



Parents as Teachers™

# News

## Driven by Data

This issue  
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Fall 2011

Parents as Teachers  
and the Federal Home  
Visiting Initiative

Missouri mother ignites  
movement, remains Parents  
as Teachers advocate

Affiliate Informational  
Updates

Same Parents as Teachers  
experience, only better



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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Karabelle Pizzigati, Board Chair

## WITH EXCITEMENT ABOUT THE DEEPER WORK OF PARENTS AS TEACHERS

on many fronts, I'm pleased to report that a new era in our Parents as Teachers history is about to begin.

After a whirlwind several months, the board of directors has wrapped up the search for our new executive leadership. **Scott Hippert** will be coming on board as our new president and chief executive officer beginning in January.

We're delighted here at the national office about the new leadership Scott will be bringing to all of us. Scott, currently the president of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, has the background and experience that



Scott Hippert

can help us both strengthen our ongoing work and map new directions for advancing our mission.

Until January, **Cheryle Dyle-Palmer**, who has been serving admirably as both COO and interim president and chief executive officer, will continue to move us forward, working side by side with our extraordinary National Center staff. In January she will assume the title of executive vice president and COO.

Our staff has been very busy expanding partnerships with Parents as Teachers state affiliates and other organizations that share our perspectives. In this ongoing process, we're learning much more about what our programs across the country need and how we can help them meet these needs. Our "i3" grant with Native American children and families is already teaching us new lessons about program and evaluation design. And we're pleased that our updated approach, new curriculum, and other tools continue to be so well received and successful.

How successful? I recently had the wonderful opportunity to join our friends at Parents as First Teachers in the United Kingdom on the occasion of their twentieth anniversary. That visit affirmed for me, on an even larger scale, the significant contribution all of you—across the United States and around the globe—are making in the lives of children and families, often in the face of huge challenges.

We have a long way to go, as we're all well aware. But we are making a difference; we're seeing increasing recognition of the positive impacts our Parents as Teachers efforts are having.

Your Parents as Teachers board thanks you for your passion and dedication to the work that helps strengthen families and ensure that all children reach their full potential. We look forward to our new executive era — and working with all of you to increase opportunities for Parents as Teachers and the success they nurture.

*Karabelle Pizzigati*

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# Driven by Data

*Over the past year, Parents as Teachers News has focused on the growing need for quality data at every level. Quality data is key to securing funding, strengthening advocacy and expanding the impact of every home visit. And it all starts at the local level with the affiliates.*

**SELF-ASSESSMENT HAS LONG BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART** of Parents as Teachers, with local programs measuring and reporting on their activities and impacts in their communities. Now, as Parents as Teachers has rolled out a new model for quality and replication, the self-assessment has evolved into the Affiliate Assessment.

## **Streamlining assessment**

“Local programs would typically say that they learned a lot from the self-assessment process once they did it, but that it was a lot of work,” explains Karen Guskin, research and evaluation director. “Now we have stripped away the extraneous elements to make it easier, faster, more integrated and user friendly.”

“Before the self-assessment process seemed separate from the local programs’ day-to-day activities. Now it builds more directly on the activities they are doing as an affiliate,” adds Sondra Horowitz, Parents as Teachers quality consultant.

The Affiliate Assessment is built on a well-defined rubric, a tool widely used in education. A rubric is an explicit set of criteria used to assess a particular type of work or performance. The Affiliate Assessment rubric developed by Parents as Teachers clearly defines required elements for model fidelity and quantitative and qualitative performance measures in a number of areas.

“Using this new rubric, an affiliate can place itself along a continuum for each of the key measures to see where it is excelling and where it can improve,” notes Sondra. “The rubric is a tool familiar to many people already. It’s visual, and it provides the big picture of where a program is.”

## **The overarching categories of the Affiliate Assessment rubric are:**

- Organizational resources and management
- Cultural competence
- Training and professional development
- Service initiation
- Family-centered assessment and goal setting

- Parents as Teachers service delivery components
  - Personal visits
  - Group connections
  - Screening
  - Resource network
- Quality assurance and evaluation

The Parents as Teachers approach highlights the importance of reflective functioning skills. Reflective functioning is relevant at many levels: parent-child, parent educator-parent, and parent educator-supervisor. “But it does not stop there,” says Sondra. “A reflective approach to the Affiliate Assessment helps staff further develop their capacity to think about and see links between the services they provide and their results, to learn from this and to implement strategies to strengthen services to families.”

## **Connecting all the dots**

The refinement of the assessment process is important not just to affiliates, but also to the Parents as Teachers organization as a whole.

“We need to remember that refining and enhancing assessment processes is considered a standard for continuous quality improvement. We have to be responsive to the political and economic environment where improved measurement is an expectation. And we have to make sure that our assessment tools reflect the changing nature of our work with families,” explains Karen.

For instance, previous assessment tools did not include any mention of prenatal services or emphasize transitions to other educational or early childhood services. These are newer areas of concentration which experts have determined can make a big impact on families. “These areas have now been brought to the forefront so we needed to update our measures to include these areas,” notes Karen.

Perhaps most importantly, the Affiliate Assessment builds upon data that affiliates regularly gather and report. For example, by using the newly released Affiliate Quality Assurance Blueprint. And that’s when data has its highest value—when data collected last week can improve the work being done this week. ❖

# Affiliate Informational Updates

**A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF INFORMATION ACCOMPANIED** the 2011 launch of the Foundational and Model Implementation curricula and training. To facilitate full understanding of the Parents as Teachers essential requirements, training guidelines and other expectations for Parents as Teachers affiliates, the national office will provide periodic "Informational Updates."

These Informational Updates are designed to help clarify information that has been released, as well as to provide additional details. Check the Web site regularly for future updates under the "Affiliate Update" quick link on the home page or [www.ParentsAsTeachers.org/affiliate-updates](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org/affiliate-updates). Below is the first such update:

## Training

Foundational and Model Implementation training provides a basis for understanding and complying with many of the Parents as Teachers essential requirements. So it is critical that all applicable staff in your organization complete retraining as soon as possible. ***Please note that the reduced retraining fee for the Foundational Training will significantly increase as of July 1, 2013.***

We are pleased that so many existing parent educators and supervisors have already taken Parents as Teachers Foundational Training. We have really appreciated hearing about the impact it is having on your work with families.

We know many of you are eagerly awaiting the online Model Implementation Training that will be available in

January 2012. As a reminder, this online course will only be for currently certified parent educators and 5-day supervisors who have taken the Foundational retraining. As part of our effort to make retraining financially manageable for you, this online course will be available at no charge.

## Affiliate compliance with the Parents as Teachers essential requirements

Supporting evidence will be necessary for the national office to confirm that an affiliate is in compliance with the Parents as Teachers Essential Requirements by the July 2014 deadline. The necessary data will be submitted via the 2013-2014 Affiliate Performance Report or APR (which includes the compliance assessment).

Once affiliates are in compliance with the Parents as Teachers essential requirements, they will provide supporting evidence of continued compliance annually via the APR. While many affiliates will be in compliance before the July 2014 deadline, they will still need to demonstrate compliance via the 2013-2014 APR.

The need for one year's worth of supporting data reinforces the importance of completing training as soon as possible and, in particular, by June 30, 2013. ❖

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*For questions about research and quality, contact [Karen.Guskin@ParentsAsTeachers.org](mailto:Karen.Guskin@ParentsAsTeachers.org).*

## Accelerate Your Career: Professional Development from Parents as Teachers



## Parents as Teachers is more than a home visiting model!

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# Missouri mother ignites movement, remains Parents as Teachers advocate

*This issue's profile is about Michelle Gieselman, a parent who participated in the Lathrop R-II Schools Parents as Teachers program in Lathrop, Missouri.*

## WHILE SEVEN MONTHS PREGNANT

with her daughter, Michelle Gieselman decided she had to stand up to the Missouri state budget cuts to the Parents as Teachers program funding in the only way she felt she could: she updated her Facebook status, sounding the alarm to a close circle of small-town mothers.

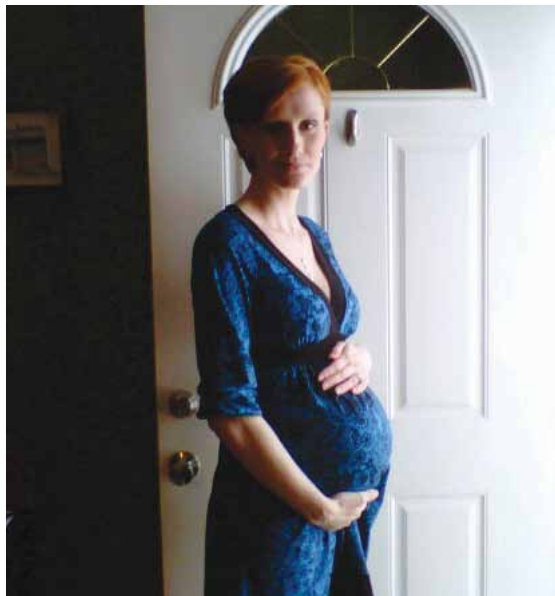
"It really spread the news," Michelle said. "I think people didn't think education would be cut, but Parents as Teachers was affected."

Within days, a Facebook group had sprung up in her name, eventually attracting almost 16,000 followers. They posted comments of support and stories chronicling the organization's impact on their lives.

Michelle herself has a similar story. Her first son Michael seemed to be developing normally. But as a teen mother, she was inexperienced. In a high school parenting class, a Parents as Teachers educator came in to speak, prompting Michelle to schedule home visits.

"At six months, I didn't realize he should have been pushing his arms up and holding his upper torso up," she said. But once her parent educator began checking for development benchmarks, Michelle was able to have a more meaningful dialogue with her pediatrician.

The parent educator assigned to her second child, Hayden, re-affirmed her faith in Parents as Teachers. "We had just moved to a small town; I didn't have any way to socialize my sons," Michelle said. So parent educator Martha Martin introduced the family to other stay-at-home moms, who organized weekly play dates for their children. "I probably would've moved if it wasn't for Martha," Michelle said.



Michelle Gieselman pictured just a few days after she started the "Save MO PAT" Facebook page.

Years later, concern for Martin's job security motivated her to fight debilitating budget cuts. "I said, 'If you participate in this program, you need to speak out! We don't want this to go away.'"

A day of activism in Jefferson City was organized in the midst of the crisis using the Facebook page and the Parents as Teachers national office. Those at the rally and meetings with legislators wore buttons that read, "We'll give you 154,000 reasons to fund MO Parents as Teachers programs," referring to the number of Missouri children that received Parents as Teachers services in the preceding year.

About \$21 million was eventually cut from Parents as Teachers in Missouri,

but Michelle said the collective efforts of early education advocates were worthwhile. "Parents as Teachers educators are the most wonderful people," she said. "And our children are the future. The more we do what's right for them now, the better off we'll all be in the long run."

Michelle's Facebook page remains active, providing news updates and an outlet for parents to share stories and communicate. This year, about \$3 million in funding has been restored to Parents as Teachers by the Missouri General Assembly, although Governor Nixon has withheld it temporarily due to the financial impact of this spring's tornado in Joplin. ❖

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*To share your story online and be a voice for Parents as Teachers, visit [www.ParentsAsTeachers.org](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org).*

# New Horizons

## Parents as Teachers Champions

By Maggie Probert,  
Development Director

We continue to highlight some of the donors who have made exceptional commitments to the field of early childhood, understanding how the early years impact life-time outcomes for young children. Here is this issue's snapshot of a Parents as Teachers Champion.

### Boeing and Babies

**WHEN YOU SAY "BOEING" MOST PEOPLE DON'T THINK OF** babies. They think of engineers and airplanes. But Boeing understands that learning begins at birth.

**This statement comes from Boeing's 2010 Corporate Citizenship Report:** *"Making sure children are ready to learn by the time they reach kindergarten requires plenty of help from any parent. For families facing financial difficulties or other added challenges, having the time or skills to do that*

*can be doubly tough. Joyce Walters, who directs Education and Workforce Initiatives for Boeing Global Corporate Citizenship, said that's why Boeing has turned its focus toward early education efforts in the past ten years.*

*'So many children are showing up one, two, three years behind their peers when they are starting kindergarten,' Walters said. 'We wanted to address that issue by providing support for parents and others who are caring for young children, so they can maximize the learning opportunities in the early years to help get kids ready for school and for life.'"*



Boeing's partnership with Parents as Teachers began with a grant in 2005. Over the years, this partnership has grown and deepened. Support from Boeing has helped Parents as Teachers develop materials for serving immigrant and refugee children, expanding math and science content in curricula, and providing scholarships for parent educators to attend trainings.

But it hasn't all been about grants and gifts. Boeing contributed the special expertise of its staff to help Parents as Teachers grow the Heroes at Home project. The Heroes at Home initiative provided Parents as Teachers services to active-duty families at 36 installations across the country. Other Boeing staff helps to promote participation in local Parents as Teachers programs to employees with young children.

This partnership reflects the shared values between Boeing and Parents as Teachers. Again the 2010 Corporate Citizenship Report states, *"To improve lives and communities, we continue to build many partnerships with nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations around the world. Our company and our employees' roles as corporate citizens magnify the values we live by and the integrity we invest in our actions. Corporate citizenship has always been a traditional part of our culture at Boeing. That's who we are — and who we always want to be."* ❖



# Using the 3 Years to Kindergarten Entry Curriculum after Foundational Training

## WHETHER YOU HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN 3-K OR PLAN TO

attend a training soon, you may be wondering how you will plan for personal visits with families using both the Foundational and 3-K Curricula. Here are some tips for incorporating the Foundational approach and forms into 3-K visits.

### Recognize the similarities.

- Both curricula contain activity pages that are used to support parents during the parent-child activity and in continuing the learning after the visit.
- The developmental topics of the Foundational Curriculum resemble the parenting topics of the 3-K Curriculum.
- The parenting behaviors of the Foundational Curriculum are an expansion of the roles of a parent presented in the 3-K Curriculum.

### Work within the 3 Areas of Emphasis.

- Before visits, use the Personal Visit Planning Guide to plan for each area of emphasis—Parent-Child Interaction, Development-Centered Parenting, and Family Well Being.
- Visit plans from the 3-K Curriculum contain suggestions for parent-child activities, parenting topics, and related parent handouts to support the first two areas of emphasis.
- Some 3-K parenting topics, as well as, most of the resources and handouts in the Family Well-Being section of the Foundational Curriculum support the third area of emphasis.
- After visits, complete the Family/Child Personal Visit Record.

### Incorporate the 3 Roles of a Parent Educator.

- **Partnering**—the 3-K curriculum is topic driven, so include parents in making decisions for which experiences, activities and discussion points to cover in upcoming visits.
- **Facilitating**—utilize parent handouts to support your discussions with families and use the strategies listed in the 3-K plans to coach parents in supporting their child's learning and strengthening their interactions during the parent-child activity.
- **Reflecting**—continue using the Toolkit and Family Journal to encourage reflection and to gain the parent's perspective.

Families will benefit as you think about the whole family and the needs of each child and family member. This is especially important when serving families with children in both the prenatal to 3 and 3 to kindergarten age ranges. As you plan from both curricula, consider focusing on the same area of development across all their children and, when appropriate, use the multi-age activity pages or similar activities that can include the whole family. ❖

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*Rebecca Graham, National  
Fatherhood Initiative*

**WEBCAST #2: Autism Spectrum Disorder:  
Where to Begin and What to Try Next?**  
*Dr. Brian Reichow, Yale Child Study Center*

**WEBCAST #3: Curbing  
Chronic Early Absentee-  
ism: Why It Matters and  
What You Can Do!**  
*Hedy Chang,  
Attendance Works*



# Parents as Teachers and the Federal Home Visiting Initiative



By Hillary Elliott,  
Public Policy Director

**PARENTS AS TEACHERS HAS PLAYED AN ACTIVE PART IN** the policy and implementation progress of the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHVP). Our efforts began in the policy arena by working with the National Home Visiting Coalition on crafting a piece of legislation that would provide proven home visiting services to families in America's most vulnerable populations and across both rural and urban settings.

Fast forwarding to today—with the legislation passed and evidence-based home visiting models selected—states are building systems of home visiting services through this federal funding to carry out the intent of this historic legislation: to improve health and development outcomes for children and families.

Through this initiative, Parents as Teachers is currently working with new and existing Parents as Teachers affiliates in 28 states, one territory and 10 Tribes and tribal organizations and anticipates expanding into other states in future funding years.

Because of our distinction as an evidence-based home visiting model, we have a unique responsibility in the process as an approved model developer and we are charged to work with both our state offices and the state lead agencies designated to administer this unique program. Each state has developed their own plan for utilizing this funding and each has elected different home visiting models to work with. The specificity of the project also lends some major challenges for states as each of the home visiting models involved in this project are responsible for reporting on benchmarks and constructs related to child and family health, educational, economic and social outcomes.

The MIECHVP provides Parents as Teachers with an unprecedented opportunity to exemplify our best practices, create and build infrastructure and sharpen our collaborative efforts with the entire evidence-based home visiting community to build a comprehensive system of early childhood care for children and families nationwide. The rigorous requirements and high-profile of this program will provide Parents as Teachers affiliates involved in this project with an opportunity to produce high-quality results for children and families and spotlight the benefits of Parents as Teachers at a national level. ❖

For more information, visit [www.ParentsAsTeachers.org/advocacy](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org/advocacy).

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# Same Parents as Teachers experience, only better



By Pat Simpson,  
Marketing Communications Director

## WE ALL KNOW HEALTH CARE IS CHANGING.

What if you could go online to:

- Find a doctor
- Request appointments with your doctor
- E-mail your care team
- Get lab results
- Track your health history
- Request prescription renewals
- Pay your bills

One mid-west health system recently implemented just such an online service. It allows patients to connect with their health care team (without visiting the office) and manage their health online, 24-hours a day. It even offers an e-ICU!

Just like this health care system, Parents as Teachers feels much of your experience with us can be improved. We want to make your interaction with us faster, easier and more accurate. We want you to be able to create and update your own personal profile, see your own record of training and professional development with Parents as Teachers, register for training and purchase curricula from the e-Store. We want you to be able to do all this no matter what time zone (or country) you're in and whether our office is open or not. And we want to stay connected to you.

Our new e-business system has been a complex effort with a lot of testing both internally and externally. I hope you'll let us know how we're doing. Log in through the portal link at the top right of our home page. Look around. Check your profile. Click on a few links. Explore the many things you'll be able to do now with just one login. It's free and easy to use. It's private and secure. And it will connect you to a wealth of information that will grow over time.

Of course, we're still here in person, too. See how to contact us by e-mail or phone: [www.ParentsAsTeachers.org/about/staff-directory](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org/about/staff-directory). ❖

For brand promotion and awareness questions, contact [Pat.Simpson@ParentsAsTeachers.org](mailto:Pat.Simpson@ParentsAsTeachers.org)

## National Office Spotlight

### COMING SOON TO OUR WEB SITE: FATHERHOOD TOOLKIT

**ANNOUNCING THE FATHERHOOD TOOLKIT, A NEW** resource for parent educators, group facilitators, and others who want to strengthen father involvement and participation. This new resource contains information and strategies to effectively engage, partner with, and understand the important contributions of fathers to the development of their young children. This project was made possible by the Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Grant from the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. Visit [www.ParentsAsTeachers.org](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org) under the "Resources" tab on the home page.

### FOUNDATIONAL CURRICULUM UPDATES

**BE SURE TO TUNE IN TO THE PARENTS AS TEACHERS NEWS** for regular curriculum update information every issue. Here is this issue's update highlight made possible by the generous support from The Heising Simons Foundation:

**Spanish online curriculum:** The complete book is now available, including all the activity pages and group connection plans.

**Fillable forms:** The Spanish forms are now accessible alongside the English forms in the portal. ❖



# Rock-a-bye baby: new crib safety standards detailed

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN SHOULD SLEEP MORE SOUNDLY

as a result of federal standards that will improve the safety of cribs. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has issued five new federal regulations which all crib manufacturers were required to meet by June 28, 2011. Retailers, childcare facilities, hospitals, hotels and other public places must have these new safer, sturdier cribs in place by December 28, 2012, while families who own older cribs have several options for making these cribs safer.

### The five new requirements of the CPSC for “a safer generation of cribs” are:

1. Traditional drop-side cribs cannot be made or sold; immobilizers and repair kits are not allowed.
2. Wood slats must be made of stronger woods to prevent breakage.
3. Crib hardware must have anti-loosening devices to keep it from coming loose or falling off.
4. Mattress supports must be more durable.
5. Safety testing must be more rigorous.

### Here’s what parents need to know:

**New Cribs:** All new cribs available for purchase in stores should now be compliant with the new safety measures. To be sure, ask the retailer if the crib meets 16 CFR 1219 or 16 CFR 1220 requirements. Consumers are cautioned about buying used cribs or buying cribs via online auction sites; if these cribs were manufactured prior to June 28, 2011, it is highly unlikely they will meet the new federal requirements.

**Recalled Cribs:** There are some crib brands and styles which have been recalled, but not because they don’t meet the new CPSC requirements. These cribs have other safety issues that have led to their recall. To see if a specific crib has been recalled, go to [www.cpsc.gov/info/cribs/index.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/info/cribs/index.html).

### Child Care Cribs and Other Places of Public

**Accommodation:** These facilities have until December 28, 2012, to ensure that their cribs meet the new crib standard requirements. Please note that you cannot tell by looking at a crib if it meets these five safety standards so parents will have to talk with their child care providers and others to be sure they have upgraded all their cribs.

**Older Cribs:** There is no way to retrofit an older crib to make it compliant with the new federal requirements. If



you must use an older crib, the CPSC recommends these safety precautions:

- Check the CPSC’s crib recall list to make sure that your crib has not been recalled.
- Check the crib frequently to make sure all of the hardware is secured tightly and that there are no loose, missing or broken parts.
- If your crib has a drop-side rail, stop using that drop-side function.
- Some manufacturers offer immobilizers that will prevent crib sides from dropping down and creating a dangerous situation. To determine if a specific crib has an immobilizer available, go to [www.cpsc.gov/info/cribs/index.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/info/cribs/index.html).
- Another option is to use a portable play yard, which is not subject to these new safety requirements.

These new regulations are the first updates to crib standards which had been in place for more than 30 years. Since 2007, the CPSC has recalled 11 million dangerous cribs as it works to protect children and families. ❖

In addition to cribs, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission provides parents with the latest safety alerts on toys, car seats, high chairs, furniture and electronics. For more information, visit [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

Parent educators can access a complete archive of printable Parent Page handouts in English and Spanish by logging into the portal at [www.ParentsAsTeachers.org](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org).



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### CONFERENCE 2012

November 7-9

Marriott at Union Station, St. Louis, Mo.

[www.ParentsAsTeachers.org/conference](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org/conference)

**Stay tuned in to our Web site during the coming months as we roll out the 2012 Parents as Teachers Conference!**

#### Call for Proposals

Information about our conference theme and opportunities to present a workshop will be available online in January.

#### Sponsorship/Advertising/Exhibit Opportunities

Check our Web site in February to take advantage of the many promotional opportunities offered at our conference.

#### Registration open in May

Be sure to take advantage of our early bird registration rates, scholarships and contests for free registration...details forthcoming.

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