

Toolkit for Parents' Groups Supporting Deaf Children

ENHANCING CAPACITIES: SUGGESTIONS AND RESOURCES




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INTRODUCTION



This is a supplementary volume of the *Toolkit for Parents' Groups Supporting Deaf Children*. It lists topics that parents' groups can consider as part of their capacity building initiatives for knowledge and skill development. Resource persons/agencies that may be able to help with the same have been mentioned. The document also contains information on writing minutes and some basic financial aspects relevant for a group. Other available reference materials are suggested as well.

Together, the five documents in the Toolkit provide suggestions that can help parents' groups grow. The Toolkit is, by no means, final. It can be improved with our evolving experiences.

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Capacity building of parents' groups needs to be undertaken in a flexible manner keeping local factors in mind. A structured class room type setting is not always required.



USEFUL TOPICS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING OF PARENTS' GROUPS

05

Are there any points we should keep in mind when planning orientation or training for group members?

- We should choose topics that are relevant and decide based on discussion within the group.
- We have to choose dates, times, duration and locations that are convenient for most, if not all members.
- It is always good to brief the resource person beforehand about the background and requirements of the group that is to be trained.
- We should ask the resource person what arrangements he/she needs for the training. We should tell him/her what we can provide.

- The training content should be explained with the use of pictures, symbols and other such means that help people to understand and remember.
- Training must be planned in a realistic and practical manner.



We try to cover topics in our regular monthly meetings. Sometimes, we need separate training also. We cannot give more than 2-3 hours for the training. It is also difficult to keep sitting in one place like that!

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We like training where various activities including discussions with practical examples are used. Then we remember it also. Using games in training make them even more enjoyable.



After the training, we should also discuss internally how the training was done, the methods used and whether we found it useful. Such discussions will help us in planning subsequent training.

Topics to be considered at the initial stages of a group

No	Theme (Knowledge/Skill)	Who Can We Contact For This
1	Directly Related to Our Children	
1.1	Basics of childhood deafness (Structure of the ear, potential causes and types of deafness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any experienced group member from another parents' group in the district or at the state level who can visit ○ Any local non-government organisation (NGO) with expertise on such matters
1.2	Early identification of deafness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IED (Inclusive Education for Disabled) Coordinator ○ Experienced Anganwadi Worker
1.3	How to communicate with our children (Sign language, lip reading, oral method, by writing and using pictures) Note: Efforts have to be made so that children can access such inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any local NGO with expertise on such matters ○ Special educator working with deaf children ○ Those trained in Indian Sign Language
1.4	Rights of deaf children (Start with children's rights and then proceed to rights of deaf children; highlight disability card and certificate, provisions for education, transport etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any experienced parents' group member (from another group) ○ District Child Protection Officer (for overall rights) ○ Special Educator working with deaf children ○ IED Coordinator ○ Any local NGO with expertise on such matters

No	Theme (Knowledge/Skill)	Who Can We Contact For This
1.5	Suggestions for obtaining and maintaining hearing aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Special Educator working with deaf children ○ Any local NGO with expertise on such matters ○ Any experienced parents' group member
2	Working as a Group	
2.1	Group Formation (Why form a group; points to keep in mind in choosing leaders and their roles; framing rules)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any experienced parents' group member from another group in the district or at the state level who can visit ○ Any local NGO with expertise on such matters
2.2	Writing minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any experienced parents' group member from another group in the district or at the state level who can visit ○ Any local NGO with expertise on such matters
2.3	Identifying key local resources and agencies/institutions that can support us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any experienced parents' group member from another group in the district or at the state level who can visit ○ Any local NGO with expertise on such matters ○ District Child Protection Officer ○ Any knowledgeable local person who can provide such information

Topics to be considered when the group has gained some experience

No	Theme (Knowledge/Skill)	Who Can We Contact For This
1	Directly Related to Our Children	
1.1	Children's rights and entitlements including provisions for deaf children with deafness (more detailed including related legislations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IED Coordinator ○ District Child Protection Officer (for overall children's rights) ○ Any local NGO with experience of working on such issues
1.2	Stage of adolescence i.e. 10-19 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anganwadi Worker ○ Auxiliary Nurse cum Midwife (ANM) ○ Anwasha Counsellor ○ Honorary Health Worker (urban) ○ Accredited Social Health Activist or ASHA (rural) ○ Any local NGO working on such issues
1.3	Child protection including issues of child abuse (how we can encourage children to protect themselves, role of parents, whom to contact if any incident of abuse is suspected)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ District Child Protection Officer ○ Any local NGO with experience of working on such issues – including those part of the national CHILDLINE (1098) network
1.4	Tips to help deaf children in socialising with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any member from the same parents' group or another experienced group ○ Special Educator working with deaf children ○ Deaf young people and adults who can share their experience








No	Theme (Knowledge/Skill)	Who Can We Contact For This
1.5	Promoting child participation (within homes, schools and communities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any local NGO with expertise on such matters ○ Any experienced parents' group member
1.6	Promoting access to higher education for deaf children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local NGO with expertise on such matters ○ Any experienced parents' group member ○ Universities including those with open and/or distance learning opportunities (as relevant)
1.7	Vocational training and work opportunities for deaf young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local NGO with expertise on such matters ○ Block Development Officer ○ National Institute of Speech and Hearing Disability ○ Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the Handicapped ○ Employment Exchange
2	Working as a Group	
2.1	Communication (including public speaking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local NGO with expertise on such matters ○ Any experienced parents' group member from another group within the district ○ Any NGO working on such issues ○ Any other resource person with expertise on this issue

No	Theme (Knowledge/Skill)	Who Can We Contact For This
2.2	Leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○As above
2.3	Maintaining finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Any experienced treasurer from other parents' group within the district or at the state level ○Any local NGO working on such issues ○Any other resource person with expertise on this issue
2.4	Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Any experienced parents' group member from another group within the district who has undertaken such initiatives ○Any experienced member from the state level parents' group ○Any local NGO working on advocacy (can share about the process)
2.5	Legal norms as well as government provisions and opportunities (related to the group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Office of the State Disability Commissioner ○District Social Welfare Officer ○Experienced parents' group

Are there any basics that we need to know about advocacy?

Through advocacy, we can speak up for our deaf children and support them in obtaining their rights and entitlements.

Key Steps

- Step 1:**  Identify the specific issue or concern (What is it? How is it affecting deaf children? What are the reasons/causes behind this issue?)
- Step 2:**  Identify the change we want to see (What is our goal? What do we want to achieve?)
- Step 3:**  Record relevant details (Write down what happened/is happening. Mention dates, times, people involved etc so that this can be referred to later.)
- Step 4:**  Identify whom to approach (Depending on the nature of the issue, identify who needs to be approached and at what level. For example, if the issue is related to education, should the headmaster be informed or should we go to the Circle Inspector ?)
- Step 5:**  Identify allies (Who can support us? Identify people and agencies that also hold the same opinion and can stand with us on the issue.)
- Step 6:**  Prepare and then approach concerned official with issue (Prepare a document which outlines the demands written in a logical manner, decide who will represent the group)
- Step 7:**  Note what happens (Document what happens in the meeting for future record; this copy can be shared with the person whom the group met)



Parents' group members and children meeting a block level official with their concerns

- Step 8:** 🟡 Keep track (Follow up to see if any decisions or commitments made are being met or not; go to the next higher level if needed, involve allies)
- Step 9:** 🟡 Review progress (If the expected change has happened, then undertake further steps as needed; if not, review strategy and plan further activities with allies etc)
- Step 10:** 🟡 Keep following up! (We have to keep up the pressure till we get what we want.)



We need to prepare ourselves for advocacy. We need to collect all the relevant information, understand related laws and programmes and structures.

Sometimes, our concerns may be about deaf children who are unable to access existing provisions that are mandated by law or provided through some scheme or programme. Sometimes, it could be about the functioning and quality of a service. Then, there may be issues which are currently not covered in any law but we want those to be included as well. This last category may take a comparatively longer time to materialise and require alliances on a bigger scale.



Some issues may be solved easily while others may take time to resolve. We should continue to work with our allies and not get demotivated.

Parents' groups in Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Hooghly and Kolkata (West Bengal, India) have been raising their voice for deaf children's rights and other issues that affect them. They have approached functionaries with concerns regarding obtaining disability cards and certificates and inclusion of deaf children in government schools. This has taken them to the offices of Block Development Officer, IED Coordinator, Sabhapati and others. These groups are also represented in the state level parents' group Pratidhwani. Members from these groups attend Pratidhwani meetings in Kolkata. Together, they have now taken up the issue of ensuring that deaf children are taught in only one language in schools.



WRITING MINUTES

Why do we need to keep a record of what happened in our group meetings?

It is important to capture who came, discussions held and decisions taken in the group meetings so that we can refer to them later. If we don't record this, then we may not be able to link one meeting with the next one. People may also forget what was agreed upon. If the group wants to seek registration as a formal entity, then this is a basic requirement.

What are minutes?

Noting the proceedings of a meeting is known as taking minutes. It contains names and signatures of people who participated in the meeting. Their contact information (such as phone numbers and address) can also be written. The topics that were covered (known as agenda) are listed. Then, the key points from the discussion are noted. Finally, any decision taken (known as resolution) and points for follow up (including names of persons responsible for the action points) are mentioned. It is a good idea to keep a separate register for writing minutes (we can call it 'Minutes Register').

Date:		Venue:		Key Points
Participants Name:	Address	Phone No.	Signature	
1				
2				
3				Resolution
4				
5				
Agenda				
1				Follow Up
2				
3				

The resolution should be read out to all the participants once so that everyone is clear about it and agrees to it. Also, the next meeting should begin with the minutes

of the previous meeting being read.

Should we write minutes only for group meetings or if we conduct any other meeting as well?

It is good to write minutes for any other important meeting held with a panchayat / councillor or other officials where any important decision is taken or they make any commitments. Then, we will have a record and can follow up with them later.

Points to Remember

- It is best to write the minutes while the meeting is going on or as soon as possible after that since it will still be fresh in our minds. If we postpone this, we may forget something.
- The responsibility of writing minutes can be shared. In one meeting, one member can write. In the next meeting, some other member can do so.
- In the beginning of a meeting, the minutes of the last meeting should be read. Then, one member should propose that the minutes be accepted. Another member should second this proposal. If all members agree, then the minutes can be considered as accepted. If required, some changes can also be made before it is approved.
- All members may not be able to write well. This should not become a barrier. It is important that the main points are captured.
- Writing minutes and undertaking other documentation related work will help members in enhancing their skills in this field. This will prove useful in their personal lives as well.



MAINTAINING FINANCES

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Should we take a membership fee?

- The group is like a family. Here, all members need to participate in various aspects including the financial component.
- If members contribute an amount every month as a membership fee, then this can grow into a fund that can be used for expenditure during activities, meet any costs related to meetings and for any emergency.
- It is extremely important that this issue is discussed frankly in the group. The economic situation of all members should be considered when deciding on the amount to be paid on a monthly basis.

Do we need to give a receipt to the members for the money taken from them?

Yes. There should be proof that a member gave money and that it was accepted by the treasurer on behalf of the group. This will help in maintaining accounts as well. A receipt book must be printed and used.

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No.	Receipt	Date
Name of the Group (Group of parents/guardians supporting deaf children and young people at the block/district level) Address of the Group		
Name.....		
Address		
Amount received as monthly contribution.....		
Rs <input type="text"/>		
Signature.....		

This is an example. Parents' groups can consider this when developing their receipt book. They can choose to add other elements on the page as well or design this differently.

Initially, we asked all our members to give Rs. 10 every month. After two years, we increased it to Rs. 30. Everybody realised that things have got expensive. We need to give Rs. 30. Everybody agreed.



We keep carbon copy paper between sheets of our receipt book. This way, one sheet can be torn off and given to the member as proof of payment while another copy remains as a sheet within the book.

Can we take money from people as a donation?

Yes. But we need to keep certain things in mind.

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- As a group, we should be clear regarding the people and agencies from whom we can or cannot accept donations.
- Whenever we approach anyone for a donation, we have to be ready to share about our group and answer their questions as well. We should be able to say how we intend to use the money.
- We should check if the donors have any expectations (such as publicity) and whether we agree and can match that.
- We should always provide a receipt.
- We should keep track of all the money that is coming in.

Do we need to have a bank account?

The group will need a bank account where it can deposit the money collected as membership fees and from donations (as applicable). For this, the three group leaders will need to visit a bank and undertake the necessary formalities for opening an account. A passbook will be issued where any money that is deposited as well as withdrawn from the account will be noted. The passbook must be kept safely by the treasurer. With a bank account, it will be easier to keep a record of the group's financial dealings.



What is a budget?

A budget is basically an estimate of income and expenditure. So, if we make a budget then we have a sense of how much activities may cost and can compare it with the amount of money available for spending. We can follow the steps given on the next page for preparing a budget.

Step 1: Decide the activity we want to do.

Step 2: Break the activity into all the sub activities and see if there are any costs (for instance, if we want to do a cultural programme, then cost of hiring the sound system, any rent for the venue, any promotional material, costs for snacks, any transport etc)

The sub tasks and costs can be written together as shown below.

No	Sub Task for the Activity	Expected Expenditure (Rs)
1		
2		
3		
4		
Total		
<i>Total amount in words:</i>		

- Step 3:** Check how much money the group has.
- Step 4:** In case the existing amount does not cover the expected total cost of the activity, then identify other sources of money. Additional contributions from members or donations can be considered.
- Step 5:** Share the details of the activity and the budget in the group meeting. Proceed further after these have been approved by the group.

Points to Remember

- The treasurer plays the key role in all financial matters. However, he/she should consult the president and secretary. Also, all key decisions should be discussed collectively in the group.
- It is good to note the actual expenditure made for the activity and tally it with what was planned. This aspect should be discussed in meetings and the experience utilised in planning subsequent activities. This practice also ensures transparency.
- As the group grows and gains in experience, we can consider having a budget which goes beyond one activity and looks at a set of activities with the related costs. This can be done first on a quarterly and then on an annual basis.
- Group members can be encouraged to undertake savings. This will prove beneficial for the group as well as in their individual lives.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Deaf Child Worldwide (2015). *Jene Rakhun – Badhir Byaktir Sujog Subidha* [Facilities and provisions for deaf people in West Bengal, India]

Deaf Child Worldwide (2009). *Ekti Badhirakta Jukta Shishur Saathe Kaaj Karun* [A guidebook for helping family members and social workers supporting deaf children]

Deaf Child Worldwide (2008). *Family Friendly! Working with deaf children and their communities worldwide*

Sphuron – Annual magazine published by the Office of the State Disability Commissioner (West Bengal) on December 3



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- *Milan, Asha and Nayan (parents' groups of deaf children in Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar)
- * Guardian Forum (Parents' group of children with multiple disabilities in Jalpaiguri)
- *Udita and Anwasha (parents' groups of deaf children in Kolkata)
- *Pratidhwani (West Bengal state level parents' group of deaf children)
- *Representatives of deaf youth from the above mentioned districts who are deaf role models
- *Graham Bell Centre for the Deaf (GBCD, Hooghly)
- *Khagenhat Welfare Organisation (KWO, Jalpaiguri)
- *Child in Need Institute (CINI, Kolkata)
- *Various government functionaries including service providers, community members and other like-minded individuals who contributed

Odisha, India

- *Mayurbhanj Pratidhwani (parents' group in Mayurbhanj)
- *Mahalaxmi Parents' Group (parents' group in Brahmapur)
- *Parents' Federation Digapandi Block (parents' group in Ganjam)
- *Pratidhwani Puri Sadar, (parents' group in Puri)

- *Representatives of deaf youth from the above mentioned districts who are deaf role models
- *Citizen's Association for Rural Development (CARD, Brahmapur)
- *Lower Income People's Involvement for Community Action (LIPICA, Ganjam)
- *Society for Action in Disability and Health Awareness (Sadhana, Mayurbhanj)
- *Sri Nrusingha Dev Anchalika Yuba Parishad (SNDAYP, Puri)
- *Various government functionaries including service providers, community members and other like-minded individuals who contributed

Karnataka, India

- *Yashwani Parents' Alliance (parents' group in Bijapura)
- *Chetana (parents' group in Dewangere)
- *Hongirana, Hombelakn, Jeevanemmdi, Hosavelaku (parents' groups in Koppal)
- *Representatives of deaf youth from the above mentioned districts who are deaf role models
- *Association of People with Disability (APD, Karnataka)
- *Samuha (Karnataka)
- * Various government functionaries including service providers, community members and other like-minded individuals who contributed

Deaf Child Worldwide is the leading UK charity committed to supporting deaf children and young people in some of the world's poorest communities. We provide vital support for deaf children and young people in South Asia, East Africa and Latin America focusing on communities where the need is greatest. We work with partner organisations to ensure that deaf children and young people are fully included in family, education and community life.

Deaf Child Worldwide is the international development arm of the National Deaf Children's Society (charity number 1016532).

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