



School Readiness

Parents as Teachers: Ready for School, Ready for Life

Children's development from the earliest years lays the foundation for what follows. In the U.S., six out of ten kids show up to kindergarten unprepared to learn.¹ As their child's first and most important teacher, parents play a crucial role in supporting school readiness. Communities need a proven intervention that better supports parents in promoting their child's health, early development, and learning.

Parents as Teachers helps prepare children for kindergarten and beyond:

- > Children score higher on measures of achievement,² language ability,³ social development⁴ and other cognitive abilities.⁴
- > Children also significantly increased their scores from pre- to post-test in every domain (colors, letters, numbers/counting, sizes, and shapes).⁵
- > Combined with preschool, Parents as Teachers (PAT) reduces the achievement gap between low-income and more advantaged children at kindergarten entry.⁶
- > Programs saw a decrease in the number of children falling in delayed categories in school readiness proficiency.⁷
- > Teachers rated children enrolled in Parents as Teachers significantly higher in multiple developmental areas including emotional well-being, fine motor, expressive language, receptive language and social competence than their non-PAT counterparts.⁸
- > Children achieve school success into the elementary grades.^{7,9}
- > Parents are more engaged in literacy activities at home³ and in their child's future.⁹
- > Children enrolled in PAT achieved higher reading and math standardized test scores than those not receiving PAT.⁹

Greater Nanticoke Area Family Center

Christine Ferrato, Director of the Greater Nanticoke Area Family Center, receives referrals from rural parents who want their children to go to preschool, but who live too far from the school bus route. For some families, Parents as Teachers is the only early childhood program available in their area. "We go straight to the family's home, which is good for families with transportation barriers," says Christine. Christine worked with one family who has a four-year-old little girl. Mom and dad were worried about their daughter being ready for kindergarten. Christine began visiting the family twice a month and worked with mom and dad on their daughter's language and social-emotional development. "The parents were committed. They practiced all the activities that I shared with them during visits. They became more confident parents and their daughter excelled," says Christine.



The Parents as Teachers evidence-based model is implemented by local organizations such as school districts and is offered to families prenatally through kindergarten. Trained parent educators provide four components for families: personal visits, developmental and health screenings, resource referrals and group connections. Personal visits focus on development-centered parenting, parent-child interaction, and family well-being to promote healthy development and learning.

All children will develop, learn and grow to realize their full potential.

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Quick Facts

- > Parents as Teachers is aligned with State Early Learning Standards. <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/state-early-learning-standards-and-guidelines>
- > Home visiting is an allowable use of ESSA, Title I and Title II federal funds for family engagement. <https://parentsasteachers.org/s/07-11-16-ESSA-Home-Visiting-Brief.pdf>
- > At this time, close to 700 school districts in 33 states and 43 Bureau of Indian Education schools implement the Parents as Teachers model with federal, state, or local funds.
- > A 2016 policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics calls on pediatricians to work with families and the community to promote healthy brain development and socio-emotional skills that provide the basis for learning. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/3/e20162293>
- > Community-based agencies such as early childhood providers, school districts, health departments, and other non-profit organizations that support children and families are critical in fostering the conditions and experiences needed to ensure that all children reach school ready to learn. A majority of Parents as Teachers programs operate within community-based organizations.

References

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- ³ Center for Early Education Evaluation at Highscope. (2015) Results from the Innovative Approaches to Literacy project. Retrieved July 3, 2017. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56be46a6b6aa60dbb45e41a5/t/57eea4abc534a575207ad7ed/1475257516482/PAT_ResearchReport_IAL_2015.pdf
- ⁴ Wagner, M., Spiker, D., & Linn, M. (2002) The effectiveness of the Parents as Teachers program with low-income parents and children. *Topics in Early Childhood Education* 22, 67-81.
- ⁵ Parent Possible. 2017 *Parents as Teachers (PAT) Evaluation*. OMNI Institute, August 2017. Denver, CO.
- ⁶ Pfannenstiel, J., & Zigler E. (2007) *The Parents as Teachers program: Its impact on school readiness and later school achievement Research Summary*. St. Louis, MO: Parents as Teachers National Center.
- ⁷ Drazen, S., & Haust, M. (1993) *Raising reading readiness in low-income children by parent education*. Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association: Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- ⁸ O'Brien, T., Garnett, D., & Proctor, K. (2002) *Impact of the Parents as Teachers program Canon City, CO*. Center for Human Investment Policy, Graduate School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado at Denver.
- ⁹ Zigler, E., Pfannenstiel, J., & Seitz, V. (2008) A Parents as Teachers program and school success: A replication and extension. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 29, 103-20.