



An Evidence-Based
Home Visiting Model

Overview

Parents as Teachers is an evidence-based home visiting model that promotes the optimal early development, learning and health of children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers. The program model can be offered prenatally through kindergarten and is replicated by various types of organizations including, health departments, non-profit organizations, hospitals, and school districts.

The Parents as Teachers model offers a cohesive package of services for families with young children and is framed around four dynamic components: Personal Visits, Group Connections, Child Screenings, and Resource Network. These components are guided by explicit fidelity and quality standards that guide program service delivery and successful replication of the program (see page 5, Fidelity and Quality). A rigorous training, a robust curriculum and ongoing implementation support, guide our home visiting professionals who work with families.

Our home visiting professionals meet families where they are comfortable, typically in their home. During visits, parent educators assess family needs and partner with parents to set family goals. Home visitors provide necessary information and resources to ensure that parents are confident in the emotional, behavioral and physical development of their children. Each personal visit includes a focus on Parent-Child Interaction, Development-Centered Parenting and Family Well-Being.

Parent educators use partnering, facilitating and reflecting in their work with families to: promote parental resilience; knowledge of parenting and child development; and social and emotional competence of children to strengthen protective factors.

Goals

- Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting practices
- Provide early detection of developmental delays and connection to services
- Improve parent, child, and family health and well-being
- Prevent child abuse and neglect
- Increase children's school readiness and school success
- Improve family economic well-being
- Strengthen community capacity and connectedness

Evidence-Base

Independent evaluation has been integral to the success of Parents as Teachers since its inception. Evidence of effectiveness of the Parents as Teachers model has been supported by rigorous research designs, including randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental methods. Studies published in peer-reviewed journals have shown statistically significant effects, demonstrating that Parents as Teachers achieves its goals and makes a real difference in the lives of children and families. Research has been conducted and supported by state governments, independent school districts, private foundations, universities and research organizations, and outcome data have been collected from more than 35,000 children and parents.

10 independent randomized controlled trials (RCT)

73 peer-reviewed published outcome studies

U.S. Recognitions

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse (CEBC) for Child Welfare: cebc4cw.org, 2024.

Child Trends What Works Programs Database: www.childtrends.org/what-works, 2010.

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention's (CBCAP) Crosswalk of Evidence-Based Programs: <https://friendsnrc.org/evaluation/evidence-based-practice/ebp-crosswalk>, 2024.

Educational Program That Works by the National Diffusion Network: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED381535>, 1995.

Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) for Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV): <http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov>, 2019.

Proven and Promising Practices website to Promising Practices Network (PPN) on Children, Families and Communities: promisingpractices.net, 2014.

Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse: <https://preventionservices.abtsites.com>, 2019.

International Recognitions

Early Impact Foundation - United Kingdom, a database of effective early intervention programs: eif.org.uk, 2021.

Grüne Liste Prävention – Germany, a database of programs that aim to prevent violence, crime, addictive behavior and other problem behaviors among children and adolescents: <https://www.gruene-liste-praevention.de/nano.cms/datenbank/information>, 2020.

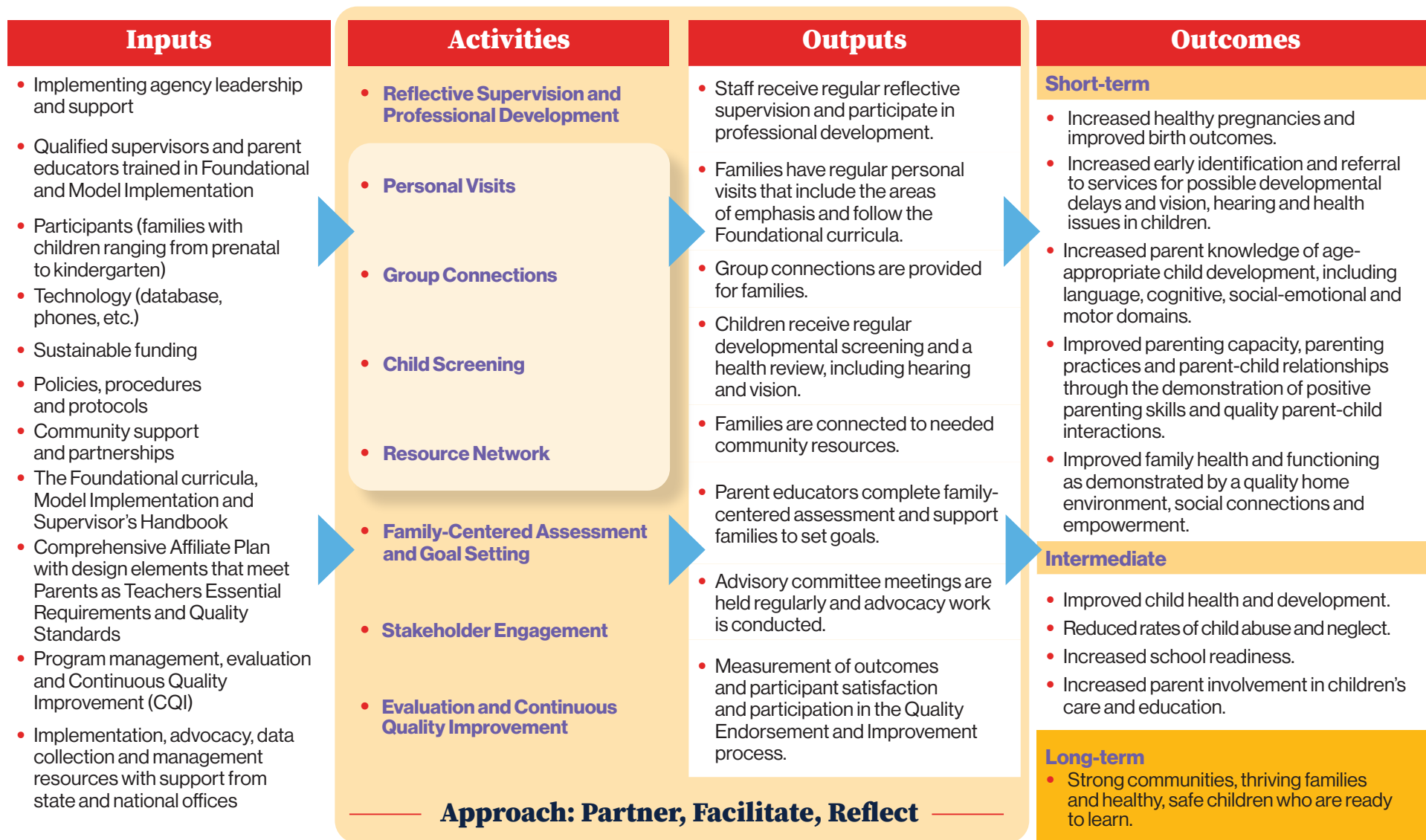
National Academy of Parenting Practices' (U.K.) Commissioning Toolkit: nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive, 2014.

PGF wirkt! – Switzerland, a list of effective prevention and health promotion projects: pgfwirkt.ch/de, 2020.

Phineo Wirkt! program for working with children in poverty in Germany: phineo.org, 2018.

Guiding Theoretical Framework

Human Ecology and Family Systems | Tenets of Child Development | Developmental Parenting | Attribution Theory | Empowerment and Self-Efficacy



Vision

Mission

Core Values

Approach

Results

Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting practices:

- Caregivers in Parents as Teachers were more likely to read aloud, tell stories, say nursery rhymes, and sing to their children.¹
- Over 75% of parents in Parents as Teachers reported taking their children to the library regularly and modeled enjoyment of reading and writing.²
- Parents also engaged their children more with language and were more likely to promote reading and have more books in the home.^{3,4}
- Overall parenting quality and interactive reading scores increased from involvement in Parents as Teachers, and mothers demonstrated more sensitivity to their children, which was directly connected to improvements in child vocabulary.^{5,6}
- Parents also showed significant improvements in parent knowledge, parenting behavior, and parenting attitudes, indicated a greater awareness of health and safety hazards, and demonstrated more safety practices in the home.^{6,7,8,9,10,11,12}

Provide early detection of developmental delays and connection to services:

- Annually, Parents as Teachers identifies approximately 32,000 new development delays or health, hearing, or vision concerns.¹³
- Early identification of delays can lead to interventions being applied in a timely manner. Over half of children in Parents as Teachers who screened positive for developmental delays overcame these delays by age 3.¹⁴



Improve parent, child, and family health and well-being:

- Parents as Teachers interrupts the harmful effect of early life stress on the brains of young children and demonstrates long-lasting positive biological effects on the mental health of children living in high-risk families.¹⁵
- Parents and families also displayed less parental and family stress than families not in the program.¹⁶
- Children were more likely to meet American Academy of Pediatrics well-child visit recommendations, and participation in Parents as Teachers was significantly related to well-child visit attendance rates.^{6,8,40}
- Children were better able to sleep through the night and had more adaptive behaviors (e.g., less bottle feeding at night, better behavior/self-control).¹⁷
- Caregivers had lower Healthy Families Parenting Inventory (HFPI) Risk Scores and improved health care literacy and self-care indicators.^{10,18}
- Parents as Teachers delivered with a focus on health and obesity prevention reduced obesity, enhanced health, and improved dietary intake, knowledge, and parental modeling among Parents as Teachers parents compared to the comparison parents.¹⁹
- Parents as Teachers mothers gained less weight weekly and total during gestation and through 12 months postpartum compared to the comparison mothers and were significantly more likely to reduce their intake of soda and other sugar sweetened beverages, increase physical activity, and achieve a weight loss and reduced waist circumference.^{20,21,22}
- Parents as Teachers mothers are also able to be screened for postpartum depression and referred to services when appropriate.⁴¹

“By enrolling in Parents as Teachers through my school district, I began receiving visits from a trained parent educator, twice a month from my son’s birth until he turned 6. As a mother, I felt empowered to have a professional that I could ask questions of and get advice from; someone I could trust with questions about my children’s development and health.”

– Leslie Miller, Parents as Teachers participant mom

Prevent child abuse and neglect:

- Parents as Teachers children had a decreased likelihood of child maltreatment substantiations (as measured by Child Protective Services maltreatment data) and were less likely to go to the emergency room to be treated for injury compared to children not in Parents as Teachers.^{9,11,23,24}
- Parents as Teachers participation was also associated with a significantly lower likelihood of Child Protective Services reinvolvement and was related to 50% fewer cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect.^{25,26}

Increase children's school readiness and school success:

- Children before age 3 demonstrated better adaptive behavior and higher levels of self-control, and scored significantly higher on initiative, achievement, social development, cognition, language development, vocabulary, persistence in task mastery, and executive function.^{1,3,9,10,17,27,28,29,30,31}
- As children enter the school system, those who participated in Parents as Teachers performed better on third grade standardized tests in math, phonics, and comprehension as well as reading and writing (for English Language Learners).^{32,33}
- Additionally, absence rates and suspension rates were lower for children that received Parents as Teachers.^{6,32}

Improve family economic well-being:

- Education and employment goals are among the top five types of goals set by caregivers at enrollment with Parents as Teachers. Parents as Teachers caregivers were more likely to gain employment (16% higher than comparison caregivers), enroll in high school (69% higher than comparison caregivers), and enroll in college (12% higher than comparison caregivers).^{34,35}
- In MIECHV-funded Parents as Teachers programs, caregivers were also more likely to receive education or training, to use nonparental childcare, and were less likely to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.⁹
- Parents as Teachers plus financial empowerment and education resulted in higher knowledge and uptake of Earned Income Tax Credit.³⁶

Strengthen community capacity and connectedness:

- Making referrals to additional community resources and services is an important way for Parents as Teachers to support families. Evaluation findings demonstrated the average number of referrals per family increased from 1.9 to 4.1 with Parents as Teachers.³⁷
- Also, connections to referrals increased from 86.8% to 93.8% and were greater for Parents as Teachers caregivers.^{10,37}
- Parents also experienced increases in social support in the areas of tangible support, positive interactions, informational support, affectionate support, and emotional support.³⁸
- Parents as Teachers participation also encourages parents' active participation in their child's learning inside and outside of the home. In addition to Parents as Teachers parents being more likely to enroll their children in preschool, parents were more likely to attend parent-teacher conferences, PTA/PTO meetings and school events, volunteer in the classroom, and talk with their children's teacher.^{4,39}



“It wasn’t until I started working with our parent educator that I realized just how far behind Layla was. Eventually we got a diagnosis: autism. Parents as Teachers gave me the tools and information to move in the right direction. Those visits continue to make a huge difference for my daughter today.”

– Paul Johnson, Parents as Teachers participant dad

Fidelity and Quality

Parents as Teachers Model Affiliates adhere to the program model, as it was designed to be implemented, to achieve positive results for children and families. Parents as Teachers offers a portfolio of resources to help ensure that model affiliates provide evidence-based home visiting services. This portfolio includes resources to guide model replication and tools for ongoing monitoring of fidelity and quality.

Resources to Guide Parents as Teachers Implementation With Fidelity

Logic Model	Provides a simplified, visual description of the theory of change and shows how the Parents as Teachers model is designed to achieve desired outcomes.
Essential Requirements	Outline the programmatic elements necessary for model replication.
Quality Standards	Guide initial and ongoing implementation of the model and form the basis of quality endorsement.
Affiliate Implementation Manual (Formerly called the Quality Assurance Guidelines)	Provides supporting information on how to implement the Essential Requirements.
Readiness Reflection	Provides an opportunity for reflection about organizational capacity, staffing and community needs and relationships. Completed prior to developing an Affiliate Plan.
Affiliate Plan	Helps organizations design their Parents as Teachers affiliate and demonstrate how they will fulfill the essential requirements, using a Logic Model format.
Model Implementation Library (Formerly called the Model Implementation Guide)	Expands upon the Affiliate Implementation Manual and provides additional implementation strategies and evidence-based practices.
Affiliate Updates	Address emerging issues around quality improvement, measurement, and evaluation of the Parents as Teachers evidence-based model.

Tools for Ongoing Monitoring of Fidelity and Quality

Supervisor's Handbook	Includes a variety of tools for affiliate supervisors to conduct and track quality assurance activities: Quality Assurance Blueprint, Personal Visit Observation Tool, Group Connection Observation Tool, Family File Review Tool and Core Competencies Self-Assessment.
Data in Motion: A Manual for Documenting Family Data, Services and Impact	Provides a road map for high-quality data collection and documentation.
Affiliate Performance Report (APR)	Provides a tool for reporting on and understanding the affiliate's design and implementation of essential requirements across a program year.
Performance Measures Report (PMR)	Provides specific indicators of performance using the affiliate's APR data to help understand and continually improve fidelity of implementation and service delivery.
Self-Study/Quality Endorsement Process	Affiliates engage in the quality endorsement process, including a self-study, in their fourth year of implementation and every five years thereafter.

Citations

- 1 Wagner, M., Spiker, D. & Linn, M.I. (2002). The effectiveness of the Parents as Teachers program with low-income parents and children. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 22(2), 67-81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0271121402220020101>
- 2 Pfannenstiel, J., Lambson, T., & Yarnell, V. (1996). *The Parents as Teachers program: Longitudinal follow-up to the second wave study*. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates.
- 3 Pfannenstiel, J. (2015). Evaluation of the I3 validation of improving education outcomes for american indian children. *Research and Training Associates, Inc.* Kansas City, KS.
- 4 Albritton, S., Klotz, J., & Roberson, T. (2004). The effects of participating in a Parents as Teachers program on parental involvement in the learning process at school and home. *E-Journal of Teaching and Learning in Diverse Settings*, 1(2), 188-208.
- 5 Neuhauser, A., Ramseier, E., Schaub, S., Burkhardt, S. C. A., & Lanfranchi, A. (2018). The Mediating role of maternal sensitivity: Enhancing language development in at-risk families. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 39, 522-536. <https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.21738>
- 6 Institute for Families in Society, University of South Carolina & Pacific Research & Evaluation, LLC. (2021). South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Parents as Teachers External Evaluation FY16-17 to FY18-19.
- 7 Wagner, M., Cameto, R., & Gerlach-Downie, S. (1996). *Intervention in support of adolescent parents and their children: A final report on the Teen Parents as Teachers Demonstration*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.
- 8 Wagner, M., Iida, E., & Spiker, D. (2001). *The multisite evaluation of the Parents as Teachers home visiting program: Three-year findings from Winston-Salem, NC*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.
- 9 McCombs-Thornton, K., Wang, Y., & Sturmfels, N. (2023). Parents as Teachers family outcomes: New insights from the Mother and Infant Home Visiting Program Evaluation (MIHOPE). Parents as Teachers National Center. <https://parentsasteachers.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/PAT-Family-Outcomes-MIHOPE.pdf>.
- 10 LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. (2024). Parents as Teachers Randomized Control Trial in Arizona: 6- and 12-Month Outcomes Report. Tucson, AZ. www.lecroymilligan.com/files/ugd/4d0a9d_3729c8f41ef34a2d9dfcb80b81c3073b.pdf.
- 11 Pfannenstiel, J. (1989). *New Parents as Teachers project: A follow-up investigation*. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates.
- 12 Parents as Teachers (2014). Internal Report on the Parenting Reflection Survey Results.
- 13 Ding, X., LaBrenz, C. A., Nulu, S., Gerlach, B., & Faulkner, M. (2023) Impact of Parents as Teachers on parenting-related protective factors: A pre- and post-evaluation. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 147, 106834. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2023.106834>
- 14 Parents as Teachers (2021). *2020-2021 Parents as Teachers affiliate performance report summary*.
- 15 Pfannenstiel, J., Lambson, T., & Yarnell, V. (1991). Second wave study of the Parents as Teachers program. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates.
- 16 Gardini, E., Schaub, S., Neuhauser, A., Ramseier, E., Villiger, A., Ehler, U., ... Turecki, G. (2020). Methylation of the glucocorticoid receptor promoter in children: Links with parents as teachers, early life stress, and behavior problems. *Development and Psychopathology*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579420001984>
- 17 LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. (2022). Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Virtual Service Delivery on Parents as Teachers Families and Parent Educators. Tucson, AZ.
- 18 Schaub, S., Ramseier, E., Neuhauser, A., Burkhardt, S., Lanfranchi, A. (2019). Effects of home-based early intervention on child outcomes: A randomized controlled trial of Parents as Teachers in Switzerland. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 48, 173-185. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2019.03.007>
- 19 Carroll, L., Smith, S., & Thomson, N. (2015). Parents as Teachers health literacy demonstration project: Integrating an empowerment model of health literacy promotion into home-based parent education. *Health Promotion Practice*, 16(2), 282-290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839914538968>
- 20 Haire-Joshu, D., Elliott, M.B., Caito, N.M., Hessler, K., Nanney, M.S., Hale, N., Boehmer, T.K., Kreuter, M., Brownson, R.C. (2008). High 5 for Kids: The impact of a home visiting program on fruit and vegetable intake of parents and their preschool children. *Preventive Medicine*, 47, 77-82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2008.03.016>
- 21 Cahill, A., Haire-Joshu, D., Cade, W.T., Stein, R., Woolfolk, C., Moley, K., Mathur, A., Schechtman K., & Klein, S. (2018). Weight control program and gestational weight gain in disadvantaged women with overweight or obesity: A randomized clinical trial. *Obesity*, 26(3), 485-491. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/oby.22070>
- 22 Haire-Joshu, D., Cahill, A. G., Stein, R. I., Todd Cade, W., Woolfolk, C. L., Moley, K., Mathur, A., Schwarz, C. D., Schechtman, K. B. & Klein, S. (2019). Randomized controlled trial of home-based lifestyle therapy on postpartum weight in underserved women with overweight or obesity. *Obesity*, 27, 535-541. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.22413>
- 23 Haire-Joshu, D., Schwarz, C., Steger-May, K., Lapka, C., Schechtman, K., Brownson, R., & Tabak, R. (2018). A randomized trial of weight change in a national home visiting program. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 54(3), 341-351. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2017.12.012>
- 24 Chaiyachati, B., Gaither, J., Hughes, M., Foley-Schain, K., & Leventhal, J. (2018). Preventing child maltreatment: Examination of an established statewide home-visiting program. *Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect*, 49, 476-484. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.02.019>
- 25 Drazen, S. & Haust, M. (1996, August). *Lasting academic gains from an early home visitation program*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- 26 Wagner, M. & Clayton, S.L. (1999). The Parents as Teachers Program: Results from Two Demonstrations. *The Future of Children: Home Visiting: Recent Program Evaluations*, 9(1), 91-115.
- 27 Jonson-Reid, M., Drake, B., Constantino, J., Tandom, M., Pons, L., Kohl, P., Roesch, S., Wideman, E., Dunnigan, A., & Auslander, W. (2018). A randomized trial of home visitation for CPS-Involved families: The moderating impact of maternal depression and CPS history. *Child Maltreatment*, 23, 281-293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559517751671>
- 28 Schaub, S., Eberli, R., Ramseier, E., Neuhauser, A., & Lanfranchi, A. (2021). Early support with the program «PAT – Mit Eltern Lernen»: Effects in the first year of Kindergarten. *Swiss Journal of Educational Research*, 43(2), 285-296. <https://doi.org/10.24452/sjer.43.2.8>
- 29 (n.d.). 2014 Maine Home Visiting Summary Report. Augusta, MN: Maine Department of Health and Human Services.
- 30 Drotar, D., Robinson, J., Jeavons, I., & Kirchner, H.L. (2009). A randomized controlled evaluation of early intervention: The *Born to Learn™* curriculum. *Child: Care, Health & Development*, 35(5), 643-643. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2008.00915>
- 31 Pais, J., & Sexer, L.P. (2023). The effectiveness of a Parents as Teachers home visitation program on school readiness: An application of Complier Average Causal Effect analysis. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 20(5). <https://doi.org/10.1080/26408066.2023.2201233>

Citations *continued*

- ³² Fields ME, Hoyt-Drazen C, Abel R, et al. (2016). A pilot study of parent education intervention improves early childhood development among toddlers with sickle cell disease. *Pediatric Blood Cancer*, 63(12): 2131–2138. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pbc.26164>
- ³³ LeCroy, C. W., Nisbet, K. M., & Schmidt, M. C. (2024). Randomized controlled trial of the parents as teacher home visiting program: Outcomes of the intervention on families at six-month follow-up. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 165, 107875. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107875>
- ³⁴ Törmänen, M., Schaub, S., Ramseier, E., Koch, C., Kalkusch, I., Rodcharoen, P., ... & Klaver, P. (2024). How do psychosocial stress of the family and early-term birth affect the development of children's executive functions? Using Baileys Scale III as a measurement for executive functions in children between 0 and 3 years. *Authorea Preprints*. <https://doi.org/10.22541/au.171907871.18637657/v1>
- ³⁵ Lahti, M., Evans, C.B.R., Goodman, G., Cranwell Schmidt, M., & LeCroy, C.W. (2019). Parents as Teachers (PAT) home-visiting intervention: A path to improved academic outcomes, school behavior, and parenting skills. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 99, 451-460. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.01.022>
- ³⁶ Mayfield, W. A., Tiwari, M., Knight, E. M., Ralston, J. A. S., DeSpain, R., & Gable, S. (2025). Participation in the Missouri Parents as Teachers Parent Education Program and third grade math and English language arts proficiency. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 70, 234-242. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2024.10.005>
- ³⁷ James Bell Associates (2022). Exploring family trends using Penelope data. Arlington, VA. https://parentsasteachers.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Employment-and-Education-Outcomes-Analyses_02282387.pdf
- ³⁸ Wang, Y. & Sturmfels, N. (2023). Exploring employment and education outcomes for caregivers participating in Parents as Teachers: Home visiting outcomes analysis results. Parents as Teachers National Center. https://parentsasteachers.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Employment-and-Education-Outcomes-Analyses_02282387.pdf
- ³⁹ Maguire-Jack, K., Park, Y., Chang, O. D., Solomon, A., Quinn, J., Greenberg, S., ... & Hinton, J. (2024). Findings from the Michigan EITC Access Project: ACEs prevention through economic intervention. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-024-00971-2>
- ⁴⁰ Heinemeier, S., & D'Agostino, A. (2017). South Carolina First Steps evaluation of Parents as Teachers 2008–2016. South Carolina State Documents Depository.
- ⁴¹ Arteaga, I., Carlo, G., & Martinez, M. (2018). Evaluation of the Right from the Start Program: Final report. Parents as Teachers National Center.
- ⁴² Zigler, E., Pfannenstiel, J., & Seitz, V. (2008). The Parents as Teachers program and school success: A replication and extension. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 29, 103-120. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-008-0132-1>
- ⁴³ Paradis, H., Sandler, M., Todd Manley, J., & Valentine L. (2013). Building Healthy Children: Evidence-based home visitation integrated with pediatric medical homes. *Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*, 132 (2), 174-179. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2013-1021R>
- ⁴⁴ Traube, D. E., Molina, A. P., YingWangKay, S., & Kemner, A. (2022). Perinatal Mental Health Support and Early Childhood Home Visitation During COVID-19. *Prevention science: the official journal of the Society for Prevention Research*, 23(2), 260–270. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-021-01313-9>



How to Join the Parents as Teachers Family

Contact Parents as Teachers today to discuss the right pathway to outcomes for you.



parentsasteachers.org | (866) PAT4YOU | 6 Cityplace Drive, Suite 100, St. Louis, MO 63141

