



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Pat Simpson

(314) 432-4330, ext. 283

E-mail: [Pat.Simpson@ParentsAsTeachers.org](mailto:Pat.Simpson@ParentsAsTeachers.org)

Web Site: [www.ParentsAsTeachers.org](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PARENTS AS TEACHERS PROGRAM ONCE AGAIN SHOWN TO  
IMPROVE SCHOOL READINESS**

*School readiness predicts later school achievement, and possibly life success, study says*

ST. LOUIS (May 29, 2008) – For almost 25 years, St. Louis-based [Parents as Teachers National Center](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org) has studied, collected and shared with parents across the country information to help them get their young children off to a good start. Now a study released in the March issue of *Journal of Primary Prevention* confirms that the Parents as Teachers model does, measurably, improve school readiness. Further, according to the researchers, kindergarten readiness is the most important significant predictor of third-grade achievement and far outweighs other demographic variables such as age, gender, poverty and minority status in predicting subsequent third-grade performance.

The findings add to the evidence that Parents as Teachers improves parenting practices in ways that lead to both school readiness and subsequent academic achievement. The research was conducted by Drs. Edward Zigler and Victoria Seitz of the Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University with Judy Pfannenstiel of Research & Training Associates in Overland Park, Kan.

“This study says that those states that wait to start early childhood education until age 4 (the most common preschool age) are making a huge mistake,” explained Zigler. “Brain development research shows you get the biggest payoff the earlier you start. The first nine months are the most critical. By starting at birth, Parents as Teachers starts at just the right time ... birth to 2 years old is obviously too young to start preschool; so that why home-visiting programs like Parents as Teachers are needed.”

The study also refutes views that such services should be limited to high-poverty children, by showing that school readiness scores of non-poverty children were also enhanced through Parents as Teachers participation.

In Missouri, Parents as Teachers services are offered free of charge to all residents through local school districts. This ‘universal access’ is a core value of the program: all parents deserve support in their parenting roles. “The model that Missouri uses to partner Parents as Teachers with school districts statewide has been incredibly successful in increasing school readiness and engaging parents early in their child’s education,” said Susan Stepleton, president and CEO of Parents as Teachers National Center. “It’s one we’d like to see picked up across the nation by other states. This published piece will be a tool for starting some important conversations with key decision makers.”

**About Parents as Teachers National Center**

Based in St. Louis, Parents as Teachers National Center is the resource base and backbone of Parents as Teachers, a parent education and early childhood development program serving parents throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten, usually age 5. The nonprofit National Center oversees approximately 3,000 programs offering Parents as Teachers services nationwide as well as in several other countries. For more information about Parents as Teachers, visit [www.ParentsAsTeachers.org](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org).

###