

Minibibliography

Assistive Technology and Diversity Issues

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Professionals need to take into account and understand how a family's cultural, ethnic and/or socioeconomic background may impact decisions about the use of assistive technology with young children. A number of studies have found differences in family reactions to assistive technology across cultures. For example, many Asian and Native American families value and expect a certain degree of dependence on the family (Hourcade, Parette & Huer, 1997). In these cultures, the use of assistive technology for increased independence by very young children may not be considered important. On the other hand, a strong value of many African American families is to fit into their communities, rather than appear different (Parette, VanBiervliet & Hourcade, 2000). AT devices that draw considerable attention to a child's disability in public places may not be acceptable to these families. Additionally, families from low socioeconomic backgrounds often have pressing concerns about basic needs such as health care, food, work and transportation that make it difficult for them to participate in AT evaluation and training sessions (Kemp and Parette, 2000). The priorities of these families may be very different than those of the professionals' working with their child.

These kinds of considerations obviously have important implications for the AT decision-making process. The following is a list of publications, many with abstracts from the ERIC (Educational Resources and Information Center) database, which discuss this issue in more detail.

Family Center on Technology and Disability. (2005a). *Family and cultural issues in assistive technology*. Retrieved December 6, 2005 from <http://www.fctd.info/reviews/reports/webboardTranscript.php?id=484>

ABSTRACT: An evolving issue in family-centered practice is the role of cultural and linguistic issues that may influence the participation of family members in the assistive technology (AT) decision-making process. Culturally and linguistically-based values may influence family perceptions of AT and the successful implementation of AT solutions agreed upon by team members. This online discussion addressed issues related to developing an understanding of family perspectives about AT that are often very different from the perspectives of professionals. The discussion featured experts Phil Parette, Director of the Special Education Assistive Technology Center at Illinois State University, and Joan Breslin Larson, AT Specialist.

Family Center on Technology and Disability. (2005b). *Family and cultural issues in AT service delivery*. Retrieved December 6, 2005 from <http://www.fctd.info/reviews/reports/webboardTranscript.php?id=474>

ABSTRACT: Effective assistive technology planning and decision making for children and youth with disabilities should include careful consideration of family and cultural factors. Inclusion of the family when considering assistive technology needs of the child is the key to identifying important family and cultural perspectives that can “make or break” the successful integration of assistive technology in the home, school, and community. Despite the recognition that families should be integral to the AT decision-making process, family and professional partnerships have often been difficult to establish in practice. Cultural and language barriers may compound the difficulty of forging a strong connection between families and professionals. Families from different cultural backgrounds may be less inclined to participate in the process of considering assistive technology for their child for a variety of reasons. This online discussion featured experts Phil Parette and Tom Nurse, who answered questions, shared their experiences and offered strategies for educational professionals to develop more family-centered AT practices.

Huer, M. B., & Wyatt, T. (1999). *Cultural factors in the delivery of AAC services to the African-American community*. Retrieved December 6, 2005 from <http://www.asha.ucf.edu/huer.wyatt.html>

ABSTRACT: There are a variety of approaches to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) service delivery. This article reviews a culturally inclusive AAC assessment model and examines how the model can be used in assessing the AAC needs of African-American children who may be severely physically and/or communicatively challenged. The authors discuss several cultural factors that may impact the delivery of AAC services within the African American population and offer suggestions that can serve as a general guide for providing culturally appropriate services and options for AAC users within this population.

Hourcade, J. J., Parette, H. P., & Huer, M. B. (1997). Family and Cultural Alert! Considerations in Assistive Technology Assessment. *Exceptional Children*, 30(1), 40-44.

ABSTRACT: Discusses cultural and family factors to consider when evaluating a student with disability for assistive technology devices, and the need to involve families in decisions about the uses of the devices. The need to be sensitive to family needs for acceptance and to be aware of cultural differences is discussed.

Judge, S. L., & Parette, H. P. (1998). Family-Centered Assistive Technology Decision Making. Infant-Toddler Intervention. *The Transdisciplinary Journal*, 8(2), 185-206.

ABSTRACT: Discusses a family-centered assessment and intervention approach that empowers and enables families in the selection and use of assistive technology by young children with disabilities. It considers key characteristics of parent/professional partnerships; child, family, technology, and service-system domains; and the use of culturally sensitive practices in making decisions about assistive-technology devices and services.

Kemp, C. E., & Parette, H. P. (2000). Barriers to Minority Family Involvement in Assistive Technology Decision-Making Processes. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 35(4), 384-92.

ABSTRACT: This article examines systemic barriers (i.e., racism and prejudice, equity of resources, and professionals' views of themselves being different) faced by minority families in the

assistive technology decision-making process. Implications for professionals working with students with mental and developmental disabilities from minority families are drawn.

Parette, H. P. (1997). Family-Centered Practice and Computers for Children with Disabilities. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 25(1), 53-55.

ABSTRACT: Examines a family-centered approach to the prescription and delivery of computers to children with disabilities. Discusses effective team decision making regarding computers in the home environment, and the relevance of family and cultural factors, such as family routines, stress, cultural value systems, and time constraints. Considers implications for professionals working with families with children with disabilities.

Parette, H. P. (1995). *Culturally Sensitive Family-Focused Assistive Technology Assessment Strategies*. Paper presented at the DEC Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs, Orlando, FL, November 30-December 2, 1995. Retrieved December 7, 2005 from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/23/0f/3b.pdf

ABSTRACT: This review of the literature on assistive technology (AT) assessment strategies for infants and toddlers focuses on taking cultural differences into account while developing individualized family service plans. Topics covered include current practices and issues, including the value of a team approach and the need to consider child factors, AT device factors, and service system factors. Family, cultural and other related issues addressed include family expectations of AT, changes in family interaction patterns and stress, the social environment, cultural influences, ethnicity, acculturation, social influences, developmental expectations, and life experiences. A comprehensive model for AT decision-making is offered in the context of future assessment considerations. The review concludes that professionals should become competent in both family-centered strategies and culturally competent intervention approaches.

Parette, H. P., & Anderson, C. L. (2001). Family and Related Service Partnerships in Home Computer Decision-Making. *Special Services in the Schools*, 17(1-2), 97-113.

ABSTRACT: Provides a review of literature related to perceptions of home computers held by various cultural groups. Argues that families vary in their degree of involvement in working with professionals to make decisions about home computers. Describes training as a primary support required by many families to ensure effective implementation of home computers.

Parette, H. P., & Brotherson, M. J. (2004). Family-Centered and Culturally Responsive Assistive Technology Decision Making. *Infants & Young Children*, 17(4), 355-367.

ABSTRACT: This article discusses issues related to effective assistive technology (AT) decision making when working with culturally and linguistically diverse families who have infants and toddlers with disabilities. It describes the role of AT in the service planning process and the importance of cultural reciprocity for meaningful information gathering, in order to address each family's unique strengths, needs, and priorities.

Parette, H. P., Brotherson, M. J., & Huer, M. B. (2000). Giving Families a Voice in Augmentative and Alternative Communication Decision-Making. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 35(2), 77-90.

ABSTRACT: A study involving 58 parents of children with disabilities investigated how professionals could help families learn how to use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)

devices. Sensitivity toward child specific issues of ethnicity and disability, and parental involvement in parent-professional partnerships were stressed.

Parette, H. P., Huer, M. B., & Brotherson, M. J. (2001). Related Service Personnel Perceptions of Team AAC Decision-Making across Cultures. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 36(1), 69-82.

ABSTRACT: This article describes a preliminary information-gathering activity that examined 37 professionals' perceptions of their roles and that of families in the augmentative and alternative communication processes. Transcripts of proceedings were analyzed, and perceptions were organized around five themes: communication style, specific information needs, values, teaming, and implementation/training.

Parette, H. P., Huer, M. B., & Scherer, M. (2004). Effects of acculturation on assistive technology service delivery. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 19(2). Retrieved December 6, 2005 from <http://jset.unlv.edu/19.2/parette/first.html>

ABSTRACT: This article examines of the complex process of acculturation and its relationship to assistive technology (AT) decision-making and service delivery. The authors review a range of influences on the acculturation process, including a discussion of socioeconomic status and its relationship to acculturation. Specific recommendations are provided to assist AT teams with the decision-making process.

Parette, H. P., & McMahan, G. A. (2002). What Should We Expect of Assistive Technology: Being Sensitive to Family Goals. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 23(1), 56-61.

ABSTRACT: This article contains the list of recommendations for dealing with family goals and expectations when considering the use of assistive technology. For more information go to <http://ericec.org/osep/newsbriefs/news32.html>

Parette, H. P., & Petch-Hogan, B. (2000). Approaching Families: Facilitating Culturally/Linguistically Diverse Family Involvement. *Exceptional Children*, 33(2), 4-10.

ABSTRACT: This article presents recommendations to increase family involvement among culturally/linguistically diverse families of children with disabilities. Recommendations include using different communication approaches, providing alternative meeting sites, providing information and training to parents, and understanding family priorities, needs, and resources, and including parents as volunteers.

Parette, H. P., & VanBiervliet, A. (2000). *Culture, Families, and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Impact: A Multimedia Instructional Program for Related Services Personnel and Family Members. Executive Summary and Final Report.* Retrieved December 7, 2005 from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/10/c9/3c.pdf

ABSTRACT: This report details the outcomes of a project designed to develop decision-making strategies and materials related to the prescription of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices for children with disabilities. The project resulted in the development of the first interactive, bilingual CD-ROM designed to be used by related services personnel, vendors, and family members from diverse cultures to develop competencies that assist in effective AAC decision-making. Instructional materials were developed to provide information and multimedia vignettes designed to sensitize related services personnel to child, AAC device, family/social, cultural, and system issues prior to the selection and use of AAC devices, provide structured procedures and checklists to use during the planning, implementation, and evaluation of AAC

devices. Multimedia vignettes also provide simulated practice in the use of the procedures. These interactive materials will enable service providers to make the most appropriate decision about the prescription of AAC devices while balancing child, AAC device, family, cultural, and system resource considerations. The report includes a description of the different phases of the project, findings from family and professional focus groups that led to the development of the interactive materials, and information on project dissemination.

Parette, H. P., VanBiervliet, A., & Hourcade, J. J. (2000). Family-Centered Decision Making in Assistive Technology. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 15(1), 45-55. Retrieved April 10, 2003 from <http://jset.unlv.edu/15.1/parette/first.html>

ABSTRACT: This paper presents an overview of family and cultural issues relevant to planning for assistive technology (AT) for students with disabilities. The potential for interactive multimedia in helping teams and families make AT decisions is reviewed. It describes a newly available interactive CD-ROM designed to provide basic information for augmentative and alternative communication decision-making

*To search the ERIC databases or access the references herein,
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