



**Parents as Teachers Technical Assistance Brief**

**Protocols**

**Child Abuse and Neglect**

**Parental Mental Health**

**Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence**

**Parental Substance Abuse**

*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 protocols in order to meet the Infrastructure and Leadership Quality Standard #7, that the affiliate has written protocols that address child abuse and neglect, parental mental health issues, domestic violence, and parental substance abuse. The provided template meets Parents as Teachers' requirements, but an affiliate's sponsoring organization may also require additional elements in their protocols. Affiliates should also have a separate policy and procedures pertaining to staff safety.

**What is a protocol and how are they used in Parents as Teachers?**

A protocol outlines a set of actions that staff should implement in a particular order to address a specific issue or situation. Affiliates have protocols to address these four topics as well as any other topics that their specific community requires. These protocols can be specific to the Parents as Teachers affiliate, or can be agency wide as in the case of Parents As Teachers affiliates embedded in larger organizations.

The purpose of having these protocols in place is to provide clear guidance for staff when they encounter or identify sensitive issues. Parents as Teachers does not require that affiliates use screening tools for each of these issues, although a number of funding sources do require this. The primary role of the parent educator in relation to child abuse and neglect, parental mental health issues, domestic violence, and parental substance abuse issues is to help families experiencing these issues connect with and receive appropriate assessment and services.

In addition, supervisors and parent educators must be familiar with the laws in their state that apply to their work with children and families. Some parent educators and supervisors also have additional standards and protocols that they must adhere to due to their professional license or credentials.

**For what issues should Parents as Teachers affiliates maintain protocols?**

There are four key issues that Parents as Teachers affiliate should maintain protocols: child abuse and neglect; parental mental health; domestic or intimate partner violence; and, parental substance abuse.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Every State, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories have designated individuals who are mandated by law to report child maltreatment. Home visitors and supervisors are among these



professionals. It is important for all mandated reporters to be familiar with the statutes and the reporting laws in their State. Mandated reporters not only have the responsibility to report suspected abuse, but also to know how to make a report and to be familiar with their program and state's policies and reporting procedures. Most states have a mandated reporter guide that should be referenced and incorporated into the affiliate's child abuse and neglect protocol.

### Parental Mental Health

Mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety affect one's mood, thinking and behavior and as a result, can increase the challenges of parenting. Since diagnosis of a mental health condition must be made by a qualified professional, your affiliate's protocol should emphasize the parent educator's role in screening and connecting families to services. It is strongly recommended that affiliates use a mental health screening tool along with their family-centered assessment tool to develop a complete understanding of the family. Brief mental health screenings may be more accurate in indicating possible mood and anxiety disorders than a broader range of psychiatric disorders.

### Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence

Domestic violence or intimate partner violence is a pattern of controlling behavior which may include- but is not limited to- isolation, intimidation, emotional abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse, threats, and using children. It is strongly recommended that your affiliate utilize a domestic violence screening tool along with your affiliate's family-centered assessment tool to develop a complete understanding of the family.

### Parental Substance Abuse

Substance abuse can have a significant impact on the health and safety of the children in a family. Your affiliate's protocol for parental substance abuse should outline how parent educators are to respond if it appears or is reported that substances are being abused by the parents or other caregivers. Your affiliate may choose to include an alcohol and drug screening as part of your protocol, either with all families or when there is a concern about substance abuse. A substance abuse screening tool can be used along with your affiliate's family-centered assessment tool to develop a complete understanding of the family. A diagnosis of substance abuse must be made by a qualified professional. Thus, your affiliate's substance abuse protocol should emphasize the parent educator's role in screening and connecting families to services.

### **Protocol Template**

This template can be used to develop your affiliate's protocols for each of the four key issues identified in the quality standard. Each affiliate will need to make the following template its own by adding in specific and detailed information on how each protocol is to be carried out. This should include making sure that the protocols are aligned with the procedures of the local community child abuse and neglect, mental health, domestic violence and substance abuse resources. Current contact information should accompany the resources referenced in the protocols.

#### **1. Introductory paragraph that addresses at least the following:**

- 1.1 Definition/criteria of the issue or condition the protocol is designed to address
- 1.2 Parent educator's role in relation to the issue or condition
- 1.3 Reference to applicable state laws
- 1.4 Screening tool(s) used by the affiliate to identify the issue or condition (if applicable)



**2. Staff training on identifying and responding to the issue or condition**

2.1 What is covered, who delivers it, and when it occurs (including regular review)

**3. Identification/screening and response/reporting procedures (a flow chart or other visual is recommended)**

3.1 & 3.2 APPLY ONLY IF THE AFFILIATE USES A SCREENING TOOL FOR THE ISSUE/CONDITION THE PROTOCOL ADDRESSES

3.1 Screening criteria (who is screened)

3.2 When screening is done (e.g. only if there is a concern, all families within 90 days of enrollment, etc.)

3.3 How to respond to a positive screening result or other indication of the issue/condition\*

3.4 How to gauge whether a family member is in imminent danger

3.4.1 How to respond when a family member is in imminent danger

3.6 Notification of/consultation with supervisor and other applicable staff (along with timeframe)

3.7 Making a report to the authorities (when applicable, who, when, how, what)

3.8 Connecting families to services

3.9 Confidentiality and privacy issues related to the issue/condition

3.10 Follow-up

*\*for domestic violence issues, this typically includes helping a family member develop a safety plan*

**4. Documentation of screening/identification, response and follow-up**

4.1 How and where screening/identification is documented (if used)

4.2 How and where any report to the authorities is documented, including any process to notify other staff and/or the supervisor (when applicable)

4.3 How staff should follow up with families after providing a resource

4.3.1 How and where to document resources provided and any follow up

**References, Additional Information & Resources** (current as of 10/23/14)

In addition to the following, local community resources can be excellent sources of information.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child Welfare Information Gateway <https://www.childwelfare.gov/>

Illinois Emergency Medical Services for Children. Second Edition, 2013.

[http://www.luh.org/depts/emsc/CAN/CAN2ndED\\_Final.pdf](http://www.luh.org/depts/emsc/CAN/CAN2ndED_Final.pdf) (retrieved 7/11/14)

Karageorge, K, Kendall, R. The Role of Professional Child Care Providers in Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect. Child Welfare Information Gateway: Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, Children's Bureau, 2008.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/childcare> (retrieved 7/11/14)

National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-4-A-Child) <http://www.childhelp.org/>

Parents as Teachers Foundational Curriculum. Parent Educator Resource: Child Abuse and Neglect (pgs. 1404-1409); Parent Handouts: Helping to Prevent Child Abuse (pg. 1410); Don't Shake Your Baby (pg. 1411); Protective Factors Survey (pgs. 1412-1413)

Prevent Child Abuse America <http://www.preventchildabuse.org/Pages/MyHome.aspx>



### Mental Health

Screening Tools: SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions

<http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/screening-tools>

Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation. Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. Inventory of Tools for Screening/Assessing Maternal Depression. <http://www.ecmhc.org/documents/maternal-depression-screenings.pdf> . (retrieved 7/11/14)

Mental Health Mayo Clinic. Diseases and Conditions: Mental Illness

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/basics/definition> (retrieved 7/11/14)

Mental Health Services: Adult Mental Health. Family Connections: A Head Start National Center on Health Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health Consultation and Training with Special Guides for Dealing with Parental Depression and Related Adversities

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/mental-health/adult-mentalhealth/FamilyConnection.html> (retrieved 7/11/14)

National Alliance on Mental Illness. About Mental Illness: What is Mental Illness?

[http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=By\\_Illness](http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=By_Illness) (retrieved 7/11/14)

### Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence

Screening Tools: Thompson MP, Basile KC, Hertz MF, Sitterle D. Measuring Intimate Partner

Violence Victimization and Perpetration: A Compendium of Assessment Tools. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2006. [http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/IPV\\_Compendium.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/IPV_Compendium.pdf) (retrieved 10/23/14)

Family Violence Prevention Fund: [www.futureswithoutviolence.org/](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/)

Parents as Teachers Foundational Curriculum. Parent Educator Resources: Domestic Violence: pages 1428-1438; Structured Intimate Partner Violence Home Visit Intervention: pages 1435-1438; Parent Handouts: When Control Becomes a Pattern: page 1432; Are you in a Cycle of Abuse: pages 1435-1438

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence: <http://ncadv.org/>

### Parental Substance Abuse

Screening Tools: SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions

<http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/screening-tools>

National Institute on Drug Abuse: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <http://www.samhsa.gov/>

Parents as Teachers Foundational Curriculum. Substance Abuse: pages 1391-1395