
Best Practice position paper on support for HIV positive parents and their children

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Background

PLWHA organisations are aware of the many potential barriers to participation that HIV positive people can face when attempting to access services, for example, issues of mobility and financial resources.

This discussion paper explores the particular support needs of HIV positive parents and their children when accessing PLWHA organisations. It will also suggest ideas for increasing participation of parents in community programmes, events and management structures.

The provision of quality childcare has long been recognised as a key factor to encourage and support parents to fully participate in their communities including the paid and unpaid work force. If childcare is accessible and affordable it not only benefits the child, the parents but the society as a whole. (1). Research also highlights the pivotal role that the provision of child care options plays in promoting equality for women and increasing women's access to more equal involvement in community. (2)

A significant number of HIV positive people in particular women are also parents. HIV positive parents especially those who carry the sole responsibility for the care of their children may need support with the care options for their children if they are to fully participate in the meetings, social activities and events organised by PLWHA organisations.

Women@napwa network members have raised concerns that there is limited support offered for care of their children when they participate in PLWHA meetings, social activities and events. It has been the experience of women@napwa members that if their children are well supported and cared for it not only decreases their stress but also enables them to more fully participate in the meeting or event. Support for families also demonstrates a welcoming and inclusive approach from the agency. However, on many occasions either the time of the meeting, social activity or events or the lack of childcare options available has meant that HIV positive women have felt restricted in their participation in these community activities and management structures.

Consequently, women@napwa have made the support of HIV positive parents a priority area in their 2006 – 07 work plan.

Commitment

As the numbers of HIV positive parents increases so does the need for a consistent and inclusive response to their specific support needs. NAPWA supports an inclusive family friendly approach by all PLWHA services and the provision of care options for children which will enable the full participation of HIV positive parents in all the meetings, social activities and events offered by PLWHA organisations.

Implementation

There are a number of ways that PLWHA organisations can provide a family friendly service and demonstrate their support of HIV positive parents.

- Ensure that the public area in agencies is safe for small children (see Appendix A - example checklist for work environment developed from 'Kids safe' www.kidsafe.com.au [1])
- Residential facilities ensure that their environment is welcoming and safe for young children
- Ensure that agencies provide resources and toys in their public areas to create welcoming atmosphere for parents and their children when they visit

Think about access issues for parents when planning the time of meetings, social activities and events i.e.

between 4 -7 may be the most difficult time for parents with small children to attend or to arrange appropriate childcare.

Provide a range of care options to enable parents to attend meetings, social activities and events such as;

- offer to pay for regular childcare arrangements as chosen by parents whether that care is provided at the parents home or at a childcare centre or with family day care worker
- Provide qualified childcare worker to care for children onsite at the agency when a parent is attending meetings, social activities and events. The agency would need to ensure that the environment is child safe and provide age appropriate resources and care equipment if needed

References used to develop background principles:

1. 2003 Future Of Work: Child Care Background Paper: ACTU congress.
<http://www.actu.asn.au/congress2003/papers/childcarebp.html> [2]
2. International org for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Babies and Bosses - Reconciling Work and Family Life: A Synthesis of Findings for OECD Countries report
http://www.oecd.org/document/45/0,3343,en_2649_201185_39699821_1_1_1_1,0... [3]
3. Gillian Doherty & Martha Friendly & Mab Oloman, 1998: Women's Support, Women's Work: Child Care in an Era of Deficit Reduction, Devolution, Downsizing and Deregulation.
http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/0662634705/199803_0662634705_e.html [4]

Appendix A

Example checklist for work environment developed from 'Kids safe'. www.kidsafe.com.au [1]

Creating a child safe environment

In public areas and child care space

- Is there an electrical safety switch to prevent electric shock?
- Do you have smoke alarms?
- Are safety plugs fitted in unused power points?
- Have you removed any potentially poisonous houseplants?
- Are electrical appliances, plugs and cords in good condition?
- Have long cords been bound with twist ties or extra cord hidden?
- Are heaters and fans guarded, and candles not left unattended?
- Are there barriers or gates on steps, stairs and changes in floor levels to prevent falls?
- Are medicines and sharp objects kept in a locked cupboard out of reach of children?
- Are medicines in a lockable cupboard? 'Lock Up and Away'.
- Is there a childproof lock on toilet door?
- Are the toys kept where children can reach them without climbing?
- Is the furniture free of sharp corners?
- Are the toys suitable for the child's age (e.g. have strings and ribbons been cut from toys)
- Are [blind](#) [5] A randomized trial is "Blind" if the participant is not told which arm of the trial he is on. A clinical trial is "Blind" if participants are unaware on whether they are in the experimental or control arm of the study; also called masked. and curtain cords out of reach?
- Are rugs and mats secured to prevent a fall (e.g. non-slip backing)?
- Are hot drinks placed well out of reach of child?

Kitchen

- Do your electrical appliances have short cords that do not dangle over the bench?
- Is the kettle out of children's reach?
- Is the microwave positioned out of reach of children?
- Are lighters, matches, knives and other dangerous objects stored in a safe place out of reach of children?

Are plastic bags out of reach or tied in the middle?
ye parents and their children

Do you have locks on cupboard doors and pantries?

Do you have a fire blanket or fire extinguisher ready to use in the event of a fire?

Outside

- Is the play equipment stable and in good condition? (regular maintenance checks required)
- Is there a soft surface under play equipment to cushion falls?

- [children and young people](#)
- [policy paper](#)
- [Positive women](#)
- [Positive Women's Network](#)
- [Work and employment](#)

Links:

[1] <http://www.kidsafe.com.au>

[2] <http://www.actu.asn.au/congress2003/papers/childcarebp.html>

[3] http://www.oecd.org/document/45/0,3343,en_2649_201185_39699821_1_1_1_1,00.html

[4] http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/0662634705/199803_0662634705_e.html

[5] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/474>