



Eastern Idaho Public Health

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month Parents as Teachers Program proving effective in reducing child maltreatment

(Southeast Idaho) – Child abuse is a problem throughout the country and our region is certainly not immune to it. Much of this abuse is inflicted upon our most vulnerable residents, children ages birth to four years. New research published in *Child Abuse & Neglect, The International Journal* found that Parents as Teachers®, an evidence-based home visiting program for children ages birth to three, demonstrates a significant decrease in cases of child maltreatment when the home visiting services are delivered through a statewide home visiting program.

The research represents one of the largest studies in the U.S. conducted to investigate the impact of home visiting on child maltreatment, including nearly 8,000 families. Researchers found a 22% decreased likelihood of substantiated cases of child maltreatment as reported by Child Protective Services data when comparing two groups of children born to first-time mothers. Children whose mothers received home visiting were compared to children whose mothers were eligible for home visiting but did not receive the services.

“This study is an important demonstration of the work we’re doing right here in Bonneville County with Eastern Idaho Public Health’s Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program to best build positive interactions between parents and infants and young children,” said Holly Whitworth, PAT Program Coordinator. “Parents as Teachers can stop abuse and neglect before it occurs,” said Whitworth.

“In our Parents as Teachers home visiting program, we work closely with families to build a trusting relationship to address critical parenting issues and behaviors that promote protective factors or the conditions that reduce or eliminate risk. Our trained professionals promote healthy development and well-being of children right in the home. The families we serve are often dealing with extreme poverty, depression, substance abuse, and teen parenting. This new research verifies that the program we’re using has a significant impact,” said Whitworth.

Idaho State legislators recognize the importance of Home Visiting as a program that can prevent child abuse and neglect with the appropriation of funds this legislative year to support home visiting across the state. If you are interested in more information about child abuse prevention and the PAT program, please go to www.EIPH.Idaho.gov.

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