
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 to help keep you up-to-date on the latest information and opportunities supporting quality practices in early learning and early intervention. Read the details at the end of this issue to request a **FREE** monthly subscription. An online version of can be viewed at: www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/Technical.htm

Special Focus: Transdisciplinary Services

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Transdisciplinary Services

The transdisciplinary approach to working with families who have young children with developmental delays or disabilities grew from the belief that families and professionals working together facilitates a whole-child and whole-family approach, allows for the efficient contribution of all the adults in a child's life (i.e. the child and family do not always need to see many different specialists), and fosters everyone's skill development. The primary purpose of this approach is to enhance the family's capacity to meet their child's needs. Because each child's developmental needs can be integrated across typical daily activities and routines, developing skills can be practiced multiple times every day.

A key feature of this approach is continual communication among the team members. Professionals share important information and skills with the primary, or consistent, caregivers that are with the child on a daily basis. Along with the family, professionals from different disciplines (e.g. early childhood educators, parent

educators/home visitors, speech, occupational and physical therapists, social workers, etc.) teach, learn, and work together to achieve a jointly agreed upon set of outcomes for the child and family.

Team members play a variety of roles. Typically, one member will provide direct services and support to the family and/or other consistent caregivers. Members also provide collaborative consultation to the family and other professionals on the team. They do this by sharing roles, helping each other acquire skills related to that person's area of expertise. This requires both role release (accepting that others can do what that person was specifically trained to do) and role acceptance (accepting that one's job can include more than what one was specifically trained to do). The roles that professionals will assume are determined for each individual child and family and are based on family and child needs rather than on the discipline-specific characteristics of the professionals.

Outcomes for the child are developed through team consensus under the guidance of the family. Outcomes - like team roles - are based on the strengths and needs of the child rather than on the disciplines of individuals serving the child. To address the outcomes for the child, supports are embedded in natural routines and activities of the home, childcare center, or community activity and carried out throughout the day.

The transdisciplinary approach to early intervention has been found to be a very effective practice in working with young children and their families.

Reference: Bruder, M. *Inclusion of Infants and Toddlers in* Guralnick M.J. (Ed.). (1997). *The Effectiveness of Early Intervention*, Paul Brookes Publishers, Chapter 9, pp. 203-227.

Research Brief

Pilkington, K. and Malinowski, M (2002). The natural environment II: Uncovering deeper responsibilities within relationship-based services. *Inf Young Children* 2002; 15 (2): 78-84.



Providing transdisciplinary early intervention supports and services requires a deep exploration of the relationships involved. New responsibilities emerge through recognition that relationships exist beyond daily interactions with infants, toddlers, and their families. Identifying and exploring these relationships enables providers to support a new level of service delivery required in everyday routines, relationships, activities, places, and partnerships (ERRAPP). This article discusses some of the further dimensions of relationships that influence the quality of early intervention supports and services.

Staff-to-Staff Relationships: There are deeper implications of teamwork in natural environments and new challenges to overcome. The transition is part of the ongoing process of relationship-based, family-centered early intervention. By employing expanded levels of interaction, interventionists can seek simple solutions based on an understanding and respect for a family's culture and the interpersonal relationship that develop through pursuit of agreement on expected outcomes. Working together on deeper levels of teamwork encourages communication, problem solving, and role release among team members. Funding models need to support the indirect time required to provide quality transdisciplinary teamwork.

Administration-to-Staff Relationships: Administrative relationships and responsibilities begin with recruiting and hiring staff, but go far beyond. Administrative structures need to support the building of staff relationships as a foundation for all other professional interactions. Administrators need to encourage and support team members to communicate, solve problems, and plan effectively for family-centered intervention. Administrators need to seek opportunities and funding to support and encourage indirect time for planning, training, and communicating. Reflective supervision forms a cornerstone of administrative-staff relationships.

Included in this article is a useful table listing how service elements need to be integrated with "natural environment principles."

Specific administrative, provider, and family roles need to be identified for planning and executing relationship-based programs for children and families in natural environments, and consequently revealing new possibilities for individuals in transdisciplinary teams, programs engaged in changing delivery modes, and the families they serve. Early intervention practitioners and administrators need to explore the deeper elements of the relationships involved in providing supports and services in everyday routines, activities, and places.

Implications:

This article is helpful for exploring ways and means for moving beyond first efforts to adopt natural environments as an optimum venue for learning for young children.



Resources

On the Web

Coaching in Natural Environments

<http://www.coachinginearlychildhood.org/index.php>

This site is chock-full of useful resources including articles, research reviews, web-based learning modules, web-based forums, bibliographies, case studies, and much more. The purpose of the Coaching in Natural Environments website is to share information and resources about where, how, and why to provide services for infants, toddlers, and their families who are eligible for services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in natural settings. The site also provides follow-up web-based training and support for state and early intervention program leaders who are participating in the Personal Development and Ongoing Continuous Improvement Model for Service Delivery in Natural Environments.

The site defines coaching as: "Coaching is a mindset for providing intervention and supports that shifts the service delivery model from expert-driven to learner-focused. Learner-focused intervention is a concept that moves the focus of the intervention off the child with the disability and emphasizes supporting those people (i.e., learners) involved with the child across a variety of environments. The interventionist serves as a coach to the learner facilitating a dynamic exchange of information based on the learners' skills and needs. Coaching is a reciprocal process between the coach and learner comprised of a series of conversations focused on mutually agreed upon outcomes (Flaherty, 1999; Kinlaw, 1999). The conversations promote self-discovery and result in competence and mastery of desired skills for the learner and child (Doyle, 1999; Dunst, Herter, & Shields, 2000). Flaherty defines coaching as "not telling people what to do, [but]

giving them a chance to examine what they are doing in light of their intentions" (p. xii). Coaching is a skill that requires practice and ongoing support from administrators and other colleagues to implement effectively."

Included in the site is an interesting section on comparing models of team interaction

<http://www.coachinginearlychildhood.org/webmodules/teaming/modelsofteams.pdf>

Learning facilitators of this project are M'Lisa Shelden and Dathan Rush, who are affiliated with both the Family, Infant and Preschool Program (FIPP) at Western Carolina Center in Morganton, North Carolina and at the Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute.

In Print

The Effectiveness of Early Intervention

Edited by Michael J. Guralnick, Ph.D.
Paul Brookes Publishers, 1997

<http://www.pbrookes.com/store/books/guralnick-255x/>

Abstract from the Paul Brookes Web Site:
"This milestone work in early intervention summarizes and interprets research and program outcomes in early intervention since the passage of PL 99-457. Analyzing research problems and examining implications for program implementation, this reference provides much-needed direction for second-generation research in the field. Highly regarded researchers and practitioners discuss selecting authentic developmental or educational approaches to intervention, designing curricula, choosing among related practice alternatives, and adapting program features to fit each child's and family's unique needs. Early intervention professionals in all practices and professions will find this an essential tool for understanding and addressing the emerging complexities in their daily work.

Every student, teacher, and practitioner of early intervention should have a copy. —James A. Blackman, M.D., M.P.H., Editor, Infants and Young Children"

Follow-up Activities to the 11th Annual Early Childhood Institute

Quality Practices in Assessment, Service Delivery, and Assistive Technology

More than 600 practitioners and family members from across Colorado attended the Institute, which was held on October 16 - 18, 2002 in Vail to learn from nationally recognized professionals in the field of early intervention. The information that was presented in Vail created energy and enthusiasm throughout the state. To keep the momentum going, a number of activities have been planned to support ongoing learning and the implementation of new practices.

Topical Bridge Calls

A *topical bridge call* is a telephone call scheduled to clarify a specific topic. Participants are given a telephone number and pass code that will enable them to join the call that a staff person from CDE's Early Childhood Connections (ECC) will facilitate. ECC has been using bridge calls for a number of topics and the calls have been very well received. Because these calls have been so worthwhile, they are being scheduled on an on-going basis. Calls currently scheduled include:

- **Transition Bridge Call** - Monday, January 13, 2003 from 12-1 p.m.
- **State IFSP Form and Instructions Bridge Call** - Wednesday, January 22 from 12-1 p.m.

To join these bridge calls: For both calls dial toll-free 1-877-427-0627 and then when prompted, enter code 221335 followed by the "#" key.

A bridge call is being planned for the spring with John Neisworth and Steve Bagnato to follow up on their session on assessment practices. Stay tuned to *Resources and Connections* for more information.

Videoconferences

Two video teleconferences are being planned for February and March that will be broadcast to several locations across the state (e.g. Alamosa, Clifton, Colorado Springs, Cortez, Greeley, Montrose, Pueblo, Steamboat Springs, and Sterling).

- **Transdisciplinary Practices:** Thursday, February 13, 2003.
- **IFSP Development:** Date to be determined in early March.

Information will be forthcoming as soon as the dates and locations are finalized. Remember that you can always check for the latest information by visiting the Early Childhood Activities Calendar at:

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

Home Page for Follow-up to the Institute

We have created a section of the ECC web site to highlight follow up follow-up information for the 11th Annual Early Childhood Institute. Visit this site to link to some of the presenter's web sites and download additional handouts from the Institute, including Robin McWilliam's PowerPoint presentation on "The Primary-Service-Provider Model for Providing Services in Natural Environments". Please visit: <http://eccevents.spindustry.com/asp/EventsPlus/events.asp?e=9>

Upcoming Events

2003 Conference on School Reform and Inclusive Education

January 16-18, 2003, Adams Mark Hotel, Denver, CO

This national conference features nationally and internationally known speakers discussing effective strategies for enabling all students to be successful learners. For more information, contact: PEAK Parent Center, Inc. at 1-719-531-9400 or visit: www.peakparent.org

Supporting Relationships of Families & Their Fragile Infants in the Home

Between January and May, JFK Partners will be providing a one day training program that focuses on early infant development (previously called the FIRST training). The training will be offered in the following communities: North Denver metro, South Denver metro, Grand Junction, Steamboat Springs, Pueblo, Durango. We are working on finalizing the dates for each site and will get that information out as soon as we have it.

Early Childhood Activities Calendar

Remember to periodically check out this useful source of information on training opportunities and other events: 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.

*Please pass along copies of
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to your colleagues and friends!*

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