

Resolution 5.9.03

Parent Mutual Self-Help Support Groups

Whereas, parent mutual self-help support groups provide a parent-led, confidential, and non-judgmental setting for those in a parenting role to exchange ideas and support while discussing the challenges and successes of parenting.¹

Whereas, parent mutual self-help support groups increase parenting knowledge, provide social support, and increase awareness of important community resources.

Whereas, parent mutual self-help support groups are an integral part in learning how to deal with stressful situations, provide alternatives to abusive discipline, and are an invaluable resource for empowerment.²

Whereas, studies indicate that involvement in parent mutual self-help support groups, such as Circle of Parents, helps those in a parenting role, over time, increase self-esteem, overcome isolation, and improve their parenting skills by exchanging support and positive parenting suggestions.³

Whereas, many parent mutual self-help support groups for parents, such as Circle of Parents, offer children's programs that provide developmentally appropriate skill-building activities, as well as a safe environment for children while their parents attend meetings.

Therefore, be it resolved, that PCA America supports:

Developing mutual self-help support groups for parents that are supported by state or regional networks, and further supported by a national network, such as Circle of Parents.

Basing mutual self-help support groups on a model that consists of the following key elements: groups are free, confidential, anonymous, non-judgmental, and promote positive, non-abusive parenting and parent leadership.

Providing free children's programs to complement every parent mutual self-help support group meetings, thereby allowing all parents the opportunity to attend.

Building public awareness of the benefits of self-help support groups for parents in preventing child abuse and neglect.

Increasing and enhancing research on the effect of parent mutual self-help support groups on child abuse and neglect, parenting skills, parent-child relationships, parent confidence, and parent involvement in the community.

¹ Summarized by Anne S. Robertson (1999). "Self-Help/Support Groups: What They Are, Benefits to Parents and Family, How to Join One, How to Start One." *Parent News* March-April 1999.

² Focus Adolescent Services. (1999). Available online: <http://www.focusas.com/SelfHelp.html>

³ Parents Helping Parents Lifelines, Fall 2001.