

Family Support NEWS BRIEF

A publication of

 CENTER FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES



Preschoolers and Screen Time

Now, more than ever, children spend more time on computers, televisions and other electronic devices. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, children engage virtually in learning, home visits, social events and more. When children spend too much time using screens, it can displace many important activities such as face-to-face interaction, family time, outdoor play, exercise, unplugged downtime and sleep. However, parents and caregivers can appropriately use technology to enhance their children's lives.

Parents should develop a family media plan with safe, engaging, developmentally appropriate activities for children that includes time limits. Family support professionals can

facilitate a discussion with parents and ask questions that help parents and caregivers develop a family media plan. For example, assess how much time the child spends on computers and other electronic devices and how much time the child is engaged in non-electronic activities. Parents should assess how they engage in their child's screen time and examine the media content prior to the child's participation. The collaboration and discussions between parents and family support professionals provide an opportunity for parents to set goals and better understand the impact of technology on their child's development.

Parents and caregivers can use technology to foster cognitive development, fine motor skill

development and social-emotional learning in young children. According to medical experts, 80% of a child's brain development occurs in the first three years of life. The cognitive development occurs through consistent verbal and non-verbal interactions between the parents/caregivers and the child. It is important to select developmentally appropriate content and be fully engaged during the child's screen time. For example, if parent and child read a story together online, the parent should ask questions about the story and allow the child to ask questions. Children may respond verbally, by drawing a picture on the computer, by physical movement or by something else and should be allowed to respond differently to the questions.

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There are many opportunities for family support professionals to discuss a child's emotional and social competence and developmental-centered parenting around screen-time activities. For example, when parents understand that children gain confidence when taking the lead, but still look to the parent for guidance, this concept will help parents develop screen-time activities that build a child's social and emotional skills. Staff can help parents review and understand their child's developmental milestones.

Parents can implement practices that support development-centered parenting during screen time. For example, a family support professional may help a parent whose child is a picky eater and is not fond of trying new, healthy foods, develop activities to learn about the food without tasting it. This may include reading about the food online, watching a cooking show, viewing and drawing a picture of the food, or finding the food in the home or at a local grocery store with the parent. Such activities help parents establish

goals and expectations based on the child's development.

Some of the best ways to regulate a child's screen time is to monitor the content, set time limits and find out why children view the content they view. According to research, too much screen time could cause a lack of quality sleep and could hinder the child's creativity and imagination, and active participation in non-electronic activities. Parents should be a role model, establish their own time limits with electronic devices and turn them off more often. Children imitate what they see. If a parent expends a lot of screen time, the child is likely to do the same.

There are several ways to help parents monitor the content of what the child views. Designating a public space in the home for children to use electronic devices where adults are present, not allowing children to use electronic devices unsupervised. In addition, there is computer software that helps monitor a child's online activities and keeps

children safe from violent, negative activity. Be engaged with the child. Child development experts recommend screen time should be interactive. Join your child as they watch their favorite show or play a game. Virtual games can help enhance a child's eye-hand coordination. Provide resources and information to parents to customize and manage their child's screen time. Watching television and using electronic devices can never substitute for a child's direct interaction with a parent or caregiver. However, parents can thoughtfully and moderately share media and screen time with their children to enhance daily life.

Resources

[Balancing Playtime and Screen Time](#)
(login required)

[Four to Five Years: Your Child's Social-Emotional Development](#)
(login required)

[Kids & Tech: Tips for Parents in the Digital Age](#)



PENNSYLVANIA Parents as Teachers®

Parents as Teachers (PAT) began in 1981 in Missouri as a pilot project for first-time parents of newborns, and now operates in all 50 states, 115 tribal communities and seven countries.

Pennsylvania PAT has been in operation since 1992. The Pennsylvania PAT State Office, based at Center for Schools and Communities, provides implementation support to programs and is part of Pennsylvania Family Support Stakeholders group, the Family Centers Network, and is a partner in the Childhood Begins at Home campaign which promotes collaboration among evidence-based home visiting models.

Despite the uncertainty of the pandemic's impact, Pennsylvania PAT affiliates continued to serve families using multiple methods including virtual and place-based services. In fiscal year 2020-2021 the 55 Pennsylvania PAT affiliates provided the four core elements of the PAT EBHV Model with over 65,000 personal visits with families, over 1,400 group connections, over 1,400 child developmental screenings and made over 4,100 resource connections.

To commemorate its 30-year anniversary and highlight the evolution of the services, Pennsylvania PAT will offer a variety of activities and resources for its affiliates. Stay tuned for updates!



March's celebration focus will be literacy.

- **Is your program part of Read Across America?**
- **Are you connected with your local library?**

Let us know!

pat@csc.csiu.org

[Like us on Facebook](#)

February is Black History Month

Parents as Teachers (PAT) has a commitment to equity as expressed through its value statement: Parents as Teachers national center's organizational values define our organizational culture and guide our conduct. We value:

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility
- Relationships
- Integrity and Accountability
- Learning and Growth

With a focus on Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility, PAT states: "We seek out diverse experiences and perspectives that enrich our products, services and support. We intentionally listen to, value and learn from each other's experiences and needs. We foster an empowering environment where everyone is able to identify and develop their skills and talents. We are dedicated to advancing equity in the rich and vibrant communities of which we are a part."

Resources

Addressing Health Disparities for Pregnant People in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Perinatal Partnerships (PPP) members work to reduce barriers to accessing health services, promote the provision of culturally and linguistically sensitive care, and support the capacity of all people in Pennsylvania to enhance and maintain their own health during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, as well as the health of their children and families.

Thriving PA

Prenatal and postpartum health care is vital to ensuring we are giving our youngest children opportunities to succeed. Unfortunately, the United States has the highest maternal mortality rate among developed countries and disparities exist in the ability to access health care for women of color.



Get **READY** for three days of exciting keynotes, engaging workshop presenters, and networking opportunities. **SET** aside time to learn and engage with your peers. **GO** back to your communities rejuvenated and equipped with strategies to support yourself and innovations for working with families.

This learning opportunity will serve as the annual gathering for Parents as Teachers providers and the Children's Trust Fund Annual Meeting. We invite others to attend who are working to create environments in which families build the Strengthening Families Protective Factors.

Registration opens in soon. [Visit conference website.](#)

Parents as Teachers Online Courses

Foundational 2: 3 Years Through Kindergarten

Monday, March 14 – Friday, March 18, 2022

Monday, April 25 – Friday, April 29, 2022

Monday, May 23 – Friday, May 27, 2022

Foundational and Model Implementation

For new parent educators and new supervisors of affiliate programs

Monday, Feb. 28 – Friday, March 11, 2022

Monday, March 28 – Friday, April 8, 2022

Monday, May 9 – Friday, May 20, 2022

Register for courses at the National Parents as Teachers' [training website](#).

If you have any questions regarding registration for PAT trainings, please contact [Jennifer Esposito](#).

Share Your Story

Do you have some success stories or program news that you would like to share in future News Briefs? If so, please email [the Family Support team](#) or join us online at the [Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers Facebook](#) page or at the [Pennsylvania Strengthening Families Facebook](#) page.



Family Support March 2022 Webinar

Helping Families with Mothers who are Experiencing Depression

Wednesday, March 2, 2022, 10–11:15 a.m. ET

Title, description, and name of presenters will be shared via email.

[Register Now >>](#)

Positive Racial Identity Study Survey

Parents as Teachers needs your feedback and the feedback of parents!

Take a brief survey and enter to win a **\$50 gift card**!

Deadline: Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022

We want to ensure that Parents as Teachers provides parent educators with as much support as they need to help parents speak to their children about race. The survey will help us better understand parent educators' perceptions of the PAT supports currently offered and how they might be improved.

[Parent Educator Survey](#)

We would also like to learn more about how parents speak to their children about race. Please share the survey link with your parents.

[Parent Survey](#)

To access recruitment and informational materials, please contact Study Coordinators [Danielle Allen](#) and [Danay Camero](#).





Family Support Team

Family Support at Center for Schools and Communities provides training and technical assistance to Parents as Teachers providers, Children's Trust Fund grantees and the Strengthening Families Leadership Team.

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Safe Kids Corner



Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas that you cannot see, taste or smell and because of this, is often called the "invisible killer." It is created when fuel-burning appliances, such as heating devices, grills, clothes dryers and vehicles, do not burn all the fuel they need to function.

Young children process CO differently than adults, so they may experience more severe side effects and show signs of poisoning quickly. Symptoms of CO poisoning include headache, nausea and drowsiness. At its worst, CO can cause severe side effects or even death. However, there are steps you can take to keep your family safe from carbon monoxide poisoning

In 2017, poison control centers reported 3,248 cases of CO exposure in children 19 and under.

Top Tips for CO Safety

- Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms. Make sure there is one on every level of your home, especially around sleeping areas.
- Test CO alarms every month. Replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use generators and grills outside of your home, away from windows and doors. Warm up vehicles outside of your garage.
- In a CO emergency, leave your home immediately. If the CO alarm sounds, quickly leave your home. Move to a safe location outside where you can breathe in fresh air before you call for help.

From Safe Kids Worldwide