Meeting the Challenges, Part III: Assessing Your Program’s Readiness to Work with Parents with Intellectual Disabilities

Marilyn Espe-Sherwindt, PhD
Family Child Learning Center
Akron Children’s Hospital & Kent State University

mespeshe@kent.edu
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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
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**
Keys to Success:
Programs That Can Make a Difference!
## Program characteristics

1. Staff has a philosophy that promotes respect of the competence and integrity of the family.  
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3

2. Staff has training on effective approaches and strategies to work with parents.  
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3

3. Intake process eliminates waiting list and minimizes paperwork.  
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3

4. Professional roles and responsibilities are clear yet flexible.  
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3

5. Sufficient staff time for planning and processing is available and protected.  
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3

*Families/parents = parents with intellectual disabilities*
1. Assume that parents are competent . . .
or are capable of becoming competent.

2. Create opportunities for parents to become competent.

3. Meet needs in ways that promote parents' sense of control.

These principles work for parents with intellectual disabilities/challenges, too!

-- Dunst, Trivette & Deal, 1988

PRINCIPLES OF EMPOWERMENT
Your relationship with families

6. Relationship-building is a primary goal of staff-parent interaction. 1 2 3
7. Parents have ongoing and consistent opportunities for input and decision-making. 1 2 3
8. Warmth and respect are consistently conveyed to parents. 1 2 3
9. Family strengths and priorities are identified through parent-provider interactions. 1 2 3

*Families/parents = parents with intellectual disabilities
Putting It All Together

Needs

Supports

Strengths

Family

Help-giver
What is a “need”?  

For a need to be a “need,” there must be . . .  

- Awareness of discrepancy  
- Perceived impact on well-being  
- Awareness of potential resource  
- Perception that they can access the resource  

-- Dunst, Trivette & Deal, 1988
**Keys to Success**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention and teaching new skills</th>
<th>Not yet in place</th>
<th>Partially in place</th>
<th>Fully in place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Providers work to shift the balance between risks and opportunities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Effective help-giving strategies are utilized.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Activities and interactions are implemented in ways that promote the development of self-esteem,</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>social skills, internal control, role comprehension and problem-solving.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Providers choose teaching strategies and materials that match the learning needs of individual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The family’s informal support system is identified, built upon &amp; expanded.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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

Role comprehension

Problem-solving

Social skills

Locus of control
Where do families turn for support?
Keys to Success*

Coordination

15. Communication and collaboration occur among all agencies involved with the family.

16. Transition among supports and services is planned in ways that expand a family’s network of supportive partnerships with providers.

17. Strategies for evaluating progress focus on relevant child and family outcomes.

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## Evaluating Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How can we demonstrate that . . .</th>
<th>Strategies/Tools</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A trusting relationship has been established?</td>
<td>• Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Parents have made gains in the 5 key areas?</td>
<td>• <em>Profile for Looking at Change</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We have assisted families to expand their support networks?</td>
<td>• Periodic “Eco-Mapping”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. We have met our program outcomes? <em>(Any adaptations needed for this group of families??)</em></td>
<td>• <em>Assessments from your curricula</em> • IFSP outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ??????</td>
<td>•</td>
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</tbody>
</table>