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Parents As Teachers

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Specialty: 0-5 Years

Target: Parent
Training

Rating: Model

Description

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an international early childhood parent education and family support program serving families throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten, usually age 5. The program is designed to enhance child development and school achievement through parent education accessible to all families. It is a universal access model. Recognizing that all families can benefit from support, PAT families come in all configurations, from all socio-economic levels, and from rural, urban and suburban communities. The program is adaptable to fit community needs. It is a national model, but a local program. Family participation is voluntary.

The program provides the following services:

- 1) *personal visits*-- personal visits (monthly, bi-weekly or weekly) are the major service delivery component. During these visits, parent educators share age-appropriate child development information with parents, help them learn to observe their own child, address their parenting concerns, and engage the family in activities that provide meaningful parent/child interaction;
- 2) *group meetings*-- parent group meetings provide opportunities to share information about parenting issues and child development. Parents learn from and support each other, observe their children with other children and practice parenting skills;
- 3) *screening*-- periodic screening for early identification of developmental delays or health, vision and hearing problems provides regular review of each child's developmental progress, identifies strengths and abilities as well as areas of concern that require referral for follow-up services, and increases parents' understanding of their child's development; and

¹ http://www.strengtheningfamilies.org/html/programs_1999/27_PAT.html

- 4) *resource network*-- parent educators help families identify and connect with needed resources, and overcome barriers to accessing services. Programs take an active role in establishing ongoing collaborative relationships with other organizations that serve families.

Independent evaluations of the PAT program show that children in Parents as Teachers at age 3 are significantly more advanced in language, social development, problem solving and other cognitive abilities, than comparison children. PAT children score higher on kindergarten readiness tests and on standardized measures of achievement in early grades. Parents in PAT are more involved in their children's schooling, read more to their children, and are more confident in their parenting role.

Implementation Costs

In order to implement a Parents as Teachers program, there must be an established funding and a supervisor with at least one parent educator. Each parent educator must attend the complete Institute, pass the daily assessments, and submit an approved implementation plan. The major cost of implementing a PAT program is the salary and travel of the parent educators. Most PAT parent educators, on average, are paid \$17 an hour depending on location of the program. Many work part-time (20 hours a week), serving 20 families with monthly visits and additional visits where needed. Some programs hire parent educators on a full-time basis. Total costs for programs including facility charges, program materials such as activities and books, and annual recertification fees (\$35 per parent educator) depend on the amount of in-kind donations of the sponsoring organization. PAT parent educators use, and encourage families to use, resources that are readily available in the home for parent-child activities.

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