

The Journey to a Primary Service Provider Model:

**LESSONS LEARNED
ALONG THE WAY**

Purpose of today

- Share evidenced based recommendations from the field which support early intervention in natural environments.
- Define key terms such as transdisciplinary, primary service provider, joint home visiting, and coaching and they relate to early intervention.
- Understand strategies for improving early intervention services in natural environments.

Evidence Based Recommendations for Early Intervention in Natural Environments

TA Community of Practice: Workgroup on Principles
and Practices in Natural Environments

Mission of Part C

Early intervention builds upon and provides supports and resources to assist family members and caregivers to enhance children's learning and development through everyday learning opportunities

7 Key Principles of Early Intervention

1. Infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts.
2. All families, with the necessary supports and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development.
3. The primary role of a service provider in early intervention is to work with and support family members and caregivers in children's lives.
4. The family's priorities, needs and interests are addressed most appropriately by a primary provider who represents and receives team and community support.

Key Principles of Early Intervention

5. The early intervention process must be dynamic and individualized to reflect the child's and family members' preferences, learning styles and cultural beliefs.
6. IFSP outcomes must be functional and based on children's and families' needs and family-identified priorities.
7. Interventions with young children and family members must be based on explicit principles, validated practices, best available research, and relevant laws and regulations.

Definitions

Primary Service Provider Model

One professional provides weekly support to the family, backed up by a team of other professionals who provide services to the child and family through joint home visits with the primary service provider. The intensity of joint home visits depends on child, family, and primary-service-provider needs.

McWilliam, 2010

Joint Home Visit

*A home visit made by the Primary Service Provider **and** a team member for the purpose of providing the team member's service through assessment, demonstration and parent education.*

Remember...

- **Majority** of home visits are done by the **same** primary service provider week after week
- There is **not** a predictable frequency of joint home visits.
- Joint home visits occur because of need, **not** scheduling

Transdisciplinary Teaming

Synonymous with the primary service provider model, where one professional supports the family in carrying out the early intervention plan, backed up by a team of other professionals.

- Team is made up of professionals from several disciplines **AND** parents.
- All team members (including parents) share responsibility for the development of the plan and the decision making process.
- Requires team members to cross discipline-based boundaries and share roles

Lessons Learned

Lesson 1

“Natural Environments”
isn't a Place

Council for Exceptional Children, Division for Early Childhood

1999 Part C Regulations

- ⦿ §303.18 Natural environments.
 - As used in this part, natural environments means settings that are **natural or normal for the child's age peers who have no disabilities**.

2011 Part C Regulations

- ⦿ §303.26 Natural environments.
 - Natural environments means settings that are **natural or typical for a same-aged infant or toddler without a disability**, may include the home or community settings, and must be consistent with the provisions of §303.126.

- “A natural environment includes both places *as well as activities* where children without disabilities would typically be found within the community...”

Dathan Rush, MA, CCC-SLP, and M’Lisa Sheldon, PT, PhD, *Natural Learning Environment Practices Defined, Coaching in Early Childhood, 2006.*

Retrieved from <http://coachinginearlychildhood.org/>

It is NOT:

- Just the *location* of intervention
- Taking the clinic or classroom into the home or a “*take-out service*”

It is:

- Relevant to daily routines leading to embedded learning throughout the day, everyday
- Focused on the needs of the child and family
- Family friendly
- Use of toys, furniture, and people that are readily available in the child's environment throughout their daily routines
- In the home, child care setting, playing at the park, riding in the car, going to the store, eating in a restaurant

Unexpected Benefits:

- ◉ Comfortable and reassuring environment
- ◉ Offers privacy for families, no need to compare with other children and families
- ◉ Limits exposure to illness or compromise to delicate health for medically fragile
- ◉ Undivided attention from PSP and family / caregiver to focus on their shared goals

● The Natural Environment

“...reveals the problems and more importantly the possibilities...”

Barbara Chandler, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, *Advance for Occupational Therapy Practitioners*, Vol. 25, Issue 5, p. 8.
February 2009. Retrieved from <http://occupational-therapy.advanceweb.com/Article/Working-Where-Life-Is-Really-Lived.aspx>

Lesson 2

The Magic Is Not
In The Bag

Basic Premises

- Learning occurs between visits, using daily routines as the foundation.
- Materials used to support successful participation in daily routines should be readily available to families
- Familiar toys and materials allow for generalization of skills with functional outcomes and learning opportunities with natural consequences.
- Bringing in toys/ tools limits your possibilities.
- We **want** parents to know what we know.

What item can you not live without ?

- Let go of the tools of the trade; allow yourself to become the most important “tool”
- Allow yourself time and opportunity to change.
- Change your expectation to one of discovery, not completion of a given task.
- Use equipment when it allows children to participate in family routines

The Real Magic Occurs...

- When families realize that they do have the tools necessary to support their children.
- When professionals realize that sharing their skills to empower others does not diminish their importance.
- Give of yourself, try it

Lesson 3

Parents are the Key

Parent and Child At Play

Parent meets identified
needs

Parents

+

Support by Professionals

=

Effective Interventionists

Mealtime

Trust

+

Respect

=

Positive Working
Relationship

Lesson 4

Respect Family Norms and Culture

A
Primary Service Provider's
Story

Lesson 5

Leave Your Title at the Door

In order for a transdisciplinary approach to be effective, professionals must engage in role-release and role-acceptance (Bruder, 2110; Sandall et al., 2005).

Several professional organizations such as AOTA, APTA , and ASHA recommend transdisciplinary teaming.

Your knowledge and skills will be constantly tested when you leave your “title” at the door.

We become both teachers and learners with our peers through mentoring, coaching and collaborating.

Lesson 6

Take Time for Reflection

Reflection

Reflective practice in early intervention is characterized by taking the time to step back from daily events, document reactions to those events, and brainstorming with others in order to analyze and problem solve issues and experiences (Gatti et al , 2001)

Make Time for Reflection

- Build reflection time into each session.
- Reflection on intervention and progress is a continuous practice.
- Use drive time for reflection while visits are fresh in your head.
- Help to develop your families' skills with reflection.
- Reflection builds competence, develops skills and guides practice.

The Parents Speak

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