

# Implementing Relationship-Based Strategies with Children and Families



Presentation created with the work of Amy Cocorikis and the Illinois Early Intervention training Team

## **It All Starts Here**



Building a network of relationships and supports

**What qualities/skills do you think make a good early intervention provider/Service Coordinator ?**



**What do you think families are looking for from their providers and Service Coordinators...**

**What skills do families think providers and Service Coordinators should have?**



Take a few minutes to write down your thoughts...

**Let's look at what some families have shared...**



What was really important to these families??



## **Qualities parents report they want in an EI SC/provider**

- Friendly
- Open minded
- Flexible-ready to accept change
- Able to relate to families at families' level
- Understands-knows that all families, children, mothers are different-that everyone is an individual



- Lets families know she is not there to inspect or judge
- Doesn't EVER make mothers feel guilty
- Doesn't EVER try to change someone's values or lifestyle
- Uses our language-not a bunch of technical words



- “What I want is someone who is available to listen to me—someone who states up front that she wants to answer my questions and allots a chunk of time to show me things.”
- “Down the road, our needs will change, and I will probably need different things.”



- “Respect. Respect of different family issues and needs. Going into a home and listening to the mother who knows her child better than your team. Speaking directly to the parent and not trying to blow off questions or answer the questions with simplistic answers when they need more. . . Even saying ‘I will find that out for you’ is better than giving a simplistic answer that is no answer.”



- “Understands the amount of stress your team being there is causing the parent and the child.”



**How does working with the family impact the development of a young child with special needs?**

Relationships Are The Key  
to Successful Intervention !



# Principles



- Early intervention provides supports and services to enhance the capacity of families to meet the needs of their young child.
- Parents and caregivers are the key to successful early intervention.
- We want to enhance a family's confidence and competence.



- “All learning takes place in the context of relationships and is critically affected by the quality of those relationships.”

Norman-Murch, 1996



- “Relationships matter critically. Consistent relationships with caring adults are essential for healthy development.”

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004, p.5



- “The essential features of the environment that influence children’s development are their relationships with the important people in their lives-beginning with their parents and other family members, and extending outward...”

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child,2004 p.4

# Relational Capacity-Building

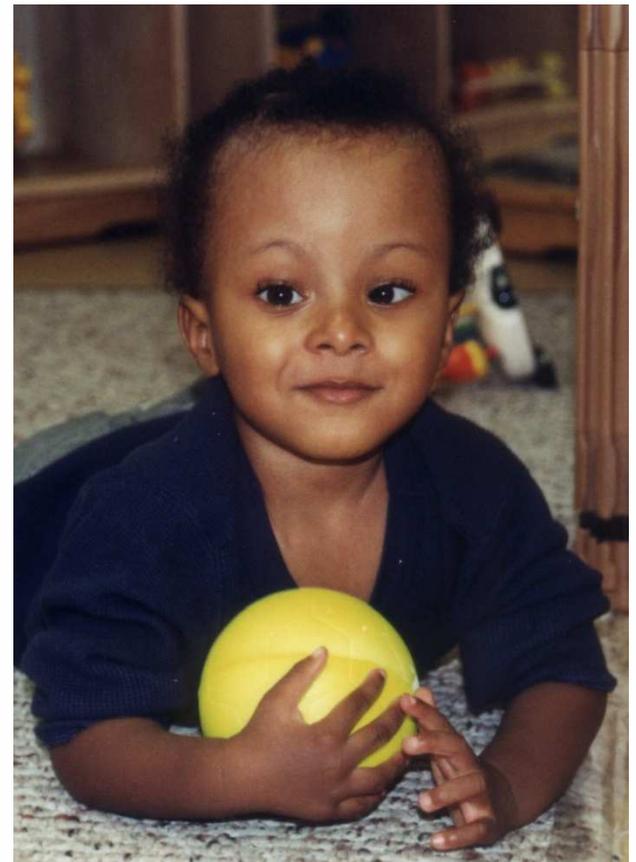


- To support *all* families in EI
- To work with each family to facilitate the social emotional development of their child
- To pay attention to relationships at all levels to accomplish these goals

## Benefits to Infants and Families



- Emotional needs of children and families are acknowledged
- Relationship between parent and child is thought about, supported, and valued
- Parents work with SC and providers who are better supported; have a safe place to talk about the work and are more able to listen and respond to them



## Benefits to Children and Families



- Family is seen more as a whole; child seen more as a whole person
- More individualized, timely services are provided, based on a fuller understanding

*Exceptional Parent*

# Parallel Process



***Do unto others as you would have  
them do unto others (Pawl, 1998)***

## **What is my role?**



How can we support and promote healthy relationships between parents and children?

# “Walking the Talk”



Putting  
Relationship Based  
Strategies  
Into Practice



## **Relationship-Based Strategies**

- Demonstrating Concern and Empathy...
- Promoting Reflection...
- Observing and Highlighting Parent/Child Relationship...
- Respecting Role Boundaries...
- Responding to Upsets and Negativity...
- Managing Your Own Feelings...
- Promoting a Working Alliance...
- Collaborating on a vision with the family



# **DEMONSTRATING EMPATHY AND CONCERN**



# **PROMOTING REFLECTION**



# **PROMOTING AND HIGHLIGHTING THE PARENT CHILD RELATIONSHIP**



# **RESPECTING ROLE BOUNDARIES**



# **RESPONDING TO UPSETS AND NEGATIVITY**



# **MANAGING YOUR OWN FEELINGS**



# **BUILDING A WORKING ALLIANCE**



# **CREATING A VISION WITH THE FAMILY**



**“If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to the people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person.”**

**Mister Rogers**



“People won’t care how much you know...  
Until they know how much you care”

Parents As Teachers

Thank you for all that you do, for all that you are, and  
for sharing your time and talents with us today...