



Parents as Teachers Technical Assistance Brief

Policies and Procedures

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 in developing their policies and procedures in order to meet the Infrastructure and Leadership Quality Standards #6 and 8, and Screening Standard #2 in preparation for the Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process that each affiliate participates in every five years. For information on developing protocols as described in Infrastructure and Leadership Quality Standard #7, please see TA Brief #9: Protocols.

The Quality Standards regarding policies and procedures ask that affiliates have written policies and procedures that address at least the following:

- > Intake and enrollment
- > Services provided to families, including timelines and frequency
- > Transition planning and exit
- > Data collection and documentation of services
- > Staff qualifications and personnel policies
- > Orientation and training for new staff
- > Supervision and professional development
- > Parent educator safety
- > Client rights and confidentiality, to ensure family privacy
- > Child screening, rescreening, and referral

What are policies, procedures, and protocols?

Policy: A policy is a principle or statement of intent that guides decisions and procedures.

- > For example, the policy for “Parent Educator Safety” might state: Maintaining staff safety is of paramount importance to the Parents as Teachers affiliate. To this end, supervisors and parent educators must be well informed about and utilize strategies designed to promote staff safety.

Procedure: Procedures detail the steps needed to carry out a policy. Procedures should specify what the steps are, who carries them out, how they are carried out, and when.

- > For example, the procedures for “Parent Educator Safety” might address the following: Animals and pets; Clothing and jewelry; Communicable diseases; Illegal substances and weapons in the home; Outdoor safety; Travel safety; Sharing schedules and communication while in the field; Parent educator safety training; etc.

Protocol: Protocols outline a specific set of actions that are implemented in a particular order for particular situations, such as child abuse and neglect, parental mental health issues, domestic or intimate partner violence, or parental substance abuse. Protocols should be based on established best practice. Please see TA Brief #9: Protocols for more information.

Comprehensive written policies & procedures must be actively and consistently implemented and regularly reviewed by staff at every level of the organization.



What should our policies and procedures cover?

The following 2-page table outlines the policy topics that should be covered by your affiliate in order to meet the Parents as Teachers Quality Standards. Your affiliate may choose to have multiple policies and procedures for any of these areas, as well as policies and procedures addressing other areas as needed.

Intake and Enrollment

Procedures should address:

- > Target population (demographics, cultural background, geographic locations)
- > Overall duration of services offered to families
- > Eligibility criteria & process for determining eligibility
- > Intake process
- > Resource connections for families that do not meet eligibility criteria or waiting list procedures
- > Expected timeframe from intake to 1st Foundational Visit
- > Required outreach to non-participating families

Services Provided to Families (including timeframe & frequency)

Procedures should address:

- > Personal visits
- > Family-centered assessment
- > Goal setting & review of progress
- > Group connections
- > Child screening
- > Resource connections & follow up

Transition Planning and Exit

Procedures should address:

- > Exit criteria, including outreach to non-participating families and when to exit based on non-participation
- > When transition planning begins
- > Types of transition supports & services to be considered
- > Who is included in transition planning

Data Collection and Documentation of Services

Procedures should address:

- > Record keeping
 - Which documents are kept in the family file
 - When must documentation be completed
- > Release of information
- > How file reviews are completed, including timelines
- > Length of time that records are kept and how they are destroyed after that time
- > Data collection & reporting for outputs, outcomes, and community stakeholders
- > Methods & frequency of collecting family feedback

Staff Qualifications and Personnel

Procedures should address:

- > Organization’s basic structure, philosophy, and rules. Includes equal opportunity hiring & advancement, conflict of interest, sexual harassment, alcohol & drugs in the workplace, confidentiality, grievances, and phone/computer use.
- > Hiring and employment, including hiring procedures, job qualifications, descriptions & categories, performance reviews, progressive discipline, benefits, employee rights, and termination/resignation
- > Operations, including hours and schedules, supervisor to parent educator ratio, caseload size, dress code, payroll, security, and paperwork



Orientation and Training for New Staff

Procedures should address:

- > Parents as Teachers Training
- > When/How orientation of new staff takes place
- > Additional training including family-centered assessment, screenings, and outcomes measurement tools, etc as applicable
- > Observations including shadowing experienced parent educators on personal visits and group connections, as well as observations of new parent educators on personal visits

Supervision and Professional Development

Procedures should address:

- > Frequency, duration, & general content of staff meetings
- > Frequency & duration of reflective supervision for parent educators and supervisors who carry a caseload
- > Reflective supervision process & content
- > Observations of parent educators
- > Ongoing professional development
- > Documentation of staff meetings, supervision, observations, & professional development

Parent Educator Safety

Procedures should address:

- > Sharing of schedules & communication while in the field
- > Safety considerations during personal visits
- > Clothing & jewelry
- > Outdoor safety and travel
- > Animals & pets
- > Communicable diseases
- > Illegal substances & weapons in the home
- > Training on parent educator safety

Client Rights and Confidentiality

Procedures should address:

- > Process for obtaining families' consent for services
- > Security & maintenance of family records including participant access & release of information
- > Case consultation within the organization
- > Personal visit privacy measures
- > Legal requirements to disclose information
- > Accommodations for disabilities
- > Participant grievances

Child Screening, Rescreening, and Referral

Procedures should address:

- > The tool(s) used for child screening and rescreening
- > The training and continuous professional development for staff on the use of these tools
- > Frequency of child screening and timelines (eg within the first 90 days and annually thereafter)
- > Screening tool scoring
- > Sharing screening results with families
- > Conditions under which children will be rescreened (scores, tools, and timeframes)
- > Referral procedures including documentation & follow up

References

KU Working Group for Community Health and Development (2014). Chapter 10, Section 5: Developing Personnel Policies. Lawrence, KS. University of Kansas. Retrieved April 28, 2014. <http://cb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/hiring-and-training/personnel-policies/main>