



CIRCLEof**PARENTS**™
Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.

HOW TO BUILD a STATE NETWORK

CIRCLE OF PARENTS™

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Published by Prevent Child Abuse America

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Circle of Parents™ is the National Network of Mutual Support and Self-Help Programs in Partnership with Communities, a collaborative project of Prevent Child Abuse America and the National Family Support Roundtable. This project was made possible by Grant No. 90CA 1668 from the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not represent the official views or policies of the funding agency, nor does publication in any way constitute an endorsement by the funding agency.

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Many Circle of Parents members contributed to this document, directly and indirectly. We would like to extend our thanks to our consultant Suzanne Eisenberg-Murray as well as national staff Barbara Shaffer, Sue Campbell, Cynthia Savage, Dora Walker, Eric Stepien, Julie Rowe, Lisa Cashion, Ben Tanzer, all Circle of Parents members and Irene Bocella, OCAN Project Officer. We especially want to thank all the new states that joined since 2001 for all of your patience as well as the trial and error you endured with us to get it right! We appreciate your time and energy. This network would not be what it is without everyone's sharing of resources and expertise!

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INTRODUCTION

Circle of Parents™ is a national network of mutual self-help parent support groups that represents a collaboration between Prevent Child Abuse America and the National Family Support Roundtable. This manual is funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The manual is a guide to use while developing a new Circle of Parents state network or as a reference while reviewing an existing network. Its intent is to share what Circle of Parents members have found to be useful when starting a new network. The addendum includes sample documents created by various states. Feel free to utilize these items or parts of them. Circle of Parents members agree to share their information freely with other members. Additional examples are available by contacting members individually, via the listserv or through the national office. Be sure to get permission from the source if the document is copyrighted.

We recognize that each state approaches network development differently and urge readers to take what works for them from this manual and leave what does not. And, most importantly, get in touch with the other Circle of Parents state networks across the nation to add greater depth and insight to the written words on the following pages.

CHAPTER one

CHAPTER one

Mission and Values

Developed by the consensus of the membership, Circle of Parents works toward the following mission, core tenets, principles, and network standards:

Mission: Prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen families through mutual self-help parent support groups.

Core Tenets

This mission is supported by the core tenets of the collaboration:

- * Children are valuable
- * Children have the right to grow up free from abuse and neglect
- * Children have the right to a safe environment
- * Children have the right to a nurturing home, family, and community
- * Parents and families have the right to non-judgmental support
- * Parents and families have the right to respect
- * Parents and families have the right to compassion
- * Strong communities value children and engage families
- * Communities have the right to parent support groups that are culturally responsive
- * Communities grow through support from their own members
- * Communities benefit from equal treatment of all members

Principles of Parent Support Groups

Trust

Parents who come to support groups count on each other to listen openly, respond honestly and always act with compassion. Parents know that all information shared in the support group is confidential and never discussed outside the group setting, within the limits of the law. All parents have the option of anonymity in the support group.

Reciprocity

Parents provide non-judgmental support to one another. Parents are the experts about their own families and their own children. Together, parents learn from one another about ways to strengthen their families.

Leadership & Personal Accountability

The support group belongs to the parents who attend. Parents determine the content of meetings and agenda; they define their own goals in the group, model healthy interactions, ensure meetings take place consistently, set individual goals and act on their decisions.

Respect

Parents in support groups can expect to have their feelings heard, one at a time. They can also count on having enough time for everyone to speak, rather than one or two people taking over all the time in the group. Parents, facilitators, and parent leaders honor cultural traditions, boundaries, and needs of group members.

Parenting in the Present

Support groups focus on what is happening today, rather than spending precious time on things in the past that cannot be changed. At times, people need to talk about the past, because the past is affecting what is happening now.

Shared Leadership

Parents and professionals build successful partnerships. They share responsibility, expertise, and leadership roles.

Responsibility

Members of the group hold each other accountable for the above values, ask for clarification if there is something they do not understand, and reach out if someone else seems to be struggling.

Non-Violence

Participants assist one another in developing positive methods of problem solving and realize that violence at any level is not an acceptable form of dealing with problems and issues.

Network Standards

- ✧ The groups utilize the mutual self-help support model.
- ✧ A trained group facilitator and parent leader facilitate the support groups.
- ✧ Open groups meet weekly and are offered at no cost to any participant.
- ✧ Driven by parent need and feasibility, a no-cost children's program is available; if not possible, then quality childcare is provided.

- * The group facilitator, parent leader and other group members are available to one another between group meetings.
- * Groups are ongoing, require no intake, and – with few exceptions – are open to all parents.
- * Group members are assured confidentiality in a non-judgmental environment within the limits of the law.
- * Community resource information that supports healthy family development is available to all group members.

CHAPTER TWO

CHAPTER

CHAPTER TWO

Overview of Circle of Parents

History

In 1999, the National Family Support Roundtable (Roundtable) was formed by 17 state and regional organizations to develop and share resources, support one another, and expand the availability of mutual self-help parent 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, yet 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 and, after a thoughtful process, Prevent Child Abuse America was selected as the administrative partner of choice.

Collaboration

The Roundtable and Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) agreed to collaborate during the spring of 2000 to seek a newly-offered \$500,000 per year, 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 OCAN funding supports the development and operations of a national network of mutual self-help parent support programs and the creation of new programs in underserved areas. Although work on the project was initiated immediately thereafter by Roundtable and PCA America staff, it was not until the spring of 2001 that a project director, capacity-building coordinator, training and technical assistance coordinator and an administrative assistant were hired.

During the summer of 2000, the collaboration successfully advocated for additional funding support through a congressional earmark. Once a legislative appropriation was passed in October 2000, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice (OJJDP) awarded a grant of \$300,000 in March of 2001. This funding is advocated for and renegotiated annually based on performance and need. The OJJDP funding supports the expansion and enhancement of self-help parent support programs in individual states and regions that are associated currently with the Roundtable, as well as PCA America's administration of the grant and reporting of significant events and progress to OJJDP.

Since the collaboration began, a variety of policies, resources, and program and training materials have been created to enhance the development of existing state and regional networks, facilitate the development of new statewide networks and ensure consistency of service delivery among all partners. In 2002, the collaboration and its statewide networks of mutual self-help parent support groups formalized its name to “Circle of Parents” to create an attractive, strengths-based identity for the collaboration.

Project Goals

The collaborative relationship between PCA America and Roundtable, as defined by the grants, is to fulfill the goals and objectives of the projects funded by OCAN and OJJDP.

The two projects include eight main goals:

1. Operate a national network, including collaboration and capacity building for self-help groups in the network,
2. Coordinate with activities under the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grants (CBCAP) authorized in Title II, as amended,
3. Identify communities lacking mutual support and self-help programs,
4. Create and promote programs in locations and for populations that are under-served,
5. Create opportunities for programs targeting populations at higher risk of victimization, including families of children birth to 3 years old, and Alaska Native, American Indian and African-American children,
6. Strengthen the capacity of existing programs to engage parents and cultivate parent leadership,
7. Promote public awareness and support for mutual support and self-help programs,
8. Establish new partnerships to facilitate program development and utilization.

To measure the achievement of these goals, the collaboration employs a participatory approach to research in partnership with PCA America’s National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research. Members contribute to the evaluation design and data gathering methodology.

Through shared leadership, four teams have created many processes and products for Circle of Parents’ members. Materials now include a train-the-trainers (T-3) curriculum and T-3 training, a support group facilitator manual, a children’s program manual, parenting tip sheets in English and Spanish and many topical technical assistance calls. Additional materials are the parent leadership development tool entitled “Circles of Parent Leadership,” a parent

handbook, and a parent leadership video, all which promote parent leadership. The collaboration also developed several marketing tools, including a website, www.circleofparents.org, and outreach brochures. Members also have access to a research data tool and self-assessment process for the continuous quality improvement of state networks.

Structure of the Collaborative Project

The project structure was developed in conjunction with the OCAN grant application. Using a shared leadership approach, the project has four teams:

Infrastructure: This team focuses on the development of the collaboration's operating policies and procedures, collegial agreements, the project evaluation, advocacy and resource development.

Capacity Building: This team addresses expansion to organizations desiring to create new statewide networks and helps to develop the capacity of members to enhance and increase the number of programs.

Training and Technical Assistance: This team promotes program integrity by producing program materials, training curricula and providing technical assistance to the collaborative partners.

Parents as Leaders: This team focuses on parent leadership development and the inclusion of the parent voice throughout the design and implementation of the project's work plan.

Each team has a variety of members: executive directors of state and regional programs, program staff, PCA America project staff, and parents, all of whom are equal participants. Team members are self-selected based on their particular field of expertise or interest, or have been nominated by their colleagues. Each team has co-chairs whose terms are time-limited.

Parents are vital members of the teams. The parent leaders represent the "parent voice" of the project's activities, not the Circle of Parents organizations with whom they originally connected. They are nominated by each state and are then brought on by the Parents as Leaders (PAL) team.

The project also has two adjunct committees that serve to strengthen the work and maintain the integrity of this shared leadership collaboration.

The **Leadership Council** is comprised of national experts in the field of child abuse and neglect prevention. Circle of Parents and PCA America nominate and elect these leaders to promote the project, the collaboration, and to serve as volunteer advisory consultants.

The **Steering Committee** is empowered by the group to resolve time-sensitive matters that cannot wait for the convening of all collaboration members. This committee also addresses issues that cannot be resolved through consensus within one of the work teams or the entire collaboration. Members of PCA America, parent leaders, and the Roundtable have equal representation on the committee.

Participatory Evaluation

The participatory evaluation model has been used for the Circle of Parents project and complements shared leadership. At the initial stages of research development, a team comprised of project members decided what information would be collected, what outcomes would be measured, and designed the methodology. At varying intervals, the research team revisits a data collection tool to make improvements and to recommend the appropriate strategies for measurement of key outcomes. The PCA America National Research Center spearheads these efforts and reports back to Circle of Parents. The project shares this information with state programs for future reports and grants and will share a final report with the child abuse prevention/family support field at the conclusion of the OCAN grant.

Next Steps

At the conclusion of the OCAN grant, Circle of Parents will continue on as a new non-profit organization. The development of the organization was led by a transition committee representative of Circle of Parents members, parent leaders and PCA America staff and board. Incorporated in April 2004, Circle of Parents created an interim board of directors, established by-laws and is pursuing tax-exempt status. Circle of Parents will continue to partner with PCA America and other organizations as it strives to continue carrying out its mission.

CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical Background

Parent Leadership

Parent leadership is the cornerstone of the Circle of Parents model of mutual self-help. Developing and nurturing parent engagement is a central aspect of successful mutual self-help endeavors that sets them apart from professionally led, hierarchical models. The collaborative believes that mutual self-help works because it is peer led and that parents experience transformative changes because they can identify with parent leaders who share their own backgrounds and similar challenges.

Parent leadership breaks down the “helper/helped (client)” model of service delivery and involves people in solving their own problems. Circle of Parents believes that the ability to solve one’s own problems builds confidence, increases self-esteem and enables people to make positive choices and changes in other parts of their lives. As parents increase their parenting skills and become role models for others, they often find themselves in leadership roles that once they had thought were beyond their abilities. Respecting the wisdom and experience of parent leaders and all group members leads to increased group development, effective programs, and stable parent participation.

Parent leadership can give members the opportunity to share and expand their personal capabilities. Not every parent has the interest to lead a group, but every parent has something to offer, whether it is coffee making, time-keeping or promoting the group in public. Because of the emphasis on personal growth and change within the safety of the group, no parent is assigned or held to a specific role. Each parent is valued for his or her contribution and the group is richer for it.

Addendum: Please see Circles of Parent Leadership and Wisconsin’s Parent Leadership brochure

Shared Leadership

Circle of Parents member organizations join with parent leaders in an asset based, shared leadership model of decision-making. The collaboration values the insights and perspectives of parents as those who best know the needs of families. Shared leadership is a learning experience in organizational life as parent leaders work with professionals to provide guidance, facilitation, and most of all hope for less experienced participants. Parent leaders know their communities; they know first-hand what matters to their peers. Engaging parent leaders in the creation of outreach strategies, evaluation programs, new group development, and overall governance are just a few of the concrete ways that shared leadership is actualized within Circle of Parents organizations.

Circle of Parents also practices shared leadership among its professional members and with collaborating agencies. When others have input into a decision, they are usually much more invested in the outcome. Quite often this approach results in more contributions from partners, greater awareness of a project, and more excitement as they too are considered the experts in their communities. People bring energy and commitment to the work if they feel valued and included with a shared sense of ownership.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FOUR

How the Groups Work

Mutual Self-Help Groups

Groups are facilitated by a parent who is a group leader, guided and supported by a trained group facilitator. The level of actual group facilitation by group leaders is always dependent on their skill levels and balanced with their own needs for support from other group members. Most groups meet for two hours each week, though some groups meet less often based upon local needs and constraints.

Circle of Parents believes that the true power of mutual self-help rests in the trust and honesty developed in the group. Group members share their personal journeys, challenges and successes, and provide help and guidance to other members. The act of sharing personal challenges helps members identify with others, breaks down isolation, and gives hope to those struggling with seemingly insurmountable difficulties.

Group members support one another as they set short and long-term goals for personal change and then hold each other accountable for meeting those goals. Often the support extends beyond the actual group meetings and members exchange after-group support, childcare, clothing, car and home repairs, or other resources that enhance their lives.

Facilitators

The facilitator is responsible for the safety and smooth functioning of the group, for the development of the parent group leader(s), and promoting parent leadership skills among the group members. Depending on the structure of the program, facilitators may be trained volunteers or paid staff. Usually they are people with education and experience in health care or human services. Most programs seek facilitators with group skills and knowledge of family support principles and the dynamics of child abuse. Facilitators might be responsible for marketing the group, parent recruitment, record keeping and site management. All programs provide extensive training and technical assistance support for their facilitators.

A facilitator should understand how the model of parent-led mutual self-help differs from traditional facilitator-led support groups and commit to the development of parent leadership. By changing the measure of success from “I led a good group tonight” to “the parent leader is exhibiting stronger group leader skills” the facilitator can re-frame the role and better understand the task.

The collective wisdom of the group is the basis for exchange of essential support, information and skills. The facilitator’s role is to enable the group to find its strength, not lead it. Participants take ownership of the group, recognize and take responsibility for their

own problems, and serve as role models for one another through the development of a caring community. Members are encouraged to support each other both inside and outside the group.

Addendum: See group facilitator sample job description

Parent Group Leaders

Parent group leaders are the heart and soul of the groups. Through nurturance by trained facilitators, they grow in abilities until they are comfortable facilitating group interaction and encouraging equal participation by all group members. Parent leaders also encourage and nurture emerging leaders in the group.

Parent leaders take on a leadership role in the group, assuming as much responsibility for its operation as they are prepared to take. A parent leader may be elected by the group, self-identify, or be asked to serve by the facilitator. Usually the parent leader and facilitator meet weekly. The facilitator works closely with the parent leader to define and constantly refine the parent leader role, help identify what skills are needed to do the job, and provide the support and feedback necessary to help the parent leader acquire those skills.

When becoming the parent group leader, a parent does not surrender his or her role as a parent in the group. It is a shared responsibility between the facilitator, parent leader and group to ensure the group leader continues to use the resources of the group for his or her own personal support if needed.

Children's Program Staff

When building a new parent group, it is important to also work towards building a parallel children's group at no cost to the parent. The goal of children's programs is to provide developmentally appropriate, skill-building activities that will increase children's self confidence and self worth while providing fun and enjoyment. Children's programs also offer an additional incentive for parent to attend Circle of Parents meetings by providing a safe, entertaining and educational place for their children.

The children's program staff is responsible for the safety and nurturing of the children while their parents are in group. Children's program staff are usually trained volunteers or paid staff who have education and experience working with children at a level specified by the individual program. All children's program staff are essential and valuable and provide another source of support to parents and other caregivers. Typically the children's program staff, facilitator and parent leader meet weekly to support each other.

Addendum: See children's program specialist sample job description

For more detailed information about how groups are structured and operated, refer to the Circle of Parents Facilitator Manual and Children's Program Manual.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHAPTER FIVE

Circle of Parents State Networks: Structures, Benefits, Responsibilities

Administration and Governance

All Circle of Parents member organizations are 501(c)(3) entities. They all have their own governing boards of directors, staff, and administration and in some cases operate or sponsor a variety of other family support programs. Many of the Circle of Parents member organizations also are PCA America chapters, www.preventchildabuse.org. Some house or partner with additional organizations such as Healthy Families America www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org and Family Support America, www.familysupportamerica.org and many others. This diversity among member organizations is a strength of the Circle of Parents national network as each member organization is structured to serve the needs of the geographic area in which it operates.

As new member organizations join Circle of Parents it is with the expectation that there is a statewide reach to provide Circle of Parents across the state. The national network recognizes the state network member as the central voice for that state and sends all information, benefits and resources through the state organization with the understanding they will distribute the information and resources as appropriate to their local groups and programs.

Benefits of Circle of Parents Membership to State Networks

Benefits

For Circle of Parents membership organizations, there are many opportunities for technical assistance, training, networking and support. Member organizations benefit in multiple ways. Parent leaders, local group staff and volunteers, administrators and managers, board members and others all can take advantage of training and technical assistance, advocacy, research and marketing support from national staff and other Circle of Parents peers and parent leaders from across the country.

One of the principal benefits of joining the national network is sharing the mutual self-help expertise of colleagues through the project listserv, materials posted on the website, conference calls and annual meetings. Members also find value in participating in the shared leadership model for conceiving, planning and implementing national network activities.

Addendum: See National Benefits of Joining

Responsibilities

There are also expectations of members, including:

- ❖ Participation on at least one work team of the Circle of Parents project;
- ❖ Participation on Circle of Parents collaboration conference calls and in annual meetings;

- * Membership fees;
- * Developing opportunities for parent leadership from the community to the national level;
- * Participation in evaluation and data collection to promote the effectiveness of mutual self-help parent support programs and the benefits of participation in a national network;

The complete list of expectations can be found on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the Addendum.

Addendum: See National Memorandum of Understanding

CHAPTER SIX

CHAPTER SIX

New State Network Development

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is critical in the initial phases of network development. This process need not be lengthy or expensive – if an agency already has a strategic plan, it is enough to revisit the plan and add Circle of Parents vision, mission and goals. It is imperative that the Circle of Parents development is coordinated with the overall direction and work of an agency. It is also critical that all stakeholders in an organization, including the Board of Directors are fully committed to the philosophy of the Circle of Parents program model, understand how it fits into the “big picture” of organizational work, and are supportive of the developmental work ahead.

The Circle of Parents self-assessment tool can be used in the strategic planning process and the development of an action plan for creating the infrastructure to sufficiently support the development and creation of Circle of Parents programs. After initial use, this tool is designed to be used once a year by all members to ensure continuous quality improvement.

Addendum: See National Self-Assessment Process and NC Site Self-Assessment

Models for Network Development

The state network is the critical component that keeps groups functioning. Either an organization decides to be the Circle of Parents state organization or is chosen for that position by a state or community consortium of stakeholders. The role an organization might play as the leader of the state Circle of Parents network varies across the national network. Currently there are three models of state network development.

Direct Service

Circle of Parents member organization is a provider of direct service and runs parent support groups itself.

Collaborating Partner

Circle of Parents member organization partners with one or more direct service providers to promote the model and operate parent support groups, while the member organization provides training, materials and/or assistance in coordinating and networking the programs across the state.

Combination Direct Service and Collaborating Partner

Circle of Parents member organization coordinates statewide activities and operates parent support groups but also partners with direct service providers to operate parent support groups.

While these models of state network development have been used successfully, organizations can be creative in their approach. It is not the technique that matters as much as the outcome: a fully functioning state network that supports parent groups to provide ongoing mutual self-help for parents in need.

All models support their groups and/or local partner organizations by providing training, technical assistance, mentors, newsletter tips for successful programs, network meetings, teleconference consultation calls, etc. The local organizations ensure that groups have a stable place in which to meet, accommodations for a children's program or child care, and local funds for snacks and program materials.

All three models are responsible for promoting the efficacy of the mutual self-help parent support model among key stakeholders. Activities may include advocacy with policy makers; developing public awareness and outreach strategies; establishing partnerships with other family support organizations; fundraising; and developing, measuring, and publicizing desired program outcomes.

Steps for Network Development

The most important aspect in the development of a state network is the readiness of an organization. It is imperative to have a solid infrastructure to support the work of building alliances with partners, creating strategies for network growth, and supporting the work of others.

Needs Assessment

State network development generally begins with a needs assessment of the target area – the whole state or region of the state or specific communities that are considered to be underserved. This can be done through surveys, facilitated meetings with potential stakeholders, focus groups with parents and community leaders, and phone conversations. Organizations can also use data from a variety of sources such as the state department of human services, department of children and families, department of education, welfare-to-work projects, Cooperative Extension, the Children's Defense Fund, Kids' Count, and other organizations that routinely collect data on child maltreatment, parental isolation, homelessness, poverty and the like. It is important to engage parents at the outset of the needs assessment. Organizations will also want to identify other parent-driven agencies to participate in the needs assessment such as Parent/Teacher Associations, family resource centers, community-based child abuse prevention programs, HeadStart, Healthy Families America and other programs that welcome parents' involvement. Also useful are less formal or non-traditional family-supportive institutions such as faith-based communities, civic organizations, park and recreation programs and neighborhood associations.

In the course of the needs assessment, there will be many opportunities to identify and communicate with potential new partners. A database of contacts and potential roles for each contact is helpful.

Once the needs assessment is complete, a fairly clear picture should emerge of the areas that hold the most opportunity to begin group development.

Setting Development Goals

Setting short and long term development goals is a critical step. Every organization will have varying capacity for first year new group development. The number of staff who can work on development, the current availability of volunteers, the budget, and the results of the needs assessment are factors to consider as initial goals are set. Leaders should be ambitious, yet realistic in goal setting and remember that new group development is a lengthy process. Some groups may take up a year to develop while others might be up and running within a three-to five- month time span.

Identifying geographic areas and potential partners

Once needs are determined and development goals are in place, identifying the geographic areas to be tackled is the next step. The willing partners that were identified during the needs assessment might define these. Most state nonprofit associations publish directories of their members that will be valuable in targeting potential partners. The Internet is another excellent tool in researching potential partners. In some instances, the initial development area might be dictated by the location of staff that could establish and operate the groups. In all cases, the identification of partners who share a common sense of mission about the need to help parents support each other will further development work faster than any other component.

Creating partner marketing materials

To bring in potential referral sources and additional partners create a simple, attractive recruitment package. The packet should contain:

- * Descriptions of the mutual self-help model,
- * Benefits of affiliation,
- * Partner roles and responsibilities,
- * Sample memorandum of agreement,
- * Elements needed for a successful group,
- * Description of your organization,
- * Mission statement, and
- * A set of testimonials from parents.

Quotes or testimonials from parents and volunteers can be found in all the Circle of Parents training manuals and the parent handbook. These testimonials can be put into the recruitment packet along with the handbook or manuals themselves. Some states have created simple checklists for development that help potential partners visualize the steps needed to create the support group while others have created a set of frequently asked questions (FAQ) for the recruitment package.

Addendum: See What parents say about groups, NC fact sheet, NC sample press release, MA Benefits for Collaborating Partners, MN Memorandum of Understanding and MA Letter of Agreement. Also refer to Testimonials on MA website at <http://www.parentshelpingparents.org/parentstories.html>

Beginning partner and/or community meetings

Working from the file that has been created of potential partners to contact for initial development meetings, leaders should create a list of initial contacts. It is usually best to begin with those organizations or potential partners with which there is a current, strong working relationship. Family support program leaders who serve on committees and task forces with staff from the targeted organizations should not be overlooked.

Creating a database and follow-up

Programs should create a formal database and keep records of contact communications. Many times, contacts that were unable to join the development effort in February are ready to be approached for successful development in October.

Network, Network, Network

Every time the development team meets and/or follows up with a contact, a primary question should be: "Who else should I be talking to in your community?" The more people reached the greater chance of success for building community "buy-in" and creating viable programs.

Define benefits of affiliation

It is critical to create "reasons" for partners to join these efforts. Many times these are called "benefits of affiliation." Consider these questions: Why should a potential partner join the development effort? What would an organization gain by developing and sponsoring a support group and children's program? What benefits would make it attractive to join a collaboration to serve parents? What barriers might they have to joining that can be overcome?

Each leadership organization will have its own list of benefits and resources it can offer their partners. Some common benefits are:

- * Greater options for parent referrals.
- * No-cost training for staff and volunteers.
- * No-cost materials and resources on mutual self-help.
- * An opportunity to add a promising service component to its existing family services.
- * Expanded marketing and outreach base.
- * Ongoing technical assistance and training.
- * The opportunity to join a statewide network of committed partners.
- * Access to national conferences and resources.
- * An opportunity to involve parents in meaningful ways in family support program and policy development.

Addendum: See MN Benefits for Chartered Affiliates

Defining Training and Technical Assistance Elements

Each state leadership organization will have a unique set of technical assistance and training (T and TA) components to offer partner organizations and groups. It is vital to define those to be offered, and then consistently deliver excellent products and service. Once development efforts begin to bear fruit, follow-up with existing partners and groups is critical to success. By providing consistent, reliable, high quality training and technical assistance to groups and partners, a reputation will be created in the community that will aid tremendously in future development efforts.

While each state offers its own distinct set of training and technical assistance elements, some common T and TA elements are:

- * Facilitator training – both initial and ongoing,
- * Children's program training – both initial and ongoing,
- * Parent leader training,
- * Specialized training on topics such as media development, parenting issues, substance abuse, domestic violence and child abuse prevention,
- * Partner/Leadership training on the basics of operating mutual self help groups,
- * Volunteer recruitment training,
- * Toll-free technical assistance phone line,
- * Staff TA site visits and TA conference calls,
- * Regional, statewide and national workshops and conferences,
- * Program newsletters,
- * Statewide network meetings and teleconference calls,
- * Website and electronic communications,
- * Educational resource materials,
- * Lending library that features samples, books, tapes and other family support and promising practice resources,
- * Monthly telephone check-ins with partners, facilitators and parent leaders,
- * Facilitator and children's programs' manuals,
- * Parent handbooks,
- * Mentoring,
- * Opportunities for partners to serve on state and national committees, and
- * Coordination and/or assistance with measuring and publicizing program outcomes.

These elements will also form the backbone of a defined benefits of affiliation.

Addendum: See Milwaukee newsletter, MT newsletter and Circle of Parents brochure
ME newsletters can be seen at <http://www.mainelyparents.org/newsletter.htm>.

Defining Partner Roles and Responsibilities

Just as the organization commits to delivering a variety of leadership and support roles for partners, so, too do partners need to understand their reciprocating roles in the relationship. Clearly defining partners' responsibilities and the expectations for network membership will create a framework for building a lasting network.

While frameworks for partner expectations will vary, some common partner responsibilities might include:

- * Naming a key contact from the partner organization to manage and nurture the development and maintenance of groups,
- * Providing sites for the support groups, and children's program,
- * Creating a local referral network for parents,
- * Taking referrals from parents,
- * Creating local public awareness of the availability of the group,
- * Recruiting volunteers or providing staff for the group,
- * Committing to and nurturing parent leadership,
- * Defraying minor expenses such as refreshments, copying, and supplies for the group, and
- * Collecting key data regarding the support group,

For more detailed information see the Circle of Parents Facilitator's Manual.

Addendum: See Collaborative Partner Development Checklist, MN

Outreach and Engagement

Outreach

Getting the word out is critical. Everyone on staff should carry information about the development campaign to promote self-help parent support groups. Organizations should prominently display recruitment materials at every opportunity and consistently invite other organizations, parents and the community-at-large to join the development campaign to support parents and nurture children.

Press releases and other public relations vehicles such as public service announcements (PSAs), placements in newsletters and newspapers, flyers, billboards, editorials from the executive director or board chair can accelerate the campaign's momentum. Requesting space in other like-minded organizations' newsletters, information booths at conferences, seeking speaking engagements at civic organization meetings, conducting workshops on the benefits of mutual self-help at conferences, and presentations to state, county and city human services staff all are excellent opportunities to reach potential organizational and community partners. Leaders should bring a sign-in sheet and get participant evaluations of all workshops, presentations and meetings to capture contact information and ideas for future development of presentations.

Some states have found it helpful to create a regular monthly development update that is sent to all contacts. This can be in the form of a memo, one-page newsletter or e-mail bulletin. This monthly contact keeps the promotion and development of self-help parent support groups in the public eye, helps contacts stay abreast of progress and is a constant reminder that the opportunity exists to join the network.

If the organization has a website, it should include a well-designed Circle of Parents presence. All outreach materials should include the website and suggest that prospective partners access it for additional information. If possible, they should include an email link so that interested parties may request information electronically.

In all cases, all materials to promote and support the development of groups should contain clear contact information, use the best language for the community, and reflect the cultural diversity of the community. It is imperative that those persons and organizations that are interested in learning more can relate to how the program can benefit their community, know how to easily contact the state network organization and be assured that they will receive immediate assistance.

Addendum: See group flyers from Milwaukee, CO, and FL flyer on starting a parent support group. Link to ME and WA websites at <http://www.mainelyparents.org/> and <http://www.parenttrust.org/>

Engagement

The essential ingredients for successful relationship building are enthusiasm, knowledge and persistence. In the course of network development, staff will connect with hundreds of people. Remaining upbeat and confident is critical. As with all relationship building, time, trust and consistency are critical factors.

Initial new development meetings generally last from 30 minutes to an hour. Leaders should be prepared. It is important to know the mission and current programs of the organizations being approached. The presentation should be focused, short and interesting, and allow plenty of time for questions. Presenters should be succinct but persuasive in the unique strengths of Circle of Parents groups, stress the long history of success of the model, describe the benefits of being associated with the emerging network, and explain the power of personal transformation that parents experience as participants in this movement.

At the close of the meeting presenters ascertain interest in program development, set a follow-up date and remember to ask the question, "Who else should I be talking to in the community?"

After initial parent support groups are up and running, organizations can recruit, support and utilize parents who are attending groups to come to program development meetings as spokespersons. Their presence will be compelling and credible. Partnering with parents in network expansion campaigns is a wonderful parent leadership development activity.

Developing Partner Organization Capacity

Organizational Commitment

Once partner agencies have been identified within the target communities, the next step is to develop the infrastructure needed to create support groups. It is helpful to have an opportunity to present the model and intended outcomes of the group to the board of directors, all staff members and their identified community stakeholders, not just those who will be directly involved in the creation and operation of support groups. This is a way to deepen community and organizational commitment to the Circle of Parents collaboration. It also helps to facilitate referrals to the groups, once they are opened, from other programs within the agency and surrounding community.

Staff and Volunteers

State network organizations should help the partner agency determine who will recruit, train, supervise and support staff or volunteers to facilitate the support group and operate the children's program. Subsequently, they should conduct a Circle of Parents basic orientation for all agency staff and volunteers chosen to be involved in developing the group. Presenters should ensure that all participants understand the fundamental principles of mutual self-help with an emphasis on parent leadership.

Key Contact

If a main contact at the partner organization has not been identified or appointed, this is the time to do so. This person will be the point person in the collaboration between the lead organization and any other partnering agencies for the collaboration and combined models, and more than likely the contact person for other agencies making inquiries about the program.

Site

It is important that the group meeting site is available for at least a year in order to provide stability for the parents. If the partner agency has space, this is ideal. If not, they can consider sites in other neighboring agencies, faith-based or community centers, clinics, family resource centers, and schools. There must also be a suitable and safe space for a children's program.

For more detailed information refer to the Circle of Parents Facilitator manual and Children's program manual.

Budget and Planning

Organizations should help the partner agency develop a simple budget covering staffing, facilities, marketing and other essentials to forecast the needs of the parent and children's support groups. It is important to ascertain if those funds are currently available or need to be raised. Many of the supplies needed to operate the group, such as snacks for children, refreshments for parents, books, games, and other items, can be obtained through in-kind donations.

Referral Networks

Referral networks are one of the main conduits used to recruit parents to support groups. Pay close attention to the development of such local networks. In helping partner agencies build referral network capacity, it is helpful to begin with existing referral networks within the community and tap into them, while remaining alert to other referral sources such as hospitals, faith-based communities, child care centers, schools, welfare-to-work programs, community centers, and family resource centers. There are no limits – wherever parents gather, worship, or turn for services there are good resources for referral network development.

Addendum: See Tools for Building Referral Network, Strategies for Recruiting Families, First Impressions

Point of Contact

A system and person at the partner agency must be created and identified to take referral calls when they begin to arrive. A responsible easily accessible person must be available to take or return calls to prospective parents and to send out information to callers and referral sources. When possible, the referral phone should be answered in person.

Developing Local Public Relations and Community Outreach

Organizations should work with the partner agency to develop their public relations/community outreach plan. Many Circle of Parents state network member organizations create and distribute generic Circle of Parents brochures with a space for local programs to insert their contact information. Others offer sample press releases and other public relation materials that can be easily customized by local partner agencies.

Parents as Partners in Development

Including parents in the initial group development process is one of the ways to ensure a parent-driven approach with new partner agencies. Organizations can invite parents who already utilize other services provided by the agency to assist in planning and implementing the support group. Parents are incredible sources of information about the needs of families in the community. They can help to identify appropriate referral sources, create messages that really reach parents and provide guidance on where to concentrate outreach efforts to make contact with parents who would benefit most from group participation. Parents on the development and planning team can also assist in the most critical factor for success– recruiting parents to the first support group meeting.

Components for Success

Although it is tempting to skip steps in order to get the group up and running, it is important that the initial capacity building and planning not be rushed or incomplete. For optimum initial success and longevity the support group needs the following foundation:

- * A needs assessment;
- * The commitment of the board and leadership of the partner agency;

- * Clarity of the roles, responsibilities and expectations for each partner;
- * A signed memorandum of understanding or letter of commitment which outlines the above;
- * A budget and identified secured resources;
- * Training for the staff/volunteers/parent leaders;
- * A trained key contact;
- * Trained facilitators/volunteers;
- * Trained children's group staff/volunteers;
- * A site that is available for at least 12 months;
- * A set day and time for the meetings as determined best by the potential participants;
- * A referral network of organizations that have agreed to and are capable of referring parents to the group;
- * A person/system for responding to referral calls;
- * A community outreach plan that is in the process of being implemented;
- * Parents who are already committed to attending the first support group meeting;
- * Ability to develop local public relations and community outreach;
- * Recruitment materials;
- * And most important, regular and ongoing support from the state Circle of Parents network organization.

The development and capacity building process can range from a several months to a year in some cases – the time frame is based primarily on the capability, resources, and priorities of the state network organization and its partner organizations.

Evaluation

State networks may use parent surveys and a self-assessment tool to help their partner agencies or local programs monitor their progress and success. Parent leaders are critical contributors to the development of all assessment and evaluation tools.

Parent surveys are one type of evaluation that many state networks use to evaluate their programs. Each evaluation is unique to its state and what they seek to measure.

As mentioned earlier, a strengths-based self-assessment tool for state networks is available to assist members of the Circle of Parent collaboration assess their progress and strengthen their work in developing networks of mutual self-help support.

Addendum: See parent survey MN. Refer back to full self-assessment/action plan for more details

CONCLUSION

This manual has highlighted areas and topics on which a member can focus while building a new network or reworking a current network. While this is far from all inclusive, it is hoped that it gives members things to think on, examples and places to look. As with any new network, remember to be patient and talk with your peers as many of the resources and processes that a new member needs are already out there. For additional questions please contact the national office at 312.663.3520 ext 828.

addendums

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CIRCLES OF PARENT LEADERSHIP

These circles of parent leadership show examples of different ways parents can grow.

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

Get self and family to group. Participate by attending regularly, on time. Follow children's program rules. Act on ideas learned through group. Report back to group on successes and challenges. Share honestly and offer ideas and support to others. Participate in parenting classes or other educational activities as needed for personal growth. Take leadership role in own family. Advocate on behalf of self and children with schools, doctors, and other professionals. Facilitate family meetings to plan fun events or solve problems. Model appropriate discipline, self-control, active listening, compassion and compromise for children and others. Take responsibility for solving personal problems: e.g. mental health issues, drug/alcohol issues, anger management problems, etc. Practice forgiveness for self and others and know that we all make mistakes, even leaders.

LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE GROUP

Arrange/open meeting room or building. Arrange for supplies, e.g. snacks, handbooks. Put up signs directing participants to the room. Welcome others; be a greeter or "chair patter". Introduce new parents to children's program. Clean up after meetings. Pass out/explain material to new parents. Take calls from prospective members. Participate in fund-raising activities. Develop referral base. Keep group calendar of upcoming events. Call missing members. Initiate introductions at group. Read or ask others to read opening and closing statements. Lead meeting. Take attendance or keep statistics. Be a timekeeper during meetings. Facilitate members' transportation needs. Accompany other parents as their advocate. Organize group events. Participate in team meetings with facilitator and children's program leader.

LEADERSHIP IN THE ORGANIZATION

Participate in training facilitators, parent leaders, and children's program staff. Attend and present at conferences and meetings. Implement needs assessments and surveys. Advocate with local aldermen, legislators, town and tribal councils. Volunteer to be on a board or advisory council. Help develop fund raising events. Contribute special talents to organization: e.g. office skills, artwork. Develop publicity to general community: e.g. health fairs, PTA presentations, service clubs, faith-based groups. Participate in publicity to target audiences: e.g. parenting classes, health and welfare groups.

LEADERSHIP IN THE LARGER COMMUNITY

Promote informed citizenship by voting and assisting with voter registration. Promote issue awareness through letter-writing and e-mail campaigns, public forums both for those affected and change-makers. Run for office: PTA, school board, local, state or national government. Organize or participate in child abuse awareness and prevention events. Serve on community councils and agency boards. Partner with community agencies. Work with national organizations or legislators to formulate public policy. Volunteer to work with national organizations or be on a national board. Participate in civic and community activities e.g. neighborhood watch, scouting, faith-based groups.

addendum B

In the State:

- Provide feedback to Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin about the development of new materials and resources for local program sites
- Help Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin plan for the development of new Circle of Parents sites and evaluation of current sites
- Communicate with state lawmakers (legislators) to improve child abuse prevention policies
- Provide presentations to the public, agencies and leaders on parent self-help groups
- Serve on Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin's Board of Directors
- Participate and/or attend the Wisconsin Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
- Attend state parent leadership conference

On the National Parents as Leaders Team:

- Assist the partnership in the planning, implementation and evaluation of national parent self-help support groups and child abuse prevention services
- Communicate with legislators in Washington, D.C., to improve child abuse prevention policies
- Serve on the Circle of Parents work teams of: Training and Technical Assistance, Capacity Building, Infrastructure or the Parents as Leaders Team
- Participate/attend the annual national conference

Circle of Parents™

Circle of Parents™ is a trademark of Prevent Child Abuse America and is the National Network of Mutual Support and Self-Help Programs in Partnership with Communities, a collaborative project of Prevent Child Abuse America and the National Family Support Roundtable.

Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin is the state chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America and is a member of the National Family Support Roundtable. Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin is one of two administrative offices for the network of Circle of Parents™ programs in Wisconsin. If you are in Milwaukee, you may want to call the Parenting Network, 414-671-5575



CIRCLE of PARENTS™
Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.



Prevent Child Abuse
Wisconsin



CIRCLE of PARENTS™
Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.

Parent Leadership



Parent leadership is an important aspect of parent-led mutual self-help groups. This brochure describes what parent leadership is and how any parent can become a leader!

What is a Parent Group Leader?

Parent group leaders are group members who are willing to help the group in an extra way. As a result, these parents expand their talents and leadership skills.

Who are parent leaders?

All parents are leaders! Every parent plays an important role in their parent support groups. However, many parent mutual self-help groups decide to select one person who, for a time, will take on extra leadership responsibilities and is designated as the group's "parent group leader."

How are parent group leaders chosen?

Parent leaders may be chosen in a number of different ways. Sometimes facilitators pose a question to all group members, asking who would be interested in volunteering to be the parent leader. Some groups decide who their parent leader will be by having group members vote. In other groups the facilitator may notice specific leadership qualities in a participant and ask that member if he or she would like to take on the parent leader role.

Why would I want to be a parent leader?

The rewards of being a parent leader are great. One parent leader said, "Being a parent leader built my confidence and increased my sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Being the group leader gave me the opportunity to speak with others about the benefits of the program. It allowed me to "give back" to my group and to my community."

If I am a parent group leader what will I need to do?

As a parent leader you may take on a number of different tasks including:

- Calling the group to order
- Reading opening/closing statements
- Being on the site committee
- Following up with missing members
- Making coffee/refreshments
- Taking calls from people who are interested in becoming a group member
- Keeping track of time for the group
- Welcoming new members
- Leading the organization of a holiday party or other celebration
- Inviting a speaker to present to the group
- Leading the group

There are many other ways you may also help lead your group. Your facilitator will be there to support you as you decide which tasks you feel comfortable taking on.

Depending on your group, you may be the only designated parent leader or you may be a co-leader and share responsibilities with another group member.

Parent leaders are usually expected to make a commitment to being the leader for a specific length of time. The length of time will depend on your local program. Some program sites ask parents to take turns leading the group on a rotating weekly schedule. Most sites have parents commit to being the leader for either a quarter or half of a year or even an entire year. Check with your facilitator to learn about your program's expectations.

What are other ways I can be leader?

Whether you know it or not you already are a parent leader—you have joined a parent-led mutual self-help group, which means you are willing to seek support for your family and tap into resources available in your community. The following is a list of other ways you can be a leader.

At Home:

- Nurture and provide a healthy home for your children
- Practice positive, effective and healthy parenting skills
- Build your children's self-esteem
- Nurture your own sense of self-worth

In a Parent Support Group:

- Help keep the group running smoothly
- Help other parents in need
- Help lead the group
- Reach out to others
- Build a support system for yourself and other group members
- Serve as a role model for other parents

In the Community:

- Volunteer at an agency that helps parents and families
- Serve on the program site's Board of Directors or a steering committee
- Provide presentations on parent self-help groups
- Speak to members of the media about parent support groups and the importance of promoting positive parenting
- Participate in community events that promote positive parenting

addendum c



Group Facilitator – Job Description

Purpose: To facilitate a weekly parent support group based on the mutual self-help and shared leadership model.

Time Expectations: Minimum one year commitment. Facilitators average 3 hours per week to complete the responsibilities listed below.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Attend Facilitator Training.
- Faithful attendance that includes arriving at group 15 minutes early to welcome families as they arrive.
- Encourage and support group members.
- Encourage and support the development of the shared leadership model.
- Provide a safe environment for families to celebrate, problem-solve, vent and become an extended support system for one another.
- Train Parent Group Leaders to actually run the group.
- Provide referral information as needed.
- Meet weekly to debrief with Children’s Program Specialists for support, problem solving and celebrating successes.
- Commit to a positive closing at the end of each group as well as a final “good-bye process” when you leave the group.

Qualifications

1. Knowledge of group process, community resources and child development.
2. A strong commitment to family empowerment and to ending all forms of family violence.
3. Ability to provide non-judgmental support and nurture leadership in those around you.

Benefits:

1. Additional experience with group facilitation;
2. Skills and ability to nurture parent leadership;
3. You will become part of the national family support movement—a growing wave of people dedicated to creating healthy extended families, thriving neighborhoods and peaceable communities; and
4. Training opportunities, resources and support at no cost.

addendum D

Children's Program Specialist – Job Description

Purpose: To provide a weekly, organized group for children whose parents are attending mutual self-help support groups.

Time Expectations: Minimum one year commitment; approximately three hours per week.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Provide a safe and supportive environment for children.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop self-esteem and social skills.
- Support children in learning safe and healthy ways to handle feeling to model effective problem solving and conflict resolution techniques.
- Support children and parents to establish trust and positive interactions with each other.
- Utilize the Children's Program Manual to plan activities for children from age five on.
- Coordinate purchase of children's snacks and supplies.
- Interact with the Group Facilitator for support and problem solving.
- Attend training.

Qualifications:

1. Experience and a passion for working with children.
2. Familiarity with creative child discipline techniques.
3. Familiarity with volunteer supervision.
4. Ability to provide non-judgmental support.

Benefits:

1. Additional experience working with children.
2. Knowledge that you are part of a community, as well as statewide effort to promote positive parenting and healthy families.
3. Training opportunities, resources and support at no cost.

addendum E

Benefits of Joining

Participate in a National Network

- Be part of a shared participatory leadership model; be involved in work teams and have your voice be heard!
- Share the resources of the Circle of Parents' members in 29** states
- Stay abreast of current information on the development of mutual self-help support programs
- Tap into a national website for mutual self-help programs containing current information and research
- Dialogue with other Circle of Parents' members through a Mutual Self-Help Listserv
- Attend an annual national meeting and network with colleagues

Training and Technical Assistance (at no cost to members)

- Access national technical assistance from current experts in the field
- Send volunteers or staff to a Train the Trainers Institute on group facilitation
- Use the national facilitator manual
- Use the national children's program manual
- Use the parent handbook developed by a national team of parent leaders
- Participate in technical assistance conference calls with nationally-known speakers several times a year
- Utilize national capacity-building / state systems development expertise
- Participate in strength based on-going peer review
- Receive peer mentoring
- Access PCA America's national staff expertise
- Share resources available through all member organizations

Parent Involvement

- Access systems for developing or strengthening parent involvement at every level of your organization
- Participate with parents on each working team
- Be on a national team supported by Parents as Leaders
- Help grow the continuum of parent involvement from groups, to state, to a national level

Advocacy

- Receive advocacy updates on national child abuse prevention agendas
- Gain tools for advocacy
- Utilize advocacy tools in seeking support for funding

- Be part of a national collective voice through the National Call to Action and the National Child Abuse Coalition
- Access experts in advocacy at the national level

Research

- Participate in development of research methodologies
- Access tools and systems for evaluating parent self-help support programs for your use at the state/region level
- Contribute to national parent self-help research that demonstrates its effectiveness
- Access PCA America research center information, collaboration, and technical assistance, such as receiving current child abuse statistics from the 50 State Survey

Marketing

- Promote your parent self-help groups using a national service identity
- Benefit from national promotion of parent self-help groups through various media i.e. PCA America national quarterly newsletter, press releases, articles, brochure, website
- Benefit from PCA America media campaigns as a partner
- Access April Child Abuse Prevention Month packets

Other Benefits

- Impact your state network development through resource development
- Access funds available to groups through the Circle of Parents' competitive RFP mini-grant process
- Benefit from national collaborations with Family Support America, CBFRS, FRIENDS and others
- Learn from and participate with other PCA America networks
 - PCA America Chapters (37 states)**
 - Healthy Families America (450 sites)**
- Attend bi-annual national conference on Child Abuse and Neglect with specific tracks dedicated to parent self-help support programs
- Benefit from the support and recognition of the network by Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and Office of Child Abuse and Neglect (U.S. Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services)

**As of Jan 2004

Circle of Parents' is the National Network of Mutual Support and Self-Help Programs in Partnership with Communities, a collaborative project of Prevent Child Abuse America and the National Family Support Roundtable. This project was made possible by Grant No. 90CA 1668 from the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not represent the official views or policies of the funding agency, nor does publication in any way constitute an endorsement by the funding agency

addendum F



Circle of Parents™

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Background and Purpose

A collaboration between the member organizations of the National Family Support Roundtable (Roundtable) and Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) has been formed to maintain, strengthen, nurture, grow and support a National Network of Mutual Support/Self-Help Programs in Partnership with Communities. The network project, known as Circle of Parents™, is funded by the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect of the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice. This collaboration is based on the philosophical framework of shared leadership and ownership, mutual respect, constituent representation on all level of participating organizations, and inclusiveness.

Basic Values of the Collaborating Colleagues

This Memorandum of Understanding recognizes the commitment of the undersigned to the following philosophical tenets in working as a member of this collaboration:

- An intrinsic belief in preventing child abuse and neglect through strengthening and supporting parents and children to build strong health families and vital communities
- A commitment to helping parents succeed in supporting the growth and development of children
- The assurance that parents will be treated as equal partners and that opportunities for parent leadership will be developed.

Responsibilities of the Collaborating Colleagues

- Pursuit of the Circle of Parents project goals.
- Developing opportunities for parent leadership from the grassroots to the national level.
- Ongoing collaboration for support and the exchange of expertise, information and resources with each other.
- Development and expansion of mutual self-help parent support programs for a variety of constituents throughout communities either directly or by enabling planning through collaborations with local, state, and national colleagues.
- Participation in evaluation and data collection to promote the effectiveness of mutual self-help parent support programs and the benefits of participation in a national network.
- Provision of information concerning mutual self-help parent support program development for best practice development and reports of progress to the project's funding sources.
- Participation on at least one work group committee or team of the Circle of Parents project.

- Participation on Circle of Parents collaboration conference calls and in annual meetings.
- Ensuring that any designated representative of the organization understands the voting process.
- Adherence to ethical standards of cooperation, coordination and collaboration with each other and with other providers of mutual self-help parent support programs.
- Participation in trainings and conferences determined to be beneficial to the sustainability and growth of the Circle of Parents.
- Involvement in advocacy actions on the local and national level to maintain and expand support for the growth and sustainability of Circle of Parents and the Roundtable.
- Promotion of Circle of Parents to all potential funders, collaborating colleagues and the media.
- Active participation in alliances established with other groups, including CBFRS agencies.
- Meeting all obligations of funding sources.

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By executing this Memorandum of Understanding, the undersigned commits to supporting the Collaboration of the National Family Support Roundtable and Prevent Child Abuse America in the development and implementation of Circle of Parents. With the exception of Prevent Child Abuse America, the undersigned also agrees to membership with the National Family Support Roundtable.

Printed Name of Authorized Representative _____

Signature of Authorized Representative _____

Name of Organization _____

Date _____

The organizations associated with this collaboration include:

**Child and Family Services, New Hampshire
The Exchange Club Parent Child Center, Mississippi
Families First, Colorado
The Family Advocate Program, Idaho
Family Forward, Texas
Family Support Network, Minnesota
Kansas Children's Service League
Mainely Parents, Maine
Montana Council for Families
Nebraska Children and Family Foundation/Prevent Child Abuse Nebraska
The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida
The Parenting Network, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Parent Trust for Washington Children
Parents Helping Parents, Massachusetts
Parents Care and Share of Illinois
Prevent Child Abuse Alabama
Prevent Child Abuse America
Prevent Child Abuse Connecticut, Wheeler Clinic
Prevent Child Abuse Georgia
Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky
Prevent Child Abuse Missouri
Prevent Child Abuse New Hampshire
Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina
Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota
Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee
Prevent Child Abuse Vermont
Prevent Child Abuse Virginia
Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin
Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming
Rhode Island Parent Information Network
Volunteers of America – Dakotas**

Revised: 4/2004

addendum G

Directions for Using the Self-Assessment Tool

Overview

The spirit and intent of the Self-Assessment Tool and companion Action Planning process is to assist Circle of Parents™ members and the stakeholders in their state or region to celebrate successes and identify areas for future growth. It is recommended that each state or region use the tool once a year or whenever they feel it will best benefit their organization. After completion of the self-assessment, the organization will craft an action plan to guide their efforts in local, regional, or statewide capacity building. The plan would then be shared with national project staff along with any requests for technical assistance needed to meet the plan's goals.

The completed self-assessment tool will remain the property of your organization and can be shared with others at your discretion.

The Self-Assessment Tool is a strength-based tool designed to assist members of the Circle of Parent collaboration assess their progress and strengthen their joint work in developing networks of mutual self-help support.

The Self-Assessment Tool is designed to help members facilitate an interactive program review process, which is inclusive of as many stakeholders as each organization deems necessary. This is an entirely collaborator-driven initiative. It is a tool to be used to measure progress, aid organizations in creating action plans for success and help collaborating members demonstrate shared leadership with their constituents.

This is not a pass or fail exercise, rather it is a continuum approach designed for each organization to self-reflect and examine its progress. This assessment method takes into account the many elements needed to develop successful networks of mutual self-help and gives stakeholders within the organization opportunities to celebrate successes while identifying areas for future growth.

The Self-Assessment Tool is broken into three sections.

- The Administrative section of the Measures of Quality is based on the Memorandum of Understanding.
- The State/Regional Network Development section pertains to those elements, which many network members across the country have found to be critical in building lasting networks of mutual self-help programs.

- The Parent Support group section contains those elements that help participants identify components of mutual self-help, which can reside in both Parent Support and Parent Education groups as well as a blending of the two.

The Self-Assessment Tool may be used in three ways to strengthen local, regional and statewide programs. The first is an interactive process involving multiple stakeholders, the second is primarily for staff to use to assess their efforts in building local networks and finally, the tool can be used by local network members to gauge their own progress. Through continued use of the tool, Circle Parents members may find other ways to use it to further strengthen their work. The interactive process has proven to be of great value in building shared commitment. If an organization chooses to use this approach, experience has found that the more stakeholders involved in the assessment meeting(s), the stronger the outcome. The group approach mirrors the values of mutual self-help as it is non-judgmental, interactive and inclusive.

Just as there is no set way to use the tool, there are no right or wrong answers. Being honest in the assessment portion and providing time for all voices to be heard is critical in getting the most out of the assessment.

How To

The ideas in this section are to be used as suggestions and guidelines. There are many ways to use the tool and each organization should use it in the manner that best reflects their needs.

The Self-Assessment Tool can be used effectively as part of an interactive meeting of organizational stakeholders. This can be accomplished in one meeting or a series of meetings. Selecting the participants for the self-assessment meetings is at the sole discretion of each organization. Using the Tool in an interactive, facilitated process will help to strengthen teams, build organizational consensus and explore a variety of opinions and perspectives.

If an organization chooses to use the interactive process approach, listed below are suggestions for groups that might work together to complete the assessment:

1. Executive Director, Program Director and staff.
2. Executive Director, Staff and Board.
3. Executive Director, Staff, Board, Parent Leaders, Key Volunteers.
4. Any of the above, plus significant collaborating partners, peers in the field and/or local funders.

If the organization decides to use the interactive process, it is helpful to have someone facilitate the meeting so that all stakeholders may fully participate. The self-assessment can be conducted in a variety of ways based upon the needs, resources and structure of your organization. The following are suggestions for recruiting a facilitator for the session:

1. Use a staff person or volunteer from your organization to facilitate the process.
2. Hire an outside facilitator to conduct the session.
3. Obtain a pro-bono facilitator from your local United Way or another funder.

4. Request a facilitator from the Circle of Parents national staff.
5. Request another Circle of Parents member to serve as a peer facilitator.

If the organization chooses to use the interactive process, it is most helpful if participants complete the tool themselves prior to the meeting. During the meeting, the facilitator will chart individual responses to each measure of quality and allow time for discussion. This can be a rich time of discovery for all participants; providing time for differing points of view to emerge and helping the group to identify areas of strength as well as areas for future improvement.

If you choose to use this method, it is important to gain group consensus in pinpointing where the organization currently ranks on the accomplishment continuum for each measure.

Using the group process to complete the Self-Assessment Tool will provide important feedback from organization stakeholders and will help to build commitment to the work. However, the tool also may be used by the Executive Director, Program Director or other staff alone. Individual use of the tool will provide a base-line evaluation of the program and pinpoint areas for future growth. Regular individual use of the tool can also help to chart progress on organizational goals and indicate areas for plan modification and adjustments.

The Tool may also be used by network members to gauge their progress in developing local mutual self-help groups. Program Directors or Program Coordinators may wish to modify the tool for local member's use.

Regardless of the method used, it is important to set aside time not only to reflect on progress and challenges but also to celebrate achievements.

While the Self-Assessment Tool can be used alone, it is recommended that the next step in the assessment process is the creation of an action plan. An action plan, drawn directly from the results of the assessment will aid the organization in achieving success in their identified areas for improvement.

Action Plan

The action plan can be used in a variety of ways. Some suggested uses for the completed action plan include:

- A guidepost for constructing annual staff/volunteer work plans
- Track annual results in developing state networks
- Identify technical assistance needs for the organization.
- Provide input for a requested site visit from Circle of Parents peers or national staff

The quality assurance tool and the resulting action plan can be used effectively to track annual progress against goals. The results of the process can be used to demonstrate to funders and other donors that the organization is using an all-inclusive process to measure quality and track results in the development of local, state and regional networks.

Self-Assessment Tool

Measures of Quality	Accomplishment Continuum			
	Met	Good Momentum	Under Development	Stuck
Administrative				
1. Meet all deadlines for submission of reports, data and evaluation information.				
2. Respond to requests to advocate for project funding & support through emails, letters, visits & phone calls.				
3. Share expertise & resources with other project collaborating colleagues.				
4. Actively participate on at least 1 work team. (Infra., Cap, T/TA, PAL)				
5. Actively participate in conference calls & annual meeting.				
6. Participate in project trainings & conferences as resources allow.				
7. Demonstrate commitment to developing parent leadership through work on 1 or more initiatives such as: a) Involve parents in planning/facilitating of local groups b) Involve parent leaders in other significant state/regional activities. i.e. spokesperson, serve on state/regional board c) Support/Create state/regional parent leadership councils d) Nominate local parents to national team				
8. Actively collaborate with other groups and organizations to promote Circle of Parents & mutual self-help overall.				
9. Actively pursue the goals of the project.				
State/Regional Network Development				
10. Create & use a state/regional annual development & support plan for mutual self-help programs.				
11. Create and fund an annual budget to ensure development & support goals are attainable.				
12. Provide training for facilitators.				
13. Provide training for children's program volunteers/staff.				
14. Provide training for parent leaders.				
15. Distribute national or locally produced facilitator manual to all direct service staff and volunteers.				
16. Distribute national or locally produced Children's Program Manual to all direct service volunteers/staff.				
17. Distribute national or locally produced parent handbook to all parent participants.				
18. Provide training for local leadership volunteers.				
19. Provide training on referral network development, local fundraising, and outreach strategies.				
20. Distribute newsletters, technical assistance bulletins or use other vehicles to regularly communicate with network members.				
21. Provide access to technical assistance & support using a variety of means.				

Measure	Met	Good Momentum	Under Development	Stuck
22. Provide monthly phone contact with every – network member.				
23. Conduct site visits with each network member at least once annually.				
24. Provide toll-free telephone access or have staff in areas that are accessible by most network members.				
25. Hold a conference or gathering to strengthen the state/regional networks.				
26. Use a variety of strategies to ensure the voices of parents are used in meaningful organizational decision-making & planning.				
27. Conduct an annual or bi-annual survey of parent group participants.				
28. Utilize a group quality assurance strategy or component for support groups.				
29. Provide a new development packet to all potential new support groups or network members.				
30. Use a tool such as a tracking sheet or development checklist in the creation of new support groups.				
31. Provide support groups, materials, training and technical assistance to a wide variety of culturally diverse populations.				
32. Develop & utilize a variety of strategies and approaches to reach underserved populations, both geographic and demographic.				
Parent Support				
33. All groups operate from the Circle of Parents' network standards as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The groups utilize the mutual self-help support model. b) A trained group facilitator and parent leader facilitate the support groups. c) Open groups meet weekly and are offered at no cost to any participant. d) Driven by parent need and feasibility, a no-cost children's program is available; if not possible, then quality childcare is provided. e) The group facilitator, parent leader and other group members are available to one another between group meetings. f) Groups are ongoing, require no intake, and, with few exceptions, are open to all parents. g) Group members are assured of confidentiality in a non-judgmental environment within the limits of the law. h) Community resource information that supports healthy family development is available to all group members. 				

Note: Information for completing items 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 27 can be found on the OCAN data collection tool.

Revised 2.21.03



Action Planning Process

Overview

The self-assessment process will assist you to identify areas of strength and areas, which need improvement. The action planning process provides a framework that your stakeholders can use to set realistic goals and strategies for organizational improvement.

The overall objective of the Action Planning Process is to create strategies around selected measures of quality that assist the organization in moving one step up on the Accomplishment Continuum. Designed for collaborative use, the action planning process leverages the expertise and resources of participants and ensures ownership of the plan's implementation.

The completed action plan is a tool to guide the development and strengthening of state and regional networks. It provides a framework to monitor and evaluate efforts and make decisions related to program improvements and expansion. Most important, the action planning's continuous improvement process encourages stakeholders to remain focused on the critical measures of quality that ensure successful network and group development.

What is Action Planning

The Action Planning Tool provides a framework to create goals and craft specific tactics or tasks that must be undertaken to achieve expected outcomes. To be most effective, goals must be measurable and specific with clear accountabilities of all persons responsible and time frames for achievement.

Action Planning is a continuous process, which does not end when the plan is completed. Rather, it is a tool to guide all plan implementation, monitor progress against stated goals and provide information for the next phase of organizational capacity building.

How to Use the Tool

Use the sample Action Planning Tool below and the companion key to help clarify any portion of the tool.

Action Planning Tool

Organization & State: (1)

Date Completed: (2)

Measure of Quality: # (3)	Goal: (4)				
	Tasks (5)	By Whom (6)	By When (7)	Resources Needed (8)	Results (9)
	1.				
	2.				
	3.				

Key:

1. Name of your organization and the state or region in which you provide services.
2. Date the Action Plan begins.
3. The Self Assessment Measure of Quality this goal covers.
4. A measurable and specific goal, i.e., Train all facilitators, is not as measurable and specific as: Train a minimum of 15 facilitators by December 31, 2003.
5. List the tasks that will be undertaken to achieve the goal.
6. Assign **one** person to be accountable for the achievement of this task, even if the task will require work and input from multiple persons or groups.
7. Set a date by which you expect to complete each task. Beginning with the end in mind is a good way to set realistic dates. If you need to have the project completed by December, work backwards from your goal date to set deadlines for completion of each task.
8. The resources needed column provides opportunities for the planning group to identify resources, be they human, financial, materials, etc., which are needed to successfully achieve the plan.
9. The results column becomes a way to track your progress against each goal. In this column you can: a) record the date the task was completed, b) capture lessons learned for future planning and c) identify other items that need to be completed for success of the plan. If you fall behind in the completion of tasks in the plan, the planning group can use the results column to help modify the plan to ensure the goal is still attainable.

The Action Plan is a map, which you can use to guide your efforts. It is not a static document. It can and should be modified along the way to take into account the changing environment in which everyone works, unanticipated staff and volunteer changes, and opportunities that may present themselves to make the work faster and easier to accomplish.

While it is not listed as column in the Action Planning Tool, many groups find that identifying the barriers to achieving their goals is a helpful exercise. To do so, simply list the goal and its potential barrier(s), the planning team then brainstorms a list of possible solutions to each barrier. This gives your action plan more depth and helps everyone be better prepared for the inevitable pitfalls that may lie ahead.

Action Planning is a creative and future focused endeavor. When used in conjunction with the Measures of Quality, a plan can assist state and regional organizations as well as local groups increase their capacity to serve parents, strengthen groups, discover new areas of support and identify areas for future growth.



CIRCLE of PARENTS™
Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.
Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.

Action Planning Tool

Organization & State:		Date Completed:			
Self Assessment Measure of Quality: # _____	Goal:				
	Tasks	By Whom	By When	Resources Needed	Results
	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	4.				
	5.				
	6.				
Self Assessment Measure of Quality: # _____	Goal:				
	Tasks	By Whom	By When	Resources Needed	Results
	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	4.				
	5.				
	6.				
Self Assessment Measure of Quality: # _____	Goal:				
	Tasks	By Whom	By When	Resources Needed	Results
	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	4.				
	5.				
	6.				
Self Assessment Measure of Quality: # _____	Goal:				
	Tasks	By Whom	By When	Resources Needed	Results
	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	4.				
	5.				
	6.				
Self	Goal:				
	Tasks	By Whom	By When	Resources Needed	Results
Self	Goal:				
	Tasks	By Whom	By When	Resources Needed	Results
Self	Goal:				
	Tasks	By Whom	By When	Resources Needed	Results

addendum H

Site Self Assessment
NC Circle of Parents Network

	Met	Good Momentum	Under Development	Stuck
There is one trained, consistent facilitator for group(s)				
There is one trained substitute facilitator for the group(s)				
There is at least one Parent Group leader who is actively involved				
There is one trained Children's program leader/ childcare specialist				
There are at least two children's program/ childcare assistants				
There is an advisory/planning committee for the local program site with appropriate stakeholders represented, including parents				
The program site embraces the philosophies of parent leadership, mutual self-help, and family support principles – refer to "Parent Involvement Checklist"				
The program site conducts monthly "staffings" with the group facilitator(s), parent leader(s), children's program staff, and supervisor to discuss prior group meetings, and plan for future group meetings.				
There is an active referral network established				
There is a budget and long-term funding plan in place				
The meeting site is safe, convenient, comfortable, and secured for at least a year				
Group is available to participants once a week				
The group has a consistent structure (e.g. opening/closing statements, group rules, etc.)				
There is a means for parents to provide and receive support between group meetings				
The local program site meets reporting requirements				

addendum I

What parents say about groups

"I don't have a lot of outside friends and support for my daughter, because I'm a single mom. I need that group every week. I've developed and I need to go to it and get advice from everyone, the support. It's more of a help than I thought it would be." single parents groups participant

"One thing that I love about our group that I didn't really know to expect was how people are not judgmental of each other. People come and bring all sorts of stuff, and everyone is open to listen and not to judge, but just to go, oh man, that must be hard. So it's much more sharing instead of, well, she shouldn't have done that. I just never have gotten that feeling of people judging each other. Instead, it's like how can we help you and what can we do to make things better? It's just being there for each other." parent group participant

"The fact that it makes me a better parent, because I feel that I'm not doing it wrong, or that it's okay to put them in time out, or whatever people are suggesting to me. It's like I'm getting reinforcement on what I'm doing as a parent." parent group participant

"The best thing about the group is that it's so enjoyable I don't want to leave. I feel so exhilarated and confident about being a parent. And going home, I feel like I really got a break and got adult conversation. And even though it's mainly about the children, it's still that time away. And I love the feeling when I leave there. I feel like a brand new parent." parent group participant

"The real important thing is that with a group you learn, in more than one way, that you're not alone. You realize you're having the same problem as someone else. The same problems and issues affect everyone all over the country." parent leader

"With my group, the help is there all the time; we share phone numbers. I know I can pick up the phone and talk to someone to help me get through a real tough time. If your anger is boiling up, just knowing that you can pick up the phone and nothing will happen is a real good feeling. Someone on the other end of the phone will help calm you down and get you back." parent group participant

"Parent support groups are a world of information. There are so many different views and ideas. I will find someone in the group who can give me information to get started on the relationship and how to deal with the problems. If someone in the group doesn't have first-hand knowledge, they often have other resources, like books or other groups. They share resources as well as the experience." parent group participant

addendum j

Circle of Parents

The North Carolina Circle of Parents Network is sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina and is firmly rooted in the principles of mutual self-help, family support, and shared leadership between parents and professionals.

What Are Circle of Parents Groups?

Circle of Parents groups provide places for parents to build their own sense of competence and power. Parents do this by building relationships and connecting with other parents who share common experiences, successes, and challenges. Through weekly group meetings co-led by parents and professionals, participants will:

- gain a sense of belonging and relief as they learn that their family dynamics and their child's behavior are more typical than problematic
- become resources to each other inside and outside of the group by sharing coping strategies and parenting skills from parents who have "been there"
- advocate for themselves and other parents as they both give and receive help and thereby recognize that seeking help is a sign of strength - not a sign of weakness

A Circle of Parents program is a source of strength and support *for parents by parents*, providing lasting friendships for group participants.

These programs are a time-tested child abuse prevention approach that promote positive parenting. The groups are confidential and non-judgmental. The Circle of Parents model epitomizes the concept of shared leadership with families. Parents participate in planning at the national, state, and local levels and also lead the groups with the support of professional facilitators. Sites also provide a parallel children's program or quality child care.

How Do Self-Help Groups Operate?

The Circle of Parents model spells out key elements the program should have for successful groups:

- A trained group facilitator and parent leader who facilitate the support groups
- Weekly group meetings that are offered at no cost to participants
- Groups that are driven by parent need
- An accompanying children's program, if possible, or quality childcare provided at no cost
- The group facilitator, parent leader, and other group members being available to one another between group meetings
- Groups that are ongoing, require no intake, and with few exceptions are open to all parents
- Assurance of confidentiality in a non-judgmental environment (within the limits of the law)
- Availability of community resource information supporting healthy family development



What Are The Objectives Of This Program?

The objectives of this program are to help parents achieve their self-described goals by:

- Helping reduce isolation, build self-esteem, and reinforce positive parenting
- Exposing parents to other families, letting them know that their child's behavior and their family dynamics are typical, and providing reassurance that the challenges a parent faces are neither unique to his or her family, nor insurmountable
- Improving communication and problem-solving skills by allowing parents to discuss the frustrations and successes involved in particularly challenging family circumstances
- Promoting parent leadership, by giving participants the opportunity to provide help as well as receive it
- Linking parents to resources throughout the community and within the group
- Helping parents become more competent and confident in parenting roles

How Can You Start a Circle of Parents Group in Your Community?

Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina officially launched the North Carolina Circle of Parents Network in October 2002, through a grant from Prevent Child Abuse America. We will be working to establish a network of mutual self-help parent support groups throughout North Carolina, based on the Circle of Parents national model, with the goal of preventing child maltreatment and strengthening families. It is envisioned that these programs will eventually be available statewide, providing families with mutual support. Training and technical assistance in program development, evaluation, and quality assurance are provided to assist local communities in developing and operating the program. A statewide advisory committee guides our work while building and maintaining the network.

If you are interested in starting a Circle of Parents group in your community, please contact Katrina Gay at 1-800-CHILDREN or email kgay@preventchildabusenc.org. For more information on the Circle of Parents national model, please visit www.circleofparents.org.

What Do Parents Say About the Circle of Parents Program?

"It's just a group where I think you can just feel free to talk and be open, and people will listen to you. If you don't want to talk, you don't have to; you can just listen. But it just gives you a lot of support and a lot of good ideas for what to do with kids when things get tough."

"In my case, I didn't want to be like my dad. He was very abusive. I came home from work one day and I was yelling at my kids—yelling at them mostly for not doing things—and I thought, 'Hey, I'm starting to sound just like my dad. I don't want to be like him.' I saw an ad in the local paper for a support group for parents and I went right away. It was scary. I didn't know what to expect. It was the first time I had ever gone to any kind of support group. I've been going for 10 years now. It helped me realize that I am not the only one with this type of problem. I realize that my kids are normal. It helps just to talk with another adult. I feel better as a parent today that I did 10 years ago. Making the first step was the hardest part."

"I don't have a lot of outside friends for support for my daughter because I'm a single mom. I need that group every week. I need to go to it and get advice from everyone, their support. It's more of a help that I thought it would be."



**Prevent Child Abuse
North Carolina**

Circle of Parents is the National Network of Mutual Support and Self-Help Programs in Partnership with Communities, a collaborative project of Prevent Child Abuse America and the National Family Support Roundtable. This project was made possible by Grant No. 90CA 1668 from the Children's Bureau, Administration of Children, Youth, and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services. The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not represent the official views or policies of the funding agency, nor does publication in any way constitute an endorsement by the funding agency.

addendum K

For Immediate Release



Prevent Child Abuse
North Carolina

Contacts: **Name/Title**
 Phone number

Parent Support Group Opens in (city/county)

Date – Parents and children in *(Name)* County will have the opportunity to participate in a new parent support group called Circle of Parents. *(Agency Name)* of will be sponsor the program in *(city/county)*.

(Insert quote from local agency director)

Through the Circle of Parents program, parents will be able to connect with other parents in their communities in ways that will build their self-confidence, reinforce positive parenting skills, and help them understand that they are not alone. Groups are co-led by a parent and a specially trained facilitator. Participants are provided with the opportunity to talk about the difficulties of raising children, parenting ideas, and resources in the community as well as the successes of their children and their abilities as a parent.

(Agency Name) will be coordinating the Circle of Parents meetings in *(insert city/county)*. They will take place (date/time/location). For more information, please contact (number/name).

Mutual self-help parent support programs are a time-tested strategy that promotes positive parenting through free open-ended weekly meetings for anyone in a parenting role. The groups are confidential and non-judgmental. Parents are encouraged to participate in planning and leading the groups.

The Circle of Parent groups are part of a statewide Prevention Network supported by Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina. Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina is working to establish a network of mutual self-help parent support groups in North Carolina. The overall goal of the program is to strengthen families by helping parents feel more competent and confident in parenting roles. It is envisioned that these programs will eventually be available statewide, providing families with open-ended, non-judgmental, confidential, supportive weekly meetings that promote positive parenting and self-improvement.

(Insert paragraph about local agency)

Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina is a statewide, citizen-based, nonprofit organization dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect in all its forms. Its network of affiliated agencies, members, and volunteers work in a collaborative manner with community, state, and national groups to turn information into action by developing sound child and family oriented community-based prevention programs, public awareness activities, educational initiatives, and training programs. Founded in 1979, Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina is a state chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America. For more information, please call 1-800-CHILDREN or visit www.preventchildabusenc.org.

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addendum L

PARENTS HELPING PARENTS BENEFITS FOR COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Parents Helping Parents provides a free package of services for its collaborating partners:

I. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

- A. On-going consultation with PHP staff coordinator regarding group development
- B. On-going consultation with PHP staff coordinator regarding group dynamics
- C. Assignment to an experienced mentor for encouragement, brainstorming, problem solving, and emotional support
- D. Quarterly check-ins and data collection
- E. Annual evaluations and quality assurance

II. TRAINING

- A. New Facilitator training (full day)
- B. Intermediate trainings
 - 1. Group dynamics
 - 2. Parent leadership
 - 3. Developing a children's program
- C. Regional meetings for group leaders
- D. Statewide meetings for group leaders and parent members
- E. Biennial statewide conference

III. REFERRALS

- A. Callers to statewide PHP referral line are referred to local PHP groups

IV. PARENT LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- A. Support for parents in becoming the Parent Leader of their group
- B. Statewide Speakers' Bureau
- C. Parents Helping Parents Board of Directors
- D. Advocacy program to enhance opportunities for parents to participate in service planning, program planning, and policy development

V. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Twice yearly newsletter, *Lifelines*
- B. Monthly chapter mailings
- B. Toll-free access to technical assistance line
- E. PHP website
- F. Outreach activities using the media are conducted on a regular basis by PHP

VI. MATERIALS

- A. Facilitator's Manual
- B. Parent Handbook
- C. Children's Program Manual
- D. Outreach materials, including flyers, brochures, business cards
- E. Tools for chapter nurturance and growth
 - 1. Parent and volunteer recruitment strategies
 - 2. Fundraising ideas
 - 3. Guidance for building and maintaining referral networks

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE

- A. Insurance coverage for meeting space and for PHP volunteers and staff, including childcare
- B. Quarterly reports regarding the status and progress of each group
- C. When requested, PHP will be the fiscal agent for a chapter

addendum M



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Background

The National Family Support Roundtable (Roundtable) and Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) have formed a collaboration to develop a national network of mutual support/self-help programs, known as Circle of Parents. Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota (PCA Minnesota), as a member of both entities, has developed a statewide Circle of Parents chapter network to maintain, strengthen, nurture, grow and support mutual self-help programs in collaboration with organizations and communities throughout Minnesota. These collaborations are based on the philosophical framework of shared leadership and ownership, mutual respect, constituent representation on all levels of participating organizations, and inclusiveness.

Purpose

We hereby confirm that _____ and Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota commits to a Memorandum of Understanding to develop Circle of Parents support groups for parents and children, according to the Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota measures of quality. Upon completing the development process, _____ will offer mutual self-help support groups for parents and children, at no cost, within their community.

Basic Values

This Memorandum of Understanding recognizes the commitment of the undersigned to the following philosophical tenets in working as a member of this collaboration:

- An intrinsic belief in preventing child abuse and neglect through strengthening and supporting parents and children to build strong healthy families and vital communities
- A commitment to helping parents succeed in supporting the growth and development of their children
- The assurance that parents will be treated as equal partners and that opportunities for parent leadership will be developed.

Benefits Provided by Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota

Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota will provide:

- Technical assistance
- Training
- Administration
- Communications
- Outreach
- Resources
- Support and Supervision

Responsibilities of _____ agrees to provide:

- Staff member designated as the Main Contact
- Children's Program Leader and Assistant(s)
- Facilitator and Co-facilitator to practice shared leadership
- Site for weekly support groups
- Monthly statistics

Further, _____ agrees to attend Circle of Parents training and to meet with Circle of Parents staff annually to charter the chapter and set annual goals and objectives.

Mission Statements

This collaboration between PCA Minnesota and _____ signifies our common mission to work as partners to serve families. As members of Circle of Parents, we commit to prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen families through mutual self-help parent support groups.

Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota Mission Statement

To prevent child abuse and neglect by promoting positive parenting, healthy families and homes where children are valued and loved.

Collaborating Colleague Mission Statement

Mission statement mission statement mission statement mission statement mission statement mission statement.

Signature of Authorized Representative _____

Name of Organization _____

Date _____

Signature of PCA Minnesota Executive Director _____

Date _____

addendum N



Parents Helping Parents

the roundtable of support

Collaborating Partner LETTER OF AGREEMENT

We hereby confirm that _____ and Parents Helping Parents - The Roundtable of Support have a collaborative agreement to provide one or more mutual support groups for parents in the _____ geographic area.

Parents Helping Parents will provide training and technical assistance in the development of these groups, orientation and on-going support for the groups' facilitators, opportunities for the development of parent leadership, and extensive outreach and assistance as described on the reverse side of this letter.

The collaborating partner, _____, agrees to provide a staff person to serve as the key contact between both organizations, participate in the recruitment of the groups' facilitators, identify a site for the parents' group(s), provide referrals for parents to attend group meetings, participate when appropriate in the provision of childcare to support the parents' group(s), and maintain regular contact with the PHP Regional Coordinator in the area. Further, the collaborating partner agrees to meet annually with Parents Helping Parents to review the progress of the group(s) and to renew this agreement.

We understand that this collaboration means that we support each other's mission and agree to work together as partners to serve families to the best of our capacity.

Parents Helping Parents - The Roundtable of Support's Mission

To promote and support healthy parent/child relationships and break the cycle of child abuse through peer-led, professionally facilitated mutual support groups.

Collaborating Partner's Mission...

For Collaborating Agency (Signature)

Date

Print Name and Title

Address of Collaborating Agency

Executive Director of Parents Helping Parents (Signature)

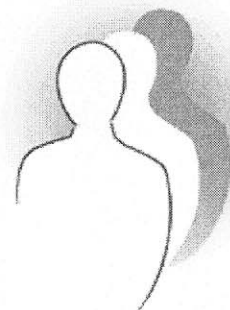
Date

PARENTS HELPING PARENTS AGREES TO PROVIDE:

- Partnership with PHP Regional Coordinators and other PHP leaders who are experienced with all stages of group development.
- Initial and on-going training, at no cost, for group facilitators and parent leaders.
- Conferences and workshops for parents and the Massachusetts human service community.
- Extensive written training materials and on-going technical support about groups and group process.
- A statewide hotline that provides crisis counseling for parents and refers them to local PHP groups and other resources.
- Opportunities for parents to accept new leadership responsibilities and challenges, both within their mutual support groups and in the Parents Helping Parents organization as a whole.
- Advocacy efforts to enhance opportunities for parents to participate in service planning, program planning, and policy development.
- Opportunities for cooperative fundraising efforts to support the activities of both PHP and the collaborating partner in providing the PHP mutual support group.
- Insurance coverage for meeting space and for PHP volunteers.
- Unlimited outreach materials. Outreach efforts using the media and mailings are conducted on a regular basis by PHP.
- Statewide newsletters and bi-monthly updates.

THE COLLABORATING PARTNER AGREES TO PROVIDE:

- A key contact person within the agency to provide focus and leadership for the partnership and to interact with the staff of PHP.
- Outreach within and outside the agency to publicize the group to parents.
- Comfortable, private, safe and easily-accessible space for the group to meet.
- Participation in the recruitment of facilitator(s) for the group. Final decisions as to the selection of a facilitator will be arrived at by consensus.
- When determined by the partner and PHP, participation in the development of group childcare, including a separate, suitable meeting space.
- Regular contact between the group's facilitators and PHP's Regional Coordinator, including participation in quarterly programmatic updates and annual group visits.
- Annual meetings between the collaborating partner and PHP to review the program and plan for the future.



addendum 0



Benefits for Chartered Affiliates

Circle of Parents provides a free package of services that include:

I. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Administrative

- Fiscal services
 - Liability insurance
 - File 1099 tax forms
- Volunteer accident insurance
- Background checks for your children's program volunteers

Communications

- Newsletters
 - The Networker, Parent Power, Chapter Flash*
- Toll-free access to our technical assistance line
- Access to our private listserv, *Family Room*

Outreach

- Brochures, bookmarks and posters
- Assistance in designing customized materials
- Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota promotions
- 1-800-CHILDREN

Resources

- Child abuse prevention/parenting resource library
- Tools for chapter nurturance and growth
- Chapter Operations Guide
 - Organizational overview/chapter structure
 - Volunteer recruitment
 - Referral networks and public relations
 - Resources and materials
- Fundraising ideas and resources
- Circle of Parents manuals and guidebooks
 - Children's program manual
 - Facilitator manual
 - Parent handbooks (English and Spanish)
- Website: www.pcamn.org
- Prevent Child Abuse America materials
- Children's program materials
- Children's books

II. SUPPORT SERVICES

Chapter Initiated Contact

- Access to staff for encouragement, brainstorming, problem solving, emotional support, debriefing and special recognition opportunities

Staff Initiated Contact

- Monthly support phone calls for facilitators and children's program staff
- Chapter check-in's
- Toll-free participant and resource referrals
- Statewide parent leadership team
- Networking meetings
- Quality assurance program (chartering)

III. TRAINING

Basic Training—for all new volunteers

- Circle of Parents orientation
- Basic Facilitation Skills
- Establishing a Children's Program
- Creating an Advisory Team

Advanced Training—for existing children's program leaders, facilitators, parent group leaders, and advisory team members

- Advanced Programming for Children
- Nurturing Dynamic Parent Leadership
- Understanding Group Process
- Creating Referral Networks
- Public Relations and Volunteer Recruitment
- Grassroots Fundraising
- Stress and Children
- Children with ADHD
- Domestic Violence and the Effects on Children

Chapter/Partner Training Needs

- Customized training designed to fit your needs. Call for more information.

IV. Outcomes Evaluation

- Quality assurance program (chartering)
- Access to outcomes evaluation research for grantwriting and publicity
- Access to most recent national mutual self-help research through Circle of Parents

V. PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer Recognition

- Each month you will have an opportunity to recognize a volunteer for their time. Circle of Parents will send him/her a certificate and letter of appreciation.

Parent Leadership Team

- Provides ongoing opportunities for parents to increase their leadership skills while making meaningful contributions to program planning and organizational decision making.
- Open to all parent participants.

Child Abuse Prevention Conference

- Provides a great opportunity to meet other parents and colleagues from our statewide network for skill building, resources, networking and fun.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

- 2002, Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota distributed 350,000 blue ribbons and 2,600 child abuse resource packets throughout the state.
- We encourage and support all chapters to take an active role in this important annual awareness campaign.
- Community resource packets are available for distribution and provides a variety of ideas and resources to aid in your community campaign.

Circle of Parents, A Program of Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota

Mission Statement:

To prevent child abuse and neglect by promoting positive parenting, healthy families and homes where children are valued and loved.

addendum p

February 2002



fa•cil•i•talk

fa•cil•i•tate: to make easier; help forward [a process]

A monthly newsletter to facilitate the learning process for TPN's Parent Support Group Facilitators

Dear Facilitators,

How can we not think of February without thinking also of Valentine's Day? February 14th—a day that does not commemorate a national hero or historic event, but celebrates the invisible reality of LOVE.

The Eskimos have 52 words for the word *snow* because it is so special to them. Maybe we need at least 52 words for the word *love*, as the expression "I love you" has different meanings to different people. It may mean: "I don't want to be alone." "I want to control you." "I want you to take care of me." It may also mean: "I want your happiness." "I want you to fulfill your greatest potential, and what can I do to help?" "I take you seriously." It can mean "I am connected deeply to you just because we're both human beings." I'm sure that each of you would describe *love* in your own unique way.

We've all heard the adage, "Love makes the world go 'round.'" The saying makes it sound like *love* is a very crucial energy, life-sustaining to the earth and ourselves, something like the very air that we breathe. Air is basic to life; *LOVE* is basic to life.

Think about *love*, how you let it into your life, how you breathe it out to those around you. While I believe that *love* is the most powerful energy in the universe, it is also dependent on you and me in order to live.

Happy Loving Day and Days,

Sharon Koziczkowski
Parent Support Group Manager

Be empathic NOT sympathetic
Put yourself in the other's shoes,
But don't walk their path for
them.

So much of what we know
of love, we learned at
home.

Unknown

A very small
degree of hope
is sufficient to
cause the birth
of love.

Stendahl

Don't forget to love yourself!

Soren Kierkegaard



*Difficult
situation in a
group?
Challenging
behavior from a
parent?
Special
moment to
share?*

*Call Sharon at
671-5575.
Your concerns
are Sharon's
top priority!

*Also, share any
stories, ideas,
or helpful hints
on parenting,
group
dynamics,
children that
you might have.
We will
incorporate
them into our
newsletter.*

EFFECTIVE PARENTING TIPS

By Lois Delaney and Sally M. Wade

These tips were developed for working with children with ADHD but they are effective for children of any age.

- **Get Their Attention**—Before giving directions, get your child's attention by touching him on the arm, between the shoulder and elbow. His eyes will automatically turn towards you and you may then state the direction.
- **Quiet and Near**—Directions, reminders, etc. are always better understood when delivered while standing near the child and using a quiet tone of voice.
- **One or Two Steps at a Time**—Give directions in small steps, one or two at a time. Instead of "Go clean up the mess in your room," tell the child, "Put the cars back in the car box and put your trains back on the shelf."
- **Keep it Positive**—Tell him the behavior you want to see, instead of making a "don't" statement.
- **Give Notice**—Tell the child what is going to be happening, especially if there will be a change in routine or schedules, so she may prepare for the change. Spend a moment going over what is expected of the child during this activity.
- **Repeat After Me**—On the way, tell the child where you are going and ask her to tell you what is the acceptable behavior. "We're going to Grandma's house. What tone of voice do we use in Grandma's house?"
- **Clean Slate**—After a consequence, give the child a chance to start over, again and again and again. Children learn through repetition, not through harshness of our tone of voice or by "suffering" a punishment.

Warm-Up Questions

Ice-breakers, opening activities, opening rounds are critical to setting the tone and structure of the group. They are also a way to stimulate self-discovery, and serve as a non-threatening, relaxed way to build bridges with others in the group. Here are a few *Warm-Up Questions* that you might consider using with your group.

- What (or who) most encourages the little child in you to come out and play? When was the last time this happened?
- What is your earliest memory?
- Describe your dream vacation. Who would it be with, where would you go, and what would you do?
- What is the one thing you never did in high school that you wish you would have done?
- If you were a mouse, what would be the most daring thing you would try to do while the cat was away?
- What person in your life has been the best example of love? Explain how.

Do rounds slowly and thoughtfully, so that people have a real opportunity to reflect. Responses will be richer and more personal.

- **Participant Information Forms**
- **Attendance Sheets**
- **Signs & Plastic Holders with Suction Cups**
(placed in strategic areas at your locations each week)
- **Certificates of Attendance** (fill in the blanks)
- **Stamped, Self-addressed Envelopes**
- **Order Forms** to order more of any of the above



**If you judge people,
you have no time to love them.**

Mother Teresa

Facilitators Challenged...

Tuesday evening, January 22nd, **Cheryl Orgas**, Support and Therapy Coordinator at The Counseling Center, helped eight facilitators deal with challenging behaviors that arise in the group. Cheryl shared techniques to move the facilitation process to deeper levels. Use open ended questions or just share your own impressions ("I sense...", "I wonder about...", "I feel...") to assist parents in sharing more and getting in touch with feelings that are hidden and feel more vulnerable.

Facilitators who participated in the training were:

Kristin Dicker
Marian Forsyth
Peggy Nealon
Kathy Newnam
Devon Palmanteer
Jeannine Perushek
Jeff Phillips
Judy Tietyen

To the evaluation question, ***What were the most useful parts of today's program?***, you replied, ***"It is helpful to hear strategies that can be used in the group."*** (I learned) ***"How to bring structure into the group so that everyone owns their responsibility for giving others a chance to participate."*** ***"Examples of specific techniques and phrases to use."***

We will continue these ongoing trainings. Please feel free to call Sharon at 671-5575 with ideas and

Build & Maintain a Process Vessel

Very early in your work with a group, it's important to establish ground rules that will maintain the integrity of a group process. These rules establish the boundaries within which the group will operate, and their respectful enforcement inspires a discipline of integrity among its members.

Common ground rules include: no side talking, attending regularly, returning from breaks on time, maintaining confidentiality of all that's shared among the group, and sharing what is true for you in the present moment.

If your ground rules are to have any value, then you must enforce them. By enforce, I don't mean that you punish, or embarrass people who break them. When someone breaks a ground rule, it's only necessary that you simply make them aware of it.

For example, "Joe, I notice that there's a lot of side talking going on around you. Would you be willing to recommit to the rule of no side talking?"

At times you may need to remind the group that group results are their responsibility and that the ground rules are intended to support their efforts to get the results they want. If you do not have clear ground rules in your group, work with the participants to come up with several pertinent rules and facilitate their commitment to follow them.

Do you know a
nurturing dad who
would be a great
facilitator for a
DAD'S GROUP?

Call Sharon at
671-5575 x29



Newsletter Contributions

To contribute stories, upcoming events or general information about the newsletter, contact us at (414) 671-5575.

Publication Team:
Sharon Koziczowski (ext. 29)
Christy Barden (ext. 16)

SHOP TALK

An Icebreaker to Warm Up your Group...

This activity provides a non-threatening environment in which participants can say what's in their "hearts." Use it to focus on one individual at a time, or have parents imagine using it with their children.

PROPS

Small candy hearts with sayings on them (at least one per person) found in stores around February 14.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each participant one candy heart.
2. Tell participants they'll now have a chance to give a wish to the person in the group they're celebrating.
3. Explain that each participant will think of a wish or statement about the person they're celebrating (or each of their children) that incorporates the words found on their hearts.
4. Tell them that they'll take turns expressing their wishes aloud to that person (or practice saying the words to their children).

VARIATIONS

1. Have participants give hearts to many people in the group.
2. Have participants choose the hearts they would like to use in forming their comments.

TIPS

1. Keep this light and fun.
2. Don't be surprised if parents use the opportunity to speak from their hearts.
3. If you use this icebreaker with group members, its success will depend on the level of comfort among them.



The Parenting Network
1717 South 12th Street, Suite 101
Milwaukee WI 53204-3300

Dates to Remember, Gentle Reminders:

- **The Facilitation Skills Training which was to begin on February 4 has been postponed.** New facilitators will be notified of the next training session.
- **Sharon Koziczowski** will be away from The Parenting Network from **February 7th, returning on February 18.** If you have group questions, please call Jan Buchler at 671-5575, x12.
- **After 5 PM, call The Parent Helpline (671-0566)** if you need to know:
 - ...That a group will go on as scheduled or needs to be cancelled
 - ...To contact a facilitator or childcare provider about emergencies or delays

addendum q

PARENTS TOGETHER: SUPPORTING
MONTANA FAMILIES
FACILITATOR'S NEWSLETTER

MT. COUNCIL FOR FAMILIES.....DECEMBER 2003

Special Gifts

As we move into the holiday season, what can each of us do to make our lives and the lives of our families, neighbors, and co-workers more hope-filled and joy-filled? The following are some special gifts we can give:

The Gift of Listening...

Really listening. No interrupting, daydreaming, planning a response. Just listening.

The Gift of affection...

Being generous with appropriate hugs, pats on the back and compliments. These small actions demonstrate the love we have for others.

The Gift of Laughter...

Lighten up; enjoy laughing at someone's story, joke, or action. Laugh with them, not at them. Be willing to share humorous anecdotes. Laughter is not only fun it is healthy for the whole person.

The Gift of a Written Note or A Card...

A brief, handwritten note or card saying, "Thank You" or "I care" can brighten anyone's day. Some may be remembered for a lifetime, and may even change a life.

The Gift of a Favor...

Everyday, go out of your way to do something kind.

The Gift of a cheerful disposition...

The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone. It's not that hard to say hello, thank you, to smile or give a short greeting.



The Gift of a Compliment...

A simple and sincere, "You did a great job", or "You look great," increases a person's self-esteem and well-being.

This is a wonderful time to understand and reconcile ourselves with others and live from a focus of genuine concern for others, acknowledging their presence, their joys and pains, and acting out of an environment of compassion, making certain no one is ignored.



Re-energizing Burned-Out Volunteers- **Tips for Non-Profit Organizations.**

Do you have lackluster performance by board members? Volunteers who have just given up? Consider this ten-point checklist to help you get going again.

1. Board members are often recruited with the warm body method. Anyone with a pulse qualifies for board membership. Consider identifying the skills you need on your board and then systematically finding the right people with the motivation and work ethic. For example-If you need Public Relations skills- go to their professional association.
2. Have you structured achievable job descriptions? Or are the tasks unrealistic or too much of a stretch given the resources at hand? Make sure that people can succeed at their job. Orient and train them. Especially when you want them to do a job they have never done before.
3. Consider restructuring how the volunteers work. Many volunteers that work at their child's school are often working on more than one committee. Allow them to design their work, or catch up on meetings through email, fax, or other methods. Consider limiting meetings, or schedule them at different times.
4. Listen and adapt. Meet with key volunteers and ask them what should be changed about their job description. Ask them if they would continue their participation after you make the changes they recommend.
5. Expand your pool of volunteers. Ask existing volunteers to bring a friend, or ask managers to recruit their staff. Consider hosting a recruitment party/fair where everyone has lots of fun, talking about why they enjoy volunteering for the organization. Let them know the

rewards of volunteering firsthand from those who volunteer.

6. There are many ways to accomplish one task. Allow volunteers to design their own work, providing they meet the required parameters set by management. When individuals are delegated responsibility, they often step up to the challenge.
7. Give them a rest! Sometimes volunteers just need a new job, or some time off. Respect their wishes and agree to meet with them at a certain time in the future when you can see how they are doing.
8. Be consistent. If you have rules, make them apply to everyone. Sometimes volunteers get upset when they see the rules are bent because someone in the agency has more political clout.
9. Provide choices. Some schools have a fundraising or volunteer requirement. Many parents would rather donate, either because they do not have the time, or because of personal choice. Set the bar high enough and provide this option for those who do not wish to become a volunteer.
10. Allow volunteers to job share. Many schools and organizations now allow co-chairs for many committees. And although the work will probably never be distributed 50/50, at least you may be able to recruit some individuals who have the skills and interest, but need to know that they will have support if they need it.

George Mezinko, Executive Director Child Abuse Prevention Services, The National Exchange Club

addendum R

What parents say

At Circle of Parents, parents are the experts. Here's what some of us have to say:

"One thing that I love about our group is how people are not judgmental of each other. People come and bring all sorts of stuff, and everyone is open to listen... it's like: how can we help you and what can we do to make things better?"

"It makes me a better parent...I'm getting reinforcement on what I'm doing."

The best thing about the group is that it's so enjoyable I don't want to leave. I feel so exhilarated and confident about being a parent."



Circle of Parents

200 South Michigan Avenue
17th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604-2404
312.663.3520

www.circleofparents.org



CIRCLEof PARENTS™
Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.

Circle of Parents is the National Network of Mutual Support and Self-Help Programs in Partnership with Communities, a collaborative project of Prevent Child Abuse America and the National Family Support Roundtable. This project was made possible by Grant No. 90CA 1668 from the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not represent the official views or policies of the funding agency, nor does publication in any way constitute an endorsement by the funding agency.

Do you need a place to talk about parenting?

Circle of Parents might be just the place for you!



"The important thing is you learn you're not alone. You realize you're having the same problem as someone else."

-Participant



CIRCLEof PARENTS™
Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.

**Do you feel frustrated,
overwhelmed or alone
in your parenting?**

**Or do you just need
to talk?**

We all know parenting can be hard.

Kids depend on us, and sometimes it seems like none of us could possibly have enough time, strength or wisdom to give them every-thing they need.

But help is available – help from other parents who might have a good idea of what you're going through.



**We'll listen to you,
talk about it, and offer
our own ideas and support.**

**Is a parent support
group for you?**

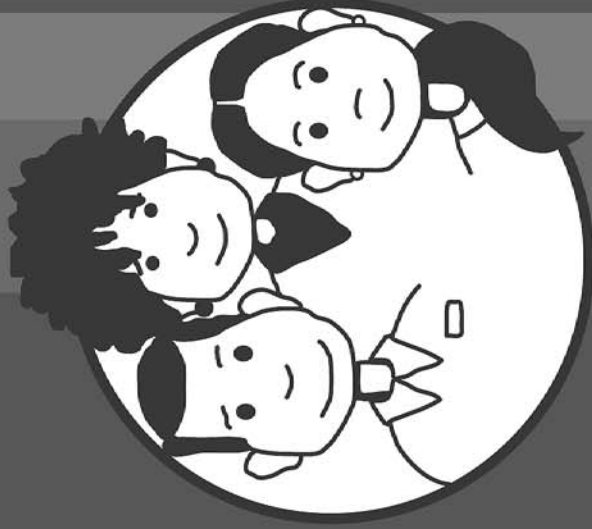
Circle of Parents offers free meetings for anyone in a parenting role. Parents lead the groups with the help of a trained facilitator.

In groups we talk about anything related to raising kids: discipline, school, health, safety.

We meet weekly and keep information shared in the group **confidential** – within the limits of the law.

And, we **never judge** other people's situations or stories.

**We know how it feels...
We're parents too.**



Parent Leadership

At Circle of Parents, parents decide the topics, lead the discussions and are involved in all levels of decision-making.

Circle of Parents encourages the development of parents' leadership skills – not just as parents and group leaders, but in all aspects of their lives.

Children's Programs

Many groups provide children's programs or childcare – usually free of charge. These programs are a safe place for children to play and interact while their parents are in a group.

Join Us!

Please see the back of this brochure for contact information for the national office or a program near you.

Or go to our website at
www.circleofparents.org.

We look forward to seeing you!

* This brochure is also available in Spanish.

addendum s

Circle of Parents

Collaborative Partner Development Checklist

INITIAL STAGE:

I. Consider the need and feasibility for development...

Look over Circle of Parents information.

- Information provided in the "Welcome to Circle of Parents" packet.

Presentation from Circle of Parents representative.

- Discuss the mission, history, and organizational structure.

Consider if it is possible to take on the task of developing a mutual self-help support group with-in your agency.

- Assess the need for such a group in your community.
- Are similar services currently offered and could you work together to augment services?
- Who will help establish the group and maintain the group once it is up and running?
- Which families will you target and how might you do this?
- How will you involve families in developing a local support group?

Will your collaborating agency be willing and able to offer support throughout the duration of the group?

- Is your support staff and management supportive of this development?
- In what ways will they help with this effort?
- Are they prepared to take on the tasks of developing and maintaining this group?

Log onto our website and check us out!

- www.pcamn.org

II. Once you have decided a collaborating partnership is feasible, then consider the following:

Who would your main contact be?

- A person will need to be identified to nurture our collaborating partnership.
- This person will maintain regular contact with Circle of Parents.

Determine if release time staff is available to operate the group.

- Using Circle of Parents job descriptions, consider 4 people who are available within the existing structure of your agency who can facilitate, co-facilitate, lead the children's program, and be a children's program assistant.
- Are they able to make a one-year commitment for a minimum of two hours a week?
- If not, can you use recruitment tools to find volunteers to fill these roles?

Is a meeting site available?

- Does your agency have space available for the parents and children to meet weekly for two hours?
- If not, consider other organizations, community centers, churches, schools, clinics, etc., that are available in your community who may offer this space as an in-kind donation.

What would your budget needs be?

- Roughly plan out what your budget might look like.
- Is there access to existing funding sources?
- Is the agency able to provide the funding for release-time staff, snacks, costs of a site - if needed, and miscellaneous operating costs?
- Where could you solicit monies to support this development?
- How much of these expenses could be covered with in-kind help?

Access to referral networks in your community?

- Referral networks are a key to the success of your chapter.
- Does your agency have current referral networks to promote parent participation?
- Identify other places where families go in your community. A few examples include: child care centers, clinics, hospitals, churches, mental health services, WIC, social services, community centers, ECFE, Head Start, schools, human resource departments...you define the limits.

Who would accept referral calls?

- Consider who and where you will route referral calls.
- The person who accepts these calls should have a clear understanding of the mutual self-help model.

Do you have the ability to do public relations and community outreach?

- Public relations and community outreach are crucial for nurturing your referral sources and inviting parents to group.
- Does your agency have access to existing PR and community outreach strategies to spread awareness about the group?
- Who is available to help do this?

Who could begin recruiting/referring volunteers and parents?

- Begin developing a parent base to participate in the group.
- Including parents in the development stage enhances leadership skills and empowers them to build a group that reflects what families really need and want.

Circle of Parents

Collaborative Partner Development Checklist

DEVELOPMENT STAGE:

Sign Memorandum of Understanding.

- The Memorandum of Understanding is a memo explaining what Circle of Parents and your agency agree to contribute as we work together as partners to develop a mutual self-help support group for parents and children in your community.

Receive chapter operations guidebook from Circle of Parents.

- Includes resources to assist you with chapter development, volunteer recruitment, referral sources, public relations, and grassroots fundraising.

Develop a network of people who work with families.

- Mental health professionals, clergy, schools, family advocates, social workers, etc.
- Using tools from Circle of Parents, begin to build relationships with people who will refer parents to group.

Receive outreach materials from Circle of Parents.

- You can distribute this information as you begin to promote the group in your community.
- You may want to create your own customized stamp or label for Circle of Parents materials, brochures, or posters to promote the group in your community.

Secure funding.

- Who will serve as your fiscal agent?
- Will all of the necessary expenses be covered?

Begin Recruiting:

Volunteers

- Using available tools from Circle of Parents (sample letters, ads, job descriptions, applications, and interviews), recruit people to operate the group.

Parents

- Recruit a core group of 8-10 parents who will initially attend group.
- Consider creative methods for recruiting parents.
- Encourage parents to spread the word, involve them in these development efforts!

Referral networks

- a minimum of three ongoing referral networks.
- Routinely contact your referral sources to maintain your relationship and to learn and how many people have been referred.

Key people.

- Main contact
- Facilitator/Co-facilitator for parent's support group
- Children's program leader and assistants (1 adult:5 children)
- Parents

Complete Background Checks for children's program.

- Return completed notarized form to Circle of Parents.
- Allow about 2 weeks to process.

Attend Circle of Parents training prior to start of group meetings.

- All trainings are offered at no cost.
- Circle of Parents training manuals for facilitator and the children's program will assist you in your role.

Establish Group Specifics:**Secure a site for 12 months**

- Plan for space for both the parent's group and children's program (i.e. local church, community center, school, health clinic...)

Establish the name for your group.**What will meeting day and time be?**

- Most groups meet weekly, in the evening for two hours.

Set date of first meeting.

- Meetings can start when training is completed and all paper work has been finalized.

Create customized outreach materials to promote your group.

- Circle of Parents has examples for you to review.
- You can also secure our logo to assist your efforts.

OPENING STAGE:**Complete Circle of Parents charter application.**

- Meet annually with Circle of Parents to complete the quality assurance program.
- PCAMN Board of Directors will officially add your chapter to the network.

Complete a roster list for Circle of Parents.

- To include the name, address and phone number of main contact, facilitators, children's program leader and program assistants.

Facilitators, children's program volunteers and advisory team review.

- Review benefits of affiliation for chartered chapters.
- Circle of Parents quality assurance program.

- Bi-annual parent surveys
- Discuss questions about role expectations
- Monthly check-in forms

Receive parent handbooks.

- Each parent who participates in the group will receive a handbook (English and Spanish).

Receive resource library listing and instructions.

- The resource library is available for you to check out materials on a particular subject of interest with the group.

Receive statistical books.

- Receive orientation for monthly reporting.
- Books are provided for the parent's group and the children's program.

Receive children's program books.

- Mister Roger's Activity Book.
- Children's books (donated by KTCA Twin Cities Public Television Ready to Learn Services).

Receive children's start up kit.

- This start up kit includes toys, craft materials, a first aid kit and other essentials to help get your children's program started.

WELCOME TO CIRCLE OF PARENTS!

In order to promote promising practices, Circle of Parents asks that each chapter will...

Provide free, confidential, anonymous, and non-judgmental, mutual self-help support for families based on the shared leadership model.

Encourage parent leaders to be active on the Parent Leadership Team.

- This is an opportunity for parents to become actively involved as a Circle of Parents leader. They will take an active role sharing organizational leadership with PCAMN Board of Directors and staff, and will participate in building a state-wide network of parent leaders.
- Some parent leaders may have opportunities to attend national leadership events, and/or participate on the Board of Directors.

Meet with facilitator and children's program monthly.

- Regular communication will nurture ongoing communication and sustain the overall quality of service your chapter provides for families.

Volunteer recognition and retention.

- It is very valuable to recognize the contributions people make for the sake of your chapter.
- Circle of Parents will provide special recognition for the people you nominate.
- When you need to recruit new volunteers we will be happy to offer assistance.

Return statistics each month.

- Statistics are kept each month for the parent group and the children's program. These are very important to help us capture information.
- Someone from your chapter will mail, email, or fax them no later than the 5th of each month to our Albert Lea office.

Return monthly check-ins.

- Monthly check-ins are an opportunity for your chapter to make notes of any changes, record volunteer hours, request materials, and to nominate a chapter member for volunteer recognition.

Return parent surveys.

- Parent surveys are distributed two times a year.
- The facilitator is asked to have parents complete the surveys and then return them to Circle of Parents.

Maintain contact with a minimum of three referral sources.

- This creates a dual relationship with other community services, promotes community awareness, and makes the group accessible to new members.

Annual chartering process.

- Your Program Coordinator will personally visit, during the time of your chapter's anniversary date, to charter your group through our quality assurance program.
- During this time we will work as a team to review your goals and objectives for the past year and plan for the following year.

Return bi-annual financial reports.

- If PCAMN is your fiscal sponsor, we will need your financial reports no later than January 15 and July 30.
- If you have your own 501c3, this does not apply to you.

addendum T

DAD MATTERS



A Free
Group Just
for Fathers!

Free
Childcare

MONDAYS

6:00-7:30 PM

At The Parenting Network
W. Burleigh St.

Every child has a place inside that only a Dad can fill. Being a Dad matters. Sometimes being a Dad is challenging, *because children don't come with instructions.*

- Join with other Dads to discuss ideas and concerns about parenting.
- Understand why children think and behave the way they do.
- Gain parenting tips that really work with kids, especially on *discipline*.
- Learn to form agreements with your child's mother about parenting...and more.

To register, call our
PARENT HELPLINE
(414) 671-0566



Facilitators: Darrell
Jeff
Credentials: Dads

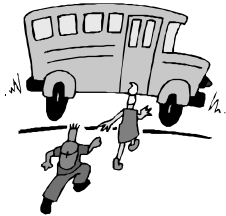
Circle of Parents™

At

Eastridge Elementary School

...because kids don't come with instructions!

Parenting doesn't have to be a struggle. Discover some proven methods for cutting down on the frustration of being a parent in today's hectic world. Come unlock the knowledge you already hold and share your wisdom. Find out you're not alone. The group is parent-led and professionally facilitated.



- Why are meals a nightmare? (picky eaters, manners, short order cooks)
- How do I get to work on time?
- I keep repeating myself (chores, encouraging responsibility)
- How do I survive homework?

Where:

When: Mondays (Drop-ins welcome) - *No group Memorial Day 5/31*

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Cost: Free

with free children's program; building self-esteem and social skills

**Families
First**



Family Support Line 303-695-7996

Call the Support Line for a listening ear or information on parent education classes and other support groups.



Interested in starting a parent support group?

FREE training & support available!!

Learn how to facilitate a **CIRCLE OF PARENTS™** mutual-self-help parent support group.

Become part of a national network of parent support groups that enhance parenting skills and empower parents to become role models for their children and leaders in their communities.

Support groups provide:

- Emotional support
- Social support
- Anger management strategies
- Advocacy and leadership
- Information on child health and community resources

2" x 10"

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FREE training & support available!!

Support groups benefit parents by providing:

- Emotional support to relieve stress
- Social support to reduce isolation and encourage problem-solving skills
- Anger management strategies to promote healthy communication skills
- Advocacy and leadership opportunities to build self-esteem and self-confidence
- Information on child health and development to help parents meet their children's needs
- Information about how to access additional community resources



CIRCLE of PARENTS™
Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.

4.5" x 5.25"



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4.5" x 2"

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2" x 4.75"

addendum w

Tools for Building Referral Networks

NC Circle of Parents Toolkit

A Community Referral System - How to Build it and Make it Work

The ideal community referral system works in both directions. Professionals refer parents to the local Circle of Parents group and the group helps parents find resources they need within the community. When you contact professionals and other community agencies with information about the Circle of Parents program this is also an opportunity to learn about the resources they offer that parents may find helpful or even need.

Think about the agencies and organizations that serve parents and children in your area. Ask yourself these questions about each of them:

- Who makes referrals? To whom?
- What information about Circle of Parents and your agency do they have?
- Who sees parents?
- Who sees children?
- Who deals with problems of abuse?
 - ☐ neglect?
 - ☐ worry?
 - ☐ guilt?

Consider these:

Human Services: WIC - AFDC – Home Visitors
Mental Health Clinic - therapists
Medical/Dental Clinics –pediatricians, family doctors, nurses
Head Start and Early Childhood Family Education - teachers, aids
K-12 - counselors, teachers, principal
Churches - clergy, social ministers
Courts -judges, court services, guardian ad litem
Law Enforcement - officers, chief, sheriff, deputies
Parents who are affiliated with the Circle of Parents group and/or your agency

In your community, how does a referral source make a referral to your agency?

Having made the referral, what can the source expect from your agency?

How does the local Circle of Parents program maintain on-going contact with the referral source?

Remember: Research from other states shows that of 9 parents who express interest, 3 call the group facilitator for more information and 1 comes to the support group meeting.

In Minnesota about 1/3 who call to ask about the Circle of Parents program through the MN Family Support Network have a friend or acquaintance that has experience with this agency.

It's all about RELATIONSHIPS

Establishing the Need

What is a referral source?

- Public or private agency or organization that has a pool of parents who could benefit from Circle of Parents group participation.
- Professionals who have regular contact with parents who could benefit from Circle of Parents group services.
- Individuals who work in public or private agencies or organizations that routinely see or serve parents who could benefit from Circle of Parents group meetings.

Why develop a referral networks?

- Generate ongoing source of parents for possible group participation
- Raise level of community awareness about Circle of Parents group services
- Develop new sources of additional group volunteers
- Breakdown any "stigma" that might exist about Circle of Parents group attendance
- Give professionals in community additional resources to help clients /patients, etc.

How does a referral network work for your group?

- Ensures that Circle of Parents group information and materials are available for parents who may need services
- Ensures that Circle of Parents materials and information are available in many, diverse locations
- Keeps the community focused on the prevention nature of Circle of Parents group services
- Keeps participation levels at an acceptable level, which makes the group work better for its participants

Identifying Your Network

- Consider the following categories of sources of referrals & parents
 - ☐ Recreation and education
 - ☐ Social services and health
 - ☐ Government and legal system
 - ☐ Personal/work
 - ☐ Community
- List places within these network categories that your target audience interacts with.
- Brainstorm connections (personal & professional) that you have to these places/people.
- Consider how can you make use of these connections to recruit parents.

Nurturing Your Network

- Keep in regular touch with referral sources
 - A quick five minute phone call once a month is sufficient for most sources
 - Be sure that you remember to replenish supplies of brochures
 - If a parent begins to attend group, send a quick thank you note to referral source
 - Show appreciation, perhaps with an annual coffee and cake reception for referral sources
- Use the referral source log to keep on top of your contacts

Referral Network Planning Sheet

Agency/Organization	Contact Person	Phone Number	Who Will Contact	By

SAMPLE REFERRAL NETWORK LETTER

Date _____

Dear _____

I work with (*insert your agency name*) and a new program called the Circle of Parents. We have identified the need to have a community-based mutual self-help support group for parents in our community, to strengthen families by helping parents feel more competent and confident in their parenting roles, with the overall intention of preventing child maltreatment.

Circle of Parents provides a confidential, non judgmental setting for parents to give and receive help and support for all types of parenting issues. During weekly mutual self-help support groups, parents learn more positive ways to discipline their children, share tips on strengthening family relationships and learn better coping skills which reduce frustration and isolation.

Circle of Parents provides guidance by a trained group facilitator at each meeting. The facilitator does not lead the group, rather, they identify and mentor a parent who has made progress in the group to serve as the parent group leader, Circle of Parents is peer-led and that's one of the reasons it works so well. The facilitator also serves as a resource for the group, providing information about community resources that parents may need as they work on individual challenges.

The group is offered at no cost to parents and includes a children's program. While parents meet, children are provided with nurturing child care and activities designed to enhance self-esteem and promote better social behavior.

I would love to have an opportunity to meet with you to describe our program more fully and give you information to refer to parents you work with to Circle of Parents. I will be calling next week to see if there is a mutually convenient time for us to get together. If you would like information sooner than that, I can be reached at(*your phone number*). Thank You.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Referral Network Presentation

Use this outline to help prepare to make a presentation to referral sources about your local Circle of Parents Group. The following information could easily be used to develop a powerpoint or slide presentation. Whenever possible, present this information at a meeting with everyone in the agency who could refer parents, for example, at their staff meeting. If your budget allows, bring food or other “goodies” for your audience to engage them.

Materials Needed: Circle of Parents materials *(with your local contact information)* and/or local flyers about your group.

History of relationship with Circle of Parents & Prevent Child Abuse NC

The Circle of Parents Program is part of a statewide network supported by Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina, a statewide, citizen-based, nonprofit organization founded in 1979, dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect in all its forms. Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina is working to establish a network of mutual self-help parent support groups throughout the state. These groups are a time-tested child abuse prevention strategy that strengthens families by helping parents feel more competent and confident in parenting roles. Prevent Child Abuse NC staff provide training, technical assistance, information and prevention resources that support the growth and longevity of the Circle of Parents program.

(Insert information about your local agency, its mission, and how long your group has been a Prevent Child Abuse NC affiliate.)

What is the purpose of Circle of Parents Support Groups

- To provide a non judgmental, supportive environment for parents to come together to share the stresses, challenges, and successes of parenting.
- To decrease the isolation some parents may be experiencing and provide opportunities for peer support and problem solving while fostering a sense of extended family for participants.
- To model positive parenting techniques, learn new parenting skills and offer opportunities for parents to increase their leadership abilities.

What are the Benefits of a Circle of Parents mutual self-help group

- Empowers people
- Costs less than helping services
- Increases social supports
- Research shows that self-helpers have a longer life span
- Utilizes a unique problem-solving approach
- Increased self-esteem often results from belonging to a group
- Increased motivation comes from group intervention
- A self-help group helps the family cope
- Helps relieve anxiety of the unknown by hearing about people's experiences

- Is a good source of information
- Shared experiences bring a sense of unity and strength
- New information is often available faster because of the combined efforts of the group

What happens in a parent support group?

Circle of Parents support groups are gatherings where parents talk about their parenting and the changes they are striving to make in their home life. They are based on the following principles:

Trust. Parents who come to support groups count on each other to listen openly, respond honestly and always act with compassion.

Leadership. Parents are the experts about their own families and their own children, and parents define their own goals in group. Together, parents learn from one another about ways to strengthen their families.

Respect. Parents in support groups can expect to have their feelings heard, one at a time. They can also count on having enough time for everyone to speak, rather than one or two people taking over all the time in the group.

Parenting in the Present. Support groups focus on what is happening today, rather than spending precious time on things in the past that cannot be changed. When people need to talk about the past, it is because the past is affecting what is happening now.

Responsiveness. If a parent has a crisis or is very upset, they will get the group's support first.

Responsibility. Members of the group hold each other accountable for the above values, ask for clarification if there is something they don't understand, and reach out if someone else seems to be struggling.

Who leads the support group?

Parent empowerment is the cornerstone of our work. This parent empowerment is most apparent in the shared leadership model of group facilitation that practiced by Circle of Parents. Circle of Parents support groups are led by a trained facilitator (or co-facilitator) and a parent group leader all of whom share the responsibility for the group's success. This shared leadership model makes the Circle of Parents mutual self-help group unique. The role of the facilitator is to guide and mentor the parent leader. The role of the parent group leader is to actually facilitate the group process.

What about childcare while parents participate in the support group?

Local Circle of Parents groups provide a free program for the participants' children. This alleviates the barrier of childcare for parent participants and provides a safe, trusting, and consistent environment for the children. Circle of Parents Children's Programs help children learn about feelings, problem solving, self-esteem, and communication in a caring atmosphere.

Participation in the Children's Program helps children to:

- develop and increase self-esteem
- develop and increase social skills
- safe and healthy ways to express and cope with their feelings
- learn problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills
- establish trust and positive relationships with their parents

What are the benefits for participating families?

According to a recent survey of parents in Minnesota:

- 96% of the parents indicate that abusive behaviors have been reduced since coming to group.
- 87% of the parents indicate that their parenting skill have improved since coming to group.
- 87% of the parents indicate that they feel better about being a parent and their parent-child relationship has improved since coming to group.

How often do groups meet?

Circle of Parents support groups meet weekly for one and a half to two hours. Most groups meet in a local church or community center. In our community the support group meets (give local information to your audience, day of week, time, location of meeting).

Who is appropriate to refer to a Circle of Parents support group?

- Any parent who is interested in strengthening their family relationships
- Parents who feel isolated
- Parents who are frustrated with the challenges of parenting
- Parents who wish to increase their parenting skills and abilities
- Parents who may have experienced inconsistent parenting or abuse as children
- Parents who are worried about their feelings of anger
- Parents who have low self-esteem
- Parents who need assistance in developing specific parenting skills
- Parents who would benefit from more concrete information on child development and available community resources
- Parents who have hurt or fear that they may hurt their children

Who is inappropriate to refer to a Circle of Parents support group?

- Parents who are chronic substance abuse users and are not in treatment.
- Parents with mental health issues that keep them from productively participating in the group process.
- People who have been convicted of sexual abuse and are not in treatment.

Ask contact to refer parents to group!

Leave materials with contact, e.g. brochures, flyer, poster, etc.

Be sure to provide contact information and any information about how to make a referral. Remember to *send a thank you* and be sure to show appreciation for any future referrals!!

Remember – It's all about RELATIONSHIPS.

addendum x

STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITING FAMILIES NC CIRCLE OF PARENTS NETWORK

It is clear that families across the nation are experiencing troubling stresses and not reaching out for support.

- A recent national survey of parents conducted by the YMCA and Search Institute in 2002, found that 78 percent of parents feel that talking with other parents about parenting issues would help “very much” or “somewhat.”
- Other things that were reported as helpful included being affirmed for their parenting, seeking advice from professionals they trust, and having other adults they trust spend time with their children.
- But 53 percent of parents surveyed said that they do not regularly reach out for parenting help from any of these sources.

This is the paradox that we often struggle with in providing support services to families. Families indicate that they need or desire services, but when they are approached to participate in the services very few follow through. The reason may be that families perceive themselves as “weak” or “needy” if they actually reach out for help. It is our obligation to emphasize to parents that networks of support actually help strengthen families. Keep in mind that it takes a lot of time and encouragement for hesitant families to come around, so patience and persistence are required. As a new program, much of your energy will be spent creating a reputation for the group, as someplace that is safe and responsive to parents’ needs.

Strategies to Consider:

Clearly define your target population—In the initial planning stages for your group, it is important to determine your target population. Which parents in your community need this program?

- Will you be working with all families seeking extra support?
- Will you focus on specific populations identified as needing special attention, such as teenage parents, fathers, or minority families?
- Will you work with families already involved with DSS?

Think about the people and places that interact with your target population.—Several are listed below. Keep in mind that families more often interact with agencies, institutions, and individuals that are not connected to the human service or child welfare system. How could you partner with these organizations and individuals to promote your program, and who among them should be included in the planning process?

- WIC
- Work First
- maternity care coordinators
- child service coordinators
- early intervention specialists

- teachers
- school counselors
- childcare providers
- employers
- churches
- health care providers
- libraries
- businesses
- clubs
- parks
- grocery stores
- neighbors

Ask parents for help!—Because parents have ownership of their group, this really should be the first strategy that is used. Parents can let you know if the meeting time is inappropriate for working parents, or if the location is considered unsafe after dark, or if they need to have food provided because it's too much trouble to feed their family before coming to the meeting. Including parents in the development stage enhances leadership skills and empowers them to make the group into something they know families really need and want. Unless you have a true sense of why parents are not attending group meetings, it won't be possible to address their needs. You can do this by:

- **Focusing initial efforts on recruiting the initial “core” group of parents.** It is not recommended that a group begin until contact has been made with 3 to 5 parents who assure they will attend. The group will grow as they tell other parents and as referral sources see you as a credible resource.
- **Forming a Parent Advisory Committee** or Parent Leadership Team to help with planning, parent recruitment, problem-solving throughout program implementation. This can be your initial “core” group of parents.
- **Following up with individual families who stopped attending** or who had expressed interest but never made it to group.
- **Conduct focus groups and/or surveys.** This can be done as part of a normal group meeting, or it can be conducted separately. Consider making a presentation to parenting classes, PTA groups, Headstart/Early Start parents, and other established meetings that parents attend, and asking for their feedback, either through discussion or a short survey.

Build and maintain referral networks—This creates a dual relationship with other community services, allowing referrals and community awareness to go both ways as relationships are established and strengthened.

- **Create a list of potential referral sources**, keeping your target population in mind. Then think about how you would go about seeking services for your own family. Would you turn to the sources you've listed? Are there other sources from which you would seek help that should be added to the list?

- **Set-up personal meetings** with the various agencies, organizations, and programs in your community that are somehow linked to parents and present the program to them, so that they can connect the group to a person. Tools are available from Prevent Child Abuse NC to assist with these meetings, including a “Referral Network Planning Sheet,” a sample letter of introduction to a referral source, and an outline/agenda for meetings with referral sources.
- **Maintain regular contact with referral sources once** a relationship is established. This is important to find out how and why they have or have not made referrals to your group. Provide them with any updates about your group, and be sure to frequently replenish supplies of local program materials.
- **Follow-up with referral sources** to thank them for referrals and let them know the outcome of referrals as confidentiality guidelines allow. You can send a quick thank-you note with a reminder of the group’s meeting time. This builds trust and credibility for your group.

Make a personal appeal to families, preferably in person, and ask about their interest—People are more likely to participate if they have a good understanding of what to expect and if they know it will match their needs. This can be achieved through a one-on-one conversation with families. If families indicate an interest in participating, take time to talk about the group with them. The information that should be discussed during this brief initial contact include:

- Basic information about the group – time, location, childcare specifics, and whether transportation and/or food is provided.
- Overview of the group purpose, format, and culture
- Why the family is interested and whether this group matches their interest

Encourage the “buddy system” (or “Each One Bring One”)—Sometimes a new experience is less intimidating with the support of a buddy. Encourage everyone to bring someone with them to the next meeting, including new parents who feel comfortable doing so, the group facilitator, and the children’s program specialist. If everyone does this it will double the group attendance!

Develop family-friendly, appealing marketing tools—This includes press releases, flyers, and posters throughout the community. Tools, materials, and technical assistance are available from Prevent Child Abuse NC to assist in developing marketing tools for your community. Keep in mind that most parents find out about group through word-of-mouth. Written information primarily reinforces what parents have heard through other sources.

- Graphics and text should be simple and culturally appropriate.
- Avoid associating your group with child abuse. You can promote it as a place for parents to take a break and get help coping with the stresses and challenges of parenting.
- Include contact information for your group in the phone book.

Offer incentives and food—Something that almost never fails is to lure families with giveaways. Oftentimes, it’s just a matter of getting people to come to one meeting to experience the benefits of group. Once they realize what they can get out of the group itself, many of these parents will become ongoing members. Ask local community organizations, churches, and businesses to donate incentives and food.

- Many businesses have funds set aside for the express purpose of donating it to worthy efforts. Walmart, for instance, distributes donations monthly to organizations on their donation list. Visit businesses in your community with information in-hand, and ask the manager to support your group by donating food, merchandise, gift certificates, or cash.
- If you can't provide food at every meeting, organize a one-time kick-off event with food and prizes.
- Offer gift certificates to the local grocery store or popular discount store to every first-time group participant.
- Work with other programs in your community who have incentive programs for families. For example, one community has a "Baby Bucks" program where parents receive points for different activities such as attending parenting classes and keeping prenatal and well-child appointments. Parents can cash in their accumulated points or "Baby Bucks" for things like car seats, cribs, and diapers.

addendum Y

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Initial Contact with Parents Wanting to Attend Your Circle of Parents Group...

When a parent expresses interest respond to them immediately if possible. An attitude that is welcoming, encouraging and supportive helps to put the parent at ease.

The contact person needs to be familiar with the Circle of Parents' program. Have information available regarding the Circle of Parents' program in case the parent has questions.

When you talk to a parent about attending group, review the Circle of Parents™ program with them. If you've talked about it with them earlier, ask them if they have any questions or if they would like you to review the program again (they may be under so much stress that they don't remember what you said earlier). Explain how Circle of Parents' works and try to describe the program in terms that are meaningful to the parent's situation.

Develop a relationship with the parent during your first contact with them. Reinforce the parent's decision to call and talk to someone about their challenges and help them realize that the group will offer support, and ideas to assist them if they choose to participate.

Assume that the parent needs a friend right now and see yourself as that friend. Emphasize to the parent that the group is for parents who want to be better parents, and don't always know what to do in given situations. Parents who attend the group love their children and want what is best for them.

If you are calling the parent back, plan to call them when you have plenty of time to talk. Be sensitive to the parent's privacy, schedule and feelings. Ask if it is a convenient time to talk—they may be busy or want you to call when their spouse is not at home.

Encourage the parent to bring their children to the program. The Children's Program parallels the group as a place of respect and bonding. You may want to explain that it is beneficial for children to have time away from their parents and to be with other children.

Determine what the parent needs in order to attend the group. For instance, do they need transportation? If so, try to make arrangements to assist them in attending the meeting. If possible, it is nice to have someone pick up the parent and give them a ride to their first meeting so they already feel a connection to another participant.

You may wish to meet with the parent before the first meeting so that they will know someone when they are attending the first meeting. This will also help you to be prepared for possible issues that might arise as a result of the new member entering into the group. For example, are there any issues that the new parent is sensitive about and will be upset about if they are discussed as part of the group early on in their involvement with the group?

Keep in touch with the parent as they prepare to attend their first group. You may want to give the parent a phone number where they can reach you if they have questions between the time of your call and the group they plan to attend. You may also want to call the parent the day before the group meets to remind them. Let the parent know that the group is important and that you will be expecting to see them at the group meeting. If you detect ambivalent feelings on the part of the parent, invite the parent to express them, and then address them.

Remember that some parents aren't ready to come to a group and the best thing you can do is leave the door open and remind them that the group will be there should they want to join at a later time.

addendum z



CONFIDENTIAL SURVEY

Directions: Please choose the most appropriate responses based on your situation. All answers are anonymous and will be kept confidential. Return completed surveys to your facilitator. Your facilitator will place all surveys in a confidential envelope and will return to the Circle of Parents™ office. Thank you.

1. What is your gender?

- | | |
|-----------|---------|
| 1. Female | 2. Male |
|-----------|---------|

2. What is your age?

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. 17 years or younger | 4. 30 to 39 years |
| 2. 18 to 21 years | 5. 40 to 49 years |
| 3. 22 to 29 years | 6. 50 years or older |

3. Which race best describes you? (Please circle all that apply.)

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. American Indian / Alaskan Native | 5. White / Caucasian |
| 2. Asian | 6. Two or more races |
| 3. Black / African American | 7. Unknown race |
| 4. Native Hawaiian / other Pacific Islander | 8. Other: _____ |

4. In your own words please describe your ethnicity / cultural background in the space provided.

(Latino, Hispanic, Hmong, Liberian, etc.) _____

5. Which region of the state is your Circle of Parents™ group located?

1. Northern Minnesota (St. Cloud and north)
2. Metro Minnesota (Twin Cities and surrounding counties)
3. Southern Minnesota (West Central Minnesota and south of Twin Cities)

6. To the best of your knowledge, about how many people live in the community in which you live (or the town you live closest to)? _____

7. Which of the following best describes where you live?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Minneapolis or St. Paul | 3. Other small City / Town |
| 2. Suburb of Twin Cities Metro Area | 4. Rural Community / Farm |

8. How would you best describe your education?

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. 11 th grade or less | 4. Some college |
| 2. High school graduate / GED | 5. College graduate |
| 3. Trade / business / vocational school | |

9. Which of the following choices best describes your current life situation?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Single | 4. Separated |
| 2. Married | 5. Divorced |
| 3. Not married, living with partner | 6. Widowed |

10. Which of the following best describes your current household income level?

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Under \$10,000 | 4. \$20,000 to \$29,999 |
| 2. \$10,000 to \$14,999 | 5. \$30,000 to \$44,999 |
| 3. \$15,000 to \$19,999 | 6. Above \$45,000 |

11. Please indicate the relationship, age and living status of each of your children.

Relationship:	Ages:	Number living with you:
Biological		
Foster		
Step		
Grand		
Adoptive		
Guardian		
Other		

12. What are the reason(s) you decided to join a Circle of Parents™ support group?

(Circle all that apply.)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Frustrated with parenting | 7. ADD / ADHD child |
| 2. Trouble controlling my temper | 8. Single parent |
| 3. Child with a disability | 9. Parenting tips / new ideas |
| 4. Having a teenager(s) | 10. Stepfamily |
| 5. Afraid of hurting my kids | 11. Required / mandated to attend |
| 6. Felt isolated | 12. Other, please explain: _____ |

13. Please check the box for any of the following concerns that are current stressors in your life and/or your child's life. (Check all that apply.)

	Yourself	One or more of your children
1. Physical disability	—	—
2. Learning disability	—	—
3. Developmental disability	—	—
4. Behavior problems	—	—
5. Mental health concerns	—	—
6. Alcohol or drug use	—	—
7. Domestic Violence	—	—
8. Social Isolation	—	—
9. Unstable housing situation	—	—

14. When you were a child, did you experience any of the following? (Circle all that apply.)

- Verbal abuse (insulting or foul language that damages a child's self-esteem)
- Emotional abuse or neglect (when a parent is not emotionally supportive)
- Physical abuse (non-accidental physical injury)
- Physical neglect (not meeting a child's basic needs, not protecting a child from a dangerous situation)
- Sexual (any sexually provocative behavior or intentional invasion of privacy)
- Domestic abuse between adults or parents
- None
- Unsure

15. Has your child ever experienced any of the following? (Circle all that apply.)

1. Verbal abuse (insulting or foul language that damages a child's self-esteem)
2. Emotional abuse or neglect (when a parent is not emotionally supportive)
3. Physical abuse (non-accidental physical injury)
4. Physical neglect (not meeting a child's basic needs, not protecting a child from a dangerous situation)
5. Sexual (any sexually provocative behavior or intentional invasion of privacy)
6. Domestic abuse between adults or parents
7. None
8. Unsure

16. How did you learn about your Circle of Parents™ support group? (Circle all that apply.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Friend / family member | 9. Poster or Brochure |
| 2. My child's schoolteacher | 10. Newspaper ad or article |
| 3. Child protection worker | 11. TV or radio |
| 4. MFIP worker | 12. Therapist or counselor |
| 5. Other social worker | 13. Other support group |
| 6. Health care provider | 14. Circle of Parents™ website |
| 7. Childcare provider | 15. 1-800-CHILDREN referral |
| 8. Other, please explain: _____ | |

17. When did you attend your first Circle of Parents™ support group meeting?

(If you're not sure, please use your best judgment.)

1. Approximate month you joined (e.g., March) _____
2. Approximate year you joined (e.g., 1998) _____

18. Before tonight, how many Circle of Parents™ support group meetings have you attended?

(If you're not sure, please use your best judgment.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. This is my first meeting | 4. 11 to 20 meetings |
| 2. 1 to 4 meetings | 5. 21 to 50 meetings |
| 3. 5 to 10 meetings | 6. More than 50 meetings |

19. Are you required to attend this support group?

- | | | |
|--------|-------|----------------|
| 1. Yes | 2. No | 3. Not anymore |
|--------|-------|----------------|

20. What keeps you coming to group? (Circle all that apply.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Support from group | 6. Parenting ideas |
| 2. Support from leaders | 7. Informational resources |
| 3. Gets me out of the house | 8. Referrals to services |
| 4. Friendships | 9. Other, please explain: _____ |
| 5. Children's program | |

21. Have you ever recommended a Circle of Parents™ group to another parent or caregiver?

- | | |
|--------|-------|
| 1. Yes | 2. No |
|--------|-------|

22. How far do you travel one way to your Circle of Parents™ group?

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. 0 to 5 miles | 5. 31 to 40 miles |
| 2. 6 to 10 miles | 6. 41 to 50 miles |
| 3. 11 to 20 miles | 7. If more than 50 miles, how far? |
| 4. 21 to 30 miles | _____ |

23. What reasons have caused you to miss meetings?

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Transportation | 4. Too far away from my home |
| 2. Family obligations | 5. Work conflicts |
| 3. Group is not helping | 6. Other, please explain: |

24. How has your participation at group benefited your family life?

25. What do you like *most* about your group?

26. What do you like the *least* about your group?

27. Are there any other issues or services you would like your Circle of Parents™ support group to address?

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey!

Your contributions make a difference for other families who attend Circle of Parents™ groups. Your group can expect to receive a donation of Scholastic children's books as an incentive for returning this completed survey.



CIRCLE OF PARENTS™

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