



Parents as Teachers Technical Assistance Brief

Implementing the Essential Requirements with Fidelity

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 with understanding what it means to implement the Parents as Teachers Essential Requirements with Fidelity, including use of the New Affiliate Plan and Essential Requirements Success Plan as tools for ongoing fidelity improvement.

What do we mean by Essential Requirements?

The 17 Essential Requirements represent the elements necessary for success replication of the Parents as Teachers model. Each requirement covers an aspect of infrastructure or service delivery, operationalizing the four model components (personal visits, child screening, resource network, and group connections) and the supports affiliates must have in place in order to effectively provide high quality Parents as Teachers services. Affiliates demonstrate model fidelity through adherence to all 17 Essential Requirements.

How do we measure model fidelity?

Affiliates report on implementation, infrastructure, and service delivery data at the end of each program year via the Affiliate Performance Report (APR). Once the APR is submitted online through the ePortal, the affiliate supervisor can view the Performance Measures Report (PMR) which uses the APR data to show the affiliate adherence to the 17 Essential Requirements based on the data submitted. By reviewing the PMR, affiliate supervisors can quickly notice errors in their data and see at-a-glance how well their affiliate is meeting their service delivery goals. Parents as Teachers recommends that affiliate supervisors share the PMR with program staff and stakeholders as part of the continuous quality improvement plans.

What are the Parents as Teachers Essential Requirements and how can we implement them effectively?

The text of the 17 Essential Requirements can be found below, clarification and further information is provided in *italics*.

Essential Requirement #1: Infrastructure: Affiliates provide at least two years of services to families with children between prenatal and kindergarten entry.

This refers to the affiliate's program design and can be demonstrated by a grant, contract, or informational materials that indicate the affiliate intends to provide at least 2 years of service to families. The optimal service duration is at least 3 years.

Essential Requirement #2: Staffing: The minimum qualifications for parent educators are a high school diploma or GED and two years previous supervised work experience with young children and/or parents.



Essential Requirement #3: Leadership: Each affiliate has an advisory committee that meets at least every six months (can be part of a larger committee, community network, or coalition as long as the group includes a regular focus on the Parents as Teachers affiliate).

In depth information about forming a Parents as Teachers advisory committee and best practices for advisory committees can be in the Advocacy section of our website

(http://www.parentsasteachers.org/images/stories/PolicyTK_BuildingStrongAdvisoryAffiliateCommittee_2-2016.pdf).

Essential Requirement #4: Supervision: 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.

Reflective supervision must be provided individually to each parent educator. Most typically, it is provided by the designated supervisor(s) or lead parent educator, but can be provided by a qualified professional outside the organization. If the program chooses to utilize a lead parent educator for supervision, this should be a formal designation and their caseload should be decreased proportionately. Supervisors who carry a caseload must also obtain supervision (at least 1 hour/month for supervisors with a caseload equal to less than a .5 FTE parent educator & at least 2 hours/month for supervisors with a caseload equal to a .5 FTE or more parent educator). For more information on how supervisors that carry a caseload can obtain supervision, see TA Brief #3: Reflective Supervision (LINK). The supervisor needs to maintain documentation of staff meetings and supervision with each parent educator (as well as their own supervision, if applicable). Such records should include dates, duration and key topics that were covered.

Essential Requirement #5: Supervision: Each supervisor, mentor or lead parent educator is assigned no more than 12 parent educators, regardless of whether the parent educators are full-time or part-time employees.

The number of parent educators assigned to the supervisor needs to be adjusted proportionately if the supervisor is not full-time. Sometimes supervisors have a portion of their time assigned to the PAT program with the rest of their time assigned to other programs within the organization. If the supervisor is less than full-time with the PAT program, they should be assigned fewer than 12 parent educators.

Essential Requirement #6: Training: All new parent educators in an organization who will deliver Parents as Teachers services to families attend Foundational and Model Implementation Trainings before delivering Parents as Teachers; new supervisors attend at least Model Implementation Training.

Parents as Teachers further recommends that all supervisors attend Foundational Training so that they are familiar with and can access the Foundational curriculum. Supervisors should ensure that all of their staff have attended the necessary trainings.

Essential Requirement #7: Professional Development: Parent educators obtain competency-based professional development and training and renew certification with the national office annually. Parent educators and supervisors who provide Parents as Teachers services to families use the Core Competencies Self-Assessment located in the Supervisor's Handbook on the ePortal to identify areas for growth and guide professional development.



Essential Requirement #8: Family-Centered Assessment: Parent educators complete and document a family-centered assessment within 90 days of enrollment and then at least annually thereafter, using an assessment that addresses the Parent as Teachers required areas.

For a review of other assessment tools and their alignment with the required areas, see TA Brief #2: Family Centered Assessment (LINK). An assessment summary sheet or copy of the full assessment should be retained in the family file.

Essential Requirement #9: Goals: Parent educators develop and document goals with each family they serve.

Goals must address at least one of the following areas: parenting behaviors, child development and family well-being. While families often set and accomplish more than one goal during the course of a program year, a family may continue to work on a goal across several program years. A new goal does not have to be developed each program year for the family to be considered as having a goal. Along with documenting goals in the family file, a plan to meet each goal and documentation of progress towards goals should also be recorded.

Essential Requirement #10: Visit Planning: Parent educators use the foundational visit plans and planning guide from the curriculum to design and deliver personal visits to families.

All parent educators and supervisors serving families 0-3 must use the PAT Foundational Visit Plans for the first 8 visits and the PAT Personal Visit Planning Guide for all subsequent visits to design and deliver each visit. Parent educators carry out the visit plan using resources and materials from the Foundational curriculum. Parent educators and supervisors serving families 3-K use the Foundational 2 Curriculum. Use of a foundational plan or the planning guide should be documented on each Personal Visit Record (PVR).

Essential Requirement #11: Personal Visits: Families with 1 or fewer high needs characteristics receive at least 12 personal visits annually and families with 2 or more high needs characteristics receive at least 24 personal visits annually.

See Appendix E in the OA Guidelines for definition of the high needs characteristics.

To be counted as a personal visit:

- > *The visit must be delivered by a model-certified parent educator*
- > *At least 1 enrolled child must be present (may be prenatal), along with at least 1 parent, guardian, or primary caregiver*
- > *The visit must be designed to include the 3 major areas of emphasis: parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting and family well-being*
- > *The visit is delivered to the family unit, incorporating multiple enrolled children into 1 visit*

Families' high need characteristics may change over time, but should only be adjusted in the program's database once per year (typically at the start of each program year). However, parent educators should not wait to increase visit frequency. Visit frequency should increase at the time there is an increase in a family's number of high needs characteristics.

Essential Requirement #12: Personal Visits: Full-time 1st year parent educators complete no more than 48 visits per month during their first year and full-time parent educators in their 2nd year and beyond complete no more than 60 visits per month.

While 60 is the maximum number of visits allowed per month for full time parent educators in their 2nd year and beyond, 50 visits per month is optimal (40 for full time 1st year parent educators). The number of visits completed monthly needs to be decreased proportionately when a parent educator is part-time. For additional information on establishing and adjusting caseload size, see TA Brief #6:



Establishing and Adjusting Caseload Size (LINK). Visits must be documented using the PAT Personal Visit Record or comparable form.

Essential Requirement #13: Group Connections: Affiliates deliver at least 12 group connections across the program year.

To be counted as a group connection, the group must be focused on one or more of the 3 areas of emphasis (parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting, and family well-being) AND a certified parent educator or supervisor must be present. Records of the planning and delivery of group connections must be maintained, using the PAT Group Connection Planner & Record or comparable form.

Essential Requirement #14: Screening: Screening takes place within 90 days of enrollment for children 4 months or older and then at least annually thereafter (infants enrolled prior to 4 months of age are screened prior to 7 months of age). A complete screening includes developmental screening using PAT approved screening tools, along with completion of a health review that includes a record of hearing, vision, and general health status.

To count as a “complete” screening, it must include developmental screening AND a health review that includes a record of hearing, vision, and general health status.

- > *The developmental screening must cover the domains of language, intellectual, social-emotional & motor development AND use PAT approved screening tools. See Appendix H in the QA Guidelines for a list of the approved developmental screening tools.*
- > *The health review must include review of hearing, vision & general health status using the national center approved options outlined in the QA Guidelines.*
- > *If any part of the complete screening is outsourced, the provider must be consistent with the PAT essential requirements and quality standards.*
- > *Documentation of all screening results must be in the family file (including when outsourced).*

Essential Requirement #15: Resource Connection: Parent educators connect families to resources that help them reach their goals and address their needs.

Resource connections should address the unique needs and interests of the family. Resource connections include providing detailed information to the caregiver(s) about specific resources in the community. Marketing an upcoming event in your community to all families would not count as a resource connection for all of those families. In contrast, informing a family about an upcoming community event because they have a goal of spending more quality time together would count as a resource connection for that family. Resource connections and follow-up must be documented in the family file.

Essential Requirement #16: Family Feedback: At least annually, the affiliate gathers and summarizes feedback from families about the services they’ve received, using the results for program improvement.

The PAT Parent Satisfaction Survey is one way to obtain feedback from families about their experiences with PAT, please see TA Brief #5: Satisfaction Survey (LINK) for more information. However, affiliates can choose to use a different survey or feedback form or a different method altogether. For example, affiliates could utilize focus groups or interview techniques to solicit feedback from parents. No matter the method used to collect the feedback, results should be summarized in a way that allows the affiliate to use the information for continuous quality improvement.



Essential Requirement #17: Data Reporting and Continuous Quality Improvement: The affiliate annually reports data on service delivery and program implementation through the APR; affiliates use data in an ongoing way for the purposes of continuous quality improvement, including participating in the Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process every five years.

Affiliates complete the APR after the end of the program year, every summer. Affiliates are responsible for their data and should review their submissions including the Performance Measures Report (PMR) to ensure that their information is complete and correct. Once every five years, Parents as Teachers affiliates take part in the Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process. This process begins with an Essential Requirements Review and for those programs meeting all 17 Essential Requirements, continues with a review of the Parents as Teachers Quality Standards.