

## Parents as Teachers Research and Quality Improvement Technical Assistance Brief #2

### ***Guidance for Family-Centered Assessment***

*This is part of a series of Technical Assistance Briefs published by the Parents as Teachers national office and designed to address emerging issues around quality improvement, measurement, and evaluation of the Parents as Teachers evidence-based model. These briefs will inform and be informed by technical assistance efforts, feedback from stakeholders, and discussion within Parents as Teachers learning communities.*

#### **What information will I find in TA Brief #2?**

The purpose of this TA Brief is to provide updated guidance on selecting and conducting a family-centered assessment<sup>1</sup>. This guidance includes a revised list of the required topics that should be included in your assessment approach as well as a review of existing assessment instruments and their alignment with the required areas (see Appendix A).

#### **What is the overall purpose of family-centered assessment within Parents as Teachers?**

Parent educators use family-centered assessment to get to know and genuinely understand a family, recognize factors that promote family resilience and well-being, and facilitate goal setting. Together, assessment and goal-setting helps parent educators plan and deliver services, as well as track their families' progress.

To ensure that your family-centered assessment approach is sufficiently comprehensive, your strategy will include gathering information from parent(s) using an existing instrument and/or assessment questions developed by your affiliate that covers the required areas listed below. It is important that your approach to assessment is strengths-based, collaborative and respectful of families' cultural background. It is also important that the assessment is utilized with all families served by your affiliate, regardless of their needs characteristics, to facilitate goal-setting with each family.

At a minimum, a family-centered assessment should contain items that assist parent educators with understanding families' strengths, resources, and needs in each of the areas listed below.

- Parenting (such as parent knowledge, capacity, parenting practices, and/or parent-child relationship)
- Family relationships and formal and informal support systems
- Parent educational and vocational information
- Parent general health
- Parent/child access to medical care, including health insurance coverage
- Adequacy and stability of income for food, clothing, and other expenses
- Adequacy and stability of housing

**Please note:** The information gathered in the areas outlined above should be integrated with the child's developmental, health, vision and hearing screenings to gain a full understanding of the family's strengths, resources and needs.

<sup>1</sup> The information in this document supersedes that provided on the updated family-centered assessment guidance posted to the PAT website on 11/19/11.

In addition to the areas minimum listed above, you are strongly encouraged to gather information about broader contextual factors that influence family and child well-being, including neighborhood and community factors (e.g., safety, availability of resources, social connections, etc.).

***What is the current essential requirement for family centered assessment?***

The essential requirement for family-centered assessment is that: **parent educators complete and document a family-centered assessment within 90 days of enrollment and then at least annually thereafter** (ER #9, September 2012).

***How do we measure up on the family-centered assessment essential requirement?***

The measurement of family-centered assessments on the annual Affiliate Performance Report asks for: 1) the number of newly enrolled families that had an initial, comprehensive family-centered assessment completed and documented within 90 days of program enrollment and 2) the number of families (not including those newly enrolled) that had an annually updated family-centered assessment completed and documented during the program year.

Parents as Teachers recognizes that the essential requirements will not be met 100 percent of the time for 100 percent of the families. The benchmark for an acceptable level of fidelity calls for at least 60 percent of families to receive a family-centered assessment within the required timeframe. Note that this is a minimum benchmark and is in line with studies that have found positive results with implementation levels around 60 percent (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). This benchmark level also acknowledges that flexibility in the measurement of this essential requirement is needed to give programs the ability to tailor the timing of assessments to meet families' individual needs and circumstances.

***Additional Resources***

To help inform your selection of a family-centered assessment, a table is provided in Appendix A which provides detailed information about a sampling of assessments that are currently used in the field. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of family-centered assessments and inclusion on this list does not constitute an endorsement by PAT. Across these family-centered assessments there is considerable variability in the coverage of the required areas, in the way that information is gathered to complete the tools (e.g., observation, interview, parent survey, etc.) and in the degree to which they use a strengths-based approach. Before making a final determination, affiliate supervisors and staff will need to carefully review assessments and consider their fit with the families they are serving (e.g., Will it be perceived as burdensome? Is it strengths-based and respectful of families' culture? Can it be used in a collaborative way? Will it facilitate goal-setting?).

If a particular assessment tool does not cover all required areas, supplemental items will need to be utilized. For example, if your affiliate selects the Protective Factors Survey (PFS), this tool could be supplemented by the Family Resource Scale (FRS) along with items developed by your affiliate that assess parents' general health and health insurance coverage.

***References***

Durlak, J. A., & Dupre, E. P. (2008). Implementation matters: A review of research on the influence of implementation on program outcomes and the factors affecting implementation. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 41*, 327-350.

**Appendix A**

Family-Centered Assessment	Cost	Training	Assessment Strategy	Scoring Software Available	Psychometric Data Available	Spanish Version	Parenting	Family relationship & support systems	Education & vocation	Parents' general health	Access to medical care, including health insurance	Adequacy & stability of income for food, clothing, other	Adequacy and stability of housing
<b>Life Skills Progression</b> <a href="http://www.lifeskillsprogression.com/home/index">http://www.lifeskillsprogression.com/home/index</a>	\$44.95 for CD of the instrument & forms. Additional training costs apply.	1-day training strongly recommended	Observation & semi-structured interview with parent	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Family Development Matrix</b> <a href="http://www.factoc.org/data/evaluation/263-fdm.html">http://www.factoc.org/data/evaluation/263-fdm.html</a>	Free	Training support provided by a how-to guide	Observation & semi-structured interview with parent	X	--	X	X	X	X	X	--	X	X
<b>Family Resource Scale</b> <a href="http://www.wbpress.com/index.php?main_page=product_book_info&amp;products_id=237">http://www.wbpress.com/index.php?main_page=product_book_info&amp;products_id=237</a>	Book for training, \$25 \$10 per set of 10 scales.	Training support provided by book titled "Supporting and Strengthening Families: Methods, Strategies, and Practices".	Parent Self-Report Survey	--	X	X	--	X	No items on parent education	--	No items on health insurance	X	X
<b>The Protective Factors Survey</b> <a href="http://friendsnrc.org/protective-factors-survey">http://friendsnrc.org/protective-factors-survey</a>	Free	Training support provided by a how-to guide	Parent Self-Report Survey	X	X	--	X	X	No items on parent vocation	--	--	No items on income stability	No items on housing adequacy
<b>Massachusetts Family Self-Sufficiency Scales and LADDERS Assessment</b> <a href="http://www.mass.gov/hed/docs/dhcd/cd/csbg/slguide.doc">www.mass.gov/hed/docs/dhcd/cd/csbg/slguide.doc</a>	Free	Training support provided by a how-to guide	Semi-structured interview with parent	--	--	--	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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www.mass.gov/hed/docs/dhcd/cd/csbj/scales-ladders1.doc													
<b>Measure of Family Well-Being</b> <a href="http://friendsnrc.org/component/joomdoc/doc_details/147-outcome-accountability-measure-of-family-well-being">http://friendsnrc.org/component/joomdoc/doc_details/147-outcome-accountability-measure-of-family-well-being</a>	Free	None required.	Parent self-report & observation	--	--	--	X	X	X	X	No items on access to health insurance	No items on income stability	No items on housing adequacy
<b>Missouri Community Action Family Self-Sufficiency Scale</b> <a href="http://www.roma1.org/web/module/tr/submit/true/interior.html?dstate=MO">http://www.roma1.org/web/module/tr/submit/true/interior.html?dstate=MO</a>	Free	Interview Guide Available	Semi-structured interview with parent	--	--	--	--	--	X	X	No items on parent or child access to medical care	X	X
<b>North Carolina Family Assessment Scale</b> <a href="http://www.nfpa.org/assessment-tools.html">http://www.nfpa.org/assessment-tools.html</a>	See website to request price quote.	Training package available; see website for details.	Observation & semi-structured interview with parent	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	--	X	X
<b>The Kempe Family Stress Inventory (KFSI)</b> <a href="http://friendsnrc.org/joomdocs/fsc.pdf">http://friendsnrc.org/joomdocs/fsc.pdf</a>	Free	Need specialized training if using supplemental rating criteria copyrighted by Health Families America.	Observation & semi-structured interview with parent.	--	X	--	X	X	--	--	--	X	X

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<b>Family Map</b> <a href="http://familymedicine.uams.edu/FamilyMap/About">http://familymedicine.uams.edu/FamilyMap/About</a>	See website to request price quote.	Required: 1½ hr. online training followed by a 6-hr group training session led by a Family Map Trainer.	Semi-structured interview with parent	--	X	--	X	X	X	X	X	X	No items on housing adequacy
<b>Family Assessment Form</b> <a href="http://familyassessmentform.com/index.php">http://familyassessmentform.com/index.php</a>	\$14.95 for paper version; see website for cost of software application.	Two half-day sessions for use of tool; additional 2 hours for use of software.	Observation & semi-structured interview with parent	X	X	X	X	X	No items on parent education	--	X	X	No items on housing stability

**Notes:** An X indicates “true” for the assessment listed and a dash indicates “not true” about the assessment.