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Madison pediatrician to keynote Parents as Teachers’
2020 Virtual International Conference set for Oct. 5 – 8
Dr. Dipesh Navsaria to discuss how supporting strong, nurturing relationships
between children and their families matters even more at a time like this

Madison, Wisconsin – Sept. 21, 2020 – For more than a decade, Dr. Dipesh Navsaria, a board-certified pediatrician who blends the roles of a public health professional, children’s librarian, and educator in his work, has been on a mission to promote and advocate for social policies that support healthy children, families, and communities.

A faculty member at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health with master’s degrees in library science and public health to go along with his M.D. credentials — and with years of experience with a variety of populations — Dr. Navsaria will deliver the keynote address at the closing session of Parents as Teachers (PAT) 2020 Virtual International Conference, slated for Oct. 5 – 8.

PAT is a non-profit organization headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri specializing in early childhood development and parenting education through home visiting, and is a leader in the on-ground and virtual home visiting field. More than 2,000 early childhood development professionals and social services experts have already registered for the virtual conference under the theme of Listen, Learn, Lead.

The conference brings together home visiting professionals to learn how to optimize home visiting as a strategy to support parents in developing their parenting capacities and helping their children to reach their full potential. It will encourage the exchange of ideas, all concentrated on early childhood home visiting, facilitated through more than 60 workshops and panel discussions.

Presenters and workshops will focus on topics and themes such as community engagement, collaborations and partnerships, diversity, equity and inclusion, health and wellness, parenting and child development, serving multi-cultural groups, and parenting in a digital world. For a complete line-up of conference activities, visit www.parentsasteachersconference.org.

“We are thrilled to have Dr. Navsaria as our conference’s closing keynote speaker. He’ll bring a high octane brand of speech focused on the healthy development of kids’ brains and the importance of advancing policies that further discussion about early childhood literacy,” said PAT President and CEO Constance Gully. “As a PAT board member, Dr. Navsaria shares our belief in partnering with parents and elected officials to promote social policies that advance children’s health issues.”
Dr. Navsaria is the founding medical director of Reach Out and Read Wisconsin, and is now vice-chair of the Board of Directors of the Reach Out and Read National Center. Reach Out and Read is a national evidence-based early literacy program implemented in pediatric clinics and hospitals that makes literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care so that children grow up with books and a love of reading.

Early on in his medical career, Dr. Navsaria became aware of the importance of parents reading with their children. While training to become a physician assistant at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., he saw pediatricians handing out books to kids, and was struck by what a great idea that was. He recognized that reading with children gives them the kind of face-to-face interaction many kids don’t get at any other time.

According to Dr. Navsaria, books also make for excellent diagnostic tools, “When I hand a child a book, I can instantly observe gross motor skills, fine motor skills, language skills, memory.... I can get more information that way than I can get with a stethoscope,” he said.

Born in London to Indian immigrant parents and raised in New York City, Dr. Navsaria graduated from Boston University with undergraduate degrees in biology and English before enrolling in medical school at the University of Illinois in Urbana where he furthered his passion for children’s literature: during his second year of med school, he started taking library science classes in children’s librarianship, eventually earning a master’s degree in that field.

During his time in Illinois, he helped found a student-run free clinic, and it was there that his thinking about advocacy and addressing health problems on a systemic rather than individual-level began to formulate. In 2006, he arrived in Madison for a pediatric residency and was hired by UW right afterward. He was immediately asked to head up the department’s advocacy training program.

A dynamic speaker who easily translates basic science and clinical medicine for a wide variety of audiences to shape programs and policy, Dr. Navsaria lectures locally, regionally, and nationally on early literacy, early brain and child development, child health advocacy, and technology. He has also been actively involved in the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and is also nationally involved with the AAP’s Council on Early Childhood, co-chairing the Early Literacy Subcommittee. Most recently, he’s the host of the new-in-2020 Reach Out and Read Podcast, found at www.reachoutandread.org/podcast.

**About Parents as Teachers**

Parents as Teachers builds strong communities, thriving families and children that are healthy, safe and ready to learn by matching parents and caregivers with trained professionals who make regular personal home visits during a child’s earliest years in life, from pregnancy through kindergarten. The internationally-recognized evidence-based home visiting model is backed by 35 years of research-proven outcomes for children and families. PAT currently serves nearly 200,000 families in all 50 U.S. states, 115 Tribal organizations, six other countries, and one U.S. territory. Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., is a non-profit organization headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri.