Why Invest in Parents as Teachers

An evidence-based home visitation approach builds strong families and promotes positive parent-child interaction so children are healthy, safe and ready to learn.

Few investments have the rate of return of early childhood programs. Investing in children, starting with the earliest years, produces significant long-term impacts for individuals and communities. Benefits to the children, families and communities that participate in early education programs can range from reduced child abuse and neglect and lower health care costs to school success and better employment.

Parents as Teachers is designed to:

1. Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting practices
   - Parents who participated in PAT showed improvements in parent knowledge, parenting behavior and parenting attitudes. Parents who participated in PAT engage in more language and are more likely to promote reading in the home. Parents who participated in PAT are more likely to take an active role in their child’s schooling by enrolling them in preschool, attending parent-teacher conferences and school events, volunteering in the classroom, attending PTA/PTO meetings, and talking with their child’s teacher and assisting them with homework.

2. Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues
   - Parents as Teachers detects delays and refers children to appropriate resources for early intervention. In the 2011-2012 program year, PAT parent educators identified thousands of delays: 3,500 social emotional problems, 2,300 vision problems, 2,400 physical delays and health problems, 17,500 developmental delays.
   - 19,400 of the children with delays identified were referred for further assessment and 58% then received services.
   - Early identification and intervention can save costs in the long-term. Annual special education costs per student = $8,080
   - Annual cost for non-special education per student = $4,394

3. Prevent child abuse and neglect
   - Children who received PAT services are less likely to be treated for injury.
   - Parents who participated in PAT have significantly fewer cases of abuse and neglect.

An independent cost-benefit analysis

A 2012 study conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy titled “Return on Investment: Evidence-based Options to Improve Statewide Outcomes” found that:

- Parents as Teachers realized a $765 return on investment for communities ($4,992 in benefits of the program minus costs over 3 years).
- Parents as Teachers had a higher benefit per dollar of cost ($1.18) than several other home visitation programs reviewed.
4. Improve school readiness and school success.

> Children score higher on measures of achievement, language ability, social development, prosocial behavior, persistence in task mastery and other cognitive abilities.\(^5,6,7,8,18\)

> Children score higher on kindergarten readiness tests and standardized measures of reading, math, and language in elementary grades.\(^10,12\)

> PAT combined with quality preschool education reduced the achievement gap between poor and more advantaged children at kindergarten entry.\(^10,12\)

---

Every year 4 million children are born in the United States; if each of these children participated in Parents as Teachers, more than $3 billion in benefits could be realized.\(^2,19\)

---