Parent Partner Program Manual

Sample Policies and Procedures

Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

Suggested citation:

Capacity Building Center for States (2016). *Parent Partner Program Manual: Sample Policies and Procedures*. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This product was created by the Capacity Building Center for States under Contract No. HHSP233201400033C, funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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Note: The contents of this manual are for informational purposes only and do not replace State or local agency policies and procedures.

Introduction

Family engagement and peer-to-peer support have been increasingly recognized as valuable strategies to increase successful outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system. Parent partner programs embrace these strategies by matching parents who have previous child welfare experience with parents new to child welfare for mentoring and support. In addition to working directly with families, parent partners often participate in child welfare agency workgroups, trainings, and other activities that help integrate family "voice" into child welfare policies and practices.

A Program Manual:

- **Communicates leadership vision and expectations for the program**
- **Sets standards for delivering services**
- **Provides rules and guidelines to meet long-term program goals**

A program manual supports the effective and consistent operation of a parent partner program. The Capacity Building Center for States (the Center), working with Center Family Consultants who are leaders in parent partner programs, developed this manual to provide a template and guidance for program administrators, parent partner coordinators, family leaders, and other key stakeholders to develop their own parent partner program manuals.

Purpose of the Manual

Developing a comprehensive and detailed program manual can be time-consuming work. To give State and local programs a "head start," this manual offers recommendations on key parent partner program manual components, guiding principles, and sample statements, policies, and procedures. The samples represent some of the best policy and operational guidance available from parent partner programs across the country.

The purpose of this document is to support parent partner program design teams, steering committees, or other designated entities (typically including program administrators, family leaders, and key stakeholders) in developing program manuals that guide the ongoing operation of their programs. This document can be a resource for new parent partner programs to develop a program manual and for existing parent partner programs to review, update, and add to their policies and procedures.

Use with the Parent Partner Program Navigator

This program manual and its sample policies and procedures are a supplement to the Center's *Parent Partner Program Navigator: Designing and Implementing Parent Partner Programs in Child Welfare* (the Navigator). Center staff and Family Consultants developed the Navigator to guide child welfare administrators, staff, and parent leaders through the essential steps of developing and implementing successful parent partner programs. The Navigator can be found at https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/family-empowerment/parent-partner-navigator.

While the Navigator offers a high-level overview of program design, development, and initiation, the program manual's focus is on daily operations once the program is established. The Navigator and this manual are complementary and are intended to be used together. The authors have made efforts to avoid duplication of text between the documents and provide cross-references to related Navigator sections for additional information and links to related resources.

The Importance of the Planning Process and Tailoring

This program manual is a guide and provides examples of how some parent partner programs have addressed various aspects of operating their programs. Be aware, however, that "one size does not fit all." Jurisdictions that are initiating parent partner programs or drafting new program manuals should not simply copy the examples and insert their State's or county's name. Each jurisdiction must evaluate its own needs, the needs of the families it serves, and how best to serve those families. In addition, programs must work within their lead agency's established structure and procedures for the review and approval of policies and procedures.

It is important that your program manual is viewed as a product of a systematic, collaborative process. As emphasized in the Navigator, the planning process, like the parent partner program, should include all stakeholders working together in a partnership process and nonhierarchical team. Stakeholders include family leaders; child welfare agency administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers; representatives from related systems (courts, mental health, family violence programs); community partners and service providers; and other "champions" of the parent partner concept. The experience of having stakeholders come together and work through issues—especially to establish the program's mission, vision, and core values—is a necessary part of the program's development. The design team process provides a valuable opportunity for stakeholders to sit together at the planning table and begin to develop the essential working relationships that lay the foundation of an effective parent partner program. The strength and sustainability of a program will reflect the efforts of stakeholders coming together to do the necessary planning work.

Organization of the Manual

This document is organized into chapters that reflect the potential sections of a parent partner program manual:

- Parent partner program overview
- Setting the infrastructure: roles and responsibililties
- Recruiting and selecting parent partner program staff
- Training parent partners and supporting professional development
- Facilitating the peer-to-peer support process
- Supervising and supporting parent partners
- Compensating parent partners
- Collecting and using data

Each chapter begins with a green box that summarizes recommended contents for that chapter of a program manual. The overview describes the content elements, offers contextual information, and refers readers to the relevant Navigator component for more information and related resources. Following the overview, the chapter offers guiding considerations to focus your program's development of relevant policies, procedures, or statements. The guiding considerations and "Tips from the Field" boxes reflect expertise and lessons learned from experienced parent partner program leaders. Each chapter concludes with a series of selected sample components, policies, and procedures.

Chapter 1
Parent Partner Program Overview

Overview

The first section of a parent partner program manual can set the foundation by providing an overview of the following interrelated components:

- **Background and history** — a brief description of how and why the parent partner program came into existence
- **Vision statement** — a concise sentence or phrase that captures your program's optimal goal and expresses hope for future conditions if your program is successful (see Sample 1.1)
- **Mission statement** — a broad overview of how the program will realize the vision (see Sample 1.2)
- **Program objectives** — specific, measurable results that will lead to achievement of the mission (see Sample 1.3)
- **Core values** — beliefs and principles that guide a program's work (see Sample 1.4)
- **Theory of change** — a "roadmap" that illustrates how program activities are intended to lead to desired changes and improved outcomes for children and families (see Sample 1.5)

Recommended Program Manual Contents:

- Background and history
- Mission and vision statements*
- Program objectives*
- Core values*
- Theory of change*

* Samples provided

These components are important because they establish the long-term direction of every aspect of the parent partner program's daily operations.

See also Parent Partner Program Navigator Components 1, 4, and 10.

TIPS FROM THE FIELD: The program's design team and key stakeholders (including family leaders, program staff, child welfare administrators, caseworkers, representatives from related systems, and community service providers) should work together to develop these foundational elements of building a program. Group discussions clarify for all stakeholders what they are working toward, how, and why. Given the diverse stakeholders at the planning table, it may be useful to bring in an experienced facilitator who can ensure that everyone participates and is heard.

Guiding Considerations for Development of Foundational Components

- The parent partner program's mission, vision, and core values are the underpinning of all future decisions about policies and operations.
- Vision and mission statements should articulate your program's essential beliefs and values and define its place in the world.
- Parent partner programs provide supportive interventions based on the premise that parents who have experience with child welfare can be valued resources for those new to the system.
- The partnership between child welfare services and parents is based on their mutual goal—child safety. Both want to help families address the issues that brought them to the attention of child welfare and to maintain the connection between parents and children.

Sample Foundational Components

Sample 1.1: Vision Statement

a) The Partnership Program envisions a world where empowered mothers and fathers provide their children with safe, stable, and healthy environments in which to grow and thrive.

b) The vision of this program is that:

- Fathers, mothers, and other adults in parenting roles are included and valued as partners in our day-to-day work with families.
- Parent leaders are visibly present serving as a resource to other parents and to staff supporting the mission of the Division.

Adapted from New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth and Families. (2014). New Hampshire parent partner program.

Sample 1.2: Mission Statement

The program's mission is to promote the welfare of children and families through authentic partnerships that provide integrated, quality peer support services that are individualized, strength based, family centered, and culturally sensitive.

Adapted from Jefferson County Department of Human Services, CO. (n.d.). *Parent partner program Handbook.*

Sample 1.3: Objectives

The primary objectives of the Partnership Program are to provide peer support services that will:

- Provide intensive assistance to parents to prevent removal of children from their homes
- Provide instructive assistance to parents so that they may reunify with their children in a timely manner
- Collaborate with substitute care providers to maintain connections between parents and children

Adapted from Department of Community Based Services. Jefferson County, KY. (2007). *Building a better future: Parent advocacy program protocol.*

Sample 1.4: Core Values

Our Core Values: The Parent Partner Program shares the beliefs and principles of the Division for Children, Youth and Families.

Prevention: Prevention reduces child abuse and neglect

- *"We partner with the community to develop and enhance prevention initiatives and services."*

Safety: All children/youth should be safe

- *"We work in partnership with families and communities to keep children and youth safe."*
- *"We value and consider children, youth and families' voices in decisions regarding their safety."*

Permanency: All children/youth need and deserve permanency

- *"Permanency begins with the goal of maintaining children with their families, followed by reunification, adoption, guardianship or another permanent planned living arrangement."*

Well-Being: All children/youth and families deserve a life of well-being

- *"We partner with families and the community to identify and provide services for the specific needs of individual children, youth and families."*

Family Voice: All families have strengths

- *"Families are best served when they are actively engaged, their voices are heard, valued and considered with regard to all decisions."*

Given the nature of our work, we commit to the following core values:

Partnerships: We work to foster equal, mutually respectful partnerships among parents, staff, allies, and other partners in child welfare to improve the lives of children/youth and to positively change the child welfare system.

Parent Leadership: Fathers and mothers are family and community leaders. They bring knowledge and expertise to the table found nowhere else. We value promoting parents as change agents and leaders.

Engaging Fathers: Fathers are important to the well-being of their children and when they are involved in a positive and consistent way, there are life-long benefits for children. We believe that it is our collective responsibility to work with fathers and support their involvement with their children.

Adapted from New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth and Families. (2014). *New Hampshire parent partner program*.

Sample 1.5: Theory of Change Using a "So That" Chain

Sample "SO THAT" Chain[1] for Parent Partner Program

Strategy

Build capacity to provide peer-to-peer support to parents in the child welfare system

So That

Parents entering child welfare are matched with a peer parent partner who can offer emotional support and help them understand how the system works

So That

Parents new to the system feel supported and more quickly overcome fears or anger

So That

Parents see the system as a resource and support to them and their families

So That

Consensus is reached on how to work better together

So That

Caseworkers, parent partners, and birth families are working toward one goal with a shared understanding of the challenges and what can help

So That

Resources and services are matched to meet the needs of the family

So That

Parents engage in services and specific changes to achieve case goals

So That

There are positive changes in the lives of vulnerable children and families involved in child welfare

So That

Children and youth are reunited with their families in a quick and safe manner

Source: Capacity Building Center for States, Family Consultant Team. (2016). *Parent partner program navigator: Designing and implementing parent partner programs in child welfare*.

[1] For more information on "So That" chains, see Annie E. Casey Foundation & Organizational Research Services. (2004). *Theory of change: A practical tool for action, results, and learning*. Seattle, WA: Authors. Retrieved from http://www.aecf.org/resources/theory-of-change/

Chapter 2
Setting the Infrastructure: Roles and Responsibilities

Overview

The infrastructure section of the program manual provides an overview of a parent partner program's structure and how it fits within the overall organization. There are currently three common models for parent partner programs: (1) parent partners as child welfare agency staff, (2) parent partners as employees or contractors of a nonprofit organization, and (3) parent partners as employees of a legal aid agency. (For more information, see Navigator Component 6.) Your program manual should explain program structure, relationships among participating organizations (e.g., the child welfare agency and the legal aid agency or nonprofit organization), and relationships between key participants (e.g., parent partners and caseworkers). The program structure can be illustrated in an organizational chart (see Sample 2.1).

Recommended Program Manual Contents:

- Program structure
- Organizational chart*
- Program leadership and oversight
- Role of key participants
- Job descriptions*

* Samples provided

Many parent partner programs structure their programs to include the following entities/participants:

- **Steering committee** — an oversight entity that helps set the direction of the program and advises on key decisions, policies, and core strategies (see Sample 2.2). Members may include a child welfare administrator, parent partner program manager, parent partner coordinator, parent partners, supervisors and caseworkers, community service providers, and other program "champions."
- **Program manager** — a manager who acts as the liaison between the agency's administration and the parent partner program, serves on the steering committee, and supports the program's implementation. This manager helps align the program with agency operations, communicates progress and achievements to other internal agency management groups, and brings action items to senior leadership.
- **Parent partner coordinator** — a coordinator who manages the daily operations of the program and supervises the parent partners. The parent partner coordinator will play a lead role in overseeing program implementation tasks and ongoing operations (see the job description in Sample 2.3).
- **Parent partners** — parents who have been involved in child protection who now offer mentoring and support to other parents currently receiving child welfare services. They support caseworkers by engaging parents, exploring service options to meet parents' needs, and promoting a family-centered approach. They also provide the family "voice" by serving on workgroups, providing input for agency decision-making, and co-facilitating trainings (see job description in Sample 2.4). Parent partners are known by different titles, such as family partner, parent advocate, parent mentor, parent navigator, and parent support partner. Some programs also have a lead parent partner who supports and coaches newer parent partners.
- **Interagency and community partners** — partners help link parents to needed services, support training and professional development activities for parent partners, and sometimes provide in-kind donations. Partners may represent the juvenile dependency court, county and community mental health

services, substance use treatment services, domestic violence services, parent support groups, housing services, local adult education programs and community colleges, and faith- and community-based organzations.

- **Parents** — most parent partner programs serve birth parents whose children have been placed in out-of-home care and who agree to work with a parent partner. Parents are generally referred by caseworkers or service providers that believe the parent will benefit from peer support.

Your program structure and key participants may differ, reflecting your agency's and program's needs and circumstances. As part of your planning and implementation process, a number of key decisions will need to be made, including agency arrangements and structuring, specific target population, eligibility requirements for parent partners, and roles of various players, to name just a few.

See also Parent Partner Program Navigator Components 6, 8, and 13.

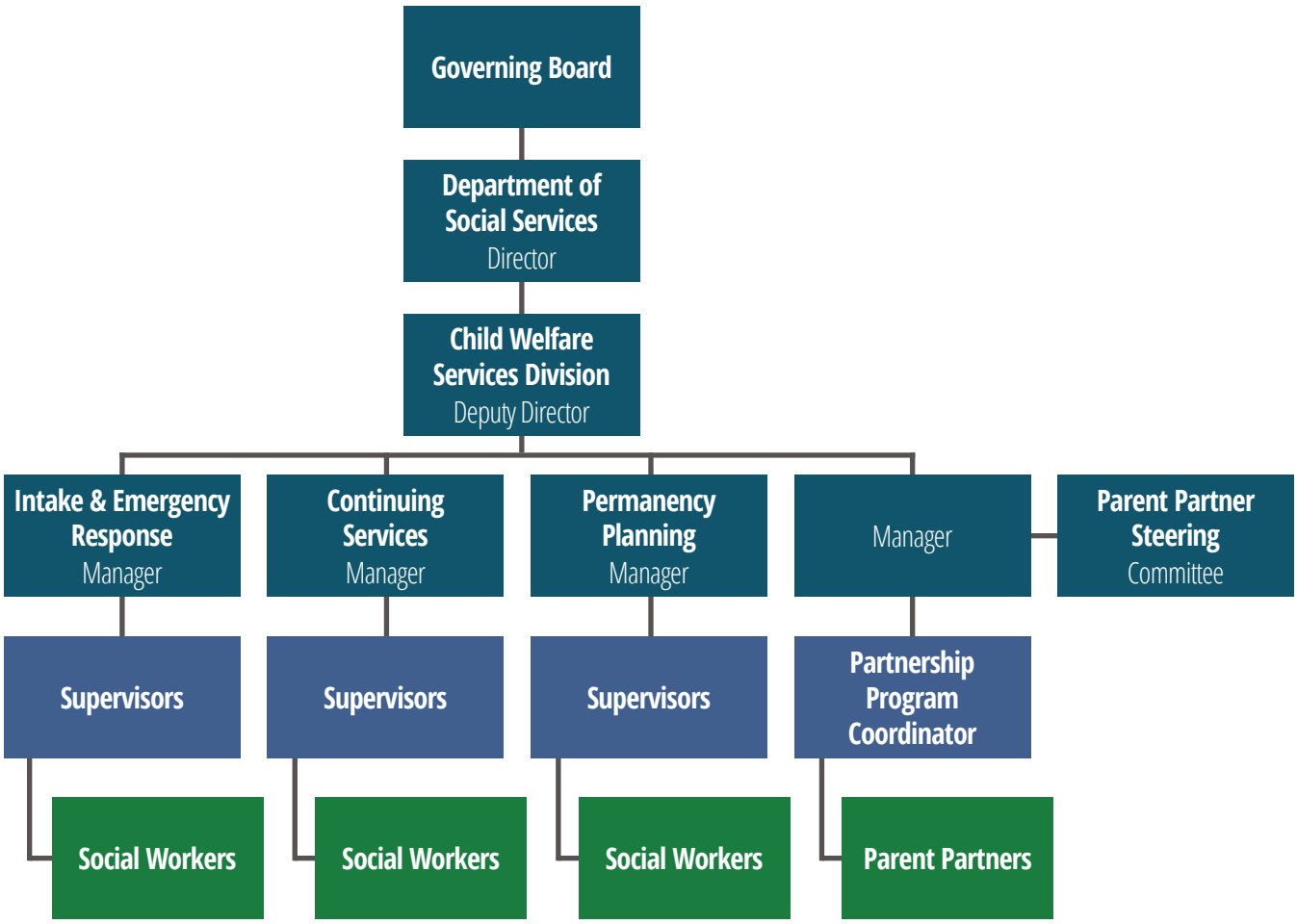
TIPS FROM THE FIELD: Help interagency and community partners understand the role of parent partners and the benefits of peer support. Once engaged, such partners can assist with meeting families' needs. Effective partnering can also support the engagement of parents in agency or community programs, which in turn helps the programs meet their service objectives.

Guiding Considerations for Development of Infrastructure

- Parent partner programs must be a structured, integral part of its host organization.
- Parent partner programs must develop a structure that will be able to meet parents' needs in an effective and sustainable manner.
- Regardless of the chosen program model, to function effectively, clear oversight and coordination roles must be part of a parent partner program.

Sample Foundational Components

Sample 2.1: Organizational Chart



Sample 2.2: Statement of Steering Committee Responsibilities

The Partnership Program Steering Committee will meet at least quarterly to assess parent partner program needs and progress and provide guidance on key issues.

The main functions of the Steering Committee include the following:

- Setting the program's goals and direction
- Aligning the program vision, mission, and core values with the agency's overall vision, mission, and values
- Promoting the program, its mission, and core strategies to child welfare agency staff, interagency and community partners, and other stakeholders
- Developing a work plan that includes clear objectives and strategies to reach program goals
- Providing program oversight and advising on key policies, decisions, and issues
- Monitoring the budget and expenditures
- Developing program sustainability plans
- Other aspects of program implementation, as needed

Sample 2.3: Parent Partner Coordinator Job Description

The parent partner program will be led by a Parent Partner Coordinator. The Parent Partner Coordinator will:

- Work under the general supervision of the program manager and with the guidance of the steering committee.
- Oversee all parent partner services, implementation and programmatic issues, and day-to-day tasks.
- Develop and implement an individualized referral process and identify target populations in coordination with other child welfare services supervisors and managers.
- Implement a family assignment process that ensures that:
  - Confidentiality and mandated reporting requirements are addressed and adhered to throughout the duration of services.
  - The assigned Parent Partner is matched appropriately.
  - The Parent Partner contacts the family as soon as possible (within one week) of assignment.
- Review, guide, and monitor parent partner service delivery in weekly supervision with the parent partner to discuss concerns and ongoing issues.
- Develop and implement use of standardized documentation and reporting tools as appropriate.
- Ensure clinical support for the parent partner on at least a monthly basis for clinical issues that arise in service provision.
- Foster ongoing personal and professional development opportunities for parent partners that include speaking engagements, committee representation, trainings, and conferences, as available.
- Attend required agency meetings and trainings.
- Meet regularly with the program manager for supervision and consultation about the program.
- Attend steering committee meetings, prepare program reports for the steering committee, and implement steering committee recommendations.

Adapted from Iowa Department of Human Services. (2014). *Iowa parent partner approach handbook.*

Sample 2.4: Parent Partner Job Description

This sample role description was developed by Parents Anonymous® Inc. In this program, the peer support position is referred to as "family partner" rather than parent partner. As part of a collaborative effort with California Wraparound programs, a tool was developed for measuring fidelity to the parent partner role description and program model (see http://parentsanonymous.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Parent-Partner-Fidelity-Tool-Social-Work-Research.pdf)

SAMPLE FAMILY PARTNER ROLE DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Family Partner (Parent/Caregiver)

REPORTING RELATIONSHIP: Family Partner Program Supervisor

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION: The purpose of this position is to provide active, hands on peer support to parents/caregivers of children ages 0-18 entering the child welfare system to assist families in successfully reunifying and ultimately reducing reentry to foster care. Effective peer support should be friendly, helpful, accessible, and flexible. Peer support may be at agencies, in family homes or in community environments. The role of the Family Partner is to provide peer support for up to 1 year to fully engage parents and caregivers who have been involved in the child welfare system to become effective advocates for their own families and also work collaboratively with DCFS staff to support systems change by increasing parent and caregiver involvement in policy and administrative decisions.

DUTIES OF THE FAMILY PARTNER RELATED TO WORKING WITH FAMILIES:

I. Engagement Skills

1. Decide collaboratively with the Family Partner Program Supervisor details about the initial engagement meeting with the parent or caregiver.
2. Introduce yourself as a peer who is a caregiver who has had direct experience with a child serving system (i.e., child welfare, mental health, probation) and explain the role of the Family Partner.
3. Encourage the parent or caregiver to share their own story including their culture, beliefs, and situation.
4. Consider the parent or caregiver's story to identify family strengths, and what parts of the Family Partner's story would be helpful for the parent or caregiver to hear.
5. Effectively share your own story in a way which builds connection, confidence, and hope for the parent or caregiver relevant to the family's culture, beliefs, and situation.
6. Explore with the parent or caregiver potential supports (family or friends) and what might motivate them to work collaboratively with you, their social worker, and other service providers to fulfill their case plan in order to reunify with their children as quickly as possible.
7. Explore the parent or caregiver's situation regarding the need for rest, relief, and safety and work collaboratively with the Family Partner Program Supervisor to develop and support a stabilization plan.
8. Secure agreement from the parent or caregiver about the Family Partner meeting with them regularly to help them develop their own solutions to issues and attend meetings on their behalf, including Team Decision Making Meetings (TDM), in order to assist them in successfully achieving the goals of their case plan.

II. Implementation Core Skills

1. Begin meeting with the parent or caregiver regularly and consistently in order to encourage and support an understanding of the parent or caregiver's perspective of their family's situation and vision for the future.
2. Actively listen to the parent or caregiver's perspective to help identify the strengths of the parent or caregiver; assist the parent or caregiver in recognizing and verbalizing their own strengths.
3. Participate with the parent or caregiver and Social Worker in planning and developing a case plan that includes required tasks and timelines.
4. Assist the parent or caregiver in working with the Social Worker to reach agreement about underlying unmet needs that may be driving the situation in the family. Clarify unmet needs versus service provision.
5. Participate with the parent or caregiver and Social Worker in brainstorming a wide range of interventions to prioritize needs, while also considering the potential family strengths that will match interventions.
6. Volunteer for tasks if the Family Partner's strengths match the intervention.
7. Assess the level of support that is needed by the parent or caregiver based on the families' support network, their ability to involve their support network at times of need and in TDM's, and the ability of the parent or caregiver to be heard by others.
8. Work with the parent or caregiver to develop plans/strategies of how the Family Partner can support the parent or caregiver during meetings to ensure the parent or caregiver's culture, beliefs, experience, voice, and choice are heard by the Social Worker and TDM members and are incorporated into the case plan.
9. When accompanying parent or caregiver to meetings with other agency representatives and community service providers (i.e., TDM, meetings with social worker or school personnel), the Family Partner will assist the parent or caregiver in explaining their perspective, culture, and beliefs in a way that increases understanding by others.
10. Share information with the Social Worker, TDM members, and other service providers about the parent or caregiver's experiences and perspective on being heard by them.
11. Actively participate as needed, by speaking up and through actions, to support the parent or caregiver's perspective during meetings (i.e., meetings with the Social Worker, TDMs).
12. Provide individualized, peer-to-peer support to parents or caregivers on a regular basis, according to the identified needs of their family.
13. Attend and participate in TDMs, meetings with the Social Worker, and other relevant meetings as requested by the parent or caregiver.
14. Develop plans/strategies with parent or caregiver to ensure the concerns of their family are heard and understood.
15. Under the supervision and guidance of the Family Partner Supervisor, support and/or implement proactive responses to family in crisis, both during and after business hours as designated in the safety/crisis plan.
16. Connect the parent or caregiver and other family members with identified community resources; assist in introducing and engaging the family with the community resource, ensuring they can access the service after transition.

17. Discuss with the parent or caregiver and other family members the effectiveness of the interventions. Support the parent or caregiver in communicating information regularly to their Social Worker about the effectiveness of the interventions/process related to the case plan.
18. Work with parent or caregiver and other family members to continue to address the unmet needs initially discussed with the Social Worker.
19. Recognize, celebrate, and document family strengths and successes.

III. Transition Skills

1. Help introduce the transition phase of Family Partner services to the family.
2. Discuss the transition planning phase with the family related to their culture and beliefs, their vision, and their identified needs.
3. Practice implementation and rehearse crisis responses with the family.
4. Continue to assist the family in accessing needed resources/supports.
5. Celebrate the family accomplishments with a Transition/Family Achievement Portfolio and event that highlights their progress, always considering the family's culture.

Duties to Implement Shared Leadership® Activities at the Policy and Program Development Level

The Family Partner role is also intended to implement parent/caregiver and professional partnership activities at the policy and program levels. The Family Partner will work in shared leadership® with DCFS and the Family Partner Program management staff in all aspects of the program planning, implementation, and evaluation on the expansion of the Family Partner Program, including co-training of new Family Partners. In addition, this position will also work in shared leadership® with the DCFS management to ensure the family perspective is incorporated into all policy and administrative decisions. Duties will include representation on decision-making bodies or committees established to implement strategies identified in the System Improvement Plan to improve the child welfare system.

Adapted from: Parents Anonymous (2011). Sample family partner role description (parent/caregiver). Retrieved from: https://www.strengthening-families.org/cpec/leadershiptools/Sample%20Family%20Partner%20Role%20Description.pdf

Chapter 3
Recruiting and Selecting Parent Partner Program Staff

Overview

The success of a parent partner program depends on the skills and abilities of the parent partner coordinator and a pool of diverse and competent parent partners. Your manual should address the recruitment and selection policies and procedures, which begins with the identification of the **experiences, skills, qualities, and core competencies** you seek in a parent partner coordinator (see Sample 3.1) and in parent partners (see Samples 3.3 and 3.4).

The program's design team or steering committee can develop the interview process for the parent partner coordinator and the selection criteria. The interview and selection team for the program coordinator position may include key members of the program's design team and others who are knowledgeable about the program and needed services.

Recommended Program Manual Contents:

- Coordinator job qualifications*
- Parent partner job qualifications*
- Eligibility criteria*
- Recruitment and referral processes*
- Application processes and forms*
- Interview questions*
- Procedures for checking references
- Selection processes
- Procedures for hiring candidates with child abuse and criminal backgrounds*

* Samples provided

To identify a good pool of possible parent partner candidates, a program manager or coordinator can reach out for recommendations. Individuals who have direct experience with parents and who may be able to recommend individuals who successfully navigated the child welfare and juvenile court systems include child welfare workers, community service providers, and juvenile court personnel.

To aid in the process, programs may develop and include in their manuals the following standardized forms and related procedures:

- **Referral forms** (see Sample 3.5) to identify the nominee and describe why the nominee would be an effective parent partner
- **Application form** (see Sample 3.6) for parent partners to complete
- **Interview processes and questions** (see Samples 3.2 and 3.7)

Since potential parent partners have been involved in the child welfare system, they may appear in a child abuse registry and have a criminal record. While successful resolution of their problems is seen as beneficial for providing peer support, in most public agencies this type of background can create barriers to employment. Every jurisdiction will have to determine how it will handle this situation. Careful selection of parent partner candidates will be necessary, along with thorough reference checks and documentation that they have resolved their problems. Programs may need a letter from an agency administrator explaining the request to hire appropriate individuals who have a history of child abuse and/or criminal records to serve as parent partners (see Sample 3.8).

For more information on recruitment and selection, see Parent Partner Program Navigator Component 7.

TIPS FROM THE FIELD: Programs can provide potential parent partners with information and resources to enable them to do some self-screening and serious thinking about the job. For example, potential candidates can watch a series of short videos, including "What Does It Take to Be a Parent Partner?" and "Parent Partners: Personal Stories," available at:

https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/familyvideos/#parentsHelp

Guiding Considerations in Policy and Procedure Development

- The program must have standardized job descriptions that state the essential duties of the parent partner position and the parent partner coordinator position (or other supervisory role) as well as the experience, knowledge, skills, and qualities necessary for these positions.
- Successful parent partners in child welfare demonstrate a solid understanding of the parent partner role; skills to work effectively with other parents and child welfare staff; understanding of the power of shared lived experiences and an ability to nurture hope; general knowledge beyond their own experience of how the child welfare system works; and a caring, creative, and professional disposition.
- The program must establish a recruitment process for selecting a diverse pool of candidates who have had personal experience with child welfare and are willing and able to provide assistance to other parents.
- The program must establish a selection process that includes a screening process and an interview process that increases the likelihood of selecting the most appropriate candidates.

3.1 Sample: Parent Partner Coordinator Job Qualifications

The successful Parent Partner Coordinator candidate will possess the following qualifications:

- Experience directing and/or supervising the work of others or the ability and willingness to receive training in this role
- Experience as a parent partner or a similar role in providing peer-to-peer support and/or client advocacy
- Experience with the child welfare system, professionally and/or personally
- Ability to speak at public events and promote the program to a wide range of audiences

Education: Bachelor's Degree in human services or a related field from an accredited four year college with a minimum of two years of full time experience in child welfare services; or Master's Degree in human services or related field from an accredited college or university; or Associates of Arts Degree plus four years of full time experience in child welfare services. Candidates who do not meet education requirements but have a combination of education and experience will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Adapted from Children and Families of Iowa. (2014.) Parent partner coordinator job description.

Sample 3.2: Interview Questions for Hiring a Parent Partner Coordinator

Parent Partner Coordinator Interview Questions
(Scoring by competency area – 100 points possible)

1. Tell us what you know about the position and what it is about the position that interests you.
   (This may be asked for in written form as a writing sample; oral and written communication skills – 20 points)
2. What are the skills and background that qualify you for this position? Specifically, what is your experience and understanding of the child welfare system?
   (Knowledge of child welfare system – 15 points)
3. Families who have experienced the child welfare system can often feel powerless, angry, defensive, and lost. How do you envision the Partnership Program assisting families who might be feeling this way? What role would the parent partner play?
   (Understanding the program and parent partner's role – 15 points)
4. What strategies would you use to recruit parents to become parent partners? What support or training would they need to be successful parent partners?
   (Ability to recruit, train, and supervise parent partners – 10 points)
5. You and a parent partner are in a community meeting. During introductions, the parent partner begins sharing their personal story. She goes on at length about her negative experience with her social worker and the "system." What do you do in this situation?
   (Ability to handle difficult situations and supervise parent partners – 10 points)
6. How would you go about developing community resources for families? What would some of the resources be?
   (Knowledge of what resources are needed and ability to develop – 20 points)

7. Your parent partner is assigned to work with a family who speaks a language she does not know. She is unsure of how to work with this parent. How would you instruct her? How would you deal with this issue in general in the Partnership Program?
   (Ability to provide individual/system advocacy for families/children and awareness of need for cultural and linguistic diversity – 10 points)

Adapted from Children and Family Services. Contra Costa County, CA. (n.d.). Parent partner coordinator interview questions.

Sample 3.3: Eligibility Criteria for Parent Partners

Since peer-to-peer support is based on the shared experience of the parent client and a parent partner, parent partners must have experienced the child welfare system and understand the complex needs of families entering child welfare. Eligible candidates must demonstrate that they have resolved their own issues related to child welfare involvement and currently have healthy and stable family situations. Parent Partners must possess personal qualities that promote partnerships and professional conduct.

Experience with Child Welfare and Current Stability

- Candidates have a healthy and stable family situation with no current child welfare involvement for safety issues.
- Candidates' involvement with the child welfare agency has ended and they
  - Have been reunited with their children for at least 1 year, OR
  - Have had at least 1 year to resolve issues related to termination of parental rights or another permanency decision that did not involve reunification
- There is clear evidence that issues resulting from an out-of-home placement or termination of parental rights have been resolved and that the parent is in a place where he or she can provide effective peer support to others.
- Candidates who were noncustodial parents have had experience related to working with the child welfare system and are able to assist other noncustodial parents.
- Candidates whose cases involved substance disorders have been substance free for at least 1 year; some programs require 18 or 24 months of sustained sobriety.

Skills and Qualities

- Candidates have demonstrated personal qualities that promote collaboration and partnerships with the child welfare system such as integrity, good listening skills, ability to empathize, and a positive attitude.
- Candidates have demonstrated appropriate behaviors consistent with professional conduct and commit to sustain such professionalism at all times.
- Candidates are comfortable in sharing their own child welfare experience but have insight to share it only when it can help the other parent.
- Candidates have demonstrated commitment to the safety and well-being of children and are willing to embrace the mission of the agency.
- Candidates understand the requirements of a mandated reporter of child abuse and neglect.

Adapted from Capacity Building Center for States. (2016.) *Parent partner program navigator: Designing and implementing parent partner programs in child welfare.*

Sample 3.4: Core Competencies for Parent Partners

Desired Parent Partner Core Competencies

- **Communication** – expressing oneself and listening/responding to others
  - Uses own experiences as a guide to help families in similar situations
  - Tells personal story effectively
  - Uses active listening techniques
  - Describes barriers/roadblocks to supportive communication
  - Identifies and supports advocacy skills in other families
- **Cultural proficiency and family dynamics** – recognizing and respecting diversity
  - Remains mindful of the needs of others
  - Respects the attitudes, choices, practices, and beliefs of others
  - Responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of people with sensitivity to their cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds
- **Navigation** – knowing programs and organizations and how to access them
  - Supports parents in understanding how the child welfare system works
  - Helps parents find and use resources and navigate systems of support
  - Assists families and community members in identifying formal and informal supports, resources, and systems available to them
  - Engages in grassroots level organizing
- **Decision-making and problem solving** – recognizing and working through a problem
  - Uses problem solving and decision-making processes to help others work through issues
  - Utilizes personal experience to help other families learn to solve problems and make decisions
- **Partnerships and relationships** – collaborating for change
  - Develops and maintains relationships
  - Networks with peers and associates to build constructive and supportive relationships
  - Distinguishes internal values from collective values and sees the big picture

Adapted from Reynolds, M.C., & St. John, J. (2012.) *Core competencies of family leaders: A guide for families and organizations.* Missouri Family to Family Resource Center, University of Missouri-Kansas City Institute for Human Development.

Sample 3.5: Parent Partner Nomination Referral Form

(Note: The following form is for illustration purposes and is not a fillable format.)

Parent Partner Nomination Referral Form

Child Welfare Services is recruiting parents to be part of the Partnership Program. Please nominate a family member with whom you have worked in Child Welfare Services (CWS), who has made the necessary life changes in order to have their children returned to their care (or remain in their care). Your nominee's CWS case must be closed. Nominees will be screened, including background checks of recent activities. Training and support will be provided for them. Parents will receive financial compensation for their work.

An effective child welfare system of care reflects collaboration with parents. By engaging families to share their experience in the system, we help break down barriers, empower families, and inform the system of practical ways to provide meaningful services for children and families. Parent Partners are life-trained paraprofessionals who have successfully navigated the child welfare system. They offer their knowledge and experience by supporting and guiding parents currently involved in the system, attending meetings and court with parents, accessing resources, and navigating systems. They can also be the "family voice" as participants on various committees and workgroups.

Name of person making nomination: _____ ext:_____

Name of nominee: _____

Address: _____

Telephone, e-mail: _____

Briefly explain the nominee's involvement with CWS and why you think that person would be a successful Parent Partner:

_____

_____

When was your nominee's child welfare case closed? _____

Does your nominee know that you are submitting his/her name as a Parent Partner candidate? _____

Please share any additional relevant information: _____

_____

Please return this nomination form to the Parent Partner Coordinator.

Adapted from Department of Human Services, Jefferson County, CO. (n.d.). Welcome to Jefferson County's parent partner program.

Sample 3.6: Application for Parent Partner Position

(Note: The following form is for illustration purposes and is not a fillable format.)

Name_____

Address_____

Home Phone_____ Cell Phone_____ Email_____

Male____ Female_____ Birthdate_____

Person to notify in case of emergency_____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone_____

List paid and volunteer jobs in the past five years:

What skills did you develop as a result of the jobs listed above?

Previous involvement with child protection, juvenile court and alcohol and other drug use:

Because of the qualifications necessary for a Parent Partner, failure to answer the following questions may affect consideration given to your application. Having a criminal record or being on the child abuse registry may not disqualify you from consideration.

When and why were you involved with the child welfare system?

Who was your child welfare worker? Will you sign a release that will allow us to contact this person?

☐ Yes ☐ No Name_____ Phone_____

Agency_____

Are you involved in recovery from alcohol and/or other drugs abuse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Your sobriety anniversary date_____ Total years_____

Did you complete formal chemical dependency inpatient or outpatient treatment? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what program and when did you complete it? _____

Will you sign a release to allow us to contact the above treatment program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you currently participating in a 12-step or other recovery group? ☐ Yes ☐ No

During your involvement with the child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drug systems, do you feel like you were treated fairly? ☐ Yes ☐ No Please explain:

Why do you want to become a Parent Partner?

What other skills and expertise will you bring to the Parent Partner position?

Will you be willing to serve at least two years as a Parent Partner? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please list three references:

(1) Name_____

Address_____

Phone_____ Relationship_____

(2) Name_____

Address_____

Phone_____ Relationship_____

(3) Name_____

Address_____

Phone_____ Relationship_____

In order to promote the integrity of the program, ensure confidentiality is maintained, and protect the safety of program staff and those families you will be in contact with, we will conduct a background check, including criminal and child maltreatment records checks. Are you willing to allow us to conduct this background check on you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I submit the statements on this application are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that falsification on this application can disqualify me from consideration or can result in dismissal at a later time.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Adapted from Minnesota Supreme Court and Minnesota Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *A handbook: Framework to forming a parent partner network.*

Sample 3.7: Parent Partner Interview Process and Questions

Writing Sample

Obtaining a writing sample is part of the interview. Before the interview, place the candidate in a quiet room and ask her or him to provide a written answer to the following questions: "What do you know about the parent partner position and the Partnership Program? What interests you about the position?"

Interview Questions

Score the answer to each question using a scale of one to five, with "1" indicating the applicant has difficulty or inexperience with the concept, and "5" indicating the applicant has a mature and well thought out grasp of the concept.

1. Why do you want to serve as a parent partner and what do you hope to gain from your participation? (score) _____
2. What experiences have you had that might help you understand the different backgrounds and needs of families in the child welfare, juvenile court, and alcohol and other drugs systems? (score) _____
3. What do you think government's role should be in the protection of children? (score) _____
4. What responsibilities, if any, do communities and neighborhoods have to protect children? (score) _____
5. If you were introducing a new social worker to working in your community, how would you describe the community and the families living there that he or she will serve? (score)_____
6. What do you think causes child abuse and neglect? What recommendations might you make to prevent it? (score) _____
7. Please describe a recent situation when you worked as a member of a team. Tell us what you liked and did not like about it. (score)_____

(Possible total 35 points) TOTAL SCORE: _____

Other Questions (These questions are not scored.)

1. Is there anything else about your background or experiences that you have not mentioned and we should know about in considering you for this position?
2. Have you ever been convicted of any of the following: Child abuse crimes, murder, manslaughter, felony level assault or any assault crime, kidnapping, arson, criminal sexual conduct or prostitution?
3. We will be contacting your references that you listed. Are there any changes?
4. If chosen as a parent partner, are you able and willing to make an initial commitment of one year?
5. Are you willing to participate in initial and ongoing training?
6. Will you agree to maintain confidentiality?
7. Do you have any questions?

Adapted from Minnesota Supreme Court and Minnesota Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *A handbook: Framework to forming a parent partner network.*

Sample 3.8: Sample Letter Explaining Hire of Person with Child Abuse and Criminal Background

To Whom It May Concern:

The Parent Partner Approach promotes innovative change in social work practice. It is unique because Parent Partners are selected based on their interpersonal skills and proven abilities to overcome obstacles. Parent Partners have been involved with the child welfare services (CWS) agency due to child protection issues. At one time, their children were removed from their primary care and have since been successfully reunified or child protection issues have been resolved.

Parent Partners provide support to parents who are working toward reunification with their children who are in foster or kinship care. Parent Partners demonstrate advocacy and effective communication, while holding families accountable in meeting their case plan goals. Parent Partners facilitate trainings and collaborate with child welfare professionals.

Many Parent Partners have had personal experience with domestic violence, substance abuse, and/or mental health issues. It is these experiences that make Parent Partners so beneficial to families who are currently receiving CWS services due to child protection issues. Some Parent Partners have demonstrated leadership skills and/or have completed additional education to be eligible to serve as site coordinators and service area coordinators.

Most of the individuals involved in providing services are on the child abuse registry and may have criminal records. Their work is with parents working toward reunification; they do not work directly with children. Because of the unique nature of this program, these individuals have been approved to provide Parent Partner services in the state's Parent Partner program. These same individuals are considered eligible to be hired or contracted as Parent Partners and/or Coordinators.

With the efforts of these individuals, the Parent Partner Approach has had a positive impact on hundreds of families during the initial program years. That impact is expected to continue to grow as implementation continues and increases.

Sincerely yours,

Name, Title

Adapted from Iowa Department of Human Services. (2013). Letter.

Chapter 4
Training Parent Partners and Supporting Professional Development

Overview

Training and professional development are essential to build knowledge, skills, and competencies needed by parent partners to effectively mentor other parents in child welfare and provide the family voice at the agency/system level. Your manual should address policies and procedures for:

- **Initial core training** — before a parent partner begins peer-to-peer work (see Sample 4.1)
- **Supplemental training** — within the first year of employment
- **Ongoing training and professional development** — over time to support growth and development (see Sample 4.2)

Recommended Program Manual Contents:

- Training requirements*
- Ongoing professional development opportunities*

* Samples provided

Initial core trainings typically address the peer-to-peer process, the mandates and operation of the child welfare system, the rights and responsibilities of parents involved in child welfare, and the importance of confidentiality. Additional core and supplemental training may focus on: (1) building a better understanding of specific issues that families are experiencing (e.g., substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health); (2) increasing knowledge of child welfare agency and court processes; and (3) building skills to be an effective parent partner and family leader (e.g., engagement skills, presentation and communication skills, crisis management, and self-care). Other topics may be added to reflect specific processes and priorities of the agency and parent partner program.

For more information, see Parent Partner Program Navigator Component 9.

Guiding Considerations in Policy and Procedure Development

- In order to serve in their peer support roles, parent partners need comprehensive training in child welfare topics.
- Training should reflect a strengths-based approach that engages parent partners in recognizing their individual strengths and building on their personal experience in the child welfare system.
- Parent partners need to learn to use their personal experience to help other parents and families address their needs.
- Confidentiality is of great importance in child welfare services, and parent partners must be provided thorough training about confidentiality matters.
- Parent partners are mandated reporters and should be trained on State reporting laws and agency protocols regarding the safety of children.

Sample 4.1: Required Training Outline

The first five trainings (*) are required before a new Parent Partner can begin one-on-one mentoring.

Initial Training

1. Understanding the Child Welfare Process *

This training consists of three sessions designed to familiarize new Parent Partners with a greater understanding of the child welfare process. It is also designed to provide participants with tools and skills to assist parents involved with the child welfare system to move through the system more successfully.

The goal is to teach a strengths-based approach by engaging participants in recognizing their own individual and family strengths, and to support them in recognizing the individual and family strengths of those families and children they will be assisting.

Training objectives:

- Provide new Parent Partners with a better understanding of the Partnership Program and its approach to engaging parents.
- Introduce participants to the feelings and experiences CWS workers, Care Providers, Foster Parents, Juvenile Court Attorneys and others in the Child Welfare system have when children are removed from their parents' care and custody.
- Develop a foundation for a working relationship between new Parent Partners and Child Welfare providers.
- Familiarize participants with the kinds of feelings Parents may have over time about separation from their children.
- Introduce participants to some of the tools and strategies that Parent Partners use in supporting parents involved with the Child Welfare System.
- Help participants think about how to help parents assess the benefits and consequences of participating in their case plans.
- Help participants to better assist parents in having effective case-related meetings.

2. Mandatory Reporting Training *

To be provided by a Child Protective Services Supervisor in Intake and Emergency Response Services with experience and knowledge of mandatory reporting procedures

Training participants will learn:

a. The history of mandated child abuse reporting laws and important legal definitions for multi-disciplinary teams, Safe Havens, etc.
b. Who is considered a mandatory reporter
c. The legal categories of child abuse
d. How a report is made. The difference between a mandatory reporter and a "permissive" or voluntary reporter
e. The three findings that are possible in a child abuse assessment: founded or substantiated, inconclusive, and unfounded or unsubstantiated

3. Boundaries and Safety Issues Training *

This training is to be provided by a CWS staff person or another qualified individual or group who has the appropriate combination of experience with and knowledge of basic boundaries, ethics, and safety issues in a professional atmosphere with special attention to children, families, domestic violence, substance use, mental health, etc.

Training ensures that participants will have the opportunity to learn the importance of appropriate boundaries to the working relationship, positive outcomes, and their own mental health.

a. Learn how to set and maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries between themselves and those they will mentor
b. Learn about types of potentially harmful dual relationships when working as a parent partner: Intimacy, Emotional/Dependency, Personal Benefit/Gain, etc.
c. Learn tips and methods to avoid falling into the above dual relationships
d. Define and discuss ethical behaviors of Parent Partners, including but not limited to: behavior in the working relationship, behavior when not acting as a Parent Partner, empowerment, dual relationships, confidentiality, honesty, self-disclosure, conflicts of interest
e. Learn about the importance of self-care
f. Discuss potential conflicts and resolve as a group
g. Gain awareness of consequences and/or responsibilities of unethical behavior

4. CWS 101 Training *

To be provided by CWS supervisors who have the appropriate combination of experience with and knowledge of county CWS practices, policies, and procedures

Training ensures that participants will have the opportunity to:

a. Gain an understanding of the CWS role
b. Articulate justifications for removal
c. Navigate through a case plan and other basic court documents
d. List the types of placements available to youth in CWS custody
e. Gain a general understanding of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and required federal outcomes that affects families
f. Articulate the intake process
g. Explain the types of court hearings, the roles of all parties in the process, closed hearings

5. Family Interaction[2] Overview Training *

To be provided by a qualified individual or group who has the appropriate combination of experience with and knowledge of family interaction plans, policies, and procedures

Training ensures that participants will have the opportunity to gain a clear understanding of a Family Interaction Plan, including:

a. The primary purpose of family interaction.
b. Goals of family interaction.
c. Knowledge of family interaction guidelines, including threats of maltreatment, child vulnerability, and protective capacities.
d. Safety assessment outcomes including unsafe, conditionally, and safe.

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[2] The primary purpose of family interaction is to maintain the parent-child relationship and other family attachments and to reduce the sense of abandonment that children experience at placement. Family interaction is a time to: enhance the parent's ability to adequately and appropriately care for and relate to the child; help the parent develop appropriate parenting behaviors; and identify and resolve problems before the child returns home.

Supplemental Training

The following supplemental trainings are required to be completed within one year of acceptance to the Partnership Program. Additional supplemental training may be provided as needed.

6. Domestic Violence (DV) 101 Training

To be provided by a qualified individual or group with an appropriate combination of experience working with and knowledge of DV issues

Training ensures that participants will have the opportunity to:

a. Learn dynamics of domestic violence: the Power and Control Wheel
b. Examine myths and stereotypes about victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and learn how those myths and stereotypes perpetuate domestic violence in our society
c. Learn about impact of domestic violence on children and parenting skills
d. Learn common techniques for working with domestic violence victims (interviewing skills, active listening, avoiding victim-blaming, etc.)
e. Learn about the impact of intervention on safety for victims of domestic violence and their children
f. Learn basic safety planning techniques for victims
g. Learn basic safety planning techniques for themselves when working in a home with known domestic violence issues
h. Learn how to examine one's own past or present experiences with domestic violence in order to ensure proper emotional boundaries and appropriate work with birth parents

7. Mental Health Training

To be provided by a qualified individual or group with an appropriate combination of experience working with and knowledge of mental health issues

Training ensures that participants will have the opportunity to:

a. Learn about the local mental health resources
b. Receive an overview of available mental health services
c. Understand what causes stress and depression
d. Distinguish the definition and kinds of depression (including but not limited to seasonal, post-partum, bereavement, clinical, bi-polar)
e. Know approved treatments for and signs and symptoms of various depressions
f. Learn facts about suicide and resources available for those struggling with thoughts of suicide
g. Know the environmental and sociological influences of mental health
h. Hear examples of how to help individuals with mental health issues and learn what not to say or do
i. Ask questions about suicide, depression, and mental health
j. Build their skills regarding mental health and suicide prevention in their area

8. Family Team Meeting (FTM) Overview

All Parent Partners will need an understanding and overview of FTM in order to mentor families. It is highly recommended, but not required, that all Parent Partners and the Partnership Coordinator attend a complete 18 or 21 hour Family Team Meeting training when possible.

To be provided by a qualified individual or group who has the appropriate combination of experience with and knowledge of FTM practice and purpose

Training ensures that participants will have the opportunity to learn the skills to:

a. Recognize all families have strengths
b. Treat all families with dignity and respect
c. Understand families can make well-informed decisions about keeping their children safe
d. Encourage and support families to make decisions and plans
e. Improve outcomes by involving families in the decision-making process
f. Use a strength-based approach instead of a deficit-based model
g. Produce positive solutions for change with a team approach
h. Be open and honest with the family and staff
i. Accept families' definition of their members, that may extend beyond the primary birth family
j. Meet the unique situations and needs of the families with individualized plans
k. Implement non-conventional and creative solutions
l. Respect if child abuse or child neglect are involved, the child welfare agency approves the plan based on safety, permanency, and stability for the children
m. Enhance family plans with FTMs throughout the life of the case

9. Cultural Competency Training

To be provided by a qualified individual or group who has the appropriate combination of experience with and knowledge of a particular cultural issue within or pertinent to the local communities, county, and state

Cultural competency trainings should not be limited to race, but can include ethnic background, religion, gender identity, sexual preference, economic status, single parenting, lack of natural and/or professional resources, extended family connections and other family dynamics, blindness, rural vs. urban living, etc.

10. Substance Abuse Training

To be provided by a qualified individual or group with an appropriate combination of experience working with and knowledge of substance abuse issues

Training ensures that participants will have the opportunity to:

a. Learn what addiction is
b. Differentiate between manifested addiction in men and women
c. Recognize a connection between substance abuse and mental illness
d. Identify the impact of substance use and abuse, and production of methamphetamines on children
e. Learn about effective treatment and recovery
f. Recognize readiness to change
g. Motivate parents into treatment and enhance treatment readiness
h. Support recovery and enhance treatment effectiveness

Adapted from Parents, Community Partnerships for Protecting Children, and Iowa Department of Human Services. (2014). *Iowa parent partner approach handbook: Governing philosophy, policy, & protocol*.

Sample 4.2: Policy and Procedures for Identifying Ongoing Training and Development

Ongoing Training Requirement:

Partnership Program staff are required to obtain 20 continuing education hours annually.

Identifying Training and Development Opportunities for the Partnership Program

The partnership coordinator will identify needed learning and growth opportunities for the full Partnership Program staff that will build on the new parent partner training provided during the first year of employment.

The Partnership Coordinator will review the child welfare social worker training events and, when appropriate, enroll Parent Partners in that training. Participation in that training will not only offer learning opportunities for the Parent Partners but also enhance the working partnership between Parent Partners and CWS social workers. This training can be provided through specific educational presentations at Partnership unit meetings, attendance at community education offerings, and various county and community events.

Identifying Training and Development Opportunities for Individual Parent Partners

The Partnership Coordinator, together with the Parent Partner, will identify learning needs and desired growth opportunities during Performance Evaluations. This will lead to an individual training plan for each Parent Partner. Both the Partnership Coordinator and the Parent Partner will have responsibility for identifying training and development opportunities, which may fulfill the training plan. Learning opportunities may be provided through the agency, another county or community agency, a local adult education institution, or other approved organization.

Chapter 5
Facilitating the Peer-to-Peer Support Process

Overview

The core of a parent partner program is the peer-to-peer support process and a trusting relationship between the parent partner and the parents. Because of the authority of the child welfare agency to place children in out-of-home care, parents may perceive their relationship with agency caseworkers as adversarial. Parent partners are often able to break through barriers and establish partnerships with parents that are not otherwise possible. The shared child welfare experience provides the basis for the parent partner to support the parent in dealing with the emotional trauma of involvement with child protective services and to explain what to expect over the course of a case.

Recommended Program Manual Contents:

- Identification of parents to receive support*
- Matching process*
- Initial contact process
- Peer support process
- Parent partners' responsibilities*
- Parents' responsibilities
- Parent partner support in court*
- Parent partner participation in family team meetings *
- Completion of services

* Samples provided

It is important that program administrators and parent partners develop a clear and shared understanding of the peer-to-peer support process. The program manual should walk through the key aspects of the peer-to-peer process, including the following. Some programs may want to use a visual diagram to illustrate (see Sample 5.1).

- **Identifying parents to receive support.** Programs must identify which parents entering the child welfare system will receive services and appropriate referral processes (see Sample 5.2). Selection of parents may reflect parents' needs, their willingness to work with the agency and a parent partner, the positive relationship with their children, and other factors.
- **Matching parents and parent partners.** Matching is the careful process of identifying which available parent partner can best provide the support needed by each parent entering the program. Typically, the matching process takes into account the availability and skill sets of parent partners; cultural backgrounds (e.g., parents supporting other parents with similar ethnic backgrounds and native languages); gender considerations (e.g., fathers helping other fathers); parents' needs and preferences; and shared experiences. Matching may also take into consideration whether parents are likely to know one another from their community, a recovery program, or otherwise. It may be less feasible in small or rural locations to exclude partnerships when partners and parents know each other (see Sample 5.3).

TIPS FROM THE FIELD: A program brochure with a clear, concise program description and eye-catching graphics can help attract prospective parents and also promote referrals among child welfare staff and service providers. Printed brochures lend a sense of credibility to the parent partner program.

- **Establishing the first contact.** Programs may chose different approaches for making the first contact between the parent partner and the parent. Regardless of mode (e.g., by telephone or in person), the first contact should not be a surprise to the parent. First contacts may occur at various locations and points in the case process—at a meeting soon after a child's removal from the home, at the first court proceeding, or at the first famiy team meeting. Following the first contact, parent partners will work to establish a trusting relationship with parents.
- **Providing ongoing peer support activities**. Parent partners support parents in varied ways and must determine how they will work together to meet parents' needs and goals. Support may include encouragement, guidance on child welfare processes; hands-on assistance (e.g., help finding safe housing or conducting a job search), and help with developing support networks. Programs may differ in which services and supports are allowable. The program must provide clear guidance to the parent partner and the parent about what partners may and may not do in their roles (see Sample 5.4).
- **Offering support in specialized settings.** Parent partners may offer support to parents in selected agency and court processes, such as:
  - **Court proceedings**. Parent partners help parents understand what to expect in court and sometimes attend court hearings to offer emotional support. Program manuals should specify parent partner roles and what is and is not acceptable in supporting parents in court proceedings (see Sample 5.5).
  - **Family team meetings.** Parent partners may be included in team meetings related to making case plans and decisions. These meetings vary slightly by approach and are known by many names, including family group decision-making, family team meetings, child and family team meetings, team decision-making, and case planning conferences. At these meetings, parents, children and youth, the social worker, and formal and informal supports come together to develop a service plan. Program manuals should specify how the parent partners can contribute to such meetings (see Sample 5.6).
- **Completing parent partner program services.** Programs need to develop guidance for proper closure of program services. This may include policies for ending services when either the parent or the parent partner decides that the match is not working. It also should include policies and procecures for ending program services when a child welfare case is closed. Programs need to be clear on whether it is appropriate for parent partners to continue to maintain contact with a parent as part of their support network once official peer-to-peer services have ended.

See also Parent Partner Program Navigator Components 10, 11, and 12.

Guiding Considerations in Policy and Procedure Development

- Parent partner programs provide interventions based on a trusting relationship between a parent partner and a parent.
- Parent partners are matched carefully with parents to maximize the peer support intervention.
- Parents and all stakeholders should understand the voluntary nature of the parent partner program.
- Parent partner programs must decide and document which support services parent partners can provide to parents.
- Parent partners, often because of their own cultural experiences, are able to provide specialized support and liaison services to parents of similar backgrounds and needs.
- Parent partners may provide significant support to parents in preparing them for and accompanying them to court, but it should be made clear that parent partners do not provide legal advice nor do they provide court testimony.
- Parent partners may participate in family group decision-making to support the parents' voice and choices in case-related decisions.

Sample 5.1: Diagram of Peer-to-Peer Support Processes

Identifying Families to Receive Services

- Referrals by caseworkers
- Voluntary participation

Matching Parents with Parent Partners

- Matching of trained parent partners with experience in child welfare with other parents
- Culture and gender considerations

Providing Peer-to-Peer Support

- Initial contact and relationship building
- Encouragement and emotional support
- Mentoring and modeling
- Hands-on assistance
- Support in court and family team meetings

Completing Program Services

- Documentation of services and evaluation
- Potential ongoing support as part of social network

Sample 5.2: Policy Statement for Identifying Parents Who Will Receive Parent Partner Support

Parent clients are selected on the basis of their needs, their willingness to work with a parent partner, and their desire to maintain a positive relationship with their children. Participation is voluntary.

Referrals:

1. Most parents will be referred by a child welfare services social worker. The social worker will share information about the program with the parent. The social worker will ask if the parent is interested in meeting a parent partner and receiving additional support. As appropriate, the social worker may ask a parent partner to reach out to the parent. If the parent is interested in the program, the social worker will complete a program referral form.
2. Judges, court personnel, and county and community service providers may refer parents to the parent partner program.
3. A parent may self-refer.

Sample 5.3: Sample Considerations for the Matching Process

Parent partners and parents should be carefully matched in order to maximize peer support. Considerations for matching parent partners with parents include the following:

- Matches will generally be with parents of the same gender.*
- The parent partner and parent will have no previous knowledge of one another.
- As possible, parent partners and parents will be matched to reflect shared experiences, such as substance abuse or domestic violence.
- Matching will consider the role of the parent partner and the parent in each experience; a victim of domestic violence will not be matched with a domestic violence perpetrator, nor will a noncustodial parent be partnered with a primary caregiver.
- As possible, parent partners and parents will be matched to reflect shared characteristics, such as cultural background and language.
- If both of the child's parents are actively involved in child welfare services, each parent will be assigned a parent partner, even if both live in the same home.
- Matching will reflect the parent partner's strengths, skills, and abilities as well as triggers and comfort level in addressing various issues (e.g., sexual abuse).

* In cases where cross-gender matches are made, the program will implement procedures to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained (e.g., meeting only at a public office, setting clear expectations for professional behavior, and establishing processes for reporting concerns.)

Adapted from Iowa Department of Human Services. (2013). *Iowa parent partner coordinator practice guide.*

Sample 5.4: Parent Partner Responsibilities

Parent partners can:

- Meet parents "where they are at" and practice compassion and empathy
- Take time to build trust by listening to the parent with an unconditional positive regard
- Provide support as a parent goes through what can be a very confusing and fearful time with the child protection system
- Teach parents how to build an effective working relationship with their social worker
- Educate parents about child welfare and court requirements and terminology
- Accompany parents to court hearings and meetings with the child welfare worker (if requested by the parent)
- Model and support success and recovery from alcohol and other drugs, mental health, domestic violence, or other problems
- Help other parents stay accountable for their recovery and well-being
- Meet with parent(s) at least once a week to celebrate successes, listen, and provide other support

Parent partners cannot:

- Give legal advice
- "Take sides"
- Make formal written or verbal reports
- Conduct visitation or custody evaluations
- Supervise visitation between parents and their children
- Identify services for families' case plans, e.g., psychological evaluations or determinations of what kind of substance abuse intervention is required
- Make recommendations in the child welfare case planning process, unless specifically asked by the worker to do so

Adapted from Minnesota Supreme Court and Minnesota Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *A handbook: Framework to forming a parent partner network.*

Sample 5.5: Parent Partners' Role in Court

Parent partners may participate in the court process by attending court hearings with a parent to offer support. A parent partner typically does not actively participate in the court process. The parent partner does not write court reports or provide court testimony.*

Parent partners can help prepare parents for court hearings by:

- Describing for the parent the type of hearing and what it will determine, where it will be, who may attend and what their role is, and how the hearing fits on the timeline of the family's case
- Providing guidance about the formal court environment, how to dress (e.g., no sunglasses or hats) and expected behaviors (e.g., turning off cell phones, no bringing in any food or beverages, no chewing gum)
- Encouraging the parent to communicate with their attorney, particularly about placement options that the parent wants the court to consider or barriers to attending court-ordered services (such as fear of losing one's job)

- Asking parents their preference for the parent partners' support (go into the courtroom with them or stay outside and wait)
- Discussing what expectations and fears the parent has about the hearing
- Coaching parents on how to ask their questions and who to ask
- Setting up a plan, if necessary, to help the family deal with unmet expectations
- Providing written information, as available, on the court process for parents' reference

Parent partners should follow the following guidelines when accompanying parents to court:

- Arrive early and review preparation with parents
- Sit in the back of the room, remain quiet, and do not attempt to communicate with their match or anyone else during the proceedings
- Write down the verbal court orders to review and discuss with a parent before they receive a court order document
- Find a private place to talk to the parent after the hearing (remember that confidentiality can easily be breached by hallway conversations)

* If a parent partner receives a subpoena to appear in court, the parent partner must notify the parent partner coordinator immediately. The parent partner will then consult with the program's legal counsel.

Adapted from Iowa Department of Human Services. (2013). *Iowa parent partner coordinator practice guide*.

Sample 5.6: Parent Partners and Family Team Meetings to Make Case-Related Decisions

If requested by the parent client, the parent partner will accompany the parent during family team meetings. Parent partners may provide the following support related to family team meetings:

- Meet with parents before the meeting to explain the meeting process so that the parent knows what to expect and the significance of decisions to be made
- Teach parents how to participate constructively in the meeting and encourage parent to express him/herself
- Act as a "translator" of information so that parent understands terminology
- Explain what kind of information is being sought and help the parent be prepared to contribute that information
- Explain the possible roles the parent partner can play and ask the parent what kind of support he/she would like
- Help parents identify whether there are relatives or friends who can attend the meeting in a support and assistance role
- Take notes and review the notes with the parent after the meeting
- Help connect the parents with resources

Chapter 6
Supervising and Supporting Parent Partners

Overview

To support parent partners in their roles, they must be provided with supervision and support that is structured, consistent, responsive, and individualized. The parent partner program is intended to support both parents—the parent client and the parent partner. As the parent partner mentors the parent, the parent partner is growing personally and developing professional skills. Supervision provides the parent partner an opportunity for self-reflection and personal accountability.

Recommended Program Manual Contents:

- **Supervisory structure and responsibilities***
- **Policies and procedures to address relapse prevention and intervention for parent partners***
- **Policies and procedures to address parent relapse and reporting of safety concerns***

* Samples provided

Your parent partner program manual should outline the supervision to be provided to parent partners to guide them in taking on peer mentoring and parent advocacy roles and to ensure self-care. Supervision of parent partners is generally the responsibility of a parent partner coordinator and may also involve a mental health clinician or other agency staff. Your program manual should include a description of your program's supervisory structure and related responsibilities (see Sample 6.1).

One specific area for attention is the supervisor's role in relapse prevention and intervention for parent partners. The coordinator must recognize and build supports that reflect awareness that parent partners have a prior history of a behavior that warranted the intervention of a child welfare agency and that they are often paired with parents with similar behaviors (e.g., substance abuse). Your manual should include policies and procedures that reflect recognition of potential relapse triggers and outline steps for prevention and intervention (see Sample 6.2).

Likewise, program manuals should address parent relapse. In addition to providing training on mandated reporting (discussed in Chapter 4), programs should have and communicate specific procedures for parent partners and supervisors when safety concerns arise (see Sample 6.3).

See also Parent Partner Program Navigator Component 15.

Guiding Considerations in Policy and Procedure Development

- The program must establish a clear supervision structure to appropriately guide and support parent partners.
- The program coordinator should complete the same supervision training as child welfare supervisors.
- Parent partners must receive regular, responsive, and individualized supervision to support them in all aspects of the work.
- Supervision should focus on work performance, life balance, and professional growth of parent partners.
- Parent partners and their coordinators must be alert to relapse triggers that might result from working with parents with problems similar to their own and address related issues through supervision.
- Programs must establish procedures to handle a parent partner's relapse.
- Parent partners are mandated reporters and should be trained on State laws and informed of agency protocols regarding the safety of children.

Sample 6.1: Supervisory Structure and Responsibilities

- The parent partner coordinator will supervise the parent partners.
  - Individual supervision: Parent partners will meet individually with the coordinator on a weekly basis.
  - Unit meetings/group supervision: The coordinator will hold unit meetings for group supervision purposes once a month.
- A mental health clinician who can address behavioral health issues will be contracted to provide monthly and as needed clinical supervision for parent partners.
- The coordinator will complete the supervision training program that is mandated for all child welfare supervisors and conduct supervision according to the model provided in that training.
- The coordinator will address supervision topics, including agency and program operations, professional conduct, reporting responsibilities, safety, confidentiality, privacy protocols, and documentation requirements.
- The coordinator will educate the parent partners on policies, procedures, and protocols and will monitor compliance to these.
- Both the coordinator and the parent partner are responsible for ensuring that they make themselves available for supervision sessions regularly. The coordinator ensures regular supervision and the parent partner prepares to use the supervision time responsibly and honestly.

Adapted from Iowa Department of Human Services. (2013). Iowa parent partner coordinator practice guide.

Sample 6.2: Parent Partner Relapse Prevention and Intervention

Protective Supports

The Parent Partner Program will support parent partners to increase their self-protective capacity and to know how to obtain assistance if intervention is necessary.

- The coordinator must be alert for red flags regarding how the parent partner is balancing the personal and professional roles.
- The coordinator must be aware of triggers and trauma that might be associated with working within the child welfare system.
- The coordinator must continually assess the parent partner and consider how to reduce the likelihood of placing the partner in a role that could be harmful or overwhelming.
- The coordinator and/or clinical supervisor and parent partners must work together to identify potential trauma triggers, and develop strategies to manage these triggers in the field. They also must identify self-care tools and coping strategies to manage the stress inherent in child welfare work.
- The coordinator should identify local specialists in the areas of mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence who can be consulted by parent partners in need.
- Training will be provided to parent partners on substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence and will address signs and symptoms to look for in both their parent clients and themselves.
- The coordinator may also establish a review team to address relapse situations, ensure that a safety plan is developed, and provide the parent partner with support.

Procedures for When Relapse Occurs

- All allegations of a parent partner involved in a relapse whether from correspondence, rumor, self-report, or child abuse intake will be reported immediately to the parent partner coordinator.
- The parent partner will be suspended from all parent partner activities until the allegation has been resolved. All families that the parent partner is working with will be reassigned immediately.
- The parent partner coordinator and the program manager will meet immediately, within a 24-hour period, to discuss whether or not a child protective services referral needs to be made and/or determine other appropriate referrals. If a child protective referral needs to be made, the report will come from the parties directly impacted by the allegation.
- The coordinator and manager will recommend that the case be sent out of the jurisdiction and the assessment be locked to protect the privacy of the parent partner.
- The coordinator will allow the child protective services process to begin before providing additional supports to the parent partner. After the child protective services worker has made contact, the coordinator will support the protective services process, and the parent partner, too.
- If the allegation is unconfirmed, a review of the plan will be conducted by the parent partner coordinator, program manager, and an appropriate behavioral health expert to determine when/if a parent partner may resume parent partner activities and mentoring families.

Adapted from Children & Families of Iowa. (2012). Iowa Des Moines service area parent partner practice model.

Sample 6.3: Policies and Procedures for Child Safety

Children's safety is the child welfare agency's and parent partner program's first priority. While parent partners must ally themselves with the parent clients, that alliance cannot interfere with protecting children from harm caused by their parents.

- Parent partners must know State reporting laws and agency protocols for making a report.
- If a parent partner knows (observed or reported) that a parent he or she is working with has engaged in a concerning behavior that might risk their child's safety and/or their case plan, the parent partner will respond according to the situation.
- If the child is present in the home or there is imminent danger to the child, the parent partner will work with the coordinator to make a child abuse referral.
- If the child is not present, and there is still a potential safety issue when the child returns home, the social worker will be informed.
- The parent partner will encourage the parent to be accountable by self-reporting to his/her social worker and support the parent in doing so. If the parent does not, the parent partner will inform the parent of the parent partner's requirement to report.
- If a parent partner has a safety concern about a parent, the parent partner will immediately inform the parent partner coordinator to determine the appropriate next steps and to ensure compliance with mandatory state reporting laws.
- Parent partners must be assured that they will have the support of the coordinator in addressing safety concerns.

Adapted from Children & Families of Iowa. (2012). Iowa Des Moines service area parent partner practice model.

Chapter 7
Compensating Parent Partners

Overview

Parent partners must be compensated and reimbursed in a manner that recognizes their valued contributions as peer mentors and respected participants in agency activities.

Compensation may reflect hourly rates as well as specified benefits and reimbursement for mileage, phone use, and other expenses directly related to providing support to parents. Some parent partners provide their services to clients as independent contractors and are compensated according to the terms set out in their contract. Contracted parent partners typically will need to complete an invoice, along with required proof of their claim for payment.

Recommended Program Manual Contents:

- **Compensation policies**
- **Timesheet and/or invoice procedures**
- **Independent contractor contract* (if applicable)**

* Samples provided

Program manuals should present compensation policies as established by the agency and related procedures for submitting timesheets or invoices, as applicable. This section's samples includes a sample contract that describes the services an independent contractor parent partner will be paid for and under what terms (see Sample 7.1).

See also Parent Partner Program Navigator Component 17.

Guiding Considerations in Policy and Procedure Development

- Parent partners provide a valuable service and deserve fair compensation.
- Compensation for parent partners should be consistent with fair market rates for similar services in the program area.
- Offering progressive compensation rates rewards seasoned and experienced parent partners.

Sample 7.1: Parent Partner Independent Contractor Agreement

(Note: The following agreement is for illustration purposes and is not a fillable format.)

Parent Partner

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR AGREEMENT

This agreement is entered into between the [Name of Agency] (hereinafter referred to as the Agency), a non-profit social services organization, and the person named below (hereinafter referred to as the Contractor) on the date entered below.

Please **PRINT** all information clearly.

Date of Contract: _____

_____

Last Name Middle First

_____

Address City State Zip Code

WHEREAS, the Agency is a non-profit corporation that provides programs for children and families dealing with poverty, mental illness, addiction, relationship issues and family turmoil, the Agency is contracted to administer the Parent Partner Services provided by the State;

WHEREAS, the Agency desires to utilize independent contractors to provide services;

WHEREAS, Independent Contractor desires to perform the duties mm/dd/yyyy to mm/dd/yyyy,

IT IS AGREED BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Relationship of Parties**. The relationship between the parties shall not be that of employer and employee but rather that of an Independent Contractor. The Independent Contractor shall perform the duties of **Parent Partner** (the Services) in a manner consistent with all federal, state and local laws and regulations. Independent Contractor shall choose the time and manner for performing the Services. Independent Contractor is required to have a vehicle or access to a vehicle to perform the Services, as well as telephone access. Independent Contractor is responsible for the equipment required to perform the Services and for the cost of the equipment. Independent Contractor agrees to maintain confidentiality regarding the information provided by the Agency's clients to Independent Contractor while performing the Services.

2. **Compensation**. Independent Contractor will receive payment as follows:

   Reimbursement for services per 15-day time frame

6 hours and up	$XX.00 per family
4 hours – 5.9 hours	$XX.00 per family
3.9 hours and under	$XX.00 per family

Time spent for attending meetings, presentations, etc. - $XX.00 an hour
Phone usage reimbursement at $XX.00 per month.
Mileage outside of the metro area is reimbursed at $.XX per mile (the Federal Standard Mileage Rate).

3. **Contractor Services.** The Independent Contractor agrees to provide the following services under this agreement.

a. Attend and participate in offered trainings if Independent Contractor determines it is necessary in order to remain current on best practices and requirements of Parent Partner programs.
b. Attend family team meetings and other activities as requested by the parent client.
c. Represent Parent Partners professionally both with families and in the community.
d. Complete paperwork in an accurate, thorough, and timely manner.
e. Assist in recruitment of parents to serve as Parent Partners.
f. Collaborate and communicate with the Parent Partner Coordinator to ensure program needs are met.

4. **Training**. The Agency will offer training in which Independent Contractor may participate. The training is a resource for Independent Contractor to assist in maintaining performance standards as required by the State.

[Note to reader: The remaining contract language regarding taxes; term and default; notice of default/ termination; immediate termination; defend, indemnify and hold harmless/ insurance; and non-exclusivity will include your agency's standard language for agreements with Independent Contractors.]

Adapted from Children & Families of Iowa. (n.d.). Parent partner independent contractor agreement.

Chapter 8
Collecting and Using Data

Overview

Given the importance of evaluation and strategic use of data to program improvement and accountability efforts, the program manual should outline policies and procedures related to data collection and use.

Parent partner programs should collect data from the start of services and continuously after for the following uses:

- To align program services with parents' needs
- To assess whether the program is meeting its desired goals and objectives
- To assess fidelity to a program model
- To evaluate the program's effectiveness and identify what is working well and where improvement is needed
- To demonstrate outcomes to meet Federal, State, and grant requirements

Recommended Program Manual Contents:

- **Tracking parent partner activities and performance (procedures and forms)***
- **Collecting data to assess program outcomes and areas for improvement (procedures and forms)***

* Samples provided

TIPS FROM THE FIELD: To gain insight into program successes and areas for improvement, some parent partner programs hold case practice reviews. These may incorporate peer teams and focus groups.

Parent partner programs can work collaboratively with agency data staff, local universities, or national capacity building centers to determine data collection needs and develop forms related to:

- Tracking parent partner activities and performance
- Assessing program outcomes
- Releasing confidential information

The following table summarizes a list of potential data collection processes and forms, the purpose of the form, who completes the form, and when. Samples of each of these forms and accompanying instructions are provided in the chapter samples section. These forms are included for illustrative purposes. While these forms may provide ideas for the types of questions to ask, programs should tailor new forms for their own program's use.

See also Parent Partner Program Navigator Component 18.

Table of Potential Data Forms

Form Title	Purpose	Who Completes the Form	When	Sample Number
Parent Profile (Referral and Intake)	To collect general intake information needed by the parent partner program to provide support for the parent	Referral agency; coordinator or parent partner	Program entry	8.1
Family Self-Assessment (Entry)	To find out where the parent/family is in terms of program needs and services when they first become involved with the parent partner program	Parent partner with parent	Program entry	8.2
Family Self-Assessment (Exit)	To assess a family member's progress in meeting their needs based on individual and program goals	Parent partner with parent	Program exit	8.3
Fidelity Checklist & Family Outcomes	To ensure implementation and consistency of parent partner program processes/ activities and to assess resulting changes	Parent partner with coordinator	Program exit	8.4
Parent Feedback (Exit)	To assess parent partner activities in meeting family needs	Parent	Program exit	8.5
Parent Partner Monthly Activity Tracking Form	To track individual activities of each parent partner to enable reporting program activities	Parent partner	Each month	8.6

Guiding Considerations in Policy and Procedure Development

- Each program must determine a method for tracking and regularly collecting information regarding the activities and performance of parent partners.
- Collected data is valuable for identifying a program's successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.
- Collected data is valuable for identifying and documenting the meaningful benefits and outcomes of a parent partner program.

Sample 8.1: Parent Profile (Referral/Intake) Form

Parent Profile (Referral/Intake) Form Instructions

Purpose:
To collect general intake information needed by the Parent Partner Program to provide support for the parent.

Who completes form?

- Referring person completes as much as possible, then forwards to the Coordinator via e-mail or hard copy.
- Coordinator and/or Parent Partner meet with parent to complete fully.

What to do with form?

- This CONFIDENTIAL form is handled by the Coordinator and/or Parent Partner and kept in the individual's folder.

How is the information used?

- To determine whether or a not an individual will be accepted into the program.
- To determine a Parent Partner match.

(Note: The following form is for illustration purposes and is not a fillable format.)

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014). *Iowa parent partners forms guide.*

PARENT PARTNER PROGRAM - PARENT PROFILE
REFERRAL AND INTAKE FORM

REFERRAL INFORMATION

Person Making Referral: _____ Date of Referral: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Referral agency: ☐ DHS ☐ Self ☐ Other: _____

Does the family know a referral is being made? ☐ Yes ☐ No Release signed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Reason for referral:_____

Has the family attended a Pre-Removal Conference (PRC)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Date of PRC (if different from referral): _____ Time of PRC: _____

Current concerns: ☐ Domestic Violence ☐ Substance Abuse ☐ Mental Health—Parent
☐ Housing ☐ Physical Abuse ☐ Mental Health—Child(ren)
☐ Child(ren) Supervision ☐ Sexual Abuse ☐ Other_____

DHS Worker (if different from 'Person Making Referral'):_____

Email Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

PARENT INFORMATION

Referred Parent Name (Last, First): _____ ☐ Mother ☐ Father

Parent ID#: _____ D.O.B. ____/____/_____ Youngest Child ID#: _____

Primary Phone Number: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Current Address: _____

(Street Address, City, State, Zip Code)

County_____ Email Address: _____

FAMILY INFORMATION

Other Parent Name (Last, First): _____ ☐ Mother ☐ Father

Has this parent been referred to the PP program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does this parent share custody of children? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other

Explain:_____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Have the children been removed from the home? ☐ No ☐ Yes Date of removal:_____

Child(ren) placement information_____

Has this family had prior involvement with DHS? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, when & why?_____

Date of next FTM:_____ Time:_____ Location:_____

Date of next court date:_____ Time: _____ Location:_____

Full Name of Family Member	Relationship to Parent	Date of Birth (MM/DD/YY)	Gender (M/F)	Race*	Hispanic/ Latino?
	PARENT (SELF)				

*Mark all that apply: American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN), Black/African American (B), White (W), Asian (A), Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (NH/PI), Don't Know (DK), Refused (R) or "Other"— specify.

Attempts to Contact Parent

Date	Type (phone, email, FTF)	Comments

Result of referral: ☐ Client accepted ☐ Client declined services ☐ Client not accepted for services

PP Assigned (name):_____ Date:_____

Date of Entry of Intake in database:_____ Date of Intake Completion:_____

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014.) *Iowa parent partners forms guide*.

Sample 8.2: Family Self-Assessment (Entry) Form

Family Self-Assessment (ENTRY) Form Instructions

Purpose:
To learn family's needs and services at program entry. This form also serves as an engagement tool for a family new to the Parent Partner program.

Who completes form?

- The family with the support of a Parent Partner upon entry into the program.

What to do with form?

- The Coordinator keeps the form upon completion.

How is the information used?

- To understand a family's current abilities on a number of items related to their individual goals and the program's goals.
- To encourage families who may encounter struggles through the Parent Partner process. (For example, if a family member is frustrated by a perceived lack of progress, a Parent Partner may use a new copy of the form and have the family fill it out to compare their current assessment with their initial/entry assessment.)
- To observe changes over time.

(Note: The following form is for illustration purposes and is not a fillable format.)

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014). *Iowa parent partners forms guide.*

FAMILY SELF-ASSESSMENT (ENTRY)

This form is to be completed by the family with the support of a Parent Partner upon entry into the program.

- Ask the family member to use the scale at the top of the table to assess their current level for each item.
- Mark the number that corresponds to the family member's current self-assessment for each scale item in the far right column.

Family Member:	ID#:
Parent Partner:	Date:

Using the scale below, mark the number in the far right column to indicate the family member's assessment on each item.

Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4	Always (5)

1.	I am able to find the community resources I need to keep my children safe.	
2.	I am able to complete the steps necessary to get the community resources I need.	
3.	I am able to effectively manage my situation to keep my child(ren) safe when times are stressful.	
4.	I am able to make the appropriate decisions for myself and family.	
5.	I have others who will listen when I need to talk about my problems.	
6.	I have others who will support positive choices and changes I make.	
7.	I talk reasonably and honestly with others about my situation and problems.	
8.	If there is a crisis in my life, I have someone I can talk to.	
9.	I am able to effectively speak up for myself and my family to DHS and other service providers.	
10.	I am able to listen to DHS and other service providers and understand their concerns with my situation.	
11.	I feel comfortable when talking with my DHS worker or other service providers.	

Using the scale below, please mark the box that best describes your current relationship with your DHS worker.

☐ Very Negative	☐ Negative	☐ Neutral	☐ Positive	☐ Very Positive

Please use the space below to provide any additional comments regarding any of the statements above.

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014). *Iowa parent partners forms guide.*

Sample 8.3: Family Self-Assessment (Exit) Form

Family Self-Assessment (EXIT) Form Instructions

Purpose:
To assess a family member's progress in meeting their needs.

Who completes form?

- The family with the support of a Parent Partner upon program exit.

When is form to be completed?

- Within 2 weeks before a family member's expected exit date from the program.

What to do with form?

- The Coordinator will keep the form once it has been completed.

How is the information used?

- To learn what changes a family has experienced through the parent partner process.
- To encourage a family to identify the positive changes they have made for themselves and their families.

(Note: The following form is for illustration purposes and is not a fillable format.)

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014). *Iowa parent partners forms guide.*

FAMILY SELF-ASSESSMENT (EXIT)

This form is to be completed by the family with the support of a parent partner upon exit from the program. There are two ratings to be completed.

- First, ask the family member to "think back to when they first began the Parent Partner Program" and assess their level when they first started. Mark the number that corresponds to the family member's RETROSPECTIVE self-assessment for each scale item in the left column.
- Then ask the family member to assess their current level. Mark the number that corresponds to the family member's EXIT self-assessment for each scale item in the right column.

Family Member:	ID#:
Parent Partner:	Date:

Using the scale below, mark the number in the far right column to indicate the family member's assessment on each item.

Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4	Always (5)

Retrospective Assessment			Exit Assessment
	1.	I am able to find the community resources I need to keep my children safe.	
	2.	I am able to complete the steps necessary to get the community resources I need.	
	3.	I am able to effectively manage my situation to keep my child(ren) safe when times are stressful.	
	4.	I am able to make the appropriate decisions for myself and family.	
	5.	I have others who will listen when I need to talk about my problems.	
	6.	I have others who will support positive choices and changes I make.	
	7.	I talk reasonably and honestly with others about my situation and problems.	
	8.	If there is a crisis in my life, I have someone I can talk to.	
	9.	I am able to effectively speak up for myself and my family to DHS and other service providers.	
	10.	I am able to listen to DHS and other service providers and understand their concerns with my situation.	
	11.	I feel comfortable when talking with my DHS worker or other service providers.	

Using the scale below, please mark the box that best describes your current relationship with your DHS worker.

☐ Very Negative	☐ Negative	☐ Neutral	☐ Positive	☐ Very Positive

Please use the space below to provide any additional comments regarding any of the statements above.

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014.) *Iowa parent partners forms guide.*

Sample 8.4: Fidelity Checklist and Family Outcomes Form

Fidelity Checklist Form Instructions

Purpose:

- To review key components of parent partner support
- To ensure that there is consistency among parent partners
- To assess the fidelity of the parent partner program
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the support provided

Who completes form?

- This form should be completed by the parent partner and the coordinator or parent partner.

When is form to be completed?

- The form should be completed upon a parent exiting the program.

What to do with form?

- The Coordinator will keep the form in the parent's file once it has been completed.

How is the information used?

- The form will be used to assess a parent's experience through the parent partner mentoring process. It is not an assessment of an individual Parent Partner, but of the parent's experience with the program overall.
- The Coordinator may use the information on this form to discuss the parent's overall case with the assigned Parent Partner.

(Note: The following form is for illustration purposes and is not a fillable format.)

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014.) *Iowa parent partners forms guide*.

PARENT PARTNER PROGRAM
FIDELITY CHECKLIST & FAMILY OUTCOMES

This form is to be completed by the Parent Partner with the Coordinator or Parent Partner upon a parent exiting from the program. Consider using parent's file and database records as a reference when completing this form. There are TWO sections to this checklist; be sure to complete both.

Family Member:	ID#:
Parent Partner:	Date:

Using the scale below, mark the appropriate box to indicate your response for each item. .

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	My parent declined or did not participate (N/A)
The Parent Partner...							
1.	Encouraged the parent to fulfill their case plan activities						
2.	Had regular face to face visits with the parent						
3.	Had other (email, phone, web) communication and contact with the parent						
4.	Advocated for parent for needed resources						
5.	Encouraged the parent						
6.	Connected the parent with community resources						
7.	Helped the parent connect with the community						
8.	Coached the parent on communication strategies						
9.	Supported the parent at FTM, court, treatment, other gatherings						
10.	Coached the parent on what to expect throughout the process						

Please provide additional comments regarding the parent's performance on these activities throughout the parent partner program. If you rated any of the above statements as "Always" or "Rarely" or "Never," please explain why.

Using the scale below, mark the appropriate box to indicate your response for each item. .						
		Significant Improvement	Some Improvement	Remained the Same	Decreased	Don't Know
Please rate the parent's IMPROVEMENT on their...						
1.	Relationships with people who are able to connect them with resources					
2.	Relationships with people who support their positive change(s)					
3.	Level of communication with their DHS worker					
4.	Level of communication with attorney(s)					
5.	Ability to advocate appropriately for themselves and their family					
6.	Knowledge of what needs to be done for custody of their children					
7.	Ability to get to appointments on time					
8.	Ability to find community resources for their family					
9.	Knowledge of who to contact with needs or concerns regarding their case					
10.	Level of personal responsibility and accountability for their actions					
11.	Willingness to make changes					

If you rated any of the above statements as "Significant Improvement" or "Remained the Same" or "Decreased," please explain why below. Note that "Remained the Same" could mean that no change was needed, or the indicator was satisfactory to begin with.

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014.) *Iowa parent partners forms guide*.

Sample 8.5: Parent Partner Program Parent Feedback Form

Parent Partner Program Parent Feedback (Exit) Form Instructions

Purpose:
The purpose of this form is to receive feedback from the parent regarding their experiences in the Parent Partner Program.

Who completes form?

- The parent should complete this form on their own. Due to potential biases, the parent partner should not be present when the parent is completing the form.
- If privacy is a concern, a parent can request an addressed-and-stamped envelope to mail the completed form back to the coordinator.

When is form to be completed?

- The form should be completed upon a parent exiting the program.

What to do with form?

- The coordinator will keep the form in the parent's file once it has been completed.

How is the information used?

- The information is used to assess an individual's experiences with the parent partner program. It may also be used to identify the challenges of working with the parent, while also highlighting the strategies that were successful for a parent partner.

(Note: The following form is for illustration purposes and is not a fillable format.)

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014.) *Iowa parent partners forms guide.*

PARENT PARTNER PROGRAM
PARENT FEEDBACK FORM (EXIT)

This form is to be completed by the parent upon exit from the Parent Partner program. The parent should evaluate the quality of the statements from his or her perspective. The completed form should be returned to the Coordinator

Family Member:	ID#:
Parent Partner:	Date:

Using the scale below, mark the appropriate box to indicate your response for each item. .

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Declined or did not participate (N/A)
The Parent Partner...							
1.	Encouraged me to complete my case plan activities						
2.	Had regular face-to-face visits with me						
3.	Had other (email, phone, web) communication and contact with me						
4.	Advocated for needed resources						
5.	Encouraged me						
6.	Connected me with community resources						
7.	Helped me connect with the community						
8.	Coached me on communication strategies						
9.	Supported me at FTM, court, treatment, other gatherings						
10.	Coached me on what to expect throughout the process						

Please provide additional comments regarding the parent partner's performance on these activities throughout the parent partner program. If you rated any of the above statements as “Always” or “Rarely” or “Never,” please explain why.

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014.) *Iowa parent partners forms guide*.

Sample 8.6: Parent Partner Monthly Activity Tracking Form

Parent Partner Monthly Activity Tracking Form Instructions

Purpose:

- To track the individual activities of each Parent Partner
- To enable reporting of site activity quarterly

Who completes form?

- Each Parent Partner completes the form each month.

When is form to be completed?

- The form should be completed throughout the month following any activity with an assigned family or on a committee related to Parent Partners or Child Welfare.

Instructions for completing the form – Activities with each parent mentored

- Parent Partner may use one form per month and include all activities with all families; or they may choose to use one form for each family they are working with and combine the information for a monthly report to be turned in to the Coordinator.
- Other face-to-face contact column is to be used only if the contact does not fit another category listed on the form.
- Phone conversations – is to be used to record conversations with each family.
- Text or e-mail – is to be used to record the separate conversations with each family.

Instructions for completing the form – Program activities

- Parent Partner should record participation in all meetings, trainings, and other activities specific to Parent Partners and child welfare in general.
- Indicate if local, state, or service area.
- Describe participation—presenter, participant, guest, etc.

How is the information used?

- The Coordinator uses the information to report quarterly site activity on standard reporting form to the state coordinator.

(Note: The following form is for illustration purposes and is not a fillable format.)

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014.) *Iowa parent partners forms guide.*

PARENT PARTNER PROGRAM
MONTHLY ACTIVITY TRACKING FORM

This form should be completed each month by the Parent Partner.

	ACTIVITIES WITH EACH PARENT MENTORED								
FAMILY NAME (First Name, Last Name Initial)	Attended Removal Conference w/ family	Attended FTM	Supported at court	Supported parent before and after counseling session	Helped parent access needed services	Supported parent before or after family interaction (visitation)	Had other (face-to-face) contact with family	Had phone conversation with family	Had text or email conversation with family related to their case

PARENT PARTNER PROGRAM
MONTHLY ACTIVITY TRACKING FORM (Continued)

This form should be completed each month by the Parent Partner.

PARENT PARTNER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES							
Committees related to child welfare	Child welfare new worker orientation	Community Partnerships for Protecting Children	Speaking engagements & program awareness	Other meetings, trainings and activities	Clinical and/or Coordination	State, Local or Service Area	Describe participation (Name Committee, Group, Organization, etc.)

Adapted from Iowa Parent Partners. (2014). *Iowa parent partners forms guide.*

Conclusion

The *Parent Partner Program Manual: Sample Policies and Procedures* was prepared as a resource for jurisdictions and agencies that are beginning a new parent partner program or that have an existing program and want to ensure that their program manual addresses key elements. Together with the Parent Partner Navigator, these documents can provide programs with guidance and examples that will help shape program implementation and operations and enhance the likelihood of their success.

The featured samples draw from the efforts and lessons learned from established parent partner programs from across the country. We appreciate their generosity in sharing their work products, online and in our workgroups, so that others can benefit.

Of course, no guide of this nature can include every relevant aspect of program operations for every program. We encourage you to think of it as a "starting point" to organize your program manual and to include key stakeholders in discussions of how best to adapt the samples to meet your program needs.

In closing, we return to the "core" of the parent partner program. Providing parents with meaningful and authentic support through the development of a trusting relationship with a peer who has been on the same journey is an important goal. It is a means to help individual parents become more self-aware; to grow as individuals and as parents; and to provide their children with the love, stability, and thriving environment they deserve.

We wish you great success in your parent partner program and in establishing or revising your program's manual to support your important work!