

PAT Group Connections

Why do you host group connections?

- To bring families together to build social connections
- To encourage families to develop strong parent-child interactions
- To support parents and caregivers as they learn to support their child's development
- To invite potential families as a recruitment tool
- Because it is a requirement

No matter why you host group connections, be sure you review the guidance provided by PAT in the Model Implementation Guide to ensure your group meets the required criteria. If you have questions regarding the required criteria, contact [Tiedra Marshall](#) or [Allyson Fulton](#) at the PA PAT State Office.



Parents as Teachers™

Group Connections Required Criteria

In order to count as a group connection, it must meet all of the following criteria:

- The group connection is planned and promoted in advance
- The group connection is designed to include one or more of the three areas of emphasis: parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting, family-well-being
- One of these formats (or a combination of them) is used: family activity, ongoing group, presentation, community event, parent café
- The group connection is staffed by at least one model-certified parent educator or PAT supervisor
- The planning and delivery of the group connection is documented

For more information on PAT group connections and for sample plans, review pages 195-270 of the Model Implementation Guide. Don't forget, always solicit feedback from the families you are serving to help plan for future events. In addition to direct family feedback, PAT adds "Parental needs and interests should be intentionally determined through surveys, group connection feedback, case discussions, and aggregate analysis of needs assessment, goals, and child screening data." Be sure you are considering all of these avenues when planning your next group.

Need help with Penelope?

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.



Supporting Families Experiencing Grief and Loss

"Anyone old enough to love is old enough to grieve." —Dr. Alan Wolfelt

Family support professionals guide parents and children through many life challenges and offer assistance during difficult times. When a family experiences the death of a loved one, staff can be a trusted source of information and compassionate support, but may not know what to do or say in the face of what may seem to the family as an insurmountable loss.

As noted by the Highmark Caring Place, "a death doesn't affect individuals in isolation; the family as a whole is impacted by the death."¹ The family might grapple with new roles in their family unit or changes in traditions. The youngest children might not understand the permanence of death or ask a plethora of questions. Older children may have a better understanding of death but not have the vocabulary to describe how they are feeling. Parents may push aside their own grief process to support their children or have difficulty dealing with everyday tasks because of the immensity of their feelings. Grief is a highly individualized experience which does not follow a linear path. It can, perhaps, be best described as a spiral, in which sometimes we experience progress and at other times come around again to what feels like the beginning.

Parents and children can be supported by providing resources about grief, connections with others with similar experiences and relationships with compassionate adults. For more information about supporting families experiencing grief, explore the organizations below:

National Alliance for Grieving Children has a myriad of resources related to helping children and families cope with grief including a list of member-submitted activities for children divided by age. This organization also provides a list of organizations in Pennsylvania that support families experiencing grief and loss.

New York Life Foundation supports AChildInGrief.com, "a valuable collection of stories and resources that will help guide you and your family through the death of a loved one."²

The Dougy Center has tip sheets on supporting grieving children of all ages and in certain circumstances like deaths involving violence. They also produce the Dear Dougy podcast which "is a mostly-question-and-answer conversation, and occasionally includes other visitors in the field of dying, death, and bereavement."³

The Moyer Foundation has partnered with the New York Life Foundation to provide the National Bereavement Resource Guide which has links to national and state grief organizations and camps for children. A list of bereavement resources featuring children's books and helpful websites is also included.

Highmark Caring Place offers free brochures on various topics related to

grief and loss. A flyer is provided with overviews of each brochure.

References

¹ Grieving Adults & Families. Highmark Caring Place: Grief —Grieving Adults & Families. <https://www.highmarkcaringplace.com/cp2/grief/grievingAdultsFamilies.shtml>. Accessed January 11, 2017.

² A Child in Grief. New York Life. <http://www1.newyorklife.com/nyl/v/index.jsp?contentId=143448&vgnnextoid=1572a2b341f32310VgnVCM100000ac841cacRCRD>. Accessed January 11, 2017.

³ Center TD. Dear Dougy Podcast: Conversations About Grief And Loss. Podcasts | Grief Resources | The Dougy Center. <http://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/podcasts/>. Accessed January 11, 2017.



**Pennsylvania
Children's Trust Fund**



Safe Kids Corner

Carbon Monoxide: The Silent Killer

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas that you cannot see, taste or smell. More than 400 Americans die from unintentional CO poisoning every year, of which 184 are children. Each year more than 20,000 children visit the emergency room due to CO poisoning. The danger of carbon monoxide is increased in the winter because fuel-powered devices are used more frequently.

How is Carbon Monoxide Produced? CO is an odorless, colorless gas that often goes undetected, striking victims caught off guard or in their sleep. This "silent killer" is produced by burning fuel in cars or trucks, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges, portable generators or furnaces. When the gas builds up in enclosed spaces, people or animals who breathe it can be poisoned. Ventilation does not guarantee safety.

Safety Tips

- Make sure your home has a CO alarm. As with smoke alarms, install a CO alarm on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas, and keep them at least 15 feet away from fuel-burning appliances.
- CO alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms and vice versa. Combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are available.
- Do not use a grill, generator or camping stove inside your home, garage or near a window.

- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not leave a car, SUV or motorcycle engine running inside a garage.
- If using gasoline-powered devices, store gasoline in a locked location where children cannot access it. Keep only small quantities in an approved container that has child safety features.
- Keep gasoline away from any source of heat, spark or flame. Even common household appliances such as water heaters and clothes dryers can start a gasoline fire. Be sure to store your gasoline away from anything that could ignite it.

What to Do When the Carbon Monoxide Alarm Goes Off

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission says never ignore a CO alarm and do not try to find the source of the gas. Instead, take the following steps:

- Immediately move outside to fresh air.
- Call emergency services, fire department or 911.
- Make sure everyone is accounted for once outside.
- Do not reenter the premises until emergency responders have given you permission.



Family Support at the Center for Schools and Communities provides training and technical assistance to Parents as Teachers providers, Children's Trust Funds grantees and the Strengthening Families Leadership Team.

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Family Support



Family Support Webinars

First Wednesday of the month

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Feb 1 Supporting Parents: How Early

Childhood Experiences Matter

Mar 1 Parental Mental Health

Partnering with Teen Parents

Mar 20-21 Camp Hill, Pa.

Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers Conference

May 9-10 Grantville, 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

Jan 30 – Feb 3 Camp Hill, Pa.

Mar 27-31 Homestead, Pa.

PAT Foundational

For new approved users

Jan 30 – Feb 1 Camp Hill, Pa.

Mar 27-29 Homestead, Pa.

PA Foundational 2: 3 Years through Kindergarten

Feb 27-28 Camp Hill, Pa.

Apr 24-25 Homestead, Pa.

- Parents as Teachers and Strengthening Families

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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](#)