

Family Support NEWS BRIEF

A publication of

 CENTER FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES



2023 Pennsylvania Strengthening Families Conference

The 2023 Pennsylvania Strengthening Families Conference, “Thriving Together, Growing Stronger” was held May 2 – 4, 2023, at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel. The conference was attended by over 200 people and opened with a reception on the evening of May 2, where guests were welcomed by Shante’ A. Brown, Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

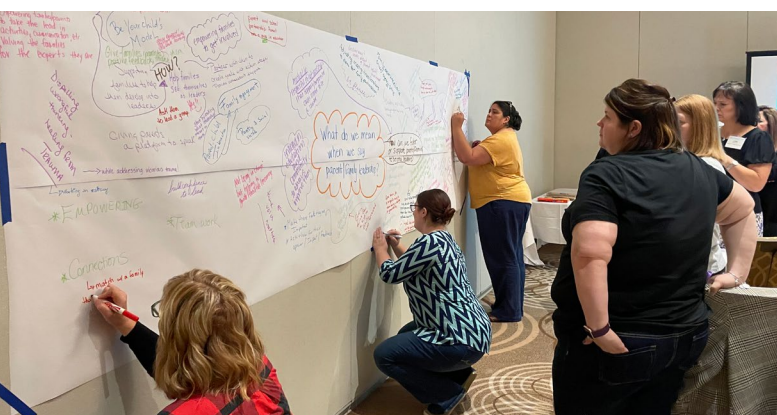
In addition, there were three keynote addresses over the course of the three days:

- “Reframing Child Adversity” – Julie Sweetland, Ph.D., Senior Advisor, FrameWorks Institute.
- “Back to Life” – Tiedra Marshall, Director of Expansion, Parents as Teachers.
- “HEAL PA: It’s Time for Aspirational Pragmatism” – Maryann McEvoy, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Office of Advocacy and Reform.

With many thanks to our generous presenters, the conference offered 18 workshops :

- PANEL: “Leading the Way: A Conversation with Family Leaders” – Sarah Holland, Lauren Waite, Maria Searcy, Sadia Batool.
- “The Stories We Share: SEL and Early Literacy” – Stephanie Colvin-Roy, Center for the Promotion of Social and Emotional Learning at Center for Schools and Communities.
- “In Our Own Voice” – National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Dauphin County, April Downing and Amy Leone.
- “Learning Together: PBS Stations and Parents as Teachers” – Donna O’Brien and Robin Roberts, Parents as Teachers National Center.
- “Nuestra Gente: A Holistic Approach to Services” – Nelly Arevalo, ACLAMO.

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- “Supporting Young Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness” – Tracy Duarte, PA Head Start State Collaboration Office, Office of Child Development and Early Learning.
- “Supporting Learning Through Everyday Activities” – Allyson Masters, Temple University.
- “Family Digital Wellness: A New Link in Prevention” – Justin Donofrio, Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PSFA).
- “PA One Book: Partnering with Libraries to Support Early Literacy “ – Christine Felicetti, Center for Schools and Communities, Barry Wiestling, Office of Child Development and Early Learning.
- “Diversifying Funding for Your PAT Program” – Tiedra Marshall, Parents as Teachers National Center.
- “Deeper Dive: Reframing Child Adversity” – Julie Sweetland, Frameworks.
- “Growing Great Group Connections” – Lauren Lazzari and Lauren Waite, Beginnings, Inc.
- “Little Talks: Children Thriving and Growing Through Home Visiting’s Triadic Relationship” – Patricia Manz, Lehigh University.
- “Building Strong Families Together” – Katie Bauer and Hailey Michalk, Twiga Foundation.
- “Understanding and Responding to Child Neglect” – Haven Evans, Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance.
- “Facilitating Discussions Through Protocols” – Rae Ann Crispell, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit.
- “Hosting Successful Be Strong Parent Cafés” – Rijelle Kraft, Center for Schools and Communities.
- “Connected in Loss: Creating a Community of Support for Children When Parents Are Incarcerated” – Alexa Livelsberger and Denija DuCasse, Highmark Caring Place.

Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers and Pennsylvania Children’s Trust Fund focus groups were also held during the conference. We appreciate the insight provided by all that participated. Similar to completing the conference evaluations, this information will help shape our future efforts.

We are grateful for all who contributed to the successful outcome of the conference—whether you attended in person, shared the registration information, or sent well wishes our way. Stay tuned for information about our 2023 - 2024 convenings!



2023 Pennsylvania Strengthening Families Conference: Positivity Packets

During the conference, attendees were invited to visit the Inspiration Affirmation Station with “Positivity Packet” materials. Based on favorable feedback, we are sharing the process and products used in the activity.

Positivity Packet Assembly Instructions

1. Select a cardboard box (one for each participant).
 - We used [pillow boxes](#) ordered on Amazon.
 - A cost-effective alternative might be using envelopes.
2. Decorate the box to indicate that it contains uplifting notes.
 - We used magic markers, gel pens, [Blessed stamp set](#), and [Nice Work stamp set](#) from Michael’s.
3. Select several stickers with words that make you feel good or write your own positive messages on the small cards provided (you can always add more later).
 - We used a [motivational sticker set](#) from Amazon.
 - We also used cards that people could write personal messages on that were cut to size with a paper cutter from 3” x 5” note cards and older folders that were no longer being used since moving to a paperless filing system.
 - While card stock weight is ideal, slips of any paper could be a cost-effective alternative.
4. Place the stickers and cards in the container and tie it shut.
 - Ours had a string to tie it shut; yours may not but it should have some way to close so the inspirational messages aren’t lost.

Whenever you need an extra boost of inspiration or affirmation, untie (open) your package and pull out a random piece of positivity. Maybe it will even help turn a frown upside down.



Upcoming Family Support Webinars

There is no webinar scheduled for July. Check out the July News Brief for information on the August webinar.



PENNSYLVANIA
Parents as Teachers.



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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Celebrate a Dad in Your Life !

There are many websites that offer information about working with fathers. Here are a few:

Child Welfare Resource Center: [Fatherhood Resources to Promote Family Well-Being](#)

Center for the Study of Social Policy: [Fathers and the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework](#)

[National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse](#)

Enjoy a fun video – or two – about fathers.

Ad Council: [Dad Jokes](#)

[For all the Awesome Dads](#)

Parents as Teachers Online Courses

Foundational and Model Implementation

For new parent educators and new supervisors of affiliate programs.

Monday, July 10 – Friday, July 21, 2023

[FMI registration for July session](#)

[FND registration for July session](#)

Monday, July 31 – Friday, August 11, 2023

[FMI registration for August session](#)

[FND registration for August session](#)

Foundational 2: 3 Years through Kindergarten

Monday, August 28 – Friday, September 1, 2023

[VF2 registration](#)

Questions regarding registration for PAT trainings? Contact [Jennifer Esposito](#).

Register for other courses offered by National Parents as Teachers at their [website](#).