Nurturing Positive Parent Behaviors

Children learn to master tasks such as brushing their teeth, self-feeding, bed making or cleaning their room from caregivers who take time to teach them. Just as children learn these skills, they must also be taught how to effectively communicate their needs and wants, manage their emotions and positively interact with others.

When children are not equipped with these social-emotional skills, the results can manifest themselves in unwanted behaviors such as tantrums, defiance or aggression. These behaviors are simply a form of communication. When children exhibit unwanted behaviors, it may be natural to focus on “fixing” the behavior instead of interpreting what message they are trying to share. It is important to consider what may be shaping that behavior such as their environment including the quality of relationships with adults in their lives.

Creating a positive relationship is the foundation for teaching. Caregivers can build healthy relationships by giving attention to their children’s interests, responding to their cues, creating opportunities for their children to learn through play and exploration, and creating opportunities for their children to talk about what is important to them. For some caregivers this is a challenge because of competing responsibilities.

Though these actions can be incorporated into daily routines, it is also important for caregivers to make time for these interactions. Play and exploration are not only helpful for children; they can also reduce stress levels in parents. This is especially important as caregivers shape how well children effectively communicate by showing that they too are able to manage their own stress as it relates to parenting.

According to the Center for the Study of Social policy, parents and families can manage their own stress better when they embrace nurturing communication and interaction styles. According to Parents as Teachers, family support professionals can facilitate reflective conversations to help parents consider ways that they can embrace healthy parenting practices such as nurturing and communicating. Some questions to consider may include:

- What do you do to show your love?
- How do you communicate to your child?
- How do your children express their emotions? How does that make you feel?
- How comfortable are you expressing your emotions?

Establishing healthy parental patterns and parenting practices can promote childhood well-being. Acknowledge and praise positive parenting behaviors when they occur. Not only does it empower the parent, but it also boosts their esteem and reinforces their ability to be resilient as they continue to grow as a parent.

Resources

Parents as Teachers. Foundational Curriculum. 2017

Parents as Teachers Conference News

Download the mobile conference app for session descriptions, speaker information and handouts.

Affiliate Implementation News

PAT Affiliate Plan
PAT implementation support staff has updated the PAT Affiliate Plan. This document tends to get filed in the “done with that task” folder, but can be a living document. While you are not required to complete the updated plan at this time, consider doing so in the near future.

Functional Vision Screening
PAT parent educators will no longer conduct PAT Functional Vision Screening. A record of a vision screening by a health professional will be acceptable. Check the quality assurance guidelines for information.

Essential Requirements
The updated Essential Requirements will be effective as of July 2018. Review the Essential Requirements for 2018-2019 to familiarize yourself with the updates. These updates can also be found on the PAT Portal under the tab Upcoming Essential Requirements.

Data in Motion
Be sure to check out the Data in Motion Manual. It describes data required and tools to use. It can also be found on the PAT Portal under the PAT Records tab, Online Curriculum.

Model Implementation
The Model Implementation Course has been revised. New parent educators and supervisors will be able to discuss with existing staff upon their return for the Foundational and Model Implementation (FMI) course. Remember that all new supervisors should plan to take the five day FMI course.

Penelope Tip: What to Do When Missing Families in Reports
Are you missing families when running the Service Alert Report? For families to show up in the report (or the APR) as enrolled, you need to complete all records/documents pertaining to Family Records, which are:

- Family Information Record
- Child Information Record for each enrolled child
- Parent/Guardian Info Document for the primary caregiver

More detailed information on these documents can be found in the Penelope User Guide “Family, Child and Parent/Guardian Information.”

Using Penelope? Need Help?
Penelope Q&A sessions are available upon request for all PAT Affiliate programs in Pennsylvania. Contact Wenda Deardorff for more information or to schedule a session.

Preparing for Child Abuse Prevention Month

April marks the recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month across the United States. Many organizations plan events to raise awareness about the community’s role in preventing child abuse and neglect. These events can not only raise awareness, but can also act as a platform to garner support for prevention efforts in your area. Communities across Pennsylvania hold community events, display pinwheels and wear blue ribbons to mark this important month. There are many resources available to organizations to augment their efforts. A few of those resources are discussed below.

Child Welfare Information Gateway
This website provides a myriad of resources related to child welfare including Child Abuse Prevention Month.

About provides a timeline that is helpful in explaining the history and evolution of this commemorative month as well as child abuse prevention legislation.

Spread the Word contains resources to use to spread awareness in the community including outreach materials like press releases and social media posts, widgets, as well as a video gallery.

Video Gallery contains clips that you can use to start conversations about the importance of prevention in your community.

Resources includes a link to download the latest Prevention Resource Guide, tip sheets for parents, links to other prevention related resources available at the Child Welfare Information Gateway, activity calendars and ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) information.

Check back mid-February for the launch of updated resources for 2018 including an updated resource guide with a focus on keeping children safe and families strong in supportive communities, a section on adverse child experiences, updated statistics and data on child maltreatment, voices of parent leaders, which are audio stories about parenting and new video vignettes featuring the protective factors.

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance
The mission of the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) is to “educates, informs and leads communities to action to protect children from abuse and neglect.” They provide training throughout the year for professionals, parents and community members that empowers them to support families and keep children safe in their communities. PFSA and their affiliates hold events.
throughout April to commemorate Child Abuse Prevention Month.

On April 4, 2018, PFSA will host the PA Champions for Safe Kids Awards Ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg, Pa. This event recognizes advocates for children. They will also honor children who were maltreated and children who died last year due to child abuse and neglect.

PFSA’s website provides resources for parents and caregivers, mandated reporters and communities.

Prevent Child Abuse Pennsylvania
Prevent Child Abuse Pennsylvania (PCAP) is the local chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America which leads the Pinwheels for Prevention Campaign. Like the blue ribbon, the pinwheel is recognized as a symbol of child abuse prevention efforts. On the PCAP website you can order pinwheels and learn more about the campaign. From the PCAP website you can link to the Prevent Child Abuse America website which also provides resources related to the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

“The Silent Killer” – Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas that you cannot see, taste or smell that often goes undetected, striking victims caught off guard or in their sleep. More than 400 Americans die from unintentional CO poisoning every year – of which 184 children – and 20,000 children visit the emergency room. The danger of CO is increased in the winter because fuel-powered devices are used more frequently.

How CO Is Produced
This “silent killer” is produced by burning fuel in cars or trucks, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges, portable generators or furnaces. When the gas builds up in enclosed spaces, people or animals who breathe it can be poisoned. Ventilation does not guarantee safety.

Winter Season Safety Tips
• Make sure your home has a CO alarm. As with smoke alarms, install a CO alarm on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas, and keep them at least 15 feet away from fuel-burning appliances.

• CO alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms and vice versa. Combination smoke and CO alarms are available.

• Do not use a grill, generator or camping stove inside your home, garage or near a window.

• If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not leave a car, SUV or motorcycle engine running inside a garage.

• If using gasoline-powered devices, store gasoline in a locked location where children cannot access it. Keep only small quantities in an approved container that has child safety features.

• Keep gasoline away from any source of heat, spark or flame. Even common household appliances such as water heaters and clothes dryers can start a gasoline fire. Be sure to store your gasoline away from anything that could ignite it.

Steps to Take When a CO Alarm Sounds
Never ignore a CO alarm (according to CPSC). Do not try to find the source of the gas. Instead, follow these steps:

• Immediately move outside to fresh air.

• Call emergency services, fire department or 911.

• Make sure everyone is accounted for once outside.

• Do not reenter the premises until emergency responders have given you permission.
The Sharing Corner

The Sharing Corner is for you, by you. Share your expertise, celebrations, testimonies and news. Send an email with the information you would like to share to Wenda Deardorff.*

* Center for Schools and Communities reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of the information.

Family Support Webinars
First Wednesday of the month
10:00 AM - 11:15 AM
Feb 7, Depression and Pregnancy: How to Support Your Clients
Mar 7, Parenting Behaviors

Parents as Teachers
Until one month prior to the event, registration will only be open to Pennsylvania participants. If you have a new hire in the month before the event, contact Wenda Deardorff.

PAT Foundational & Model Implementation
For new parent educators & supervisors of affiliate programs
Jan 22-26 Camp Hill, Pa.
Mar 12-16 Homestead, Pa.

PAT Foundational
For new approved users
Jan 22-24 Camp Hill, Pa.
Mar 12-14 Homestead, Pa.

PA Foundational 2: 3 Years through Kindergarten
Feb 26-27 Camp Hill, Pa.
Apr 9-10 Homestead, Pa.

Family Support at the 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 is based at the Center for Schools and Communities. Learn more at the following sites:
Children’s Trust Fund
Strengthening Families