



Parent to Parent USA Endorsed Practices for Parent to Parent Support Summary Document

Parent to Parent USA (P2PUSA) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to promote access and quality in parent to parent support for all families who have children or adolescents with a special health need, mental health issue or disability. The formal matching of a Referred Parent with a trained, volunteer, Support Parent is the model of peer support promoted by Parent to Parent USA. The following practices, endorsed by Parent to Parent USA, are based on research¹ and the knowledge and experience of Parent to Parent Program Directors.²

Glossary of Terms

- **Matching** – The formal connecting of a parent seeking the support of an experienced parent. Formal matching involves connecting a parent to a Support Parent who has received training.
- **Parent to Parent Programs** – organizations that formally match parents seeking emotional and informational support with an experienced, trained, volunteer Support Parent* .
- **Support Parent** – Parents with children or youth who have special needs who have participated in skill-building or training session(s) in preparation for their role as Support Parent.
- **Referred Parent** – Parents with children or youth who have special needs who request to talk to another parent with similar experiences for the purpose of emotional and information support.

Matching Program

Evidence-Based Practice

- Maintains the capacity and/or ability to match families with diverse experiences including but not limited to ethnicity, culture, race, language, socio-economic, disability and other child/family related factors
- Continuous quality improvement processes are in place

Best Practice

- Program is directed/coordinated by parent of child or youth with special health care needs, disability or mental health issue

The Match

Evidence-Based Practice

- Criteria for the match are driven by the concerns, needs and priorities of the Referred Parent
- Matches are made within 24-48 hours of request

¹ Singer, G.H.S., Marquis, J., Powers, L.K., Blanchard, L., DiVenere, N. Santelli, B., (1999) A Multi-site Evaluation of Parent to Parent Programs for Parents of Children with Disabilities. *Journal of Early Intervention*, Vol. 22, No 3. 217-229.

² Statewide Parent to Parent Director's Meeting Philadelphia, PA 2002.



- Support Parent makes at least 4 contact within the first 8 weeks of receiving the match

Best Practice

- Referred parents are informed about the possibility of a match not being made within 24-48 hours and updated on the process until a match has been made³
- The person facilitating the training coordinates the matches

Support Parent

Evidence-Based Practice

- Parent of child or youth with special needs
- Completed Skill-Building Support Parent Training(s)
- Commitment to program standards
- Participates in program evaluation

Referred Parent

Evidence-Based Practice

- Parent of a child or youth with special health care need, disability or mental health issue voluntarily comes to program requesting match
- Determines criteria for match
- Participates in program evaluation

Support Parent Training Curriculum

Best Practice

- Program orientation including expectations; referral, matching, follow-up and evaluation processes
- active listening and communication skills
- self-reflection/self awareness
- sharing family stories
- role play
- adjustment/adaptation process
- cultural diversity
- national, state and community resources
- positive philosophy
- advocacy
- leadership
- confidentiality

³ Parent to Parent USA 2007 Survey Report of Statewide Parent to Parent Programs



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* This document and subsequent materials developed by P2PUSA will use the term Support Parent to describe the role of an experienced, veteran supporting parent.