Breaking New Ground in Professional Ethics

Continuous quality improvement in action

Putting training into practice: the new Parents as Teachers approach puts the family first

Profile of a Parents as Teachers parent educator

The importance of public engagement in supporting early childhood education

This issue also available at www.ParentsAsTeachers.org under the “Publications” tab
OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS,
I had the opportunity to visit many of you in the field,
including this year’s Losos Prize winners: 4C of
Southern Indiana in Evansville, Indiana; Child
Development and Family Resource Support
Program in Portland, Oregon; and Riverview
Gardens School District Parents as Teachers
in St. Louis, Missouri.

These organizations have been working hard
to connect families living in difficult circumstances
with Parents as Teachers services. From looking
for ways to incorporate early childhood services
into elementary schools to creating teen parent and
fatherhood programs and bringing services directly
to child care facilities, these organizations gave me
a glimpse into the amazing work our affiliates are accomplishing throughout the world.

During my travels, it was exciting to see the impact our affiliates have on the families
and communities they serve, and how our model can create measurable results that help
our affiliates secure funding to sustain their programs. Much of this is thanks to the
strengthened Parents as Teachers approach.

Another purpose of my travels has been to gather input about the Parents as Teachers
strategic direction. More than once you told us to consider offering different levels
of engagement with Parents as Teachers—options that would consider the different types of
organizations and individuals currently in our network. Based on your feedback, we are
exploring new pathways to partnership that will offer greater flexibility while maintaining
fidelity to the Parents as Teachers “evidence-based model” that is at the core of our mutual
work. Foundational Training will, of course, remain at the heart of each pathway.

We also are developing strategies to build the network of those providing Parents as
Teachers services even as we strengthen our support for those of you in the field. Currently,
we support affiliates through training and curriculum development, advocacy work and fundraising. Because you have requested it, and model fidelity demands it, we will also
be delivering high quality program support/technical assistance to affiliates. My goal is to
make certain that we provide you with every support and innovation possible to ensure the
sustainability of your programs and the success of your engagement with families, young
children, and professionals.

While we continue to make Parents as Teachers the “gold standard” of home
visiting models, we encourage your feedback. Feel free to send your thoughts to me
at editor@ParentsAsTeachers.org. As always, thank you for continuing to provide the
highest standard of service to your families. As I saw during my recent visits, the work
you do with parents and children will continue to have a positive impact on families
and communities for years to come, and will indeed make us a stronger, smarter and
healthier nation.
EVERY TIME A PARENT EDUCATOR ENTERS A HOME, HE OR SHE encounters family situations and values that are as unique as each child. Respecting and adapting to each individual situation requires sensitivity to and knowledge of culture, boundaries, and ethics. Recognizing this challenge, Parents as Teachers has strengthened their resources and training in the Foundational Curriculum.

“The code of ethics for parenting education professionals is much less defined than for those in social work or nursing for example, yet we address some of the same challenging situations,” notes Donna Hunt O’Brien, senior manager of training. “Social work and education have been around for centuries, but parenting education is relatively new,” Donna says. “More states are developing credentialing standards for early childhood home visitors, but no one has come at ethics for our field from a national perspective. So for now we rely on those codes already in place for family support and education.”

For parent educators, the area of ethics is wide-ranging, covering everything from honoring Parents as Teachers copyrighted materials to dealing with personal safety situations.

Many discussions about ethics begin with confidentiality. “Ethics starts with the information collected from families — this is often highly sensitive, highly confidential information and much of it is in a digital format. It’s a responsibility just protecting that information on behalf of a family,” Donna explains. “Multiply that by the number of agencies that often serve a single family and suddenly there are a lot more procedures and issues around confidentiality.”

Extending beyond data collection, parent educators must also protect families’ privacy within their communities. “Many of our parent educators are working in small communities or in micro-communities in which parent educators may have multiple relationships with a specific family. They may go to the same place of worship or have kids in the same school, for instance,” Donna says. “You have to be up front with families about your role. Acknowledge common relationships at the very beginning and assure the family you won’t discuss their private information.”

The Parents as Teachers deepened approach requires that every parent educator receives training, signs an ethics agreement and participates in reflective supervision. This comprehensive approach acknowledges the importance of understanding and applying ethics to everyday situations.

Reflective supervision is particularly important in this regard. It acknowledges that parent educators are impacted by what they see or hear in the field and provides them with a confidential way to explore emotions, boundaries, and program policies. “A lot of reflective supervision is supporting the translation of theory and policy into practice. When it’s done well, it makes for very strong parent educators,” Donna explains. “That’s one reason reflective supervision is an essential requirement of our model.”

In addition, parent educators participate in decision-making scenarios and role-playing during their Foundational Training. “One portion of training is devoted to ethics and boundaries. We take parent educators though ethical decision-making and we role-play to explore emotional triggers and hot buttons. Our curriculum provides strategies to help them learn how to step back and ask, “Why am I reacting this way?”

Donna continues, “At one point in the training, we ask, ‘Is it ever okay to break confidentiality?’ and the answers are all over the board. The reality is that ethical decisions are influenced by policies, personal beliefs, and culture. But there are three situations in which confidentiality can always be broken: when child abuse or neglect is suspected or observed, when someone shares intent to commit a crime or when a person is a danger to him or herself or others.”

BREAKING IT DOWN

Some resources on ethical boundaries and home visits
- Considering Ethical and Professional Behaviors: A guide for parent educators
eStore at www.parentsasteachers.org
- Knowledge Studio: www.parentsasteachers.org
- National Association for the Education of the Young Child: www.naeyc.org
Continuous quality improvement in action

By Karen Guskin, Research and Evaluation Director

THE QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL
Requirements (revised March 2012) provide clear expectations and guidance for high quality replication of the evidence-based Parents as Teachers model. Another important characteristic of high quality replication is the collection of implementation and service delivery data and use of the data for continuous quality improvement (CQI). Through the ongoing process of CQI, those implementing Parents as Teachers at the local, state and national levels will have the ability to:
- assess how closely implementation adheres to the essential requirements
- identify areas for focusing improvement efforts
- create and implement improvement plans
- monitor progress

The 2011-2012 Affiliate Performance Report (APR) has been designed with the CQI process in mind. Along with descriptive information about your program, such as funding sources, the APR is a tool for reporting on and understanding your affiliate's implementation of the Parents as Teachers model during the program year.

On the Parents as Teachers Web site under Results > Quality and Fidelity and on the Web Portal, you can find a paper copy version of the The 2011-2012 Affiliate Performance Report (APR) that includes all of the items that you’ll be asked to answer when you log into the Web-based APR. Answering the items on the APR form first will help you be prepared to complete the Web-based APR during the reporting window (May 1–August 15). This document also provides general and item specific instructions for completing the APR, including the steps to follow for any item that may require a calculation to be performed.

The supplemental 2011-2012 Performance Measures Report Worksheet provides specific indicators of performance that correspond to essential requirements for model implementation. In addition to the usual APR reports that are available to affiliates upon completion of the APR, this year the online APR will include a Performance Measures report (available by July 15, 2012). Additional information on how the performance measures are calculated based on APR responses is provided on the worksheet.

Parents as Teachers believes that using data to guide decisions about program improvement is a hallmark of quality. Continuous quality improvement includes regularly discussing summary data reports with staff and other stakeholders to develop specific goals for improving program implementation and continually monitoring progress toward those goals. We encourage you to embrace that philosophy in your own affiliate in order to strengthen the quality of services and maximize the results for families.

For questions about research and quality, contact Karen.Guskin@ParentsAsTeachers.org.
Putting training into practice: the new Parents as Teachers approach puts the family first

In this issue, we profile Rose Boersma, parent educator at the South Region Parents as Teachers Program in Lethbridge, Canada, who recently participated in the Parents as Teachers Foundational Retraining in the Fall of 2011.

In 2005, Rose Boersma was providing classroom support at an elementary school in Alberta, Canada, when her principal announced that the school had an opening in their Parents as Teachers services. Excited about the opportunity to bring early childhood expertise to local families, Rose became a parent educator, igniting her passion for Parents as Teachers.

“When my husband and I moved from our small town to Lethbridge, I crossed all my fingers and toes hoping that I would get a job at the city’s Parents as Teachers program, because I didn’t want to do anything else,” said Rose. She joined the South Region Parents as Teachers program, where she continues to help families in the Lethbridge area.

Last fall, Rose attended the Parents as Teachers Foundational Training to learn about Parents as Teachers’ new approach for working with families. After putting her training into practice, she observed that the greatest benefit of the new approach is that it truly puts the family first.

“This new, enhanced approach is all about supporting families, appreciating each unique family’s goals and celebrating both small and large victories that they accomplish as parents,” said Rose. “When I use the new curriculum, I feel more connected and engaged with the parents, and we can focus more on what they want instead of covering every topic in the book. It allows more time for reflection, and we can talk more about what matters most to that parent.”

This approach was especially useful in one of Rose’s visits with a mother who wants to raise her daughter to be self-confident. During the parent-child activity, the mother traced the girl’s outline on a piece of paper and glued photos of things the child liked around the drawing. While working, Rose commented on the positive parenting behaviors she saw the mother doing, simple things like making eye contact with her daughter and responding to her child when she talked, to affirm her importance.

“We discussed how these parenting behaviors supported the mother’s goal to instill confidence in her daughter. I’ve found that this is the type of conversation that the new Parents as Teachers approach helps facilitate,” said Rose. Together, they wrote these parenting behaviors around the child’s outline and hung the picture in the kitchen to provide affirmation for both the daughter and the parent.

Rose also carries the new Parents as Teachers toolkit to each of her visits. “Nowadays, parents are bombarded with information online, but often they end up having more questions than answers. The toolkit provides quick and easy reference to the latest in research-proven parenting techniques in easy to understand terms,” said Rose.

Rose is more confident in the Parents as Teachers approach than ever before. “Parents can’t know everything on their own, and they need reassurance that they are doing a good job. As parent educators, we can help parents recognize what they do right, and serve as their cheerleader when they need extra support,” said Rose. “I am incredibly thankful to be part of an organization that is evolving its curriculum to provide even greater support for parents and their children.”

To share your story online and be a voice for Parents as Teachers, visit www.ParentsAsTeachers.org.
Parents as Teachers: the best nonprofit to work for

The Missouri legislation that created Parents as Teachers was passed in 1984. Three years later in 1987, the non-profit Parents as Teachers national office was established to oversee the growth and expansion of Parents as Teachers across the country and in other countries. In the 25 year history of the Parents as Teachers, millions of families have been the beneficiaries of the work of the national office staff.

In April Parents as Teachers was recognized as one of the 50 best nonprofits to work for by The NonProfit Times, the leading business publication for nonprofit management. Parents as Teachers ranked twelfth among all nonprofit employers, and sixth among small nonprofit organizations.

The ranking is based on responses to The NonProfit Times’ third annual Best Places to Work survey which gathered information about work benefits, policies, culture and general work satisfaction from nonprofit employees at participating 501(c)(3) organizations nationwide. Each nonprofit employer provided information about their organizational policies and practices, and each employee responded to approximately 72 statements about the organization’s leadership, work environment, training and development, supervision, pay and benefits, and overall employee engagement. Those nonprofits with the overall best scores were selected as the top 50 nonprofit employers.

“It is very rewarding to know that the work we do at the Parents as Teachers national office has such positive impact on families and children,” stated Scott Hippert, president and CEO. “It’s easy to have a positive workplace with such a dedicated, devoted staff. It’s great to have this designation from The NonProfit Times.”

The Parents as Teachers national office houses about 35 employees who support Parents as Teachers services by providing training, curriculum development, fundraising, advocacy, IT infrastructure and administrative support. The national office staff assists roughly 10,000 parent educators around the world who provide personal visits with families to make sure children are healthy, safe and ready to learn in kindergarten.

To read the full article, go to http://www.thenonprofittimes.com/article/detail/50-best-nonprofits-to-work-for-in-2012-4515.
My baby sister overdosed on meth when she was seven-and-a-half months pregnant with Lillie. Lillie was full-term, but she weighed just a little over four pounds when she was born. Because of my sister's addiction and the overdose, we didn't really know what to expect with Lillie. The doctors only gave her a 10 to 20 percent chance of living.

When Lillie was seven weeks old, we went to visit her and it was not a good situation. She was quite ill. We took her to the hospital, and she had an upper respiratory infection, an ear infection and bacterial and yeast infections on her bottom. We nursed her back to health.

When we got Lillie, we hadn't had little children in the house for almost 20 years. Our youngest child is 21 and I have a granddaughter Lillie's age who is here for visits but not day in and day out. So it was really reassuring to have Parents as Teachers helping us. Nancy Booth is our parent educator, and I really don't know what we would have done without her.

Nancy would bring a worksheet every time she came and go through it with us so we could see how Lillie was progressing. Nancy helps us know what to look for in Lillie's development and gives us exercises and games we can do with her. We work with Lillie every day with flashcards and books. We weren't sure what to expect because of her mother's overdose, but so far, Lillie is right on track with other kids. She already knows her colors and her ABCs. She can even sign "I love you."
Profile of a Parents as Teachers parent educator

By Pat Simpson, Marketing Communications Director

LAST FALL THOUSANDS OF YOU PARTICIPATED IN SOME PARENTS as Teachers online surveys and focus groups. As certified parent educators and Parents as Teachers affiliates, you are already entitled to exclusive discounts and offers throughout the year. But we’ve been exploring ways to offer added value to you through special discounts, exclusive offers, professional development opportunities and more. We’re working now to create a special place on our Portal where you can find exclusive information or links to organizations and companies willing to provide you with special benefits.

To identify things that will be truly meaningful to you, we needed to get a better picture of you—all 10,000 of you! Your input helped do that, so thank you to those of you who willingly shared your insights with us.

Here’s what a Parents as Teachers parent educator looks like!

• The majority of our parent educators are over 45.
• Two-thirds are employed full-time.
• Ten percent are new to the job, but almost half have been with Parents as Teachers for up to seven years. About six percent have been with Parents as Teachers for more than 20 years!
• More than one-third of our parent educators live in small households...just one- or two-persons.
• Half have no children under 18 living with them; about one-third have 1 or 2 children under 18 still at home.

What do parent educators like to do?
• Top three leisure activities: cooking, reading and listening to music.
• Most visited store: grocery stores
• Favorite stores: big box stores (like Wal-Mart and Target)
• Most frequented places: dine-in restaurants, fast food restaurants and department stores

Preferred way to receive information, special offers and program updates from Parents as Teachers?
Email: 95% Direct mail: 37%
Newsletters: 40% Texts: 5%

Be sure to log into the Portal regularly. New and exclusive offers and opportunities will be showing up for Parents as Teachers parent educators!

For brand promotion and awareness questions, contact Pat.Simpson@ParentsAsTeachers.org

New curriculum supports children transitioning to school:
We’re Going to School! A Parent Involvement Approach to School Transitions

IT’S THE LATEST ADDITION TO OUR portfolio of parent educator resources! We’re Going to School! CD can be used to support young children transition to preschool, kindergarten or first grade. Features activity pages, professional resources, parent handouts and group connection plans for topics such as parent leadership, school readiness, play, self-regulation, parenting behaviors and more.

We’re Going to School! aligns with the Foundational Curriculum approach and can supplement the Born to Learn™ 3 Years to Kindergarten curriculum.

How to order
Visit the Knowledge Studio at www.ParentsAsTeachers.org.

Special feature: Fillable templates let programs customize their visits, meetings and transition paperwork!
Parent Satisfaction Survey now available online

**THE PARENT SATISFACTION SURVEY HAS BEEN REVISED TO ALIGN** with the *Parents as Teachers Foundational Curriculum*. This Web-based survey allows you to enter your parent satisfaction data and immediately receive reports and charts summarizing the results.

The survey is intended to assist you with fulfilling the “Family Feedback” essential requirement that your affiliate gathers (at least annually) and summarizes feedback from families about the services they’ve received using the results for program improvement. The *Parent Satisfaction Survey* is one way of gathering information directly from parents and can help you make decisions about how to better meet your families’ needs.

To access the survey, Affiliate Web Administrators should log into the Parents as Teachers Portal and visit My Tools > Affiliate Administrator > Quality > Parent Satisfaction.

A note about Affiliate Web Administrators
The Affiliate Web Administrator is the only person who can access the survey within the Portal (this person is also able to complete group training registrations and can view and update employee and affiliate information). After logging into the Portal, if you don’t see “Affiliate Administrator” as an option under the “My Tools” section, click “Contact Us” in the upper right corner and indicate the name of the person that should be designated as the Affiliate Web Administrator and his/her email address on the Help Request form. The designated person will be notified by email when the request has been fulfilled.

**KIPS Maps the Path to Nurturing Parenting**

*The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS)* is a valid and reliable evidence-based parenting tool that assesses the quality of parenting and helps you match your services to each family’s strengths and needs. By meeting families where they are, you can help them build nurturing parent-child relationships and support their children’s development.

**Use KIPS to:**
- Identify 12 key parenting behaviors
- Guide staff observation
- Support reflective practice and supervision
- Evaluate parenting outcomes
- Track parenting progress and change over time

KIPS has been used by Parents as Teachers and other home visiting programs across the U.S. to effectively measure changes in parenting behavior over time.

- Recommended by Parents as Teachers to measure parenting outcomes
- Rated “A” by California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse

“Here at last is a tool that combines clinical value with a means of generating quantifiable figures that so delight those who hold the purse strings.” – Robin Balbernie, Gloucestershire, UK

For more information, contact Comfort Consults, LLC • 610.455.1463 • www.comfortconsults.com • info@ComfortConsults.com
The importance of public engagement in supporting early childhood education

By Cathryn Richter
Cathryn Richter is a CORO fellow who recently completed her fellowship with a placement at Parents as Teachers national office working on public policy-related projects.

Grasstops engagement
The new buzzword in advocacy, grasstops advocacy, focuses on high-level, local support. Individuals with major influence on policy, such as superintendents, mayors, and local business leaders, are considered priority constituents. These individuals have the potential to influence local legislators to continue to support early childhood education in key policy decisions.

Parents as Teachers works to interact with grasstops networks as early childhood education has been proven to produce a higher-quality workforce. Corporate sponsors recognize the long-term advantages to their businesses through supporting Parents as Teachers, and this public support can be influential in local legislation.

National advocacy
On the national level, Parents as Teachers is working to develop partnerships with other national organizations that share our common legislative interests so that we can promote a common vision from a broad base. We lead discussions convened by members of the national Home Visiting Coalition and work to advance federal home visiting policies, such as the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV).

Together, these levels of advocacy form a collaborative effort to maintain the support and promote the importance of early childhood education programming. Work at each level is critical to providing the tools and resources necessary for parents to help their children develop to their fullest potential.

For more information, visit www.ParentsAsTeachers.org/advocacy.

Save travel costs: come early to conference for Foundational Training!

Parents as Teachers Foundational Training
Monday, November 5 – Wednesday, November 7
St. Louis Union Station Marriott

Foundational Training prepares you to use the strengthened Parents as Teachers approach with families of very young children. Focus is on parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting and family well-being.

Training cost includes one year access to online curriculum. Those from affiliated programs can continue on to Model Implementation Training to achieve model certification.

Class size limited – register NOW!
$695 New • $150 Retraining

To register, visit the Training section at www.ParentsAsTeachers.org or by logging into your Portal account.
Sibling rivalry: it’s all in the family

IT’S HARD TO REMEMBER WHEN YOUR CHILDREN ARE FIGHTING
that sibling rivalry is a normal part of family life. In fact, this
natural tension between brothers and sisters can help children
learn how to negotiate, compromise and happily coexist—
skills that will serve them well throughout their lives.

This is a lifelong process and the key is for parents to help
their children learn how to navigate through these small daily
confrontations in a way that actually builds family bonds.

Before birth
• Encourage positive thinking well before the baby arrives.
  Focus on the child’s important new role as an older sibling.
• Explain and actively demonstrate what sharing means
  by sharing food or a pillow or other appropriate items with
  your child.
• Create a sense of excitement around the baby’s arrival; talk
  about all the fun things he will get to do with the baby, such
  as read to her or help fold the baby’s clothes.
• Encourage your child to draw pictures or write stories about
  the new baby.
• Make sure your child has the opportunity to practice sharing
  and socializing skills with other children before a new baby
  comes along.

Infants and toddlers
• Create a calm, inclusive atmosphere for the new siblings
  and provide opportunities for them to bond.
• Make your older child feel important through positive
  feedback (“The baby just smiled at you! He thinks you
  are a great big sister.”)
• Give your older child a special toy or doll to take care of
  so the child can model your nurturing behavior with the
  new baby.
• Let your child pick out the baby’s clothes or do other small
  tasks to make her feel important and actively involved.
• When the older child inevitably acts up or misbehaves to
  get your attention, talk to the child calmly, reassure her and
  give a hug. Don’t dwell on minor issues and resist the urge
to overcompensate with attention or gifts.

Children
• As your children get older and have fights over toys or
  TV or other minor skirmishes, correct the misbehavior
  and then move on.
• Encourage the children to work out problems on their
  own, rather than expecting you to be a referee.
• Help them understand their feelings; help them understand
  the problem; help them come up with a solution.
• Reinforce good behavior: notice and celebrate sharing
  and compromising.
• Don’t try to make everything equal between your children;
  instead recognize that each child is unique and work for
  balance among your individual relationships.
• Spend quality time with each child and make sure that time
  is customized to each child’s individual interests.
• Make sure siblings have their own space so they can have
  time independent of each other, even if that space is just a
  corner of a room.
• Avoid motivations or disciplines that inadvertently create
  competition, for example, “Whoever cleans up first gets
to pick tonight’s book.” Instead encourage a team effort:
  “If we all clean up, then we’ll have time for a book tonight.”

Adults
• Keep your perspective and a good sense of humor.
• Remember that, handled well, sibling rivalry can become
  the basis of family bonds that are resilient and enduring.

Access printable Parent Page handouts in English and Spanish by logging
into the Portal at www.ParentsAsTeachers.org. A complete archive can be
found under My Tools > Online Curriculum > Other Resources.
Join us early at conference on November 7 for…

**Preconference**
9 a.m.—4 p.m. ($225)
Extend your conference experience and learning by attending one of four full-day workshop options. See our Web site for topic details.

**Welcome Reception and Exhibit Hall Grand Opening**
4 p.m.—6 p.m.
It’s an exciting kickoff that will feature food, fun and your chance to meet new President/CEO Scott Hippert. Special booksigning by Iza Trapani, author of *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*.

**Parents as Teachers Nightcaps**
7:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.
Choose your topic, choose your table, make connections. A new networking opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions with colleagues from across the nation.

**Registration Is Open!**
- **Preconference** Registration Fees: $225
- **Conference** Registration Fees: $350 by September 1;
  $425 after September 1

**Maximize your budget!**
Customize your conference experience with these affordable options:
- **Preconference AND Conference Registration Discount**—Save $50
- **Early Bird Conference Rate**—$75 savings if registered before Sept. 1
- **Thursday Day Pass**—$275
- **Friday Day Pass**—$175
- **Keynote Speaker Pass**—$40 each
- **Hotel and Airfare Discounts**—for details visit our Web site.

Questions? Call the PARENTS AS TEACHERS HOTLINE at 1-866-PAT4YOU, x232 or patconference@gmail.com.

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