

# Family Support NEWS BRIEF

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CENTER FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES



## Strategies for Empowering Families Through Partnership

Family support programs and their staff are increasing their efforts to include families in the planning and design process. Involving families in this process can increase participation in services, build trust, and better reflect the services that families want to receive. There are several approaches that programs can incorporate such as advisory committees, listening sessions, and coaching for families interested in taking on leadership roles within the program. Approaches that include family voice and promote collaboration help families to build relationships within the program.

There are several strategies that programs can utilize to collaborate with families effectively. This process can begin by defining and addressing goals and any challenges through conversations and surveys. Allowing family input will help gain a greater understanding of their real-life experiences and assets that exist within the community. The next step in the planning process involves evaluating the feedback from families and partners with parents in program development.

Be sure to include flexible participation options for families who want to get involved. This includes home

visits, parent groups, child care support, scheduling convenient times for meetings, and removing transportation barriers. This will minimize any challenges that families may have with participating in the process. Additionally, programs who offer guidance to families support them in the decision-making process.

Programs can also partner with family and community-led organizations to further family engagement. This will help programs improve outreach and build relationships within the community. Lastly, tracking participation and outcomes helps program make changes and make adjustments as needed. Through reviewing records, collecting feedback, and assessing data, program staff can improve their efforts and keep families informed.

### Family Engagement Resources

- [Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement \(PFCE\) Framework.](#)
- [Head Start Community Partnership Resources.](#)
- [Administration for Children and Families, Understanding Family Engagement in Home Visiting: Literature Synthesis.](#)

**“The Power of Play: Unlock Developmental Benefits for Your Child”**

[“The Power of Play: Unlock Developmental Benefits for Your Child”](#) article from [Start Early](#) encourages parents to recognize ways that play with their children is more than fun. The connections and recommendations are useful for home visitors, too.

Remember that you can link parent-child activities and group connections with the Pennsylvania’s Early Learning Standards (PAR,) which also help parents see that play and everyday routines build behaviors (such as curiosity) and skills (such as sorting) that prepare their children for learning in formal settings.

At the [Resources tab on the PA PAT website](#), scroll to the Early Learning Standards Crosswalk with PAT.

**American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule**

Latest news about vaccines may have parents wondering what to do. A [recent article from the American Academy of Pediatrics](#) may be helpful to parents and family support program staff.



## Safe Kids Corner: Car Seat Tips

### How to Ride Safely

- 1. The back seat is the best.** It is the safest place to ride for all children under age 13. Not all cars allow for a car seat in every place that has a seat belt. Check your car owner manual to see where you can put a car seat.
- 2. Be wary of toys in the car.** Choose toys that are soft and will not hurt your child in a crash. Secure any loose objects in the car.
- 3. Wear your seat belt.** We know that when adults wear seat belts, kids wear seat belts. So be a good example and buckle up for every ride. Be sure everyone in the vehicle buckles up, too.
- 4. Never leave your child alone in a car, even for a minute.** [Learn more about preventing heatstroke.](#)

### Expert Help is Available

- 1. Find a car seat expert.** Safe Kids hosts car seat inspection events across the country where certified car seat technicians can teach you to install and use your car seat properly. In some communities, they also serve in fixed locations called inspection stations during specific days and times. You may find an inspection station at a GM dealership, a hospital, or even a fire house. [Find a Safe Kids car seat checkup event near you.](#)
- 2. Read the Ultimate Car Seat Guide.** For parents on the go, the [Ultimate Car Seat Guide](#) offers easy-to-understand tips on how to choose and use a car seat. You can fill in your child’s age and weight to get answers personalized for your child. Available in English or Spanish.

Source: [SafeKids.org](#)





## 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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Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers at Center for Schools and Communities

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# Children's Trust Fund (CTF) Corner

The [Penn State Child Maltreatment Solutions Network Fall 2025 Conference: Innovative Pathways in Child Welfare Practice](#) will be held Friday, October 3, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM at the Barron Innovation Hub in downtown State College (with a virtual option also available). Nationally renowned presenters will share information on best practices in child welfare, with a focus on:

- **Quality Forensic Investigations** – Enhancing access to interviews and medical evaluations
- **Caring for Children and Families** – Improving systems of care for children and families to improve recovery

[Sign up to receive Children's Trust Fund Alliance news, policy updates from the CTF Alliance Action Alert List.](#) For more information you may contact Jim McKay at [jim.mckay@ctfalliance.org](mailto:jim.mckay@ctfalliance.org).

## Parents as Teachers Core Course

### **Foundational and Model Implementation**

October 27 – November 7 | 9:00 AM  
Instructors: Terry Wertman, Bethany Smith  
[Register for FMI Course](#)

### **Foundational**

October 27 – November 4 | 9:00 AM  
Instructors: Terry Wertman, Bethany Smith  
[Register for FND Course](#)

## Family Support Webinar

### **Maternal Mental Health**

**September 17 | 10:00 AM ET**

[Register for Maternal Mental Health](#)