



## Childhood Cancer Support Group

---

All Lions clubs are autonomous, meaning that each Lions club is an independent entity responsible for conducting its own events and complying with local laws and regulations. This planner is intended to provide recommendations and should not be considered legal advice or best practices. The activities in this planner may or may not be appropriate within your community. Please consult a local professional to ensure compliance with all laws and regulations, safety guidelines and best practices.



# Childhood Cancer Support Group

This project planner can help your club organize an ongoing monthly support group for parents/guardians affected by childhood cancer focused on providing peer-to-peer socialization, learning and coping strategies in a welcoming, inclusive environment.

By taking on a project like this, you're helping us achieve our strategic vision of helping those affected by childhood cancer to survive and thrive.

## Start planning your event.

Fill in the blank fields in the form below to determine the details of your event.

<b>What you will achieve</b> » Implement a monthly support group for parents/guardians affected by childhood cancer that provides opportunities for discussion and social activities in a positive environment	<b>Duration</b> 1-2 hours Ongoing	<b>Location</b> <input type="radio"/> Community recreational facility <input type="radio"/> School or educational facility <input type="radio"/> Informal (e.g., faith-based) <input type="radio"/> Other <hr/>
	<b>Planning time</b> 2-4 months	
	<b>Start/end dates</b> <hr/>	

Planned participants		
Select the audience you would like to serve at your event.		
<b>People we will serve:</b> <input type="radio"/> Children <input type="radio"/> Youth <input checked="" type="radio"/> Adult <input type="radio"/> All	<b>People who will provide services:</b> <input type="radio"/> Local hospital(s) <input type="radio"/> Cancer patient navigator(s) <input type="radio"/> Local cancer association(s) <input type="radio"/> Social worker(s) <input type="radio"/> Peer mentor(s) <input type="radio"/> Other <hr/>	<b>Notes:</b>

## Determine all required tasks for your project.

Be sure to focus your planning efforts on activities that are fun as well as educational. All projects should incorporate the following three tasks:

### 1. Identify educational speakers and resources.

- » Guest speakers can include a representative from a local cancer foundation, pediatric oncologist, oncology nurse, peer mentor, social worker or psychologist.
- » Materials can be provided by childhood cancer treatment centers, advocacy groups for childhood cancer, camps for children with cancer or agencies providing services for families affected by cancer.

Speaker(s):

a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

Resources:

a. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Determine small group discussion topics.

- » Small group discussions are based off of the session topics, and should provide opportunities to emphasize learning on a specific subject.
- » Relevant topics can include coping with illness and treatment, side effects, family issues, health and exercise, recreational outings, cancer advocacy and resources.

Discussion topics:

a. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Determine small group activities.

- » Small group activities can help foster socialization and peer connections while also including meals, holiday parties or other celebratory occasions.

Activities list:

a. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_

Led by:

a. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_



Assign roles for volunteers at your event.

Position/Role	Name	Contact Information	Notes
Support group lead			Must be a certified healthcare professional or social worker familiar with childhood cancer and support group facilitation and can also manage event logistics and volunteers.
Peer mentor			An individual who is caring for a child with cancer or a child who has become cancer free, and who conveys a positive and encouraging attitude in the support group environment.
Volunteer manager			Make sure to identify volunteers who can discuss club membership with participants.
Marketing lead			
Event photographer			You must secure signed release forms from participants if you plan to use event photographs for promotional purposes
Local partners/collaborators			Collaborators can include oncology nurse, local cancer camp director, social worker, school psychologist, childhood cancer foundation and support agencies for families affected by cancer.

Number of Lions	
Number of Leos	
Number of others	



## Organize your project into achievable steps.

The support group lead may complete this form and track progress.

Status	Task	Deadline	Task Lead	Tips
X	Inform your club			Host a meeting to inform your club about the event
	Create event name/title			
	Form a planning committee			Committee to determine event participants, activities, tasks, logistics and process for follow-up care
	Identify potential event collaborators			
	Prepare a preliminary budget			
	Pursue funding (if necessary)			
	Secure location, date and time			
	Contact local organizations serving children and families affected by cancer for help with recruiting participants  Tip: Not every person you invite will attend your first support group or continue attending after the first meeting. That's okay! If you want to form a 20-person support group, invite 50 people initially.			Local hospitals and cancer treatment facilities, agencies serving families affected by childhood cancer or camps serving youth with cancer can help you to determine individuals you will invite to support the group. These facilities can also share information about your support group with their clients, provide other promotional opportunities for your group or contribute supplies and materials.
	Create promotion/marketing plan			Can include flyers, digital materials, etc.
	Ensure proper insurance coverage			Check with relevant officials to determine if a certificate of insurance or supplemental insurance will be required  For questions regarding coverage under the General Liability Insurance Policy provided to all Lions clubs, please review the Program Insurance Booklet by visiting <a href="http://lionsclubs.org/pib-en">http://lionsclubs.org/pib-en</a>
	Secure necessary volunteers			» Volunteers must adhere to local regulations for working with members of the public who have disabilities, and secure necessary documentation, as required. » Due to the sensitive nature of this event, consistency of volunteers throughout the duration of the support group meeting schedule is encouraged.
	Finalize event itinerary			Should be a time-specific schedule of all activities from start to finish
	Schedule a post-event meeting to celebrate successes and discuss opportunities for improvement			Use the reflection questions to talk about your project



# Determine the budget for your project.

\_\_\_\_\_ may use this worksheet to determine finances for the event.

Description	Quantity	Cost	Total Expense	In-Kind/ Donations	Income	Balance
<b>Education</b>						
Educational materials						
Printing expenses						
Professional fees						
<b>Equipment and supplies</b>						
Meeting supplies						
Activity supplies						
Facility rental fees						
<b>Marketing</b>						
Promotional materials						
<b>Other</b>						
Water/snacks (optional)						



## Measure the success of your project.

Reconvene as an event planning committee to celebrate your impact and report your service!

Success Measures			
<b>Measure your project</b>			
# of people served under 18		# of nonmembers volunteered	
# of people served 18+		Total direct service hours	
# of Lions volunteered		Total project planning/fundraising hours	
# of Leos volunteered			
<b>Reflect on your project</b>			
1. Did you implement a support group that provides an encouraging and positive environment for parents/families affected by childhood cancer through discussions, presentations and organized activities?			
2. What were your biggest successes?			
3. What were your biggest challenges?			
4. Would you do this project again?			
5. What would you change?			



## Parental Support Group Benefits

When their child is first diagnosed with cancer, many parents experience different emotions, which can change over time. These include shock, fear and denial, sadness, guilt or anger. Some may not feel all of these emotions. Parents and guardians may internalize the stress of balancing life and family after the diagnosis, affecting all members of the family. Parents may also experience feelings of separation and isolation from other family members, friends and their communities.

A parental support group for parents affected by childhood cancer can provide a positive and restorative environment of peer social support. The benefits of peer support are many:

- » Reduce the feeling of isolation
- » Belong to a community
- » Stress relief
- » Compassion and empathy
- » Productive and meaningful conversations
- » Confidence and reassurance
- » Emphasis on self-care
- » Quick resource referrals based on real experience
- » Genuine best interest of each other's children
- » Guest speakers providing current and timely information and resources
- » Support and encouragement
- » Helping others brings purpose to the pain and is healing

Educational topics should be discussed at every session. Once that education is shared, then parents can discuss their interpretation of this topic in ways such as how useful it is, how it affects them and how they might solve current struggles.

Support groups may range in duration from a few months, to ongoing continuous meetings for as long as needed.

A support group's success is built upon the relationships that are created between participants, and how it provides a positive outlook on the parents who are caring for a child with cancer.

