



**Parents as Teachers Technical Assistance Brief**

**Guidance for Reflective Supervision**

*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 clarify how the reflective supervision essential requirement applies to and can be met by Parents as Teachers affiliate supervisors who “carry a caseload,” meaning that they provide regular personal visits to families.

**What is the overall purpose of reflective supervision?**

Regular individual consultation and support are vital for all staff providing personal visits to families. For affiliate supervisors who carry a caseload, it is important to carve out time and space from supervisory and administrative duties to reflect on one’s work with families. All parent educators need to be able to process their thoughts and feelings about their experiences with families, including the affiliate supervisor who visits families. While the affiliate supervisor who carries a caseload may not necessarily need the guidance and education that a less experienced parent educator requires, regular reflective supervision remains instrumental in preventing burnout and maintaining high quality services.

**What is the current essential requirement for supervision?**

The 4th Essential Requirement states that each month, parent educators working more than .5 FTE participate in a minimum of two hours of individual reflective supervision and a minimum of two hours of staff meetings and parent educators working .5 FTE or less participate in a minimum of one hour of reflective supervision and two hours of staff meetings.

In order to support high quality services to families, this essential requirement includes supervisors who provide home visits to families as a parent educator. The content of supervision or consultative sessions for an affiliate supervisor focuses on “case review,” or discussion surrounding the content/process of home visits to families.

Supervisors providing home visits on a part-time basis (less than .5 FTE) need to participate in a minimum of 1 hour of reflective supervision per month. Supervisors who provide visits on more than a part time basis (.5 FTE or more) need to participate in a minimum of 2 hours of reflective supervision per month.

**What are some ways affiliate supervisors who carry a caseload can obtain supervision?**

In some organizations, the affiliate supervisor has a designated supervisor or there is another qualified individual within the organization who is able to provide reflective supervision. However, Parents as Teachers recognizes that not all affiliate supervisors have someone in their organization that they can meet with. Therefore, alternative reflective supervision options for supervisors include:



- > Individual peer reflective supervision with a fellow Parents as Teachers program supervisor, or other equivalent supervisory professional. If there are few other professionals in the community, it is acceptable to engage in individual consultation via telephone or Skype.
- > Group peer reflective supervision sessions with other Parents as Teachers program supervisors or equivalent supervisory professionals. Group supervision does **not** meet the requirement for supervision for parent educators who are not program supervisors, although it can be offered in addition to individual reflective supervision as part of an affiliate's staff meeting time.
  - When using a group approach to ensuring that program supervisors receive reflective supervision, more time needs to be allotted in order to meet the requirement. For example, rather than 1 hour per month for a supervisor who carries less than half the program's standard caseload, he/she would participate in 2 hours of group consultation monthly. A supervisor who carries half or more of the program's standard caseload would participate in 4 hours monthly of group consultation (could be 2 hours bi-monthly).

### **Who can provide supervision/consultation?**

A designated supervisor, another Parents as Teachers program supervisor, or equivalent supervisory professional can provide reflective supervision. An equivalent supervisory professional should have supervisory experience and be familiar with the general principles of home visitation and the Parents as Teachers model. However, it is not required that they attend Parents as Teachers Foundational or Model Implementation training. These professionals may have a background in social work, health, psychology or early childhood education. Persons providing reflective supervision to Parents as Teachers affiliate supervisors are not required to have specific training in reflective supervision, but should understand the basic principles of reflective supervision, home visiting, empowerment theory, adult learning, and child development.

### **Additional considerations and resources:**

#### Confidentiality

Supervisors should take steps to protect the confidentiality of families participating in the program during discussions with individuals outside of the agency providing PAT services. These steps include keeping personally identifiable information confidential, and having group participants or outside supervisors sign confidentiality agreements.

#### Documentation

Supervisors must maintain records of their own reflective supervision. These records should indicate dates, duration, who provided the supervision, whether it was individual or group, and key topics (e.g. case review).

#### Resources

Zero to Three has published several excellent resources on reflective supervision. *Reflective Supervision: What It Is and Why We Do It?* Stefanie Powers, Editor, *Putting Reflective Supervision into Practice* Stefanie Powers, Editor, and *Look, Listen and Learn: Reflective Supervision and Relationship-Based Work* by Rebecca Parlakian are a few resources that can be helpful in understanding and implementing reflective supervision. These booklets, along with others, can be purchased via the Zero to Three online catalog available on their website [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org).