



FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK WORKBOOK



Special Olympics



Special Olympics

**FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK
WORKBOOK**

FOR USE WITH THE FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK
PROJECT MANAGEMENT GUIDE

November 2002, v.1

The Family Support Network is funded through the generous contributions of Kim Samuel-Johnson and the Samuel Family Foundation.



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WORKSHEET 1

Family Support Network Project Checklist

- Read the entire Family Support Network Project Management Guide
- Obtain commitment for implementing the project from the Program Director and Board of Directors
- Link project with other family programs (if they exist)
- Complete Action Plan Document
- Hire the Family Support Network Project Coordinator
- Create an Advisory Committee
- Develop promotional materials
- Recruit Family Messengers
- Train Family Messengers
- Identify Community Partners
- Establish relationships with Community Partners
- Establish a way to match new family members with Family Messengers
- Establish a tracking system
- Invite new families to Special Olympics events
- Collect evaluation information about the Program
- Host a Welcome Event
- Host a Family Forum



WORKSHEET 2

Action Plan Question Guide

The following questions will assist you as you complete the Action plan

1. How many family members would you like to recruit initially, in order to result in a certain number of trained Family Messengers?
2. What are five key strategies for finding potential Family Messengers (for example, putting an advertisement in your Special Olympics Program newsletter, setting up an information table at a sporting competition, etc.)
3. How many existing family volunteers do you feel would make good Family Messengers (remember, serving as a Family Messenger may take a family member away from other volunteer duties)?
4. In which geographic areas do you think you will need to conduct Family Messenger training in order to capture geographic diversity?
5. How many Family Messenger training sessions will you host?
6. In addition to making connections with new families, what other activities would you like to see Family Messengers conduct (for example, being a liaison with Community Partners, planners for special events, trainers, public speakers, assisting in the development of the Family Welcome Package, etc.)?
7. Will you sponsor/host a follow-up training or follow-up meetings for Family Messengers?
8. How will you keep track of the Family Connections?
9. Who would make a good Advisory Committee member?
10. What materials do you currently have for families? What else do you need?
11. What Community Partnerships already exist?
12. What family events do you already conduct?
13. What is your budget for families activities?
14. How does your Special Olympics Program Register Families?



WORKSHEET 3

Family Support Network Action Planning Document

Mission of Family Support Network

Below, craft a 1-2 sentence purpose statement that adequately describes your Family Support Network. Utilize the goals listed below. Think as broadly as possible and try to consider the purpose of the Family Support Network in the context of your Special Olympics Program.

Primary Goals of the Family Support Network

1. Link families of Special Olympics athletes, or Family Messengers, with new families of potential athletes to provide them with support and information.
2. Introduce new families to the benefits of Special Olympics Programs and support networks.
3. Through connections with new families, recruit new athletes to Special Olympics, thereby contributing to overall growth in the movement.

Objectives of the Family Support Network

1. Create an internal structure which includes hiring a Coordinator and establishing an Advisory Committee to manage the Family Support Network.
2. Develop a network of relationships with (#) Community Partners who will serve as referral sources for new families.
3. Develop a set of outreach materials tailored for families, including a family brochure and a Family Welcome Package.
4. Recruit and train (#) family members of existing athletes to become Family Messengers. Ask Family Messengers to make connections with at least (#) families who are not yet involved with Special Olympics.
5. Establish a process for facilitating New Connections including a system for tracking and monitoring the connections made between new family members and Family Messengers.
6. Host a Welcome Event and/or Family Forum.
7. Evaluate the Family Support Network.

Create your Family Support Network Mission Statement Here:



WORKSHEET 4

Action Plan Template

OBJECTIVES	ACTION STEPS	STAFFING or Volunteer Support	BUDGET	TIMELINE (based on a 1-year cycle)
<p>Example:</p> <p>1. Create an internal structure which includes hiring a Coordinator and establishing an Advisory Committee to manage the FSN.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain endorsement from the Program Director and then the Board of Directors for the Family Support Network project, the position of Coordinator and the Advisory Committee. 2. Create a position notice and job description for the position with clear indication of responsibilities and hours required. 3. Conduct hiring procedures and select a Coordinator. 4. Prepare materials for recruiting Advisory Committee members. 5. Select Advisory Committee members. 6. Schedule Advisory Committee meeting. 			
<p>2. Develop a network of relationships with (#) Community Partners who will serve as referral sources for new families.</p>				



OBJECTIVES	ACTION STEPS	STAFFING or Volunteer Support	BUDGET	TIMELINE (based on a 1-year cycle)
3. Develop a set of outreach materials tailored for families, including a family brochure and a Family Welcome Package.				
4. Recruit and train (#) family members of existing athletes to become Family Messengers. Ask Family Messengers to make connections with at least (#) families who are not yet involved with Special Olympics.				
5. Establish a process for facilitating new connections including a system for tracking and monitoring the connections made between Family Messengers and new families.				
6. Host a Welcome Event and/or Family Forum.				



OBJECTIVES	ACTION STEPS	STAFFING or Volunteer Support	BUDGET	TIMELINE (based on a 1-year cycle)
7) Evaluate the Family Support Network.				



WORKSHEET 5

Budget Template

LINE ITEM	PROGRAM SHARE CASH	PROGRAM SHARE IN-KIND (Cash Equivalent)	OTHER SHARE (e.g., grants)	TOTAL COST
1) Community Partners				
Transportation to meetings				
Hosting meetings				
Communications with (telephone, fax, postage)				
Other (Please specify)				
Subtotal:				
2) Family Support Network Brochure				
Design/Development				
Printing				
Distribution (postage)				
Subtotal:				
3) Family Welcome Package				
Design/Development				
Printing				
Distribution (including postage)				
Subtotal:				
4) Promotion				
Newspaper/radio ads				
Hosting community meetings and presentations				
Online advertising				
Other (specify)				



LINE ITEM	PROGRAM SHARE CASH	PROGRAM SHARE IN-KIND (Cash Equivalent)	OTHER SHARE (e.g., grants)	TOTAL COST
<i>Subtotal:</i>				
5) Family Messenger Training (approx 15 people per training)				
Provisions (includes meals)				
Lodging				
Transportation/travel				
Facility Rental Fees				
Printed Materials				
Facilitator/consultant				
Other (specify)				
<i>Subtotal:</i>				
6) Facilitating New Family Connections				
Office telephone/fax/postage costs for communicating with new families				
Reimbursements for transportation -Family Messengers				
Reimbursements for telephone - Family Messengers				
Reimbursements for postage - Family Messengers				
Other (specify)				
<i>Subtotal:</i>				
7) Referral & Information System				
Distribution and collection of data collection tools (with Family Messengers)				



LINE ITEM	PROGRAM SHARE CASH	PROGRAM SHARE IN-KIND (Cash Equivalent)	OTHER SHARE (e.g., grants)	TOTAL COST
Other (specify)				
Subtotal:				
8) Special Event for New Families (# attendees_____)				
Provisions (includes meals)				
Lodging				
Transportation/travel				
Facility Rental Fees				
Printed Materials				
Other (specify)				
Subtotal:				
9) Hosting a Family Forum (# attendees_____)				
Provisions (includes meals)				
Lodging				
Transportation/travel				
Facility Rental Fees				
Printed Materials				
Other (specify)				
Subtotal:				
General				
Staffing (indicate # FTE staff)				
Supplies (specify)				



LINE ITEM	PROGRAM SHARE CASH	PROGRAM SHARE IN-KIND (Cash Equivalent)	OTHER SHARE (e.g., grants)	TOTAL COST
Equipment (specify)				
Other (specify)				
Other (specify)				
Subtotal:				
TOTAL:				



WORKSHEET 6

Sample Family Messenger Position Description

A Family Messenger is a trained Special Olympics family member who serves as a support person and provider of information to family members of potential Special Olympics athletes. Together, Family Messengers form a network called the Family Support Network. Below is a summary of the expectations for Family Messengers:

- Commit to the Family Support Network for at least one year
- Provide support as a Family Messenger for 5-10 hours per month
- Attend a Family Messenger training seminar (include date and place)
- Fill out a Family Messenger information form at the training (this will be used as the basis for making Family Connections)
- When a match is accepted, contact the new family within 24 hours, and keep trying until you reach them
- If you cannot accept a Family Connection when one is offered, inform the Family Support Network Coordinator right away
- Fill out a contact log at the start of the support relationship and provide a copy of this log to the Family Support Network Coordinator
- Notify the Family Support Network Coordinator immediately after the first contact with a new family
- Update the Coordinator periodically regarding the progress of the support relationship and consult with the Coordinator if problems arise
- Follow the Family Support Network rules regarding confidentiality.

As a Family Messenger...

I understand and agree to maintain confidentiality regarding information I receive about or from the family I am supporting. This means that conversations I have with the family I am supporting will be kept private and only shared when needed with the Family Support Network Coordinator.

I agree to provide timely and appropriate support to the families referred to me. I understand that I am not a professional counselor and that I should not provide advice; rather my role is to listen and to share my own experiences.

I agree to accept and handle referrals when possible, feeling free to say "no" if family or personal considerations make it impossible to provide help needed by a new family.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____



WORKSHEET 7

Sample Recruitment Letter for Potential Family Messengers

Date _____

Dear _____,

As you know, families with a family member who has a mental disability can provide invaluable support to each other by sharing experiences, frustration, knowledge and joys. There is a common bond between families of people with disabilities. Yet, many times these families are not able to discover this bond because they don't know where to turn to find other families facing similar situations.

Special Olympics has formed the Family Support Network, a network of parents and family members of Special Olympics athletes, who reach out to other parents and family members..

You have been identified as a family member who might be willing to volunteer to become a Family Messenger (support parent) in the Special Olympics Family Support Network project. To become a Family Messenger, you simply need to devote approximately 10 hours per month to listening to, and talking with, other family members. You would also need to attend a training workshop focused on communication skills, listening skills, confidentiality and local resources. During the workshop, we will also discuss different disabilities, how the Family Support Network functions and how it fits with the overall mission of Special Olympics.

Our next workshop will be held _____ at _____. Please think about this. If you are interested, please call us at _____ to register. The registration deadline is _____.

We believe that the Family Support Network creates a community for families to share their resources success stories and challenges.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

NAME



WORKSHEET 8

Family Messenger Screening Guide

The following list is an informal guide to determining whether family members would make effective Family Messengers. As you talk to prospective Family Messengers, keep these questions in mind. The most important question is: What message would this prospective Family Messenger give to family members?

Knowledge of Special Olympics:

- Is their family member an actively participating Special Olympics athlete?
- Do they seem familiar with the mission and goals of Special Olympics?
- Are they generally satisfied with the Special Olympics Program?

Acceptance of the Family Member:

- Do they view their family member as a valuable person?
- Do they accept their family member's strengths and weaknesses and have expectations that seem realistic?
- Do they believe their family member can learn? Do they feel learning opportunities are important?
- Have they successfully worked through most of their anger and fear surrounding the diagnosis of their family member?

Ability to provide support to other parents and family members:

- Are they willing to share their own experiences?
- Are they concerned about others?
- Are they nonjudgmental?
- Do they view their role as a prospective Family Messenger as a supporting role rather than a decision-making one?
- Are they coping well with emotional issues?
- Do they have an ability to identify the needs and feelings of others?

Ability to cope with other people's problems:

- Are they willing to become personally involved with other people?
- Can they cope with the problems of others without being hurt themselves?
- Can they handle confidential information without the need to discuss it with other people?

Ability to Communicate:

- Do they express themselves well?
- Are they good listeners?
- Do they know when to be quiet?
- Do they convey a sense of calm reassurance?

Maturity:

- Are they able to accept rejection by others without being personally offended?
- Can they work without a lot of praise or recognition?
- Are they willing to give to others without the expectation of returns?
- Do you think they are ready to share their knowledge and experiences effectively with another parent or family member?

Time:

- Do they have the time to be involved with the Family Support Network?



WORKSHEET 9

Sample Agenda: Family Messenger Training Session

- I. Welcome, Introductions, Overview**
- II. Sharing Family Stories: Large-Group Sharing**
- III. General Orientation to Special Olympics**
 - mission
 - eligibility
 - local training and competitions available
- IV. Overview—Family Support Network**
 - Parent to Parent Model
 - Vision, goals of the Family Support Network
 - Role of Family Messenger
- V. Overview—What is mental disability?**
 - Definitions and diagnoses
 - Resources & services available
- VI. Grief and Adjustment Cycles**
 - Aspects of grief and adjustment
 - What it means for a parent or family member to adjust to their family member's disability
- VII. Role of Family Messengers**
 - Position description and responsibilities
 - Effective Family Connections
 - Communicating with Community Partners
 - Matching process
 - Collecting information
 - How associated costs will be handled
 - Other roles (e.g., promoting the project, etc.)
- VIII. Communication Skills**
 - Attending skills
 - Listening Skills
 - Perceiving Skills
 - Responding Skills
 - How to resolve conflicts
 - Cultural/social awareness
- IX. What ifs...role playing, simulations**
 - Wrap-Up
 - Resource listing
 - Evaluation form
 - Questions?



Worksheet 10

Sample Story for a Listening Exercise

Puppies For Sale

A man was putting up a sign that read, *Puppies for Sale*, and before he had driven in the last nail, there was a small boy at his side. That kind of sign seems to attract small boys.

The youngster wanted to know how much the puppies cost. The man told him they were very good dogs and that he did not expect any of them to go for less than \$35 or \$40. There was a look of disappointment and then a lot of questions: The boy said, "I've got \$2.37. Could I look at them?"

The man whistled and called, "Lady," and out of the kennel and down the runway came Lady, followed by five little balls of fur, with one lagging considerably behind. The boy spotted the lagging puppy and pointing, asked, "What's wrong with him?" The reply was that the dog would always be lame.

The boy's immediate reply was, "That's the dog I want to buy. I'll give you \$2.37 and 50 cents a month until I get him paid for."

The man smiled and shook his head. "That's not the dog you want. That dog will never be able to run and jump and play with you."

The boy very matter-of-factly pulled up his little trouser leg and revealed a leg brace running down both sides of his badly twisted right leg and under the foot, with a leather cap over the knee. "I don't run so well myself," he said. "And he'll need somebody who understands him."

Questions:

- How much were the puppies?
- How much money did the little boy have?
- What was the mother dog's name?
- How many puppies were there?
- What was the little boy's proposed deal to buy the puppy he wanted?
- Why did the boy want that particular puppy?
- When did you know that?



WORKSHEET 11

Family Messenger Tracking Template

Family Messenger #1:

1. Name:
2. Contact Information (address, telephone, e-mail):
3. Relationship of Family Messenger to athlete (e.g., mother, father, sister, brother, etc.):
4. Age of their athlete?
5. Did this Family Messenger attend a training session?
6. Number of new families assigned to the Family Messenger to date:

Family Messenger #2:

1. Name:
2. Contact Information (address, telephone, e-mail):
3. Relationship of Family Messenger to athlete (e.g., mother, father, sister, brother, etc.):
4. Age of their athlete?
5. Did this Family Messenger attend a training session?
6. Number of new families assigned to the Family Messenger to date:

Family Messenger #3:

1. Name:
2. Contact Information (address, telephone, e-mail):
3. Relationship of Family Messenger to athlete (e.g., mother, father, sister, brother, etc.):
4. Age of their athlete?
5. Did this Family Messenger attend a training session?
6. Number of new families assigned to the Family Messenger to date:

WORKSHEET 12



Community Partner Tracking Template

Community Partner # 1:

1. Name of organization:
2. Contact Person:
3. Contact Person's Information:
4. Type of organization: (mark box below)

- Service provider
- Medical organization
- Educational organization
- Advocacy organization
- Government organization
- Other (please describe _____)

Indicate the number of new families referred by this Partner: _____

Community Partner # 2:

1. Name of organization:
2. Contact Person:
3. Contact Person's Information:
4. Type of organization: (mark box below)

- Service provider
- Medical organization
- Educational organization
- Advocacy organization
- Government organization
- Other (please describe _____)

3. Indicate the number of new families referred by this Partner: _____

Community Partner # 3:

1. Name of organization:
2. Contact Person:
3. Contact Person's Information:
4. Type of organization: (mark box below)

- Service provider
- Medical organization
- Educational organization
- Advocacy organization
- Government organization
- Other (please describe _____)

3. Indicate the number of new families referred by this Partner: _____



WORKSHEET 13

New Family Member Tracking Template

Date: _____

New Family Member #1: ID# _____

1. Name of new family member:
2. Contact Information (address, telephone, e-mail):
3. Age of potential athlete:
4. Relationship of potential athlete with new family member (e.g., mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, etc):
5. How did the new family member hear about the Family Support Network (Be specific. Community Partner? If so, please indicate which one. From a Family Messenger? Other?)
6. Has the new family member attended a Special Olympics event?
7. Has the athlete registered to join Special Olympics?
8. Who is the Family Messenger assigned to this new family member?

New Family Member #2: ID# _____

1. Name of new family member:
2. Contact Information (address, telephone, e-mail):
3. Age of potential athlete:
4. Relationship of potential athlete with new family member (e.g., mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, etc):
5. How did the new family member hear about the Family Support Network (Be specific. Community Partner? If so, please indicate which one. From a Family Messenger? Other?)
6. Has the new family member attended a Special Olympics event?
7. Has the athlete registered to join Special Olympics?
8. Who is the Family Messenger assigned to this new family member?

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

The Family Support Network provides a programmatic structure in which Special Olympics families reach out to new families to welcome them into the Special Olympics community. Family Support Network objectives — to support families, to develop partnerships with community organizations, to train new Family Leaders — all contribute to Special Olympics' primary goal of increasing the number of athletes participating in the movement worldwide.

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS

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Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation for the Benefit of Persons with Mental Retardation.



Through my sons ... I have learned what is important in life.

Through my sons ... I have made wonderful friends who see me for what I am.

Through my sons ... I have become part of the Special Olympics Family Support Network which allows me to give support to others in a similar situation.

Through my sons ... I feel that I am making a contribution to society.

Through my sons ... I have been blessed.

Patricia Hickey

Family Leader, Special Olympics Ireland

*Funded through the generous contributions of Kim Samuel-Johnson
and the Samel Family Foundation*



Special Olympics