

## Leader Guidelines

### API Leader Guidelines

**Guideline 1:** API meetings are open to all, particularly parents and parents-to-be. People of all religious, racial, or ethnic backgrounds are welcomed. Support groups cannot be affiliated with religious or political organizations nor espouse religious or political viewpoints. With that said, it is fine for support groups to meet within religious institutions.

**Guideline 2:** Personal information shared within a group will remain confidential. The dignity and respect of every member will be maintained; therefore, gossip is to be avoided.

**Guideline 3:** Children should also be treated with respect. We encourage the use of gentle, non-violent, loving discipline. In consideration of all parents attending meetings, parents should monitor their children's behavior and attend to the needs of their children during the meetings. This also applies to leaders who bring children to meetings.

**Guideline 4:** Presenting other topics not directly related to Attachment Parenting (AP) should be avoided. When issues such as diapering options, homebirth, home schooling, circumcision, vaccinations, specific diets, etc. come up during a discussion, the leader should state that API takes no stance on these issues, but encourages parents to educate themselves to make informed decisions about them. Literature about various options may be made available after the meeting. Books on these topics may be included in the group's library. Above all, parents need to feel accepted, and peripheral issues should not be allowed to distract from our focus on AP. If a discussion of a particular non-AP issue becomes divisive, then the leader should end the discussion and return to the meeting topic.

**Guideline 5:** API Support Group meetings are free for the families who attend. Donations may be solicited at the meeting to cover the cost of renting a meeting space, but it should be made clear to attendees that donations are voluntary. Leaders are expected to encourage attendees to become API members (free) and AP Advocates (\$35) at each meeting. If AP Advocate portion is not sufficient to pay the support group's expenses, then a fundraising project, sponsorship and/or an event should be considered.

**Guideline 6:** Leaders cannot engage in dispensing legal or medical advice. Those needing help beyond the normal course of parenting a healthy child should be referred to the proper resources.

**Guideline 7:** The API Support Group should not be used as a vehicle for selling products or services except for fundraising items that are sold to benefit the group. Members who wish to do so may talk individually to potential customers in a non-intrusive way before or after meetings. Leaders should not use the group to promote products and services from which they financially benefit. API Leaders who make their living as childbirth educators, midwives, doulas, lactation consultants, etc., should avoid self-referrals.

**Guideline 8:** If an API Support Group creates or sponsors an e-mail discussion list, it is imperative that the support group leaders establish guidelines that are shared with subscribers (e.g., avoid gossip and respect confidentiality, be supportive and encouraging, use courtesy and respect when posting or responding, avoid inappropriate topics). A leader should monitor the discussion and post the guidelines when needed. People can easily be offended on e-mail discussion lists. It is imperative that any conflicts be resolved quickly. It should be made clear to participants that advertising of products or services is never permitted on any API e-mail discussion list.

**Guideline 9:** API has worked hard to create sound parenting materials and resources and we endeavor to maintain a level of quality and integrity that benefits the character of all API Support Groups. As part of your continued orientation to leadership, API will support you with guidance and feedback on printed

materials and speakers you anticipate hosting. As such, leaders are required to submit all materials created to use within a support group to the Leader Liaison for approval during the first six months of leadership. This includes all advertising, promotional and meeting support handouts that will be distributed to families within the community. All support groups are required to have all speakers approved by the Leader Liaison during the first six months of leadership before organizing speaking engagements at any local API sponsored events. This includes any volunteers who will help lead support group meetings. The Leader Liaison will return submissions within 3 working days. When contacting the Leader Liaison for approval please note 'API Support Group Materials Approval' or 'API Support Group Speaker Approval' in the subject line so that your request can be handled promptly to meet the two working day turnaround time.

**Guideline 10:** API Leaders are required to submit monthly and yearly financial reporting concerning each support group's monetary activity to API. This information is extremely important as API reaches out to potential donors and offers justification of our credibility and impacts that are felt worldwide. Even if you have a month of limited or zero transactions API still needs to receive the forms.