

Kent, Sussex Parents as Teachers programs aim for Blue Ribbons



The Parents as Teachers program aims to help all children grow and learn to reach their full potential with services focused on children from before they are born until they enter kindergarten.

The Delaware Early Childhood Center's [Parents as Teachers](#) (PAT) program, housed in the **Lake Forest School District**, hopes to achieve Blue Ribbon honors for its work serving children and families throughout Kent and Sussex Counties prenatal to kindergarten entry.

Recently, the Parents as Teachers National Center selected both the Kent and Sussex PAT affiliate programs to participate in the Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process.

Through this, the programs have the opportunity to be recognized as Blue Ribbon Affiliates, an honor for delivering high-quality services to children and families in Kent and Sussex. This process will take place over the next program year 2016-2017 with awards announced in Fall 2017.

Being selected to participate in the process itself was an honor.

"To be recognized on a national level for the quality home visiting services the Delaware Early Childhood Center Parents as Teachers program provides to children and families is an honor," said Christine Olley, PAT coordinator for Kent/Sussex.

Carmen Gallagher, who administers the PAT program for the Delaware Department of Education's Office of Early Learning, said Delaware implemented PAT within a few

years of the program's conception, and it has grown and developed in the 15 years since.

"All of Delaware should be proud of this program, and most importantly, that we are providing the very best services possible to families," she said.

PAT's vision is for all children to learn, grow and develop to realize their full potential. PAT's main focus with families is through home visits that focus on every family's unique needs, providing families with support and encouragement in their parenting journeys. PAT further partners throughout each county to support families and the community with weekly play group opportunities and family events throughout the year.

PAT also partners with Delaware Adolescent Program Inc. (DAPI) of Kent and Sussex counties and **Caesar Rodney High School**, where PAT works directly with the teen parents. Additionally, PAT has formed community partnerships in Sussex and Kent, including with Beebe Hospital and Connections, to work with families dealing with addiction.