

2022 Match Summary

Name of Match: **Family leadership: Fostering the path of inclusion, growth, and resilience from the beginning.**

Location of Match: Online- 4 sessions

Session 1: Why build family leadership? Begin early to set a positive direction for your child and family hosted by Plumtree and McKenzie Centre Tuesday 16th August 2022

Session 2: Why leadership by families is key to full, meaningful and inclusive lives for people with disability CRU host on behalf of NACBO September 24th 2022

Session 3: Learning from each other – how family leadership organisations can help. Imagine More host on behalf of NACBO 6th October 2022

Session 4: What more could we be doing as families and organisations to build strong family leadership? hosted by Plumtree and McKenzie Centre, 20th October 2022

1. Describe the **purpose** of the match: (Maximum 500 words)

This family leadership match was hosted by four different organizations to focus on families of children and adults across the lifespan.

Session 1

As parents, we want the best for our children but when a young child has a developmental delay or disability, how do we get back to what's important to our family? Developing new ways to think about a positive future for our child and family starts at home as we hold on to the possibility, not the struggle. Join us for session one, to discuss what family leadership means in the context of young children with developmental delays or disabilities.

TOGETHER WE WILL DISCUSS (three or four bullet points)

- The meaning of family leadership
- Family leadership as a journey of development starting in the early years
- Building our child's independence
- How we as families can identify what's important to us and a plan to achieve this

This session focused on families whose children are aged birth to 8 years old along with professionals who work to build family leadership. However, we welcomed families whose children are older.

Session 2

Why leadership by families is key to full, meaningful, and inclusive lives for people with disability

- How family leaders can be spotted and developed
- The values, knowledge and skills family leaders need
- Potent strategies for developing leadership
- Why family leaders need ongoing connections to thrive and contribute

Session 3

Learning from each other– how family leadership organisations can help.

Session 4: What more could we be doing as families and organisations to build strong family leadership?

We pulled together the key points from our discussions across the previous three sessions, and dmoving Family Leadership forward... beyond discussions.

Exploring...

- What more can we be doing as families and organisations to build strong family leadership?
- What more can we be doing to add to what we already know, and
- How can we help to activate Family Leadership, nurture it, and help families flourish.

2. Describe the **leaders** who participated in the match (for example, were some of them peers, youth, family/caregivers, practitioners, policy makers, clinicians? Were they from community settings, government, NGOs, clinical settings?): (Maximum 500 words)

There was a total of 48 RSVP's (5 apologies and 10 no shows) across the three sessions hosted by the three organisations, plus the fourth wrap-up session which was facilitated by Plumtree.

Session 1- 22

Session 2- 16

Session 3- 20

Session 4 -18

Managers who didn't identify as having a child with a disability

Peer Workers

Parents of young children with a disability who are not working in the sector

The below people attended at least one session with almost half attending 3 or all sessions.

The mix of participants included Leaders of Organisations, ranging from Peer and/or Advocacy Support, to Service Delivery, Government representatives, Educators, Peer Workers and also Parents.

There was a good blend of people, with parents early in their journey and others who have been in the sector for longer, this added to the richness and depth of our discussions, benefiting from the wisdom experience brings, and the freshness of new ideas that new eyes can bring.

It was also good to see representatives from various communities and cultures contributing to our discussions, where we shared insights and sought solutions to our sector's challenges. We had people from 5 different states and territories across Australia, as well as people joining in from New Zealand, the USA, and Scotland.

Match hosts

Jan Krueger	Executive Director	Imagine More ACT
Linda Depledge	Family Support Worker	McKenzie Centre NZ
Lisa Bridle	Senior Consultant	Community Resource Unit QLD
Margaret Rodgers	CEO	Community Resource Unit QLD
Melo Kalemkeridis	Peer Worker	Plumtree Childrens Services NSW
Sylvana Mahmic	CEO	Plumtree Childrens Services NSW
Trisha Benge	Centre Director	McKenzie Centre NZ

Other attendees

Alexis Diamond	Branch Manager	DSS Early Years Strategy ACT
Ann-Marie Pergamalis	Parent	
Bree Pennie	Program Lead	Kindred NSW
Bridget Snedden	Director	Family Network NZ
Caroline Grassia		DSS ACT

Camela Macpherson	Policy Officer	DSS ACT
Emma Hetherington	Peer Worker	Plumtree Childrens Services NSW
Eram Afroze	Peer Worker	Now and Next Learning NZ
Erosha Bakmiwewa	Peer Worker	Imagine More ACT
Irina Castellano		
Isabel Le	Peer Worker	Plumtree Childrens Services NSW
Jo Hughes	Head of Service Dev.	Down Syndrome Scotland
Joseph Anthony Sarra Jr.	Director	Georgia's Children's Freedom Initiative USA
Karen Reid	Team Leader	Valued Lives WA
Keren Edwards		
Kirstie Newton		
Kristie Hardbottle	Peer Project Officer	Valued Lives WA
Kylie Aekins	Peer Worker Hub Leader	Plumtree Childrens Services NSW
Lisa Ann McEvoy	Agent	Growing Together NZ
Matt Attia	Parent	
Nicole Buffoni	Peer Hub Leader	Plumtree Children's Services NSW
Olivera Pendarovski	Parent	
Rachel Skoss	Senior Research Fellow	University of Notre Dame WA
Sarah Harvey	NDIS support co-ordinator	Plan HELP NSW
Stacey Touma	CEO	Kindred NSW
Victoria Hatwell	Peer Worker	McKenzie Centre NZ
William Miles		
Cameron Zellner		

3. What do you see as the **game changer** for this match topic? (Game changer is defined as: a newly introduced element or factor that changes an existing situation or activity in a significant way.) (Max 500 words)

Overwhelmingly, participants came to the match stating they wanted to learn about practice and perspectives on family leadership. The discussions were rich and nuanced. The three matches were hosted by different types of organisations:

- Plumtree Children's Services
- Imagine More
- CRU

This diversity in the host organisation provided a range of approaches on the topic of family leadership that included:

- Taking a lifespan perspective starting in early childhood
- Presenting a unique range of perspectives on family leadership provided by the different organisations

4. How will the match **support inclusion, resilience and growth** for this match topic and for the leaders who attended: (Maximum 500 words)

Session 1: What are your thoughts on activating family leadership beginning early?

- **Start from the beginning in early childhood** and keep building because it's a different experience for every family
- **Introduce the role of peers**, peer work, peer support and connection from the beginning
- **Set expectations** for an inclusive life across the lifespan
- **Recognise that the systems** are often challenging family leadership

Session 2: What helps family leaders thrive over the long term?

- **Strong support networks** through connection with other families and family leaders across the generations
- **Importance of pacing yourself** and looking after your family and personal wellbeing, and having fun
- **Opportunities to learn, grow, and develop** your family leadership experiences in a supportive environment

Session 3. What are some ways families can show leadership?

- **Family leadership can look different**, from acts of personal leadership within ones family through to influencing and engaging with wider system change and advocacy
- **Sharing positive stories of change** including being vulnerable about the realities of challenges at different stages
- **Modelling family leadership** through behaviour and strengths based approaches and stories that enable others to act
- **Collaborating** with other allies and organisations wherever possible

Appendix- Summary of the 3-session match which was sent to all participants

Family Leadership: Fostering the Path of Inclusion, Growth, and Resilience from the Beginning

Recap of our match so far from participants contributions through jamboard....

Overwhelmingly, participants came to the match stating they wanted to learn about practice and perspectives on family leadership

Session 1: Why build family leadership? Begin early to set a positive direction for your child and family

What does family leadership mean to you?

- **Building the agency, confidence, and capability** of families to actively shape their and their child's life through a strengths and empowerment approach
- Sharing and learning what we are doing to build family leadership individually and as a collective

What are your thoughts on activating family leadership beginning early?

- **Start from the beginning in early childhood** and keep building because it's a different experience for every family
- **Introduce the role of peers**, peer work, peer support and connection from the beginning
- **Set expectations** for an inclusive life across the lifespan
- **Recognise that the systems** are often challenging family leadership

What are you doing to build family leadership-personally, organizationally or at a community level?

- **Supporting connection and direction** through a range of strategies such as workshops, peer connection, groups, training, and resources
- **Participants shared many great resources** with each other which included international frameworks. We could assemble and distribute these to each other.

What are the challenges around building the family leadership journey for families of young children?

- **Family leadership is individual and developmental**, and it is not introduced systematically to all families from the beginning
- **Families of very young children can be overwhelmed** with information and the focus on addressing immediate issues that arise in the early stages which can mean that family leadership is not understood, valued, or prioritised
- **Specific challenges** included: impact of pandemic, specific needs for particular groups such as those from Aboriginal, cultural, linguistic, religious, LGBTQI+
- **Family leadership is poorly understood** in the broader community and systems and is not funded/resourced well enough

Session 2: Why leadership by families is key to full, meaningful, and inclusive lives for people with disability

What do families need to know? What are the foundational ideas/frameworks they need to be exposed to?

- **The importance of contemporary approaches** to disability such as: social model of disability, a good life, inclusion, strengths-based approaches
- **The need for a positive vision** and the skills and support to get there
- The power of stories to inspire change, mindset, and vision
- **Frameworks and strategies** such as SRV, Citizenship, Circles of Support, The Art of Asking, The Power of 10; vision board

What skills do family leaders need?

- **A range of personal skills** such as: authenticity, calm, patience, open mindedness, being welcoming, strategic thinking; hopefulness; good listener, good communicators, understand and respect privacy, that they know when to ask for help themselves

- **Recognise that all families are different** that their role is to activate agency in others while not enforcing their own preferences, and that they bring others along with them

What helps family leaders thrive over the long term?

- **Strong support networks** through connection with other families and family leaders across the generations
- **Importance of pacing yourself** and looking after your family and personal wellbeing, and having fun
- **Opportunities to learn, grow, and develop** your family leadership experiences in a supportive environment

Session 3: Learning from each other– how family leadership organisations can help.

What approaches do organisations take to invest in family leadership?

- **Peer work:** Supporting, promoting, and developing it
- **Meeting each family where they are at** including starting very early with families of little children right through to connecting with families of older children and adults
- **Delivering practical opportunities for families to listen, learn and engage** with each other through: workshops, weekends, informal and formal connections such as coffee chats, online sessions; that are both private and public where stories and information are shared that can plant seeds of ideas that can change futures

What are some ways families can show leadership?

- **Family leadership can look different**, from acts of personal leadership within ones family through to influencing and engaging with wider system change and advocacy
- **Sharing positive stories of change** including being vulnerable about the realities of challenges at different stages
- **Modelling family leadership** through behaviour and strengths based approaches and stories that enable others to act
- **Collaborating** with other allies and organisations wherever possible

What hinders families most in undertaking family leadership roles?

- **Being unfamiliar with family leadership** for example: not knowing what it's about, that it is more complex than it is, feeling someone else is better equipped not knowing where to start, not knowing we can ask for more and expect great things
- **Personal barriers** such as: being time poor, overwhelmed, low in energy or resilience, focused on immediate child development priorities, lack of confidence, self doubt and guilt, experiences of trauma, the views of other can be limiting, language or culture, fear of repercussions or judgement
- **Systemic barriers** such as: ableism, deficit approaches prevail; limited support and networks