

## NORTH CAROLINA IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

### CIRCLE OF PARENTS® PROGRAM

*Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina (PCANC) provides support for quality implementation of Circle of Parents. These guidelines reflect the components necessary for effective implementation with program fidelity.*

#### TARGET POPULATION

Circle of Parents is a parent-led, mutual self-help support group open to anyone in a caregiving role. In North Carolina, Circle of Parents groups strive to address the five protective factors which include: resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social and emotional competence. It is often beneficial for recruitment and retention purposes that Circle of Parents groups have an identified target population (i.e., single parents, young parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, etc.).

Providers should also ensure that their target population aligns with any funder requirements.

#### STAFFING

Optimal implementation of Circle of Parents includes one trained facilitator and at least one main parent leader for each group.

#### FACILITATORS

- Attend the NC Circle of Parents Core Training prior to implementation.
- On an ongoing basis, identify, develop, and support at least one main parent leader for each group.
- Encourage group members to build shared ownership within the group by taking on helping roles based on their strengths and interests.
- Support families in using positive discipline strategies and developing new skills.

#### PARENT LEADERS

- Attend the NC Circle of Parents Core Training (prior to facilitating when possible).
- Facilitate and manage group discussions and encourage input and ownership from all participants using a strength-based approach.

#### SUPERVISOR

- Provide regular, ongoing one-on-one supervision for facilitators.
- Organize monthly meetings with group facilitators, parent leaders, and children's program staff to plan for upcoming Circle of Parents groups and to discuss successes and challenges.
- Support facilitators in the implementation of Circle of Parents and the continual development of parent leaders.
- Encourage facilitators and parent leaders to plan for the logistics of their groups on a weekly basis.
- Conduct at least two fidelity assessment observations per year for each facilitator to ensure model fidelity and provide strength-based feedback based on these observations.
- Encourage and track facilitators time and engagement in coaching and PCANC implementation support, including video reviews.

## RECOMMENDED STAFF TIME FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- Parent and children’s facilitators need at least 5 hours each per week for program preparation, delivery, planning, and 1:1 supervision at their agency.
- An additional 6 hours per week are needed for coordination of activities, including, but not limited to: promoting the program, recruiting parents, group logistics, paperwork, data collection, reporting, and providing support outside of group.
- Facilitators need a minimum of 9 hours per semester of staff time to participant in PCANC support, including video reviews, and up to 9 additional hours for support, based on need.
- Coordinators are encouraged to participate in 7.5 hours of PCANC support per semester. Based on need, coordinators can participant in up to 8 additional hours of PCANC support.

## BEST PRACTICES

- Weekly group meetings are parent-owned and parent-led.
- Weekly discussion topics, speakers, and activities are identified by the group members, with at least half of the meeting dedicated to open discussion among parents.
- Groups have a consistent structure with opening and closing statements or rituals, group rules, and agendas defined by group members.
- Groups are open, free, confidential, ongoing, and typically last from 1 ½ to 2 hours.
- Facilitators and group members share community resources that support healthy families and positive parenting.
- Support is encouraged inside and outside group meetings.
- Priority should be given to activities, speakers, and discussions that relate to the five protective factors.

## CHILDREN’S GROUP

- Each parent group should have, or be working towards, a free, structured, parallel children’s group, except where the location or composition of the parent group precludes it (i.e. groups in schools, parents of teens, etc.).
- Link themes between parent group and children’s group and include children in developing processes, when possible.
- The goal of the children’s group is to provide developmentally appropriate, skill-building activities that will increase children’s confidence and self-worth while providing fun and enjoyment.
- Children’s group facilitators, staff and volunteers should be knowledgeable of child development (typical and atypical) and utilize positive behavior management practices.

## CHILDCARE

- Quality childcare is acceptable if a structured children’s group is not possible.
- Agencies will continually assess appropriate child to caregiver ratios to ensure safety and staff availability.

## GROUP SIZE AND RECRUITMENT

- Although the Circle model does not define a minimum or maximum group size, many agencies find that groups with between 5 and 12 caregivers are ideal. Group size should be continually assessed to ensure families can adequately engage in the mutual self-help group model.
- Each agency is encouraged to adhere to their funder’s requirements for group size.
- When possible, talk with prospective families prior to their first group meeting to determine goodness of fit. This includes discussing expectations and barriers to attendance, confirming family members participating, and sharing meeting logistics.
- Agencies should enroll custodial caregivers as well as other adults in a parenting role.
- Recruitment should be ongoing, intentional, and target population driven.
- Incentives are encouraged to support recruitment and retention.

## LOCATION

- Groups should be held in a meeting site that is safe, convenient, comfortable, and secured for at least a year.
- The meeting location should minimize travel barriers for families.
- Agencies should select a meeting location that provides separate spaces for parent group and children's group/childcare.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

Network agencies participate in an annual statewide evaluation process and receive agency level and statewide reports as part of this process. Agencies are encouraged to collect and use both process and outcome evaluation data to inform their work.