



**Parents as Teachers Technical Assistance Brief**

**Bereavement and Infant Loss**

*This is part of a series of Technical Assistance Briefs published by the Parents as Teachers national office designed to address emerging issues around the Parents as Teachers evidence-based model. These briefs are informed by research and evaluation findings, technical assistance efforts, feedback from stakeholders, and discussion within Parents as Teachers learning communities.*

**What information will I find in this brief?**

The purpose of this TA Brief is to assist Parents as Teachers affiliates serving families facing miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal loss, or the death of a child. The Parents as Teachers Foundational and Foundational 2 curricula provide Parent Educator Resources, Parent Handouts, and suggested resource connections for parent educators to use in their work with families.

**What is the role of the Parents as Teachers affiliate in the event of miscarriage, stillbirth, or the death of a child?**

The loss of a pregnancy or death of a child can be devastating for the entire family, as well as for the parent educator serving that family. It is important for the Parents as Teachers affiliate to be able to support the parent educator's work with grieving families who have experienced a loss. Whereas Parents as Teachers personal visits require the presence of the child and/or expecting parents, in cases of loss personal visits may be conducted with the parent/caregiver(s) as part of the transition into appropriate services.

Parents as Teachers encourages affiliates to provide at least one personal visit to families who have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth, or the loss of a child. Parents as Teachers also encourages affiliates to provide time for parent educators to support families in the way that best suits that family's needs<sup>1</sup>. Administratively, it can help to keep the family on the parent educator's caseload during the transition process. The exact number of personal visits post-loss or amount of time that a bereaved family stays on a parent educator's caseload is a programmatic decision that affiliates should make with input from their funders.

When a family experiences a loss, the parent educator serving that family may also need extra support. This support may be provided in reflective supervision to process the parent educator's own grief and their reactions to the situation. Parents as Teachers requires two hours of staff meetings and two hours of individual reflective supervision per month for full-time parent educators, but in times of stress some affiliates find that they need to temporarily devote more time to reflective supervision and staff meetings to help staff balance their professional obligations and maintain healthy boundaries. Furthermore, it is a Parents as Teachers Quality Standard that affiliates have access to a licensed mental health professional who can provide consultation to staff regarding their work with families, this support can be especially valuable for parent educators and program staff who serve grieving families.

If your affiliate has questions or special considerations, please contact your Parents as Teachers technical assistance provider at the state or national office for further information and support.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the Parents as Teachers Foundational Curriculum Parent Educator Resource, *Bereavement and Infant Loss*, for more information on visit content, parent handouts, and resource connections.