



Racial Disparities in Health

For some, the announcement of a new baby, can be exciting. The idea of bringing a little bundle of joy into this world births thoughts of squeezable cheeks and squeals of delight. For some families, however, the thought of caring for a new child births a series of fears such as the inability to provide or the challenge of managing existing health problems. If you are a woman of color, there is the added fear of managing stress relative to gender and racial discrimination. The latter, causing an influx of daily stress, makes pregnant women of color more susceptible to pregnancy complications including preeclampsia, inflammation, hemorrhaging and even death. Many studies have shown that black women in America experience alarming rates of discrimination in many parts of their lives including education, housing, recreation and health. According to the CDC, black women are 243 percent more likely than white women to die from pregnancy or childbirth related causes, regardless of a woman's education or socioeconomic status.

Stress not only impacts the health of the expectant mother, but also the life of the unborn child. High rates of stress that black women experience, especially during pregnancy, impacts various areas of development of the fetus including that of the brain. Toxic levels of stress

also cause women to go into pre-term labor. Pre-term birth is the most frequent cause of infant mortality, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. The rate of black infant deaths more than doubles that of white infants. Though these statistics are alarming, family support professionals can play a role in reducing or eliminating this disparity in the American culture.

As you work with pregnant and expectant families, provide an opportunity to partner with them to address essential needs and concerns as the primary focus of their involvement with your program. Provide a safe space for families to address their stressors and support them in finding concrete support to meet their needs.

Once you become aware of discrimination that a family may be experiencing, build a partnership with them to collectively and courageously face it. Speak up about injustices that families experience because of their race, education, gender and other distinguishing characteristics. Work with your community partners to bring light to the situation and its root causes.

Document everything. Monitor health outcomes, accurately record results of screenings and assessments, and record successes and challenges of completed referrals to community partners. This evidence will give your program

administrators information needed to inform programmatic decisions and advocacy efforts.

While these health related disparities may seem specific to a small component of your program, these disparities inevitably impact other areas of a family's well-being including adult health, economic wealth, esteem and education. As you continue to support families in being resilient in the face of change, your entire program will benefit.

Resources

Mathews TJ, Driscoll AK. Trends in Infant Mortality in the United States, 2005-2014. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db279.htm>. Published March 21, 2017. Accessed February 15, 2018.

Riddell CA, Harper S, Kaufman JS. Trends in Differences in US Mortality Rates Between Black and White Infants. *JAMA Pediatrics*. 2017;171(9):911. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2017.1365.



PENNSYLVANIA
strengtheningfamilies

Parents as Teachers News

Parents as Teachers recently participated in Mediaplanet's Early Education campaign where they united with likeminded industry leaders to highlight the new tools and technologies that are helping children stay ahead of the learning curve while emphasizing how important the pre-K years are to children's continued success. Read the article "[The First, and Most Important, Classroom is the Kitchen Table.](#)"

Thank You for Supporting MIECHV, Kids and Families!

On February 9, 2018, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program was reauthorized by Congress for five years, at level funding with small policy changes. Thank you for all of your efforts to help MIECHV get across the finish line. Please [help us thank Congress](#) and send a note to your member of Congress today.

Home Visiting Coalition

Visit the [Home Visiting Coalition](#) website for up-to-date information about MIECHV and home visiting resources.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Cohort 3 Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process (QEIP) participants are wrapping up their work; self-assessments are due Monday, April 2, 2018.

Parents as Teachers national center recently invited affiliates to participate in the cohort 4 of the QEIP. If your organization is going to participate, our state office will offer assistance throughout the process.

Penelope Tip: Preparing for the 2017-2018 APR

The recorded webinar "Preparing for the 2017-2018 APR" provides tips on finding errors in your data and information on Penelope reporting. Details about the reports and how using the CSV format can help you get the most out of your data is covered in this session.

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™

Safe Kids Corner

Liquid Laundry Packet Safety

Currently, 20 percent of U.S. households are using liquid laundry packets. Parents need to be aware of this emerging risk for children. Between 2012 and 2013, more than 700 children five and under experienced serious health effects as a result of poisoning from liquid laundry packets, with the impact greatest among one and two-year-olds. The American Association of Poison Control Centers reported over 62,000 calls between 2013 and 2014.

Laundry packets are a highly concentrated, single-dose product designed to dissolve in water. When they come in contact with wet hands or mouths, the packets start to dissolve and release the concentrated liquid inside. The packets or pods are attractive to children and can easily be confused with candy or teething toys.

If children get into laundry packets, their health can be significantly harmed. Children can experience burns to their eyes and skin, seizures, respiratory arrest and coma. At least two children have died as a result of exposure to this product.

Prevention Tips

- The most obvious remedy is to avoid the packets and use conventional laundry products until your young children are no longer at an age where everything within reach goes in their mouths and can understand the dangers associated with laundry packets.
- Keep liquid laundry packets and all laundry products out of children's reach or in a cabinet secured with a child lock.

- Keep packets in their original container and keep the containers tightly closed.
- Purchase opaque containers so children will not be attracted to the contents inside.
- Always follow the instructions on the product labels.
- If a child gets into laundry pods or other products, call the Poison Control Center Help number immediately, (800) 222-1222. The call is free and confidential; translation is available in 161 languages.

**SAFE
KIDS**
PENNSYLVANIA

Increasing Recruitment and Improving Retention in Family Support Programs

Recruitment and retention are often cited as challenges in family support organizations. Some programs struggle with bringing families to their programs, others find it difficult to keep families engaged, and some struggle with both recruitment and retention. According to research reviewed and summarized in a toolkit developed by the Rand Corporation on this topic, “children and families in the most need of human services, such as behavioral health interventions, are least likely to receive them” and “among families that do start treatment, 40 to 60 percent drop out after only a few sessions.”^{1(p.1)}

This article will explore how three groups of stakeholders can be engaged to ensure that families have access to and participate in programs that support their wellbeing.

Families

The first group to consider is families. Before outreach even begins it is important to engage potential participants in program planning. What do the families in your communities need? Have they been engaged in a process to help identify those needs? What kind of services are they interested in receiving?

Once a program or series of offerings is chosen it is important to craft the messaging of your outreach materials. What do your recruitment messages tell families? Are they strength based? Would a family in need feel comfortable seeking services or would they feel hesitant?

By approaching families in a way that is affirming and focused on the notion that everyone needs help sometimes, organizations can provide services to families who may be at risk without stigmatizing seeking help. It is very important to clearly state the benefits of participation. Families have many competing demands on their time – how will participating in this program improve their lives and or eliminate stressors?

After families have enrolled, they need to continue to see the benefits of their participation. This may be by reflecting on

successful use of skills they are learning, achieving stated goals and being linked to resources to meet material needs. Regularly checking in with families to gauge their satisfaction with the program (and making changes when necessary) is crucial to retention.

Programs often cite “word of mouth” as an effective recruitment strategy. Consider how you can make this process more intentional by holding “bring-a-friend” events or incentivizing client referrals. Participants who have been positively impacted by the program can be great ambassadors to recruit new families to the program and serve as mentors for new participants. Practices that engage participants such as motivational interviewing, maintaining frequent contact with families, and reducing barriers to participation (providing meals, transportation, child care, etc.) will also improve retention of families.

Referral Sources

The second group to consider is referral sources. Though the actual messaging to families is key to direct recruitment, having a steady stream of referrals is key to building a program and waiting list. However, these referral sources do not only have to be human services agencies like WIC or Children and Youth. Reach out to churches, local nonprofits, community elders, pediatricians and local connectors such as shop owners and neighborhood watch leaders.

Identify trusted individuals and institutions in the community you plan to serve.² A suggestion from them may spur a family to enroll and stay in your program. To ensure that you are maintaining these relationships, consider including relationship building activities into your referral tracking system. Activities might include featuring referral organizations in your newsletter, sending thank you notes or inviting them to special events.

Staff

The third group that is vital to recruitment and retention is staff. Having consistent, well-trained and caring staff members will build relationships with participants.

These relationships are crucial to retaining families. Consider hiring staff from the community that you plan to serve. Ensure all staff receive training that encourages them to develop strength based practices and cultural responsiveness, as well as opportunities that increase their knowledge of content areas.

It is also important that organizations provide an empowering and positive work environment for staff. Studies have shown that although supervisors rank salary as the number one performance motivator, staff list appreciation and feeling a part of decision making as the most important factors in job performance. Devise ways to show appreciation and ensure that all staff members have the opportunity to lead or collaborate on projects. Keeping your staff engaged and excited about their work with families will translate into great service for families.

Check out these resources for more recruitment and retention strategies:

- [Five Strategies for Successful Recruitment and Retention of Children and Families in Human Services Programs](#)
- [Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Participants in Prevention Programs](#)

References

¹ Barnes-Proby D, Schultz D, Jaycox LH, Ayer L. Five Strategies for Successful Recruitment and Retention of Children and Families in Human Service Programs. RAND Corporation. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL242.html>. Published April 21, 2017. Accessed February 15, 2018.

² Cooney SM, Small SA, O'Connor C. Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Participants in Prevention Programs. https://fyi.uwex.edu/whatworkswisconsin/files/2014/04/whatworks_02.pdf. Published February 2007. Accessed February 15, 2018.



**Pennsylvania
Children's Trust Fund**

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 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.

Partnerships Project Manager

Karen Shanoski

(717) 763-1661 x139

kshanoski@csc.csiu.org

Family Support Specialist

Wenda Deardorff

(717) 763-1661 x116

wdeardorff@csc.csiu.org

Family Support Technical Specialist

Jennifer Esposito

(717) 763-1661 x 161

jesposito@csc.csiu.org

Family Support Technical Assistant Coordinators

- Children's Trust Fund and Strengthening Families

Rijelle Kraft

(717) 763-1661 x221

rkraft@csc.csiu.org

- Parents as Teachers and Strengthening Families

Tiedra Marshall

(717) 763-1661 x103

tmarshall@csc.csiu.org

- Parents as Teachers

Alexia Brown

717-763-1661 x146

abrown@csc.csiu.org



Parents as Teachers™

Family Support

31
2018

Family Support Webinars

First Wednesday of the month

10:00 AM - 11:15 AM

Mar 7, Parenting Behaviors

Apr 4, TBA

Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers Regional Meetings

Apr 23, State College, Pa.

Apr 24, Allentown, Pa.

May 22, Cranberry, 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](mailto:Wenda.Deardorff@csc.csiu.org).

PAT Foundational & Model Implementation

For new parent educators & supervisors of affiliate programs

Mar 12-16, Homestead, Pa.

Apr 16-20, Camp Hill, Pa.

May 14-18, Camp Hill, Pa.

June 25-29, Homestead, Pa.

PAT Foundational

For new approved users

Mar 12-14, Homestead, Pa.

Apr 16-18, Camp Hill, Pa.

May 14-16, Camp Hill, Pa.

June 25-27, Homestead, Pa.

PA Foundational 2: 3 Years through Kindergarten

Apr 9-10, Homestead, Pa.

July 16-17, Camp Hill, Pa.

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](#)

