

Parents As Teachers

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an international early childhood parent education and family support program serving families throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten, usually age 5. The program is designed to enhance child development and school achievement through parent education accessible to all families. It is a universal access model, however the strongest outcomes have been demonstrated with at risk families.

Program Description

The program provides the following services:

- 1) *personal visits*-- PAT-certified parent educators help parents understand and have appropriate expectations for each stage of their child's development;
- 2) *group meetings*--parents meet to enhance their parenting knowledge, gain new insights and share their experiences, common concerns and successes;
- 3) *developmental screenings*--Parents as Teachers offers periodic screening of overall development, health, hearing, and vision to provide early detection of potential problems and prevent later difficulties in school; and
- 4) *linkage to a resource network*-- families are helped to access other needed community services that are beyond the scope of the PAT program.

Evaluation and Outcomes

Independent evaluations confirm the positive impact of PAT on both parents and children:

Child outcomes:

- PAT children at age 3 are significantly more advanced in language, problem solving and other cognitive abilities, and social development than comparison children.
- The positive impact on PAT children carries into elementary school. PAT children score higher on kindergarten readiness tests and on standardized measures of reading, math and language in first through fourth grades.

Parent and family outcomes:

- PAT parents are more involved in their children's schooling.
- PAT parents are more confident in their parenting skills and knowledge.
- PAT families have lower rates of suspected or documented incidents of child abuse and neglect than comparison groups or state averages.

Implementation Cost

The major cost of implementing a PAT program is the salary and travel of the parent educators. There is also a cost for training and certification of parent educators and for purchase of the *Born to Learn*[™] curriculum materials.