Fostering Powerful Parent Partnerships

How To Cultivate, Nurture, and Sustain Meaningful Parent Relationships

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Agenda
- Relationship Based Practices
- Building Partnerships
- Parent Mediated-Child Learning Model
- The Home Visit

Relationship Based Early Intervention

“All learning takes place in the context of relationships and is critically affected by the quality of those relationships.”

Still Face Experiment

“When I asked what part of the day was most challenging for her, she replied without hesitation that bedtime and bath time were just awful her and her child. This opened it up for me to ask more questions about what was going on during those routines that made it so difficult. So when I asked her what her ideal bath time/bedtime routines would look like she seemed surprised and said, “You would help me with that?” When I said yes, she smiled and gave me some really good information and outcomes she would like to achieve for her child and family.”

WV Birth to Three Developmental Specialist
The Parent-Professional Relationship

The Dance Begins

"Here you are, the professional, eagerly awaiting your new dance partner. Your arms stretched out inviting us, parents, to enter your world... We, parents, having not chosen this dance, are usually not as eager as you. We may approach you not with open arms but with tightly folded ones clutched to our chest... we may feel reluctant, ambivalent, and often unwilling. For one thing, if we choose to join you, we have to acknowledge that our child has special needs. We have to acknowledge that we are entering your world- one that is initially unfamiliar and frightening. Entering into our partnership with you demands that we let go of our dreams and begin to build new ones." (Fialka, 2001, p.22)

Reflect

I view this person as....

- Overwhelmed
- Friendly
- Angry
- Sad

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The Brain

- First impression Polaroid
- A primitive feature - “eat or be eaten” world

“Thin slices generated in the primitive area of the brain, where feelings are also processed- which accounts for the emotional punch of some first encounters”

[polyclot.com]
Partnering with Families – Where Do I Begin?

- Understand that our ability to provide a family with a positive first encounter will go a long way.
- Understand that there is possibly resistance to our being there.
- Understand that families react to stress in different ways with different temperaments.

Reframing the Art of Listening

- Relieved
- Angry
- Sad
- Lonely
- Overwhelmed
Listening – The Basics

• Never assume you know what is best for a family – what they need to be successful

• Provide the family a safe space to share their thoughts, feelings and concerns

• Do not jump into your tool box too quickly

Active Listening

• “You sound like you had a frustrating week. I see that you’re rubbing your neck as you talk, it must be really difficult to deal with all of that crying” - Validating.

• “However, I really have to say that I’m excited to see that you’re recognizing that through crying she is communicating with you. She’s just doing it in the only way she knows how.” - Encouraging

• “So let’s begin to think of some ways that we can create opportunities to teach her more effective ways of communicating with you. How does that sound to you?” - Action

Listening to Understand

Statements:

• “It drives me crazy”

• “She won’t tell me what she wants”

• She just cries

Meaning:

• I’m overwhelmed and need support.

• I can’t understand her and I just don’t know what to do

• I understand that she is frustrated, but I don’t know how to handle it

Reflection

Impact of Families

• Multiply the number of hours a 2 year old is typically awake and multiply by 7 days a week, you get about 84 hours.

• That is 84 hours families/caregivers have opportunities to interact with a child and help the child practice new skills.

• What are the number of hours we as home visitors have each week for those same opportunities – 1-1 1/2 hours at most

Key Concepts

• It’s the family and caregivers who influence the child – we influence the family

• Children learn throughout the day – not in separate “goal time”

• All the intervention occurs between visits – during daily routines

• Focus on families – Support to families not services
Becoming Family Focused

1) Being Present for Parents
2) Avoid Creating a Child-Only Visit
3) Seeing the Child Within the Context of the Family

Scenario

You walk in to meet your new family for the first time, excited to run through all of the questions that you have prepared. When you get there, you see that Mom seems upset. It looks as though she may have been crying and she begins to tell you about the difficult time that the family has been having.

Becoming Family Focused

• Being Present
  • Let go of expectations
  • Looking at their experience
  • True understanding

Becoming Family Focused

• See the Child Within the Context of the Family, Neighborhood, and Community

Becoming Family Focused

• Avoid Creating a Child-Only Visit
  • Family empowerment
  • Successful foundation
  • Research on coaching

Strong, competent families who are able to be deeply involved with their children are the greatest contributors to child progress and child well being

Dr. Glen Dunlap, 2008
Strengthening Families Framework

Relationship Based Early Intervention

Empowering Families

Give a man a fish and you feed him for today, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime...

Adult Learning

Characteristics

- Autonomous & Self Directed
- Foundation in Life Experience
- Goal & Relevancy Oriented
- Practical
- Equal in the Partnership

Our Role in Partnership with Families

- promote positive attachment between children and their parents/caregivers through attuned and responsive caregiving
- identify children’s functional/developmental capacities and needs
- analyze the child’s home environments and identify what adaptations are needed to ensure the child’s full participation/engagement in activities
- analyze the child’s home environments and identify what learning opportunities exist or can be created to maximize the child’s practice of key skills

Our Role in Partnership with Families

- support parents in implementing adaptations and maximizing learning opportunities for the child
- monitor the impact of these strategies on the child’s developmental and functional skills and child’s participation/engagement in activities
- strengthen the capacity of universal services to meet the needs of all children through fully inclusive programs

Dr. Timothy Moore, PhD
Who Influences What?

- Caregiver Competence & Confidence
- Professional Supports
- Child Outcomes

Relationship Based Practices

Helping families to succeed requires us as professionals to model the attributes and dispositions needed to facilitate healthy parent-child interactions and to promote learning.

Adapted from Wilcox and Weber

Relationship Based Early Intervention

- Additional skills needed beyond child development and discipline specific training
  1. Listen carefully
  2. Demonstrate concern and empathy
  3. Promote reflection
  4. Observe and highlight the parent/child relationship
  5. Respond thoughtfully in emotionally intense interactions, and
  6. Understand, regulate, and use one’s own feelings

What Does It Mean to Be Family Focused?

- Recognize the family as “the constant”
- Recognize the family as the child’s first teacher
- Recognize the family as the most important caregiver
- Recognize the family as the key to early intervention

The Family: “The Constant”


  - Enhancing the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infant and toddler with disabilities

The Family: The First Teacher

- “Young children establish and can benefit greatly from a variety of close relationships. Yet those adults who are most consistently available and committed to the child’s well-being play a special role in promoting competence and adaptation that cannot be replaced by individuals who are present less consistently or whose emotional commitment is not unconditional” (National Research Council, 2000, p. 389).

  - It’s the family and the caregivers who influence the child we influence them...
The Family: The Caregiver

- "Human relationships, and the effects of relationships on relationships, are the building blocks of healthy development" (National Research Council, 2000, p. 4).
  - Assisting families and caregivers to create a supportive and nurturing environment.

The Family As The Key

Promoting family decision making by providing opportunities for families to make meaningful choices in regards to their child and family.

Using routines to find strengths, priorities, and concerns

1) What are routines?

2) How do we support families to open up about their routines?

Routines Based Interview

EXAMPLE:
- Could you describe what wake up time is like?
- Who usually wakes up first?
- Where does your child sleep?
- How does your child let you know she is awake?
- Does she want to be picked up right away? If so, is she happy when picked up?
- Or is she content by herself for a few minutes? What does she do?
- What is the rest of the family doing at this time?
- Is this a good time of day? If not, what would you like to be different?

Using Routines to Identify Family Concerns & Priorities

- Concerns: To be a care, trouble, or distress to [Merriam-Webster.com]
- Priorities: Something given special attention [dictionary.com]

Scenario – The Smith’s

- Could you describe what wake up time is like?
  - Difficult, there’s so much going on and everyone ends up being late.
- Who usually wakes up first?
  - Pete, he’s usually screaming and wakes everyone up. It feels like such a yucky way to wake up, and I think that we’re all affected by it through the day.
- Where does your child sleep?
  - He bounces back and forth between our bed and his own. When he’s in our bed he’s usually kicking and squirming which leaves for a really hard night of sleep.
- How does your child let you know he is awake?
  - It’s usually crying. Like I said, we feel very stressed to wake up everyday like this.
• Does he want to be picked up right away? If so, is he happy when he is picked up?
  • He always wants to be held the whole morning routine, which leaves little time for getting Shelly up and moving. I think she feels rushed, and I don’t want her to have to grow up with that kind of stress. He does stay calm when I am holding him, but he’s getting really heavy. He loves to be held. He wants it all the time and it’s really straining.

• Is he content by himself for a few minutes? What does he do?
  • No he usually cries and follow me around saying “up, up”. If I were to leave him by himself he would find me.

• What is the rest of the family doing at this time?
  • Pretty much running around like chickens with their heads cut off. It’s a mad dash to be ready for the bus and work. Joe is always late and he hates to be late.

• Is this a good time of day? If not, what would you like to be different?
  • Well, more than anything, I would like to have everyone ready for where they need to be and feeling a little bit good about going there. We just want some calm in our lives right now. Everything is rushed and there’s a lot of crying.

Identifying Family Strengths

• Where does your child sleep?
  • He bounces back and forth between our bed and his own. When he’s in our bed he’s usually kicking and squirming which leaves for a really hard night of sleep.

• How does your child let you know he is awake?
  • He’s usually crying. Like I said, we feel very stressed to wake up everyday like this.

• Does he want to be picked up right away? If so, is he happy when he is picked up?
  • He always wants to be held the whole morning routine, which leaves little time for getting Shelly up and moving. I think she feels rushed, and I don’t want her to have to grow up with that kind of stress. He does stay calm when I am holding him, but he’s getting really heavy. He loves to be held. He just wants it all the time and it’s really straining.

• Is he content by himself for a few minutes? What does he do?
  • No he usually cries and follow me around saying “up, up”. If I were to leave him by himself he would find me.

Framework for Home Visiting

• Giving the family the information they need on what to do with the child

• Ensuring families have the materials they need to support the child participating

• Being with the family to encourage and be emotionally supportive of the hard work they are doing

Natural Learning Environments

Parent Mediated Child Natural Learning Model

Emotional Direction
• The parent provides a safe and nurturing environment
• The parent invites the child into learning activities
• The parent maintains attention and emotional regulation and responds to the child’s cues in a positive manner.

Responsive Parenting
• Parent follows the child’s lead recognizing and noting what the child is interested in
• Parent matches the child’s focus and engages in interactions that promote joint attention
• Parent uses a variety of child interest-based materials and activities
Parent Mediated Child Natural Learning Model

**Responsive Teaching**
- Parent offers the child opportunities to practice and learn throughout the day.
- Parent guides, models prompts, provides direct instruction and praise.
- Parent helps the child explore new things and extends and elaborates on the child’s interest.

How do we do this …
- Involving the family in teaching functional skills during daily routines, using their objects and toys.
- Listening to and acting on the interests and priorities identified by the family (family wants walking to be a priority).
- Considering informal support systems, like grandparents and neighbors.
- Bringing specialized materials and toys into the family’s home to “teach” the child and model for care providers.
- Identifying outcomes based only on team assessment (team identifies feeding, playing with toys and communication as priorities based on test results).
- Using only formal supports to assist the family or expecting one care provider (mom) to consistently complete all routines.

Activity Based Intervention

- Individualized approach
  - Child’s unique learning characteristics
  - Family culture, values and ways of being
  - Routine activity structure and flow
- Assess during routine activities
- Identify approaches that fit the routines of the family
- Blend into routine activities
  - Avoid redesigning or adding to routines

Driving force behind activity-based intervention is the attainment of functional skills that can be used across all environments and situations (Pretti-Frontczak & Bricker, 2011, p. 22)

Planning for Home Visits

- Joint planning with families
- Activity Based
  - The driving force is the attainment of functional skills that can be used across all environments and situations (Pretti-Frontczak & Bricker, 2011, p. 22)

Embed Learning into Routines

- Learn about child and family preferences and expectations
- Specify strategies and sequences
  - Logical
  - Beginning and ending
  - Repetition
  - Meaningful materials and words
- Gather feedback and monitor progress
- Match child’s current developmental abilities
- Tailored to child interests
- Engage child in activities within the context of authentic transactions
- Use evidence based practices
- Many opportunities, across the day, using:
  - Everyday routines
  - Child directed activities
  - Planned activities

Will Occur within Routines

Embed Learning into Child Directed Activity

- Initiations
- Preferences
- Cues
Embed Learning into Planned Activities

- Trip to the park
- Grocery shopping
- Walk or stroller ride

Involves predictable routines or
May become routines

Timely Feedback or Consequences

- Immediately following behavior
  - Child reaches out to ball
  - Parent hold the ball says “ba” and immediately provides the ball to the child
- Logical outcome of behavior
  - Child turns off light switch
  - Room becomes dark
- Natural reinforcers
  - Non-natural – stickler for turning off light or token for saying “j” when wants juice

So what about the toy bag?

- Consider how children learn - throughout days, not in lessons or sessions
- Consider how early intervention serves to support natural caregivers, not specifically working with the child.
- Use what is CONSISTENT within the home available to the child

WHAT? No Toy Bag?

- “Your junk ain’t good enough”
- Implies that intervention occurs during the visit
  - Attribution Problem
  - Taking the toys away

Reflection

What if families don’t seem to have toys?
What About Child Level Intervention?

- Demonstration / Modeling/Teaching for the family
- Assess progress or appropriateness of a strategy
- Show affection to the child

What if the Family is Resistant?

1. Talk to the parent about your suggestion
2. If the parent is unsure or appears not to understand, ask if they would like to be shown
3. Tell the parent what you are going to do
4. Do it
5. Tell the parent what you did and point out the consequence
6. Ask the parent if they would like to try
   - Yes – observe their attempt – praising and giving limited corrective feedback
   - No – leave it alone

Home Visiting Principles Checklist

- Using routine activities as the intervention context
- Facilitating child and caregiver engagement
- Supporting caregiver confidence and competence in strategy use

Reflection

"It is important to remember that we are not in the home to meet the needs of the baby himself; instead we are in the home to try to assure that the baby’s needs are met.”

Give a man a fish and you feed him for today, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime...

Thank You for Attending!