



ECIA (VC) Forum 2: September 13, 2004

Developing Outcomes in Early Childhood Intervention

Part 2: what strategies can address the agreed outcomes?

Reading Material 2:

Strategies

- supplementary reading.

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1) Sandall, S, McLean M.E, Smith, B.J (2000) DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education

This resource lists evidence based recommended practices in the areas of: assessment, child-focused interventions, family based practices and interdisciplinary models. For a description of this extensive project, refer to ECIA (VC) *Early Talk*, May 2004.

A number recommended practices are presented as checklists. These checklists are available free of charge, as wide distribution is encouraged. They are available on: www.dec-spied.org

Checklists include:

- a) parent checklist – an overview of recommended practices to assist parents understanding of what to expect from service providers.
- b) Self assessment checklist – for staff – practices relating to children,
- c) Administrator Essentials checklist – for policy makers and managers.

Parent Checklist – Sample Items

How do professionals work together with families to meet the needs of the children?

- teams of professionals and family members make decisions and work together.
- Professionals from various disciplines teach skills to each other so that when they are working with children they can work on all of the child's goals.
- Services are based on the child's needs, involve the child's regular caregivers, and focus on the child's regular routines.
- Services are provided in ways that eliminate stress, are flexible and individualised for each child and family, and promote the well being of families.
- Services are sensitive and responsive to the cultural, racial and language preferences and backgrounds of families.

Other parent checklist items consider

- How does the program determine the strengths and needs of the child and family;
- What are the teachers and other adults doing?
- What are the policies of the program, and how are they communicated to families?

Staff Self Assessment for Child-Focused Interventions

– Sample Items

Adults design environments to promote children’s safety, active engagement, learning, participation, and membership.

Adults individualise and adapt practices for each child based on ongoing data to meet children’s changing needs.

- Practices and goals for each child are based on (a) the child’s current behaviour and abilities across the relevant domains; (b) the family’s view of what the child needs to learn; (c) specialist’s views; (d) the demands, expectations and requirements of the child’s current environments.
- Practices target meaningful outcomes for the child that build on the child’s current skills and behaviours and promote membership with others.
- Recommended practices are used to promote whatever skills are necessary for children to function more completely, competently, adaptively, and independently in the child’s natural environments.

Adults use systematic procedures within and across environments, activities, and routines to promote children’s learning and participation.

Administrator Checklist – Sample Items

Administrators, other professionals, and families shape policy at the national, state, and local levels that promote the use of recommended practices in early intervention.

Administrators ensure that they and their staff have the knowledge, training and credentials necessary to implement the DEC recommended practices in early intervention.

Program policies promote families as partners in the planning and delivery of services, supports, and resources.

Program policies promote inter-agency and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Program policies, administration and leadership promote program evaluation and systems change efforts at the community level.

2) SERVICE PLANNING

From R.A McWilliam:

- a) presentation at the National ECIA conference, Melbourne, 2004 and
 - b) It's Only Natural... to have early intervention in the environments where it's needed. *Young Exceptional Children*, Monograph series No2, pages17-26.
- Professionals will work in the home and the community. Sessions at home are not 'home-school or isolated therapy sessions'. Instead home visits are to ensure the family has the support and strategies needed to meet their priorities until the next consultation. In this way intervention occurs 'between visits'.
 - At intake, professionals seek to understand the family's ecology and natural resources - more than focusing on medical information, test results, or providing information about the program.
 - Professionals will support families to make decisions about services. Services are planned after goals are decided rather than before. A team and partnership approach is used in planning both the service and intensity of service.
 - ECI professionals will work primarily with the regular caregivers – using daily interactions with the child during regular routines are more important for child progress than are professional sessions with the child.
 - Professionals will consult each other and co-ordinate their services.
 - Professionals will provide support at emotional, informational and material levels – not just instructional support to the child.
 - Professionals are able to explain how sometimes 'less is more'. Rather than every need requiring a formal service and more sessions meaning more effective service, professionals will work to empower regular caregivers to encourage development. The stimulation children and parents require to make gains will not come from instructional or therapy sessions alone, but rather comes from daily interactions with caregivers.

3) USING FAMILY ROUTINES.

From: Dunst, C.J., Hamby, D., Trivette, C. M., Raab, M., Bruder (2000) Everyday Family and Community Life and Children's Naturally Occurring Learning Opportunities. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 23 (3), 151-164.

3300 parents and caregivers of preschool age children with or at-risk for developmental delay were surveyed about naturally occurring learning opportunities in the family and in the community. Routines to consider for natural and incidental learning are listed. 22 different categories in home and community life provide a framework for recognising and identifying sources of learning opportunities to provide children and families with a rich array of experiences.

Home and Family Activities:

- Family Routines – household chores, cooking & preparing meals, caring for pets, food shopping.
- Parenting Routines – bath time, bed time & nap time,
- Child Routines – brushing teeth, washing, picking up toys, toileting, dressing
- Literacy Activities – looking at books, telling the child stories, talking walks, bedtime stories, people coming and going, cuddles.
- Physical Play – Riding bikes, ball games, water play and swimming, tumbling.
- Play – creative, imaginative play, board games, video games
- Entertainment – dancing, singing, listening to music, watching TV/videos, playing alone.
- Family Rituals – talks, saying grace, other spiritual activities, holidays, house decorations, birthday dinners.
- Social Activities – family gatherings, picnics, having friends over, visiting neighbours, sleep overs
- Gardening – mowing the lawn, planting plants, vegetable gardens.

Community Activities

- Family Excursions – family activities, weekend activities, car rides, bus rides, errands.
- Family Outings – eating out, shopping, visiting friends
- Play Activities – indoor and outdoor playgrounds, play group, arcade games, parent and child classes.
- Community Activities – community celebrations, children’s festivals, fairs, parades.
- Outdoor Activities – hiking, nature walks, boating, camping, community gardens.
- Recreational Activities – fishing, community centres, swimming, horse riding.
- Children’s Attractions – animal farms, petting zoos, parks, reserves, zoos, pet stores, nature centres.
- Art & Entertainment – children’s museums, science centres, music concerts, children’s theatre, library, storytellers, music activities.
- Church – religious activities, going to church, Sunday school.
- Organisations – children’s clubs, gymnastics, scouts, sports.

4) COMMUNITY LEARNING ACTIVITIES.

From: Dunst, C.J., Herter, S.H & Shields, H. (2000) Interest-Based Natural Learning Opportunities in *Young Exceptional Children*, Monograph Series No2, 37 – 48

This study considered participation in community based activities as sources of natural learning opportunities. Results considered characteristics of activities that encouraged participation and the benefits gained. Results included child observations, case studies and surveys of parents and community members.

Community learning considered a) children's interests in people, objects and events that lead to b) engagement – interest based playing, exploring and participation. This engagement allows the practice of existing capabilities and learning of new skills, which is shaped by the response of others in the community. Engagement can lead to c) competence and d) mastery.

Interest based assessment can consider a) children's favourites and preferences, b) emotional indicators focusing on children's feelings, c) children's social situation and relationships, c) indicators that focus on children's choices and self determination and d) physical factors. An interest assessment results in a profile of the child's abilities, strengths, assets and preferences.

Community based learning opportunities allow the expression of the children's interests in inclusive and natural learning environments. Take each interest and list possible learning opportunities in the child's immediate and extended community. Choose the activities, both formal and informal that best match the child's interests and strengths.

5) ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY WITH WEBSITE RESOURCES

From: Pretti-Frontczak, K.L., Barr, D.M., Macy, M & Carter, A (2003). Research and resources related to activity-based intervention, embedded learning opportunities, and routines-based instruction: an annotated bibliography. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 23(1) p29-40.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Dunst, C. J., Bruder, M. B., Trivette, C. M., Hamby, D., Raab, M., & McLean, M. (2001). Characteristics and consequences of everyday natural learning opportunities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 21, 68-92.

The authors examined the "everyday natural learning opportunities" offered to children and how those experiences shape behaviours. Sixty-three children with disabilities/ delays participated, along with the parents/caregivers. The study lasted between 19 and 26 weeks, and it included a preintervention interview to identify activity settings (e.g., where children spend their time) and the participants in those activities. The intervention involved the following: the researchers visited every other week (eight total visits), the researchers built an activity schedule to amplify child engagement, the parents/caregivers monitored activity settings (i.e., they completed self-reports in logs about frequency of participation), and the parents were taught how to respond to their child's initiations (e.g., responsive teaching) within the activity settings. The findings suggested that child functioning was enhanced when children were given frequent and various opportunities to participate in activity settings.

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

Dunst, C. J. (2000). Revisiting "rethinking early intervention." *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 20, 95-104.

The authors suggest that service delivery efforts be based on promotional, strengths-based, resource-based, and empowerment models. Early intervention services should include creating/identifying learning opportunities and providing parenting and family/community supports. Under this paradigm, everyday experiences and intentionally planned activities serve as a source of natural opportunities for children.

Grisham-Brown, J. L. (2000). Transdisciplinary activity-based assessment for young children with multiple disabilities. *Young Exceptional Children*, 3(2), 3-10.

Assessment should provide information that informs program planning for young children with disabilities. In a case format, this article provides the steps to complete a transdisciplinary activity-based assessment. The author stresses the importance of conducting assessments in the child's classroom or home during everyday activities. Examples of how to involve families and gather information throughout daily activities are provided, and a sample assessment protocol and a team meeting grid are also included.

BOOKS & CHAPTERS

Bricker, D. D., Pretti-Frontczak, K. L., & McComas, N. R. (1998). *An activity-based approach to early intervention* (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Brookes.

McWilliam, R. A. (Ed.). (1996). *Rethinking pull-out services in early intervention: A professional resource*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Sandall, S. R., & Schwartz, I. S. (2002). Embedded learning opportunities. In S. R. Sandall & I. S. Schwartz, *Building blocks for teaching preschoolers with special needs* (pp. 129-140). Baltimore: Brookes.

Wolery, M. (1994). Implementing instruction for young children with special needs in early childhood classrooms. In M. Wolery & J. S. Wilbers (Eds.), *Including children with special needs in early childhood programs* (pp. 151-166). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Wolery, M. (2000). Recommended practices in child-focused interventions. In S. Sandall, M. McLean, & B. Smith (Eds.), *DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education* (pp. 29-37). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

WEB SITES

Web address: <http://www.circleofinclusion.org/>

Web address: <http://www.parsons.lsi.ukans.edu/facets/>

FACETS provides information on how family-guided activity-based services can be created and implemented. The site focuses on how to involve families in the intervention process and on effective collaboration. It contains information about the project and staff, family stories, additional links, and five training modules.

Web address: <http://tactics.fsu.edu/>

TACTICS examines procedures for implementing a family-guided, routine-based intervention within natural environments. The site contains four training modules: Routines-based assessment in natural environments, linking assessment to intervention through team planning, using daily routines as a context for intervention, and involving care providers in teaching/learning.

Online Items:

Forney, P. (n.d.). Providing early intervention services in natural environments: Concerns and tips. Retrieved December 12, 2002, from <http://education.gsu.edu/georgiadeafblindproj/Article-EI.htm>

Fourteen tips for providing services in the natural environment are discussed, along with the importance and nature of transdisciplinary teaming.

Hollingshead, L., Harris, K., & Stremel, K. (1998, March). Embedding intervention targets into caregiving routines and other activities of the families' choice. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 417575)

Training module on how to embed interventions regarding children's targeted goals and objectives during family routines. It includes forms that can be used to assess change, examples and illustrations of key concepts, sample implementation forms, and slides/transparencies containing summary information.

Wolery, M. (1998, July 30-31). Embedding prompting strategies in inclusive preschool classes. Paper presented at the Research to Practice Summit. Research summary retrieved December 12, 2002, from <http://www.nectac.org/topics/inclusion/meetings/rseembed.asp>

Reviews four areas of knowledge teachers must have to meet the needs of young children in inclusive settings (e.g., what to teach, how to teach). Briefly reviews the literature base regarding the four areas. Also describes key findings regarding response-prompting procedures (e.g., time delay, system of least prompts, simultaneous prompting, graduated guidance) that can be embedded into daily activities of inclusive classrooms.

Woods, J. C., Hanline, M. E., & Daley, S. E. (1997). Preparing practitioners for planning intervention for natural environments. In P. J. Winton, J. A. McCollum, & C. Catlett (Eds.), *Reforming personnel preparation in early intervention: Issues, models, and practical strategies*. [Electronic version]. Retrieved December 12, 2002, from http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~scpp/pdfs/Reforming/13-337_362.pdf

The chapter promotes the design and implementation of services for young children that are "child-initiated, family-guided, contingently responsive, functional, activity-based and play-based within natural settings."