Nationally, almost one-third of all victims of child abuse are younger than three years old, and more than 70 percent of all maltreatment victims that died were younger than 3. The brain is particularly vulnerable to trauma during the early childhood years, and in an environment of abuse or neglect, children often aren’t able to learn, grow, and develop to their full potential. Extreme or “toxic” stress and environmental factors such as poverty, neighborhood crime and a lack of community resources make parenting even harder for families.

The early years of a child’s life are a crucial time to strengthening a parent’s understanding of the critical role of parenting, the essential opportunities for promoting healthy child development, and the consequences of trauma on a child’s formative years. Communities can stop child abuse in its tracks by investing in a solution that works.

Parents as Teachers helps to prevent child abuse and neglect:

> In one of the largest research studies in the U.S. conducted to investigate the impact of home visiting on child maltreatment, researchers found a 22 percent decreased likelihood of substantiated cases of child maltreatment (as reported by Child Protective Services) for Parents as Teachers families compared to the non-PAT families.

> In a randomized-controlled trial of Parents as Teachers for CPS-involved families, the program was associated with a significantly lower likelihood of CPS for non-depressed mothers.

> Children in Parents as Teachers are less likely to go to the emergency room to be treated for injury.

> Parents as Teachers participation was related to 50 percent fewer cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect.

> Parents as Teachers in Maine focusing on families with involvement with Child Protective Services, found that once entered into a Parents as Teachers program 95 percent of families had no further substantiated reports or allegations of child abuse or neglect.

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My parent educator was the first positive influence in my life

"I didn’t know what good parenting looked like until I started working with a parent educator from Parents as Teachers. As a child, my mom went back and forth from being too lax, to overly strict. If I got in trouble, my discipline was getting punched in the face. My friends aren’t good parents, either, and drugs have been a big part of that. My parent educator was the first positive influence in my life. I know she will come to the house every couple weeks and I am motivated to be a better parent because she has shown me how. She taught me to be consistent and how to discipline without spanking or shouting. She also supports my sobriety. She brings me books to read to my child and taught me how to read to her, and I know that makes a difference in her school readiness skills. In my own life, my parent educator encouraged me to build relationships that resulted in my regaining employment. I have made a lot of mistakes in my life, but being a good mom and helping my child develop to her full potential will not be one of them."

— Sharon, Centralia, Parents as Teachers program participant
Quick Facts

> The CDC's Task Force on Community Preventive Services performed a comprehensive review of the home visiting literature and found that home visiting programs reduced child abuse and neglect by approximately 40 percent as compared to control groups not receiving home visiting services.7

> Parents as Teachers is a family-centered, results-driven approach in our department's portfolio of programs to support young children and families, particularly those who are overburdened and underserved. A 22 percent reduction in child abuse cases is a measurable result that is a cost-effective solution.

References


