



UPS for DownS

United Parent Support for Down Syndrome

Support • Information • Community

Next Chapter Book Club

Volunteer Facilitators Manual



Chicago NCBC

*Providing adolescents and adults with disabilities
an opportunity to read and socialize with friends*



The UPS for DownS' Katie MacDonald Literacy Project is proud to be a Sponsor Organization of the Next Chapter Book Clubs.



About the Katie MacDonald Literacy Project:

By Nancy MacDonald

Katie was born in 1973 at a time when attitudes about people with disabilities were beginning to change. We took her home from the hospital and treated her like we would any child. She had a great interest in books and began reading at an early age. Her love of reading opened many doors for her. Reading increased her knowledge on many topics and certainly increased her vocabulary. That, in turn, improved her ability to speak and converse on a variety of issues. She gained great self-confidence and excelled in presenting herself to others. She made numerous speaking engagements in front of large groups and appeared in videos and on television. Her extraordinary success empowered others to try harder. For parents of individuals with Down syndrome, she offered hope.

So, why the Katie MacDonald Down Syndrome Literacy Project? Katie was most proud of her ability to read. She read to learn; she read for enjoyment. She proved to many doubters that people with Down syndrome can read and benefit from it. After Katie died unexpectedly in 2002, UPS for DownS approached me with a desire to honor her memory. Out of Katie's love of reading, the Katie MacDonald Down Syndrome Literacy Project was created.

Mission Statement for the Katie MacDonald Literacy Project: "To honor the memory of Katie MacDonald, who, with the help of her mother, was instrumental in paving the way of inclusion for children and adults with Down syndrome. Our goal is to increase public awareness that people with Down syndrome can and do learn to read. Our hope is that we will keep Katie's spirit alive by expanding upon all that she accomplished in her lifetime."

UPS FOR DOWNS IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING ONGOING LITERACY-BASED PROJECTS TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF KATIE MACDONALD AND HER LOVE OF READING.

Top Ten Reasons to Facilitate a NCBC

10. *You've been wanting to catch up on your reading.*
9. *It's more fun than watching reality T.V.*
8. *Volunteering feels good.*
7. *Can you spell COFFEE BREAK?*
6. *Who can't use a few more friends?*
5. *Lots and lots of laughs!*
4. *Groups become like families and look forward to getting together every week.*
3. *It's a relaxing break from the rat race.*
2. *It's a chance to be a part of a groundbreaking program.*
1. *Your NCBC members will leave a lasting impression on your life.*

We are delighted that you have chosen to serve as a co-facilitator for the Next Chapter Book Club and we hope your experience will be both enjoyable and rewarding. This chapter of the NCBC training handbook is designed to supplement the training and orientation provided by the Program Coordinators. It describes the steps involved in facilitating a group and provides guidelines and suggestions for creating an enjoyable book club

experience for members. This chapter does not, however, provide you with enthusiasm or commitment. *Those must come from you!* We welcome any questions you may have and encourage you to seek support from the NCBC coordinator throughout the process.

Thank you again for choosing to be a part of this exciting program. You are part of an innovative effort to make life more socially and educationally rewarding for people with disabilities.

Step 1:

Examining Your Motivation for Becoming a NCBC Facilitator

Facilitating a NCBC is a rewarding yet sometimes challenging experience. It is important to understand that you are committing to facilitate the book club until the book is finished.

Members will get to know you and look forward to coming to book club. Consequently, we encourage you to carefully consider your decision and ask yourself the following questions:

- Why do you want to become a NCBC facilitator?
- What qualities do you hope to bring to the book club members?
- What are you hoping to learn or gain from this experience?
- Have you made a plan to include the NCBC in your schedule?
- Do you have any fears or worries about becoming a NCBC facilitator?

We also encourage you to visit a book club that is already in progress in order to gain a better understanding of the process.

Please feel free to ask any questions or share any concerns you may have with your NCBC Program Coordinator.

Step 2:

Before You Begin

In order for you to be well prepared to begin your NCBC group, we ask that you take the following steps before your first meeting.

Attend training session with Program Coordinator

During this one-hour training session, the Program Coordinator will discuss guidelines for facilitating your group, as well as address topics such as confidentiality, facilitator and member rights and responsibilities, and any other questions or concerns you may have.

Complete a Profile Form

This form provides the Program Coordinator with information regarding your background, interests, and training needs. The form may also assist the Program Coordinator in matching co-facilitators.

Self-Evaluation

After you have attended the training session, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What unanswered questions do I have at this point?
2. What challenges might I face?
3. How will I deal with these challenges if they arise?

Step 3:

Developing a Relationship with Your Co-facilitator

The NCBC provides each book club with two facilitators in order to take advantage of the unique qualities of both individuals. Co-facilitators also offer one another support throughout the book club process. A supportive partnership between co-facilitators is essential for the success of a book club.

It is important that you feel comfortable with your co-facilitator and you will have an opportunity to get to know him or her during or after the training session. If you feel you have been matched inappropriately, please express your concerns to the Program Coordinators.

Supporting One Another

Book clubs run more smoothly when co-facilitators support each other. This means assisting each other during possible

times of disruptive behavior and moments of uncertainty. Co-facilitators also support one another by sharing their creativity and encouraging a fun atmosphere.

Delegating Responsibility

You and your co-facilitator should decide how you will divide the group management responsibilities. These responsibilities are outlined further in Step 5; however they include calling members each week to encourage attendance and completing a brief monthly evaluation form.

Co-facilitators should also give some thought to such roles as assisting members with reading and initiating conversations during the weekly meetings. One member may serve as the primary literacy facilitator, while the other serves as the primary social facilitator. This ensures that both literacy and social development are given attention at each book club meeting.

Step 4:

Facilitating Your Group

Whether you are new to leading a group or you already possess some experience, it is likely that you will learn many things about yourself and the group process while facilitating your book club. Throughout this process, it is important to have a calm and positive attitude, as your members will follow your lead. Although there are certain guidelines we ask you to follow, we recognize that each group will be different. We encourage you to allow your members to create the kind of group that works best for them.

Introduce yourself

Before your first meeting, give each of your members a call to introduce yourself and let them know where and when you will be meeting. Depending on the individual, you may need to speak with support staff at this time to be sure they are aware of the member's commitment. Then at your first meeting, ask each member to introduce him or herself to the group and share a little

bit about themselves by asking them about their hobbies or favorite movies, for example.

Allow members to decide how the group will run

Ask members how they would like to read the book (do they want to read aloud, read the book at home and meet to discuss it, listen to the book on tape, etc.). Typically, groups enjoy reading the books aloud, as this encourages maximum participation.

At your first meeting, it is a good idea to tell your members they can participate to whatever degree they feel comfortable. The reading levels of your members will vary, and it is important to let everyone know that you are there to help anyone who would like help. You may involve non-reading members by asking them questions about the book, reading word-for-word with them, or asking them to perform such duties as passing out the books.

Group norms will develop as members begin to feel more at ease with each other. These norms include where members sit

and the way they begin each meeting, and are a sign of comfort and connection.

We want members to feel they have control over their book club. Your group may decide to set a few guidelines. Some suggested guidelines include:

- Only one person talks at a time
- We do not make fun of anyone's reading ability
- There are no bad questions

Encourage participation

Though you may want to begin your meetings with some chit-chat, you should also encourage members to talk about the book. Ask questions and encourage members to share their thoughts and feelings about events and characters from the book. We encourage you to keep the mood casual and seize opportunities for laughter and cheers.

Recognize and reward participation whenever feasible. For many members, participation seems risky. Your positive

reinforcement is an excellent way to encourage efforts to become a part of the group.

As your group becomes more familiar with the process, you may want to ask them to take more responsibility for running the group. Members may serve as “facilitators” and ask volunteers to read. They may also take turns calling each other each week to remind everyone about book club. The more of the process that is facilitated by group members the better!

Encourage friendships

We want the NCBC to be a social outlet for our members, and therefore we encourage them to interact with each other during and outside of group. You may want to initiate conversations between members who have similar interests. You will also be provided with member intake forms. Through the forms you will collect the names and phone numbers of the members. By creating a list and sharing it with the members, it will serve as a roster of who is in their book club and allow

members to contact each other outside of group if they choose. (Be sure to ask permission to share this information).

Take notice of attendance

Because this is a voluntary activity, members are free to leave the book club if they choose. If you notice a member has stopped attending book club, you may want to contact the individual yourself, or ask the Program Coordinators to do so. We want to find out why that individual is no longer participating in book club, and hopefully address any concerns they may have. If it is a matter of scheduling, the Program Coordinators can work to find that individual a book club that works with their schedule. It is also important to have a brief discussion with remaining members to let them know the individual has left the group.

Any time an individual joins the group, make sure to ask the new member to introduce him or herself. Then prompt existing members to introduce themselves and discuss what has been going on in the book so far. Also, be sure to include new members in the phone number exchange.

Manage Conflict

It is important to stay flexible and remember that your group may not run the same each week. Members may become disruptive or lose focus from time to time.

If a member becomes disruptive, attempt to redirect him or her by asking if he or she would like to read or discuss the book. Though it is rare, a member may be unable to be redirected. In this case, you may need to locate the member's staff for support. Also, contact the NCBC Program Coordinator the following day to alert them of the situation.

Although conflict is naturally distressing to group leaders, it is a typical component of any group. Most conflict you will encounter can be used as a tool to expand discussion. If it is kept in the proper context and within group rules, it can be valuable by allowing group members to learn from each other's unique perspectives and experiences. However, if a conflict exceeds the level of usefulness for discussion or has become a

personal issue for one or more members, do not hesitate to redirect members or change the topic entirely.

If a member become bored or loses focus, it may be helpful to start a conversation and spark the member's interest again. Keep things fun by having an activity or question-and-answer session from time to time. Facilitators may have a drawing to win a prize, organize a game or discussion, or bring a special snack. Your Program Coordinator will provide you some suggested activities.

Encourage Literacy Learning

The following list includes many strategies for you to use when helping your members develop literacy skills.

Communicatively match members

- Communicate in ways members can try to do as well
- Talk about the story not only to be understood, but to show members what to say. Ex. "Wow, I bet Dorothy was scared when she landed in Oz!"

- “Match-up” by giving members one or two more comments to say
- Show members new words to say. Ex. “You said she was scared. Maybe she was terrified, nervous?”
- Show members how to extend a topic. Ex. “Let’s talk more about hurricanes and tornados, like the one in The Wizard of Oz. What do you think of last year’s hurricanes?”

Respond to all communication

- Give member a word for his/her experiences. Ex. A member is giggling. “You think the Scarecrow is funny?”
- Treat members experiences as bridges to stories
- Focus on teaching words (oral and written) for what members are already communicating
- Translate members communication into words
- Return the member to the topic when he/she strays
- Do not respond to inappropriate or undesired talk

Make communication balanced and reciprocal

- Say one thing then **wait** for member to respond. It is important to give members ample opportunity to respond to questions or to de-code words.
- Talk in a turn-taking style
- Prevent member from talking in monologues
- Make sure you are all discussing the same topic

Engage Members Emotionally

- Practice turn-taking games with words
- Practice rhyming with words. Try reading poetry.
- Avoid making literacy a test for members
- Be animated in your conversations

General

- Start with the strategies that come most easily for you
- Watch how members respond
- Keep doing strategies that work

- Try new strategies when little is happening; there are many ways to be effective
- Be patient and feel energized by every new skill demonstrated

Step 5:

Weekly Group Management

For the continued success of the NCBC, it is important that you monitor your group's progress and member participation. In addition the weekly club meetings, you will be asked to do the following two tasks:

Weekly phone reminders- Call all group members weekly the day before your group meets to remind members (and their staff or guardian if appropriate) of tomorrow's book club. This promotes high attendance. Eventually, this task should be re-assigned to group members.

Facilitator reports- While you will want to keep a weekly record of attendance, there is also a brief, but essential quarterly report for the monitoring and development of the book clubs.

Please email them to the Program Coordinator, or discuss alternate delivery methods if email is not possible for you.

However, the most important task is to encourage members to learn and have fun by creating a safe and comfortable environment!

Step 6:

Become involved in the recruiting of new NCBC members and facilitators

Your support and enthusiasm are important for the growth and development of new book clubs. You can participate in the recruiting of new members in the following ways:

- Challenge the members of your group to bring someone new to their next meeting
- Follow up with individuals who have expressed interest, or refer them to the Program Coordinator
- Encourage members to tell their friends about the NCBC

- Make sure your group members are having fun! If the members are enjoying themselves, they will tell others

You can also participate in the recruiting of new facilitators by:

- Talking about your experience to friends, co-workers, and family members. Word of mouth is often our most effective recruiting tool.

- Asking interested individuals to visit your group.

Chances are they will become inspired by what they see at your group!

Next Chapter Book Club
Facilitator Intake Form

1. Name
2. Phone number
3. Address
4. Email
5. Occupation
6. How would you describe yourself?
7. Have you been involved with individuals with intellectual disabilities in the past? YES NO If yes, how?
8. What experience have you had with volunteer work?
9. How did you hear about the NCBC?
10. Do you have any concerns about facilitating a book club?
11. When would you like to begin facilitating a book club?
12. What days and/or evenings and times are you available to facilitate?
13. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If yes, please explain.
14. Are you an insured driver?

Please read the following statements carefully and sign below.

I will protect the privacy of all members in my book club and keep all information shared by and about the members confidential.

I understand the Next Chapter Book Club (NCBC) staff may take and use my photograph for the purpose of publicizing the program.

I certify that the information provided above is true to the best of my knowledge.

Volunteer Facilitator

Date

Rev. 07/05/05

Next Chapter Book Club
Member Intake Form

1. What is your name? _____
2. How old are you? _____
3. What is your phone number? _____
4. What is your address? _____

5. Do you live alone? Do you live with family or roommates?

6. What days and times are you available to participate in the NCBC?

7. What kind of books would you like to read?

8. Who should we contact in case of an emergency? Phone number?

Please read or listen carefully to the following statements.

I understand the Next Chapter Book Club (NCBC) staff may take and use my photograph for the purpose of publicizing the program.

I also understand the NCBC will be unable to include me in a book club if my behavior is disruptive or aggressive because it can disturb other members in the group. I understand the NCBC has the right to ask me to leave the group if my behavior is disruptive or otherwise inappropriate.

Name

Date

(Guardian, if appropriate)

Date

Date completed:	Group:
-----------------	--------

Rev. 07/05/05

Next Chapter Book Club
Facilitator End-of-Book Survey

Name:

Date:

Day, time and location of group:

What book did your group read?

How many weeks did it take to complete the book?

How well did your members seem to enjoy the book?

Do you think members' reading abilities have improved over the course of reading the book? If so, how?

Do you think any friendships have developed among group members?

What do you think the members gain from participating in NCBC?

How well has your group been received by the host site?

What do you like most about facilitating a NCBC?

What do you like least about facilitating a NCBC?

Are you interested in continuing to facilitate a NCBC?

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the NCBC?

Next Chapter Book Club
Member End-of-Book Survey

Name:

Date:

Group facilitators:

What book did you read?

Did you enjoy the book?

What did you like about it?

What did you learn from reading this book?

Do you enjoy being in the NCBC?

What do you like most about being in the NCBC?

What do you like the least about being in the NCBC?

Do you feel your reading abilities have improved from being a part of the book club?

Have you made any new friends? If yes, what are their names?

What do you think about meeting in the café/bookstore/coffee shop?

Do you tell your friends about your book club? If yes, what do you tell them?

Do you want to continue to participate in the NCBC? Why or why not?

ECO-NCBC

Describe how often you observed the events below during the NCBC meeting. Circle the number that applies.

1 = Never 2 = Seldom 3 = Occasionally 4 = Often 5 = Consistently NA = not applicable

Social Exchange

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Enjoys reading with others. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 2. "Reads" alone. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 3. Pays attention to both book and participants. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 4. Takes turns with participants. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 5. Cooperates with participants. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |

Language

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Repeats facilitator's words. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 2. Responds when participants comment. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 3. Answers questions. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 4. Communicates. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 5. Talks to participants for the fun of it. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 6. Talks to request or control. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 7. Talks to self. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |

Conversation

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Talks about a variety of topics. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 2. Stays communicating on a topic. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 3. Talks inappropriately or off topic. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |

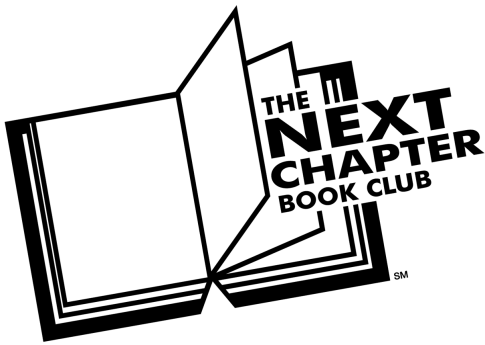
Literacy

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Attempts to follow reading in book. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 2. Points to illustrations. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 3. Points to text. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 4. Comments on connections between book and life. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 5. Predicts story events (What happens next?). | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 6. Reads letters. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 7. Reads words. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 8. Labels illustrations. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 9. Initiates familiar, repetitive events from story. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 10. Initiates comments about story. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |
| 11. Extends conversation from story. | 1...2...3...4...5...NA |

Participant Name: _____

Date: _____

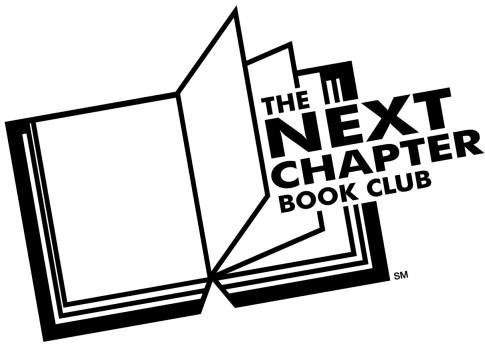
Observer: _____



What A Novel Idea

Book Club Activities

- **Words of the Week-** Members each choose a word from the book and write them on note cards. The following week, members recall their words and discuss their meanings.
- **Word and Letter Games-** Use note cards to write words from the book that are frequently used (i.e. character names) or particularly difficult. Members may be asked to write their name and then find words in the book starting with each letter of their name.
- **What Just Happened?-** After a member has read a paragraph or page, stop to ask a couple questions to make sure members are comprehending the story. You may also want to ask questions related to what might happen on the next page.
- **Picture It-** Ask members to picture a particular scene in the story and describe what it looks like to the group. For example, if a family is having breakfast in the kitchen, ask the members to talk about what they “see” in the kitchen.
- **Round Table-** Go around the table and ask each member to read only one sentence. This keeps everyone involved and ensures that each member has an opportunity to read.
- **To Your Left-** Ask members to tell the person seated to his or her left about a favorite character or favorite book, etc.
- **Theme Week-** Holidays, current events or events in the book may inspire theme weeks. Members may dress up, bring articles or memorabilia, or focus discussion on a particular theme. Celebrating birthdays is also a good way to learn more about each member.
- **Field Trip-** Take a field trip through your host site to encourage social inclusion, skill development and community participation.
- **Scrabble-** Board games such as Scrabble can be a great way to practice spelling and vocabulary. Members can use their books to help them spell out words from the story.



What A Novel Idea

- **Off to the Library We Go-** Take your members to the library and teach them how to understand and use their local library. You may also want to include a discussion about other sources for inexpensive books, such as yard sales, half-priced bookstores, and borrowing from friends.
- **A Time to Share-** Once a month, ask members to disclose something new about themselves with the group members.
- **Phone Tree-** Facilitators can begin the calls with a few questions each member can ask each other, i.e. How was your week? What are your weekend plans? Members will call the next person on the list, and conversations should last for at least two minutes.
- **Alphabet Letter Exchange-** Give each member 8 – 10 letters of the alphabet and ask them to exchange letters with their fellow members until they have enough letters to spell a word from the story.
- **Word Finds or Crossword Puzzles-** Use words from the story in a word find game, or use questions about the story as clues in a crossword puzzle.