



Enhancing Services in Natural Environments

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*Part of a Web-based Conference Call Series
Sponsored by the OSEP Part C Settings Community
of Practice*



Key terms

- **Planning conversation:**
 - Discussion with families to plan individualized evaluation and assessment
- **Functional assessment:**
 - incorporates a variety of methodology within a child's familiar context to observe functional development/participation
- **Functional outcomes**
 - Context-based actions/interactions selected by families for themselves and children
- **Peer coaching**
 - Process by which EI practitioners reflect and practice together to build new skills and refine existing ones

Today's discussion:

- Move from solo performer to sit beside family to take part in their “story”
- Shift from directing “hands on” sessions with children in their homes to:
 - *Supporting* families in their actions/interactions with children in multiple settings/situations
 - *Connecting* families with community resources

What do you believe about EI and natural environments?

*Children will participate in
family/community life*

Covers routines, activity settings,
activities, places and spaces, actions,
situations, etc. *selected by families*

Misassumptions about “natural environments”

How to *get* family/colleagues to be in the same boat with *me*

Getting parents to take an active role

Having parents *perform* the home program or task in my presence to assure success

Natural Environments: Touch Points

- Initial planning conversation
- Functional evaluation/assessment
- Functional outcomes
- Family/child supports & services
- Coaching colleagues

Purpose of planning conversation with families

<http://cte.jhu.edu/courses/IFSP>

- Talk with families about what they want for their child:
 - where and how a child will participate
- Individualize a child's initial evaluation and assessment: gather info to determine eligibility, answer family questions, select outcomes/strategies

Planning conversations with families: Guiding questions

Popper, 1996; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001

1. What does a family want to know?
2. What do EI specialists need to know? When do we need to know it?
(to help families select functional outcomes and supports/services?)
3. What measures will yield this info?
4. How can info be collected w/o intrusion?

Functional evaluation covers:

Meisels & Atkins-Burnett, 2000; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001

- Parent's description of a child's *medical* and *developmental history* and abilities across domains
- Discussion with parents → desires/concerns about when, where & how child participates
- Observation of a child within familiar context (people, places, things)
- Focused eval/assessment of specific areas

Focused assessment uses:

<http://cte.jhu.edu/courses/IFSP>

- Naturalistic observation
- Standardized measures, as appropriate
- Criterion-referenced instruments
- Informed clinical opinion

IFSPs are a family's roadmap

Rosenkoetter & Squires, 2000; <http://cte.jhu.edu/courses/ifsp>

- ***Where are families going?***

Functional Outcomes:

- Family-selected
- Context-based

IFSPs are a family's roadmap

*National Research Council, 2000;
<http://www.researchtopractice.info/>*

- ***How will we get there?***

Strategies:

- *help families adapt interactions, actions, routines, environment, schedule*
- *community resources*
- *formal services across agencies*

IFSPs are a family's roadmap

- ***How will we know?***

Measurable criteria:

- can be seen or heard by everyone
- are family's indicators

Family-child supports/services

Hanft & Pilkington, 2001; Barrera & Corso, 2003

- Decide on outcomes *before* choosing supports/services
- Consider informal and formal supports/services
- When selecting formal services, consider who has the *expertise* to help families implement strategies
- Reflect on culturally competent practices

Family-child supports/services

National Research Council, 2000;

<http://www.researchtopractice.info/>

<http://cte.jhu.edu/courses/ifsp>

- Embrace evidence-based practices
 - A child's *relationships* with primary caregivers organizes all his or her early development.
 - Children are *active* participants in their own development, based on their drive to *explore and master* their environment
 - Improved outcomes are noted when *consumers* of all ages are *actively involved* in planning and implementing intervention.

Embrace evidence-based practices con't

- New motor and communication behaviors are learned and used when a child has *repeated* opportunities for practice in *meaningful* situations with generalization of skills across *different* settings.
- The knowledge and resources of early childhood specialists are shared with a child's key caregivers through *adult-adult relationships* that *support* family members in their day-day responsibilities caring for their children

Family-child supports/services

Dunst, Hamby, Trivette, Raab, Bruder, 2000

- *Where* you interact with families depends on what needs to happen to help a child participate in key settings

Key elements of coaching

Hanft, Rush & Shelden, 2004

- Based on conversations of *personal discovery*
- Improves an individual's *performance* within a specific *context*
- *Process* for improving skill, trying new approaches, resolving challenges and building collegial relationships

Peer coaching depends on:

Hanft, Rush & Shelden, 2004

- Community of life-long learners
- Flexible format: expert and reciprocal models
- Opportunities for spontaneous and planned coaching

Learning styles for Coaching

Hanft, Rush & Shelden, 2004

Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic
Caregiver observes therapist	Caregiver summarizes feedback from therapist	Caregiver keeps journal
Caregiver observes others	Caregiver narrates actions from a video	Caregiver practices actions
Caregiver watches video	Caregiver listens to audiotape	Caregiver demonstrates actions to others
Caregiver reads an article and/or looks at illustration	Caregiver calls another caregiver	Caregiver joins support group or visits another caregiver

Quality Indicators: Supporting families

- Do you select outcomes *before* discussing services/frequency?
- Do you *reflect* on what works and why?
- Do you emphasize *supporting* caregivers and building their competency?
- Do you incorporate *principles of adult learning* in all your interactions?
- Do you reinforce *colleague's* suggestions?

Top Ten Must Reads!

- *Planning conversations:*

<http://cte.jhu.edu/courses/IFSP>

(Module 1 *Planning with families for eval and assessment*)

- *Eval/assessment:*

Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001

Meisels & Atkins-Burnett, 2000

Popper, 1996

<http://cte.jhu.edu/courses/IFSP>

(Module 1, *Comprehensive evaluation assessment*)

- *Functional outcomes*
 - Rosenkoetter & Squires, 2000
 - <http://cte.jhu.edu/courses/ifsp>
(Fall '04, *Developing IFSP with Families*)
- *Family/child supports & services*
 - Barrera & Corso, 2003
 - Dunst, Hamby, Trivette, Raab, Bruder, 2000
 - Hanft & Pilkington, 2001
 - National Research Council, 2000
 - <http://www.researchtopractice.info/>
- *Coaching colleagues*
 - Hanft, Rush & Shelden, 2004 (Chapter 7)

Training Information

- Target audience:
 - Early intervention/childhood programs
- TA Formats:
 - workshops, program evaluation, consultation, peer coaching
- Key topics/content:
 - EI in natural environments: Supporting families and children
 - Coaching and collaborative consultation
 - Developing effective IFSPs with families
- Costs
 - Include speaker fees, travel expenses, materials
- Contact info:
 - bhanft@comcast.net 301-587-6026