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.
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
§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.

§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…”


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…”

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
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
References


ERIC/OSEP Special Projects (Fall 2001). Family involvement in special education: Research Connections in Special Education (number 9). Arlington, VA: The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education.


McWilliam, R.A. (2000). It's only natural... to have early intervention in the environments where it’s needed. Young Exceptional Children: Natural Environments and Inclusion (monograph series 2), 17-26.


