



FAMILY CHAPTERS Leadership Manual

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WELCOME LETTER FROM FAMILY PROGRAMS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Welcome! The National Stuttering Association and its Family Programs Committee would like to thank you for your interest in establishing a NSA Family Chapter in your community. The National Stuttering Association is the United States' largest self-help support organization which relies on dedicated volunteers to realize the goal of providing support and assistance to people who stutter and their families.

Family Chapters, which include NSAKids and TWST local chapters, are an important component of the NSA's mission. It is at these meetings where young people and their families are able to make connections, share information and experiences, and feel understood. As such, the role of Chapter Leaders comes with great responsibility but has even greater benefits. While Chapter Leaders assist in making a positive impact in the lives of children who stutter and their families, we think you will find that members of the group will make an even greater impact on you!

It is essential that you read this Manual in its entirety before making this important commitment to the NSA and your community.

Thank you again for your interest in volunteering your time to support children who stutter and their families. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of us for additional information.

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NSA FAMILY CHAPTERS LEADERSHIP MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. About the NSA
 2. About NSA Family Chapters
 3. Understanding the Family Chapters Evolution
 4. NSA Family Chapter Objectives
 5. NSA Family Chapter Resources
 6. NSA Family Chapters Chain of Command
 7. Requirements for Chartered NSA Family Chapters
 8. Selection of NSA Family Chapter Leaders
 9. NSA Family Chapter Leader Responsibilities
 10. Required Elements of Family Chapter Meetings
 11. NSA Family Chapters Safe Environment Policy
 12. Becoming a Chartered NSA Family Chapter – New Chapter Formation
 13. Becoming a Chapter Leader, Assistant Chapter Leader or Chapter Leader Trainee of an Existing NSA Family Chapter
- Appendix A - Volunteer Screening Application
- Appendix B - Family Chapter Leadership Agreement
- Appendix C - NSA Family Chapter Meeting Attendance Reporting Sign-In Sheet
- Appendix D – NSA Family Chapters Safe Environmental Policy FAQs
- Appendix E – Welcoming and Closing Words for Family Chapter Meetings
- Appendix F – Family Chapters Authorization, Waiver & Release Agreement

1. About the NSA

NSA Family Chapter leaders are spokespersons for the NSA. It is therefore essential that you spend the time to read the website “About Us” web-pages and other NSA web-pages to be familiar with the history, national and local presence, leadership and committees that run the NSA, and especially the NSA’s mission. So many potential questions will be answered by this exercise – don’t delay!
www.WeStutter.org

You will also find almost everything you will need as a Family Chapter leader at the following “Chapter Leaders” page of the website, including a copy of this Manual, forms and many valuable tips: <http://www.nsastutter.org/localChapters/chapterLeaderArea.html>.

2. About NSA Family Chapters

Family Chapters can be designed and operate in one of the following three ways. The choice between these options will largely depend on the Family Chapter Leaders and the individuals in the Chapter’s local area who are expressing a desire to attend such a support group.

- 1. NSAKids Only Family Chapter:** These Family Chapters are designed for children age 5 to 12 and their parents, guardians, other adult family members, siblings and interested SLPs. Due to the age of the children, an adult must always accompany the child. The adult will typically be a parent but may also be an adult sibling, grandparent or other family member or friend, including a SLP, who the parent has entrusted to accompany the child. These NSAKids Only Family Chapters should foster a family environment, supporting the whole family’s experience with stuttering. If there are children over age 12 who are not ready to advance to a TWST Chapter, or if there is no TWST Chapter in the area, they should be welcome to stay active in the NSAKids Family Chapter so long as they are attending with an adult.
- 2. TWST (Teens Who Stutter) Only Family Chapter.** The TWST Only Chapters are for teens age 13 to 19. It is mandatory that all minors (under 18) must be either (a) accompanied by an adult or (b) the minor’s parent or legal guardian must sign the Family Chapters Authorization, Waiver and Release Agreement authorizing their minor teen to attend unaccompanied by an adult. See **Exhibit F** for this form. The Chapter Leader may elect to not permit minors to attend without a responsible adult under any circumstances, but if the Chapter Leader wants to permit unaccompanied teens to attend then the Chapter Leader must have the Family Chapters Authorization, Waiver and Release Agreement signed by the parent/legal guardian for all such teens. The form provides further instructions. Those who stutter who are 18 or over are invited to attend NSA Adult chapter meetings and teens should be encouraged to do so once they turn 18. This transition, as with kids age 13-14, should be flexible because of the different degrees of maturity among 18 and 19 year olds; some teens age 18 or 19 may still be in high school while others are already out of high school and are working or in college.
- 3. NSAKids and TWST Combined Family Chapter:** These Combined Chapters are chapters that have chosen to meet the needs of both NSAKids and Teens who Stutter (TWST) and will more fully incorporate parents and family members than a TWST-only Chapter. All minors

must be accompanied by a responsible adult. The meetings will typically begin with everyone together and then break into age specific groups and a parent group.

The NSA website lists all Family Chapters and Adult Chapters located throughout the United States. Family Chapters are described as one of the three types of chapters above. It is the hope of the authors of this Manual that more Family Chapters will operate as NSAKids and TWST Combined Family Chapters so that there is greater collaboration, family involvement and ease of transition for children as they age out of NSAKids and into TWST. The goals of enabling teens to feel more grown up and not lumped in with younger children can be achieved with break out groups at an all-inclusive Family Chapter, rather than TWST-only Chapters, but the NSA recognizes that many TWST-only Chapters exist already and we do not want to disrupt those Chapters.

Meetings of Family Chapters should welcome and be open to all those interested in support for stuttering. This includes children who stutter, teens who stutter, parents, siblings, and other family members, as well as legal guardians and family friends. We also welcome Speech Language Pathologists (“SLPs”) and student SLP’s to Family Chapter meetings because SLPs and people who stutter and their families can teach each other and support one another.

Family Chapters can be as small as two families and grow from there. The size of the Family Chapter will impact how meetings are run by the Chapter Leaders. For a meeting of any size to be held, at least one Chapter Leader must be present and the requirements of the Safe Environment Policy (See Section 11) must be adhered to.

Family Chapter meetings are typically held for 1.5 to 2 hours in duration on a monthly or quarterly basis at a convenient and safe location, such as a church, school or public facility. For great ideas and practical advice on how to run a successful Family Chapter meeting, please consult the Chapter Leaders pages of the NSA website.

3. Understanding the Family Chapters Evolution

The Family Programs Committee began in 1993 and continues as a committee of the NSA today. Family Chapters began as CARE Groups in 2003. The name for youth groups then changed to NSA-Kids/ TWST (teens). The name “Family Chapters” was adopted in December 2010 to better communicate that while NSAKids/TWST local chapters are for kids and teens who stutter, meetings are also open to parents and other family members collectively. Simply referring to chapters as NSA-Kids and TWST did not make clear that the meetings are open to parents, grandparents, and siblings as well as the kids and teens.

4. NSA Family Chapter Objectives

The objectives of the NSA Family Chapters are as follows:

- Provide a safe, comfortable, supportive environment for young people who stutter (PWS) and their family members.
- Help people who stutter and their families establish connections with other people who stutter and their families.
- Provide a resource for information about stuttering.

- Provide a comfortable place to practice speech techniques and therapies as desired by each individual member.

The highest priority is to provide a safe, comfortable and supportive environment. When people come to a NSA Family Chapter meeting, they must feel as though they are among friends. The NSA Family Chapter environment should promote the sharing of information, knowledge and experiences and should provide young people who stutter with a place to feel accepted, to have fun with peers, and to build confidence and self-esteem.

5. NSA Family Chapter Resources

Family Chapter leaders have no shortage of resources, both in terms of leaders within the NSA and in terms of materials and ideas which are provided on the website and shared within the yahoo groups, at conferences and at the meetings themselves. The NSA encourages communication between chapter leaders, regional chapter coordinators, national committees and the national office. Because the NSA is a national organization, the most efficient mode of communication for the organization is email. The following resources are available to assist chapter leaders and to help them increase their own knowledge about the NSA organization and stuttering:

National Family Programs Chairperson(s)

The Family Programs Chairperson(s) is the primary point of contact for Family Chapter leaders. The Chair(s) are individual(s), often parents, who volunteer to coordinate all of the Family Chapters as well as all of the other family programming on a national level.

National Office

The national office is available Monday through Friday from 9am to 6pm Eastern Time to answer your questions. Due to the large number of phone calls that are received each day, it is preferred that one of the other resources in this section be used first. But, do not be afraid of calling the national office. The NSA national office staff is there to assist you. You can call the NSA main office at (800) WeStutter (937-8888) or email us at info@WeStutter.org.

You can also write to the NSA National Office at:

National Stuttering Association
119 W. 40th Street
14th Floor
New York, NY 10018
FAX: 212-944-8244

NSA Chapter Yahoo Group

Chapter leaders, including Assistant Chapter Leaders and Chapter Leader Trainees (see Section 7 for descriptions of each position), are eligible to participate on the NSACChapter Yahoo Group and the NSA FamProg Yahoo Group. This listserv functions as a way for everyone who is on the list to quickly send emails to everyone else on the list. Please be aware that both Family Chapter and Adult

Chapter leaders are on the same listserv. The Adult Chapter leaders can be a good resource for you and you may want to have the adult chapter leader in your area attend one or more of the Family Chapter meetings and you should consider doing an annual event together. All you need to do to participate on the Yahoo Group is to be a current Chapter Leader, Assistant Chapter Leader or Chapter Leader Trainee and have an email address. Please contact the National Office to be placed on the Chapter Leaders' Group.

Board of Directors

The NSA Board of Directors is composed of 10-15 members of the organization. The members of the Board are listed on the NSA website under "About the NSA". If you need to contact a board member for any reason, feel free to do so. The Board is here to serve you and the NSA benefits when its Board is in touch with local chapter leaders.

National Committees

The national committees are where the Board of Directors' instructions are put into action. This is an excellent place for the Family Chapter leaders to begin to work on being more involved on a national level. You can be a leader at the local chapter level and also serve on one or more national committees at the same time. See the "About the NSA" section of the website for information about the committees.

Other Chapter Leaders

Communicating with other chapter leaders is a great way to broaden your knowledge about the NSA and chapter leadership. The contact information for all of the chapter leaders can be found on the NSA website on the Local Chapters page. The annual NSA Conference provides an ideal forum to connect as well; prior to the start of the conference, there is a Chapter Leaders' meeting where you will have the opportunity to talk to NSA leaders and other chapter leaders. It is an excellent opportunity for Chapter Leaders to share their experiences and feel connected!

Financial Resources

Please be advised that the NSA does not provide funds to local Family Chapters and expenses of meetings or any other costs incurred will not be reimbursed. Family Chapters are encouraged to create a budget, decide in advance what costs will be incurred, and how those costs will be funded by the Family Chapter. It can be as simple as all members pitching in to cover the costs of drinks, snacks and promotions of the Family Chapter. Chapter Leaders can provide members with a charitable donation receipt for tax purposes; these forms can be obtained from the national office. Some NSA materials, such as brochures and newsletters, may be made available by the national office at no cost to the local chapters; contact the national office to make your request.

6. NSA Family Chapters Chain of Command

If issues arise for a leader of a Family Chapter, you should first contact a Chair of the NSA Family Programs Committee. Depending on the issue, you will be referred to the appropriate NSA leader. Please expect a response time of 3 to 5 business days. If your need is immediate and you cannot reach a Family Programs Chair then call the National Office.

7. Requirements for Chartered NSA Family Chapters

For an organization to function effectively there must be an established set of expectations, rules and procedures. The goal of this section is to ensure the chapter leaders understand what the NSA expects from a chapter and its leadership. Additionally, some guidelines are presented in this section to assist chapter leaders with the operation of their chapter.

- **Chapter Leadership Requirements**

Every Family Chapter is required to have a Chapter Leader and an Assistant Chapter Leader. It is also highly recommended that there be at least one Chapter Leader Trainee who will later serve as a Chapter Leader and who will be a screened volunteer on hand to meet the Safe Environment Policy requirements (see Section 11) if only one Chapter Leader can be present at a meeting.

The reason for having leaders is to establish roles and responsibilities within a volunteer organization. Someone must be in charge and accountable. By having a Chapter Leader and an Assistant Chapter Leader, and at least one Chapter Leader Trainee, the NSA is ensuring a high likelihood that the chapter will be sustainable over time and not overly dependent on the dedication and experience of one leader. It is imperative that Chapter Leaders invest in succession planning, meaning that future leaders should be recruited to transition into leadership positions when existing leaders move away or need to resign for any reason.

The NSA hopes that dedicated and experienced Chapter Leaders will pursue becoming regional chapter coordinators or work on a national committee. Thus, establishing leaders at the chapter level is beneficial for the NSA in general.

- **Family Chapter Position Descriptions**

Chapter Leader – This person has overall responsibility for the chapter and is the NSA's primary contact. It is his or her job to ensure that the chapter is functioning like a NSA Family Chapter. Additionally, this person needs to ensure that outreach is being accomplished so that the chapter will fulfill its mission, remain active, and ideally grow and flourish over the years. Finally, this person will ensure that the paperwork required by the NSA is accomplished in a timely manner.

Assistant Chapter Leader – This person works closely with and supports the efforts of the Chapter Leader. This person is expected to attend the vast majority if not all of the meetings and to stand in for the Chapter Leader when he or she is absent or temporarily unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities.

Chapter Leader Trainee – While not having the full responsibility of the Chapter Leader and Assistant Chapter Leader, this person should be groomed to become an Assistant Chapter Leader and then a Chapter Leader in the future. The Chapter Leader and Assistant Chapter leader should make an effort to assign the trainee tasks and responsibilities that will prepare him or her to later lead the chapter.

Optional Leadership Positions - In order to promote involvement and leadership among other chapter members, the chapter leaders are encouraged to establish additional leadership positions. Some ideas for leadership roles include:

Treasurer – to manage chapter expenses and contributions from chapter members

Secretary - to take notes at meetings, submit meeting attendance forms (required), and maintain chapter records such as member contact information

Outreach Coordinator – to coordinate efforts to grow attendance, make first timers feel welcome, develop mentoring relationships, and to connect with SLPs, pediatricians and other local professionals

Communications Director – to develop notices of meetings, issue press releases, oversee development of content for web-pages, submissions to NSA and local chapter newsletter (if applicable)

Chapter Youth Leader(s) – youth members age 10 to 19 who are assigned leadership responsibilities. These youth leaders can serve as a positive influence on other young members and will gain valuable experience for future leadership in the NSA.

The need for leadership and additional positions with clear roles and responsibilities will depend on the size and ambitions of each chapter, and the availability of willing volunteers.

8. Selection of NSA Family Chapter Leaders - Length of Terms

Chapter Leaders should commit to no less than a one year term. There is no limit on how long anyone holding a leadership position can serve. If the chapter members are pleased with the current leaders and the leaders are willing to keep serving, then they may continue their leadership. The NSA recommends, however, that each chapter decide upon a process to elect leaders and that this process happen no less often than every two years.

While the NSA defers to individual chapters to develop a system for filling leadership roles that makes sense for its chapter, the NSA does want to stress that it is important to afford chapter members the opportunity to select their leaders. It is also important that people who want to serve in a leadership position are not prohibited by long-term leaders from having an opportunity to serve. Chapters can use common election processes, such as:

- Nominations and elections
- Current leadership selects new leadership and the chapter membership does a confirmation vote of the new leadership

9. Chapter Leader Responsibilities

The Chapter Leader is the most important link between NSA members and the national organization. The Chapter Leader is more than just the person standing up front leading the meeting. He or she is a facilitator, marketing person, conflict resolution manager, and cheerleader. This job is not easy but definitely has its rewards.

The responsibilities of a Chapter Leader can be summarized as follows:

- Facilitate meetings
- Recruit new members
- Retain current members
- Comply with NSA requirements
- Provide information to NSA national office
- Promote the NSA

It is strongly recommended that the Chapter Leader encourage other chapter members to share responsibility for these items; however, the ultimate responsibility falls on the Chapter Leader.

- **Facilitate Meetings**

The first responsibility of the Chapter Leader is to ensure that the meetings are facilitated. This does not mean that the leader is always the facilitator. Having other members, especially the Assistant Chapter Leader and Chapter Leader Trainee, facilitating meetings is a good way to develop new leaders.

- **Recruit New Members**

The recruitment of new members is another responsibility of the Chapter Leader. If a chapter is to grow, it needs new members. All support groups will have members that stop coming over time. People will feel that their needs have been met, they will “age out” or move away or they will just stop coming for unknown reasons. Thus, new members are always needed. The addition of new members will also help keep the meetings more vibrant and exciting. In order to find new members, flyers and press releases need to be distributed, meetings need to be announced, regular contact needs to be maintained with SLPs in the community, and existing members need to be encouraged to participate in outreach efforts.

- **Retain Current Members**

Retaining current members is achieved by having meaningful meeting content and fostering fulfilling relationships among the attendees. The meetings need to be fun for the kids and teens! The Family Chapters section of the NSA website contains many ideas that other chapter leaders have used with great success.

- **Comply with NSA Requirements**

It is very important that all chapters have the same “feel” about them. What is meant by feel is that any person who walks into any chapter in the U.S. could immediately tell that they are in an NSA chapter. This is not meant as a mandate to make every chapter identical. On the contrary, one of the NSA’s strengths is the diversity of its membership and its chapters. NSA Family Chapter Requirements are set forth in Section 7.

- **Promote the NSA**

The Chapter Leader should be dedicated to promoting the NSA. You are the national organization's local cheerleader. Every new chapter meeting attendee is a potential NSA member and you are their first contact. You should make sure members are aware of what is happening at the national level and should encourage attendance at the national conference, participation in NSA leadership and member submission of articles for the national Family Voices newsletter.

- **NSA Family Chapter Meetings**

The main requirement for a NSA Family Chapter is to hold chapter meetings. A Family Chapter meeting is what sets us apart from other stuttering organizations. Our meetings enable young people who stutter to be among understanding peers, and parents to obtain information and support. It is imperative that the meeting environment be one of support and encouragement.

- **Suggested meeting format**

The actual meeting content and format are up to chapter's leadership team. However, the following format seems to be very effective.

1. Reading of the NSA Welcoming Words (*provided on Local Chapters pages of the website*)
2. Introductions, especially if new members or visitors in attendance
3. Discussions and activities for parents, teens, SLPs and/or children; presentation and discussion of a topic or an activity that is fun or relevant to stuttering.
4. Time set aside to allow all those who want to share an experience, accomplishment or a problem to be able to do so.
5. A break about midway through the meeting.
6. NSA and/or local chapter announcements (like National Convention).
7. Set/remind time for next meeting. Encourage members to bring new members to the next meeting.
8. Reading of the NSA Chapter Closing Words (*provided on Local Chapters pages of the website*)

Many great ideas for facilitating meetings are provided on the Chapter Leaders pages of the website.

Please be mindful that the children and teens will want to have fun and hang out while the parents will often have specific questions that they want to have addressed. You will want to enable the parents to share information and speak openly but not have the children and teens having to sit through what may be heavy conversations. Plan accordingly and be sure to adhere to the Safe Environment Policy (see Section 11) when separating minors from the adults that accompanied them to the meeting.

Appendix D – FAQs about the Safe Environment Policy – will be helpful in this regard.

- **Meeting Length & Frequency**

A typical meeting length is about 1.5 - 2 hours but you are free to use whatever length works for your chapter members. Chapters often meet either monthly or quarterly, and may add special events and gatherings during the year as well.

10. Required Elements of Family Chapter Meetings

The mandatory requirements are:

1. **Complying with the Safe Environment Policy.** See Section 11
2. **The reading of the welcoming and closing words.** The reason for this is to establish a connection with other chapters. The goal here is to ensure that anyone who walks into the chapter will immediately recognize it as a NSA Family Chapter meeting. The Welcoming and Closing Words are provided on the Chapter Leaders pages of the website as well as in [Appendix E](#).
3. **Chapter Meeting Attendance Reporting**
 - a. **Sign-in Sheets.** A Family Chapter sign-in sheet needs to be filled out at every meeting for every person in attendance (all ages). This needs to be completed even if the people in attendance are the same people who attend each meeting; you can populate the form with the names of repeat attendees and delete their names if they are not there to be more efficient but it remains mandatory to list each individual who attends and to do so for each meeting. After the meeting, the sign-in sheet **MUST** be mailed, scanned and emailed, or faxed to the national office as soon as possible. This needs to be done so that the national office can inform new chapter attendees of the various programs, research and information the NSA has to offer people who stutter and so that we have data on attendance. The sign-in sheet is a vital link from the local chapter to national office. The form is attached as [Appendix C](#) and is also available on the Family Chapters website page. You must submit this information within 3 business days of the meeting or event.
 - b. **Email reporting of attendance.** As an alternative to filling in and faxing your sign-in sheets, you may type and email the required information to: Stephanie Coppen at sdccoppen@gmail.com.

Failure to comply with these requirements will place the Chapter's Charter in jeopardy.

11. Safe Environment Policy

The Safe Environment Policy of the NSA has two primary components: (1) screening of volunteers; and (2) requiring that minors (under 18) not be alone with only one adult NSA volunteer, regardless of whether that volunteer has been screened and approved. Some additional rules are also set forth below.

- **Screening of Volunteers**

The NSA screens all volunteers who may have contact with children, teenagers, and/or vulnerable adults. This includes all Family Chapter Leaders, Assistant Chapter Leaders and Chapter Leader Trainees, youth day leaders and annual conference family programs session leaders, among others.

A volunteer includes any unpaid person engaged in a NSA activity on behalf of the NSA involving children, teenagers, and/or vulnerable adults. Vulnerable adults are defined as any adult who is physically disabled, and/or mentally or emotionally impaired, whether temporary or long-term.

The purpose of the screening process policy is to protect the youth (children and teens) and vulnerable adults who participate in NSA activities. The NSA has this requirement to help reduce the risk of and liability associated with inappropriate or abusive treatment of our minor and vulnerable adult members. We view this as a profound moral and legal obligation and call upon chapter leaders to ensure that this requirement is adhered to at the local chapter level.

The Volunteer Screening Application is provided in [Appendix A](#).

- **Rules for youth activities and activities where minors may be present**

In order to help ensure the safety of minors (children under the age of 18) participating in NSA events, the NSA requires that no minor or group of minors be permitted to be alone with only one NSA screened and cleared adult volunteer during a NSA sponsored activity. Having an adult volunteer alone with one or more minors at any NSA event for any length of time is simply not permitted. Instead, if minors are going to be separated from their accompanying adults (parents, legal guardians, etc) then there must be two unrelated and screened NSA volunteers present with those minors.

There are several ways to make sure this rule is not violated and we have provided FAQs in [Appendix D](#) to help you comply with this mandate when faced with a variety of possible circumstances.

Rules:

- All minors must be accompanied by an adult (18 or over) who is taking responsibility for that minor.* This adult can be a parent, sibling, speech therapist, or even a family friend. No minor should be dropped off to a Family Chapter meeting or event without an accompanying adult.
 - *The only limited exception is for TWST-Only Family Chapters whose Chapter Leader has decided to permit teens to attend unaccompanied by an adult and only those minor

teens whose parent/guardian has signed the Authorization, Waiver & Release (see **Exhibit F**) are permitted to attend unaccompanied.

- Ideally, all NSA Family Chapter meetings and events where minors will be present should be attended by at least two of these three Chapter Leaders: Chapter Leader, Assistant Chapter Leader and Chapter Leader Trainee. If this is difficult to achieve, the NSA recommends having an active adult member, such as a parent, get screened as a NSA volunteer so that minors can meet separately from their accompanying adults without violating the Safe Environment Policy.
- If only one screened NSA volunteer is able to attend a Family Chapter meeting or event, then each minor must remain in the same room with the adult who accompanied that minor to the meeting or event. Thus, the minor children should not be in one room alone with only one screened volunteer while the accompanying adults meet in a separate room.
- Even if two screened unrelated volunteers are in attendance at the meeting, it is not appropriate for one Chapter Leader to meet with the adults while the other Chapter Leader meets in a separate room with the minors. The easy solution is to have everyone in the same room when broken into groups; just make sure the group of minors is visible to the accompanying adults.
- No activities will be scheduled during times that violate local curfew laws.
- Minor children may not reside, travel, or stay overnight with an adult NSA volunteer. If there is a desire on the part of a parent or parents and a NSA volunteer to do so, then the Chapter Leader shall contact the National Office for approval and must have all parents/legal guardians execute a NSA Parent/Legal Guardian Authorization, Waiver & Release for the specific event and send these executed releases to the NSA National Office.
- No alcohol, tobacco, or drugs will be provided to anyone under 21 who is engaged in a NSA youth event.

12. Becoming a NSA Chartered Family Chapter – New Chapter Formation

If you are reading this Manual because you are interested in starting and leading a new NSA Family Chapter in your area, this section lays out what you need to do. If you are reading this because you are seeking to lead an existing NSA Family Chapter, then you can skip to Section 13.

- Becoming a Chartered NSA Family Chapter

All Family Chapters are required to be chartered; a new chapter must have permission from the national office to be recognized as an official NSA Family Chapter. Until the Charter is obtained no meetings can be held as meetings of the NSA. This is done to ensure that all of our chapters are able to meet the same high standards. The actual charter process is simple. Listed below are the steps required to become a chartered chapter of the NSA.

- Person interested in founding and leading a new Family Chapter contacts the NSA national office with a request to form a new Family Chapter.

- A NSA Family Programs Committee Chairperson contacts the potential Chapter Leader and instructs him or her to obtain this Manual from the NSA website and read it. The Chair also answers any questions the interested person may have about running a Family Chapter.
- Potential new Chapter Leader reads the Manual and confirms desire to begin and lead a new Family Chapter.
- Potential Chapter Leader identifies a willing Assistant Chapter Leader who also reads this Manual to ensure he or she is committed to and comfortable with taking on this role.
- Potential Chapter Leader and Assistant Chapter Leader complete the NSA Volunteer Leader Screening Application.
 - See **Appendix A**
- Potential Chapter Leader and Assistant Chapter Leader are contacted regarding results of their screening.
- Cleared Chapter Leader and Assistant Chapter Leader must sign the Family Chapter Leader Agreement and send it to the NSA National Office.
 - See **Appendix B**
- The NSA confirms that both new leaders are members of the NSA; if not, they need to join the NSA.
- The new Family Chapter becomes chartered. The National Office will inform the Chapter Leader.
- Once all the steps are completed, the new chartered Family Chapter will be officially recognized by being listed on the NSA's website, can be advertised as an official NSA Family Chapter, and meetings can be held. The Chapter Leader and Assistant Chapter Leader will also be added to the NSA-Chap and NSA-FamProg Yahoo Groups.

You may not call your group a NSA Chapter, yourself a NSA Chapter Leader or hold a NSA meeting until the new Family Chapter is chartered. If you want to gather people together to discuss forming a NSA Chapter, you can certainly hold a meeting but it must be clear that it is not a NSA Chapter meeting.

While a Chapter Leader Trainee is not required to form and charter a new Family Chapter, if the Chapter Leader identifies a person to serve as a Chapter Leader Trainee, that person must also read this Manual, submit a Volunteer Leader Screening Application and receive clearance, and must sign and submit the Family Chapter Leader Agreement before being given this leadership position and title. This person must also be a member of the NSA.

13. Becoming a Chapter Leader, Assistant Chapter Leader or Chapter Leader Trainee of an Existing NSA Family Chapter

Listed below are the steps required to become a Chapter Leader, Assistant Chapter Leader or Chapter Leader Trainee of an existing NSA Family Chapter.

- All persons interested in serving in one of these 3 leadership positions must read this Manual to ensure he or she is committed to and comfortable with taking on the position.
- Person must complete and submit the NSA Volunteer Leader Screening Application.
 - See **Appendix A**
- Applicant will be contacted by the NSA National Office regarding results of the screening.

- Cleared applicants must sign the Family Chapter Leader Agreement and send it to the NSA National Office.
 - See **Appendix B**
- The NSA confirms that the applicants are members of the NSA; if not, they need to join the NSA.

Once all the steps are completed, the new leaders will be officially recognized by being listed on the NSA's website and can perform their respective roles. They will also be added to the NSA-Chap and NSA-FamProg Yahoo Groups.

THIS CONCLUDES THE NSA FAMILY CHAPTER LEADERSHIP MANUAL

Thank you for your interest in serving the NSA!

Appendix A-E are attached

NSA FAMILY CHAPTERS LEADERSHIP MANUAL

APPENDIX A

NSA Family Chapter Volunteer Screening Application

**Obtain this Application from
Local Chapter page of NSA Website**

NSA FAMILY CHAPTERS LEADERSHIP MANUAL

APPENDIX B

Family Chapter Leader Agreement

**Obtain this Agreement from
Local Chapter page of NSA Website**

NSA FAMILY CHAPTERS LEADERSHIP MANUAL

APPENDIX C

NSA Family Chapter Meeting Attendance Reporting Sign-In Sheet

**Obtain this form from
Local Chapter page of NSA Website**

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Appendix D

NSA Family Chapters Safe Environmental Policy FAQs

- Why does the NSA require each Family Chapter to have more than one screened chapter leader?
 - Although all minors attending the NSA Family Chapter meetings must be accompanied by an adult*, which is typically a parent, the Chapter may wish to separate the minors from their accompanying adult to engage in youth oriented activities while the adults talk about more serious matters. In such a circumstance, two unrelated screened adult volunteers must be with those minors; just one screened adult cannot be alone with one or more minors under the NSA's Safe Environment Policy. This requirement for two or more screened Chapter Leaders is also designed to promote succession planning and the preservation of the chapter if one leader can no longer serve in this role.

**See [Section 2](#) of this Manual regarding a limited exception for TWST Only Chapters and related requirements.*

- If a Family Chapter loses one screened Chapter Leader and no one else can be found to fill that spot, can a parent who attends with his or her child be screened and fill the requirements of the Safe Environment policy without being a Chapter Leader, Assistant Chapter Leader or Chapter Leader Trainee?
 - Yes. This person must submit the Screened Volunteer Application and be cleared just as a Chapter Leader would.
- Can a person under age 18 come to a meeting unaccompanied by an adult?
 - No. All minors must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, therapist or other adult who is responsible for and present with the minor. *See [Section 2](#) of this Manual regarding a limited exception for TWST Only Chapters and related requirements.*
- Can a person 18-20 come to a Family Chapter meeting without a parent or legal guardian given that they are adults?
 - Yes. However, the NSA encourages family members or supportive adults to accompany young people to the Family Chapter meetings. If the member aged 18-20 has any emotional, mental or physical issues that make it necessary to require an adult to accompany that member, then the Chapter Leader has the authority to make that requirement of the member.

- Can a person under age 18 come to a meeting accompanied by his or her SLP, adult sibling, family friend or another adult other than his or her parent or legal guardian?
 - Yes. If, however, the Chapter Leader has any concerns about the appropriateness of the adult accompanying the minor, then the NSA recommends that the Chapter Leader have the minor's parent or legal guardian sign the Authorization, Waiver & Release form attached hereto as Exhibit F stating that their child can attend a meeting with this adult. An example of when this would be warranted is if a 17 year old is attending with her 18 year old boyfriend.

- Must two screened and unrelated NSA volunteers be in the same room at all times if children under 18 are at the meeting, even if each child is accompanied by his or her parent?
 - As long as minors are not separated from their parents (or accompanying adults) then it is not necessary to have two screened volunteers in the room.

- If the meeting attendees want to divide into two groups of (1) children and (2) parents, can there be one screened volunteer with the group of children and the other screened volunteer with the group of parents even though this would mean that the children would be with only one screened volunteer and not their parents/legal guardians?
 - This would not be ok unless the two groups are meeting in the same room and are visible to each other.

- If all children in attendance have a parent/legal guardian or permitted adult accompanying them and everyone at the meeting is in the same room, does there still need to be more than one screened volunteer at the meeting?
 - No.

NSA FAMILY CHAPTERS LEADERSHIP MANUAL

Appendix E

Welcoming and Closing Words for Family Chapter Meetings

These words should be said at all meetings and events!

Family Chapter Meeting Welcome Words

Welcome to the _____ Family Chapter of the National Stuttering Association. The National Stuttering Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing hope, dignity, support, education and empowerment to children and adults who stutter.

For the time we meet here, this room is a very special place.

This is a place where we can share ideas and be ourselves. It is a place where we can stutter openly and have fun!

It is a safe place to learn things to help deal with stuttering.

It is also a place where we can help others who want to learn about stuttering.

Being here lets us know that we are OK whether we stutter or not.

We who stutter, and those who support us, are not alone. Together we are strong.

Family Chapter Meeting Closing Words

May the spirit we have shared tonight help our speech in the coming weeks until we meet again.

May we go forth gladly into speaking situations, without force or struggle accepting ourselves regardless of our fluency, and listening always to the music of our voices.

We are not alone. Together we are strong.

NSA FAMILY CHAPTERS LEADERSHIP MANUAL

APPENDIX F

NSA Family Chapter: Authorization, Release & Waiver Agreement

**Obtain this form from
Local Chapter page of NSA Website**