



# **Supporting Paraprofessional Parenting Educators**

## ***A Manual for Recruitment, Training and Supervision***

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	vi
How to Use this Manual .....	vi
Titles and Terms .....	vii

## Section One: Recruitment of Paraprofessional Parenting Educators (PPEs)..... 1-1

▶ Introduction .....	1-2
▶ Defining Your Program and Those it Will Serve .....	1-2
▶ Identifying Who You are Looking for and How to Find Them .....	1-2
▶ Contacting Prospective PPEs .....	1-3
▶ Interviewing PPEs.....	1-4
▶ Using References .....	1-5
▶ Guidance for Group Programs Using Facilitator Teams or Volunteers .....	1-7
▶ Sample Forms .....	1-8

## Section Two: Initial Training for Paraprofessional Parenting Educators (PPEs) ..... 2-1

▶ Introduction .....	2-2
▶ Choosing a Curriculum.....	2-3
▶ Goals of Initial PPE Training .....	2-4
▶ Training Space .....	2-4
▶ Initial Training .....	2-6
▶ Sample Training Activities and Handouts .....	2-7
▶ Resources for Groups Facilitated by Teams .....	2-24
▶ Observations of PPE's Training Performance .....	2-26

## Section Three: Paraprofessional Parenting Educators Supervision ..... 3-1

▶ Introduction .....	3-2
▶ What Goes into Support and Supervision of PPE.....	3-3
▶ PPE Supervision Schedule Guide .....	3-5
▶ Support and Supervision .....	3-6
▶ Guide for Observations of Group/Home Visits by Supervisor.....	3-7
▶ Potential Questions to Ask PPEs in Supervision Contacts.....	3-8
▶ Questions to Consider for Supervision and Informal Evaluation.....	3-8
▶ Sample Form .....	3-10
▶ PPE Performance Review Form .....	3-10

## Section Four: Ongoing Training for Paraprofessional Parenting Educators ..... 4-1

▶ Introduction .....	4-2
▶ Sample Forms .....	4-3
▶ Preparation for Training.....	4-3
▶ Ongoing Training Agenda Sample.....	4-5
▶ Sample Handouts.....	4-7
▶ Group/Home Visit - Individual Issues .....	4-9
▶ Group Only Issues.....	4-15
▶ Concluding the Group or Home Visits .....	4-20

## Introduction

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Paraprofessional Parenting Educators (PPEs) are persons who work with parents. They typically have a wealth of applicable life experiences and are frequently recruited and hired from the participating community of parents. They have practical and concrete knowledge of parenting education services from the parent perspective, but may have little or no formal education in parenting educator competency areas. They develop parenting education competencies (knowledge and skills, beliefs and values) through a combination of initial training, regular ongoing training, and work experience with reflective supervision. It is understood that paraprofessional parenting educators will likely continue to acquire competencies over time through further training, experience, and education. The competencies they acquire are often tailored to their role as a paraprofessional parenting educator and the audiences they serve.

## How to Use This Manual

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This manual has been developed to assist organizations in the hiring, training and supervision of Paraprofessional Parenting Educators (PPEs). Information on providing parenting education in both a group setting and home visit is described. Included in the manual are content and processes needed for the hiring, training and supervision of paraprofessionals, as well as **sample forms to be copied and adapted for use only in your organization's specific program of parenting education. Please credit NPEN as your source.**

**Send any comments or questions to PPRC@NPEN.org with "paraprofessional manual" in the subject line.**

The manual is a companion document to Paraprofessional Parenting Educator Competencies: A Resource Document for the Field of Parenting Education. The competencies document contains the knowledge and skills, beliefs and values necessary for working with children, their parents, and the practice of parenting education. It can be found on the National Parenting Education Network (NPEN) website at <https://npen.org>. Neither of these documents are a curriculum for a specific population of parents. You will have to choose a curriculum on your own to match the work you are doing with families. There is information that will help your decision in Section 2 "Choosing a Curriculum."

There are three groups that will find this manual helpful:

- ▶ organizations and supervisors beginning a parenting education program using paraprofessionals,
- ▶ organizations that already have a paraprofessional parenting education program, and
- ▶ paraprofessional parenting educators themselves.

In all cases the manual will assist in defining an appropriate role for paraprofessional parenting educators and identifying necessary recruitment, training and supervision needed to have a successful program for parents.

## Listening Skills (Support)

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**Directions for use:** Discuss, with examples, of “why listen” and the “do’s and don’ts.” Break the group into pairs having one be a listener using the listed skills and one be a person who has an issue they want to discuss. Then switch roles. Practice for 3 minutes each. Share the experience and use of the skills. Then discuss “what is next.” Practice in pairs as before.

### Why Listen?

- ▶ To understand
- ▶ To let the person know you understand

#### 3 Do's of Listening

1. Restating/reflecting
2. Clarifying
3. Asking question

#### 3 Don'ts of Listening

1. Problem solving
2. Giving advice
3. Sharing personal experiences

### After you understand, what is next?

Ask the person what they want?

1. Just to be heard
2. Explore alternatives
3. Problem solve
  - Acknowledge and identify the problem
  - Brainstorm alternatives
  - Choose an alternative
  - Do it for a certain period of time
  - Evaluate progress or problems