The Role of Families in their Child's Learning

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If you treat an individual as he is he will stay as he is, but if you treat him as he ought to be, and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.

Goethe
Definition of Expert

One who knows a lot about a subject

OR

One who has a powerpoint
Life in the 21st Century

- Change is the Constant
- Technology
- Instant Gratification
- Viral Communication
- Personalized Learning
Early Childhood Challenges

Changing characteristics of families
Changing characteristics of children
Changing characteristics of communities
Changing models of early childhood programs
Changing roles for early childhood professionals
Family

We all come from families. Families are big, small, extended, nuclear, multi-generational, with one parent, two parents, and grandparents. We live under one roof or many. A family can be as temporary as a few weeks, as permanent as forever. We become part of a family by birth, adoption, marriage, or from a desire for mutual support. As family members, we nurture, protect, and influence one another. Families are dynamic and are cultures unto themselves, with different values and unique ways of realizing dreams. Together, our families become the source of our rich cultural heritage and spiritual diversity. Each family has strengths and qualities that flow from individual members and from the family as a unit. Our families create neighborhoods, communities, states, and nations.

Developed and adopted by New Mexico’s House Memorial 5 Task Force on Children and Families and the Coalition for Children. 1990.
What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must be what the community wants for all its children

John Dewey
Family Centered Care

recognizes and respects the pivotal role of the family in the lives of children. It supports families in their natural caregiving roles, promotes normal patterns of living, and ensures family collaboration and choice in the provision of services to the child.
Early Childhood Intervention

Research

Policy

Families

Practice
Policy
Legislation in Early Intervention


1968 Handicapped Children’s Early Education Program: Funded model preschool programs.

1972 Economic Opportunity Act; Required at least 10% of children with disabilities in Head Start.


1986 PL 99-457-Amendments to EHA: FAPE for eligible preschool children; State plan grants for birth to 3 systems.
IDEA-PART C; Sec. 631 FINDINGS AND POLICY

Findings.--Congress finds that there is an urgent and substantial need--

to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, to minimize their potential for developmental delay, and to recognize the significant brain development that occurs during a child's first 3 years of life;

(2) to reduce the educational costs to our society, including our Nation's schools, by minimizing the need for special education and related services after infants and toddlers with disabilities reach school age;

(3) to maximize the potential for individuals with disabilities to live independently in society;

(4) to enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities; and

(5) to enhance the capacity of State and local agencies and service providers to identify, evaluate, and meet the needs of all children, particularly minority, low-income, inner city, and rural children, and infants and toddlers in foster care.
Early Intervention Services may include …

• Family training, counseling and home visits
• Special instruction
• Speech-language pathology and audiology services, and sign language and cued language services
• Occupational therapy
• Physical therapy
• Psychological services
• Service coordination services
• Medical services only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
• Early identification, screening, and assessment services
• Health services necessary to enable the child to benefit from other early intervention services
• Social work services
• Vision services
• Assistive technology devices and assistive technology services
• Transportation and related costs that are necessary to receive services
Qualified Personnel who provide early intervention services include …

• Special educators
• Speech-language pathologists and audiologists
• Occupational therapists
• Physical therapists
• Psychologists
• Social workers
• Nurses
• Registered dietitians
• Family therapists
• Vision specialists, including ophthalmologists and optometrists
• Orientation and mobility specialists
• Pediatricians and other physicians
Research
Definition of Evidenced Based Practice

Practices that are informed by research, in which the characteristics and consequences of environmental variables are empirically established and the relationship directly informs what a practitioner can do to produce a desired outcome.
Evidenced Based Practice

• Evidence is not value-free.

• There are no universal solutions or quick fixes.

• Evidence is often incomplete or equivocal.

• Evidence can be quite complex.
Teaching and Learning in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century: The Science of Learning
Science of Learning

The brain is adaptable and can be influenced by positive experiences....

The brain is vulnerable and can be harmed by negative experiences....
Evidence-Informed Early Childhood Intervention

- 50+ years of research has identified many of the intrafamily and extrafamily factors that account for variations in child, parent, and family behavior and development
- Different bodies of research now provide the foundations for a particular set of early childhood intervention practices that matter most for optimizing child, parent, and family outcomes
- The research and associated practices, taken together, are framed in an ecological model with intervention practices at different levels of systems influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

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Relationships Between Social Supports, Resources, Parent Well-Being and Parenting

“Whether parents can perform effectively in their child-rearing roles within the family depends on the role demands, stresses, and supports emanating from other settings....Parent’ evaluation of their own capacity to function, as well as their view of their children, are related to such external factors as flexibility of job schedules, adequacy of child care arrangements, the presence of friends and neighbors who can help out in large and small emergencies, the quality of health and social services, and neighborhood safety. The availability of supportive settings is, in turn, a function of their existence and frequency in a given culture or subculture.” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 7).

Relationship Between Supports, Resources, and Early Childhood Intervention

“Intervention programs that place major emphasis on involving parents directly in activities fostering their children’s development are likely to have constructive impact at any age, but the earlier such activities are begun, and the longer they are continued, the greater the benefit to the children. One major problem still remains...[Many] families live under such oppressive circumstances that they are neither willing nor able to participate in the activities required by a parent intervention program. Inadequate health care, poor housing, lack of education, low income, and the necessity for full-time work...rob parents of the [psychological] energy to spend time with their children (p. 449).”

Relationship Between Social Supports, Family Resources, and Parent Physical and Psychological Well-Being

- Parents are more likely to provide their children development-enhancing learning opportunities and interact with their children in responsive ways if their well-being is not compromised.

- Research on the relationship between social support and parent and family well-being shows that well-being is enhanced and stress, anxiety, and other psychological disorders are lessened by the variability of needed supports and resources.

- Results from a meta-analytic structural equation modeling study (Trivette et al., 2010) found that pathways of influence can be traced from social supports to parent well-being to positive parent-child interactions to changes in child development.

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Adult-Child Interactions as the Context for Strengthening Child Functioning

Linda Richter (2004), as part of a review of research and practice on caregiver-child interactions in many different countries and cultures throughout the world, concluded (among other things) that:

- “Sensitive and responsive caregiving is a requirement for healthy child development” (emphasis added).

- “Nurturing and supportive caregiving relationships have universal features across cultures, regardless of differences in specific child rearing practices” (emphasis added).

Social Support

Intrafamily Factors

Well-Being

Parenting Styles

Child Behavior and Development
Capacity-Building Help Giving Practices

- Relational help giving practices include early childhood practitioner knowledge and skills in their area(s) of professional preparation, their abilities to establish interpersonal and collaborative relationships with families, and their abilities to support and strengthen family capacity.

- Capacity-building help giving practices focus on actively involving parents and other family members in informed decision-making and procurement of supports and resources, or engagement in desired activity, based on their choices.
Family-Centered Participatory Help Giving Practices

Family-centered participatory help giving practices include (a) the methods and procedures used by early childhood practitioners to (b) actively engage family members in obtaining needed supports and resources or engaging in different activities that (c) improve family functioning in ways that (d) enhance and strengthen parent, family, and child competence and confidence.
Family-Centered Capacity-Building Help Giving Practices

- Research conducted by investigators in different countries indicates that family-centered help giving is comprised of both relational (relationship-building) and participatory (capacity-building) practices that are related to family strengthening benefits and outcomes.

- Recent research “points to” particular characteristics of participatory help giving as necessary if practitioner interventions are necessary to have capacity-building consequences.
Influences of Family Capacity-Building Practices on Parenting and Child Outcomes

- 17 studies including 10,000+ infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with identified disabilities or delays and their parents

- Secondary analyses of a subset of measures were conducted for testing the relationships among the variables in our family capacity-building model

- The measures included family capacity-building practices (participatory help giving), frequency of parent-practitioner contacts, parenting self-efficacy beliefs, parent responsiveness to child behavior during parent-child interactions, and child development (cognitive and language development)

- Meta-analytic structural equation modeling was used to analyze the relationships among the study variables
Role of Children’s Interests in Everyday Learning

- One child characteristic that has consistently emerged from research and practice as a person factor influencing everyday learning is a child’s personal interests (preferences, choices, desires, likes, etc.)

- One activity setting characteristic that has consistently emerged as setting factor influencing children’s everyday learning is the situationally-interesting features of everyday activity settings

- Incorporating either personal or situational interests into everyday child learning has been found to be associated with optimal child benefits

Contrasting Approaches to Everyday Child Learning

Comparisons of two different approaches to young children’s natural environment interventions found that using everyday activities as sources of child learning opportunities resulted in 3 to 4 more learning opportunities per activity setting compared to implementing early intervention in everyday activities (Dunst et al., 2005).

Practice
Family Centered Helpgiving

Provide families with choices, and opportunities to act on their choices, to increase the self-efficacy benefits of practitioner helpgiving.
Help Giving

Relational Help Giving:

(a) behavior typically associated with effective clinical practice including, but not limited to, compassion, active and reflective listening, empathy, and effective communication

(b) practitioner beliefs and attitudes about family and cultural strengths and values

(c) practitioner sensitivity to these beliefs and values as part of intervention practices

Participatory Help Giving:

(a) behavior that engages family members in informed choice and decision making

(b) family members using existing strengths and abilities as well as developing new capabilities needed to be actively involved in different types of child and family interventions

(c) practitioner responsiveness to and flexibility in how help is provided to children and their families
DEC Recommended Practices - Family

1. Practitioners build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity.

2. Practitioners provide the family with up-to-date, comprehensive and unbiased information in a way that the family can understand and use to make informed choices and decisions.

3. Practitioners are responsive to the family’s concerns, priorities, and changing life circumstances.

4. Practitioners and the family work together to create outcomes or goals, develop individualized plans, and implement practices that address the family’s priorities and concerns and the child’s strengths and needs.

5. Practitioners support family functioning, promote family confidence and competence, and strengthen family-child relationships by acting in ways that recognize and build on family strengths and capacities.
6. Practitioners engage the family in opportunities that support and strengthen parenting knowledge and skills and parenting competence and confidence in ways that are flexible, individualized, and tailored to the family’s preferences.

7. Practitioners work with the family to identify, access, and use formal and informal resources and supports to achieve family-identified outcomes or goals.

8. Practitioners provide the family of a young child who has or is at risk for developmental delay/disability, and who is a dual language learner, with information about the benefits of learning in multiple languages for the child’s growth and development.

9. Practitioners help families know and understand their rights.

10. Practitioners inform families about leadership and advocacy skill-building opportunities and encourage those who are interested to participate.
Family-Centered Practices

Child Learning Opportunities

Parenting Styles and Instructional Practices

Learning and Development

Parenting Supports

Family/Community Activity Settings

Participatory Opportunities

Family/Community Supports and Resources
Practices That Matter Most

- Child strengths and interests as the building blocks for child learning and development
- Everyday activity settings as the context for child functional learning and development
- Parent (adult)-child interactions as the context for promoting and strengthening child and parent competence and confidence
- Parenting supports that provide parents the time, energy, and opportunities to carry-out parenting roles and responsibilities
- Family systems practices that promote and strengthen parents’ abilities to obtain needed child, parent, and family supports and resources
- Family-centered participatory practices used by early childhood practitioners to support and strengthen parent and family functioning in ways having capacity-building consequences
Learning Paradigm

- Interests
- Mastery
- Learning Opportunities
- Engagement
- Competence
Family Characteristics

Personal characteristics of parents. Characteristics not related to child’s disability or biological risk status (e.g., social support, marital relationship, financial resources).

Family Patterns

Quality of parent-child transactions. Family orchestrated child experiences. Health and safety provided by family. Attitudes and beliefs of families.

Child Development Outcomes

(Guralnick, 1998)
## Examples of Factors Influencing Child Learning and Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microsystem Influences</th>
<th>Development-Enhancing Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Characteristics</td>
<td>Child temperament, <em>child personal interests</em>, <em>child strengths</em>, severity of child delay, type of child disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Setting Characteristics</td>
<td>Geography (activity locations), <em>types of everyday activities</em>, <em>situationally interesting activities</em>, material availability, activity setting features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver Characteristics</td>
<td>Cultural beliefs and values, parenting beliefs and attitudes, <em>caregiver interactional styles</em>, acculturation and enculturation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model for Viewing Different Ecological Settings as Sources of Learning Experiences and Opportunities

- Larger Society
- Early Intervention/ SE Programs
- Community
- Family
- Child
- Home Routines
- Community Activities
- Program Practices
- Cultural Beliefs/Values
Everyday Activity Settings as Sources of Child Learning and Development

• Activity settings are made up of everyday experiences rather than a deliberate curriculum [that contain] ordinary settings in which children’s social [and nonsocial] interaction and behavior occur. They are the who, what, where, when, and why of daily life (Farver, 1999, p. 102).

• The different terms used to describe everyday activities include routines, rituals, daily occupations, activities of daily living, natural environments, and activity settings. Activity settings or everyday activities are the preferred terms for describing contextually based everyday child learning because they encompass routines, rituals, celebrations, natural environments, and other settings, places, and locations where child learning occurs.

Activity Setting

Everyday family and community experiences, events, and situations providing children learning opportunities that have development-enhancing (or development-impeding) qualities and consequences.
## Family (Home) and Community Learning Environments and Children’s Learning Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Settings (Examples)</th>
<th>Community Settings (Examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Routines</strong> (Cooking, food shopping, animal care)</td>
<td><strong>Family Routines</strong> (Running errands, car or bus rides, weekend chores)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting Routines</strong> (Child’s bedtime and bath time)</td>
<td><strong>Family Outings</strong> (Shopping, eating out, visiting friends)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Routines</strong> (Brushing teeth, dressing, eating)</td>
<td><strong>Play Activities</strong> (Outdoor playgrounds indoor playlands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy Activities</strong> (Looking at books, listening to stories, reading)</td>
<td><strong>Community Activities</strong> (Libraries, fairs, festivals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play Activities</strong> (Drawing, lap games, playing with toys)</td>
<td><strong>Physical Activities</strong> (Horseback riding, swimming, sledding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Play</strong> (Roughhousing, ball games, swimming)</td>
<td><strong>Children’s Attractions</strong> (Petting zoos, nature centers, pet stores)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entertainment Activities</strong> (Dancing, singing watching TV)</td>
<td><strong>Art/Entertainment Activities</strong> (Children’s theater, storytellers, music activities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Rituals</strong> (Family talks, spiritual readings, saying grace at meals)</td>
<td><strong>Church/Religious Activities</strong> (Sunday school, church services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Celebrations</strong> (Holiday dinners, birthdays, decorating the house)</td>
<td><strong>Organizations and Groups</strong> (Karate, movement classes, parent/child groups)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Home Setting
  Kitchen
    Table
      Meals
      Games
    Sink
    Cabinets
      Dinner
      Talk
Community Setting

Playground

Slide
Steps
Platform

Swing

Teeter-Totter
Sliding Trough
Relationship Between Locations, Activity Settings, Learning Opportunities, and Behavior and Development

Locations

↓

Activity Settings

↓

Learning Opportunities

↓

Behavior and Development
Table 15
Examples of the Home/Family Locations, Activity Settings, and Learning Opportunities for a 35 Month Old Child with Autism Participating in a Part C Early Intervention Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>Music Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>Outdoors/Yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daycare</td>
<td>Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>Playroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Room</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Settings</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Play</td>
<td>Holiday Celebrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Activities</td>
<td>Meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking</td>
<td>Music Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bath Time</td>
<td>Shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedtime</td>
<td>Social Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthday Parties</td>
<td>Solitary Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Rides</td>
<td>Toileting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>TV/Videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressing</td>
<td>Yard Work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Opportunities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being Dressed</td>
<td>Playing Circle Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brushing Teeth</td>
<td>Playing Turn-Taking Games with Mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloring/Drawing</td>
<td>Playing with Doll House/ Other Toys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing with Scarves</td>
<td>Playing with Golf Set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating Meals/Snacks/Holiday Dinners</td>
<td>Potty Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Ready for Bed</td>
<td>Praying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Bedtime Stories</td>
<td>Reading/Looking at Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Mass</td>
<td>Riding Up and Down Escalator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitting a Piñata</td>
<td>Roughhousing/Tumbling with Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping on a Trampoline</td>
<td>Running Errands with Mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to Mom Play a Xylophone</td>
<td>Running/Playing with Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at Self in a Mirror</td>
<td>Singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking Out the Car Window</td>
<td>Sliding on a Slide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picking up Toys</td>
<td>Taking a Bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Chase with Mom</td>
<td>Watching/Imitating Music Videos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of the Community Locations, Activity Settings, and Learning Opportunities From Three Cultures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hawaiian 25 Months Old</th>
<th>Native American 16 Months Old</th>
<th>African American 17 Months Old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Locations**
- Beach
- Car
- Church
- Mall
- Neighborhood
- Outdoor playground
- Relatives’ homes
- Restaurants
- Relatives’ homes
- Pueblo village
- Jewelry shows
- Woods
- Lake
- Park
- Shopping stores
- School playground
- Family’s church
- Day Care at church
- Friend’s church
- Church friends’ homes
- Relatives’ homes
- WIC office
- Mall
- Movie theater

**Activity Settings**
- Car rides
- Church socials
- Family gatherings
- Halloween carnival
- Music activities
- Ocean
- Sand
- Swings
- Car rides
- Village dance area
- Slide
- Feast areas
- Visiting relatives
- Walks
- Pow Wow
- River
- Day Care
- Bake sales
- Family gatherings
- Easter egg hunt
- African American Street Festival
- Sanctuary
- Sunday School classrooms
- Visiting friends

**Learning Opportunities**
- Being buried in the sand
- Being carried by other children
- Being pulled around in a basket
- Floating in water
- Going window shopping with Mom
- Hearing Dad play ukulele
- Hearing Dad give a speech
- Hearing Mom count in Hawaiian
- Watching Hula dancing
- Putting feet in the water
- Going on “Neighborhood Police” walks
- Playing a game of chase
- Listening to music
- Watching fish in tidal pools
- Watching animals
- Singing Pow Wow songs
- Playing in the mud
- Listening to Grandfather tell stories
- Playing with cousins
- Watching tribal dances
- Hearing Grandfather speak Kevis
- Playing music with xylophone
- Touching rocks, ground
- Hearing Dad speak Zuni
- Playing in water
- Looking out car window
- Playing a game of chase
- Listening to Native American music
- Playing with toys
- Watching people at church
- Playing “peek-a-boo”
- Watching people in costumes
- Listening to people sing
- Playing with toys
- Pulling on clothes
- Watching movies
- Bouncing up and down
- Eating cookies
- Playing with spoon
- Listening to poems related to black history
- Clapping hands
- Listening to story tellers
- Sitting on Santa’s lap
NOTE. The locations, natural learning environments, and learning opportunities are only a small sampling of the make-up of a child's community life.
Community Activity Setting Recording Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interventionist: __________________</th>
<th>Date: __________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s Name: ___________________</td>
<td>Child’s Name: ____________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXISTING ACTIVITY SETTINGS</th>
<th>NEW ACTIVITY SETTINGS</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
# Learning Opportunities Recording Form

Parent’s Name: ______________________________

Child’s Name: ______________________________

Interventionist: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activity Setting</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Learning Opportunity</th>
<th>Why is it Important?</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
Activity Setting Analysis Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Setting</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>as is</th>
<th>w/adapted materials</th>
<th>w/adapted curr/goals</th>
<th>w/personal assistance</th>
<th>Specific Adaptations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>YES NO</td>
<td>YES NO</td>
<td>YES NO</td>
<td>YES NO</td>
<td>YES NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Change is not magic or inspiration.

It’s completing many undramatic, small steps successfully.

Danziel & Schoonover, 1988
A paradigm is a set of rules and regulations that:

• define boundaries

• tell us what to do to be successful within those boundaries
We see things not as they are
But
As we are
“The way we see the problem may be the problem”
The best way to predict the future is to create it.

Peter F. Drucker
Elements of Change

Where are we now?

Where do we want to be?

What do we need to do to get from here to there?
Families Are Forever

Life Goes On……..

After Early Childhood Intervention

AND Beyond……..