Working with and Coaching Multiple Caregivers and Foster Families

Jeannine Billings, Mary Ellen McGeehan, Monica Ross

Jeannine.billings@itsjc.org Maryellen.mcgeehan@itsjc.org monica.ross@itsjc.org

Infant Toddler Services of Johnson County
Objectives

- Discuss family dynamics and behavior/interaction style
- Foundations for communicating among team members and caregivers
- Provide strategies to prepare information for parents when the child is seen in daycare or grandparent’s.
- How to work with the Department of Human Resources and foster families effectively
Family Dynamics & Behavior/Interaction Style

- DISC
- Temperament Scale: Becky’s info, acknowledge the parent’s temperament,
  - Temperament tool link
  - How to engage a parent that is not involved, how to get a parent off the couch, looking deeper at potential mental health for parent
- Cultural differences: men vs. women, feeding children, discipline in public, co-sleeping,
DEC Recommended Practices - Family

- **Family-centered practices**
  - Practices that treat families with dignity and respect; are individualized, flexible, and responsive to each family's unique circumstances; provide family members complete and unbiased information to make informed decisions; and involve family members in acting on choices to strengthen child, parent, and family functioning.

- **Family capacity-building practices**
  - Practices that include the participatory opportunities and experiences afforded to families to strengthen existing parenting knowledge and skills and promote the development of new parenting abilities that enhance parenting self-efficacy beliefs and practices.

- **Family and professional collaboration**
  - Practices that build relationships between families and professionals who work together to achieve mutually agreed upon outcomes and goals that promote family competencies and support the development of the child.
The Better Conversation Beliefs

- I see conversation partners as equals
- I want to hear what others have to say
- I believe people should have a lot of autonomy
- I don’t judge others
- Conversation should be back and forth
- Conversation should be life-giving
The Better Conversation Habits

- Demonstrating Empathy
- Listening with Empathy
- Fostering Dialogue
- Asking Better Questions
- Making Emotional Connections
- Being a Witness to the Good
- Finding Common Ground
- Controlling Toxic Emotions
- Redirecting Toxic Conversations
- Building Trust
  - It’s not about the nail
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHrOg
Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

- Jackson’s annual with Susan and ME
- Brenda and Juliana with Kathy
- Coaching in daycares
Listening: An Active Process

- Look at the person talking
- Attend to what they are saying
- Indicate to the person that you are listening
- Ask clarifying questions if you don’t understand
- Summarize what the person said
- Listen with empathy

Interaction Technique: OARS

- Open-ended questions “Tell me about...how did that make you feel...etc.”
- Affirmations of strengths “That was great when...I can tell that you have worked really hard...etc.”
- Reflective Listening “So you feel...it sounds like...etc.”
- Summarize like...Let me make sure that I’ve got it right...etc.”
Working with KVC and Foster Families

- Develop a relationship with local SRS/KVC
  - How to do that?
- Enquire about safety plan or other restrictions
  - ITSJC Safety Plan, Hotline Procedure
- Keep all stakeholders informed
- “Red book” that follows the child
- Visitation issues with biological parents
  - What happens when the priorities change for the foster family after the child has a visit with biological parent:
    - Example: the priorities might be using words to make choices and requesting what they need and after the child returns from a visit, the child exhibits significant social-emotional changes that affect sleeping, eating, tantrums, behavior;
    - PSP work with the foster family to anticipate those changes and patterns after a visit and what strategies to put into place before and after a visit with the biological parents
Parent’s Primary Concern vs. Caregiver’s Primary Concern

- When the concerns are different, listen to what the daycare provider concern is and in what situation.
- Ask if the daycare provider has shared these concerns with the parents and if so has a joint plan has been created yet to address the concerns.
- The PSP might then explore typical development with the daycare provider and gather more information whether the behavior/concern is related to transition, frustration due language skills, behavior, and/or peer/class dynamics, etc.
- When concerns are the same, the PSP can share strategies that are working at home with the daycare provider to see how those strategies work at daycare.
Differences in Daycare Provider
Differences We’ve Noticed

- Nannies are typically more engaging with the child in a playful manner; they are managing less children than a daycare provider (in-home or center-based) and emotionally invested in the child differently than the grandparent.

- Grandparents tend to nurture and assist the children more versus applying the strategies of choice-making and open-ended questions; lots of yes/no questions.

- Daycare Providers are managing a classroom of children and depending on the daycare, there can be staff turn-over, no consistent/rotating classroom teachers, and daycare providers are required to follow the daycare curriculum.
When The Child Responds Differently In Different Settings...

- Daycare providers sometimes have more success with redirection than parents do because the attention goes to the children who are complying versus the child who is not.

- The classroom situation is structured and predictable and allows the child to have some readiness and anticipate the transitions to travel successfully between them.
  - Home might be more chaotic than daycare, have less structure and henceforth create more tantrums for the child due to being less predictable.
How To Establish Good Relationships With Daycare Providers

- Introduce yourself, discuss parents’ priorities and how does that fit with what the daycare provider sees in the classroom

- Ask what the daycare provider’s concerns are
  - We are here to support your needs to have Johnny have success during his day,

- Ask the daycare provider to share what they have tried with the child so far
  - What has worked/what hasn’t worked

- How often does this behavior/concern occur during the classroom and is this different from the peers’ behavior and developmental expectations for the child’s age
  - This gives the PSP an idea of what knowledge the daycare provider has about typical development

- Schedule visits during naturally occurring classroom transitions (snack, circle, outside) so there is one daycare provider available to talk while the other provider works with the children
Strategies applied in different settings

- Modeling
- Redirecting of behaviors rather than addressing negative
- Introducing the concept of choice making to the daycare provider and child to allow the child more independence while the teacher maintains control of the classroom
- Talking with the teachers about needing more emotion words and descriptors to express how the child is feeling rather than using physical communication/gestures
- Use of social stories if child has “first, if...then” concepts to redirect behavior at either home and/or daycare
- Daycare providers /parents may sing a song in prep of transition to clean up
- Use timers to set up activity finish/start
- Allowing the child a choice to be a line leader or door holder to help with transition and with parent the choice might be to carry the backpack or ride in the stroller,
Following Up With Parents After Visits

- Foster families: the FSC gets a release of information signed to share with the social worker, foster family, bio parent
- Progress note written after home visit and emailed to the parent; discussed with grandparents during home visit
- PSP texts the parent a day/time/routine (snack, circle, outside) for the next appointment, the parent confirms with the daycare and then gets back with the PSP
- Get permission from the parents to release the progress notes to the daycare centers if applicable
- PSP asks parent to meet at daycare first thing in morning, over lunch, late afternoon and schedule some visits at home with the family too so there is continuity
Resources
