

# Family Support News Brief



## Family Support NewsBrief Readers

We are trying a new approach with this publication. In the future, there will be one longer article a month, news for readers about events and connection to resources, and articles from you. We look forward to your stories of success.

Tell us about:

- How you maintained such great retention of families in your program
- Fund development activities that yielded the best results

- How a Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycle informed your work
- Who you work with in the community and what you have done together
- An event or how you reached a program goal
- How you reduced a barrier to service or worked collaboratively in the community

Send your articles to [Wenda Deardorff](#).



## Reflections on Strengthening Families

I first met Valerie when I was an intake caseworker at a county children and youth agency. I came to understand that she was a regular "customer". One by one, her children had been placed outside of her home due to behaviors borne out of mental illness and substance use, which created instability for family life. Valerie wanted to be part of their lives and was very angry that her children were in placement. Her youngest was just a baby when I met her and she was making every effort to keep him with her – he ended up in placement. One morning arriving at work early, I noticed that the glass door was cracked and there was blood spatter near the door. Later we learned that Valerie

had tried to kick in the door in an effort to get into the office over the weekend.

A few years passed. I had a new job that involved helping people with furniture and meeting other basic needs. Valerie's caseworker called to say that she had participated in a treatment program and had strong supports in the community. She was moving into an apartment with her youngest son, now in elementary school and needed furniture. As we moved the sofa and other items into the house, Valerie expressed appreciation and eagerness to start this next chapter in her life with her son.

Within a year, her caseworker asked if we could store the items from her apartment until she could return from a treatment program. As we moved the furniture and boxes into the storage space, some items fell out of one of the boxes. Picking up the items to put back into the box I recognized a holiday card for her son signed, Love, Mom. It gave me pause because it was the same card I had selected for my oldest son that year.

It made me think. Here we are two mothers rearing children in a multi-racial, multi-cultural, poor community who deeply love their sons and want them to grow strong. We want them to know we are there for them. We selected the same

card to express our joy in the Christmas season. Were we really so different? As a mom who sometimes felt isolated it made me feel connected. As a social worker it made me wonder if there were alternative ways of supporting Valerie; working with her to use her strengths to create her home in the community. Valerie returned to a new home and recovered the furniture and supplies. It made me look beyond her risk factors and think about the strengths we shared. It brought to mind a phrase that I often thought about "A person's a person no matter how small, a person's a person after all."<sup>1</sup> with deeper relevance. It served to remind me that we can and should treat each person with dignity.

I lost connection with Valerie's story, but I am grateful for that glimpse into her life that allowed me to see a full person, not just someone who kicked in doors and needed furniture, but as a loving mother who struggled and persevered. It made me reflect on my own strengths and needs. As helping professional, recognizing that I need supports myself can make my offer of support to others more genuine, more based out of curiosity about the person and his or her experience and less out of prescription for an ailment. My connection to Valerie is one of the reasons that the Strengthening Families Protective Factors resonate for me – we are all just people trying our best, we need friends, furniture, guidance to understand our children, help them grow

healthy and able to get along with others; we need support to build our capacity to be resilient.

Have you worked with a family that helped you reflect on the protective factors in your life? What was the impact on your work?

#### Resource

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Seuss. *Horton Hears a Who!* New York: Random House; 1954.



PENNSYLVANIA  
strengtheningfamilies

## 2018 Parents as Teachers International Conference

October 8-11, 2018, Phoenix, Ariz.

This year's conference theme is YOUUnited. It is the opportunity for individuals to unite with other professionals to learn together and share insights. Together, we collaborate to expand the impact of home visiting to families and the communities we serve.

Join one of the four focus groups at this year's conference. Facilitators will lead you through a guided conversation and ask thought provoking questions regarding your valuable opinions and perceptions.

More about PAT International Conference  
More about Focus Groups

#### Parents as Teachers National Webinar Series

November 16, 2018, February 15 and May 17, 2019

The 2018-19 webinar series will focus on data driven practice. The series are available to state offices, implementation support providers, PAT affiliate supervisors and staff, and early childhood home-visiting stakeholders. The first webinar of the series was held August 17, which you view on demand.

[More about Webinar Series](#)

#### Intentional Partnerships Podcast

Each episode of the Intentional Partnerships Podcast offers an on-the-ground perspective from real people exploring their shared values around family engagement.

[Listen to Intentional Partnerships Podcasts](#)

#### Family Support

OCDEL's Home Visiting and Family Support department reached out to recently opened Early Learning Resources Centers (ELRC) strongly encouraging them to work with the home visiting and family support programs. The Pennsylvania PAT state office communicated with the ELRCs

about PAT affiliates and Children's Trust Fund grantees throughout the state. If you have not met with the representative in your area yet, reach out to do so.

#### Using Penelope? Need Help?

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



Parents as Teachers™



# Cohort 27: Upcoming Report Due Dates

- October 15, 2018 first quarter expenditure reports are due
- October 31, 2018 first quarter program reports are due

## 2018 Together for Families National Conference

October 15-17, 2018, Cleveland, Ohio

The Pennsylvania Strengthening Families leadership team is part of the planning committee for the National Conference, a unique new opportunity to gather various stakeholders from across the country in the family support and strengthening field.

[More about the National Conference.](#)



## Safe Kids Corner

### Trunk Entrapment Prevention

Little kids have endless energy, stamina and imagination, and they are always looking for a fun place to play. Here are a few tips to prevent trunk entrapment.

- Make sure to lock your vehicle, including doors and trunk, when you are not using it. Keep keys and remote entry fobs out of children's sight and reach.
- Teach kids that trunks are for transporting cargo and are not safe places to play or hide.
- Show older kids how to locate and use the emergency trunk release found in cars manufactured after September 1, 2001. Very young children will not have the strength

or ability to open the release bar. Young children should never be in a trunk.

- Keep rear fold-down seats closed and locked to help prevent kids from climbing into the trunk from inside your car.
- If your child is missing, get help and check swimming pools, vehicles and trunks. If your child is locked in a car or trunk accidentally, get him or her out as quickly as possible and dial 911 immediately. Emergency personnel are trained to evaluate and check for signs of heatstroke.

Retrieved from Safe Kids Worldwide.



**SAFE  
KIDS**  
PENNSYLVANIA

## 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.

Oct 3 TBD



## 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

Oct 29 – Nov 2, Camp Hill, Pa.

### PAT Foundational

For new curriculum subscribers

Oct 29 – Nov 2, Camp Hill, Pa.

### PA Foundational 2: 3 Years through Kindergarten

Dec 3-4, 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](#)