Needs Assessment Report:
Peer Support Groups for Parents
Curriculum Development/Training and Technical Assistance

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Needs Assessment Report
Executive Summary
Peer Support Groups for Parents

This report was prepared by Children’s Institute, Inc. for First 5 LA as a part of the Peer Support Groups for Parents Project. It presents recommendations regarding parent peer support groups from a cross-section of stakeholders representing each of the five Los Angeles County Supervisorial Districts including: parents of children 0-5 years, community leaders, community-based provider organizations, faith-based organizations, early childhood organizations, medical providers and government entities. The overarching focus of the needs assessment is to: identify priority topics and formats/structure, as well as to identify high-needs community locations for peer support groups, for parents of young children.

Major findings and recommendations discussed in the report include:

- Participants strongly recommended 7 overarching categories of interest for groups: new baby, self-care, special needs, behavior challenges, fathers, teen parents, and school. These broad content areas are referred to as content foci (Table 2). These foci represent the organizing themes for the groups, the area of interest common to all participants who would attend.

- Participants strongly recommended several areas of specific interest: behavior challenges, discipline, managing stress, safety/crime, nutrition, domestic violence, resources, financial literacy and developmental milestones. These specific issue areas are referred to as content topics (Table 3). A topic may be included within more than one focus area.

- Participants identified 3 operating principles for the groups: flexibility, group decision-making and community-linked facilitators. Participants stressed the importance of flexibility with regards to meeting times, level of participation, session frequency, and topic areas. Further, participants preferred the content of groups to be flexible and based on the needs and experiences of the group members. Finally, participants preferred facilitators who were actively involved in the community and were knowledgeable about community resources.

- In terms of session format (Table 4-9), there was interest in both open-ended “discussion” and curriculum-based groups. Ideally, groups would be held once a week for 60 to 90 minutes. Most participants preferred open-ended discussion groups to be held during the afternoon or
evening. Participants liked the idea of guest speakers joining for a portion of the open-ended groups. For the curriculum-based groups, most participants preferred morning or afternoon times, with the total number of sessions ranging from 5 to 10. Finally, participants liked dividing time between a curriculum or content topic, discussion and networking.

- The majority of participants wanted groups to be held in a variety of languages responsive to participants.

- Participants identified several potential barriers that might prevent a parent from attending a group, along with possible solutions for overcoming the barriers. In general, participants listed inconvenient meeting times and scheduling difficulties as barriers to attending groups. Other prominent barriers included safety concerns, cost, stigma, and lack of cultural sensitivity. Suggested solutions to these barriers included convening sessions at convenient times, in safe and accessible locations, with availability of transportation and childcare services.

As a consequence of these findings, a modularized curriculum organized around the 7 primary content foci and incorporating information across a variety of prioritized topics is recommended. This curriculum would be highly flexible, while including sufficient structure, topical materials, and resource information to support relevant content on key topics, robust discussion and networking. The curriculum materials would include detailed guides for facilitators and topic specific information and/or resources sheets for group participants.

The parent support groups would be led by parent-facilitators who are connected to and knowledgeable about their communities. The primary goal of the groups would be to enhance social support, reduce isolation, and empower parents to access other needed services and supports. Thorough training on support group facilitation skills in general, and the modularized curriculum specifically, as well as an extended period of supervision, is a second critical recommendation resulting from the needs assessment.
# Executive Summary

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Introduction

Background
In November 2010, the First 5 LA Commission approved $2.2 Million for the Peer Support Groups for Parents Project, for a Lead Agency to work with five community-based organizations to establish 100 peer support groups for parents of children from the prenatal stage to age 5 in Los Angeles County communities where support, social cohesion, and connection to neighborhood peers are weak or lacking. The project aims to increase social connectedness of parents, increase parents’ knowledge, confidence and efficacy in parenting skills, and raise parents’ awareness and use of resources available to support them. In September 2011, the Commission approved an additional $300,000 for a Curriculum Developer/Training and Technical Assistance (TA) Provider, responsible for enhancing and modifying the implementation of the project by including the development of core competencies, training and TA. Through competitive solicitation processes, in 2013, Children’s Institute Inc. was selected as both the Lead Agency and Curriculum Developer/Training and TA Provider, to implement the Peer Support Groups for Parents Project.

As a part of the initial 6-month planning phase of the project, Children’s Institute Inc. has led the development and implementation of a needs assessment to identify priority topics, formats/structures and high needs locations for peer support groups, for parents of young children.

A. Context for the Peer Support Groups for Parents Project
The overall goal of the First 5 LA Peer Support Groups for Parents project is to develop opportunities for underserved, at-risk parents of children 0-5 that foster social connections, reduce isolation and encourage sharing of knowledge and skills. To accomplish this, Children’s Institute, Inc. (CII) has partnered with community-based provider organizations to establish 100 Parent Peer Support Groups throughout Los Angeles County during a 30-month period. The following five community-based organizations are responsible for convening the support groups, one in each of the County’s Supervisorial Districts:
   - Weingart East Los Angeles YMCA (District 1)
   - Para Los Ninos (District 2)
   - Family Focus Resource & Empowerment Center (District 3)
   - For the Child (District 4)
   - Parents’ Place Family Resource & Empowerment Center (District 5)

CII collaborated with Family Resource Center Network of Los Angeles County (FRCNLAC), and Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), between October 2013 and January 2014 to conduct the needs assessment. The purpose of the needs assessment was to ascertain the preferred topics, format and operating principles of parent-to-parent support groups. The needs assessment addressed the following three objectives:
1. To provide guidance concerning the structure of peer support groups
2. To identify major topics of relevance to potential participants
3. To determine the type of training materials necessary to support the preferred peer support group format and content

The needs assessment process involved the following activities:
   - Developing the needs assessment objectives
 Consulting literature reviews
 Formulating and refining the focus group and key informant questions
 Developing protocols for conducting interviews and focus groups
 Training parent facilitators to conduct the interviews and focus groups
 Analyzing responses
 Preparing findings and recommendations

B. Review of Relevant Literature
A search of literature pertaining to parent-to-parent support programs was conducted to examine the concepts, constructs and key elements of successful peer support groups. The meta-review of existing reports focused on facilitator recruitment and selection, facilitator training and session format. The relevant findings below are extracted from the First 5 LA Literature Review conducted in August 2012 and Parent to Parent Synthesis of the Emerging Literature prepared by University of South Florida in July 2008.

The reviews of literature were informative in regards to facilitator recruitment. Key findings included:

- One criterion for selection of peer group facilitators is to identify people who have gone through the same experience.
- Recruitment of these parent facilitators is often done by word of mouth or recommendations from professionals.
- Facilitators who are knowledgeable about the culture of the group are more likely to have participant buy-in and to ensure that participants feel safe and comfortable (Money et al. 2011; Shealy et al.).
- Parents that have first-hand experience with the support group topic are most often selected as facilitator of the group (Arlotti et al. 1998, Day et al. 2012, Dennis et al. 2002; Dennis 2003, Muirhead et al. 2006, Rodriguez et al. 2011).

The reviews of literature were informative in regards to facilitator training. Key findings included:

- Training of facilitators often includes content training on the specific topic that the support group will address as well as training on communication and facilitation skills (Arlotti et al. 1998, Day et al. 2012, Dennis et al. 2002; Dennis 2003, Muirhead et al. 2006, Rodriguez et al. 2011).
- Training ranged from programs that offered an orientation before the intervention to programs that required 40-hours of advanced training and demonstration of core competencies (Dennis et al 2002, Rodriguez et al. 2011).
- In addition to initial training, several programs offer ongoing support and supervision for facilitators. The purpose of this ongoing support can include e-training, re-establishment of roles and responsibilities, or advice on any challenges that the peer support facilitators encounter (Day et al. 2012, Dennis 2003, Kingsnorth et al. 2011, Ritchie et al. 2000, Rodriguez et al. 2011).

The reviews of literature were informative in regards to session format. Key findings included:

- Several support programs offer participants access to multiple forms of support including support group; one-on-one mentoring and professional support (Kingsnorth et al. 2011, Kruske et al. 2004. Ritchie et al. 2000, Rodriguez et al. 2011).
Community-based implementation of peer support groups allows programs to adapt to meet the needs of the population that they serve as these needs change (Arlotti et al. 1998, Bridges et al., Day et al. 2012, Stremler & Lovera 2004).

The length of interventions and meeting intensity seemed to depend upon the purpose of the group as well as topic. For example, breast feeding and post-partum depression seemed to be most effective when intensive support is provided closely following hospital discharge (Arlotti et al. 1998, Dennis et al. 2002, Muirhead et al. 2006).

Methodology

A. Participant Recruitment/Invitation Guidelines

Participants for the focus groups were recruited through a variety of methods. Event materials and flyers were distributed at community sites that serve parents of young children 0-5. Outreach focused on a variety of systems of care including early childhood education centers, mental health and disability service centers, domestic violence intervention agencies, child welfare and public health entities and faith-based groups. Focus group locations were selected to ensure county-wide representation, demographic diversity and the inclusion of Best Start community sites.

Key informant interviewees were selected based on their knowledge and familiarity with the needs of parents in the respective districts. Staff from each of the five partnering community-based organizations served as key informants. Best Start parent leaders were also included as key informants. In addition, county-wide key informants were included from Los Angeles Unified School District, Department of Mental Health and Children’s Law Center. County-wide agencies were included to ascertain a broader perspective of community needs. CII has on-going relationships with Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest school district in LA County, as well as with the Los Angeles Department of Mental Health, so it was a unique opportunity to include them in our feedback process. Two former foster care youth were approached through the Children’s Law Center to include feedback from the child welfare system prospective. The group of interviewees was diverse in terms of language, culture and gender.

CII partnered with FRCNLAC and CHLA to train 17 parent facilitators to conduct the focus groups and the key informant interviews. A total of 12 focus groups comprised of approximately 100 total participants and 25 key informant interviews were conducted as part of the needs assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Focus Group Locations</th>
<th>Key Informant Interviews per Agency Represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory District 1</td>
<td>• East LA</td>
<td>• Southeast Rio YMCA (1 staff member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maywood (Southeast)</td>
<td>• Para Los Ninos-Skid Row Center (1 staff)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LA County Cities Best Start Community
- Chinatown

Chinatown Community Center (1 staff member)
Former East LA Best Start Advisor

Supervisorial District 2

- Los Angeles 90020
- Los Angeles 90007 (Metro LA Best Start Community)

Children’s Institute, Inc. (2 staff members)
Koreatown Youth and Community Services (1 staff member)
Para Los Ninos (3 staff members)

Supervisorial District 3

- Pacoima City Best Start Community
- West Los Angeles
- Canoga Park

UCLA Early Head Start
Grandparents As Parents (1 staff member)
Early Learning Center (2 staff members)
Family Focus Resource & Empowerment Center, Northridge (1 staff member)
Child Development Institute/Early Learning Center (2 staff members)

Supervisorial District 4

- Bellflower
- Long Beach (Long Beach Best Start Community)
- Wilmington (Wilmington Best Start Community)

Rainbow Services, San Pedro (1 staff member)
Spiritt Family Services (1 staff member)
For the Child (1 staff member)

District Focus Group Locations Key Informant Interviews per Agency Represented

Supervisorial District 5

- Lancaster (Lancaster Best Start Community)
- Pasadena

Newhall Community Center (1 staff member)
LA County 211, San Gabriel (1 staff member)
Parent’s Place West Covina (1 staff member)

Los Angeles County-wide constituency

- Los Angeles Unified School District (1 staff member)
- Children’s Law Center (2 staff members)
- Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (1 staff member)

B. Focus Group Protocol Summary

Nine questions formed the basis of each focus group discussion. Please see appendix for complete protocol including introduction and prompts. Sessions were recorded and transcribed. Participants provided information about the following areas:

- Previous personal experiences with support groups including what was most and least helpful.
- The types of support groups that may be helpful to parents of young children.
- The preferred format(s) for peer support groups including meeting frequency, duration and content (curriculum series, open-ended discussion or topic based).
• The most convenient meeting locations within the supervisorial district.
• Community specific needs for translation of materials and language-based groups.
• Identifying the potential barriers to participation and recommended solutions.

C. Key Informant Interview Protocol Summary

Ten questions formed the basis of the focus group discussion. Please see appendix for complete protocol including introduction and prompts. Sessions were recorded and transcribed.

Informants provided information on existing support groups for parents within each Supervisorial District and whether these groups focus on the needs of parents of young children 0-5 and pregnant women. Based on their expertise in providing services within the community, key informants offered insight regarding the under-served and hard-to-reach areas of the district that would benefit from support groups and strategies for reaching these communities. In addition, recommendations on support group topics, content format and meeting structure was provided.

Findings

Responses collected during the focus groups and interviews were analyzed and common themes emerged regarding content and meeting structure recommendations. The broad, overarching categories of suggested curriculum content are organized into content focus areas. The seven content foci that were strongly recommended include: new baby, self-care, special needs, positive parenting, single parents, school and child development (see Table 2). The curriculum content focus is meant to provide guidance to each district, not to provide a rigid protocol. A district may choose to develop its own focus area group and are encouraged to utilize the content and tip sheets pertinent to their group. Facilitators will be observed, offered feedback and provided with regular supervision to guide their selection of group material and resources.

| Table 2: Curriculum Content FOCUS Area Requests by Region |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Curriculum Content FOCUS Areas** | **District 1** | **District 2** | **District 3** | **District 4** | **District 5** | **County** |
| New Baby (Getting Children on a Routine, Breastfeeding*) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
The specific areas of interest within each focus are referred to as content topics. The requested topics include: discipline, behavior challenges, nutrition, managing stress, healthcare, safety/crime, domestic violence, resources, developmental milestones, financial literacy, academic support and job preparation (see Table 3). The development of this project profile will inform the content areas of greatest interest and guide the specific topics to be developed for the parent groups. If a district indicated an interest in a topic and content-specific information is not developed through the writing process, any district is able to form their own group and the facilitators will be able to utilize resources developed or seek resources that are pertinent to their particular group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Care</th>
<th>District 1</th>
<th>District 2</th>
<th>District 3</th>
<th>District 4</th>
<th>District 5</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior Challenges</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Required curriculum content*

Table 3: Curriculum Content TOPIC Area Requests by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Content TOPICS</th>
<th>District 1</th>
<th>District 2</th>
<th>District 3</th>
<th>District 4</th>
<th>District 5</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior Challenges</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Managing Stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordable Care Act (ACA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety/Crime</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental Milestones</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping Child be Successful in School</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Resources for Low SES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Preparation/Issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of meeting structure, participants requested a combination of open-ended discussion and curriculum-based groups. Preferences across the Supervisorial Districts were noted, regarding the number of sessions, frequency of meetings, duration, time of the day, language and location (see Table 4). The curriculum-based portion of any given group would be time-limited by the content topic and tip sheets, whereas the open-ended group portion would continue based upon the group members’ consensus. For example, a district may develop a group for parents of foster children. The facilitators would select the content and tip sheets that match the needs of this particular group and determine the duration of their group based upon the needs of their group participants. Additionally, the facilitators can seek guidance from their trainers and supervisors as their group process proceeds. Mid-course changes are anticipated based on learning from the initial groups. The facilitators would have the latitude to add additional group locations in any given region as the program ramps up.

### Tables 4: SESSION FORMAT Recommendations by Region

#### Supervisorial District 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Sessions:</th>
<th>Ongoing sessions for open-ended discussion groups and 8-week cycles for curriculum-based groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency and Length:</td>
<td>Once per week for 60-90 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days and Times:</td>
<td>Weekdays, evenings or mornings for open-discussion groups and weekdays, afternoon or evening for curriculum-based groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td>English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations:</td>
<td>Boyle Heights, East LA, Huntington Park, South Montebello, Bell Gardens, South Gate and South El Monte</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Supervisorial District 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Sessions:</th>
<th>Ongoing sessions for open-ended discussion groups and curriculum-based groups vary per topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency and Length:</td>
<td>Once per week for 60-90 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days and Times:</td>
<td>Mid-morning or mid-day for open-discussion groups and mid-morning, afternoon or evening for curriculum-based groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td>Spanish, Korean, Tagalog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations:</td>
<td>Compton, Koreatown, Adams and La Brea, Westlake, Watts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Supervisorial District 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Sessions:</th>
<th>Ongoing sessions for open-ended discussion groups and between 6 and 8-week cycles for curriculum-based groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency and Length:</td>
<td>Once per week for 90-120 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days and Times:</td>
<td>Afternoon, evening or morning for open-discussion groups and morning or evening for curriculum-based groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td>English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations:</td>
<td>Van Nuys, North Hollywood, West LA, Pacoima, San Fernando, Canoga Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Supervisorial District 4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Number of Sessions:</strong></th>
<th>Ongoing sessions for open-ended discussion groups and curriculum-based groups vary per topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency and Length:</strong></td>
<td>Once per week for 60-120 minutes (open-discussion) and 90 minutes (curriculum-based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Days and Times:</strong></td>
<td>Afternoon, early-evening or morning for open-discussion groups and late-afternoon or evening for curriculum-based groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language:</strong></td>
<td>Spanish, English and Samoan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locations:</strong></td>
<td>San Pedro, Wilmington, Olive Crest, Diamond Bar, Immigrant Communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Supervisorial District 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Number of Sessions:</strong></th>
<th>Varying number of sessions for open-ended discussion and 6-8 week cycles for curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency and Length:</strong></td>
<td>Once per week for 90-120 minutes (open-discussion) and 60-120 minutes (curriculum-based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Days and Times:</strong></td>
<td>Evening or morning for open-discussion groups and morning for curriculum-based groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language:</strong></td>
<td>English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locations:</strong></td>
<td>Lancaster, Canyon Country, Palmdale, little Rock, Lake LA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### County-Wide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Number of Sessions:</strong></th>
<th>Ongoing sessions for open-ended discussion groups and 10 or more week cycles for curriculum-based groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency and Length:</strong></td>
<td>Once per week for 60-90 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Days and Times:</strong></td>
<td>Open-discussion groups vary per members and evening for curriculum-based groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language:</strong></td>
<td>Spanish, Korean and Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locations:</strong></td>
<td>South La, Compton, Carson, Pomona, Antelope Valley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

The needs assessment has informed the types of groups/curricula topics, group formats and curricula materials that should be developed. There was strong interest in support groups, to be led by parents who are active in their community, scheduled at convenient times, and in safe and accessible locations with availability of transportation and child care. Moreover, the feedback indicated that these groups should be flexible and able to accommodate the needs and preferences of the participants. CBO’s and their respective facilitators will conduct outreach within their communities to select the group foci, explore convenient and appropriate times and locations for group sessions, develop the group format and duration based on the participants consensus and have the content topic and tip sheets available for use when the group indicates interest. Facilitators will have the skills to assist the group in the supportive process, and how to integrate content with process during each group session. While some representatives were part of a Best Start Community, they were blended into focus groups and did not have a focus group of their own.

Based on the areas of interest expressed in the focus groups and interviews, seven types of groups are being recommended. The seven group foci or themes are described below.

1) **Self-Care** groups have the goal of lessening stress and preventing maternal/parental depression. Self-Care groups address baby blues, depression, self-esteem, parental mental health and managing stress. Parents in Self-Care Groups may not describe themselves as depressed but would fall somewhere on the spectrum from stressed to overwhelmed with the demands of parenthood, isolation and other life stressors. The name Self-Care was identified to avoid the stigma of joining a depression group and to clarify that this would not be a therapy group.

2) **Special Needs** groups target parents who have children with disabilities or chronic health conditions. Special Needs groups address special needs, special education, children in hospital, early intervention, transition from early start and child mental health. These groups address the need to understand the development of children who develop differently and help parents meet the needs of their children.

3) **Nurturing Parents** groups target parenting and child development and include breastfeeding, new baby, getting your child on a routine, child development, red flags and supporting early learning. Nurturing Parent Groups focus on general parenting and may be divided by age and developmental level into the sub-groups, so that parents are discussing similar developmental stages, concerns and opportunities:
a. **Nurturing New Baby**
New Baby groups target parents of infants and encompass recommendations for groups that address new baby, getting child on a routine, child development and breastfeeding. Participants in New Baby groups will have the opportunity to explore and discuss a variety of topics that are relevant to early infancy.

b. **Nurturing Toddlers**
Nurturing Toddlers groups target parents of children approximately 18 – 36 months and encompass recommendations for groups that address getting children on a routine, breastfeeding, supporting early learning, red flags and child development.

c. **Nurturing Preschoolers**
Nurturing Preschoolers target parents of children approximately 3 -5 years old and encompass recommendations for groups that address child development, red flags, preparing for kindergarten and navigating school.

4) **School** groups focus on supporting parents where school is the primary area of concern or interest. These may be groups that help in the preparation of parents as their children enter kindergarten.

5) **Behavior Challenges** groups target parents who have concerns or need support addressing behavioral challenges and discipline issues. Groups may be divided by the age and stage of child development or may be more focused on general issues of positive discipline.

6) **Young Parents/ Young Children** groups target parents under age 22. The group is called Young Parents/Young Children and would be of particular interest to parents who are still in school (either high school or college). Since some parents who receive special education services can remain in school up to age 22, we set that as an a casual upper limit. However, parents older than 18 or even 22 may feel an affinity with this group and are welcome to attend. The groups would focus on the particular challenges and concerns of young parents.

7) **Men Nurturing Children** groups target fathers and other men parenting young children. The groups focus on the particular challenges, concerns and interests to nurture and care for children experienced by fathers.

Based on the strong recommendations for flexibility and that the members of each group themselves identify the content for the group, we recommend a modularized curriculum that would provide components that can be assembled or organized in a variety of ways to meet the interest and needs of each individual group. Rather than a static curriculum, these components would provide background information and resources to support the facilitators in leading a discussion on a variety of topics within the context of their support group focus. This modular “curriculum” would address both content foci and topics of interest and can be highly individualized. Information on the topics would be tailored to and incorporated into the each of the 7 categories of groups, as appropriate. The relationship between content foci and topics is illustrated in Table 10.
The modular curriculum would include facilitator reference pages for each topic area with background information describing its relevance for parents of children 0-5 and guidance for discussing the topic within the group. The curriculum would also include “tip” sheets for certain topics that include resources for parents. The Nurturing Babies module will be attached (Attachment C).

Finally, based on the reviews of literature, thorough training and supervision for peer support group facilitators is highly recommended to insure that they fully understand the curriculum and have the skills and support to implement it successfully. After completing a 3-day core facilitator training, each group facilitator will be observed by a trainer during the first and third sessions and receive feedback on their content and process-related skills, then receive monthly reflective supervision for the duration of their group. The Facilitator Training Curriculum will be attached (Attachment D).

Next Steps

Weingart East Los Angeles YMCA (District 1), Para Los Ninos (District 2), Family Focus Resource and Empowerment Center (District 3), For the Child (District 4), and Parents’ Place Family Resource and Empowerment Center (District 5) in partnership with CII will utilize the needs assessment findings to implement groups over the next two years. The CBO’s will recruit facilitators and group participants. Also, while this is a countywide program and is not restricted to the areas of the Best Start Communities and other First 5 LA investments (e.g., Welcome Baby), the CBO’s will work with the investments, located within the support group catchment area, on outreach and recruitment.

CII will provide ongoing TA and training to the CBO’s and facilitators. The CBO representatives will receive a one-day training to familiarize themselves with the core concepts that the facilitators will learn. The initial facilitator core training will occur March 27, 28 and April 4, 2014 to support the initial 10 groups, 2 per district that will begin in April 2014. It is anticipated that two additional core trainings will be necessary to adequately address staff necessary for the new groups that will be implemented through September 2014 (Year 1). Subsequent groups in Years 2 and 3 will be implemented incrementally and will be informed by learning from the initial groups in Year 1. A Training of Trainers curriculum will also be developed in Year 2. The curriculum along with on-going consultation and reflective supervision is intended to promote sustainability.

About Children’s Institute

Children’s Institute, Inc. (CII) helps children in Los Angeles’s most challenged communities heal from the trauma of family and community violence, build the confidence and skills to break through the barriers of poverty, and grow up to lead healthy, productive lives. Established in 1906, CII now reaches more than 20,000 children and families each year through treatment, youth development, early childhood and
family support services. We also work to inform the larger field of children’s services through the research and professional development efforts of our Leadership Center.

www.childrensinstitute.org
About First 5 LA

First 5 LA’s mission is to increase the number of young children who are physically and emotionally healthy, protected, and ready to succeed. First 5 LA oversees the L.A. County allocation of funds from Proposition 10, which added a 50-cent tax on tobacco products sold in California. Since First 5 LA was established in 1998, more than $1 Billion has been invested in health care, education and child development programs for children from the prenatal stage to age five and their families. Five core values - families, communities, results, learning and advocacy - guide First 5 LA in building public support for targeted programs that address the needs of young children and their families.

www.First5LA.org
### Table 10: Illustrated Example of Focus Areas and linked Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSCLAC</th>
<th>Parent Support Group Foci and Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Nurturing Parents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Challenges</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding*</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Milestones</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Literacy</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Your Child Be Successful At School</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Preparation/Issues</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning To Interact With Your Child (Singing)</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing Stress</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing For Kindergarten</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources (Childcare, Best Start)</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources For Low SES</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Care, including Maternal Depression*</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td><img src="" alt="Focus Areas and linked Topics Table" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mandated Curriculum Topics
References


Your voice matters!
Parents, Grandparents and other caregivers of young children (0-5), we want to hear from you!

We are collecting information to create parent led groups in your area. What type of support is needed by parents of kids 0-5? What groups and resources are already in the community? Where and when should groups be held? Do you have a group you would like to put together?

Raffles
Child Care
Cuidado de niños

Feb. 13, 2014
9AM-11AM
Villa Parke Community Center
363 E. Villa St.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Para participar llame a Martha: 626-300-9171 to participate

¡Su voz vale!
Padres, abuelos y otros con niños de 0-5 años, queremos escuchar de ustedes.

Estamos buscando información para establecer grupos en su comunidad. ¿Qué tipo de apoyo se necesita para padres de niños 0-5? ¿Qué grupos y recursos ya hay en su área? ¿Dónde y cuándo deben de ser los grupos? ¿Tiene un grupo que quisiera empezar?

funded by First 5 LA
Attachment B:
Parent Support Circles of Los Angeles County
Focus Group Questions

Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in today’s focus group. We appreciate your help. My name is [name of facilitator] and this is with [name of note-taker]. We are working with Children's Institute and [fill in name of CBO] on a project called Parent Support Circles of Los Angeles County (PSCLAC) to develop support groups all over Los Angeles County for parents of children 0-5 (including before the baby is born). The overall goal of the program is to develop opportunities for parents of young children to connect with other parents, reduce their stress and also increase their knowledge and skills. This project is funded by First 5 Los Angeles.

Over the next few weeks we, and other trained parents, will hold about 10 focus groups so that we can get the opinions and ideas from parents all over the county. Before we start let’s go around the group and introduce ourselves. Please tell us:

- Your first name
- The age(s) of your child(ren)
- Your favorite color

Thank you. Today we are going to ask you some questions about support groups. We will use your ideas and thoughts (along with those from the other groups) to help us design the groups and decide where they should be located.

Ask the group if anyone has participated in a focus group before.

If you haven’t participated in a focus group before, or even if you have, I would like to explain how this group will work. I will ask you some questions and would like your responses. There are no “right or wrong” answers to these questions. However, we ask that you respond to the question being asked (even if there is something else you would like to talk about). We are looking for a variety of responses so the group doesn’t have to agree on a single response or vote for the most popular one. For example, if I ask you what your favorite flavor of ice cream is; one person may say “pistachio”, another might say “chocolate” and a third might say “I really don’t like ice cream” – those are all helpful responses. But if you say “cats”, that answer doesn’t help us so much.

We are recording this focus group and [note taker] is taking notes so that we have an accurate record of your responses. We are just using what you say, but we are not identifying who said it. You do not have to answer every question. But remember, all of your ideas and opinions can help us so please think about each question and give us your thoughts.

I just want to take care of a few housekeeping items.

- The bathrooms are located [fill in location]. If you need to go to the bathroom, just get up quietly.
• We have some snacks, if you need something to eat or drink, feel free to get up quietly at any time.
• Please put your cellphone on vibrate. If you get an emergency call, please step outside to take the call. We ask that you wait to respond to non-emergency calls until after the group.

Are there any questions? [Respond to any questions]. All right, let’s begin.

1. Before we ask you about the groups we are setting up, we would like to know about your experience with support groups.
   a. Have you ever attended a group?
   b. If yes, please describe.
   c. What did you find the most helpful about the group?
   d. What did you find least helpful about the group?

Now we would like your thoughts about the types of support groups that would be helpful to parents of young children (or even before the baby is born)

2. Think about when you were a new parent (and/or before your child was 5), what types of support groups would have been helpful and/or interesting to you? (prompts: things like managing stress, help with breastfeeding, managing toddler behavior)
   a. What types of groups do you think would be helpful to other parents of young children?

3. Can you think of any parents of young children that may have specific needs for support and information (prompt: such as children with special needs or developmental disabilities, behavioral challenges, parents who don’t speak English, etc.)

Support groups can take many formats. For example, meet once a week, once a month, etc. They can be open ended (continuously meet and parents can start and stop at any point) or they can be time limited (e.g. a six week support group, once a month for 8 months). They can also be an open discussion, have a meeting topic, or they can have a guest speaker or can be a class series (have a curriculum). Our funders are requiring that at least some of our groups have a curriculum, so we want your thoughts on what the curricula should be and the format for those groups as well. I am going to ask you some questions about what you think are good formats for our support groups.

4. Think about open discussion groups, groups where there isn’t a set agenda or lesson.
   a. How often should these support groups meet?
   b. How long should the support group meetings be? (prompts: 1 hour 1 ½ hours, 2 hours)
   c. What time of day/time should the groups be? (prompts: weekday mornings, Sunday evening)
   d. Do you think these groups should be ongoing or meet for a certain number of sessions?
e. Should open discussion groups have a topic for the meeting (prompts: managing tantrums, healthy foods for toddlers) or should they be open to anything the participants want to discuss?
   i. If you think they should have a topic – what are some topics that you suggest?
f. Should open discussion groups invite guest speakers?
   i. If yes, should the speaker present for the entire meeting or just a portion of it?

5. Think about groups with a curriculum.
   a. How often should these groups meet?
   b. How long should the support group meetings be? (prompts: 1 hour, 1½ hours, 2 hours)
   c. What time of day/time should the groups be? (prompts: weekday mornings, Sunday evening)
   d. Should the entire session be the lesson or should some of the meeting be open discussion or networking?
      i. If the groups include open discussion/networking, how much time of the meeting should this be?
   e. Groups with a curriculum will have a certain number of sessions. How many sessions should this type of group be?

6. We will start 20 groups in this area. How many of the groups should be open discussion and how many should have a curriculum?

7. Our goal is to start support groups all over Los Angeles County (provide each participant with a supervisory district map). Where do you think we need to have groups in your supervisory district?

8. What languages do you think we need support groups in?

9. What do you think could make it hard for parents to attend support groups? (prompt: transportation, child care, time of day)
   a. What recommendations do you have to address these barriers?

Those are all of our questions. Your input has been very helpful and will be used to develop our groups. Thank you for agreeing to participate. If you have questions about this project, you can contact Children’s Institute and ask for Yvette Baptiste or Fran Goldfarb. Here is a flyer about the project with Yvette and Fran’s contact information (pass out flyers).
Attachment C:
Parent Support Circles of Los Angeles County (PSCLAC)
Key Informant Interview Questions

Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me [us]. I [We] appreciate your help. My name is [name of interviewer] and this is [name of note-taker]. As you may be aware, I am [we are] working with Children’s Institute on a project called Parent Support Circles of Los Angeles County (PSCLAC) to develop support groups all over Los Angeles County for parents of children 0-5 (including before the baby is born). We are particularly interested in underserved and/or hard to reach communities. The overall goal of the program is to develop opportunities for parents of young children to connect with other parents, reduce their stress and also increase their knowledge and skills. This project is funded by First 5 Los Angeles.

Have you heard about this project? Do you have any questions? [if the key informant asks a question that you can’t answer, tell them you will give their question to Yvette Baptiste or Fran Goldfarb and one of the them will respond].

Over the next few weeks we, and other trained parents, will talk with community leaders in each supervisorial district, so that we can get a better idea of what types of support groups will best serve each district. We are looking for information related to structure and content of the groups.

We are recording this interview and [note taker] is taking notes so that we have an accurate record of your responses.

Do you have any questions? [Respond to any questions]. Then, let’s begin.

1. [Give the key informant a map of the supervisorial district]. What support groups are you aware of that currently serve this area?
   a. Which of these groups focus on parents of young children (birth-5) and/or pregnant women?

2. What types of groups do you think would be helpful to parents of young children?

3. Can you think of any parents of young children that may have specific needs for support and information? (prompt: such as children with special needs or developmental disabilities, behavioral challenges, parents who don’t speak English, etc.)

4. What specific underserved/hard to reach communities do you think could benefit from support groups?
   a. Who/what do you think will be helpful to reach these communities?
Support groups can take many formats. For example, meet once a week, once a month, etc. They can be open ended (continuously meet and parents can start and stop at any point) or they can be time limited (e.g. a six week support group, once a month for 8 months). They can also be an open discussion, have a meeting topic, or they can have a guest speaker or can be a class series (have a curriculum). Our funders are requiring that at least some of our groups have a curriculum, so we want your thoughts on what the curricula should be and the format for those groups as well. I am going to ask you some questions about what you think are good formats for our support groups.

5. Think about open discussion groups, groups where there isn’t a set agenda or lesson.
   a. How often should these support groups meet? (prompts: once a month, once a week)?
   b. How long should the support group meetings be? (prompts: 1 hour 1 ½ hours, 2 hours)
   c. What time of day/time should the groups be? (prompts: weekday mornings, Sunday evening)
   d. Do you think these groups should be ongoing or meet for a certain number of sessions?
   e. Should open discussion groups have a topic for the meeting (prompts: managing tantrums, healthy foods for toddlers) or should they be open to anything the participants want to discuss?
      i. If you think they should have a topic – what are some topics that you suggest?
   f. Should open discussion groups invite guest speakers?
      i. If yes, should the speaker present for the entire meeting or just a portion of it?

6. Think about groups with a curriculum
   a. How often should these groups meet?
   b. How long should the support group meetings be? (prompts: 1 hour 1 ½ hours, 2 hours)
   c. What time of day/time should the groups be? (prompts: weekday mornings, Sunday evening)
   d. Should the entire session be the lesson or should some of the meeting be open discussion or networking?
      i. If the groups include open discussion/networking, how much time of the meeting should this be?
   e. Groups with a curriculum will have a certain number of sessions. How many sessions should this type of group be?
   f. Are there any existing support group programs/models that you feel are particularly good for our communities?

7. We will start 20 groups in this area. How many of the groups should be open discussion and how many should have a curriculum?
8. Our goal is to start support groups all over Los Angeles County. Given that our goal is to reach underserved/hard to reach communities, where do you think we need to have groups in your supervisorial district?

9. What languages do you think we need support groups in?

10. What do you think could make it hard for parents to attend support groups? (prompt: transportation, child care, time of day)
    a. What recommendations do you have to address these barriers?

Those are all of our questions. Your input has been very helpful and will be used to develop our groups. Thank you for agreeing to participate. If you have questions about this project, you can contact Children’s Institute and ask for Yvette Baptiste or Fran Goldfarb. Here is a flyer about the project with Yvette and Fran’s contact information (provide a flyer).
Attachment D
Parent Support Circles of Los Angeles County
Support Group Facilitator Training
Agenda

**Day 1**

Registration/Coffee/Snacks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Overview of Peer Support Group Project and Support Groups Lecture (PowerPoint)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 AM</td>
<td>Introduction to Support Groups Lecture/Activity (PowerPoint)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 AM</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td>Role of the Support Group Facilitator Lecture/Discussion (Handout 1 – Confidentiality Agreement, Handout 2 Mandated Reporting)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lunch**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V</th>
<th>Communication Activity</th>
<th>12:45 PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Introduction to Support Group Lecture</td>
<td>1:10 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitator Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Active Listening Activity</td>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>2:15 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Why Do People Attend Support Groups Discussion</td>
<td>2:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Why do people leave support groups?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Support Group Logistics Part 1 Lecture</td>
<td>3:15 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Getting Started</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Defining Your Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Questions/Homework</td>
<td>3:45 PM</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Adjourn**

4 PM
## Day 2 Support Group Facilitator Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Coffee/Snacks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>I Check-in/Homework Reporting</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 AM</td>
<td>II Principles of Adult Learning</td>
<td>Lecture/Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 AM</td>
<td>III Support Group Logistics Part 2</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Supervision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Planning for Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Record Keeping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 AM</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 AM</td>
<td>IV Stages of Group Formation</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
<td>V Characteristics of Successful Support Groups</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 PM</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 AM</td>
<td>VI Group Facilitation Skills</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 AM</td>
<td>VII Signs a Person May Need More Help</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 AM</td>
<td>VIII What Do I Do If</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45 AM</td>
<td>IX Questions</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 PM</td>
<td>Adjourn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day 3: Support Group Facilitator Training

Coffee/Snacks 8:00 AM

I Check-in/Homework Discussion 8:30 AM
Reporting

II Reviewing the Tinker Toy Lecture 9 AM
Model

III Topics v Type Lecture 9:20
A. Using the Matrix

IV Defining Your Groups Activity 9:45 AM

V Support Group Topic Guides Lecture/Activity 10:15 AM
Break 10:45 AM

VI Meeting 1 Part 1 Activity 11 AM

**Lunch**

VII Meeting 1 Part 2 Activity 12:45 PM

VIII Speakers and Topics Discussion 1:45 PM

IX Using Content Activity 2:00

X Using Resources Discussion 2:50 PM

VII Questions/Evaluation Discussion 3:10 PM

**Adjourn** 3:30
Support Group Facilitator Training

Objectives:

• Participants will have increased knowledge regarding PSCLAC, and the PSCLAC support group model
• Participants will have increased knowledge of the components/strategies necessary for a successful support group
• Participants will have increased support group facilitation skills

MATERIALS

Day 1
• Supervisorial District Map
• Training Folder
  o Agenda (HO 1)
  o PowerPoint Handout (Day 1) (HO2)
  o Project Roster (HO 3)
  o Support Group Descriptions and Topic Guides (Handout [])
  o Confidentiality Agreement (HO [])
  o Mandated Reporting Handout (HO [])
  o Support Group Facilitator Tasks (HO)
  o Evaluation Form (Day 1) (HO [])
• Fidget Toys - Tinker Toys
  • Active Listening Handout (HO [])
• Blocks
• Post Its
• Flip Chart
• Nametags
• Name tents
• Toys or Erasers of 5 Different Colors (to be used to assign roles)
• Paper Bag (or deep bowl)

Day 2
• Handouts
  o PowerPoint Handout (Day 2) (HO [])
• Fidget Toys - Tinker Toys
• Post Its
• Flip Chart
• Nametags
• Name tents
• Toys or Erasers of 5 Different Colors (to be used to assign roles)
• Paper Bag (or deep bowl)
• Secret Information Cards
• Support Group Content (HO [])
• Evaluation Form (Day 2) (HO [])

Day 3

• Handouts
  o PowerPoint Handout (Day 3) (HO [])
  o 1st Meeting Checklist
  o Evaluation Form (Day 3)
• Fidget Toys - Tinker Toys
• Post Its
• Flip Chart
• Nametags
• Name tents
• Toys or Erasers of 5 Different Colors (to be used to assign roles)
• Paper Bag (or deep bowl)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>1. As each person enters, ask them to sign in and give them a packet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Training folders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Invite them to have refreshments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• District Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Ask them to take a seat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
<td>A. Introductions</td>
<td>Group Activity</td>
<td>60 min</td>
<td>PowerPoint Slides 2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Welcome everyone to the training. The presenters will introduce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>themselves. The presenters will introduce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• How did you learn how to be a parent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Ask each person to introduce themselves, giving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What is your experience with support groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Their name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What do you wish you knew when you were a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The district they live in.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>new parent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Names and ages of their children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Ask the group to pair up and answer the following questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How did you learn how to be a parent?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is your experience with support groups?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What do you wish you knew when you were a new parent?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. House keeping</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Bathrooms – The bathrooms are located in the hallway right behind us. Look for the Blue Walls

2. Breaks – There will be scheduled breaks, but if you need to get food or go to the bathroom, please feel free to get up quietly at any time.

3. Cellphones - please put your phones on vibrate or turn them off. If you need to take an emergency call, please step out of the room.

C. Agenda

1. Go over the agenda of the training
   - Ask for any questions

2. Introduce the parking lot –
   - Instruct the participants that there is a pen and post it notes on their tables and they can put their questions on the parking lot board. We will answer all of the questions in the parking lot – either where they belong in the agenda or at the end of the training.

3. Evaluation-
   - Your feedback is very important to us. We will ask you to fill out an evaluation form at the end of each day.
## II. Overview of PSCLAC and Support Groups

### A. Overview of PSCLAC

1. Present the Parent Support Circles of Los Angeles County PowerPoint
   - First 5 Los Angeles
   - 30 month project
   - The goal is to develop 100 support groups in Los Angeles County
     - 20 per Supervisorial District
     - That are responsive to Community Need
     - Parent Led Support Groups

### II. Goals (for participation in support groups)

1. Increase social connectedness of parents in Los Angeles County
2. Increase parents' knowledge, confidence and efficacy in parenting skills
3. Greater parent awareness of opportunities for parent education

### III. Project Structure

1. CII is the lead agency (and is also the lead on the Training and Technical Assistance Grant)
   - Richard Cohen ^
   - Adriana Molina ^
   - Yvette Baptiste ^*
   - Fran Goldfarb ^*
   - Nancy Ezra *
   - Todd Sosna*
   - Amina Fields*

2. There are five Community Based Agencies (provide District Maps for review)

### Lecture

- **15 min**
  - PowerPoint Slides 5-9
  - LCD Projector
  - Laptop
  - PSCLAC PowerPoint Handout
  - Project Roster
| • District 1 Weingart East LA YMCA- Molina  
• District 2 Para Los Niños – Ridley-Thomas  
• Family Focus FRC – Yaroslavsky  
• For The Child – Knabe  
• Parent’s Place - Antonovich  
• 20 groups per CBO |
|---|---|---|

3. Ask the participants to identify their district by raising their hand when it is called out.

4. The other partners in this project are:
   - The Family Resource Center Network of Los Angeles County (FRCNLAC)  
     o Linda Landry,  
     o Yvette Baptiste  
   - Patient and Family Centered Care (PFCC) Partners  
     o Libby Hoy  
   - USC UCEDD CHLA  
     o Fran Goldfarb  
     o Marie Poulsen  
     o Hope Wills

D. T & TA process

1. The Training and Technical Assistance Project is involved in Information Gathering and evaluation which includes:
   - Needs Assessment  
     o Focus Groups  
     o Key Informant Interviews  
   - Curriculum Development  
   - Training Support Group Facilitators
### III. Introduction to Support Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Support Groups vs. Educational Groups vs. Therapy Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Divide participants into 3 or 6 groups (depending on the number of participants in the training - each group should have 5-7 people in them) the group categories will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Psycho-Educational Groups,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Support Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Therapy Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Give each group a dish with erasers and ask each group to pick one eraser. Pull one eraser out of a bag and the people with matching erasers will facilitate their group. Pull another eraser out of the bag and the people with matching erasers will be the recorders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assign each group to describe the characteristics of their category (5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask each group to present their description to the larger group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pass out Handout [] and review the characteristics on the PowerPoint slide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Psycho-Educational Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Therapy Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Support Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Explain that we will be conducting support groups and not therapy or psycho-educational groups. We will have information for the facilitators to use in their groups but we won’t be conducting “classes”. Also some parents might need more than a support group, so we will provide resources for those parents (as well as strategies for talking with parents about needing more than can be provided in a group).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Tinker Toy Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduce Tinker Toys v. Tonka Trucks PowerPoint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Explain that each group will look a little different and that is okay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture/Activity</th>
<th>60 minutes</th>
<th>Group Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handout []</td>
<td></td>
<td>PowerPoint Slides 10 - 22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. During this training (and ongoing supervision) you will get the information and skills to help your participants decide how they want to structure their group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV</th>
<th>Role of the Support Group Facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Role of the Facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Ask participants to share the role of a support group facilitator. Write responses on a flipchart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Use PowerPoint slide to confirm or fill in missing responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Ask participants to take out their job description and handout [HO] Key Characteristics of an Effective Self-Help Group Leader/Facilitator and discuss those qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Discuss the boundaries of a support group facilitator including: not giving advice, not prescribing or evaluating treatment, not providing therapy. Use PowerPoint Slide [] to review those boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Point out how these qualities are different from those of a teacher or a therapist [PowerPoint slide ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Creating a Safe Environment and Mandated Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Discuss that there are other responsibilities, including creating a safe environment - guaranteeing confidentiality and mandated reporting. Go over those responsibilities and ask that each participant sign the confidentiality agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Ask the participants how they will let their groups know about confidentiality and mandated reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Anything discussed in the support group is confidential (unless there is a concern regarding abuse or neglect). Also members should be re-assured that attendance information is not given out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- PowerPoint Slides 23 -
- Facilitator Job Description (HO [])
- Key Characteristics of an Effective Self-Help Group Leader/Facilitator
- Confidentiality Agreement Handout (HO [])
- Mandated Reporting Handout (HO [])
3. Point out that while a support group doesn’t meet the requirements of a court ordered parenting class (for DCFS family re-unification), support group facilitators may be asked for documentation of a member’s attendance
   a. if you are asked for this, tell your CBO contact. Any documentation should come from him/her.

D. Maintaining Groups
1. Discuss that in addition to facilitating the group, it is also the role of the facilitator to maintain the group. This includes:
   - Showing up on time
   - Keeping records
   - Communicating with their CBO
   - Attending supervision

2. Explain that this will be discussed further in when we talk about logistics.

V Communication

| 1. Introduce the activity by sharing that communication is key to successful support groups. | Activity | 25 minutes |
| 2. Divide the participants into 4 groups. Ask them to gather around a table. Place an assortment of blocks on each of the 4 tables. |   |   |
| 3. Tell the group that they have 3 minutes to build the biggest/tallest structure with the blocks. Tell them that they are not allowed to talk during this exercise. |   |   |
| 4. Time the groups and after 3 minutes, ask each group to display their structure. |   |   |
| 5. Ask the group to do the same exercise a 2nd time, but this time the groups can talk. |   |   |
| 6. After 3 minutes, ask each group to display their structure. |   |   |

- blocks
- Barriers to Communication Handout (HO [])
7. Ask them how the experiences were different depending on whether they could talk or not.
8. Summarize that it is easier to be working together if there is communication and people have the opportunity to know what other people are thinking.
9. Remind the participants however not all communication is created equal; that there things that you can do to enhance communication and also some things that are barriers to communication.
10. Ask participates to identify things that can create barriers to communication.
11. Pass out Barriers to Communication Handout and review.

VI
Introduction to Support Group Facilitator Skills
A. Ask participants to refer back to the description of a support group leader and share that there are several skills they can use to create a safe environment where people feel comfortable sharing. These skills include:
1. Setting Ground Rules
2. Including Everyone
3. Listening Skills
4. Ability To Manage Difficult Situations/Behaviors
5. Ability To Model Supportive Behavior
6. Facilitating Not Leading
7. Identifying Resources (Not Answers)
B. Discuss what each of the skills entails.
C. Assure participants that we will be covering all of these skills in this training and that they will be able to increase their
skills during supervision sessions.

VII
Active Listening

1. Pass out the Active Listening Handout.
2. Review handout with the participants.
3. Divide participants into groups of 3 and assign the following roles:
   a. Talker
   b. Listener
   c. Observer
4. Provide the following instructions.
   a. Each person will have an opportunity to try out each role. The roles are assigned as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
<th>Round 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tallest</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Tallest</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortest</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Each round will last 6 minutes.
   - A will talk for 3-4 minutes about an issue that is important to her/him.
   - B will use active listening skills and
   - C will observe the interaction and pay attention to active listening and also less supportive listens.
   
   When the bell rings, the group will have 2 minutes to discuss.

c. Bring all the participants back together and discuss how they felt about their active listening skills and what felt natural and what was awkward. Inform them that this skill will become easier with practice.

Activity 45 minutes
• Active Listening Handout (HO [])
| VIII  | Why Do People Attend Support Groups? | 1. Divide the participants into groups of 5-6 people. | 2. Ask the groups to discuss *Why Do People go to support groups*. Each group will have 5 minutes to discuss this. | 3. Ask each group to share their answers. - Highlight important reasons. | 4. Ask the groups to discuss *Why Do People Leave Support Groups*. Each group will have 5 minutes to discuss this | 5. Ask each group to share their answers. - Highlight important reasons. | 6. Ask each group to discuss *What can facilitators do to make their groups comfortable for people to attend*. Each group will have 5 minutes to discuss this | 7. Ask each group to share their answers. - Highlight important reasons. | Discussion 45 minutes | • toys/erasers • Flipchart |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| d. Share information about “I messages”  
   i) This means making statements with the word “I” in them such as "I think" or "I feel", rather than making statements like "you should".  
   ii) This is very important technique for sharing information.  
| e. Provide Homework Assignment to practice Active Listening and “I Messages” at least 1 x a day and we will be discussing their experience during Day 2 of the training. |
### Support Group Logistics Part 1

#### A. Getting Started

1. Refer back to the tinker toy model and remind the participants that the support groups that we are developing should be flexible and responsive to the group participants. Participants for the support groups will be recruited based on the type of group, e.g., parents of babies for the Nurturing Baby group or parents of children with special needs for the special needs groups. All of the participants will have some common characteristics, but each group may look a little different and have different priorities.

2. Tell the participants - but before we think about what our groups want to talk about, we have to back up a little and talk about how the groups will be started.

3. The facilitators will meet with your CBO and
   a. Decide on a day and time. This will be based on:
      - the results of the needs assessment
      - the availability of the support group location
      - your availability
   b. Facilitator roles and which co-facilitator will be responsible for:
      - Gathering Resources
      - Inviting Speakers (As Appropriate)
      - Setting Up The Room
      - Setting Out Resources
      - Providing/Setting Up Refreshments
      - Welcoming The members As They Arrive
      - Starting The Support Groups Meeting And Being The Lead Facilitator
      - Managing Disruptions
      - Setting The Agenda For Upcoming Meetings
      - Closing The Meeting
      - Record Keeping
      - Make Direction Signs
      - Post Direction Signs At The Meeting
      - Bring Meeting Supplies
      - What Role Facilitators Will Play In Participant Recruitment.

Some co-facilitators may want to alternate who does what, other may want to have defined roles.
c. Develop a contact list for your group which includes:
   - Co-Facilitators
   - CBO Contacts
   - Location Contacts
   - Who To Call If There Is A Facility Emergency (Room/Building Is Locked)
   - CII Supervisor
   - Childcare Providers

 Notify your CBO contact and your co-facilitator if you have to miss a support group meeting for any reason.

d. The start date of your group
e. If not already done, finalizing contract/employment

4. Contact your CII supervisor
   a. Your supervisor will attend your 1st and 3rd support group meetings
   b. You will begin attending mandatory monthly supervision meetings.

B. Defining Your Group
1. You will know
   a. The type of group you will facilitate
   b. Whether you will have content sheets or this will be an open discussion group
   c. The location of your group
   d. The start date
      • Proposed day and time

2. You may know
   a. The frequency of the group
   b. Whether this is an ongoing or time limited group

3. You will decide with your group
   a. Your topics
      • You may have to provide suggestions (or initially provide suggestions)
      • You will also want to decide if the frequency is what the groups wants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions/ Homework</th>
<th>A. Overview of Day 1/Preview of Day 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Acknowledge that the participants covered a lot of information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Remind them that next week:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. We will be in Room []</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. We will start on time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Discussion 15 minutes
c. We meet on Thursday, 3/27 and Friday 3/28

3. Inform participants that on Day 2 we will cover:
   a. Principles of Adult Learning
   b. Support Group Logistics Part 2
   c. Supervision
   d. Planning for Flexibility
   e. Record Keeping
   f. Stages of Group Formation
   g. Characteristics of Successful Support Groups
   h. Group Facilitation Skills
   i. Signs a Person May Need More Help
   j. What Do I Do If

B. Homework
   1. Active Listening/I Messages – practice everyday
   2. Review some of the resources in the Support Group Topic Guides for your type of support group.
      a. If your type of group doesn’t have Support Group Topic Guides then review the ones for the Self-Care Groups

C. Ask for questions

D. Evaluation Forms – ask everyone to fill out their Day 1 Evaluation form (in their packet)