



Strengthening Family Leadership - Tips -

Empowered Connections



This resource was developed with the support of a Lotterywest grant.

Family leadership means working together as a family to create a positive and meaningful life for your loved one with disability. It involves:

- Advocating for your family member's needs.
- Supporting their independence and goals.
- Building strong relationships within the family and community.
- Empowering your family to take on leadership roles in decision-making and planning.

Family leadership helps create a more inclusive world by valuing the strengths and contributions of every family member.

Families often use leadership skills without realising it, such as:

- Talking to a child's teacher.
- Researching therapists.
- Managing healthcare appointments

Family leadership empowers families to influence the services and supports they receive. Families are seen as experts in their own lives, and their ideas and opinions are valued in decisions affecting their lives.

LEVELS OF FAMILY LEADERSHIP

There are different levels of family leadership.

- **Personal Level:** Families seek information and build skills to advocate for themselves or their family members.
- **Peer Support Level:** Families and people with disability support others with similar experiences of disability.
- **Systems Change Level:** Family members become actively involved in organisations or movements that work towards systemic changes, such as in healthcare or education.

What Does Family Leadership Look Like?

Family leadership is about working together to create a good life for everyone in the family. This means:

1. **Advocating for Change:** Speaking up for better services, inclusion, and accessibility.
2. **Encouraging Independence:** Supporting your family member to make decisions and take control of their life.
3. **Building Relationships:** Strengthening bonds within the family and fostering connections in the community.
4. **Planning for the Future:** Setting goals and creating a vision for your family member's life.
5. **Sharing Leadership Roles:** Empowering all family members to contribute and lead in their own way.

Strengthening Family Leadership

1. Identify Your Family's Strengths

Every family has unique strengths. Think about:

- What is your family good at?
- How does your family solve challenges?
- What qualities make your family strong and connected?

2. Set Shared Goals

Work together to set goals that reflect your family's values and vision. Ask:

- What kind of life do we want for our family member with disability?
- What steps can we take to support their goals?
- How can we work together as a family to make this happen?

3. Build Advocacy Skills

Being an advocate means speaking up for what's right. To build advocacy skills:

- Learn about your rights and responsibilities.
- Practice speaking clearly and confidently about your needs.
- Work with others to create positive change.

Strengthening Family Leadership

4. Strengthen Family Connections

Strong families communicate openly and support each other. Strengthen connections by:

- Having regular family discussions to share ideas and solve problems.
- Celebrating successes and milestones together.
- Encouraging every family member to share their thoughts and feelings.

5. Build Community Connections

Connecting with your community helps create opportunities and support networks. Build connections by:

- Joining local groups or organisations.
- Participating in community events and activities.
- Volunteering or taking part in advocacy campaigns.

Tips for Successful Family Leadership

- ✓ Be Open to Learning: Leadership skills grow with time and experience.
- ✓ Share Responsibilities: Encourage every family member to take part in decision-making.
- ✓ Celebrate Progress: Acknowledge small wins and milestones along the way.
- ✓ Ask for Help: Reach out to friends, support workers, or community organisations when needed.
- ✓ Stay Positive: Focus on strengths and opportunities, even during challenges.

Using Family Leadership to Build the Future

Family leadership is not just about today—it's about creating a vision for the future. Think about:

- What kind of support will your family member need as they grow older?
- How can you ensure your family member's voice is always heard?
- What steps can you take to ensure financial and emotional security for the whole family?

Planning for the future helps your family member with disability feel safe, supported, and ready to take on new opportunities.