Introducing the facilitators

- **Milly Burrows, LICSW**
  Family Partnerships / Mental Health Manager
  Early Head Start
  Associates for Human Services, Inc.

- **Margo Chevers, Commissioner**
  Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
  Co-Facilitator of Grandparents in the Know Support Group
Courtesies

• Please turn off or mute your cell phones
• We will take questions & comments throughout
• You will be given ample opportunity to share
Benefits of Support Groups

Knowing you’re not alone
- Sharing personal stories, feelings, frustrations, monthly check-ins with members
- Offer mutual support

Offers Resources
- Reading and discussing relevant articles of interest to the group
- Social service agencies that have services available to grandparents raising grandchildren

Advocacy
Benefits of Support Groups

Sharing topics to explore
- Discussing the many facets of addiction
- Discussing difficult issues with children (parents’ substance use, incarceration)
- Maintaining jobs while caring for children
- Internet technology- supervising and maintaining safety
- Grandparent’s age/health
What We’ll be Covering

- How to publicize
- Themes and Topics for meetings
- Resources
- Funding
- Facilitating the meetings
Publicizing with Flyers

- Sr. Centers
- Daycare
- Schools – ask to have it placed in their newsletter/nurse’s office/guidance and adjustment office
- Churches
- Pediatrician offices
- Hospitals
- Mental health agencies
Flyers

- DTA office
- DCF office
- WIC office
- Correspondence with politicians offices
- Family lawyers
- Early intervention programs
- Headstart and early headstart programs
- Libraries
- YMCA & YWCA
- Boys & Girls Clubs
Publicizing with Press Releases

- This is on-going
- Need a list of all the publications in your catchment area
- Find out the proper editor to send press releases to
- They prefer to receive them in email form
- Attach the press release to your email
Publicizing with Press Releases

News Release Dos and DONTs

Basic Information to include

Who is doing it?
What are they doing? Why is it being done? Who will benefit?
When is it taking place?
Where does it occur?
Publicizing with Press Releases

TIPS

Never use “I” or “we” unless it is in a quote.
Never continue a sentence onto 2nd page. If it won’t fit, put it on the next page, flush left. Do NOT indent. Remember that shorter is better. Keep it simple.
Press Release Sample

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: (your name and contact info)

Organization’s name

For Immediate Release

City, date

(Name) of the grandparents Raising Grandchildren group will sponsor “title of workshop” addressing ___ on (date, time and location)

The workshop is free and open to the public. Speakers include. During the workshop, attendees invited to participate in discussions regarding ____. The event will also include ____.
The (name) Grandparents Raising Grandchildren has (#) members and meets on (day of week/month) at (time) at (location). They are a group of grandmothers and grandfathers that meet to talk about the challenges they face raising their grandchildren, resources they have found helpful and plans for inviting guest speakers to present information of interest to the group. For more information or to get involved please contact (name) at (phone number and web site if appropriate).
The grandparents raising grandchildren support group is one of many statewide support groups that is listed on the website of the Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. The commission was established on July 8, 2008 when the Child Advocate bill was signed into law. The commission consists of 15 persons who have demonstrated a commitment to grandparents. For information about other support groups, resources, relevant news and the work of the commission, go to the web site at www.massgrg.com
Making Technology Work for You

The Web --- Facebook --- Pinterest --- Twitter

- Use a catchy, attention-grabbing headline or objective
- Carefully create your profile
- Use key words that will help people identify you/your group
Making Technology Work for You

- Keep your language clear and concise
- Be consistent so you become branded and easily recognized
- Post frequent updates (at least weekly)
- Update with a purpose – make the content work for your goal
- Make your postings generate interest, update your audience on new developments, etc.
Making Technology Work for You

- Respond promptly and thoughtfully to any inquiries
- Acknowledge people who reach out to you and/or participate in conversations
- “Like” other people’s sites so your info gets more exposure
- Email other people/organizations to ask them to “Like” your page
Making Technology Work for You

- Consider using a photo that relates to your objective, stimulates interest, and is of good quality
- Keep it interesting
- If you have the ability, consider creating or utilizing an interactive game
Services of Support Groups

Support Group (English and Spanish language)
Information & Referral
Phone Reassurance
Grandparent Education Workshops
Lending Resource Library
Quarterly newsletter
Recreation Programs
Parenting Classes

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Services of Support Groups

Outreach

Informational forums

Support for Children with Developmental Disabilities

Family Activities

Playgroups

Clothing and Toy Swap

mb
Topics and Themes for Groups

- **RELATIONSHIPS**
  - Setting healthy boundaries & loving limits
  - Handling confrontations
  - Multigenerational issues
  - Communicating with Children
  - Birds and the Bees
  - What’s the new norm
Topics and Themes for Groups

- EMOTIONAL HEALTH
  - Mutual Support
  - Communicating with children
  - Developmental expectations
  - Coping with loss, trauma
  - Connecting children with their cultural heritage
- Social Connections
- Self Care

mb
Topics and Themes for Groups

- Public School EDUCATION Rights
  Basic Education Rights, Processes & Advocacy
  Learning about diagnoses
  Bullying

Childcare
Topics and Themes for Groups

- **LEGAL ISSUES**
  - Guardianship vs. Custody vs. Adoption
  - Visitations/siblings/other grandparents
  - Advocacy
  - Planning for children’s future

Speakers
Resources

Coordinated Family and Community Engagement programs (CFCE)

For families of children ages birth to 8 years

To provide information, resources and accessibility to high quality early education and child care programs
Resources

Families First

Offers two-part workshops for Grandparents parenting again.

www.families-first.org
617-868-7687 ext 14
Resources

www.MassGRG.com
Guides, materials, websites, workshops
Respite opportunities
Family Resource Centers (all listed separately - look up for your area)
Resources

- Local Visiting Nurse Associations have support groups for children on grief and loss
Resources

Mass 2-1-1
Heating/Fuel Assistance
Senior Care
Housing Assistance
Suicide Prevention
Counseling
Child Care Services
Official Emergency Information
Resources

Mass 2-1-1
- Mental Health Services
- Volunteering
- Substance Abuse Programs
- Health Care
- Basic Needs – Food, Shelter, Clothing
- Crisis Intervention
- Financial & Legal Assistance
Resources

Mass 2-1-1

- Domestic Violence
- Emergency Shelter Information
- Disability Services
- Veterans Services
- Financial & Legal Assistance
- Volunteering & MORE

Is your agency listed?
Resources

Scholarships (YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, Summer Camps, Salvation Army 5-12yrs)

Adoption Agencies
Adoptions Journeys
MARE www.mareinc.org
links to other resources

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Resources

Stay in touch with your state representatives and senators

State representatives
http://www.malegislature.gov/People/House

State Senators
http://www.malegislature.gov/People/Senate

What resources can you add to this?
Best Practices

- Food
- Confidentiality
- Babysitting
- Volunteers for babysitting
- Building relationships w/ politicians
- Free meeting space (choose wisely)
- Facilitator: licensed mental health counselor or trained facilitator
Best Practices

- Agency
- Build leadership
- Newsletter
- Family social activities
- Car pooling
- Frequent feedback from participants
- Co-facilitation
- What best practices can you add?
Facilitation Skills

- Never forget that the facilitator's primary job is to create, and constantly re-create, an environment that brings the best out of those present.
- There is no one size fits all. All groups are different.
- Never abuse your power - it's about them, not you.
- Go through a training program.
Facilitation Skills

• Your role

• Establish the rules with input from group
• Listen
• Give everyone the opportunity to participate
• Draw out reluctant people
Facilitation Skills

- Your role
  - Respect that everyone’s opinion is valuable
  - Be non-judgemental
  - Keep the meeting moving
  - Wrap up
Funding

- DCF
- Council on Aging
- Area Agency on Aging
- Banks
- Foundations (AARP, Brookdale, CDBG, donors, United Way, CHNA)
- Local Service Groups
Helpful sites

• www.MassGRG.com
  
  *Put in your zip code to get info on childcare providers in your area or call the EEC at 617-988-6600.*

• www.mass.gov/masshealth/childbehavioralhealth
• www.learn2cope.org *only in eastern mass
• www.nami.org
Helpful sites

- www.Mass211help.org
- www.child-family-services.org/adoption-journeys-program-components
- www.mareinc.org
- www.familycontinuity.org
- www.zerotothree.org
- www.aarp.org/relationships/grandparenting/info

Can you add to this list?
Q&A