**Spectrum Strong Autism Parent Network Charter**



**Purpose Statement**

The Spectrum Strong Autism Parent Network is a supportive community of parents and caregivers of children on the autism spectrum. Our mission is to connect, empower, and uplift families by sharing experiences, providing resources, and advocating for acceptance and inclusion. We strive to foster a safe, compassionate, and informed space where every parent feels seen, heard, and supported on their unique journey.

**1. Objectives**

* Provide emotional and peer support to parents and caregivers of children with autism.
* Share resources, strategies, and services that benefit families.
* Advocate for greater understanding, inclusion, and acceptance within the community and educational settings.
* Organize regular meetings, workshops, and events that foster connection and learning.
* Collaborate with schools, professionals, community and organizations to support our children’s growth and success.

**2. Goals**

* **Invite:** Engage families by fostering a community rooted in support, advocacy, learning, and the celebration of autism.
* **Community:** Establish a safe, resource-rich environment for families seeking connection, information, or participation in group activities.
* **Education:** Provide meaningful learning opportunities focused on autism. Educational sessions will include relevant topics and age-appropriate resources that support children across the entire spectrum.
* **Celebrate:** Celebrate neurodiversity by creating inclusive spaces, both within our group and the broader community. We uplift differences and promote acceptance and visibility.

**3. Membership**

The Spectrum Strong Autism Parent Network will be launched in **three phases** to ensure thoughtful growth and sustainability:

* **Phase I:**

Initial membership will be open to families and caregivers from the following **Hudson, Wisconsin elementary schools**:

* Willow River Elementary
* North Hudson Elementary
* Houlton Elementary
* EP Rock Elementary
* Hudson Prairie Elementary
* River Crest Elementary

**Phase II:**

Expand membership to include families of children that are enrolled in:

* Birth to 3 Program
* Early Childhood
* Hudson Middle School
* Hudson High School.

**Phase III:**

Open the group to additional families, caregivers, and advocates within the **Hudson Area**.

**4. Leadership and Structure**

**Steering Committee**: A volunteer group of parents/partners will guide the direction of the group, plan events, and facilitate meetings. Current members of the steering committee include:

* Tracy Metz
* Becky Okonek
* Katie Lallier
* Lauren Bock
* Jennifer Hays

**Steering Committee Responsibilities:**

* Organizing and facilitating group meetings and special events
* Coordinating communication among members
* Planning educational sessions and gathering resources
* Promoting inclusion and visibility across schools and in the broader community
* Managing membership outreach and engagement
* Maintaining the integrity and values of the group charter
* Reviewing feedback from members to guide future growth

**5. Meetings**

* The Spectrum Strong Autism Parent Network will meet on a **quarterly basis**, starting in **Quarter 3 of 2025**.
* Additional meetings or special events (e.g., guest speakers, social events, workshops) may be scheduled based on member interest and availability.
* Agendas will be sent prior to every meeting via email or the #GroupMe App.
* Meeting notes and action items will be sent after each meeting via email or the #GroupMe App

**6. Values and Principles**

* **Respect**: Every family’s journey is unique. We honor and respect diverse perspectives and experiences. We may not all agree on all things, but we must show respect to all.
* **Confidentiality**: What is shared in the group stays in the group. This is a safe place to share our stories and experiences and information.
	+ **Pictures**: We will be creating a photo disclosure form for picture sharing. Until this is created, use your best judgment on sharing pictures of our kids and families outside of this group.
* **Decision Making:** In all decision-making processes, we will thoughtfully consider the perspectives, beliefs, and values of the entire group. While individual ideas or initiatives may be strongly advocated, any action or decision will be guided by a commitment to inclusivity and the collective interest of the group as a whole.
* **Support**: We are here to uplift, not judge.
* **Inclusion**: All voices matter—our group is open to all cultural backgrounds, family structures, and lived experiences.
* **Empowerment**: We believe in each other’s strength and potential as advocates for our children.
* **Time**: We respect your time and will be sure to follow the times established and communicated for each meeting and outside activity or event.

**7. Communication**

* **Channels**: Information will be shared via email, #GroupMe App and newsletters.
* **Privacy**: All communications will respect members' privacy. Personal information will never be shared without consent.

**8. Events and Initiatives**

* Family-friendly outings, parent workshops, sensory-friendly events, and autism awareness campaigns and fundraisers.
* Collaboration with local organizations, schools, and therapy providers.
* Volunteer and advocacy opportunities for parents who wish to get more involved.

**9. Review and Amendments**

This charter will be reviewed annually by the steering committee. Suggestions from members are always welcome and can be submitted via [email/contact form].