Meeting the Challenges, Part II: Evidence-Based Strategies for Working with Parents with Intellectual Disabilities

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Which parents are we talking about?

- Cannot travel alone
- Reading & writing problems
- Erratic appointment keeping
- “Poor historian”
- $ problems
- Overwhelmed
- Difficulty with child management
- Covering-up
- “Benefactor”
- History
Some Myths About Parents with “Mental Retardation” . . .

1. Their children will not be normal.

2. They will have lots of children.

3. They cannot learn.

4. They cannot give their children adequate care.
Which parents are most likely to succeed?

• NOT IQ
• Spouse/significant other
• Extended family
• $$
• Number of children
• Mental health / substance abuse
• Comprehensive services
• Willingness to take advantage of those services
• **Attitude of service providers**
Shifting the Balance
Balancing Risks & Opportunities

**RISKS**
- Mother’s age
- Parent education
- Income
- SES
- Job stability
- Pregnancy
- Number of children
- Residential stability
- Marital status
- Marital stability
- Child temperament
- Infant separation
- Parental mental health
- Parental health
- Parental self-esteem
- Parental locus of control
- Parental social skills
- Coping strategies
- Parenting style
- P-C interactions
- Nutrition
- Accidents/toxic substances/illnesses
- Alternate caregivers
- Extended family
- Extrafamily support
- Life events

**OPPORTUNITIES**

-- Dunst, 1993
Putting Together the Puzzle

- Self-esteem
- Social skills
- Problem-solving
- Role comprehension
- Locus of control
Parents learn best when . . .

- what they are learning is important to them
- “difference” is okay
- mistakes are okay
- there’s no “right” or “wrong” answer
- the atmosphere encourages openness
- they are encouraged to trust in themselves as well as others
- they feel respected and accepted
- they (not you) evaluate how they’re doing.
The **WHAT**: Evaluating Curricula and Resources

What questions should I be thinking about?

- Is this a priority?
- Are adaptations or changes needed?
- Is the level appropriate?
- Does it fit the family’s values?
- Is it consistent with adult learning?
- Does it impact the five pieces of the parenting puzzle?
- Are objectives stated?
- Is it interactive?
- How will I evaluate my success?
Animal Bingo Picture Cards

- Fox
- Monkey
- Pig
- Cow
- Dog
- Sheep
3. Hold baby against your chest.

4. With hand gently pat baby on back until baby burps.
Zip, Zip, Zip

*Purpose:* Having fun while changing a diaper

Diapering a baby gets harder as the baby gets older. Having a special poem to say will keep the baby's attention.

*Zip, zip, zip, off it goes!*
*I see baby without clothes.*
*Zip, zip, what do I see?*
*Diaper on, one-two-three!*

Trying to say the word “zip” is great fun for the baby.

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Balloon Game

*Purpose:* Making discoveries; language and motor skills

Fill up a small balloon with \( \frac{1}{4} \) cup of water. Tie a knot in the balloon. Show your baby how it changes shape as you squeeze and wiggle it.

Now for the fun: let the baby experiment. The baby will soon discover that it will bounce when you drop it and wiggle when you roll it.

Do the same thing with two balloons of different colors. Each time you drop the balloon or squeeze it, identify the color by name. Each time you give the baby a balloon, say the color as you give it to the baby.
The **HOW**: What’s important to remember about “teaching”?

- Impact of social setting
- Prior knowledge
- Forming connections
- Self-regulated learning
  - Preskills
  - Current strategies
  - Alternative strategies
  - Modeling (thinking aloud)
  - Practice plus feedback
  - Generalization
Sunny Side of the Street

- Ready for School, Ready to Read, Ready to Get Along, Ready to Play, Ready for Bed
- Mentor and Parent Handbook (includes “assessment”)
- DVD with 5 episodes
- Let’s Sing About It CD
- 5 Sunny Side of the Street card decks
- 5 Parent Picture Pages (can be downloaded from www.lookiris.com)
- 5 Fridge Charts
**Ready for Bed**

Think about the parent with whom you are using the program and their parenting (of their child ages 3-6) over the last few weeks. Does the parent...

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1. **Have a predictable pattern of evening activities (a bedtime routine)?**

2. **Spend time in a shared activity with the child, before bed, such as singing a song, or looking at a book?**

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3. **Use encouragement to build positive behavior during the bedtime routine?**

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4. **At bedtime, give the child choices from a set of alternatives that are OK with the parent?**

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5. **Appropriately express physical affection toward the child at bedtime?**

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Add all five scores ___
Divide by five to get the average score ___
1. Put an $×$ under the day that you and your child practice your bedtime routine.

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2. Circle the picture of any parenting skill that you used that day.

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Routines  Encourage  Shared Focus  Show Affection  Give Choices
Choose one parent with whom you are working. Identify a task that the parent might want you to teach her/him.

1. Is your relationship strong enough to support you as the “teacher”? If needed, how might you go about strengthening your relationship?
2. What teaching strategies have worked successfully in the past with this parent? (i.e., how does the parent learn most effectively?)
3. What teaching strategies haven’t worked? Why?
4. What skills are involved in this particular task?
5. What does the parent already know (general knowledge) about the topic? Do you need to know more about what the parent knows? How will you find that out?
6. How does the parent currently accomplish this particular task?
7. What are some possible alternatives to suggest? How will you adapt your curriculum?
8. Where is the best place to “teach” this? (Think of the impact on the parent.)
9. How can you help the parent make connections (i.e., “generalize”)?
Tell Me . . .
I Forget

Teach Me . . .
I Remember

Involve Me . . .
And I Learn