

**FROM RESEARCH
TO REAL LIFE:**
Increasing Visibility
and Use of Family-
to-Family Centers

BRIEF
3

Creating Effective Marketing Campaigns from Data

Based on findings from the 2009-2010 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs, there are an estimated 1,002,912 children with SHCN whose families reported that they had difficulty using needed services because they could not get the information they needed (National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs. NS-CSHCN 2009/10). In addition, lack of information and need for support in navigating the complex system of services can be one factor that feeds racial and ethnic disparities in access to care for children and youth with special health care needs.

Family-to-family information and advocacy centers play a key role in connecting families to that needed information and support. To address the documented need for information and support for families of children with SHCN, federally-funded, centers were created within states, expressly designed to give families knowledge and support. For over 40 years, the Office of Special Education Programs within the Department of Education has funded Parent Training and Information Centers. In addition, as a requirement of the Affordable Care Act of 2010, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the Health Resources and Services Administration initiated funding for a Family to Family Health and Information Center in each state and a national training and technical assistance center through Family Voices to support those projects. Ongoing evaluations of family-to-family centers reflect their value to those families that use their services, yet many families still do not access these family centers.

If you work in a family-to-family center, consider the following:

- How often do you hear from families that contact your center, “I didn’t realize you existed!”?
- Are there groups of families that you wish you could reach more effectively—diverse cultural, racial, or ethnic groups? Families of transition age youth? Rural families? Families who speak a language other than English?
- Do the demographics of the families you serve reflect the racial and ethnic make-up of your state?

What can state-wide family-to-family information and advocacy centers do to connect with families that need their services, but have not yet found them?

Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development and three state-wide family-to-family centers (Exceptional Children's Assistance Center in North Carolina, Parents' Place of Maryland and Parents Reaching Out in New Mexico) are partners in research funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services to study how and where families of children with special health care needs seek information and ways in which family-to-family centers can learn how to reach more families in their states. The study is based on the idea that families typically turn to family, friends, co-workers, agencies or doctors and other care providers that they already know and trust when they want information and advice about raising their children. If their usual networks do not know about or feel positively about using family-to-family centers, families may never reach out for those services.

The study has three phases:

1. Focus groups with families who had already used their services and with families who had never used the services of a state-wide, family-to-family center to learn more about what families know about their centers, how families like to receive

Racial, Ethnic and Language Disparities in Care

Responses to the 2009-2010 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs indicate that Hispanic, black, and other non-white, non-Hispanic children are significantly more likely to have families who report that they had one or more unmet need for healthcare services in the year preceding the survey than white children and are significantly more likely that those who are white non-Hispanic to report that:

1. they did not receive needed elements of care coordination;
2. they did not receive coordinated, ongoing, comprehensive care within a medical home; and
3. they usually or always are frustrated in getting care for their children.

Finally, a key to effective care of special health care needs is identifying the problems early and throughout the life course, yet based on responses to the 2009-2020 NSCSHCN Hispanic families with SHCN are significantly less likely to report that their children receive early and continuous screening services than white children with SHCN.

- information, and to whom they typically turn for help.
2. Key informant interviews with health care providers and others in the natural support and communication networks of the families in the focus groups to learn what they knew about the family-to-family centers, how they viewed the centers, how best to communicate with the centers and whether they referred families for services from the centers.
3. A communication/ marketing plan that is directed to both families and those in the natural social and communication networks of families the centers wanted to reach more effectively.

This series of *From Research to Real Life* briefs will share information from each of these three phases so that all family-to-family centers can profit from what the centers in the study are learning.

Brief III will show you how the centers in the study used the information they learned from the focus groups and key informant interviews to create a new approach to marketing their centers.

It will include the following information:

1. How to change your mindset from disseminating information to marketing your center.
2. Principles of a Successful Marketing Campaign
3. Creating messages that are audience-focused, benefit focused and give a simple call to action.
4. Using a creative brief.
5. Partnering for successful marketing.
6. Using message penetration and repetition to get the word out.
7. Choosing effective messengers.
8. Making organizational changes to support marketing.
9. Sustaining your marketing efforts.

1 From dissemination to marketing.

For many years, family-to-family centers have been required, by their funders, to disseminate information and materials. Although this is an important way to get the word out about your center, it may not be all that helpful in getting new families to use your services. All three centers had been telling families and members of their social communication networks (see Brief II) about their programs and projects, yet those audiences reported that they were not entirely clear about what the centers did or offered them. How could that be? Centers had brochures, websites, social media sites and all of them provided a great deal of information about the centers. **Results of the focus groups and material audit revealed that the majority of the centers' materials were organization-focused. That is, the majority had the centers' mission front and central. They provided information about various programs offering detail and using language that would be familiar to funders and providers but not relevant to families in distress looking for help. Essentially, the materials were not consumer-focused, they did not address audience wants and needs.** One member of the centers' teams noted that it was a very hard transition from proudly sharing the center's history and mission and all the programs they had to giving clear and effective

marketing messages. See Table 1 for information on the Six Principles that guide marketing campaigns. It is these principles

that the centers in the study used to guide their new marketing efforts. The following sections show how they applied these principles.

Table 1. Six Principles of a Successful Marketing Campaign

PRINCIPLE 1: Audience Focused. Just like for-profit organizations design their products with the consumer in mind, the centers need to design their marketing campaigns with the target audience in mind. Centers need to be able to see the issues through the eyes of the target audience. In material development, centers should rely on research conducted to-date to help staff understand audiences' wants and needs and what motivates their behavior.

PRINCIPLE 2: Simple, Clear Call to Action. All materials should include a call to action. An effective call to action presents a single step that is clear and doable. Calls to action such as "Become an advocate for your child" can be too broad and overwhelming. Instead, "Call 1-800 number to learn how to complete an IEP" might be more appropriate.

PRINCIPLE 3: Benefit-Focused. We buy certain brands because they appeal to us—they make us sexy, beautiful, young, respectable or secure. Similarly when we engage our target audience, the audience decides if what we are offering them is worth their while. In exchange for performing a desired behavior (i.e., using centers' services), we might offer them a piece of mind, a sense of being good parents, or a feeling of empowerment or independence. Centers should ensure that all materials prominently feature benefits desired by the audiences.

PRINCIPLE 4: Partner for Success. Build partnerships around mutual benefits. Each partner should be a "winner" in the relationship. Look for partners with complementary client base. Keep partnership expectations realistic.

PRINCIPLE 5: Message Penetration and Repetition. One of the key ways to ensure success of a marketing effort is to create a "surround sound"—i.e., saturate your target audience's environment with your messages—deliver your messages where the target audience lives, plays and prays. Hearing a message once is rarely enough. Ideally, target audience should be exposed to the message at least three times over a course of a few weeks.

PRINCIPLE 6: Messengers. Use current clients and client volunteers as messengers to connect with the audience and make the benefits more credible. Ask them to share their stories, their experiences with the centers. If possible, use images of real clients in materials.

Used with permission from Anya Karavanov, *Communicating for Social Change*.

2 Creating messages that are audience-focused, benefit focused and give a simple call to action.

Reviewing the findings from focus groups and key informant interviews

The family-to-family centers in the study learned the following from focus groups and key informant interviews that helped them make changes:

- Advantages of family-to-family centers are: 1) they are staffed by families who have lived experience with the system; 2) they are free to all; 3) there are no eligibility requirements; 4) they have highly knowledgeable staff; 5) they help families become effective advocates for their children.
- Families and others mistakenly thought they only dealt with educational issues.
- Families and others thought they had to go to the main offices, in person, to get services.
- There was no clear information about exactly what services a family could receive.

These findings are important to creating the new messages.

Taking stock

The first step was taking a hard look at the materials and messages that centers had been using and to evaluate them through the lens of these marketing principles. See the example below and see how well it meets those principles. Or take a look at your own information that you use to tell families and others about your center.

The text on the following two pages is a shortened version of New Mexico's Parents Reaching Out (PRO) original information. In fact it is not very different from the messages in the materials of the other centers in the study. It is shortened to fit into this brief. Look to see if the information provided is from the audience's perspective? Remember that we learned that the times when families are looking for help and information are when they receive a new diagnosis or there is a problem with their children's schooling or treatment. These are stressful times when they need clear direction about where to get help. Does a family looking for help want to know about your mission in detail, your beliefs, all your programs and who funds

"We learned that the most important message is not our purpose, but what is our effect. We have to reshape our own voice. What can we help you with, which is different from what we are."

—MARLYN WELLS, North Carolina Family Voices Coordinator at Exceptional Children's Assistance Center.

them? Is there a clear message about the benefits to a family reading this brochure, including statements from families who have used the center? Would families know what kind of help they could receive? Is there a simple call to action—what should they do if they want help?

Revising the message based on sound marketing principles

On pages 7-8, is an example of how the PRO changed their materials based on sound marketing principles and the information they learned in the focus groups and interviews. Is there a clear message about the benefits to a family reading this brochure? Would families know what kind of help they could receive? Is there a simple call to action—what should they do if they want help?



Parents Reaching Out

Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family

We are a statewide non-profit organization that works with parents, caregivers, educators and other professionals to promote healthy, positive and caring experiences for New Mexico families and children. Founded in 1981, we have served New Mexico families for over twenty five years. Our circle of partners throughout New Mexico continues to enhance our outreach connections with families and the professionals who serve them.

We have developed partnerships with state and community agencies including the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED), New Mexico Department of Health, Local Education Agencies (LEA), New Mexico PTA, hospitals, universities and family support agencies. These partnerships with funding from federal and state agencies, donations and the valuable time of our volunteers help us provide materials, workshops, technical assistance and support to effect positive change for families in our state.

Our Mission

The mission of Parents Reaching Out is to enhance positive outcomes for families and children in New Mexico through informed decision making, advocacy, education, and resources. Parents Reaching Out provides the networking opportunities for families to connect with and support each other. This mission supports all families including those who have children with disabilities, and others who are disenfranchised. Parents Reaching Out achieves this by:

- Developing family leadership
- Connecting families to each other
- Building collaborative partnerships
- Providing families knowledge and tools to enhance their power

Our Beliefs

- Families need support where ever they are in their journey.
- All families care deeply about their children.
- Families need tools and support to accomplish their dreams.
- All families are capable of making informed decisions that are right for their family.
- Families in the state benefit from our organization having the staff and materials that meet their diversity.
- Systems that listen carefully to the family perspective improve outcomes for our children.

Parent to Parent is the cornerstone of Parents Reaching Out. Outcomes for children will be brighter when families connect with one another to share experiences, information, new ideas and offer support. Families are connected with others who have faced similar challenges. Matches are based on the age of the child, the community in which the family lives, issues and concerns, school or grade, diagnosis and disability or illness. Networks of knowledgeable and empowered families can move the education and healthcare systems toward a better understanding of the family perspective as they plan and develop programs and policies to serve children.

Our **Family Leadership Action Network (FLAN)** offers training and mentoring for families and others who want to make a difference in their community through volunteering. *We invite you to contact PRO for more information about FLAN and the important gifts you can share with others.*

Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family

1920 B Columbia Dr. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106 • 505-247-0192 • 1-800-524-5176 • www.parentsreachingout.org

Parents Reaching Out is a network of programs woven together to meet the ever changing needs of families.

As the **NM PIRC** (New Mexico Parent Information and Resource Center), we help parents get the information and gain the skills they may need in order to support their children's learning and growth. We are funded by the US Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We offer information about child development and early childhood programs including Head Start as children begin transitions from home to a school setting. We share information about No Child Left Behind and offer tools for building meaningful partnerships that improve academic achievement.

As the **NM PTI** (New Mexico Parent Training and Information Center), we serve families of infants, children and youth with all types of disabilities as well as related professionals. NM PTI is funded by the US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). We help families understand the special education system and the Individual Educational Program (IEP) process so that they can make informed decisions, understand IDEA 2004 and effectively advocate for their child.

DreamCatchers work with the Early Intervention system to support the families of infants and toddlers who are at risk for or have developmental delays, disabilities or medical conditions through a grant from the New Mexico Department of Health Family Infant Toddler Program (FIT). We help families navigate systems and connect with other parents. We promote the importance of advocacy, record keeping, family perspective and partnerships with those who provide services to our children.

NM F2FHIC (New Mexico Family to Family Health Information Center) serves communities through a grant from federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Our resources build family capacity to understand the health care system and make informed choices to access quality health care services that best meet their needs.

Families as Faculty is funded by the New Mexico Public Education Department, New Mexico Department of Health, Family Infant and Toddler Program and the University of New Mexico School of Medicine—Continuum of Care. This program promotes family leadership skills and professional learning opportunities for future teachers and doctors that prepare them to work in partnerships with families for systems change.

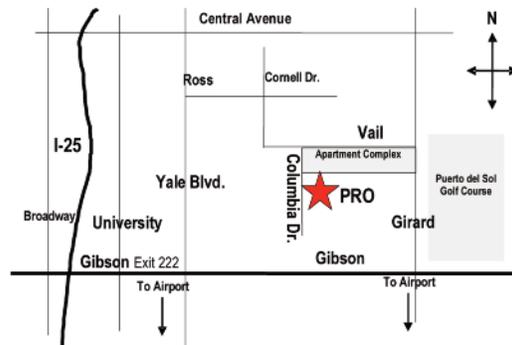
We invite families, educators, other professionals and agencies to visit or call our **Resource Center**. Our free lending library includes materials on child development, literacy, disabilities, the law, and much more. Families relocating to New Mexico or other states may contact us for connections to resources.

Our publications, in English and Spanish, offer tools as families work with systems to create successful opportunities for children and young adults. We provide information booths for workshops and conferences throughout New Mexico.

Drop by our office, give us a call or visit our web site!

Parents Reaching Out

1920 B Columbia Dr SE
 Albuquerque, NM 87106
 (505) 247-0192 · (800) 524-5176
www.parentsreachingout.org



From I-25—take the Gibson Blvd Exit and go East on Gibson. Turn left at the third stop light (Girard). Turn left on the first street—Vail. Go one block to Columbia. Turn left on Columbia. Go a half of a block (past brown apartments). Parents Reaching Out is the concrete building on the left. Welcome!

Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family

1920 B Columbia Dr. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106 · 505-247-0192 · 1-800-524-5176 · www.parentsreachingout.org

Parents Reaching Out

Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family



Have the
CONFIDENCE,
STRENGTH and
KNOWLEDGE
 to advocate for
 your child.

Parents Reaching Out
 can help you.

Quotes from Parents

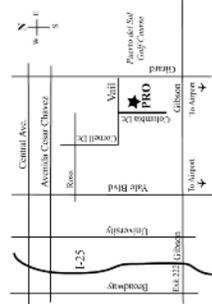
"I really appreciate what you do for our kids. The services you provide are invaluable. I will definitely be using PRO in the future."

"Thank you for all you do for our community to advocate for our families and students with special needs."



Drop by our office, give us a call, or visit our website!

Parents Reaching Out
 1920B Columbia Dr. SE
 Albuquerque, NM 87106
 (505)247-0192, 1-800-524-5176
www.parentsreachingout.org



Parents Reaching Out offers free:

- **Support and Guidance.** We provide individual help for your unique situation. Call us if you have concerns about your child's special education program or if you need help navigating the health care system.
- **Information and Resources.** We offer publications and workshops in English and Spanish on early intervention, special education, and health care topics.
- **Leadership Opportunities for Parents.** We can help you develop your skills to become a parent leader in your community. You can offer direct assistance to other parents, promote PRO in your community, or get involved with legislative advocacy. Our parent leaders make a difference in communities throughout the state.





Parents Reaching Out

Parents Reaching Out is a network of programs woven together to meet the ever changing needs of families.

Do you have a child with special needs? Are you having difficulty getting appropriate educational or healthcare services? Would you like to connect with other parents who are in similar situations?

Parents Reaching Out can help.

We are a statewide non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization that works with parents, caregivers, educators, and other professionals to promote healthy, positive, and caring experiences for New Mexico families and children. Founded in 1981, we have served New Mexico families for 30 years.



Special Education - We help families get the information and gain the skills they need to support their children's learning and gain a better understanding of the public education system. We serve families of children, and youth with all types of disabilities. We help families understand the special education system and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process so they can make informed decisions, understand their rights and responsibilities under IDEA, and effectively advocate for their child.



Healthcare - We help families understand the health care system and make informed choices to access quality health care services that best meet their needs. We promote family leadership in healthcare by bringing together families of children with disabilities and future health care professionals. We provide a framework for professionals to learn from families and prepare them to work in partnership with them.



"Thank you for providing support and a caring attitude to families like ours. We can't tell you how much this means to us." - parent



Early Intervention - Our Dreamcatchers project supports the families of infants and toddlers who are at risk for or have developmental delays, disabilities, or medical conditions. We help families navigate systems and connect with other parents. We promote the importance of advocacy, record keeping, family perspective, and partnerships with those who provide services to our children.

Resource Center - Our free lending library includes materials on child development, literacy, disabilities, the law, and much more.

Parents Reaching Out has created a number of publications - available in both English and Spanish - to meet the specific needs of families. All our publications are available through our website or you may call to request copies.

www.parentsreachingout.org/publications

505-247-0192 or 1-800-524-5176

Contact ecac today!

Are you a parent of a child with a disability or special health need? Do you have concerns about your child's health care or educational needs? **ecac**, the exceptional children's assistance center, gives free support and education to help you become your child's best advocate. Our staff is made up of parents of children with special needs who want to help you.

ecac
exceptional children's
assistance center
Empowering Families • Improving Lives

ecac is a private non-profit organization operated by parents of children with disabilities and special health needs. Our commitment is to empowering families and improving lives of ALL children.

Another example of marketing materials developed is a postcard with a refrigerator magnet with the toll free number on it created by ECAC in North Carolina. They chose that format based on feedback from families and organizations in the part of the state that was their focus. Is there a clear message about the benefits to a family reading this brochure? Would families know what kind of help they could receive? Is there a simple call to action—what should they do if they want help?

How can I get from the marketing principles and the data to a really great message?

Family-to-family centers in the study had the opportunity to work with a social marketing consultant, who helped them develop a creative brief, a document that serves as a guidepost for creating marketing materials. This document is shared with vendors and partners providing creative services (e.g., writers and designers) or any other organization or person involved in message and creative execution development.

As with many strategic documents, if the project goes off track, it is helpful to refer back to the brief to see where the divergence began. In cases where there might be one or more person working on a campaign, this document helps everyone to be on the same page. On the following page is an example of a creative brief created for Parents' Place of Maryland. Take note of the sections and the kinds of information that go into each section. This way of organizing the information can help you develop materials for your center.

Our Mission

Call **ecac's** free Parent Information Line (1-800-962-6817) for:

1. Answers to your school and health care questions
2. Support and information to help you advocate for your child
3. Parent information including packets, CDs, newsletters
4. Books, CDs and DVDs mailed to you from our Lending Library
5. Information on workshops being held in your community and online

keep this magnet on your refrigerator for quick reference!

ecac
exceptional children's
assistance center
Empowering Families • Improving Lives
907 Barra Row
Suites 102/102
Davidson, NC 28036

contact ecac today

www.ecac-parentcenter.org

ecac ecac
North Carolina's
Parent Center

Helping Families!

Creative Brief

PROBLEM STATEMENT: What are you trying to change with your new marketing approach?

Parents Place of Maryland (PPMD) is a non-profit organization committed to improving the lives of children with disabilities and special health care needs. PPMD is looking to increase utilization of its offerings by African Americans living in the following geographic areas: Baltimore, MD; Charles County, MD; and, Anne Arundel County, MD. To this end, the goal of the marketing campaign is to make the PPMD’s offerings more visible and position them as relevant to parents’ lives within targeted communities.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Whom do you hope to reach and what do you know about them and how they view your center?

The campaign’s target audience is African American parents of children with special needs. Results of the recent focus groups with parents show that many current users are unaware of the range of PPMD’s services, they believe that the center is only involved in helping parents with school-related issues and with advocacy efforts. They appreciate that PPMD’s staff understands their struggles because many staff members also have children with special needs. The non-users say that they often have a lot going on with their child’s care and may not see the need for the center’s services especially if they have an older child who has had the condition a long time. Parents are generally stressed out and stretched-thin. They feel like they are in a “fighting mode” all the time—they have to fight “the system” to get services for their children. They want to receive prompt response to their inquiries and have a one-on-one consultation.

POSITIONING: What is the key message you want the audience to get?

As a parent responsible for taking care of a child with special needs, your life is hard. Health, education and welfare systems are complex and difficult to navigate. Parent Place of Maryland is here to help you. We offer advice and resources to get results for your child and give you skills to become your child’s advocate.

ACTION: What specific things do you want to ask the audience to do?

- Call PPMD to receive a free consultation/advice
- Go to PPMD’s web site to learn more about services offered
- Sign up for workshops/conferences

BARRIERS: What do you know about why the audience does not currently use your center?

- Lack of awareness of services offered
- Everyday stress
- Lack of time
- Perceived notion that help has to be “local”—in the community
- Perception among users that PPMD is an “understaffed and underfunded” organization

REWARDS: What are the benefits that audience members would gain in exchange for performing for the desired action?

- Feel like a good parent who is doing everything to help his/her child/ren
- Peace of mind free of charge
- “Learning how to fish”—PPMD offers valuable and relevant learning opportunities provided locally

SUPPORT: How do we make our promised benefits/rewards credible?

Testimonials can be very useful.

- Parents like me say that they received valuable support from PPMD that has empowered them/gave them concrete skills or information to help their children,
- People that I trust—pediatricians/medical providers, social workers, faith leaders and affinity groups—recommend PPMD’s services.

CORE MESSAGE STRATEGY/MESSAGE POINT: What should your audience be able to say about your center after they hear your message?

Work to create a statement that summarizes the core message strategy:

If I, parent of a child with special needs, contacts PPMD to access services the organization offers, I will feel less stressed out and feel like I did something to help my child and help myself to become a better advocate [at no cost to me]. I know this because people like me and people I trust say this is the right thing to do.

MESSAGE POINTS

These are examples of message points that are based on the focus group input. These types of points need to be fleshed out as you learn more about your audience.

- Go to www.ppm.org to learn more about services offered
- People who live in your community say that accessing services offered by PPMD will make your and your child’s lives better
- Services offered by PPMD are provided by people like you, people who understand what you are going through. And, these services are offered free of charge

Continued

Creative Brief Continued

OPENINGS: When are parents ready to hear our message?

We will promote services where parents are: schools, medical providers, affinity groups, local community centers, local media outlets, and large employers.

IMAGE/TONE: How do you want your message to come across? Official, academic, friendly?

- Earnest
- Familiar/friendly
- Warm
- Moving/striking a chord with parents worrying/wishing for the best for their kids
- Art—portrait(s) of African American families with children with special needs depicting children being active in schools, playgrounds—living typical lives

MANDATORIES: What information must be in any materials?

- PPMD's logo
- Phone number, website

Now look at the message below to see how they used this Creative Brief to craft a new message. Parents' Place of Maryland crafted this new message that was informed by the focus groups and key informant interviews and the principles of marketing. Notice that the name of the center is not on top. In their feedback from families and providers, they learned that their name did not effectively convey their purpose, so they led with a headline that did.

When you create your own messages, ask several people in your center and outside to review them using this helpful check list provided by Anya Karavanov of *Communicating for Social Change*.

MESSAGE CHECKLIST:

- Clarity**—Does your message convey clear concept? Is it free of jargon? Does it use simple, direct language easily understood by your target audience?
- Appeal**—Does your message speak directly to your target audience? Is it consistent with audience's values and beliefs?
- Reward**—Does your message feature a reward that your audience would find compelling?
- Action**—Does your message have a clear, feasible and concrete call to action?
- Persuasion**—Do message points make relevant rational and emotional arguments that will motivate your audience to action?
- Consistency**—Are your message points consistent?
- Credibility**—Is information contained in your messages accurate and uses sources that are credible in the eyes of your target audience?

3 Partner for success.

The centers in the study also worked to implement the fourth principle of successful marketing. Since the social communication networks of families are so important to their deciding to use a family-to-family center, creating partnerships with other community organizations is essential. It increases your reach, can give you access to communities who do not know your center well and may not trust newcomers into their networks. New partners can even bring new resources to the table.

In New Mexico, PRO worked to create a list of community organizations to approach, developed marketing messages that were appropriate for those audiences and shifted staff time and effort to make individual contact with those potential partners. They had an important success when Blue Cross/Blue shield agreed to partner with them after a meeting where they were connected through a third party that was working with the insurer. PRO had hoped that BC/BS might want to support their large, state-wide leadership conference, but learned they were more interested in smaller events that related to issues of common interest such as medical home, family-centered care and the Affordable Care Act. As a result of this partnership, BC/BS funded meals, marketing and printing for workshops in two areas of the state. They co-branded

the marketing materials bringing visibility and credibility to PRO's efforts.

PRO had a particular focus in the Gallup area of New Mexico. To better market the center in that region, they partnered with the Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs (EPICS) helped them promote the center and local activities by contacting the local newspaper and radio stations. They even did announcements about PRO's activities in Navaho on the radio.

ECAC in North Carolina was working to increase the number of African-American families who live in several very rural counties using their center. While they had, in name, a number of partners in those areas, with their marketing plan they realized that they needed on-going in-person contact to strengthen those relationships. With planned visits four times a year, staff can create activities to benefit both the center and their partners. One key partner is a hospital in Elizabeth City, NC that is a hub of services and connection for that rural area. ECAC staff worked with them to plan joint efforts, including several grant submissions that would benefit the community. Next on their list is a new connection with the local ministerial association.

Parents' Place of Maryland coordinates The Maryland Community of Care Consortium for Children with Special Health Care

Needs (COC). It is dedicated to improving systems of care for children and their families in the state. The COC is a working group of diverse stakeholders, including families, providers, advocates, consumers, administrators, and professionals from the public and private service systems. Funded by a grant from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the COC offers a forum for information exchange, problem solving, consensus building, and collaborative action to address gaps and barriers in services for children with special health care needs (CSHCN) and their families. Working with the array of partners has provided an opportunity for Parents' Place to inform them about the center and its services. It has created new opportunities for joint training and supports to families and has spread information to the social communication networks of families of children with special health care needs.

4 Message penetration and repetition.

It is important that families encounter your message many times, preferably in a short time period. How can you do that with limited staff and resources? Especially how can you get the message out to families that have not yet learned about your center? Of course, you can provide materials and information to members of families' social communication networks, such as health care providers, to share. They may, however, only mention

your services once. PRO has developed an approach to get information about their center in the public eye in places in the community that families frequent. To do this they developed the flyer on the next page (in English and in Spanish) and have posted it in places such as laundromats, grocery stores and offices of the income support division. (Notice how the message reflects good marketing principles.) They received many calls from families after the posters went up and calls from providers who saw the posters in the community and wanted them for their offices. They have learned that they have to go out and replenish the posters, because families and others are taking them to have the information.

ECAC learned from their partners in the very rural parts of the state that the best way to gain the attention of African American families in these rural counties is community access TV. They plan to work with that media outlet to keep up frequent messages about their center.

5 Messengers.

Although families and members of their social communication networks prefer face-to-face contact in working with family-to-family centers and learning about what they do, no center has the resources to provide that kind of connection across the state. As a result, developing a cadre of volunteers who can promote the

Looking for help?

WORKSHOPS

INFORMATION

PARENT
LEADERSHIP

RESOURCES

SUPPORT

Parents

Reaching

Out



Your One Stop
Resource for a
Stronger Family

- * Access resources for children and families
- * Become an advocate for your child
- * Secure appropriate services for your child
- * Navigate education and health systems for your child
- * Prepare for life after high school
- * Connect with other parents who “understand”
- * Become an effective partner in improving your child’s school
- * Be an advocate to improve services for children and families
- * Know your rights

Look no further - Parents Reaching Out (PRO) is committed to engaging parents and professionals as partners in improving outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth in NM. We offer programs that address early childhood, parent involvement, special education, health care, transition to adult life, parent to parent support, and systems-changing opportunities.

Contact us!

www.parentsreachingout.org

505-247-0192 * 1-800-524-5176

1920B Columbia Dr. SE, Albuquerque, NM



Parents Reaching Out empowers families, professionals, and communities interested in the health, well-being, and education of children.

center and become a first point of contact for families and providers is useful. Consider developing current families served and family volunteers as messengers to connect with the audience and make the benefits of your center more credible. Ask them to share their stories, their experiences with the centers.

Parents' Place of Maryland has used their family leaders training programs to develop a cadre of such volunteers. Their marketing focus was African American families in two densely populated counties in Central Maryland. Thus they have been recruiting African American families for their leadership training programs in those counties and have been very successful. These participants have naturally become ambassadors in their communities for the center. All participants, however, are asked to provide a certain level of volunteer support to the center. They help PPMD with marketing in tightly-knit communities where an outsider would have difficulty gaining entrée. Alumni of the leadership training programs have developed church ministries related to children with disabilities, represented PPMD in resource fairs and community events and have served on local councils in their

communities. Because the volunteers are members of the communities PPMD wants to reach, they are the perfect messengers. ECAC has also engaged families they have trained as volunteers.

6 Internal changes.

The changes needed for effectively marketing the family-to-family centers in the study went beyond changing messages and finding new partners. All noted that it took changes within their organizations. These changes included the following:

- Understanding that marketing is not a one-time activity, but needs to be integrated into the core functions of the center.
- Finding an internal voice that is united—not a silo project mindset. Helping everyone to be able to articulate the purpose of the overall organization, not only a specific project.
- Being able to move from sharing, with deserved pride, the history of the organization and all it does to communicating what a family can gain from the centers services.
- Making staffing changes to provide faster response, to have time to cultivate partners and to address needs of the populations

served. For example PRO has changed its hiring priorities—all staff hired now will need to be bilingual in English and Spanish to address their goals of serving more Hispanic families.

- Putting in increased time and attention to gathering data to track the impact of marketing. It takes time to train staff about gathering encounter data and monitoring to assure they do so on a consistent basis.

7 Putting it all together.

Marketing your center will take a sustained and organized effort. In order to keep track of your efforts, it is helpful to create a marketing action plan. It should include your audiences, your objectives, the planned activities and strategies. Of great importance is setting a time line for completion of activities. It is very easy for marketing efforts to fall to the bottom of the “To Do” list. Accountability to the plan is important. On the following page is a sample of the plan that PRO developed to address one area within New Mexico. It does not include all of their planned activities, but is provided to give you a feeling for the level of detail such a plan will need.

LAS VEGAS COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Target Audiences:

- Spanish-speaking Latino parents of children with special needs residing in the targeted geographic areas
- Providers (e.g., hospitals, pediatric practices, social workers) working with the target audience population in the specified geographic areas
- Community (e.g., libraries, Head Starts, community centers) and advocacy organizations and community opinion leaders (e.g., FBOs)
- Large employers in the area
- Current and prospective volunteers
- Local city government officials
- Public school districts, local public education foundation(s) and PTAs
- State Federal Government agencies working with Latino population (e.g., Office of Border Health—they seem to be working with promotoras)

Objectives:

- Increase number of Spanish-speaking Latino clients who call-in for advice
- Recruit Spanish-speaking Latino clients to attend workshops and the conference
- Build and sustain volunteer base in the targeted geographic areas
- Increase number of Spanish-speaking Latino referrals by intermediaries

Activities

Activities	Strategies/Suggestions	Timeline	Status
Set up Community resource centers in community.		8/31/2012	
Develop and place a series of matte [pre-written] articles in the local community papers—they can provide a spotlight on specific upcoming workshops; highlight volunteers experience or highlight each of the areas PRO focuses on: advocacy, education, and health. Consider purchasing ad space in these publications promoting upcoming workshops.	Adapt SPAN's "Need Help" Flyer	7/27/2012	Done
Proactively recruit volunteers among clients who access PRO's services	Will contact families who are Spanish speaking	7/27/2012	Done
Partner Identification—Via Internet searches and/or by contacting current partners in the specified geographic locations identify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care providers • Social services agencies targeting Spanish-speaking Latino populations (e.g., food banks like Casa de Peregrinos [Las Cruces]) • Local housing authority agencies • Faith-based organizations • Head Starts • Public schools & parent-teacher organizations • Community centers and social clubs (e.g., soccer) • Libraries • Minorities and immigrant rights advocacy organizations • Large employers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. El Centro Family Health 2. Las Vegas Clinic for Children and Youth 3. Las Vegas Dental Clinic 4. Deacon Ernest Chavez 5. Salvation Arm 6. Samaritan House 7. Tri County Family Justice Center 8. Somos Familia 	7/11/2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LM 7-6-2012; LM 7-11-2012 2. LM 7-11-2012 3. Faxed PRO overview and contact info 7-11-2012 4. LM 7-6-2012 5. Spoke to and sent email to Lynn 7-6-2012 6. Mailed out PRO packet.
Distribute flyers about upcoming events in places frequented by the members of the target audience (e.g., neighborhood grocery stores; laundromats)	When workshops are scheduled will send flyers	8/3/2012	Sent information 9-11-2012 to develop flyer.
Continue to cultivate, and if possible, develop new local Spanish radio station contacts where PRO staff can act as "experts" to be called upon for a relevant subject-matter talk show or pitch a story about rights and special needs children (e.g., KRUC 88.9 FM Las Cruces; KPSA 1230 AM & KRDD 1320 AM Roswell, NM) See www.ontheradio.net/ for station listings. Ask them to do a PSA to announce a local workshop.	KFUN "Over the Backfence" Morning Show	7/26/2012	In progress. Will contact Morning show to promote workshop now that it has been scheduled.

Reference: National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs. NS-CSHCN 2009/10. Data query from the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved 5/3/2012 from www.childhealthdata.org.

The **Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development (GUCCHD)** was established over four decades ago. The GUCCHD's mission is to improve the quality of life for all children and youth, children with special needs, adults with developmental and other disabilities, and their families. A division of Georgetown University's Department of Pediatrics, the Center is founded on an interdisciplinary approach to service, training, research, community outreach, technical assistance, and public policy.



Founded in 1990, **The Parents' Place of Maryland** was created by parents of children and youth with disabilities to help other parents and families facing

similar challenges. The Parents' Place is staffed primarily by parents of children with disabilities and works in coalition with many statewide disability organizations. Our staff help families obtain appropriate education, health care, and services for their children with disabilities; work to improve education and health care for all children; train and inform parents and professionals on a variety of topics; and connect children with disabilities to community resources that address their needs.



Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) is a private non-profit parent organization committed to improving the lives and education of ALL children through a special emphasis on children with disabilities. ECAC affirms the right

of all individuals, from all backgrounds and cultures, with or without disabilities, to an appropriate education and other needed services. We seek to make that right a reality by providing information, education, outreach, and support to and for families with children across the state of North Carolina.



Founded in 1981 by families who had children with special health and developmental needs,

Parents Reaching Out (PRO) is a statewide non-profit organization that works with parents, caregivers, educators and other professionals to promote healthy, positive and caring experiences for New Mexico families and children. Through partnerships with funding from federal and state agencies, donations and the valuable time of our volunteers, PRO develops materials, programs, workshops to effect positive change for families in New Mexico.

For further information about this project contact:

Suzanne Bronheim
Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development
202-687-8914
bronheis@georgetown.edu

The research was conducted with funding from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant R40MC17176.

COPYRIGHT

This instrument is protected by the copyright policies of Georgetown University. Permission is **required** if this instrument is to be:

- modified in any way
- used in broad distribution
- used for commercial purposes.

To request permission to use these materials contact the Suzanne Bronheim, Ph.D. bronheis@georgetown.edu

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Georgetown University provides equal opportunity in its programs, activities, and employment practices for all persons and prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of age, color, disability, family responsibilities, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, matriculation, national origin, personal appearance, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or another factor prohibited by law. Inquiries regarding Georgetown University's non-discrimination policy may be addressed to the Director of Affirmative Action Programs, Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action, 37th and O Streets, NW, Suite M36, Darnall Hall, Georgetown University, Washington, DC 20005.