

Promoting Excellence in Early Childhood Intervention



2007

Learning Events

Steering Committee Agencies

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TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

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Uncle Bobs

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Department of Human Services
Specialist Childrens' Services

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Welcome!

Do you want to continue your professional development in 2007 by:

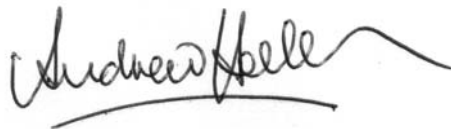
- Running or participating in topical forums?**
- Observing expert practitioners 'in the field'?**
- Attending leading-edge classroom training?**

All 140+ staff employed by North & West Metropolitan Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) agencies are invited to participate in the three types of learning events planned for 2007: teachers, therapists, psychologists, counsellors, Family Service Co-ordinators, support staff and managers.

Figuring out the difference between a satisfactory (or competent) ECI practitioner and their exceptional colleague has been the purpose of this project, "Promoting Excellence in ECI". This Project goes well beyond the units, elements and performance criteria of standard competency descriptors: it aims to address both the 'art' and the 'science' of superb ECI service provision.

In order to do this, we have carried out the following tasks:

1. Through an **Expert Modelling** process, we delved into many of the 'hows': what are the underlying thinking and communication processes – and beliefs – of all exceptional ECI practitioners? What do they all have in common, despite differences in education and training, service delivery practices and the varying environments in which they do their work?
2. Through surveying of ECI practitioners, establish the perceived **Learning Needs** in both metaskill and technical areas. In other words, what do experienced and less experienced practitioners wish to learn? How do they wish to learn with their colleagues?
3. What are some cost-effective, powerful and durable **Learning Events** that meet the needs identified within the Learning Needs Analysis and how can these be rolled-out in a way which is owned by the ECI sector?



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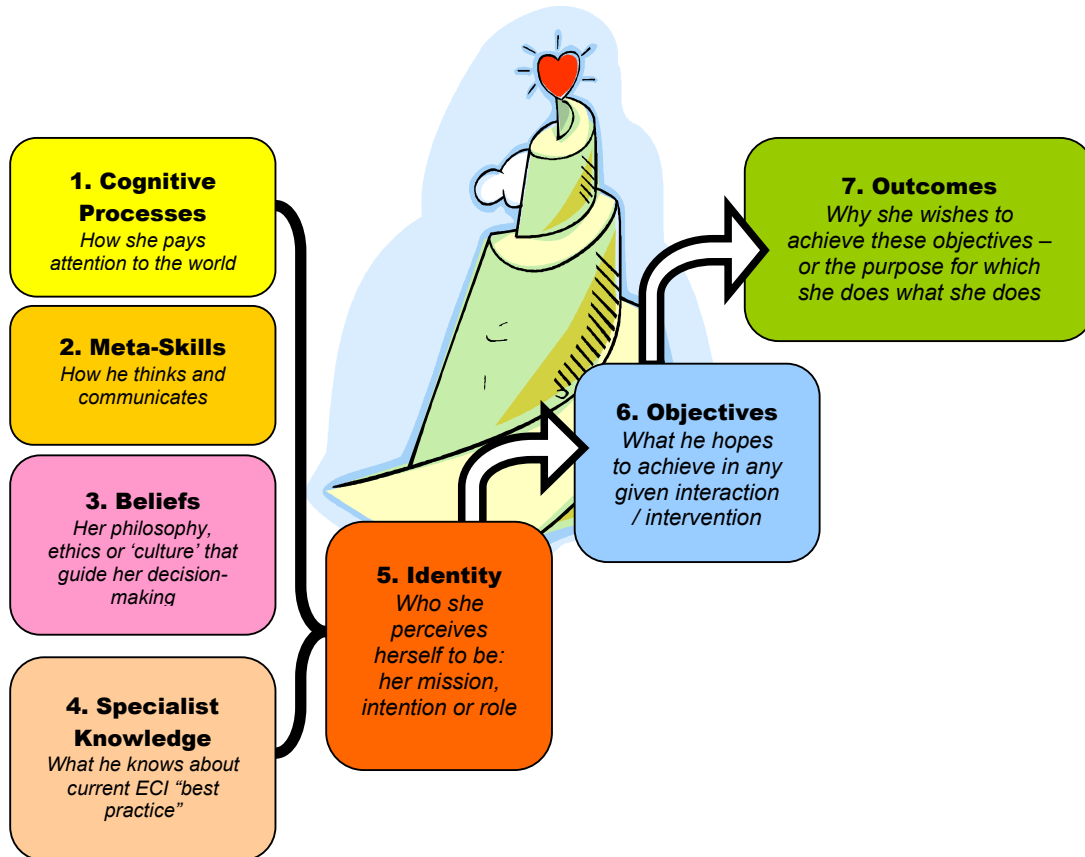
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Part One: Practitioner Competencies

The diagram below describes 7 vital success elements that define the exceptional ECI practitioner's "way of being": without each of these in place, the practitioner becomes less effective. For example, an ECI practitioner with a wealth of specialist knowledge who uses a non-aligned belief set will not achieve the same outcomes as someone whose cognitive processes, meta-skills, beliefs and knowledge set are superbly aligned.



Important note

1. These competency descriptors apply to ECI job roles such as teacher, therapist, psychologist, counsellor and Family Service Co-ordinator. These competencies are **additional to those describing teaching and therapeutic disciplines**.
2. They are 'key success factors'. That is, there may be other processes, outcomes / beliefs / meta-skills / knowledge that ECI practitioners **may use situationally**, however, those listed here are considered essential.

2. Meta-Skills

Perceptual, thinking and communication patterns I use in the vast majority of interpersonal situations

In socially and emotionally complex situations I can, at any time:

- ◆ Establish and maintain **rapport** with one or more people
- ◆ Attract and hold someone's **attention**
- ◆ Elicit willing **co-operation**

Through:

1. matching, leading, pacing and cross-pacing verbal and non-verbal behaviour;
2. observing, hearing and feeling small changes in another person's state without attributing meaning to it;
3. positively reframing another person's reported experiences;
4. making positive attributions aligned with how another person likes to see themselves;
5. using indirect language patterns that include embedded questions & suggestions.

3. Beliefs

The philosophy, ethics and 'culture' within which I operate

1. Every person has their own, valid model of the world; therefore **there is positive meaning in all behaviour.**
2. We find abundant opportunities when we stop looking at deficits and problems; therefore **every situation can be positively utilised.**
3. I take nothing for granted! Instead, **I test everything.**

1. Cognitive Processing

The 'filters' or underlying thought processes that achieve my outcomes

I do this work using the following underlying cognitive processes:

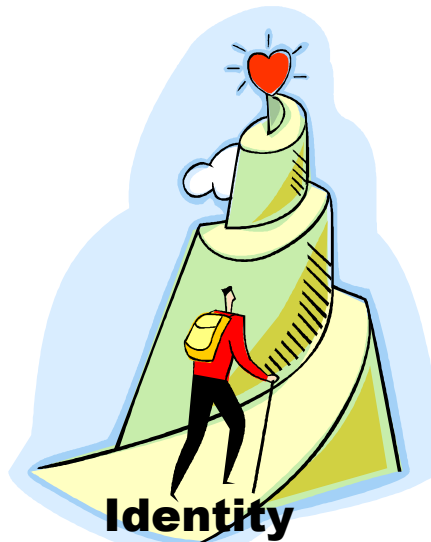
- ◆ **Team** *more than* Individual
- ◆ *Through* **Maintenance** *towards* Task
- ◆ **Big Picture** *more than* Detail
- ◆ **Options** *more than* Procedure
- ◆ **Gradual and Long-Term** *rather than* Rapid and Short-Term
- ◆ **Ease** *more than* Challenge
- ◆ **Understate** *rather than* overstate in professional communications
- ◆ **Overstate** *rather than* understate in positive interactions with a child

4. Specialist knowledge

Information I hold about the current body of professional ECI "best practice"

I have knowledge of:

1. **Child development** theories
2. The dynamics of families, groups and other **social systems**
3. **Assessment** and **planning** strategies and tools
4. **Service & team co-ordination** principles



Identity

How I see my mission, intention or role

“I am a **facilitator** who works with others to involve children in reciprocal learning, friendship and fun opportunities with adults, siblings and peers”

Objectives

The aims of my interventions & interactions

Alongside specific therapeutic / teaching objectives, each intervention is aimed towards having:

1. A child:

- a. **Direct their attention** towards an outcome
- b. **Express their thoughts** and feelings
- c. **Recognise other people's intentions**, thoughts and feelings
- d. **Negotiate** and use basic social rules

2. A family:

- a. **Enjoy and understand** the child
- b. Gain **skills** in nurturing and supporting a child in the objectives above (1a – 1d)
- c. **View** the child – and their role as family members - positively
- d. Make informed **decisions** regarding
 - i. Family outcomes
 - ii. Specific outcomes for the child
- e. Act as **advocates** and supporters

3. Other stakeholders:

- a. **Understand and interact** with the child
- b. View the child **positively**
- c. Act as **advocate** and **supporter** of the child & family
- d. Participate in making **informed decisions**

Outcomes

The purpose of the work we do

We do this work for the benefit of children, their families and the community.

Children will gain:

- ◆ Functional, developmental and coping skills that are appropriate to their ability and circumstances
- ◆ Confidence and enjoyment in their everyday life
- ◆ Meaningful participation in home and local community activities
- ◆ Experience and enjoyment from family life and community activities that are preferred by the family

Families will:

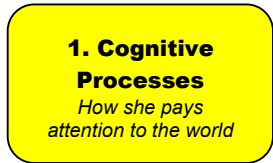
- ◆ Nurture and support their child according to their preferences and values
- ◆ Identify and address the needs of their child(ren) and family
- ◆ Advocate for themselves and their family to the degree they choose
- ◆ Participate in social and community activities to the degree they choose
- ◆ Feel supported by personal and community networks

Communities will:

- ◆ Be inclusive, providing for diversity, access and quality service for all families
- ◆ Value all members

1. Cognitive Processes

The 'filters' or underlying thought processes that make my outcomes more readily achievable



These 'cognitive processes', 'mindsets' or 'metaprograms' are the programs in our minds that operate at a meta level to our content thinking and refer to the sorting devices or patterns that we use in perceiving, paying attention to information and processing the stimuli around us.

Highly capable ECI practitioners appear to use 8 distinct 'mindsets' or patterns of cognitive processes:

1. Team *more than* Individual

A person with an 'individual' or 'independent' mindset likes to do things on their own. They like to assume and take responsibility for their own motivation and management. Skilled ECI practitioners often assume a 'team' orientation. They like the terms and concepts of 'togetherness', 'family', 'community' and 'being around people'. Such people will often describe their intentions in terms of 'co-operation' and 'collaboration' with others.

2. Through Maintenance *towards* Task

When an individual is highly task-oriented, most of their attention is directed toward the achievement of specified outcomes. Skilled ECI practitioners tend to emphasise 'maintenance' of relationships above achievement of tasks. They like to know that everyone's 'on board', people are 'on the same page' and that the comfort and resourcefulness of others has been assured.

3. Big Picture *more than* Detail

When a person sorts by 'detail', they are apt to begin with specific details and think inductively to general principles and global conclusions. Skilled ECI practitioners appear to begin with high level abstractions (principles, goals, concepts) and think deductively to arrive at useful specifics. They can use visual attention to collect a large amount of peripheral information. They will often be able to integrate and synthesise complex information, observations and examples into useful higher-order concepts.

4. Options *more than* Procedure

People who orient themselves via 'procedures' like to follow very specific and definite procedures. They may not know how to generate such procedures if nobody provides them. Skilled ECI practitioners tend to orient themselves via 'options'. They develop new procedures and figure out alternatives to a strategy. They value choices and creativity and often will search for an innovative and different approach.

5. Gradual and Long-Term *rather than* Rapid and Short-Term

When a person operates with a 'rapid' filter, they like to receive all the information at once and are frustrated by delays and constant changes. They tend to get bored with slow-moving tasks with little risk or challenge, seeing them as tedious and mundane. Skilled ECI practitioners appear to operate primarily with a 'gradual' filter: they like to take in each element and digest it thoroughly before absorbing the next. They have a more accepting and fatalistic optimism about change, expecting it will all work out in the end. People with a gradual sort enjoy working towards longer-term outcomes and often need to slow down people whose timing preference is much faster.

6. Ease *more than* Challenge

When a person sorts by challenge, they represent a situation in terms of its complexities, its multi-variate nature and will emphasise 'problem-solving' and 'hard work'. Skilled ECI practitioners often sort by 'ease': they internally simplify situations and re-present information in easily-digestible chunks. As a consequence, they often appear unruffled and calm, even in uncertain and complex situations.

7. Understate *rather than* overstate professional information

When a person understates they play things down. They tend to be more low-key and make molehills out of mountains. It is often hard to tell how things affect them. They provide little body language and minimal voice inflection. They stick very closely to the facts. Skilled ECI practitioners are often understaters in professional communications and in stressful situations; they come across as calm and consolidating.

8. Overstate *rather than* understate in positive interactions with a child

When a person overstates, they tend to exaggerate the proportions of a message. They have an enthusiasm, an energy and a noticeable reaction to events. When things are extremely good, overstaters are excited and demonstrative. Skilled ECI practitioners tend to overstate with children, especially in positive communications, by using extra emphasis in their body language and voice tone.

2. Meta-Skills

Perceptual, thinking and communication patterns I use in the vast majority of interpersonal situations

2. Meta-Skills
How she thinks and communicates

Meta-skills are the patterns which pervade a person's visible behaviour, especially their interactions with others. The skills described in this section become visible through body language and voice tonality, as well as through the content of their communications.

In socially and emotionally complex situations, skilled ECI practitioners can, at any time:

- Establish and maintain **rapport** with one or more people
- Attract and hold someone's **attention**
- Elicit willing **co-operation**

They do this through five primary clusters of meta-skills:

1. **matching, leading, pacing and cross-pacing verbal and non-verbal behaviour**

Skilled ECI practitioners will exhibit enormous flexibility in their responses to another person's verbal and non-verbal behaviour. They do not believe that they should always use their body and voice in a consistent manner. Rather, they will quickly match and pace another person's (i) gestural patterns, (ii) speech rhythm patterns, (iii) spatial movement patterns. They will do this and, then, when rapport is established can tangibly 'lead' useful verbal and non-verbal patterns.

2. observing, hearing and feeling small changes in another person's state without attributing meaning to it

Skilled ECI practitioners can effectively 'calibrate' another person and detect very small changes in their attention and emotional state. They use this information to (i) adjust their immediate response to the person, (ii) compare against previous observed patterns and, ultimately, to (iii) test hypotheses.

3. positively reframing another person's reported experiences

Skilled ECI practitioners routinely reframe another person's experience, especially where that person is becoming unresourceful. They will highlight (i) alternative meanings, (ii) learning opportunities and (iii) potential for positive interventions. For example:

Stated experience	Reframe offered by ECI practitioner
"He bangs on the table a lot and it really annoys everyone!"	"Isn't it good that he can tell you when he's bored and his attention needs redirecting?"
"We've tried so many things and nothing's worked"	"So, what can we learn about what to try next, by putting together everything we've tried so far?"
"Her brother is always interrupting her and showing her what to do"	"How can we use her brother's curiosity and interest to help her to xxxx?"

4. making positive attributions aligned with how another person likes to see themselves

Skilled ECI practitioners explicitly use a conversational pattern which causes a person to think about why things are happening, and *apply a positive internal attribution*. For example, "You really enjoy being with your child", "You have a good relationship with your son", "You're in charge of your household, just like you're in charge of this team". The results of this pattern is that people find internal explanations for why the statement is true – and are then more likely to 'live up to' that stated attribution.

5. using indirect language patterns such as embedded questions, suggestions and statements

Skilled ECI practitioners use a variety of embedded language patterns which are directed towards the common outcomes of interventions: agreement, teamwork, knowledge, understanding, learning, persistence etc. Several types of patterns are commonly demonstrated by skilled ECI practitioners, for example:

Type of embedded language pattern	Examples offered by ECI practitioners
Causal linkage	"We sit here today talking and as we get to know each other better we find that we can talk about things very openly . . .
Modal operators (of certainty)	When we discover some good ways to solve that problem . . . "
Unspecified referential index	" Stuff will happen over time that we'll feel very happy about . . . "
Awareness predicates	"Have you noticed the way that Jason often will look around the room before he finishes a task with the other children?"
Embedded suggestions	"I don't know how soon it will be before we will discover ways to have Jaynie visit the toilet on her own . . ."
Embedded questions	"I'm curious to know how you think we can get Billie to work with us "

3. Beliefs

The philosophy, ethics and 'culture' within which I operate

3. Beliefs

Her philosophy, ethics or 'culture' that guide her decision-making

Every individual ECI practitioner will have a vast array of beliefs about the children and families with which she or he works. These will depend upon:

- her **personal values** set,
- the **ethical practices** of her specialist discipline,
- the **code of conduct** of her employer etc.

Listed below are three beliefs which pertain to *how ECI work is carried out* which all highly skilled ECI practitioners appear to hold in common:

1. "Every person has their own, valid model of the world; therefore **there is positive meaning in all behaviour**"

Skilled ECI practitioners adopt the criteria and reality of the other person, be they a child, a parent or a childcare worker or kindergarten teacher. They routinely adopt a non-judgemental interpretive frame which asks, "How does this person see the world?" From this neutral position, it is easy to discern positive intent within most people's behaviours at any given time.

2. "We find abundant opportunities when we stop looking at deficits and problems; therefore **every situation can be positively utilised**"

Skilled ECI practitioners adopt a mindset which presupposes the existence of opportunity. By keeping their perceptual filters open, they are vigilant to solutions where others see dilemmas, problems and deficits.

3. "I take nothing for granted; instead, I continually **test everything**"

A critical belief exists in skilled ECI practitioners, wherein they try or test their ideas constantly. Their belief is that only by doing so, can good outcomes be delivered which are robust and durable. This belief also serves to keep skilled ECI practitioners alert to changes in a child's or family's situation.

4. Specialist knowledge

Information I hold about the current body of professional ECI “best practice”

4. Specialist Knowledge
What she knows about current ECI “best practice”

Skilled ECI practitioners are also defined by the range and scope of the specialist ECI knowledge they can apply to their interventions.

Knowledge is the internalization of information, data and facts which enable conceptual distinctions to be made. *Explicit knowledge* is the formal, recorded or systematic processes, theories or principles which can be confirmed or disconfirmed empirically. ECI specialist knowledge can be seen to fall into four domains:

Domain	Knowledge	Purpose
Child Development	Current theories of infant and child development, including content, sequences, range and variability within developmental domains	To relate sequences of development to activities the family wants their child to be able to do
	Knowledge of variability in development, including risk factors, developmental variations (including those related to specific disabilities), medical & neurological factors	To provide guidance to parents and other care providers of children with specific conditions about variations that might occur in the child’s development
	Knowledge of how a child’s development and learning patterns are informed by (i) family & child interactions (ii) peer interactions and (iii) play.	To support parents and others to interact with the child and incorporate play skills
Family & Social Systems	Current theories of family formation, development and functioning, including variations based on social and cultural factors Principles of family-centred practice recognising the family at the centre of the child’s life and as the child’s primary support, decision-maker and advocate Knowledge of how varying environments, physical & mental illness, drug and alcohol dependence, poverty and cultural backgrounds affect families’ identity, resources and coping methods.	To include families as full team members in all aspects of ECI planning and implementation
	Current theories of peer group formation and child socialisation	To promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in community early childhood settings
Assessment and Planning	Use an assessment methodology to conduct interviews and observations and incorporate information into team assessment data Interpret assessment findings for a family and other stakeholders with consideration given to language, environmental & learning variations.	To collaborate with families and other stakeholders to identify current level of functioning, strengths and needs of the child

	Understand, explain, complete and monitor a Service Plan with families and other stakeholders Knowledge of functional family-centred outcomes and strategies that are able to be carried out within everyday routines, activities and environments of the child and family.	To identify ways a family and other stakeholders can collaboratively achieve specified outcomes
Service and Team Co-ordination	Knowledge of capabilities and resources of own team Knowledge of capabilities and resources of other service providers	Integrate the skills and approaches of a wide variety of professionals and non-professionals towards meeting the outcomes of a child and family

5. Identity

How I see my mission, intention and role

Skilled ECI practitioners hold a very clear view about what the work they do says about them. While each holds a variant of the statement below, a common identity statement may be:

5. Identity
Who she perceives herself to be: her mission, intention or role

**“I am a facilitator
who works with others
to involve children
in reciprocal learning, friendship and fun opportunities
with adults, siblings and peers”**

This is more helpful to us as *a set of exclusionary criteria*, in other words, we only want ECI practitioners who firmly and strongly see themselves as:

Facilitators	<i>not</i>	Therapists, teachers, lecturers, ‘problem solvers’, ‘fixers’
Working with others	<i>as opposed to</i>	Providing opinions from the perspective of a uniquely skilled specialist
Involving children	<i>instead of</i>	‘Helping’ children
Reciprocating	<i>as opposed to</i>	Being a unilateral “expert”
Providing opportunities for learning, friendship & fun	<i>instead of</i>	‘Working’ to fix deficits
Engaging adults, siblings and the child’s peers	<i>not</i>	‘Advising’ people or ‘directing’ the child’s development

6. Objectives

The aims of my interventions & interactions

Skilled ECI practitioners conceive that *every intervention, interaction or conversation, no matter how brief or insignificant, has its own objective*. Alongside specific therapeutic / teaching objectives, within each specific interaction, an ECI practitioners' meta-skills and knowledge all have the object of enabling:

6. Objectives

What she hopes to achieve in any given interaction / intervention

A child to:

Direct their *attention* towards an outcome
Express their thoughts and feelings
Recognise other people's intentions, thoughts and feelings
Negotiate and use basic *social rules*

and/or

A family to:

Enjoy and understand the child
Gain *skills* in nurturing and supporting a child in the objectives above (1a – 1d)
View the child – and their role as family members - positively
Make informed *decisions* regarding
Family outcomes
Specific outcomes for the child
Act as *advocates* and supporters

and/or

Another stakeholder to:

Understand and interact with the child
View the child positively
Act as advocate and supporter
Participate in making informed decisions

7. Outcomes

The ultimate purpose of the work we do

Why do we do this work? Of what possible value are the objectives in (6)? Skilled ECI practitioners agree that they do this work for the benefit of children, their families and the community.¹

7. Outcomes

Why she wishes to achieve these objectives – or the purpose for which she does what she does

Children will gain:

- Functional, developmental and coping skills that are appropriate to their ability and circumstances
- Confidence and enjoyment in their everyday life
- Meaningful participation in home and local community activities
- Experience and enjoyment from family life and community activities that are preferred by the family

Families will:

- Nurture and support their child according to their preferences and values
- Identify and address the needs of their child(ren) and family
- Advocate for themselves and their family to the degree they choose
- Participate in social and community activities to the degree they choose
- Feel supported by personal and community networks

Communities will:

- Be inclusive, providing for diversity, access and quality service for all families
- Value all of its members

¹ These outcome statements are from ECIA Vic (2005), "Starting from the End in Mind: Outcome Statements for Early Childhood Intervention Services"

Part Two: Learning Needs Analysis

The competencies described in Part One of this booklet were validated with approximately 60 staff. Next, staff of participating ECI agencies were surveyed against these competencies to determine what **learning needs** they think they need:

1. How well do we influence positive change?

In socially and emotionally complex situations, even relatively inexperienced ECI practitioners feel able to observe and listen non-judgementally and can respond to negative opinions with tactful positive reframes. More than half of all practitioners say they have more to learn about complex family dynamics:

- Establish and maintain **rapport** with one or more people
- Attract and hold someone's **attention**
- Elicit willing **co-operation** especially when it comes to the more subtle (and powerful) influence skills of:
 - identifying **positive intentions** behind 'difficult' or 'aberrant' behaviours;
 - using **embedded language** patterns;
 - getting others to **match our non-verbal behaviours**.

2. What do we need to know more about?

The area that nearly all practitioners wish to know more about is around theories of **family formation, peer group formation** and **child socialisation**. Specifically, the practice needs that are most often mentioned are:

- Environment:** Very noisy environments with many distractions and competing stimuli appear to create difficulties for ECI practitioners.
- Parents:** "Non-aligned expectations" of parents can confound the direction of the work of the ECI practitioner.

Comments from Survey Respondents

I'd like to . . .

communicate less favourable or negative information to families in a gentle manner.

communicate with very difficult families.

engage parents who are not open to their child's disability, eg. Those parents who often deny that their child may have the characteristics of autism.

help families identify, clarify their issues/goals and supporting them better and become more skilled in assisting/facilitating. If they need to change thinking/behaviour to achieve their goals.

discuss things confidently with families and other stakeholders, (listening) actively.

be able say NO and not be afraid

talk with more than one family member, especially when they hold different ideas about the child e.g. discipline issues, commitment to change, child's diagnosis

listen better and use strength based practices.

analyse behaviours, causes and developing programmes more quickly.

better manage behaviour in the challenging child.

I find it difficult . . .

when the child is very young, has extremely challenging behaviours and family have high academic aspirations.

when they are highly attached to their parent and may have anxiety about separating and the parent also has difficulty in the separation issue.

when the family displays negative thoughts about the child.

working with grieving parents or parents experiencing depression/anxiety.

when parents try to direct child or problem solve for child, without understanding the purpose of my interaction is to engage/interact with child to make an assessment of their level of skills.

when the family cannot see past the fact that their child is not walking and is a child first.

when the parent stands back and shows no interest in interacting with their child, but says they play all the time.

when families have not been able to accommodate their child's disability in the family

when the family has not identified that their child may have a difficulty and sees the child as being "naughty" or when the partners in a relationship view the child differently and are not supportive of each other.

3. How do ECI Practitioners think?

ECI practitioners appear to use 8 distinct 'mindsets' or cognitive patterns in carrying out their work with children, families and other stakeholders; here are 4 of them:

Team more than Individual	<i>A person with an 'individual' or 'independent' mindset likes to do things on their own. They like to assume and take responsibility for their own motivation and management. Skilled ECI practitioners often assume a 'team' orientation. They like the terms and concepts of 'togetherness', 'family', 'community' and 'being around people'. Such people will often describe their intentions in terms of 'co-operation' and 'collaboration' with others.</i>
Options more than Procedure	<i>People who orient themselves via 'procedures' like to follow very specific and definite procedures. They may not know how to generate such procedures if nobody provides them. Skilled ECI practitioners tend to orient themselves via 'options'. They develop new procedures and figure out alternatives to a strategy. They value choices and creativity and often will search for an innovative and different approach.</i>
Gradual and Long-Term rather than Rapid and Short-Term	<i>When a person operates with a 'rapid' filter, they like to receive all the information at once and are frustrated by delays and constant changes. They tend to get bored with slow-moving tasks with little risk or challenge, seeing them as tedious and mundane. Skilled ECI practitioners appear to operate primarily with a 'gradual' filter: they like to take in each element and digest it thoroughly before absorbing the next. They have a more accepting and fatalistic optimism about change, expecting it will all work out in the end. People with a gradual sort enjoy working towards longer-term outcomes and often need to slow down people whose timing preference is much faster.</i>

4. How do we want to learn?

What does this tell us about learning needs? It tells us that, on the whole, ECI Practitioners want (i) to learn **in groups** and **with other people**, (ii) to be given **choices** and **flexibility** in how they learn and (iii) their learning to be **incremental** – and **link thematically** to a **sequence of activities** over a period of time.

Part Three: Learning Events

For 2007's Learning Events, the following principles were agreed:

- Practice based, with theory 'embedded';
- Transdisciplinary;
- Emphasise consulting / relationship-building mindsets & skills;
- Ongoing / durable and self-generating;
- Participants, including new staff, can 'drop in' and 'drop out';
- Group learning is linked to on-the-job 1:1 support;
- Cross-agency "belonging" promoted;
- Acknowledge existing skills & experience;
- Deliverable within a modest budget.

3 Types of Learning Events

Three types of Learning Events all link strongly to a practice-based supervision / coaching model. In other words, the value gained from a practitioner attending an on-site observation, a peer discussion group or a classroom training program is sharply increased when it is contextualised and debriefed within the practitioner's organization.



Why on-the-job coaching / supervision is vital

The effects of any learning intervention are substantially stronger when they are reinforced within an organization by its leaders. Organisational coaches, who can be managers, team leaders or experienced practitioners will usually focus on:

- A coaching / supervision strategy in line with development of practitioner competencies (as opposed to a case management or performance management model of coaching / supervision);
- The cost-benefits of coaching, so leaders can manage time and resources to install good coaching / supervision systems;
- Structural issues connected with coaching practice e.g., the hours available to conduct high quality coaching sessions.

1 Group Workshops / “Classroom” Model

This is the best-understood learning event model, based as it is on a centuries-old tradition of placing willing learners in a room together with a subject matter expert.

The Promoting Excellence in ECI Project is delighted to offer agencies funding to be used for two training programs in the first half of 2007:

Strengths Based Training (2 days) offered by Bernadette Glass
(http://www.eciavic.org.au/professionals/Promoting_Excellence.html)

Family Partnerships Training (5 days) as developed by Professor Hilton Davis
(<http://www.cpcs.org.uk>)

If you are (i) an ECI practitioner wishing to do either of these programs or (ii) an ECI manager who wants to upskill staff in these areas, please note that subsidy is available to attend the regular public enrolment courses of each of the above programs.

2 Peer Discussion Groups

Peer Discussion Groups are like “bookclubs”: common-interest discussion groups (often based on books) that are found world-wide. The core concept of the model is that small groups of people organise themselves to meet to discuss a specific topic of interest. The model is generative, ‘ground up’, non-judgemental and open access. Ideally, the group will be from 6-30 people and, for a group of more than 10, requires a voluntary facilitator / host. Options for this model can be:

- Recommended pre-reading / thinking on a particular topic;
- A formal presentation made by an ‘expert’ following by Q&A;
- A debate or ‘hypothetical’ pitching complementary or opposed ideas against one another, followed by group discussion;

To enable this, we’re recruiting:

- Hosts*: practitioners with an interest in a specific issue who are willing to source presenter or facilitate a group discussion.
- Participants*: practitioners interested in learning through peer dialogue;

This information will be found on the ECIA discussion group hub: a website which advertises upcoming discussion groups to potential participants.

The sorts of topics that can be addressed by this learning event can include:

- “Family strengths” models
- Family responses to grief
- Attachment theory
- Family Partnership theories
- Involving parents in problem-solving
- Assessment methods
- Mental illness in families
- Medication

3 Practitioner Observations / “The Xerox Model”

The Xerox Model takes its name from a learning concept employed by the Xerox company, who trained thousands of copier technicians by equipping them with ‘always on’ two-way radios. In this way, small groups of service technicians were in constant contact with each other and could troubleshoot and converse on-the-job by ‘telling stories’. This approach simply mirrored and expanded the ‘natural’ way in which this group had, for years, shared information and learnt from each other.

For ECI Practitioners, we will replace the concept of audible peer contact with actual peer observation and dialogue. To enable this, we are recruiting:

- Willing observational subjects*: expert practitioners working on specific issues with children / families;
- Interested observers*: practitioners interested in learning from on-the-job practice from other practitioners;

The information will be found on our ‘matchmaking’ hub: a page on the ECIA website which advertises available observational subjects / issues to potential observers.

The sorts of observational topics that can be addressed within such a model might include:

- The family member with a mental illness;
- The ‘attached’ child;
- The ‘detached’ child;
- The child with ‘challenging behaviours’
- The family ‘in denial’

To conclude . . . an invitation

The Excellence in ECI Steering Committee invites you to participate in these exciting Learning Events during 2007. To learn more visit the website:

http://www.eciavic.org.au/professionals/Promoting_Excellence.html

Julie Barber	Scope
Susana Gavidia-Payne	EPIC
Val Spence	Kalparrin
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