



Parents as Teachers promotes the optimal early development, learning and health of children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers.

Evidence-Based Model

Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers (PAT) evidence-based home visiting model promotes the optimal early development, learning and health of children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers. PAT serves families during pregnancy through the child's first year in school, and PAT can enroll families in the voluntary program anytime during that continuum. PAT's model approach and research-informed curriculum focuses on parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting and family well-being. The program is culturally adaptable to work in many environments. Through personal visits, certified parent educators create settings where families can build their protective factors, ensure health and developmental child screenings, conduct group meetings and connect parents to resources.

Research

Independent evaluation has been integral to the success of Parents as Teachers. Studies published in peer-reviewed journals have shown statistically significant effects of PAT. PAT meets the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) criteria, as demonstrated in a review conducted by the federal Department of Health and Human Services, with favorable, replicable and sustainable outcomes in:

- Child development and early detection of delays and health issues
- School readiness that increases school success
- Promotion of language development and literacy skills and increased school engagement by parents
- Parenting practices that increase parental knowledge and build confidence
- Reductions in child maltreatment

The pandemic has not stopped PAT services. Though four months of the fiscal year were impacted by COVID-19, PA PAT programs continued to deliver services with families with fidelity to the model through internet and/or telephone connections. The Parents as Teachers National Center had already introduced and researched delivering the model program in a virtual environment.

Though there were challenges, PA PAT programs were able to pivot, shifting from place-based services to virtual services within a week of the state closures. Staff and families adjusted to this new form of communication and learned quickly how to develop meaningful relationships that allowed all parts of the model to be carried out.

The Family Center has proven to be a valuable resource to me, as a first-time mom new to the area. My parent educator is knowledgeable regarding childhood development and always assists with mitigating my concerns regarding learning development and behavioral issues through correctional suggestions and educational references. Options are available to allow for as much or as little involvement as parents desire, but I enjoy all the fun children's learning activities and social events. I appreciate that this is not an intrusive program and super flexible with the sole hope of helping all community families provide the best possible support and resources for children.

~ Heather S. (parent), Columbia County Family Center

Pennsylvania PAT Blue Ribbon affiliate, Mabel Morris Family Home Visit Program, was awarded the Parents as Teachers National Center's Losos Prize for Innovation in 2020. The Mabel Morris team has been an active leader in the Read by 4th campaign – a citywide coalition dedicated to ensuring that all of Philadelphia's children are school-ready and that all families have the information, support and resources they need to promote learning at home.



According to the 2019-2020 PAT Affiliate Performance Report:

- **55 PAT affiliates supported families in nearly every county**
- **5,147 families with 6,856 children were served by 297 parent educators**
- **397 families were on waiting lists**
- **67% of families have limited incomes with 16% with low educational attainment**
- **53% of families experience multiple stressors – low income, substance use disorder, child with special needs, English language learners**

When our staff started our Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process (QEIP), we were a little nervous, as it was our first time through this process. I assured my staff that we'd work through this together, and when we were done, we would know if we needed to make some improvements or learn that we were on the right track. As we went through the questions, I saw the pride and reassurance in their responses. After receiving our Blue Ribbon Affiliate designation, we were ecstatic. The QEIP has validated our efforts and brought us together as a team. Although we work one-on-one with families, we know that our Parents as Teachers' work is a team effort. We support and encourage one another, and because of this we met 100% of the Essential Requirements and Quality Standards.

~ Cortney Pahel, Dickinson Center, Inc.

In 2019-2020, Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers engaged families in the model's four major components providing:

- **66,861 personal visits**
- **1,420 group connections**
- **11,594 full or partial health and developmental screenings of children**
- **4,526 links to community resources**

Research bibliography can be found at www.parentsasteachers.org.

PAT in Pennsylvania

Parents as Teachers programs, operating in Pennsylvania since 1992, are funded through a variety of sources, primarily contracts with the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), utilizing federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) and state investments and through local county children and youth agencies, school districts, foundations and gifts.

OCDEL funded Pennsylvania Family Centers use evidence-based PAT as the core service in achieving positive outcomes for healthy child development and parent education. Other PAT providers in Pennsylvania include community action agencies, schools, Early Head Start programs and private nonprofits.

The Pennsylvania PAT State Office, based at the Center for Schools and Communities, provides implementation support to programs through site visits, phone and email communications, monthly webinars, newsletters and professional development. The state office provides PAT certification courses for new staff through two highly qualified instructors.

Pennsylvania PAT is part of Pennsylvania Family Support Stakeholders group, the Family Centers Network, and collaborates with other evidence-based home visiting models as advocates in the Childhood Begins at Home Campaign.

On the day I was handed a brochure about the ARIN IU28 Family Focus Program, my life changed. I was a 19-year-old single mother of a four-month-old baby. I didn't know what to do or how to do it. I didn't know what was "normal" for a child that age and what I should look for. After meeting with my PAT home visitor, I realized that I could be a good parent. I learned the importance of reading to my child, safe sleep practices and nutrition. I also learned how to take care of myself so that I could better care for my child. I met other moms like me, and we were able to provide support to each other. I gained the confidence I didn't know I had; I could do it! I appreciated my home visitor completing things like "Ages and Stages" and "Milestones" with me. It was reassuring to use these tools and see my child was okay. I am very thankful for PAT for helping me be the mom I am today!

~ Alicia, a Parents as Teachers mother