

Family Support News Brief



Building Resilience

Relationship based learning is interwoven with the fabric of both the education and human services fields. Those who are capable of building responsive relationships reap benefits such as developing resilience, increasing creativity, increasing positive self-esteem, and strengthening their social connections.¹

There are three characteristics that family support professionals can use (according to Judith Jordan's model of relational resilience) to create a framework for building positive relationships: mutuality, empowerment and development of courage.

Mutuality. Mutual relationships or partnerships rest on the idea that all members of the relationship have shared ownership and therefore reap shared benefits. Family support professionals who enter relationships with families as partners, send the message to families that they matter. As inclusive decision makers about both individual and program level services, family members develop decision making skills with others which also strengthens their competence in building social connections. Families can then use those social connections as concrete supports when needed which enhances their parental resilience.

Empowerment. The empowering process includes both giving and receiving help in a relationship in which power is evenly distributed among all members of the relationship.³ Family support professionals who reject the "fixer role" and instead embrace the "facilitator role" enable families to make their own decisions and identify their own concrete supports. The mutual nature of the relationship naturally discourages repetitive negative behaviors, incites new positive behaviors and creativity, and enhances competence and confidence. All of these skills are essential to achieving outcomes such as a family's ability to set and meet goals.

Courage. Courage is the capacity to move into situations when we feel fear or hesitation. New situations are both positive and negative. It is important to stress to families the importance of maintaining a healthy routine even in the face of change. Their ability to continue to strive toward a sense of wellbeing demonstrates their resiliency. Entering into relationships with family support professionals may also be a new experience for families that requires courage. Depending on their previous experience or inexperience with family support professionals, they may not feel confident about being able to achieve their desired outcomes within the scope of this relationship. It is important to

recognize the courage that it takes for families to invest in this relationship and acknowledge growth as it occurs.

Keeping these three characteristics in mind as you foster a relationship with families who are supported by your program, will bolster protective factors in those families and increase the likelihood of achieving program outcomes.

Sources

¹ Cornu RL. Building Early Career Teacher Resilience: The Role of Relationships. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 2013;38(4). doi:10.14221/ajte.2013v38n4.4.

² Jordan JV. Relational Resilience in Girls. In: Goldstein S, Brooks R, eds. *Handbook of Resilience in Children*. Springer; 2013.

³ Zimmerman MA, Warschausky S. Empowerment theory for rehabilitation research: Conceptual and methodological issues. *Rehabilitation Psychology*. 1998;43(1):3-16. doi:10.1037//0090-5550.43.1.3.



PENNSYLVANIA
strengtheningfamilies

Home Visiting and School Readiness

What makes children ready for school? Does home-visiting have an impact on children's school readiness? The answer to the questions is yes.

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) Home Visiting model provides information to parents about parenting skills, parent-child interactions, and child development that helps families prepare for school. Research reveals that the PAT home-visiting model improves school readiness.¹ School readiness is more than children knowing the academic basics. School readiness includes children being socially, emotionally and developmentally mature. The PAT Home Visiting model provides a continuum of services to help meet social, emotional and developmental needs of children. As a result, the early experiences children encounter by PAT services provide a great deal of school-ready benefits.

The school-ready benefits for children and families involved in PAT are numerous. Research reveals many PAT children are healthier socially, physically, mentally and

emotionally, and are less likely to suffer from child maltreatment.² Parents are more involved in their children's school. In addition, PAT children enter kindergarten more ready to learn and are able to adjust to new learning environments in an easier fashion. PAT children are more self-sufficient, and continue to have success in school.³ The achievement gap between low-income children and more advantaged children is reduced for children involved in PAT.³ It is evident that the impact of PAT home visiting model upon families and children helps children develop skills to succeed in school and life.

Sources

¹ Pfannenstiel JC, Seitz V, Zigler E. Promoting School Readiness: The Role of the Parents as Teachers Program. *NHSA Dialog*. 2003;6(1):71-86. doi:10.1207/s19309325nhsa0601_6.

² Chaiyachati BH, Gaither JR, Hughes M, Foley-Schain K, Leventhal JM. Preventing child maltreatment: Examination of an established statewide home-visiting program. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. 2018;79:476-484. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.02.019.

³ School Readiness. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56be46a6b6aa60dbb45e41a5/t/5b07075d8a922df52895eba8/1527187294072/Fact-Sheet_SchoolReadiness_Final.pdf. Published February 2018.

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.



Parents as Teachers™



Engaging Fathers

Research has shown that having fathers involved in children's lives can lead to positive academic, social-emotional and life outcomes for children. Children who grow up with involved fathers are 39 percent more likely to earn mostly A's in school, 60 percent less likely to be suspended or expelled from school, and 80 percent less likely to spend time in jail.¹ Children who live with their fathers are also at lower risk of physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect than children whose fathers are absent.²

Many family support programs have events that focus on engaging fathers. These creative activities give dads the chance to have fun with their children while learning about parenting and child development. But engaging fathers is more than just planning events. Your organization has to be committed to including fathers by meeting them where

they are, ensuring that the program's environment is welcoming to dads, and helping everyone understand the importance of engaging fathers.

Considerations for engaging fathers include:

- Ensure that events are held at times that work for fathers to attend.
- Conduct outreach and events at locations frequented by dads like barber shops, gyms and men's groups at churches.
- When sending invitations, be sure to explicitly invite fathers to events and activities.
- Consider having both male and female facilitators for groups.
- Help mothers who may be resistant understand the value of having their child's father involved in their development.

- Think about how you might involve dads who have limited custody of their children or who are incarcerated.
- Be sure that your office or waiting area has pictures of dads with their children and magazines for men.
- Provide incentives for programs that are of interest to dads; ask them what they would like.
- Link fathers to or provide services they may need like employment services, continuing education programs or legal advice for custody issues.
- Ensure that interactions with dads preserve their dignity.
- Provide professional development to staff about engaging fathers.

As family support professionals, we can encourage dads to engage with their children in multiple ways when we intentionally invite and welcome them into our program.

Resources

Child Abuse and Neglect Technical Assistance and Strategic Dissemination Center
Child Welfare Information Gateway
Fatherhood Research and Practice Network
National Fatherhood Initiative
National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse
The Fatherhood Project

Sources

¹ Child & Family Research Partnership (2015). Infographic: The Importance of Father Involvement. Retrieved from: <https://childandfamilyresearch.utexas.edu/news/infographic-importance-father-involvement>
² National Child Abuse and Neglect Technical Assistance and Strategic Dissemination Center (2017), Engaging fathers. Retrieved from: <http://www.cantasd.org/explore-topics/engaging-fathers/>



**Pennsylvania
Children's Trust Fund**

Safe Kids Corner

Water Safety for Little Kids

Water is so much more exciting now that your little kid can splash and swim and dunk his or her head. It is also a time when active supervision and basic childproofing is critical – no exceptions. The best part is it is a great way to connect with your child with no distractions.

Top Safety Tips

- Keep toilet lids closed and use toilet seat locks to prevent drowning. Keep doors to bathrooms and laundry rooms closed.
- Never leave your child unattended around water. We know it sounds strict, but there is no room for compromise on this one. Babies can drown in as little as one inch of water.
- A swimming pool is a ton of fun for you and your kids. Make sure backyard pools have four-sided fencing that is at least 4 feet high and a self-closing, self-latching gate to prevent a child from wandering into the pool area unsupervised.

- Teach kids never to go near or in water without an adult present. Remember that things such as water wings, noodles and other items can create a false sense of security for children and should not be used in place of life jackets.
- Stay alert at public pools. Do not assume someone else is watching your child.
- New parents have a million things to do, but learning CPR should be on the top of the list. It will give you tremendous peace of mind – and the more peace of mind you have as a parent, the better.
- Make sure your home pool or spa has a proper drain cover or shut-off function to prevent long hair, loose clothing or body parts from getting trapped.
- Empty all tubs, buckets, containers and wading pools immediately after use. Store them upside down and out of children's reach.
- Every child is different, so enroll your child in swimming lessons when you feel they are ready. Teach your child how to tread water and float.

- When using inflatable or portable pools, remember to empty them immediately after use. Store them upside down and out of children's reach. These types of pools can pose a drowning risk.

Source: Safe Kids Worldwide



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KIDS**
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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](mailto:Wenda.Deardorff@csc.csiu.org).

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



Family Support



Family Support Webinars

First Wednesday of the month
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Aug 1, TBA

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](mailto:Wenda.Deardorff@csc.csiu.org).

PAT Foundational & Model Implementation

For new supervisors/parent educators of affiliate programs
Aug 20-24, Camp Hill, Pa.
Sep 10-14, Homestead, Pa.

PAT Foundational

For new curriculum subscribers
Aug 20-22, Camp Hill, Pa.
Sep 10-12, Homestead, Pa.

PA Foundational 2: 3 Years through Kindergarten

July 16-17, Camp Hill, Pa.
Sep 24-25, 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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Parents as Teachers™

