



### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Strengthening Families is a research-informed, cost-effective strategy to increase family stability, enhance child development and reduce child abuse and neglect. It builds five protective factors:

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

Through the Strengthening Families Initiative, more than thirty states are shifting policy, funding and training to help programs working with children and families build protective factors with families. Many states also use the Strengthening Families approach to inform state prevention strategies, strengthen families in the child welfare system and engage parents and communities in building protective factors.

### WHY PAT PROGRAM SITES AND STATE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES EFFORTS SHOULD CONNECT

Strengthening Families efforts provide a cross-systems framework for family support and capacity building in more than 30 states. State initiatives are led by cross-system leadership teams generally representing a diverse set of disciplines, including early childhood, child abuse and neglect prevention, child welfare and public health. In most states, Strengthening Families is being implemented broadly in settings as diverse as early childhood centers, family support programs, parenting programs and other venues that serve young children and their families. Connecting to these leadership teams provides an opportunity to place *Parents as Teachers* in the context of broad cross-disciplinary thinking about how to leverage existing systems to support families and prevent abuse and neglect.

At the programmatic level Strengthening Families provides a framework and set of tools to help any environment that supports young children and their families enhance their capacity to build protective factors that promote optimal development and prevent abuse and neglect. For sites implementing *Parents as Teachers*, Strengthening Families materials and tools can be used to help build a more comprehensive family support strategy that will complement their existing work. Existing programs implementing the Strengthening Families approach in states may also be an important resource for *Parents as Teachers* program sites to refer families to. These programs are already working with families in a strengths-based, capacity building way and may be an important resource to families who need additional supports as they navigate parenthood.

Visit the Strengthening Families website ([www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)) to learn more about efforts going on in specific states, or to download tools and resources to support Strengthening Families implementation within a program.



### Parents as Teachers™

*Parents as Teachers* was established in 1981 and currently has affiliates in all 50 states. It is an approved home visiting model meeting the evidence-based criteria of the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. The goals of PAT are to:

- Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting practices.
- Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues.
- Prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Increase children's school readiness and school success.

The program model includes personal visits, group connection, screenings and connections to resources. PAT uses the Parents as Teachers Foundation Curriculum.

Training from the National Center for Parents as Teachers is required for implementing the model and utilizing the curriculum.

To learn more, visit:  
[www.parentsasteachers.org](http://www.parentsasteachers.org)

## HOW *PARENTS AS TEACHERS* LINKS TO THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

*Parents as Teachers* is formally affiliated with Strengthening Families as a national partner that has committed to building strong families by embedding the Strengthening Families protective factors throughout its work. The Strengthening Families protective factors are a core component of *Parents as Teachers*' approach. Strengthening Families protective factors are interwoven within *Parents as Teachers* Knowledge Studio training and curricula, as well as the logic model that unifies all *Parents As Teachers* programs. Examples of how *Parents as Teachers* build protective factors include:

**Parental Resilience:** *Parents as Teachers* focuses on increasing parental resilience through processes that build on the strengths, capabilities and skills identified through reflection and a family-centered assessment.

**Social Connections:** Offering opportunities to connect with others is a core component of *Parents as Teachers* model fidelity. These groups help families link with other families and build social connections.

**Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:** The *Parents as Teachers* Foundation Curriculum supports a development-centered approach to parent education, conveying research-based information and utilizing evidence-based practices to help parents improve their parenting capacity and practices, as well as their relationship with their child.

**Concrete Supports:** Connecting families with resources is a core component of the *Parents as Teachers* model. Parent educators work with families to reduce barriers to access and empower families to access resources and supports. This resource network includes both the informal and formal supports families need in times of crisis and to achieve their personal goals.

**Children's Social Emotional Competence:** Helping parents understand their child's development, including possible delays that may impact social-emotional development, is a primary focus of *Parents as Teachers*.