



Engaging All Families

As the cultural landscape in various communities continues to take shape, it is important for family support programs to take notice. Assuring that staff is culturally aware can have a great impact on the quality of family engagement. Successful engagement is built on knowing and respecting the cultural values of families. This cultural respect is fostered through effective communication and ultimately creates a warm partnering environment between families and schools. It also creates additional opportunities to address community challenges, such as the need for transportation, translators or related services.

There are multiple ways that programs can engage families. The National Association for the Education of Young Children¹ offers six guiding principles in engaging families of various backgrounds:

- Programs invite families to participate in decision making and goal setting for their child
- Programs and teachers engage families in two-way communication
- Programs and teachers engage families in ways that are reciprocal

- Programs provide learning activities for the home and in the community
- Programs invite families to participate in program-level decisions and wider advocacy efforts
- Programs implement a comprehensive program-level system of family engagement

This list reflects efforts that occur over periods of time that will engage families in multiple ways. These broad principles can be adopted and adapted to meet the needs of the specific families so that all stakeholders feel supported in their efforts to protect children. When families feel supported and empowered, it is easier for them to speak up about the needs of their children and family.² This type of partnership also makes it possible for families to appropriately ask for resources to meet their needs. When families are engaged in a way that addresses their cultural identities, they will feel secure, supported and respected.

For more information about ways in which your program can provide services to the diverse families whom you support, visit the Administration for Children and Families' website.
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/acf-opre-news-vol-5-issue-8-may-4-2017>

¹ Principles of Effective Practice. National Association for the Education of Young Children | NAEYC. <https://www.naeyc.org/familyengagement/principles>. Accessed July 5, 2017.

² Key Program Elements: Staff Leadership to Create Relationships That Protect Children. https://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/resources/body/03_Staff_Leadership_REV4-1.pdf. Accessed July 5, 2017.



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strengtheningfamilies

Reflective Supervision: A Toolkit for Support and Guidance

Parents as Teachers National Center has released a toolkit designed to support affiliate supervisors in providing high quality reflective supervision. This new toolkit, released late last year, contains the following:

- Introduction with guidance around PAT reflective supervision requirements and best practice suggestions
- REFLECT Framework that highlights the essential skills needed for reflective supervision
- Ten Reflective Supervision Foundational Plans to guide the initial reflective supervision sessions
- Reflective Supervision Plan and Record to assist in planning and documenting reflective supervision together
- Guidance for completing the reflective supervision plan and record

- Handouts to support the process of PAT reflective supervision sessions

Interested in receiving this toolkit? Email reflectivesupervision@parentsasteachers.org to request a copy. This document cannot be found in the Supervisor's Handbook as of yet. It is available to all PAT affiliates, so take advantage of this resource to support your affiliate's reflective supervision practices.

For those programs using Penelope, the Ten Reflective Supervision Foundational Plans can be found under the Documents tab. If a supervisor is not yet ready to use the Foundational Plans 1-10, the blank Reflective Supervision Planning Guide and Record (Reflective Supervision 11+) may be used to plan and document sessions.

Penelope Tip

When running reports, does it seem you are missing families? Check the Family Information Record to be sure families have an enrollment date marked. For many of the reports, Penelope is only looking at full-service families, those that have an enrollment date marked on the record.

Using Penelope? Need Help?

Penelope Q&A sessions are available upon request for all PAT Affiliate programs in Pennsylvania. Contact [Wenda Deardorff](#) or [Allyson Fulton](#) for more information or to schedule a session.

The Four Big Ideas behind the Strengthening Families™: The Framework is an Approach, Not a Model

This series of articles will explore the four big ideas behind the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework identified by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP).

The Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework, developed by CSSP, is based on research focused on the characteristics and actions of parents that create environments that keep families strong and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. The five protective factors are:

- **Parental Resilience** – The ability of parents to respond productively to stress, bounce back from difficult situations and apply past learning to future difficult situations.
- **Social Connections** – Parents can identify supportive people in their

lives to reduce isolation and share the joys and stresses of parenting.

- **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development** – Parents have access to accurate and up-to-date information about their child's development and apply this knowledge to create environments that support their child's physical and cognitive development.
- **Concrete Support in Times of Need** – Parents can identify their family's needs and know where and how to access supports to meet their needs.
- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children** – Parents model social and emotional skills and provide opportunities and environments that promote their child's development of skills related to emotional regulation, communication, empathy and other aspects of social and emotional competence.

Idea 2: The Framework is an Approach, Not a Model

According to the CSSP, Strengthening Families™ is "an evidence-informed approach that can be adapted to many different settings and service delivery models."^(p.9) This is helpful to family support staff who may be overwhelmed with requests to "add one more thing" or "try this new evidence based program." Instead, this approach can be integrated into current practices and programs that support families. The developers of this framework believe that it is through "small but significant changes in how professionals interact with families" that truly impact a family's ability to build the protective factors that keep families



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strong and children safe.^{1(p.9)} To explore this concept further, let's look at how this approach can be integrated at the staff, program and community levels.

Most program staff would agree that they adopt a strengths based perspective when working with families. However, this approach encourages staff to be even more intentional in this practice. For example, many staff link families to needed services or provide resource guides. An intentional way to build a parent's access to concrete supports when they need them, is help them develop tools to identify their needs and skills to interact with service providers.

To aid in the intentional integration of this approach, CSSP has identified everyday actions that program staff can incorporate into their interactions with families that help them build protective factors. These everyday actions can be incorporated



into existing curricula. For example, many evidence based programs promote the idea of self-care for parents. Staff could incorporate the concept of building resilience through the everyday action of encouraging parents to manage stress effectively. For more ideas of how staff can incorporate the protective factors into their everyday actions with families, see the Protective Factors Action Sheets developed by CSSP.

Agencies can work to integrate this approach into the policies and practices. Organizations can review their policies to ensure that they are strengths based and support families in building protective factors. The Program Self-Assessments available on the CSSP website help organizations explore "how the protective factors can be supported through small but significant changes in program practice."² For example, a program practice that supports the development of parental resilience is to include parents in leadership roles. Agencies can invite parents to the decision-making table by including them on advisory committees or by asking them to lead initiatives. Another example might be to offer regular educational workshops that help parents explore their child's development.

Because Strengthening Families™ is an approach, rather than a model or evidence based program, it "can be used in any setting that serves children, youth and families, and can bring together program-level and systems-level partners from multiple sectors – providing a

common language and set of collective outcomes to work toward.^{1(p.9)}"

Much of the research that informs the effectiveness of this approach is meaningful to various family serving systems including education, health, human services, housing and community development. As such, the concepts and language can be a unifying force for cross-systems collaboration. In Pennsylvania, the Strengthening Families leadership team has representation from state agencies, parent groups and other family serving organizations. The team works to integrate this approach into the work of each of these systems.

For more information about how to integrate the Strengthening Families™ approach into your work, agency and community visit the CSSP and Pennsylvania Strengthening Families websites.

¹ Introduction to Strengthening Families: A Protective Factors Framework. <http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/practice/body/IntroToStrengtheningFamilies-module-script.pdf>. Accessed July 5, 2017.

² Program Self-Assessments. Center for the Study of Social Policy. <https://www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies/practice/program-self-assessments>. Accessed July 5, 2017.

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 Dearhoff](mailto:Wenda.Dearhoff).*

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

Safe Kids Corner

Hydration Awareness

To keep children in top shape for sports, it is important for them to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids. Dehydration occurs when a body loses more water than it takes in (such as through sweating). When children do not drink enough water while playing sports, they could be at risk for dehydration, heat exhaustion or even heatstroke.

Safety Tips

- Make sure athletes have a water bottle for every practice and game.
- Make sure athletes drink fluids (water is the best option) 30 minutes before the activity begins and every 15-20 minutes during activity; avoid any drinks with sugar or caffeine.
- Establish mandatory water breaks throughout practices and games, do not wait for a child to tell you they are thirsty. Encourage children to stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water before, during and after play.
- Encourage athletes to drink the right amount of water. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends: 5 oz. for an 88-pound child every 20 minutes and 9 oz. for a 132-pound child every 20 minutes.

Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration

- The severity of dehydration can vary from mild to more life threatening if left unchecked. There are three levels of dehydration: heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.
- Symptoms range from muscle cramping in the calves, back, arms or abdomen (heat cramps) to faintness or dizziness, nausea and rapid heartbeat (heat exhaustion) to collapse, emotional instability and very high body temperature (heatstroke).



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Family Support



Family Support Webinars

First Wednesday of the month

10:00 AM - 11:15 AM

Aug 9 Co-Parenting

Sep 13 Relationships with Families

Parents as Teachers International Conference 2017

Nov 29 – Dec 1 Philadelphia, 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 [Wenda Deardorff](#).

PAT Foundational & Model Implementation

For new parent educators & supervisors of affiliate programs

Sep 18-22 Camp Hill, Pa.

PAT Foundational

For new approved users

Sep 18-20 Camp Hill, Pa.

PA Foundational 2: 3 Years through Kindergarten

July 31 – Aug 1 Homestead, Pa.

Sep 25-26 Camp Hill, 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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Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers is based at the Center for Schools and Communities.

Learn more at the following sites:

[Children's Trust Fund](#)

[Strengthening Families](#)