



**ECIA (VC) Forum 2: September 13, 2004**

**Developing Outcomes in Early Childhood Intervention**

**Part 2: what strategies can address the agreed outcomes?**

**Reading Material 1:**

**Evidence based practice:**

**tenets, references and abstracts.**

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## **A UNIFIED THEORY OF PRACTICE IN EARLY INTERVENTION / EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION:**

### **FUNDAMENTAL TENETS AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES**

Adapted from Odom, S.L. and Wolery, M. (2003). A unified theory of practice in early intervention / early childhood special education: Evidence-based practices. *The Journal of Special Education*, 37 (3), 64-173.

#### ***Families and homes are primary nurturing contexts***

Except in cases where there is abuse or neglect or severe privation, families and homes are primary nurturing environments for infants and young children with disabilities. The operating assumption is that children with disabilities who live with their families and participate in community life (i.e., the natural environment) are more likely to be similar to their siblings and age-matched peers without disabilities than if they lived in a facility with only individuals who have disabilities.

- **Family-centred practices**

Thompson, L., Lobb, C., Elling, R., Herman, S., Jurkiewicz, T., & Hulleza, C. (1997). Pathways to family empowerment: Effects of family-centered delivery of early intervention services. *Exceptional Children*, *64*, 99-113.

- **Social support and resource-based models**

Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., & Deal, A. G. (1997). Resource-based approach to early intervention. In S. K. Thurman, J. R. Cornwell, & S. R. Gottwald (Eds.), *Contexts of early intervention: Systems and settings* (pp. 73-92). Baltimore: Brookes

- **Parent-implemented milieu teaching approaches**

Kaiser, A., Hancock, T. B., & Nietfeld, J. P. (2000). The effects of parent-implemented enhanced milieu teaching on the social communication of children who have autism. *Early Education and Development*, *11*, 423-446

- **Parent-education programs**

Mahoney, G., Kaiser, A., Girolametto, L., MacDonald, J., Robinson, C., Safford, P., et al. (1999). Parent education in early intervention: A call for a renewed focus. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *19*, 131-140.

### ***Strengthening relationships is an essential feature of EI/ECSE***

An essential goal of EI/ECSE is establishing positive relationships between the parents (or other caregivers) and their infants/young children; among children with disabilities and their peers; and among professionals working with infants, children, and families.

- **Relationship-based programs**

Rauh, V. A., Achenbach, T. M., Nurcombe, B., Howell, C. T., & Teti, D. M. (1988). Minimizing adverse effects of low birthweight: Four-year results of an early intervention program. *Child Development, 59*, 544-553.

- **Parent-infant interaction programs**

Girolametto, L., Verbey, M., & Tannock, R. (1994). Improving joint engagement in parent-child interaction: An intervention study. *Journal of Early Intervention, 18*, 155-167.

- **Peer-interaction programs**

Odom, S. L., McConnell, S. R., McEvoy, M. A., Peterson, C., Ostrosky, M., Chandler, L. K., et al. (1999). Relative effects of interventions supporting the social competence of young children with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 19*, 75-91.

- **Professional collaboration programs**

Lieber, J., Wolery, R. A., Horn, E., Tschantz, J., Beckman, P. J., & Hanson, M. J. (2001). Collaborative relationships among adults in inclusive preschool programs. In S. Odom (Ed.), *Widening the circle: Including children with disabilities in preschools* (pp. 81-97). New York: Teachers College.

### ***Children learn through acting on and observing their environment***

Many factors influence children's learning and development, including their genetic makeup, the status of their central nervous system, their health and physiological functioning, and the risk and opportunity variables in their families and communities. However, their immediate environments and experiences play a major role in shaping their learning and development. Children also play an active role in adapting to, learning about, mastering, controlling, and understanding their worlds. Thus, all their interactions with their social and physical environments represent opportunities for learning.

- **Contingently responsive environments**

Landry, S. H., Smith, K. E., Swank, P. R., Assel, M. A., & Vellet, S. (2001). Does early responsive parenting have a special importance for children's development or is consistency across early childhood necessary? *Developmental Psychology, 37*, 387-403.

- **Participation in natural learning opportunities**

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.

- **Participation in classrooms employing evidence-based practices**

Schwartz, I. S., Carta, J. J., & Grant, S. (1996). Examining the use of recommended language intervention practices in early childhood special education. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 16*, 251-272.

### **Adults mediate children's experiences to promote learning**

Adults in EI/ECSE mediate children's experiences to promote learning, rather than teaching or instructing them. Effective adult mediation requires planning, is goal directed, and is systematically practiced. For young children, most interventions should be used during play and other routines and activities, be embedded into and distributed across activities, and occur when they are contextually relevant.

- **Embedded learning opportunities**

Horn, E., Lieber, J., Li, S., Sandall, S., & Schwartz, I. (2000). Supporting young children's IEP goals in inclusive settings through embedded learning opportunities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 20*, 208-223.

- **Activity-based intervention**

Losardo, A., & Bricker, D. (1994). Activity-based intervention and direct instruction: A comparison study. *American Journal on Mental Retardation, 98*, 744-765.

- **Routine structuring**

Wolery, M., Anthony, L., & Heckathorn, J. (1998). Transition-based teaching: Effects on transitions, teachers' behavior, and children's learning. *Journal of Early Intervention, 21*, 117-131.

- **High-probability requests**

Davis, C. A., Brady, M. P., Hamilton, R., McEvoy, M. A., & Williams, R. E. (1994). Effects of high-probability requests on the social interactions of young children with severe disabilities. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 27*, 619-637.

- **Prompting and prompt-fading strategies**

Venn, M. L., Wolery, M., Werts, M. G., Morris, A., DeCesare, L. D., & Cuffs, M. S. (1993). Embedding instruction in art activities to teach preschoolers with disabilities to imitate their peers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 8*, 277-294.

### **Children's participation in more developmentally advanced settings, at times with assistance, is necessary for successful and independent participation in those settings**

Children acquire important skills for specific contexts by participating in those contexts, if necessary with assistance or guided participation from a caregiver or more competent peer. Thus, children with disabilities need opportunities to participate in more developmentally advanced settings, and a large range of learning opportunities in natural settings such as the home and community have been identified.

- **Learning opportunities occurring in community and home contexts**

Dunst, C. J., Hambry, D., Trivette, C. M., Raab, M., & Bruder, M. B. (2000). Everyday family and community life and children's naturally occurring learning opportunities. *Journal of Early Intervention, 23*, 151-164.

- **Participation in inclusive preschool play groups**

Guralnick, M. J., Connor, R. T., Hammond, M. A., Gottman, J. M., & Kinnish, K. (1996). Immediate effects of mainstreamed settings on the social interactions and social integration of preschool children. *American Journal on Mental Retardation, 100*, 359-377.

- **Social integration interventions in inclusive settings**

Jenkins, J. R., Odom, S. L., & Speltz, M. L. (1989). Effects of integration and structured play on the development of handicapped children. *Exceptional Children, 55*, 420-428.

### ***EI/ECSE practice is individually and dynamically goal oriented***

Caregivers and service providers must establish individualised goals for children and the strategies used to meet those goals. This is particularly necessary in the field of EI/ECSE because of the varied characteristics of children who are eligible for services and the range of severity levels exhibited by infants and young children.

- **Goal identification linked with learning strategies**

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

- **Parent input solicited by routines-based interviews**

McWilliam, R. A. (1992). Family-centered intervention planning: A routines-based approach. Tucson, AZ: Communication Skill Builders.

- **Demands of environments source of goal identification**

Thurman, S. K., & Widerstrom, A. H. (1990). Infants and young children with special needs: A developmental and ecological approach (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Baltimore: Brookes.

### ***Transitions across programs are enhanced by a developmentally instigative adult***

An ecological transition occurs when there is a change in settings and/or roles for an individual, and such transitions are a result of and potentially an instigator of developmental processes. The developmental potential of new settings is enhanced if children make the transition with one or more individuals with whom they shared the previous setting. During the early childhood years, children with disabilities and their families experience transitions across settings and agencies, and such transitions place new demands on and create new growth opportunities for children, their families, and care providers).

- **Assessing the demands of the next setting and teaching needed skills**

Ager, C. L., & Shapiro, E. S. (1995). Template matching as a strategy for assessment of and intervention for preschool students with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 15*, 187-218.

- **Preparing personnel and/or family for transition to next setting**

Wyly, M. V., Allen, J., Pfalzer, S. M., & Wilson, J. R. (1996). Providing a seamless system from hospital to home: The NICU training project. *Infants and Young Children, 8*(3), 77-84.

- **Interagency agreement to smooth transitions**

Rosenkoetter, S. E., Whaley, K. T., Hains, A. H., & Pierce, L. (2001). The evolution of transition policy for young children with special needs and their families: Past, present, and future. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 21*, 3-15.

### ***Families and programs are influenced by the broader context***

Factors outside the immediate environment of a child and family exert an influence on development and learning. Recognising this has led to the adoption of a family-centred approach, and greater use of services in the community for children and families. These practices build support for families as a means of creating a more developmentally facilitative environment for infants and young children with disabilities.

- **Family-centred planning**

McWilliam, R. A., Tocci, L., & Harbin, G. L. (1998). Family-centered services: Service providers' discourse and behavior. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 18*, 206-221.

- **Resource mapping**

Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C. J., & Deal, A. G. (1997). Resource-based approach to early intervention. In S. K. Thurman, J. R. Cornwell, & S. R. Gottwald (Eds.), *Contexts of early intervention: Systems and settings* (pp. 73-92). Baltimore: Brookes

- **Designing culturally sensitive programs**

Catlett, C., Winton, P., & Santos, R. M. (2000). Resources within reason: Materials that serve culturally and linguistically diverse children and families. *Young Exceptional Children, 3*(4), 27.

## *ABSTRACTS referred to in the Odom & Wolery article:*

- **Family-centred practices**

Thompson, L., Lobb, C., Elling, R., Herman, S., Jurkiewicz, T., & Hulleza, C. (1997). Pathways to family empowerment: Effects of family-centered delivery of early intervention services. *Exceptional Children, 64*, 99-113.

This study explores how the method of delivery for early intervention services impacts perceptions of empowerment among families. Analysis of data collected from 270 randomly sampled families participating in the State of Michigan's Early On (Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) program suggests two paths by which empowerment is effected. Along one path, implementation of program components via a family-centered framework appears to help increase empowerment. An alternative path models how family-centered delivery may help to build a family's support network. This is related to reduced stress and increased empowerment. Findings support programs emphasizing family-centered methods of service delivery.

- **Parent-education programs**

Mahoney, G., Kaiser, A., Girolametto, L., MacDonald, J., Robinson, C., Safford, P., et al. (1999). Parent education in early intervention: A call for a renewed focus. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 19*, 131-140.

Parent education as a key component of early intervention has been greatly de-emphasized during the past 15 years, we believe, because of the perceived inconsistencies between the purposes and goals of parent education and family-centered approaches to early intervention. We argue that research indicating that parent involvement is critical to early intervention effectiveness and that parents want information about specific ways they can help their children's development supports the need for parent education in early intervention. We propose that the early intervention field address the concerns expressed about the lack of sensitivity in parent education approaches, develop strategies for parent education that are consistent with contemporary family service concepts, address the need for explicit instruction of service providers in parent education strategies, and conduct research on the immediate and long-term effects of parent education on children and families.

- **Parent-infant interaction programs**

Girolametto, L., Verbey, M., & Tannock, R. (1994). Improving joint engagement in parent-child interaction: An intervention study. *Journal of Early Intervention, 18*, 155-167.

The current study tested the effects of parent training on children's joint engagement in play interactions with their mothers. Seven preschool children with developmental delays and their mothers participated in a 12-week intervention program. They were matched for developmental and communication status to seven children in a delayed-treatment control group. Mothers were trained to encourage child participation in social interaction by being highly responsive and child-centred. Following intervention, mother-child dyads experienced significantly more episodes of joint engagement than control dyads. Moreover, the total duration of joint engagement and the mean length of joint engagement episodes also increased significantly. No treatment-induced changes were detected on a series of semi-structured tasks designed to measure joint attention, suggesting that dyadic changes in joint engagement did not generalize to unfamiliar contexts. The results of this pilot study indicate that joint engagement is amenable to change and the results support the use of engagement states as an outcome measure.

- **Peer-interaction programs**

Odom, S. L., McConnell, S. R., McEvoy, M. A., Peterson, C., Ostrosky, M., Chandler, L. K., et al. (1999). Relative effects of interventions supporting the social competence of young children with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 19*, 75-91.

This study compared the effects of different intervention approaches designed to promote peer-related social competence of young children with disabilities. Preschool-age children with disabilities who were enrolled in classes in Tennessee and Minnesota participated in four intervention conditions (environmental arrangements, child specific, peer mediated, and comprehensive) and a control (no intervention) condition. A performance-based assessment of social competence, which consisted of observational, teacher rating, and peer rating measures, was collected before and after the interventions and again the following school year. Analyses revealed that the peer-mediated condition had the greatest and most sustained effect on children's participation in social interaction and on the quality of interaction, with the child-specific condition also having a strong effect. The environmental arrangements condition had the strongest effect on peer ratings. These findings indicate that there are effective intervention approaches available for children who have needs related to social competence and that different types of interventions may be useful for addressing different goals (e.g., social skills or social acceptance) of individual children.

- **Contingently responsive environments**

Landry, S. H., Smith, K. E., Swank, P. R., Assel, M. A., & Vellet, S. (2001). Does early responsive parenting have a special importance for children's development or is consistency across early childhood necessary? *Developmental Psychology, 37*, 387-403.

The role of early versus ongoing maternal responsiveness in predicting cognitive and social development was examined in home visits for mothers, full term children (n=103), and medically low-risk (n=102) and high-risk (n=77) preterm children at 5 ages. There were 4 maternal clusters based on warm and contingent responsiveness behaviours observed early (at 6, 12 and 24 months) and late (at 3 and 4 years): high early, high late; high early, low late; low early, moderate late; and low early, low late. Children, especially pre-term children, showed faster cognitive growth when mothers were consistently responsive. Social growth was similar in the consistently responsive (high-high) and the early-responsive inconsistent (high-low) clusters, but greater deceleration at 4 years among children with mothers in the inconsistent cluster refuted the notion of a unique role for early responsiveness. The importance of consistent responsiveness defined by an affective-emotional construct, was evident even when a broader constellation of parenting behaviours was considered.

- **Participation in natural learning opportunities**

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 relationships between several different person and environment characteristics of everyday natural learning opportunities and changes in both child learning opportunities and child behavior and performance were examined in an intervention study lasting 19 to 26 weeks. Participants were 63 parents or other caregivers and

their infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities or delays. Findings showed that learning opportunities that were interesting, engaging, competence-producing, and mastery-oriented were associated with optimal child behavioral change. Implications for early intervention practices are discussed.

- **Participation in classrooms employing evidence-based practices**

Schwartz, I. S., Carta, J. J., & Grant, S. (1996). Examining the use of recommended language intervention practices in early childhood special education. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 16*, 251-272.

Two studies were conducted to describe the extent to which recommended language intervention practices were implemented in preschool classrooms serving young children with disabilities, and to investigate the relationships between children's observed level of exposure to those practices and their language outcomes. Study 1 was a descriptive study of the amount and type of language training received by 59 children in 26 preschool classrooms. Repeated observations of these children over a 4 month periods revealed that children exposed to higher levels of recommended practices had higher rates of engagement and verbalisations. Study 2 was a process-product study that examined the relationship between children's gain on language measures and the level of exposure to recommended practices. Results showed that children who made greater language gains were more likely to be in classrooms that provided more frequent exposure to recommended language intervention strategies. Implications for training and research are discussed.

- **Embedded learning opportunities**

Horn, E., Lieber, J., Li, S., Sandall, S., & Schwartz, I. (2000). Supporting young children's IEP goals in inclusive settings through embedded learning opportunities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 20*, 208-223.

A set of multiple case studies was conducted to assess the feasibility for teachers in inclusive early education programs supporting young children's learning objectives through embedded learning opportunities (ELOs). The examination of the ELO procedure included assessment of the teachers' planning and implementation, the impact on child performance of specific learning objectives, and the teachers' perceptions of the ELO strategy. Case studies were conducted in three separate inclusive early childhood education programs located in three different states and included four children with disabilities and their classroom teachers. All teachers demonstrated increases in use of instructional behaviors toward targeted objectives. Children demonstrated concomitant increases in performance of targeted objectives. In follow-up interviews, teachers reported generally favorable perceptions of the ELO procedure. There were, however, some clear differences between teachers (with resulting impacts on child performance) in the consistency and frequency of implementation of the instructional support strategies. Teacher interview data are used to hypothesize on why these differences occurred.

- **Activity-based intervention**

Losardo, A., & Bricker, D. (1994). Activity-based intervention and direct instruction: A comparison study. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 98, 744-765.

An alternating treatments design was used to compare the effectiveness of two intervention procedures – direct instruction and activity-based instruction – on the acquisition and generalisation of object names by preschool age children with developmental delays or who were at risk for such delays. Subjects were given a pre-test to determine unknown object names. A systematic alternation of treatments was subsequently provided by trained interventionists. After a baseline period of 1 week, two 15-minute treatment sessions employing activity-based intervention and direct instruction were followed by a 15-minute free play generalisation session, 3 days a week, for 6 weeks. A return to baseline phase was then conducted for one week. Structured generalisation probes were also administered throughout treatment and 4 weeks after the study ended. Results indicated differential effects for both treatments.

- **High-probability requests**

Davis, C. A., Brady, M. P., Hamilton, R., McEvoy, M. A., & Williams, R. E. (1994). Effects of high-probability requests on the social interactions of young children with severe disabilities. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 27, 619-637.

High-probability requests were used to increase social interactions in 3 young boys with severe disabilities who had been identified as severely socially withdrawn. A multiple baseline design across participants was used to evaluate the effects of high-probability request intervention on (a) social initiations, (b) social responses, (c) continued interactions, and (d) performance of high- and low-probability requests. The students were observed in a second setting to examine generalisation effects across peers who did not participate in the training sequence and settings. The results demonstrated that the high-probability requests increased the student's responsiveness to low-probability to initiate social behaviour. Increases were also found in (a) unprompted initiations and extended interactions to the training peers, (b) unprompted initiations and extended interactions to peers who were not involved in the training procedure and (c) generalised unprompted initiations and interactions in a second nontraining setting. The students maintained increased levels of initiations and interactions after all prompts were removed from both the training and nontraining settings.

- **Goal identification linked with learning strategies**

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

Child-focused interventions include the decisions and practices used to structure and provide learning opportunities for children. These decisions and practices include how children are taught (strategies and practices to ensure learning), when and where the instructional practices and arrangements are implemented, and how children's performance is monitored to make decisions about modifying the interventions and identification of other goals.

Eg: 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 meeting children's changing needs. Adults use systematic procedures within and across environments, activities, and routines to promote children's learning and participation.

- **Learning opportunities occurring in community and home contexts**

Dunst, C. J., Hambry, D., Trivette, C. M., Raab, M., & Bruder, M. B. (2000). Everyday family and community life and children's naturally occurring learning opportunities. *Journal of Early Intervention, 23*, 151-164.

National surveys of nearly 3300 parents (and other caregivers) of infants, toddlers and preschoolers with or at-risk for developmental delays were conducted to ascertain the sources of naturally occurring learning opportunities afforded young children in the context of family and community life. One group of parents completed a survey about family life as sources of learning opportunities (n=1723), and another group completed a survey of community life as sources of learning opportunities (n=1560). Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that both family and community life were each made up of 11 different categories of learning opportunities. Results indicate the 22 categories provide a framework for recognising and identifying sources of learning opportunities providing children a rich array of experiencing constituting natural learning environments.

- **Participation in inclusive preschool play groups**

Guralnick, M. J., Connor, R. T., Hammond, M. A., Gottman, J. M., & Kinnish, K. (1996). Immediate effects of mainstreamed settings on the social interactions and social integration of preschool children. *American Journal on Mental Retardation, 100*, 359-377.

The immediate effects of mainstreamed and specialised settings on the peer interactions of preschool children with and without developmental delays were examined. Mainstreamed and specialised playgroups were established involving unacquainted peers and using a methodology that ensured appropriate matching of child and family characteristics. For each 2-week playgroup, the social and play interactions of each child were observed during a designated free-play period. Peer sociometric ratings also were obtained. Results indicated higher levels of peer interactions in mainstreamed settings for both typically developing children and children with developmental delays. The immediate impact of mainstreamed settings appeared to be attributed to the social demands and higher interaction levels of the former group. Children with developmental delays were not fully accepted nor totally socially integrated based on sociometric measures and behaviour indices of peer preferences. Implications of these findings for developing intervention programs to maximize children's peer-related social competence was discussed.

- **Assessing the demands of the next setting and teaching needed skills**

Ager, C. L., & Shapiro, E. S. (1995). Template matching as a strategy for assessment of and intervention for preschool students with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 15*, 187-218.

A template-matching strategy was used to develop an intervention for facilitating the transition between preschool and kindergarten for preschoolers with disabilities. Three classes of preschool students who would be entering kindergarten the following year participated: an Intervention group, and Assessment Only group, and

a Control group. The study was conducted in two phases: In Phase 1, templates were developed to evaluate the differences between instructional environments in the sending preschool classes and the receiving kindergarten classes. The design of these templates was based in direct observations of the preschool and kindergarten classes using the Eco-Behavioural System for Complex Assessments of Preschool Environments (ESCAPE) and the Assessment Code/Checklist for Evaluating Survival Skills (ACCESS). Ecobehavioural variables were then graphed for each class. In Phase 2, an intervention focussing on some of the major differences found between the environments was designed in collaboration with the preschool staff and implemented for 8 weeks. This intervention was effective in more closely aligning the preschool environments, and teacher and child behaviours, with those reflected in the kindergarten data. At follow up, preschool students involved in the intervention who were now in kindergarten exhibited fewer competing behaviours, and were the recipients of fewer individual prompts during independent work tasks.

- **Interagency agreement to smooth transitions**

Rosenkoetter, S. E., Whaley, K. T., Hains, A. H., & Pierce, L. (2001). The evolution of transition policy for young children with special needs and their families: Past, present, and future. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 21*, 3-15.

Early childhood transition policies provide an excellent case study of the types of events that can lead to policy change over time. This article describes the types of early childhood transitions that have received policy development and the types that remain unguided by federal or state policy. Some of the influences on the evolution of transition policy, including model demonstration and technical assistance projects, research data, and positions of professional organizations are examined. The authors suggest that bi-directional influences on transition policy have connected the decisions of policymakers at multiple levels with the actions and advocacy of family and practitioner stakeholders. New federal policies have stimulated state policy development. The article describes current challenges to effective transitions in early childhood and explores the characteristics of guidelines that may make a positive difference for young children and families in transition. Finally, the authors suggest areas in which additional research and policies might improve transitions for children, families, and service providers.

- **Family-centred planning**

McWilliam, R. A., Tocci, L., & Harbin, G. L. (1998). Family-centered services: Service providers' discourse and behavior. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 18*, 206-221.

The purpose of this study was to examine family-centred practice in terms of six service providers' philosophies and behaviours. Six professionals from a pool of 43 service providers were identified as matching the practices and philosophies identified in the literature as family centred. These providers and some of the families they served were interviewed. Five underlying components of family-centred services were identified: positiveness, responsiveness, orientation to the whole family, friendliness and sensitivity. Moreover, these service providers displayed skills with children and communities. Understanding these features of high-quality service provision expands our understanding of family centredness and established a basis for policy, training, and service recommendations.

End abstracts related to evidence based, best practice paper by Odom & Wolery (2003).