






# Family Support Action Plan: Strengthening Local Family Groups

Family groups can use this tool to think about ways they can support and connect families in the community.

What type of support do individual families want from family groups?	How can organisations support family groups to deliver on this support?
 <p><b>Peer Support</b></p> <p>For many families, the opportunity to connect with other families who share similar experiences and benefit from peer support and solidarity is the primary reason for coming to a family group.</p>	<p>Building and maintaining informal and semi-formal support networks in the community - for example, family peer support groups - is an important strategy for local groups to build a family movement. It is important for national federations to support local family groups to create these types of spaces because having support networks at the community level improves awareness for families and accountability for other local actors, as these peer support groups often evolve into advocacy groups over time.</p> <p>National organisations can support their local family groups to deliver on peer support by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Training family leaders on how to facilitate peer support groups at the local level.</li><li>✓ Training family leaders on specific strategies to support families to cope with stigma and discrimination in their communities.</li><li>✓ Providing examples of effective peer support models used in other communities to help local groups share strategies.</li></ul>
 <p><b>Referrals</b></p> <p>Families often do not know what services they are entitled to, what support is available to them, or where to look to find these things. Family groups play a key role in guiding families to find the support that is available to them in their community.</p>	<p>Without becoming a standalone family outreach service, the ability to deliver referrals for individual family members is an important tool for family groups to support their members.</p> <p>National organisations can support their local leaders to deliver on referrals within their communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Helping local family leaders to do a mapping of available services and allies in their community who could provide different types of support to families. This list might include institutions that deliver inclusive education, health, social services, economic empowerment programs, and more.</li><li>✓ Helping local family leaders identify existing commitments to disability inclusion in their community that can be used as a basis for accessing services, such as identifying the language on disability included in a community development plan.</li><li>✓ Sharing connections with social and child protection services, networks of community health volunteers, organisations delivering psychosocial support, and more with local leaders.</li><li>✓ Creating resources for families that provide clear examples of available support and services in communities, such as access to support people, speech assistive and text to speech devices, wheelchairs, dignity kits, respite care, etc.</li></ul>

What type of support do individual families want from family groups?	How can organisations support family groups to deliver on this support?
 <p><b>Access to information</b></p> <p>Many families come to family groups to learn - family groups are relied on to be a source of information, resources, and tools for family members who want a better life for their family member with an intellectual disability.</p>	<p>Organisations can play an important role equipping family groups with the information they need to support individual families.</p> <p>National organisations can help family leaders deliver on access to information by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Developing and providing accessible informational resources focused on inclusion that local family leaders can share with members of their family groups</li> <li>✓ Training family leaders at the local level about human rights, entitlements under local laws and international frameworks including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and other essential information for families so that they can go on to train others in their communities</li> <li>✓ Providing family leaders with training modules on inclusion and inclusive practices to use with external stakeholders in their community - such as teacher training, training for public office holders, or other stakeholders.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Accompaniment</b></p> <p>When families understand the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities, it can be difficult to understand what the process is for challenging the denial of rights. Families come to family groups seeking accompaniment, or support with individual level advocacy from other families who have gone through similar experiences.</p>	<p>In order to be able to successfully accompany individual family members through their advocacy journeys and provide support and guidance, family groups need to be equipped with knowledge of advocacy strategies.</p> <p>National organisations can support local family groups to do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Equipping family leaders at the local level with information about rights under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and under local laws to help them build a case for families</li> <li>✓ Providing advocacy resources, including advocacy messages to equip local groups to contribute to the advocacy of the movement and examples of effective advocacy strategies</li> <li>✓ Sharing success stories of local advocacy between family groups to show examples of what has worked in other communities</li> <li>✓ Linking family leaders with cross-disability networks in their country that can provide support with understanding how the broader disability movement works and link the family leaders to other key stakeholders.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Building a vision for the future</b></p> <p>Families often come to family groups with the expectations for the future of their family members with an intellectual disability that medical professionals have given them - this is typically a vision that does not emphasise inclusion or the potential of people with intellectual disabilities. Families want to know what is possible, and family groups play a key role in helping families to dream bigger and build an inclusive vision for the future.</p>	<p>Once families have built a vision for inclusion, they are more likely to engage in advocacy and spread the message of inclusion to other stakeholders.</p> <p>National organisations can support local family groups to help their members build a vision by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Training family leaders to be peer facilitators for vision building workshops.</li> <li>✓ Sharing strategies for building a vision, such as using the practical experiences of families of older children or adults or using the testimonies of self-advocates to demonstrate possibilities.</li> <li>✓ Creating resources on the national organisation's vision for inclusion and what this might look like for an individual family at the local level.</li> </ul>

## Your turn: Family Support Action Plan

Type of support	How can your organisation support family groups to deliver on this support?
 Peer Support	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
 Referrals	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
 Access to information	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
 Accompaniment	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
 Building a vision for the future	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>