with professionals, but the learning curve associated with parent involvement in a national network is worth it for the perspective they bring. The project staff felt that a huge success was the ability to involve parent leaders in the entire process and from the onset of the grant. Fortunately, the project had the foresight to allocate adequate funding to support parent involvement.

These observations and lessons learned from the parent groups, state and regional network staff and project staff will be critical to the Circle of Parents as it develops over the next few years.

Chapter IV. Use of Program Implementation Data to Understand Outcomes

As alluded to earlier in this report, there were several components and features that foster the attainment of expected outcomes. Some of them are worth highlighting here.

➢ The practice of shared leadership which included gathering, valuing and considering a variety of perspectives and employing a consensus decision-making process.
➢ Engaging parent leaders in meaningful ways early in the process and inclusive of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities.
➢ Creating a variety of mechanisms for providing training and technical assistance and capitalizing on the expertise throughout the national network...
➢ Developing mission, guiding principles, memoranda of understanding, national program materials, criteria for new state network start-up and local program mini-grants, benefits of being part of the network -- all contributing to setting standards for participation in and accountability to the network.
➢ Connecting and collaborating with other national networks such as the PCA America chapters, the Healthy Families America network, the networks of Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention programs, (formerly CBFRS), Family Support America, Chapel Hill Training and Outreach Project and Parents Anonymous.
➢ Some of the assets of the project staff assets that helped to foster the attainment of the project's objectives include:

  ✓ A training and technical assistance coordinator with several years of direct experience managing a state network self-help parent support groups, including training others to facilitate groups and developing training materials;

✓ The capacity-building coordinator came with experience in collaborations, project management and child welfare clinical practice;
✓ An administrative assistant was brought on who had years of experience providing administrative support in the non-profit arena; and
✓ The project director had a variety of experiences clinical practice, community organizing, program development, grants and contracts management and administration.

Chapter V.   Recommendations for Future Policies, Programs, and Evaluations (based on evaluation results and lessons learned)

Recommendations to Program Administrators and Potential Funding Sources

1.)   A national network of family support programs that operates from a position of **shared leadership** has several advantages, some of which are:

➢ Guidance and direction from a variety of experts who are valued for the lessons learned from their direct work supporting families
➢ In-kind resources – time, materials, training, technical assistance and support – offered generously and without restraint.
➢ Efficiencies in staffing for the national office as a result of the manpower available throughout the network.
➢ Increased ownership, responsibility and accountability for the network's success and outcomes.
➢ Standardized practices, materials and measures of quality that are have the endorsement of diverse stakeholders, including parents.

The payoff, however, must be a reinvestment of resources and funding back into the communities and families who ultimately benefit from the work of the national network. This was accomplished in several ways in this project:

➢ Resources to support the participation of parents
➢ New state network development grants
➢ Local program enhancement grants, a
➢ Leveraging additional funding (e.g. OJJDP)
➢ The distribution of program materials at no cost to the state and regional networks.

2,)   **Consensus–building and decision–making** are valuable mechanisms to achieve agreement among members of a national network. The process is takes time and patience, but it helps to ensure that the input of all members is included, respected and valued. Consensus decision making works best in large groups when smaller groups and teams are entrusted to do the work and propose recommendations, seeking input from the larger group only as it is informative to do so. Two edicts that the members of the national network espoused were:

➢ We move no faster than the pace of the slowest member.
➢ Even if everyone does not agree, no decision is final until everyone can "live with it."

3.) Family support programs are most accountable and responsive to the needs of families when families participate in their development. This national network modeled what it expects of the parent – professional relationship on the support group level – shared responsibility and shared leadership. **The involvement of parents** in this project was a key factor in bringing together the training and education of professionals with the realities of families that receive the benefits of the service. There must be allowances for flexibility in the work plan as the parents and professionals learn from each other while devising and implementing family support strategies.

4.) It is imperative to allocate and provide **sufficient resources for research** on the efficacy of self-help parent support groups and the effectiveness and efficiencies of applying network structures to family support practice. While information from actual participants – parents and state / regional network staff – is compelling and useful for performance improvements within Circle of Parents, we have yet to provide evidence that we are in fact meeting our mission to prevent child abuse and neglect. Good research could also help us learn more about reaching out to and supporting underserved populations.

Appendix A.   Technical Appendix

➢ *National Family Support Roundtable and Prevent Child Abuse America OCAN Project Evaluation Model*

Appendix B.   Data Collection Instruments

➢ *OCAN Data Collection Tool*
➢ *Circle of Parents: Select Media and Newsletter Coverage*
➢ *Technical Assistance Conference Call Evaluation Form*
➢ *Train the Trainers Evaluation Form*
➢ *Self-Assessment Tool for State Networks*
➢ *New State Network and Mini-Grant Report Formats*
➢ *Focus Group Guide – Parents*
➢ *Focus Group Guide – State Networks*