

NORTH CAROLINA Parenting Education Network

Volume 4, Issue 1, Winter 2002

The North Carolina Parenting Education Network (NCPEN) is working to build the field of parenting education in the state with a focus on partnership between parents and child care providers, teachers, and parent educators. Working together, we can help each child reach his or her potential. NCPEN is an unfunded collaboration of parenting education organizations and agencies. For more information about NCPEN, see our web site at www.ncpen.org.

NCPEN Member Highlight: Parents as Teachers

Recent neuroscience research on brain development demonstrates how early experiences shape the way children learn, think, and behave for the rest of their lives. In the beginning years, children learn more and at a faster pace than at any other time. Through Parents as Teachers (PAT), parents acquire skills to help make the most of these crucial early years. PAT children are shown to have positive gains in language development, problem solving and social skills that carry over into the elementary years.

What is Parents as Teachers?

PAT is a voluntary family education and support program that begins prenatally and extends through age 5. The program is based on the beliefs that parents are their children's first and most influential teachers and that the early years lay the foundation for children's success in school and in life.

PAT recognizes a family's strengths and that they are the expert with their child. The program helps them become involved from the very beginning of their child's life through personal visits with a parent educator. With the current curriculum that is used, parent educators help families discover ways to encourage language development, intellectual growth, social develop-



ment and motor skills, and suggest ways to strengthen the relationship with their child.

Parents as Teachers is an award-winning non-profit parent education and family support organization. Through an international network of more than 2,600 local programs, more than 10,000 PAT trained and certified parent educators work with parents to provide them with parenting support and information on their developing child.

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How does PAT help parents?

PAT focuses on the early years, prenatal through kindergarten entry, to help parents understand what to expect during each stage of their child's development. PAT-certified parent educators offer parents practical ways to encourage learning, manage challenging behavior, and promote strong parent-child relationships.

How does PAT benefit your community?

When Parents as Teachers is implemented in a community, everyone benefits. Through the program, parents become familiar with community resources and develop helpful community support. Whether it is the children who experience personal and academic success, parents who increase their confidence in their parenting skills, the school district which develops good relationships with parents and enrolls children ready for school, or government and civic leaders who invest in a cost-effective child development program, PAT will positively impact your community.

What do evaluation studies show us about PAT?

Independent studies have shown, at age three, children who participate *(continued on page 3)*

Support for printing of this newsletter was generously provided by the North Carolina Children's Trust Fund. You may find past copies of the newsletter on the NCPEN web site at: www.ncpen.org. Please feel free to make copies.

Collaborating Comes Alive with Parenting Education

by Karen Debord, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Child Development Specialist, NC State University

Nearly 200 professionals and parents who work on various aspects of parenting education came together for a conference November 28-30 in Raleigh. During the *Investing in Families II Conference*, participants attended such sessions as navigating the legal maze, fatherhood, parent involvement, family literacy, personal stress management, grandparents as parents and nurturing children. Special thanks goes to the Head Start Collaborative for the financial resources contributed to making the conference a success.

The conference planners aim was to collaboratively plan and carry-out the conference. Agencies in North Carolina focusing on parenting education were involved hoping to further build the network of parenting educators and to raise the quality of parenting education in the state. They also wanted to assure parenting education is infused into father-

hood programs. According to the evaluations, the participants felt as if these objectives were met.

Participants rated their knowledge of parenting education and parenting issues prior to the conference and then later as a result of being at the conference. The range of ratings for pre-knowledge was 1 (low knowledge) to 10 (high knowledge). Participants rated themselves an average score of 7.0 prior to the conference and an average of 8.9 following the conference for a gain score of nearly two points.

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Some of their comments about the conference were:

- Love, compassion, caring will always be the key to successful parenting and parent education
- There is a lot of collaboration potential between agencies
- I gained a lot of new resources for working with families
- Networking is one of the most effective factors in having a good program
- The whole conference was wonderful- thank-you!
- Accommodations and sessions were outstanding
- I am highly impressed with this conference
- I had low expectations because it was free and I didn't think this would be for parent educators, but BOY, was I wrong!
- After attending conferences for 15 years, I found this to be one of the best ones. □



Love, compassion, caring will always be the key to successful parenting and parent education

(Above) NCPEN members Karen DeBord (left), North Carolina Cooperative Extension, and Sally Sloop, North Carolina Partnership for Children. (At left) Dr. Charles Smith, Keynote Speaker, Kansas State University.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS

Continued from page 1

in Parents as Teachers are significantly more advanced than comparison children in language development, problem-solving and social skills. PAT children score higher on kindergarten readiness tests and standardized measures of reading, math and language in the early grades.

For all types of families, evaluation shows that parent knowledge of child development and positive parenting practices significantly increase. Parents are more involved in their child's learning and schooling. Parents feel more confident and competent in their parenting skills.

Parents as Teachers in North Carolina

Since the first North Carolina PAT program was implemented in 1989, the NC Parents as Teachers Network has grown to over 60 programs with over 300 parent educators across the state. In 1991, North Carolina became a training site of the PAT National Center and now has 4 national trainers. The flexibility of the PAT model allows programs to be funded and sponsored in a variety of ways. In NC, PAT is funded through local school systems, Smart Start, Head Start, Even Start, and other local, private, state and federal grants.

Child Care Teachers and Administrators can find a wealth of information online at:

<http://www.ncchildcare.org>

There are two interactive workbooks for professional development planning and links to educational, scholarship, and leadership opportunities.

Check it out today!



For Parenting Educators

If you are just starting as a parenting educator, are supervising a parent educator or need new ideas with planning effective programs, there is help. An interactive web site will step you through a process to consider the audience, your teaching method, ways to evaluate the program and methods of reporting outcomes. Invest in about 1 hour of self-study by visiting this site at:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/nfr/>

Researchers at UNC-Charlotte followed 97 families who were involved in the Rutherford County program beginning in 1991. Assessment at kindergarten entry showed that PAT children outperformed the comparison group children on measures of cognitive, language, motor, and self-help skills, with significant differences on the language and self-help measures. NC PAT is demonstrating success in reaching the goals set forth by the PAT National Center.

Where to Find Information

Local programs vary from community to community to who they serve. The families served are determined by the funders of the programs.

Some are universal access while others target certain populations or at-risk families.

To find out more about Parents as Teachers, findings of independent evaluation studies, trainings, the curriculum, and the PAT National Center visit the PAT website at:

<http://ncpat.org>

To find a PAT program in North Carolina:

<http://ncpat.org/programs.html>

or contact the NC PAT State Coordinator, Robin Roberts at email address:

Ncarolinapat@aol.com.

For Upcoming Events please check the NCPEN website at:
<http://www.ncpen.org>

North Carolina Parenting Education Network

If you or your organization is interested in becoming a member of the North Carolina Parenting Education Network please visit our website at www.ncpen.org. or fill out the following information. If you are an individual wishing to subscribe to the North Carolina Parenting Education Network Newsletter without becoming a member you can fill out the following information.

Taken from the NCPEN bylaws:
Membership Dues – Each member of the association shall pay annual dues of ten (\$10.00) and organizational dues of twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars due and payable on July 1, of the calendar year. Nonpayment of dues, after one year, shall cause a member to be dropped from membership in the association. Benefits of membership include 4

issues of the NCPEN newsletters per year for individuals and 200 copies of 4 issues of the newsletters for organizations (or more for a fee).



NCPEN Membership Application *(Please print)*

___ Individual membership (\$10.00)

Name _____

Mailing address _____

Phone Number _____ E-mail address _____

___ Organizational Membership (\$25.00)

Name of Organization _____

Number of parent educators in organization _____

Organizational website if applicable _____

Contact e-mail address _____

Mailing address (no PO boxes): _____

Phone/Fax Number _____

Courier number _____

Mail to: **NCPEN**
c/o Catherine Anderson
313 Chapanoke Road Ste.140
Raleigh, NC 27603

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