
Resources and Connections

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



March, 2003 • Volume 2, Number 1

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: *Family-Centered Practices*

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Family-Centered Principles

Family-centered services are based upon a number of principles that have evolved during the past 20 years. The following principles* guide how early intervention services are conceptualized, planned, and implemented.

- Recognize that families are the constant in the lives of their young children.
- Provide opportunities for families to make good decisions (give families the resources and information that they need to make decisions on their own).
- Include families as full partners in each step of the IFSP process (e.g. assessment, planning, implementation, and review) and transition from early intervention supports.
- Structure the IFSP so that families determine the priorities for their young children.
- Provide services that enhance families' capacity to support their child's development.

- Share unbiased and complete information with parents about their child's care and development on an ongoing basis in an appropriate and supportive manner.
- Respect families' cultural and linguistic diversity and styles of interaction, communication, and learning.
- Base support and intervention on a sound understanding of how young children develop and how families systems function.
- Encourage and facilitate family-to-family contact and support.
- Remain flexible, accessible, and responsive to the unique needs of a family.
- Recognize that families have a wide range of strengths, concerns, emotions, and aspirations beyond the health, educational, and developmental needs of their children with disabilities.
- Acknowledge that because no one agency can provide all of the information, knowledge, and services needed to support young children with disabilities and their families, practitioners need to be dedicated to collaborating and consulting across programs.

* Adapted from Family-Centered Care for Children Needing Specialized Health and Developmental Services (Bethesda: Association for the Care of Children's Health (ACCH), 1994) and Guidelines and Recommended Practices for the Individual Family Services Plan, 2nd ed. (Bethesda: ACCH, 1991).

A Parents Perspective on Family Centered Practices

Pam Christy is a parent co-chair of the Colorado Interagency Coordinating Council and her passions include early childhood issues and parent leadership. Pam resides in Elizabeth with her husband Kevin. They are the proud parents of two children, Kyle, seven years old and Katie who is five. We asked Pam to share her perspective on what family-centered practice means to her. Pam shares the following reflections with us.

Katie is a happy and very independent little girl. Katie has cerebral palsy. When Katie was really little, I knew that I wanted her to participate fully in community life. But, I didn't know how to do things as simple as putting her in a car seat without hurting her. We were fortunate to have come in contact with therapists who gave us great ideas about how to do the "little things" that at the time weren't so little to us. This gave me the confidence and the skills to figure out how to include her. And we haven't stopped since. They helped us to do things as a whole family, and for Katie to do what every 2 and 3 year old does.

The therapists who helped us the most were the ones who asked and really listened to what we wanted Katie to be able to do. Then they helped us to accomplish that. But not all of the therapists did this at first. Some therapists, at first, came in with their own ideas of what they thought Katie needed or should be doing at the time. These therapists meant well, but they weren't really helping. Stacking blocks wasn't what Katie or the rest of us really needed. However, when I would point out to them that I wanted more "real-life" lessons for Katie, such as eating by herself and getting dressed all by herself, they were able to change what they did. They started coming at the times when we would be doing things such as mealtimes and bath times and giving us ideas for how Katie could participate in these routines. This is when we really started to see progress. For example, I wanted Katie to participate in our family time at the local park. She had only been sitting in her stroller and I didn't know how to help her play on the playground equipment. I asked her PT to meet us at the park and help us learn how Katie could be more included in our family activity. Her information on positioning gave us the confidence to continue to do this ourselves and she didn't need to come again.

I think it's important that parents realize how important it is to tell their child's therapist what they want for their child instead of thinking that it is the therapist's job to tell you what you need. Therapists have a lot of knowledge to offer, but parents know their child the best and know what their family needs. And I found that when I did suggest to the therapist what we needed to work on she did respond and was very helpful.

So what do family-centered services mean to me? It means that services should be delivered in ways that enhance my family's ability to support our child's development and make good decisions. It means that providers recognize that families have a wide range of strengths, concerns, emotions and aspirations about their children with disabilities. It means that parents need to talk to their providers about what is best for their child and their family. And it means that providers need to be flexible and responsive to family needs.

Research Brief

Coaching Families and Colleagues: A Process for Collaboration in Natural Settings. (2003).
Rush, D., Sheldon, M., Hanft, B. *Infants & Young Children*, 16, 1, 33-47.



Coaching in early childhood is an interactive process of observation and reflection in which the coach promotes a parent's or other care provider's ability to support a child's participation in everyday experiences and interactions with family members and peers across settings. Coaching is a reciprocal process between a coach and key people in a child's life. By focusing on collaborative relationships, coaching provides a supportive structure for promoting conversations between family members, childcare providers, and early interventionists to select and implement meaningful strategies to achieve functional outcomes that focus on the child's participation in natural settings. Conversations promote self-discovery and result in competence and mastery of desired skills for the child and key people. Coaching has been shown to help interventionists provide effective services by: sustaining their efforts to use new skills or integrate new knowledge; reducing isolation and facilitating exchange of ideas, methods, experiences, and resources; promoting development of trust and collegial family-provider relationships; and encouraging providers and families to engage in continual learning. Coaching creates opportunities to empower others to solve their own problems, take responsibility for their own learning and discover how to provide early intervention services that are family-centered, evidence-based, learner focused and implemented by means of a primary provider service delivery model.

The article provides guidelines on coaching for early childhood professionals serving young children with disabilities and their families and includes examples that illustrate the five phases of the coaching process. Coaching is a learned process that consists of a specialized set of skills. The phases aid in understanding the coaching process, but should not be viewed as a linear process, but rather as part of the learner's self-discovery and development.

Initiation: The coach and learner jointly develop a plan that includes the purpose and specific learner outcomes of the coaching process, clarify the necessary ground rules, and resolve any barriers that impede the coaching process.

Observation: The coach observes the learner engage in an existing challenging situation, or the learner observes the coach model a new strategy, or the learner observes self along with the coach in preparation for reflecting on potential behavior that can promote learning, or coach and learner observe aspects of the environment.

Action: The learner practices a new strategy or skill and prepares to discuss the experience with coach in a future conversation.

Reflection: The coach explores what the learner already knows, is doing, and thinks about a situation. Through questioning and reflective listening the coach supports the learner in discovering strategies for solving a problem. It is the reflective aspect of coaching that differentiates it from problem solving and information sharing relationships.

Evaluation: This provides an opportunity for both coach and learner to review the process, determine effectiveness of the reaching the intended outcomes, and make any changes for a next coaching relationship.

Continuation or resolution: The coach and learner decide whether additional coaching conversations are needed and confirm whether or not objectives were successfully met.

Editorial comment: The "how to's" in this article will be useful to providers and families who choose to explore coaching as a way to develop collaborative relationships, and support a primary service delivery model. Support from administrators for developing this model, along with providers and family members willingness to invest in the interpersonal relationships that support a coaching model are essential for succeeding. The investment holds great promise for providers and family members interested in pursuing changes in service delivery for young children.



Resources

On the Web

Institute for Family-Centered Care

www.familycenteredcare.org/index.html

This non-profit organization provides essential leadership to advance the understanding and practice of family-centered care. The Institute serves as a central resource for both family members and members of the health care field. This site shares information, facilitates problem solving and promotes dialogue among individuals and organizations working toward family-centered care.

PEAK Parent Center

www.peakparent.org

PEAK, Colorado's Parent Training and Information Center, is a statewide organization of parents of children with disabilities reaching out to assist other parents and professionals. Their is to ensure that children, youth, and adults, with disabilities lead rich, active lives and participate as full members of their schools and communities. Families and friends of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, and professionals in education, medical, and human service fields can contact PEAK for up-to-date information about disability, special education, parents' rights and information on inclusion resources, referrals, and education.

The Center for Family & Infant Interaction

www.uchsc.edu/sm/peds/cfii/

The purpose of the Center for Family and Infant Interaction is to promote the best outcomes and relationships between families and their infants, particularly those infants who have developmental challenges and/or special health care needs at birth. The Center addresses this goal through education, consultation, research, and support of professional/parent collaboration. Infants and their families throughout Colorado who begin their lives in intensive care nurseries benefit from this program.

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC)

www.nectac.org/

NECTAC supports the implementation of the early childhood provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Their mission is to strengthen service systems to ensure that children with disabilities (birth through five) and their families receive and benefit from high quality, culturally appropriate, and family-centered supports and services. The NECTAC web site is a vast repository of useful resources. Check out *Family Involvement and Partnerships* at www.nectac.org/topics/families/families.asp

Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE)

www.finenetwork.org

Developed by the Harvard Family Research Project, FINE develops the human resource capacity for effective family-school-community partnerships. FINE offers research, articles, newsletters, and other tools to help teachers partner with families and informs families and communities about approaches to full partnership with schools. Free membership allows access to the latest information on family involvement. FINE does not primarily focus on early childhood, but there are items of interest to the early childhood community.

The National Parent Information Network (NPIN)

www.npin.org/

NPIN is a project of the ERIC system. The mission of NPIN is to provide access to research-based information about the process of parenting and about family involvement in education. NPIN believes that well-informed families are likely to make good decisions about raising and educating their children.

The Fathers Network

www.fathersnetwork.org/554.html

The mission of the Fathers Network is to celebrate and support fathers and families raising children with special health care needs and developmental disabilities.

Resources

Print and Video

Learning & Growing Together with Families

Developed by ZERO TO THREE, this set of training resources is designed to help practitioners working with young children forge respectful, collaborative relationships with parents to promote healthy child development. *Learning & Growing Together with Families* builds directly on ZERO TO THREE's book for parents, *Learning & Growing Together: Understanding and Supporting Your Child's Development*, a book that encourages parents to take the time to understand themselves and to tune in to their child's individual needs and temperament, in order to become their own best resource in supporting their child's healthy development. In this resources for practitioners, these same concepts are applied to practitioners' work with children and families: that in order to build good relationships with children and their parents, it is important for practitioners to take the time to reflect on their work, to become aware of the influences which have shaped their own views, and to understand those with



whom they are working. These materials were created for the many practitioners working in direct service roles, including home visitors, Early Head Start staff, early intervention specialists, and caregivers in child care or family child care settings. The training package includes several tools that can be used both together and separately including: the video *Learning & Growing Together with Families: Seven Ways to Build Strong Relationships* that shows specific ways that practitioners can build strong, collaborative relationships with parents and families; a *Video Guide*, designed to help trainers use the video in staff development activities; and *Learning and Growing Together with Families: Partnering with Parents to Support Young Children's Development*, a training book to help practitioners take a deeper, more personal look at themselves in relation to their work, which will then help them forge strong, respectful, collaborative relationships with parents. In addition, other tools available from ZERO TO THREE are useful for practitioners working with parents. For more information visit: www.zerotothree.org/learninggrowing/ or call (800) 899-4301. But remember that ZERO TO THREE is a wealth of other information! Check out their Professional Resources page at: www.zerotothree.org/ztt_professionals.html

Take Note:

Self-Assessment of Transdisciplinary Practices On February 13, 2003 Early Childhood Connections and JFK Partners presented the video teleconference, *What's Old Is New Again: The Renaissance Of Transdisciplinary Practices*. The videoconference was presented live in Denver and linked to 8 sites throughout Colorado. Attendees were provided with a self-assessment tool that lists recommended transdisciplinary practices that serve as a set of benchmarks for self-assessing the extent that IFSP Implementation Teams are using the transdisciplinary practices reviewed during the teleconference. The document describes a process for using this tool to reflect on practices and plan quality improvement activities. This self-assessment tool is being attached with this edition of *Resources and Connections* for those who were not able to attend the conference.

Assistive Technology Training Program The Colorado Department of Education is planning to develop a training program on the use of assistive technology (AT) and adaptive strategies for infants and toddlers. Colorado Assistive Technology Partners staff will lead the training program. To help focus and plan the event, please send your ideas for what you would like to see presented and the questions that you would like to see answered to Susan Smith at smith_s@cde.state.co.us

Upcoming Events

Service Coordination Core Training

March 3, 4, 31, and April 1, 2003 at the Lakewood Cultural Center and July 8, 9, August 5, and 6, 2003 in the Denver metro area (exact location TBA). 9:00a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Service Coordination Core Training a free, intensive four-day course for anyone wanting to build their skills as a service coordinator and for those wanting to help others become highly effective service coordinators. It is intended for service coordinators, family members, community centered board personnel, public health personnel, home visitors, and child find personnel. For more information or to register, visit:
www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections -- Under "What's New" click on "Service Coordination Core Training."

Supporting Relationships of Families & Their Fragile Infants in the Home

March 24, 2003 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Steamboat Springs
April 18, 2003 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in S. metro Denver (location TBA)
May 19, 2003 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Durango
This FREE workshop is designed for Part C coordinators, Child Find staff, service coordinators, public health nurses, early interventionists, community therapists, parents, and childcare workers who follow infants and their families in the community. This introductory workshop covers background information and basic principles of neurodevelopmental care for high risk, premature or disorganized infants. A strong emphasis is placed on assisting parents in their supportive relationship with their infant. Certificates of Attendance (6.5 hours of training for re-licensing or documentation of participation) will be distributed at the conclusion of each workshop. For more information call 303-866-6848 or to register, visit: www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections -- Under "What's New" click on "Supporting Relationships for High-Risk Infants & Their Families Workshop."

MCH Planning Process: Using Data to Plan

March 11, 2003 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This event is a part of the JFK Partners Lecture Series. Held live at Children's Hospital and telecast across Colorado. For more information or to register, visit: www.jfkpartners.org/lectures.asp

Nutrition and Difficult Feeding

May 13, 2003 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This event is a part of the JFK Partners Lecture Series. Held live at Children's Hospital and telecast across Colorado. For more information or to register, visit: www.jfkpartners.org/lectures.asp

Autism Spectrum Disorders: The SCERTS Model

June 25 and 26, 2003 at The Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities, Arvada, Colorado
Presented by Barry M. Prizant, PhD., Director, Childhood Communication Services and Adjunct Professor, Center for the Study of Human Development, Brown University, this seminar is based on The SCERTS Model of assessment and intervention which focuses on Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support. The SCERTS model provides a framework and guide to directly address the core challenges experienced by children with ASD and other language and social-communicative difficulties and their families. This two day workshop will focus on practical, up-to-date information for supporting children with ASD and their families in educational settings and everyday activities, utilizing an approach that respects & integrates knowledge from a variety of disciplines. Costs: Early Registration (by May 1): Professional: \$250/Student: \$175/Parent: \$175. Regular Registration (after May 1): Professional: \$290/ Student: \$200/Parent: \$200 Registration: To save on fees, register early! Registration can be downloaded from www.colorado.edu/CDSS/index.html or you may request a form from Sheila Goetz at University of Colorado, 409 UCB, Dept. SLHS, Boulder, CO 80309, by email at sheila.goetz@colorado.edu, or by phone at (303) 492-3039.

Circle of Courage Conference – A Journey of Culture

April 11, 2003 from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm at the Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center. This conference is intended for family members from diverse backgrounds and professionals to explore the concept of culture, including what it means to provide quality care and supports to children with disabilities and their families. Parent/Provider teams are encouraged to attend. The cost is \$50.00. Limited scholarships available for parents of children with disabilities. Space is limited. To register call 1-719-531-9400 or visit www.peakparent.org

Early Childhood Intervention Awareness Day Luncheon

11:30 a.m. on May 1, 2003 at the Adam's Mark Hotel in downtown Denver. First Lady Frances Owens, the Colorado Association of Community Centered Boards (CACCB), and The Children's Hospital invite you to join them for this luncheon to promote the critical importance of these services to our state's children and their families. This special day increases awareness about the many resources available to Colorado's young children at risk of developmental delays or disabilities and their families. For more information, contact Sherri Cornelius at 303-832-1618 or email atcaccb@caccb.org

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. Please visit: eccevents.spindustry.com/asp/EventsPlus/events.asp?e=9

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

Subscription Information

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or contact your local Early Childhood Connections at 1-888-777-4041.

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 Resources and Connections to your colleagues and friends!

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