



## 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 research<sup>1</sup> and the knowledge and experience of Parent to Parent Program Directors.<sup>2</sup>

### 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** – Programs that have processes in place to formally match parents seeking emotional and informational support with an experienced, trained, volunteer Support Parent.
- **Support Parent\*** – Parents with children or youth who have a disability, special health care need or mental health challenge who have completed training(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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Statewide Parent to Parent Director's Meeting. Philadelphia, PA 2002. Parent to Parent USA Organization Survey 2007. Parent to Parent USA Organization Survey 2010.



## **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
- Support Parent makes at least 4 contacts within the first 8 weeks of receiving the match

### ***Best Practice***

- Referred parents are informed when a match cannot be made within 24-48 hours and updated on the process until a match is made<sup>3</sup>
- The person facilitating the training coordinates the matches

## **Follow-up to Match**

### ***Evidence-Based Practice.***

- Follow up with both the Support Parent and the referred parent shortly after the match is made helps ensure mutual satisfaction and provides an opportunity to offer support and additional resources to the Support Parent or re-match parents if necessary

### ***Best Practice***

- Many local, regional, and statewide programs contact the Support Parent within 2-3 days after they have been matched with a Referred Parent just to be sure that the important first contact has been made and to answer any questions that the Support Parent may have. A final formal follow-up call to both the referred and Support Parent should be made at 8 weeks for evaluation purposes. In the most recent Parent to Parent USA Quality Standards survey of statewide Parent to Parent programs<sup>3</sup> the following reported follow-up with both the Support Parent and referred parent 100% of the time: Raising Special Kids, Arizona; PATH Connecticut; Family Ties, Massachusetts; Washington State Parent to Parent; and Parent to Parent of Wisconsin.

## **Support Parent**

### ***Evidence-Based Practice***

- Parent of child or youth with special needs
- Completes 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 who is voluntarily requesting a match
- Specifies criteria for match
- Participates in program evaluation

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<sup>3</sup> Parent to Parent USA Organization Survey 2010.



***Best Practice***  
**Support Parent Training Curriculum**

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

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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.