Building Parent Leadership

In February, we celebrate National Parent Leadership Month. This event, established by Parents Anonymous encourages us not only to consider how we partner with parents to develop productive relationships but also how we share leadership by ensuring that parent voice and parent leaders are part of all aspects of our programming from planning to policy-making. Parent Leadership Month also provides opportunities to recognize parent leaders for their contributions and dedication.

Supporting and developing parent leaders has benefits for everyone involved. As FRIENDS National Center points out, “by fostering parents in the role of expert and leader, families benefit from improved self-worth and being better advocates for their needs, while programs benefit from being more responsive and accountable to the families they serve.”

The improved self-worth as well as improved confidence helps to build resilience, one of the five Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors. Knowing how to advocate effectively is a part of building the protective factor of concrete support in times of need.

But how, as an organization do we know that we are creating environments where parents build leadership skills and are true partners in our work? Parents Anonymous explains that “parent leadership is successfully achieved when parents and professionals build effective partnerships and share responsibility, expertise and leadership in decisions being made that affect families and communities.”

For more information about parent leadership and to assess the success of your efforts, explore the resources listed below.

The resource Meaningful Parent Leadership: A Guide for Success provides comprehensive information about building a parent leadership program.

Parents Anonymous includes the Parent Leadership Month Toolkit and is the home of the Parent Leadership Network.

FRIENDS National Center for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention has a myriad of resources related to parent leadership, including assessments and checklists for organizations to explore how deeply they are partnering with parents and fostering leadership skills, as well as parent stories of their experience as leaders.
New Staff

On behalf of the Center for Schools and Communities we would like to introduce Katherine Noss, as our newest family support technical assistance coordinator, and welcome her to our family support work. Her main responsibilities will be to provide implementation support/technical assistance with the many programs with which we work.

Katherine brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience from multiple human service and education systems. Most recently she served as the English as a second language and diploma project coordinator for the Refugee School Impact Grant. She also has experience as migrant education recruiter, student support specialist, and Spanish teacher in the Harrisburg school district. She has a bachelor’s degree in Latino from Duke University. She has lived in six countries but has made central Pennsylvania her home.

Contact Katherine, (717) 763-1661, ext. 104

Parents as Teachers Advocacy Webinars

Interested in evidence-based home visiting and want to learn more about the policy climate and advocacy efforts? Join PAT National Center’s advocacy webinars.

March 20 | 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
New PAT Research: Leveraging the Findings to Spread Awareness During Child Abuse Prevention Month

April 24 | 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
The 2018 Home Visiting Yearbook
Featuring Allison Meisch from the National Home Visiting Resource Center.

July 24 | 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness: Supporting Young Parents and Their Children
Featuring Patricia Julianelle, Director of Program Advancement and Legal Affairs and Grace Whitney, Director of Early Childhood Initiatives from School House Connection.

Webinar questions? Contact Lisa Foehner, director of advocacy.

Using Penelope? Need Help?

Penelope Q&A sessions are available upon request for all PAT Affiliate programs in Pennsylvania. Contact Alexa Brown for more information or to schedule a session.
Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work

March 13-14, 2019
Center for Schools and Communities, Camp Hill, Pa.

This training will provide an in-depth discussion of protective factors and what can be done to create an environment where families can build these factors in their own lives.

Register Now for Protective Factors Framework

Strengthening Families Conference

April 30 – May 2, 2019 | Toftrees, State College, Pa.

Network with Parents as Teachers (PAT) colleagues, Children’s Trust Fund (CTF) grantees, and other family support professionals. Build your family support toolbox through interactive workshops on topics such as the Strengthening Families Protective Factors, brain development, supporting parent-child interaction, advocacy, and more! This inaugural event will take the place of the CTF Annual Meeting and PAT State Conference, and all are welcome!

More About Strengthening Families Conference

Safe Kids Corner

Burn Prevention for Little Kids

Kids do not always understand how easily they can get burned by hot liquids, steam and electrical appliances. Whether in the kitchen or bathroom (where hot water burns toddlers most), it is important for parents to take a few simple precautions.

Top Safety Tips

1. With everything going on, we know the water heater is the last thing on your mind. But a small adjustment can give you one less thing to worry about. To prevent accidental scalding, set your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or manufacturers recommended setting.

2. Check the water with your wrist or elbow before giving your baby a bath.

3. Don’t leave a small child unsupervised in the bathtub, in the kitchen or around electrical outlets.

4. Kids love to reach, so to prevent hot food or liquid spills, simply use the back burner of your stove and turn pot handles away from the edge.

5. Don’t carry or hold a child while cooking on the stove. Instead, move a high chair in the kitchen within reach or sight before you start. Then talk to your child so they know what’s going on. It’s a great way to spend time together.

6. Unplug and safely store irons, flat irons and other appliances that might be hot to the touch.

Retrieved from Safe Kids Worldwide
Professional Development Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals

The Institute offers family support professionals everywhere the opportunity to learn new skills and grow their careers. Through engaging, online modules and a personalized learning map feature, professionals take charge of their growth and advancement.

More About the Institute

Essential Communication Skills

United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey is offering this free course to home visiting programs in southeast Pennsylvania. The course will take place every other Wednesday afternoon March 20 – July 10, 2019.

More About Essential Communication Skills

Let’s Chat About Early Language and Literacy

Join the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning and Early Intervention Technical Assistance during the winter months for some hot topics around early language and literacy development. Get access to resources to share with families and use in classrooms and centers. These 30 minute chats will be offered at 8:30 a.m. and repeated at 1:30 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month in February and March 2019. POAS credit hours and infant toddler hours available.

More About Let’s Chat

The Child Maltreatment Solutions Network

The Network is an initiative of the Penn State Social Science Research Institute and focuses on research and awareness about child maltreatment. Join them for a free awareness event on April 6, 2019 to discuss strategies to prevent child sexual abuse.

More About Solutions Network

Parents as Teachers 2019 conference planning committee

The committee is seeking workshop proposals that reflect the best thinking, experience and ideas in the industry. Share knowledge and expertise with more than 1,200 early childhood education professionals by applying to present at the 35th Anniversary Parents as Teachers 2019 International Conference, October 14-17, 2019, in St. Louis, Missouri.
Family Support

Strengthening Families Conference
Parents as Teachers and Children’s Trust Fund
Apr 30 – May 2, State College, Pa.

Bringing the Protective Factors to Life in Your Work
March 13-14, Camp Hill Pa.

Family Support Webinars
First Wednesday of the month
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Mar 6, Reframing Challenging Conversations to Meaningful, Impactful and Solutions Oriented Conversations
Apr 10 - TBA

PAT Knowledge Studio Course
Facilitating Groups
Apr 2-3, Camp Hill, Pa.
Interacting Across Abilities
Apr 23-24, Camp Hill, Pa.

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 Jennifer Esposito.

PAT Foundational & Model Implementation
For new parent educators and supervisors of affiliate programs
Mar 4-8, Camp Hill, Pa.
Apr 8-12, Homestead, Pa.

PAT Foundational
For new approved users
Mar 4-6, Camp Hill, Pa.
Mar 11-13, Greensburg, Pa.
Apr 8-10, Homestead, Pa

PA Foundational 2: 3 Years through Kindergarten

Parents as Teachers

Jennifer Esposito, Specialist
(717) 763-1661, ext. 161

Katherine Noss, Coordinator
(717) 763-1661, ext. 104

Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers at Center for Schools and Communities.

Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers

Family-School-Community Partnerships
Karen Shanoski, Project Manager
(717) 763-1661, ext. 139

Children’s Trust Fund and Strengthening Families
Rijelle Kraft, Coordinator
(717) 763-1661, ext. 221

Family Support
Jennifer Esposito, Specialist
(717) 763-1661, ext. 139

Parents as Teachers
Alexia Brown, Coordinator
(717) 763-1661, ext. 146

Children’s Trust Fund Strengthening Families

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.