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Collaborating with Families: Supporting and Including Caregivers in Early Intervention

Chris R. Watts

Marcus Autism Center, chris.watts@choa.org

Kimberly Ann Resua

Marcus Autism Center, kimberly.resua@choa.org

Jennifer Stapel-Wax

Marcus Autism Center, jennifer.stapel-wax@emory.edu

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Collaborating with Families: Supporting and Including Caregivers in Early Intervention

Chris Watts, MSW & Kimberly Resua, MT



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Objectives

- Participants will understand the importance of including caregivers in early intervention practices, with an emphasis on the core components of caregiver-mediated interventions.
- Participants will identify strategies for gaining and sharing information with families in the initial stages of intervention.
- Participants will identify coaching strategies designed to support caregivers throughout the EI process.

Early Intervention: A Background

- 1973:
 - American Disabilities Act
- 1975:
 - Education for All Handicapped Children Act
- 1986:
 - IDEA was passed
 - **Part C: Statewide, Comprehensive, & Multidisciplinary Service**
- 2011:
 - 300,000 plus children nationwide qualify for early intervention
- 2012:
 - 6,640 children receive services from Babies Can't Wait in the state of Georgia



Why Early Intervention?

- To enhance the child's development
- To provide support and assistance to the family
- To maximize the child's and family's benefit to society
- To promote brain development in the first three years of life
- To develop strong, every day living skills for later in life



(The National Early Childhood Technical Center, 2011)

Broadening our Perspective

- *Historically:* Early Intervention system advocated **family-centered practices** to include caregivers in decision making and establishing goals.
- *Recently:* Early Intervention system advocates a broadened perspective of family-centered practices with an emphasis on **caregiver-mediated intervention**.



(Friedman, Woods, & Salisbury, 2012)

Let's Compare!

Clinician-Implemented
Intervention



Caregiver-Implemented
Intervention

Clinician-Mediated Intervention

- Clinician educates/informs caregivers
- Clinician gathers information on caregivers' priorities and concerns
- Clinician infuses caregivers' priorities and goals into treatment as applicable
- Clinician implements treatment plan
- Clinician tracks progress
- Caregivers observe and take turns
- Caregivers implement home program



Caregiver-Mediated Intervention

- Partnership between caregivers & clinician
- Family-centered collaborative planning
- Clinician gathers information from caregivers
- Clinician observes natural activities of the day
- Caregivers & clinician engage in ongoing consensus building conversations
- Caregivers directly use intervention practices to increase positive learning opportunities & acquisition of skills
- Clinician guides & educates caregivers' implementation via collaborative coaching



Let's Start at the Very Beginning...

Initial Conversations with Families



Where Do We Begin?

Video: Initial Conversation

Gaining and Gathering Information

- Core components of initial conversations with families:
 - Details of the early intervention program
 - Parent participation
 - Less early intervention jargon and more every day language
 - Timing is everything

(Woods & Lindeman, 2008)



Gaining and Gathering Information

- Tools for gathering information from families:
 - Conversations
 - Questionnaires
 - Mapping
 - Problem solving
 - Environmental scan



(Woods & Lindeman, 2008)

Video: Gaining and Gathering Information

Continuing to Gather Information

- Sharing while gathering information
 - Make the most of teachable moments
- Every child is different
 - Find out what activities are really preferred by the family
- Develop a plan to understand their values, concerns and outcomes



(Woods & Lindeman, 2008)

How Do We Build Caregiver Capacity?



How Do We Build Caregiver Capacity?

- Early intervention providers can build caregiver capacity by:
 - Strengthening the caregiver-child relationship
 - Building the caregiver's confidence and competence to enhance the child's learning
 - Accomplishing family-identified outcomes

(Friedman, Woods, & Salisbury, 2012)



Adult Learning Principles

- Research has shown that adult-learning strategies that incorporate **active-learner participation** have a greater effect than those that do not.
- Adults need opportunities to **practice new skills**, as well as opportunities to **evaluate and reflect** on their practice.



(Dunst & Trivette, 2009; Friedman, Woods, & Salisbury, 2012)

Stages of Caregiver Coaching

- Coaching strategies are organized within a **flexible framework** based on *adult learning principles* and *family-centered practice*.



(Friedman, Woods, & Salisbury, 2012)

Setting the Stage

- ***Setting the Stage:*** Caregiver and provider build rapport, share updates and information, and create a plan for the session.
- Caregiver coaching strategies:
 - Conversation and Information Sharing
 - Observation
 - Direct Teaching
 - Demonstrating

(Friedman, Woods, & Salisbury, 2012)



Video: Setting the Stage

Application Opportunities and Feedback

- ***Application Opportunities and Feedback:*** Caregiver practices strategies with child with support from provider.
- Caregiver coaching strategies:
 - Guided Practice with Feedback
 - Caregiver Practice with Feedback
 - Joint Interaction



(Friedman, Woods, & Salisbury, 2012)

Video: Application Opportunities and Feedback

Video: Application Opportunities and Feedback

Mastery

- ***Mastery***: Caregiver reflects, problem solves, and generalizes strategies to support child across natural activities and settings.
- Caregiver coaching strategies:
 - Problem Solving/Reflection

(Friedman, Woods, & Salisbury, 2012)



Video: Mastery

Bringing It All Together

- Coaching strategies are organized within a **flexible framework** based on *adult learning principles* and *family-centered practice*.
- Caregiver coaching is a **dynamic process**.



(Friedman, Woods, & Salisbury, 2012)

Video: Mastery

Brainstorm: Putting it Into Practice

- How do you think these coaching strategies could fit into your practice?
 - Gathering and gaining information
 - Building caregiver capacity
 - Utilizing adult learning strategies
 - Flexible caregiver coaching
 - Setting the stage
 - Application opportunities and feedback
 - Mastery



Overview

- Gathering information from families is an on-going process throughout their Early Intervention experience.
- Coaching a caregiver is a flexible process, so be prepared to adjust your supports as needed.



Thank You

- Thank you to the families who have participated in our program and shared their videos for us to use today.
- Contact Information:
chris.watts@choa.org
kimberly.resua@choa.org
- Questions?

