

Family Support NEWS BRIEF

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CENTER FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES



Using Data to Guide Families Through Uncertain Times

In today's world, families often face uncertainty. This can be due to financial pressures, changing community resources, or unexpected life challenges. During these times, family support professionals play an important role in helping families make sense of information and use data to guide their decisions.

Making decisions can be stressful under any circumstances. Using data to guide decision making can help reduce this stress. Data does not always mean complex statistics or scientific reports. It can be as simple as tracking a child's sleep patterns, recording household expenses, or noticing changes in daily routines. By gathering and reflecting on this kind of information, families can better understand what is working well and where adjustments may be needed.

Family support professionals can guide this process by teaching families how to collect meaningful information from within and outside of their family, organize it in a

clear way, and use it to make informed choices. For example, reviewing monthly spending habits can help families prepare a budget that stretches resources further. Tracking school attendance or homework completion can highlight learning supports a child may need. Comparing the benefits and limitations of community programs may help families decide which program will be most beneficial to them.

Most importantly, professionals can help families see data as empowering rather than overwhelming. In uncertain times, having concrete information can give families a greater sense of control and direction. By partnering with families to use data effectively, family support professionals can help to strengthen resiliency and support better outcomes for both parents and children. You can find some useful tools and information about this at [HeadStart.gov - Measuring What Matters: Using Data to Support Family Progress](https://www.headstart.gov/measuring-what-matters/using-data-to-support-family-progress).

October is National Safe Sleep Awareness Month.

Parents can reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) by following safe sleep practices. One helpful guideline is the “ABCs of Safe Sleep”:

- **A – Alone:** Babies should always sleep alone in their sleep space, without blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, or other items that could pose a risk.
- **B – Back:** Always place babies on their backs to sleep, for naps and at night. This is the safest position for a baby’s sleep.
- **C – Crib:** Babies should sleep in their own crib, bassinet, or other safety-approved sleep surface. The crib should be free of clutter to reduce the risk of suffocation.

For more information on safe sleep practices, review the “Safe Sleep for Your Baby” parent educator resource in the Foundational Curriculum on page 1,610 and the National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep (NAPSS) information on [The National Institute for Children’s Health Quality \(NICHQ\) website](#).

Source: Parents as Teachers, Foundational Curriculum, “Safe Sleep for Your Baby,” page 1,610.

New Addition to PATNC Fact Sheets Library

The Parents as Teachers National Center has released a new set of fact sheets for each state, highlighting the impact of our programs based on 2023–2024 affiliate data and federal funding sources. These infographics are valuable tools to support your advocacy efforts and to share with current and prospective funders. For more information about the new fact sheets, go to [O.L.I.V.E.R.>Advocacy>Fact sheets> 2024 State Impact Infographics>select Pennsylvania fact sheet](#).

Source: Parents as Teachers National Center





Safe Kids Corner: Poison Prevention Tips

How to Store Household Products Safely

Put household cleaning products up and away, out of children's reach and sight. Make sure to put cleanings supplies and any poisons away after every use

Keep all household cleaning products in their original containers. When buying products, look for child-resistant containers for an extra layer of protection.

Remember products that might be harmful to kids.

Check your home for products like cleaning supplies, [liquid laundry packets](#), plants, pesticides, alcohol, [medicine](#). Keep personal care products such as lotion, makeup, cleanser, and deodorant where kids can't get into them.

Check Your Purse for Potential Hazards

Be aware of any medications or makeup that may be in your handbag. Store handbags out of the reach of young children.

How to Use Household Products Safely

Read and follow product labels. Check for ingredients that can be harmful to kids and make sure you use and store products according to the label. Kids can get into things quickly, so remember not to leave cleaning products or personal care products unattended while you are using them.

Throw away old products. Check your bathroom, garage, and other storage areas in your home for products you no longer need.

Check for Other Poisons in Your Home

Check homes built before 1978 for lead-based paint. If lead hazards are identified, call the [National Lead Information Center](#) (800-424-5323) for detailed information.

Check www.recalls.gov for more info on product recalls involving lead-based products. Follow the recommendations to get rid of any products like toys or cookware that contain lead.

Install [carbon monoxide \(CO\)](#) alarms. Make sure there is one on every level of your home, especially around sleeping areas. If the CO alarm sounds, leave your home immediately and move to a safe location outside where you can breathe in fresh air before you call for help.

What to Do in a Poison Emergency

Save the Poison Help number in your phone and post it visibly at home: 800-222-1222. The Poison Help line is not just for emergencies. You can call this free, 24-hour, confidential phone line with questions about how to take or give medicine, concerns about plants, chemicals, carbon monoxide, bites, stings, and more. You can also use the [Poison Help Online Tool](#) for poisoning information.

Share Poison Prevention Information

Share the Poison Help number with others. Post the Poison Help number visibly in your home so other caregivers can find it in an emergency and encourage them to save the number in their phones. For more poison prevention information, [visit the American Association of Poison Control Centers](#).

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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[CenterForSchoolsAndCommunities.org](https://www.CenterForSchoolsAndCommunities.org)

Children's Trust Fund (CTF) Corner

Child Abuse Prevention Symposium

Join [Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance](#) at their annual event on November 6, 2025. [Learn more and register for the symposium.](#)

HOPE and Strengthening Families

In recent years there has been growing research about how positive childhood experiences can mitigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences. A framework known as Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) was developed to consider the types of positive childhood experiences that are most impactful to positive outcomes in adulthood. Like the Strengthening Families™ approach, HOPE encourages us to acknowledge the positive and build on strengths.

[Explore the synergy between these two frameworks.](#)

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](#)

