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# Resources and Connections:

Enhancing the Quality of Early Learning and  
Early Intervention for Infants, Toddlers, & Their Families

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A monthly compilation of useful resources including research abstracts, no- to-low cost products, web links, and upcoming learning events to help keep you up-to-date on the latest information and opportunities supporting quality practices in early learning and early intervention.

An online, Web version of this publication can be viewed at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/local/tech.htm>

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## ***News You Can Use***

The Colorado Medical Assistance Program (Colorado Medicaid) has changed the rule pertaining to the delivery of Outpatient Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) services to all Medicaid eligible patients. Highlights of the rule change encompass:

1. Removal of the “physician on-site” regulation for Outpatient OT and Outpatient PT.
2. Effective February 15, 2002, a therapist must submit a Prior Authorization Request to receive reimbursement past the sixth treatment or service for a particular child or client.
3. The prescribed service must meet the criteria for “medical necessity” as defined in Medicaid Bulletin #B0200119
4. Outpatient occupational and physical therapy services must be billed through a physician who is a Medicaid provider.

5. The child/family or client must be Medicaid eligible and the therapist must be a Medicaid provider.

In delivering services to children, the Outpatient OT/PT services can now be provided in the family’s home, childcare setting, a recreation center, or other community setting. Serving the child in his or her natural environment should help facilitate the achievement of goals and functional outcomes as identified on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

If additional information is needed concerning Colorado Medicaid policy and billing procedures, please refer to Medicaid Bulletin #B020019 or contact the Medicaid fiscal agent on the Internet via [coloradomedicaid.consultec-inc.com](http://coloradomedicaid.consultec-inc.com) or call (303) 534-0146 or 1-800-237-0757.

For information on the delivery of services in a child’s natural environments, see: *A Guidebook: Early Intervention Supports and Services in Everyday Routines, Activities and Places* and the *Just Being Kids* video as well as other materials available from your local Early Childhood Connections office or Community Centered Board. To order, visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/docs/pdf/order.pdf> or


<http://www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/natural.htm>

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## Research Brief

Hanft, BE, Pilkington, KO. (2000). *Therapy in Natural Environments: The Means or End Goal for Early Intervention?* *Inf Young Children* 2000: 12(4):1-13.

Collaboration between therapists and caregivers within natural environments (in Colorado we usually use the phrase everyday, routines, activities, and places instead of natural environments) such as home, child-care settings, and neighborhood recreation centers is the key to providing quality, family-centered care. How therapy is provided in these natural environments is just as important as where it is provided. Discussion is focused on influencing rehabilitation specialists with roots in the medical model (i.e., physical and occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists) to understand the benefits for children and families when therapists work with children and their families in their natural environments. The authors explore how working in natural environments reinforces family-centered care; discuss the benefits for all parties when therapy is provided within daily routines and settings; describe a decision-making process for embedding intervention within natural environments; and conclude by identifying challenges and guidelines to providing therapy in natural environments. Benefits for working in natural environments include opportunities to enhance family and professional interaction and relationships, increased opportunities for modeling, and supporting families, and increased opportunities for observing and understanding child's abilities. Challenges to providing services in natural environments include perceived conflicts between program



practices of center-based, disability-focused services, and federal mandates for services in natural environments. Other challenges to working in natural environments emerge when trying to balance parent decisions and federal guidelines for service delivery for those parents who are hesitant to change the venue of the services they have been receiving; and for providers of service who encounter system barriers, or their own hesitation to embrace new service delivery models.

### *Editorial Commentary:*

Service providers need a great deal of support to work in everyday routines, activities, and places, especially if their training has emphasized direct intervention, and has not included a focus on consultation as a key component of service delivery. Fiscal and logistical issues can also be challenging, e.g. reliance on payment sources that are accustomed to reimbursing center-based services and that have rules that define the service locations. These kinds of issues present challenges to providers who are committed to changing their practice, but who do not have either the skills or the support to facilitate the system changes that need to be made. One strategy for implementing widespread change is to focus more effort on learning, recognizing and supporting the learning needs of all early intervention stakeholders. Families, providers, and administrators can be more effective in their roles as change agents by learning together through dialogue, information, and education.

## On the Web

### Increasing Children's Learning Opportunities Early Childhood Research Institute

<http://www.puckett.org/childlearn/>

The goal of this Research Institute is to identify, develop, and evaluate strategies and approaches for using home and community settings as learning contexts for promoting and enhancing the development of young children with or at risk for disabilities. This goal is being accomplished by identifying typically occurring home routines and community activities that can serve as the context for learning and the instructional conditions that optimize learning opportunities and the benefits associated with these opportunities.

The Institute's web site includes a number of useful reports, such as: *Increasing Children's Learning Opportunities in the Context of Family and Community Life*; *Family and Community Activity Settings*; *Natural Learning Environments and Children's Learning Opportunities*; *Family Life as Sources of Children's Learning Opportunities*; and *Community Life as Sources of Children's Learning Opportunities*. This site also includes excellent bibliographies of books, articles, and papers on *Family and Community Activity Settings* and *Natural Learning Environment Interventions*. The Institute is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Program, Early Education Program for Children with Disabilities. Carl J. Dunst, Ph.D., is the Principal Investigator.

## Spotlight on Resources

### From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development

Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, Editors; Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development, Board on Children, Youth, and Families. National Academy Press, 2000.

How we raise young children is one of today's most highly personalized and

sharply politicized issues, in part because each of us can claim some level of "expertise." The debate has intensified as discoveries about our development-in the womb and in the first months and years-have reached the popular media.

How can we use our burgeoning knowledge to assure the well-being of all young children, for their own sake as well as for the sake of our nation? Drawing from new findings, this 612-page volume presents important conclusions about nature-versus-nurture, the impact of being born into a working family, the effect of politics on programs for children, the costs and benefits of intervention, and other issues.

*From Neurons to Neighborhoods* presents the evidence about "brain wiring" and how kids learn to speak, think, and regulate their behavior. It examines the effect of the climate -- family, child care, community -- within which the child grows.



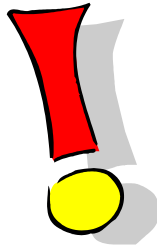
"Authoritative, yet accessible... While technically informative for policy makers and professional service providers in the area of health, education, and welfare, the book is also an engaging read for parents interested in finding out more about the most important early developmental years." --*National Investment for the Early Years*, July 2001

For a very good overview and analysis of *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, take a look at the ZERO to THREE Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 5, April/May, 2001. To obtain this issue, visit the ZERO to THREE Bookstore: <http://www.zerotothree.org/parent.html?Load=bookstore.html>

**To order:** You can read the entire 612-page book or 16-page executive summary for free or purchase it for \$31.96 by visiting: <http://books.nap.edu/catalog/9824.html>

You can also order it by calling toll-free (888) 624-8373.

## Upcoming Events



### Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children Spring Conference

April 19 & 20, 2002 at the Denver Merchandise Mart. For more info call Linda Adams 303-791-2772 or toll free 1 (888) 892-4453 or visit: <http://www.users.qwest.net/~caeyc/conferences.htm>

### Summits and Valleys

May 6-10, 2002 - A conference on families and communities, sharing the triumphs and challenges of families and children with special needs in Southwestern Colorado. The focus of this year's "traveling" conference is "Building Positive Futures: Creating A Dream, Keeping the Vision, and Reaching Your Goals." An evening presentation and a half day conference the next morning will be held in four southwestern Colorado communities: May 6 & 7 in Durango, May 7 & 8 in Cortez, May 8 & 9 in Montrose, and May 9 & 10 in Alamosa. For more information contact the Part C Coordinator in those communities or Rick Noll at 1 (970) 240-8200 or [rhino@gjct.net](mailto:rhino@gjct.net)

### KIDs' BRAINS: Healthy Connections for Our Future 2002 Conference

May 16 and 17, 2002 at the Auraria Campus, Denver, Colorado  
Featuring Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., Medical Director, Provincial Programs in Children's Mental Health, Alberta Mental Health Board, this 3<sup>rd</sup> annual conference is a two-day exploration into the importance of environment in brain development for infants and young children. Presented by *Metropolitan State College of Denver, Human Services Dept.* For more info: [www.kidsbrains.org](http://www.kidsbrains.org)

### The Culture of Childhood Early Childhood Care and Education Summer Symposium

July 17 and 18, 2002 at the Beaver Run Resort in Breckenridge. This year's general theme will be "Language and Literacy." The Symposium will be held Registration packets will be available in April. For more information, contact Juanita Kirkpatrick at (303) 866-6629 or [kirkpatrick\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:kirkpatrick_j@cde.state.co.us)

### Lastly, the Early Childhood Activities

**Calendar** is a useful source of information on training opportunities and other events:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/calendar/Cal.htm>

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**Contact Us...** *Resources and Connections* is published by Early Childhood Connections at the Colorado Department of Education and JFK Partners, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. We invite you to contact the editors with your questions and suggestions.

Larry Edelman, Co-Editor <a href="mailto:edelman.larry@tchden.org">edelman.larry@tchden.org</a> JFK Partners 1825 Marion Street Denver, CO 80218	Susan Smith, Co-Editor <a href="mailto:smith_s@cde.state.co.us">smith_s@cde.state.co.us</a> Colorado Department of Education 201 East Colfax Avenue Denver, CO 80203-1799	Ann Grady, Abstract Editor <a href="mailto:grady.ann@tchden.org">grady.ann@tchden.org</a> JFK Partners 1825 Marion Street Denver, CO 80218
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