

# *MN Circle of Parents® Orientation Training Booklet*



**MISSION:** Strengthening families by promoting the safety, stability, and well-being of children.



**MISSION:** To empower parents and caregivers to create healthy and loving families through positive parenting and mutual self-help.

**VISION:**

A world where all caregivers have the knowledge, skills and support to raise strong, resilient and happy children.

# MN Circle of Parents Model

---

The Minnesota Circle of Parents model is a successful community-based, peer-led, mutual self-help program providing family strengthening support as well as parenting education. It's a place where parents can safely discuss with other parents and caregivers the challenges, successes and frustrations involved in raising children...resulting in calmer parents and healthier children.

Implementing Circle of Parents increases parent partnerships and leadership involvement throughout each community. Protective Factors are supported naturally through co-learning and empowered leadership. Support groups also help create and strengthen existing prevention initiatives throughout your community and other local programs.

Using a combination of hands-on activities, discussion, examples, and resources, Circle of Parents trainings provide basic skills as well as:

- resilience
- strategic sharing
- trauma-informed care
- brain science
- advocacy
- prevention education
- cultural communication
- adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- community organizing and family issues (COFI)

*"I now have the power to be the kind of parent I want to be."*

*"My son has anger issues and now I can talk to him in a positive way instead of yelling and using negative words."*

*"I experienced the feeling of belonging. The support I get keeps my head high, which makes me happy, and when I'm happy my kids are healthier."*

*"Before attending our Circle of Parents group I always relied on my mom to discipline my child... but after talking to other parents and going to group I gained more confidence in my own parenting skills."*

*"Every parent needs an outlet."*

The following article, published in the *Albert Lea Tribune (Freeborn County)*, describes the impact of Circle of Parents on one family. If you are interested in starting a Circle of Parents group in your area, please contact us at 507.383.8842 or email [bsorum@familywiseservices.org](mailto:bsorum@familywiseservices.org).

## **Broken Cycle** by Jennifer Rogers, Tribune Staff Writer

Carol Woodruff's son, John, doesn't know what it is like to feel afraid and for her that is what it is all about.

"It's fabulous to know that my son doesn't know what it is like to be abused," Woodruff said. "That is what the program is all about."

The program Woodruff is referring to is Circle of Parents, a mutual self-help support group sponsored by Minnesota Communities Caring for Children and local organizations around the state. Mutual self-help groups work to build trust, respect, responsibility, and non-violence among parents that attend regular meetings, so they can create homes where children are valued and loved.

Minnesota Communities Caring for Children (MCCC) presented Woodruff with their Gerry O'Konski Chapter Volunteer of the Year award for her contribution to Albert Lea's Circle of Parents support group, advisory committee and all sponsoring organization at their annual meeting May 11. Gerry O'Konski was a well-loved, long-time facilitator in the Rochester area, whom this award is given in memory of each year.

"Carol is a caring person and has the ability to truly listen, encourage and nurture parents," said Nancy VanderWaerd, who nominated Woodruff for the award. "Her creative ideas to build and enhance community awareness of the program and child abuse prevention are numerous."

She knows how to empower others and has been an outstanding ambassador for parents and child abuse prevention in our community, said VanderWaerd.

"Without her dedication and tireless work, the Albert Lea Circle of Parents chapter would not be the success that it is," she said.

Woodruff has been a Circle of Parents volunteer since 1998.

"I heard about the organization and was a part of it as a parent. In 1979, after being in counseling. It was a kind of after care,"

Woodruff said. "I didn't want to be the kind of parent I had and the only way to do that was to go through counseling.

Support groups are perfect for that."

For Woodruff, Circle of Parents is about the children and making their lives better. "It makes a difference for the next generation," she said.

Woodruff's son, John, 23, was the only next generation person at the annual meeting. After Woodruff was given her award John asked if he could say something.

"My mom did so much for me," he said. "She broke the cycle of violence in our family!"



# Benefits for Chartered Affiliations

---

## **PARTNERSHIP ASSISTANCE**

### Outreach

- Brochures, bookmarks, and flyers
- Assistance in designing customized materials
- Resilience promotions and exhibits
- Multi-media / **virtual** platforms

### Resources

- Prevention strategies, materials, brochures, publications, and recognition
- Participation in statewide data collection and outcomes based on best and promising practice
- Trainings, resources, and materials

### Administrative

- Fiscal services (**501(c)3**, Liability insurance - File 1099 tax forms)
- Volunteer accident insurance
- Background Check of affiliated volunteers
- Periodic trainings and events

## **TRAININGS**

- Circle of Parents trainings (Orientation, Facilitation Skills, Establishing a Children's Group)
- Shared Leadership and Strategic Sharing
- Cafés (Parent/Caregiver, Community, Hope & Healing, MN Model, Teen or Kids Cafés)
- Community Organizing for Family Issues

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

### Personal Contacts

- Access to staff for coaching, debriefing, problem solving, support, and encouragement
- Regular check-ins and technical assistance as needed
- Quality assurance and best practices

### Statewide Network

- Connect and network with other family strengthening community contacts across Minnesota
- Newsletters, prevention publications, social media and announcements
- Opportunities to connect with Circle of Parents statewide network virtually or in-person (when possible)

### National Network

- Opportunities to connect with the national Circle of Parents network and Prevent Child Abuse America, and serve on committees if desired

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS and PARENT/CAREGIVER NETWORK OPPORTUNITIES**

- Co-learning opportunities for parents, caregivers and community members through community organizing, education, and action
- Support participants to become community leaders, Circle of Parents group representatives, and/or co-facilitators

# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

---

There are specific research-informed protective factors that help to prevent the occurrence of child neglect and abuse. In Minnesota, we are working to create community environments and public policies that promote these protective factors.

## **Parental Resilience**

No one can eliminate stress from parenting, but a parent's capacity for resilience can affect how a parent deals with stress. Resilience is the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family's life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships including relationships with your own child, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.

## **Social Connections**

Friends, family members, neighbors and community members provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice and give concrete assistance to parents. Networks of support are essential to parents and also offer opportunities for people to "give back", an important part of self-esteem as well as a benefit for the community. Isolated families may need extra help in reaching out to build positive relationships.

## **Concrete Support in Times of Need**

Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.

## **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development**

Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development. Information can come from many sources, including family members as well as parent education classes and surfing the internet. Studies show information is most effective when it comes at the precise time parents need it to understand their own children. Parents who experienced harsh discipline or other negative childhood experiences may need extra help to change the parenting patterns they learned as children.

## **Social and Emotional Competence of Children**

A child or youth's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers. Challenging behaviors or delayed development creates extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance for both parents and children can head off negative results and keep development on track.

## **Nurturing and Attachment**

When parents and children have strong, warm feelings for one another, children develop trust that their parents will provide what they need to thrive, including love, acceptance, positive guidance, and protection.

# CREATING AN ACTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

---

Your Circle of Parents support group is very rewarding to families and your community. It takes enthusiasm to lay the groundwork for a successful team, and a combination of commitment and common sense strategies. Circle of Parents directors are available to provide you with support, technical assistance, resources, and training. Many of the ideas and strategies in this section will be helpful as you expand your advisory committee.

As a community partner, the following are essential to sponsor a healthy mutual self-help support group:

- **Local Advisory Committee** – Recruiting six to eight dedicated, enthusiastic volunteers who represent a cross-section of your community, including parent representatives is vital to the success of your team. The advisory committee maintains the support group by recruiting facilitators and children’s group volunteers as well as securing funds.
- **Parent Group Facilitator(s) and Children’s Group Volunteers** – Advisory committee members recruit and supervise facilitators and children’s group volunteers. Recruitment and the selection process are critical to a successful self-help process. Individual background checks and training is provided by MN Circle of Parents at no cost to participants.
- **Meeting Site** – Your advisory committee is responsible for securing a meeting site for the parent and children’s groups. Most teams prefer to use a nearby church, community center, or other appropriate site.
- **Referral Contact** – Circle of Parents partners have at least one person who agrees to be the main contact for referral calls from parents or other sources seeking information about the group.
- **Public Relations and Outreach** – Local outreach activities are varied. MN Circle of Parents provides a selection of brochures and bookmarks that could be customized with your local contact information. Please reference the referral networks and public relations section of operations guide for more information.
- **Fundraising and Budget** –Advisory committees raise funds or seek donations to provide materials for the children’s group (snacks, art supplies, wipes, etc.). Some groups provide stipends to facilitators and children’s group volunteers. They may also provide coffee and/or other refreshments for parents during their group.
- **Referral Sources** – An active referral network is key to keeping your group healthy and growing. Potential referral sources might include: child protection, courts, law enforcement, therapists, family resources centers, Head Start, mental health, family services collaborative, physicians, local schools, etc. It is recommended that each partner has a minimum of three sources referring families to the group. It is critical for the advisory committee to maintain regular contact with their sources with updates and help remind to refer parents.

# Advisory Committee Member Volunteer Position Description

Appointment Term: <b>Approximately three - six hours/month for one-year minimum commitment</b>			
<b>Primary Function -- Describes the overall purpose of the position, why the position exists and its importance within the organizational partnership</b>			
Advisory Committee members provide guidance, leadership and are responsible for the development, training, and maintenance of the partnership. This may include fundraising, marketing, and other partner-related activities. Advisory Committee members serve as community and agency liaisons to prevention initiative volunteers, activities, support groups, events, trainings, workshops, etc. and responsible for ensuring that the partner meets standards of quality.			
<b>Duties -- Essential functions</b>			
1.	<b><u>Committee Chair:</u> Schedule, create agenda, and facilitate committee meetings. Incorporating awareness, education, support, leadership, and action/application into committee activities</b>	4.	<b><u>Secretary:</u> Participate in and take minutes of committee meetings. Send minutes to committee members prior to the next scheduled meeting. Responsible for correspondence (thank you letters, etc.)</b>
2.	<b><u>Main Contact:</u> Actively participate in committee meetings. Prepare and deliver progress reports and needs of partner to regional coordinator. Responsible for data collection, reporting, and maintaining. Act as liaison between any community group(s) and advisory committee</b>	5.	<b><u>Financial Manager:</u> Actively participate in committee meetings, prepare and deliver financial reports. Maintain any checking and/or savings accounts. Prepare and submit bi-annual financial statement to FamilyWise Services (if FWS is your fiscal sponsor)</b>
3.	<b><u>Parent Representative:</u> Actively participate in committee meetings. Act as liaison between committee and parent group participants. Offer input, leadership, and feedback. Participate in partner-related activities, events, projects, etc. Participate in training, workshops, and technical assistance sessions as requested and needed</b>	6.	<b><u>All Committee Members:</u> Actively participate in committee meetings. Offer input, leadership, and feedback. Participate in partner-related activities, events, projects, etc. Participate in training, workshops, and technical assistance sessions as requested and needed. Participate in marketing, volunteer recruitment, and maintaining active referral networks</b>
<b>Skills -- Additional relevant skill-sets</b>			
1.	<b>Knowledge and commitment of parenting, child/youth development, shared leadership, parent leadership, and family empowerment</b>	3.	<b>Knowledge and understanding cultural issues, diversity, and/or the importance of local customs and practices</b>
2.	<b>Knowledge and understanding of protective &amp; risk factors, hosting community Café style sessions, and maintain consistent participation of events, activities, and groups</b>	4.	<b>Knowledge of group dynamics, local family needs, community resources that promote , and ability to work as a team</b>
Preference may be given to individuals with education and/or experience in marketing, building resources, leading/facilitating meetings, and/or maintaining finances and bookkeeping. Preference may also be given to individuals with education and/or experience in the ACE Study, brain development/science, creating awareness, education, support and leadership and applying those practices to help strengthen local communities.			

# Parent Representative Volunteer Position Description

Appointment Term: <b>Approximately three hours/week for one-year minimum commitment and commitment to attend trainings as needed</b>	
<b>Primary Function -- Describes the overall purpose of the position, why the position exists and its importance within the organizational partnership</b>	
The Parent Representative is an active member of the Advisory Committee, acting as liaison between the committee and local parents and families. If applicable, the parent representative is responsible for co-facilitating the parent support group based on the Circle of Parents® mutual self-help and shared leadership models. The parent representative, in conjunction with the parent group facilitator, is responsible for the development, training, and maintenance of the parent support group and ensures to maintain and/or meets standards of quality.	
<b>Duties -- Essential functions</b>	
1. <b>Actively participate in Advisory Committee meetings. Act as liaison between committee and local parents/families. Offer input, leadership, and feedback to committee. Participate in partner-related activities, events, projects, etc. Participate in training, workshops, and technical assistance sessions as requested and needed</b>	4. <b>If applicable, co-facilitate the process of mutual self-help and model shared and parent leadership techniques and development. Meet regularly with parent group facilitator(s) and children's group lead for networking, problem solving and/or support</b>
2. <b>Serve as a resource to the Parent Leadership Team through meetings, calls, and/or other contact means</b>	5. <b>Work in partnership with facilitator to organize, plan, and facilitate curriculum and/or speakers, as deemed necessary by participants, and provide resource/referral information. Help coordinate snacks/supplies for group</b>
3. <b>Coach, mentor, and nurture empowerment of local parents/ families for possible opportunities of leadership development</b>	6. <b>Participate in training and technical assistance sessions, as requested and available</b>
<b>Skills -- Additional relevant skill-sets</b>	
1. <b>Knowledge, commitment, and understanding of parent/shared leadership, family empowerment, and mutual self-help models</b>	3. <b>Knowledge and understanding of protective &amp; risk factors, hosting community Café style sessions, and maintaining consistent participation of events, activities, and groups</b>
2. <b>Knowledge and understanding of parenting techniques, child and youth development, group dynamics, family needs, and community/local resources</b>	4. <b>Knowledge and understanding cultural issues, diversity, and/or the importance of local customs and practices</b>
If maintaining a parent support group: Help create a welcoming environment for participants and ensure atmosphere allows for everyone to talk, share, and support each other. Be flexible when necessary. Maintain participant data information. Engage participants as a group and individually when possible. Disseminate resource/referral information as needed.	





# Parent Group Facilitator Volunteer Position Description

Appointment Term: **Approximately three hours/week for one-year minimum commitment**

**Primary Function -- Describes the overall purpose of the position, why the position exists and its importance within the organizational partnership**

The Parent Group Facilitator is responsible for facilitating ongoing parent support groups based on the Circle of Parents® mutual self-help and shared leadership models. The Facilitator, in conjunction with the parent representative(s), is responsible for the development, training, and maintenance of the group, co-facilitators, mentors/coaches parent participants, and ensures that the group meets and maintains the partnership standards of quality.

**Duties -- Essential functions**

1.	Facilitate the process of mutual self-help and model shared/parent leadership techniques and development with current parent representative(s)	4.	Meet regularly with co-facilitators, parent representative(s), and children's group lead for networking, problem solving, and/or support
2.	The ability to engage participants individually or as a group. Coach, mentor, and nurture empowerment of group participants in opportunities for leadership development	5.	Actively participate in advisory committee meetings to offer input and feedback. Participate in partner-related activities, events, and projects
3.	Work in partnership with parent representative(s) to organize, plan, and facilitate curriculum and/or speakers, as deemed necessary by participants, and provide resource/referral information. Help coordinate snacks/supplies for group(s)	6.	Participate in training and technical assistance sessions, as requested and available. Maintain accurate participant data tools and submit statistical information at <a href="http://www.circlemnstats.org">www.circlemnstats.org</a> to MN Circle of Parents regional staff on a regular basis

**Skills -- Additional relevant skill-sets**

1.	Knowledge and understanding of group dynamics, shared leadership, parent leadership, and mutual self-help models	4.	Knowledge and understanding of protective & risk factors, hosting community Café style sessions, and maintaining consistent participation of events, activities, and groups
2.	Knowledge of positive parenting techniques, parent/family empowerment, and child/youth development	5.	Help ensure a welcoming environment for participants, flexibility, and ensure an atmosphere that allows for everyone to talk, share, support each other, and maintain consistent participation
3.	Knowledge and understanding cultural issues, diversity, and/or the importance of local customs and practices	6.	Have knowledge and availability of local resource/referral information for dissemination as needed

Preference may be given to individuals with education and/or experience in the ACE Study, brain development/science, creating awareness, education, support and leadership and applying those practices to help strengthen local communities.

# Children's Group Lead Volunteer Position Description

Appointment Term: <b>Approximately three hours/week for one-year minimum commitment</b>			
<b>Primary Function -- Describes the overall purpose of the position, why the position exists and its importance within the organizational partnership</b>			
The Children's Group Lead is responsible for the provision of an ongoing organized group for children while their parents participate in the concurrent support group(s). This lead position is responsible for youth participants, the development, training, and maintenance of the children's group as well as all assistants and/or volunteers and ensures that the group meets and maintains the partnership standards of quality.			
<b>Duties -- Essential functions</b>			
1.	Provide a safe, supportive environment for children that helps teach and model conflict resolution and healthy problem-solving techniques	5.	Meet regularly with children's group assistants and/or volunteers, parent representative, and parent group facilitator for networking, problem solving, and/or support
2.	Coach, mentor, and supervise the duties of all children's group assistants and/or volunteers and work as a team	6.	Actively participate in advisory committee meetings to offer input and feedback. Participate in partner-related activities, events and projects
3.	Plan, organize, and implement age appropriate curriculum and/or activities, as well as supervise and direct children's group assistants and/or volunteers in these activities	7.	Participate in training and technical assistance sessions, as requested and available. Maintain accurate participant data tools and submit statistical information at <a href="http://www.circlemnstats.org">www.circlemnstats.org</a> to MN Circle of Parents regional staff on a regular basis
4.	Coordinate and purchase snacks/supplies in conjunction with the parent representative(s) and parent group facilitator	8.	Knowledge and understanding cultural issues, diversity, and/or the importance of local customs and practices
<b>Skills -- Additional relevant skill-sets</b>			
1.	Knowledge and understanding of infant, child, and youth development, and brain development	3.	Knowledge and understanding of protective & risk factors, hosting community Café style sessions, and maintaining consistent participation of events, activities, and groups
2.	Flexibility with time requirements, and physical ability to lift and play on the same level with babies, toddlers, and young children	4.	Knowledge and understanding the signs of child abuse and procedures of reporting possible maltreatment
Preference may be given to those individuals with education and/or experience working with young children in a day care or pre-school type settings, and supervisory experience. Preference may also be given to individuals with education and/or experience in the ACE Study, brain development/science, creating awareness, education, support and leadership and applying those practices to help strengthen local communities.			

# Children's Group Assistant Volunteer Position Description

Appointment Term: **Weekly for one-year minimum commitment**

**Primary Function -- Describes the overall purpose of the position, why the position exists and its importance within the organizational partnership**

The Children's Group Assistant/Volunteer is responsible to help the children's group lead to provide an ongoing organized group for children while their parents participate in the concurrent support group(s). This position is responsible to help the group lead ensure that the group meets and maintains the partnership standards of quality.

**Duties -- Essential functions**

1.	Provide a safe, supportive environment for children that helps teach and model conflict resolution and healthy problem-solving techniques	4.	Meet regularly with the group lead, parent representative, and parent group facilitator for networking, problem solving, and/or ongoing support
2.	Help the group lead plan, organize, and implement age appropriate curriculum and/or activities	5.	Participate in training and technical assistance sessions, as requested and available. Assist the group lead to maintain accurate participant data tools and submit statistical information at <a href="http://www.circlemnstats.org">www.circlemnstats.org</a> to MN Circle of Parents regional staff on a regular basis
3.	Assist the group lead to coordinate and purchase snacks/supplies	6.	Knowledge and understanding cultural issues, diversity, and/or the importance of local customs and practices

**Skills -- Additional relevant skill-sets**

1.	Knowledge and understanding of infant, child, and youth development, and brain development	3.	Knowledge and understanding of protective & risk factors, hosting community Café style sessions, and maintaining consistent participation of events, activities, and groups
2.	Flexibility with time requirements, and physical ability to lift and play on the same level with babies, toddlers, and young children	4.	Knowledge and understanding signs of child abuse and procedures of reporting possible maltreatment

Preference may be given to those individuals with education and/or experience working with young children in a day care or pre-school type settings, and supervisory experience. Preference may also be given to individuals with education and/or experience in the ACE Study, brain development/science, creating awareness, education, support and leadership and applying those practices to help strengthen local communities.

# MN CIRCLE OF PARENTS MANDATED REPORTING POLICY

---

Any person may *voluntarily* report abuse or neglect. As a Circle of Parents volunteer and partner, you are *mandated* to report suspected abuse or neglect.

As a person who works with children and families, you are in a key position to help protect children from harm. Federal and Minnesota state law requires you to make a child protection report if you know or have reason to believe that:

- a child is being neglected or abused; or
- has been neglected or abused in the preceding three years.

Although ongoing abuse is rare for a parent attending Circle of Parents, the possibility must be considered. Circle of Parents exists to support parents and families. However, the health, welfare and safety of children are our priorities. The following process is recommended:

1. If abuse is suspected by a children's group leader or assistant, the children's group leader/assistant is the mandated reporter. The leader/assistant, the facilitator and the parent group leader are required to meet to discuss the situation. The facilitator is responsible to discuss the suspected abuse with the parent. The parent group leader has the option whether to participate in addressing the abuse with the parent. It is important to support the parent group leader in his or her decision.
2. If the facilitator suspects or discovers abuse in the course of meeting with the parent, he/she is the mandated reporter.
3. The facilitator (and parent group leader, if he or she decides to participate in this process) is responsible to discuss the suspected abuse with the parent, in a private space away from the rest of the group. The parent must be given the opportunity to report himself/herself to the appropriate social service agency. The facilitator will explain to the parent that, regardless of who makes the report, it must be made and reassure them that the group will not abandon or ostracize the parent. At a time like this, the parent needs the safety and support the group can offer.
4. If the parent cannot or will not self-report, the mandated reporter who suspects the abuse must make the report. *Even if the parent agrees to self-report, the mandated reporter must follow up the parent's report to the local social service agency.* The ideal situation is to have the parent and the facilitator (or parent group leader) call together when making the report. ***Ultimately, however, the responsibility lies with the mandated reporter to make the report.***
5. A verbal report must be made within 24 hours to the appropriate local social service agency. A written report must be filed within 72 hours, excluding holidays and weekends.
6. As soon as possible after making a report, or before if necessary, contact your Circle of Parents regional director. Your regional director will then be able to support you through this difficult process.

# SHARED LEADERSHIP

---

## Partnering With Families

Sharing Leadership with others is attained successfully when parents, family members, staff, policymakers, community members and others build effective partnerships and share responsibility, expertise and leadership in decisions being made that affect families and communities to improve systems and the quality of life. Parents involved in these collaborations are parent leaders and/or representatives.

## Elements of Shared Leadership

Shared Leadership is identified by a set of behaviors and attitudes that create an environment of trust, respect and partnership. The following elements are vital to ensuring the success of any Shared Leadership effort.

- ◆ Mutual respect for skills and knowledge
- ◆ Mutually agreed upon goals
- ◆ Trust and honesty
- ◆ Clear and open communication
- ◆ Shared planning & decision-making
- ◆ Shared resources
- ◆ Mutual sharing of information
- ◆ Shared evaluation of progress
- ◆ Commitment to Shared Leadership

## Ways to Create Shared Leadership

- Start the group with a least two people taking responsibility for the group.
- Invite people to be involved from the very beginning.
- Share decision-making.
- Discuss people's expectations of both the advisory committee in the initial meetings.
- Share and distribute leadership roles and expectations.
- Discover the talents of members and give them opportunities to use them.
- Thank and praise people for the work they do.
- Delegate even small jobs throughout the membership.
- Share responsibility for guiding the group.
- Rotate leadership and other tasks among group members.
- Accept that you are not the expert, that you will have times when you cannot be understanding and giving, and that you do make mistakes.
- Organize the work in pairs so people can learn from one another.
- As the group grows, choose others to take over responsibilities, such as Circle of Parents group liaison, leading meetings, recruiting volunteers, advertising, key leaders of committees, fundraisings, program planner, recording weekly statistics, and greeting new people.

## Examples of Shared Leadership / Shared Values

Parent/family roles and responsibilities are as varied as the members of your group. Ask group members to create a list of all the tasks that need to be – or could be – done to help the group prosper. Listed below are some possible parent partnership roles. Do not expect that all of them need to be done, or done at once, or all of the time. They are in no special order:

<b>Activities at Group</b>	<b>Promoting the Group</b>	<b>Community, State, and National Roles</b>
Call the group to order	Distribute posters	Speak at conferences
Read opening and/or closing statements	Speak at PTA's, church groups, family oriented organizations	Train parent leaders and facilitators
Be on-site committee	Create flyers	Address legislature
Open and close the building	Approach referral sources	Lobby with your congressperson
Follow-up with missing members	Provide radio / TV interviews	Represent the program at community functions
Make coffee	Recruit new members	Participate on the Board
Bring refreshments	Set up displays at health fairs, etc.	Organize a letter writing campaign
Take inquiry calls	Send notices to newspapers	Contact your senator
Group timekeeper	Write / share your story	Be an advocate for families
Chair patter	Attend workshops/trainings and promote your group	Work on a public awareness campaign
Organize a holiday party	Organize awareness events	Maintain bookkeeping
Invite a speaker	Set up public service announcements	Help develop a program evaluation
Conduct the group	Work on a newsletter	Conduct focus groups

# OUTCOMES of PARTNERING with SHARED LEADERSHIP

---

## Increased Program Effectiveness

- Parents and family members often become advocates for stronger, more responsive programs, additional resources for families, and the services that support them.
- Participation of parents and family members in recruiting, selecting, hiring and evaluating staff can lead to stronger partnerships and more effective programs.
- Parents and family members often volunteer as resources and become positive role models for other parents, which can include serving as a parent mentor.
- Parents and family members help programs respond more effectively to the needs/wishes of the families they serve by providing staff with immediate, reality-based feedback and suggestions for improvement.

## Better Outcomes for Parents, Children, Families and Communities

- Partnering with parents provides opportunities for growth and helps parents gain increased self-esteem, a stronger sense of personal power, and greater leadership capabilities.
- Parents and family members increase their skills in setting and reaching specific goals for themselves, their families and their communities.
- Parents often garner increased respect from their family members and friends.
- Often, children of participating families begin to demonstrate leadership behaviors within their homes, schools and communities appropriate for their age.
- Partnering with parents and families increases staff satisfaction and reduces burnout.

## MUTUAL SELF-HELP

---

### Sharing and equal status

Ideally, a self-help group operates on an egalitarian basis. The input of each participant is valuable. Everyone is or has been coping with the same difficulties, so in that way everyone is in the same boat.

### Giving and receiving help

In addition to receiving help, group participants can also offer to help others. People benefit just as much from helping as receiving. The confidence and self-esteem of participants is enhanced as they find that they have something to offer.

### Knowing from experience

The knowledge and understanding people gain from experiencing something is valuable, and different from that gained by simply studying an issue. The practical information and insight gained is useful and comforting to the participants of the group.

## **Finding and building support**

Groups provide the opportunity for participants to gain support from others who have similar concerns. This helps reduce isolation and stigma that parents often feel. Participants feel immense relief in hearing “You’re not alone,” and finding others who understand. Participants often develop friendships and share support outside groups.

## **Giving each other hope**

Longer term participants of groups provide inspiration to newer participants through their actions and their words.

# **FAMILY SUPPORT**

---

The primary responsibility for the development and well-being of children lies within the family. Enabling families to build on their own strengths and capacities promotes the healthy development of children. Families are empowered when they have access to information and other resources, and take action to improve the well-being of children, families and communities.

Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs and to communities. Families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.

# **SHARED VISIONING**

---

## **Strengths**

What are the strengths of this community? What is working for families in your community?  
What resources are available to families to make your community a good place for families?

## **Issues**

What is not working? What might be working against families? What gets in your way?

## **Vision for Change**

Imagine that you have all the resources you need to create a family-friendly community? What would this community look like?

## **Questions / Answers**

What would it take to start moving toward this vision? Who needs to be involved? Does this make sense?



# MEASURES of QUALITY

---

The advisory committee ensures high levels of success and quality in groups through:

## Composition

- 6-8 members
- Representatives from 5 segments of the community
- Parent representation
- Defined roles guarantee shared leadership practice

## Financial Stability

- A written budget exists for monetary and in-kind items
- The chartered group is fiscally sound and has a meeting site for at least 12 months

## Training and Evaluation

- Volunteers are trained by Circle of Parents® staff
- Families are involved in on-going evaluation through shared leadership
- Quality improvement goals and objectives are developed annually
- Progress of goals and objectives are reviewed monthly with Circle of Parents® staff
- Data regarding demographics of groups is gathered monthly
- Continued skills enhancement to support capacity of charter

## Programming

- Volunteer and participant recruitment
- Chartered group practices mutual self-help, shared leadership, acceptance, and confidentiality
- Group(s) are free of charge and meet weekly
- Identification of parent representatives for each group (with Circle staff)
- Groups have at least one consistent, trained facilitator

## Oversight of Volunteers

- Consistent, trained facilitators for each group
- Trained parent representatives for each group
- Trained children's group lead
- Network of consistent, trained volunteers to work with children's groups (as applicable)
- Maintenance of at least 1:5 ratio for children's group

*Measures of Quality  
Created by the 2004 MN Parent Leadership Team*

# MEASURES OF QUALITY GROUP SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

Measures of Quality (originally created by the MN Parent Leadership Team)	Exceeded	Met	Almost Met	Good Momentum	Stuck
1. 6-8 advisory committee of actively participating members that include parents representatives					
2. Practice shared leadership and the mutual self-help model					
3. Facilitator and children's group lead are involved with charter leadership					
4. Current budget is fiscally sound for the next 12 months					
5. Secured meeting site for the next 12 months					
6. Provide weekly support group meetings					
7. Active referral network of at least 3 organizations					
8. Active parent representative involved in charter leadership and trained in <i>Mutual Self-help Facilitation Skills</i> *					
9. Trained facilitator in <i>Mutual Self-help Facilitation Skills</i>					
10. Trained co-facilitator in <i>Mutual Self-help Facilitation Skills</i>					
11. Trained children's group lead ( <i>with current background clearance</i> )					
12. Trained children's group assistants (ratio of 1:5) ( <i>with current background clearances</i> )					
13. At least one individual who is responsible for volunteer recruitment					
14. Monthly data collection reporting to staff at <a href="http://www.circlemnstats.org/">www.circlemnstats.org/</a>					
15. Confidential and Non-judgmental					
16. Continued Skills Enhancement					

# MN Circle of Parents® SAMPLE BUDGET REPORT FORM

Date:	_____	Year covered in this report:	_____
Charter:	_____	Name:	_____
Address:	_____	Phone:	_____
		Email:	_____

## INCOME / REVENUE

Beginning Balance: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

GRANTOR/DONOR NAME	DATE REC'D	AMOUNT
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED THIS YEAR*****</b>		<b>\$</b>

## EXPENSES

EXPENSE ITEMS LIST	AMOUNT
Facilitator Stipends*	
Children's Group Stipends*	
Supplies	
Postage	
Printing/Copying	
Telephone	
Travel / Mileage	
Other (explain)	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES THIS YEAR *****</b>	<b>\$</b>

Ending Account Balance: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# DEVELOP & SUSTAIN REFERRAL NETWORKS

---

## Stakeholders

Every community project or issue is subject to the influence of a wide array of groups and individuals at the local and regional level, also known as stakeholders. They have a legitimate stake in the project because it affects them in some way. Stakeholders include all those who have a vested interest in a specific problem and its solution. Stakeholders may include:

- Individuals or groups willing to invest resources such as time and money to either promote or resist the project
- Units of government
- State/local agencies
- Businesses
- Local volunteer groups
- Collaborative entities

Stakeholders may favor or oppose some or all of your goals, aid or block specific changes, lobby for or against your project. They are a primary human factor in planning community activities and projects.

## Recruiting Process

1. State the desired outcome of your proposed project.
2. As a group, list all the stakeholders who have interest, power or influence regarding this outcome.
3. Assess the role you envision for them, as well as the role they might envision for themselves.
1. Linkages—list who influences the stakeholder and whom they may influence.
5. Develop solutions to implement changes.

The previous five steps have resulted in a quick summary of the stakeholders, their position, power and possible coalitions.

Next Steps may involve examining various subsets of the stakeholders. Look at the people/groups who are strongly opposed and powerful. Are there strategies that could decrease the opposition without alienating the stakeholders that support you? The value of mapping stakeholders is that strategies can be quickly assessed by scanning the rest of the list. You may also find that discussing strategies and their impacts on various stakeholders can generate *other* important stakeholders who could be added for consideration.

# POTENTIAL REFERRAL SOURCES

---

The ideal community referral source works in both directions. Professionals refer parents to your Circle of Parents group and you help parents find resources they need within the community.

Think about collaboratives, agencies and organizations serving families in your community. Consider the following for each:

- Who makes referrals? To whom?
- What information about your group do they have?
- Who sees parents and/or children?
- Who deals with issues of prevention, mental health, stress, worry, maltreatment, etc.?
- How do community sources make a referral to your group?
- How does your group maintain an on-going contact with referral sources?

## Consider the following sources:

Adoption Agencies/Surrogate Parenting Program	Family Y (YWCA-YMCA)
American Red Cross	Families First of Minnesota
Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC)	Father's Organizations
Chamber of Commerce	Financial Worker/Planner/Accountant
Chemical Treatment Centers	Guardian ad Litem
Child Care Resource and Referral	Healthy Families Center/Family Planning
Child Protection Services	Home Visitor's Program
Children's Mental Health Collaboratives	Insurance Professionals
Community Education	Legal Services/Attorney
ESL ( <i>English as a Second Language</i> )	Medical Professionals/Pediatricians
Family Literacy Program	Clinics/Hospitals
County Extension	Mental Health Professionals
County Referral Agency	Mentoring Programs
Counselors/Therapists	Family Issues
Court Services/County Attorney	Big Brother/Sister
Crime Victim Centers/Crisis Intervention	Friendship/Shepherd Program
Crisis Nursery	Migrant Workers Agencies
Cultural Centers	Ministerial Association
Daycare Providers/Child Care/Youth Centers	Parenting Resource Center
Dentistry/Orthodontics	Planned Parenthood
Education Systems	Police Department
College Campus	Probation Office
Dean of Students/School Board members	Public Health Services/WIC
ECFE ( <i>Early Childhood Family Education</i> )	Salvation Army/Food Shelves
Even Start/Head Start	SEMCAC
School Personnel	Share-a-Home
Social workers/Councilors	Shelters
Faith-based Communities	Social/Human Services
Family Strengthening Collaboratives	Truancy Office
	United Way
	Workforce Center

# RECRUITMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT FORM

---

Desired Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information/ Affiliation	Their Role We Envision	The Role They Envision	Who are they linked with and how?	Next Steps