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\(^1\) 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 (an experienced, veteran supporting 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


\(^2\) Statewide Parent to Parent Director’s Meeting Philadelphia, PA 2002.
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 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 made
- 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

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