

ABILITIES, SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE FOR FAMILY RESOURCE STAFF

Goal:

The goal of this document is to articulate the desired competencies for Early Intervention parent-to-parent support personnel who staff Family Resource Center/Networks.

Rationale:

The purpose of this document is to clearly articulate uniformly accepted competencies for Early Intervention parent-to-parent support staff.

Principles:

In addition to the principles outlined in the Family Support Principles, we believe the following:

- Peer parents are excellent role models for problem solving, coping and leadership
- Information and support are best met through the model of well trained and competent peer parent staff
- Empowered parents transmit confidence and self advocacy to their children, giving them a foundation in which to reach their fullest potential

The following recommendations address job functions, hiring criteria, and ongoing professional development for parent-to-parent support.

JOB FUNCTIONS:

Staff providing any level of direct parent-to-parent support should be competent in:

- Assisting families in identifying family strengths, needs and priorities;
- Providing families with culturally responsive support and materials in their native language;
- Performing intake procedures and maintaining records;
- Adhering to all confidentiality policies;
- Providing families with accurate information and referral services;
- Communicating the intricacies of the systems and services involved in the care of the child;
- Connecting families with resources within the agency;
- Connecting families with other agency and community resources;
- Connecting families with peers (on-line, support groups, etc.);
- Engaging in outreach activities;
- Networking and collaborating with community agencies;
- Providing feeling focused support; [Just what does this mean?]
- Participating in staff development activities

HIRING CRITERIA:

When hiring it is important to consider the following criteria when evaluating a potential parent-to-parent support staff member:

- Does the candidate have a demonstrated commitment to the mission, goals and purpose of the FRC/N empowerment model?

- Does the candidate have personal knowledge of and experience with disabilities and their impact on families?
- Is the candidate able to effectively engage in joint problem solving, negotiating and team building?
- Is the candidate competent in use of active listening skills?
- Does the candidate have the ability to communicate effectively with families, respecting each family's culture, values and circumstances?
- Does the candidate have the ability to be resourceful in accessing current information?
- Does the candidate demonstrate personal knowledge of one or more of the following services or systems:
 - early intervention,
 - resource center,
 - regional center,
 - education,
 - managed care,
 - mental health,
 - medical service delivery system.

ONGOING TRAINING AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Ongoing training is essential to ensure that parent-to-parent support staff stay current and be efficient. The training we encourage should be considered the minimum for parent-to-parent support in the area of early intervention and should not preclude other possible trainings (such as child abuse prevention). The following are training and support needs that we have identified. They have been excerpted from *Family Support Guidelines for Effective Practice of California's Early Start Programs*:

- Effective communication skills
- Coping skills, grief response, "feeling-focused support"
- Decision-making and problem solving
- Enhancing natural support systems
- Helping families assess their strengths and values
- Respecting families' cultural values and ensuring that they get materials in their native language
- Parent-professional collaboration
- Community resources, both generic and specialized
- Accessing community resources, specifically regarding eligibility, appeals and due process procedures
- Recognizing situations which require referral to others and respecting limits/boundaries
- Increasing the ability of families to self-advocate
- Accessing information on disabilities
- Self care strategies
- Knowledge of IDEA Part C and Part B
- Knowledge of Early Start State Statute and regulations
- Knowledge of the Lanterman Act
- Knowledge of Medi-Cal Managed Care
- Education requirements

QUALIFICATIONS FOR PARENT-TO-PARENT SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Personnel Category	Job Duties	Education or Equivalent	Classes/ Training	Experience	Professional Growth*
Executive Director / Program Director	May include: Fiscal Planning and Management, Fund Development, Personnel Management, Program Planning and Development	Leadership, human resources, personnel management, facilities management, data collection, budgeting, financial planning, financial operations, fund development, the operational framework for a 501 (c)(3), program planning, strategic planning, early intervention system and services, confidentiality, parent-to-parent support, family centered support, local generic resources, parent professional collaboration, work with board of directors or advisory board, interagency collaboration working with families and professionals in behalf of children	Training regarding job duties	1 year administrative experience and 3 years in disability and family related services	24 hours annually
Supervisory Personnel	May include: Supervision, mentoring, training, evaluation of staff	Personnel management, supervision, mentoring, training, early intervention system and services, confidentiality, parent-to-parent support, family centered support, local generic resources, parent professional collaboration, working with families and professionals in behalf of children	Supervision for 1 year	2 years experience in disability and family related services	24 hours annually
Direct Service Personnel	Listening and talking, meeting with families and professionals, speaking on behalf of families	Early intervention system and services, confidentiality, parent-to-parent support, family centered support, local generic resources, parent professional collaboration, working with families and professionals in behalf of children	Orientation and ongoing supervision	2+ years personal experience with service delivery system	Access to 48 hours training / weekly mentorship / supervision
Community Outreach Personnel	Speaking in public, training, community committee participation	Public speaking, trends/ systemic issues vs. personal experience, early intervention system and services, confidentiality, parent-to-parent support, family centered support, local generic resources, parent professional collaboration, working with families and professionals in behalf of children	Orientation and ongoing supervision	Personal experience with service delivery system	Access to 16 hours training / weekly mentorship / supervision
Interpreters	Interpreting at meetings and workshops	Rules of conduct for interpreters, Early Intervention terms and vocabulary, family centered support, confidentiality	Orientation in family centered services and support and 6 hours of trainings		Access to 16 hours training / weekly mentorship / supervision
Receptionist	Answering phones, greeting families at drop-in center	Family centered support, confidentiality	Orientation in Family Centered Services and Support		

PARENT-TO-PARENT VOLUNTEERS should have opportunities for training, supervision and evaluation.

*PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: Hours are based on full time employees, i.e. they should be pro-rated for part time staff.

DEFINITIONS FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR PARENT-TO-PARENT SUPPORT PERSONNEL

DIRECT SERVICE PERSONNEL: Provision of direct service to families might include phone line, office and home visits and accompanying families to medical, educational meetings, etc. Provision of direct service to the community might include outreach, training, working with professionals on behalf of families and promoting parent professional partnership. [It is not necessary for front line staff to have a high school diploma, etc., as long as they can fulfill the job requirements. This will allow us the opportunity to hire teen parents.]

INSERVICE: On the job training

MENTORING: Discussion and modeling of best practices for family support, individualized support to utilize training

OTHER PERSONNEL: Includes any staff, which may have direct contact with families, such as interpreter, clerical support, and receptionist.

PRE-SERVICE: Training that occurs before being hired

PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Direct overall operations of the organization which might include: administrative, fiscal management, program development, fund development, supervision of staff, public relations, data and progress reports, Board liaison

SUPERVISION: Regularly scheduled observation with opportunities for feedback, discussion of effective strategies, professional evaluation

TRAINING, CLASSES, WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES: Any knowledge based skill development activity, on a topic directly related to meeting the requirements of their job