



Early Intervention Newsletter

Active Parent Participation is the key to effective early intervention services

Parent participation in early intervention is crucial, because the greatest amount of a child's time is spent with the parent, rather than the therapist.

“Parents are the child's first and most essential teachers”

(Boyer, 1995, p.47-48).

According to Roffwarg and Muzzio (1966), if a 1-year old child received 2 hours of intervention without parent participation in a week, that would only account for 2% of the child's waking hours. Therefore,

when parents are taught strategies to foster the development of their children during daily routines, they are able to “teach” their children when the therapists are not there. The early intervention professional who shows a parent the importance of everyday learning opportunities will be able to increase a child's competence much more than one who depends entirely on an hour therapy session per week. The learning opportunities provided by a child's

everyday life circumstances are significant to child development.

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Parent Infant Program

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“Parents have the glorious opportunity of being the most powerful influence, above and beyond any other, on the new lives that bless their homes.”

- L. Tom Perry

Early Intervention Resources

☺ Great web site for parenting information:

1. The power of learning through play –includes different ideas for different ages and stages
2. Healthy minds- nurturing your child's development
3. The power of music in child development

http://www.zerotothree.org/ztt_parents.html

☺ The Web site is designed to help caregivers understand and gain ideas for how to use simple, everyday moments to promote a child's social, emotional, and intellectual development.

Loving and Learning Through Everyday Activities:

<http://www.zerotothree.org/magic/>

Natural Learning Opportunities Web site created for the research project—lists activity settings and learning opportunities in everyday activities !!!

http://home.comcast.net/~jenmaury/

Transitioning Your Child Into Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

-by Kristine K. Pearman, M.Ed. (Chesterfield County Schools)

Transitioning your child into a preschool program is difficult for any parent. It is one of the first signs that they are “growing up” and often is the first time the child will be leaving the home to be cared for by someone else. The transition into an E.C.S.E. program can be even more difficult as it also includes a realization that your child is not developing at the same rate as a child typical of their age. As an early childhood educator, I understand that this is an emotional time for families. It will help to ease your anxiety to have an outline of what is involved in the process of transitioning your child into an ECSE program. Here is a general schedule that you will follow and some suggestions to make it easier.

First, you will go through the “paperwork process.” After a referral is made, your child will need to be evaluated in order to find out what delays, if any, are occurring in order to be found eligible for special education services. You will be invited to a “Child Study Meeting” in which it will be determined which evaluations would be appropriate for your child. These evaluations may include a developmental/educational evaluation, an occupational or physical therapy evaluation (if motor issues are a concern), a psychological, a sociological, and a speech/communication evaluation. The developmental evaluation will look at the overall areas of cognition, adaptive skills (dressing, toileting, attending), communication, motor skills, and personal-social skills. The people evaluating your child will often ask for your input, as they cannot possibly find out everything about your child in a brief amount of time. Before evaluations, be sure that your child is fed and well rested so that they will be able to give their best effort.

After the testing is completed,

there will be an “Eligibility Meeting” to review the evaluations and discuss whether they show that the child does have delays in one or more areas of development and is indeed eligible for special services. Consider this a great opportunity to ask questions! Share your thoughts and observations so that the team has a full understanding of the daily functioning of your child. Don’t be intimidated or shy. Team members may have worked with your child for an hour. You, on the other hand, see your child every day across a variety of situations. Share progress that your child has made between the time of the evaluation and this meeting. It is going to be up to you to either sit back quietly and listen to one evaluation being read after another, or whether you are involved in a meaningful discussion of how your child is developing. The team really wants to know “the whole child” to have a better understanding of how they can help.

After your child is found to be eligible for services, an “I.E.P. (Individualized Education Program) Meeting” will be held to discuss what your child specifically needs to work on and what setting/services would be most appropriate. Know that there are a number of options available. If your child is only delayed in speech, then speech therapy may be the best option. If more than one area of development is significantly delayed, then a center-based ECSE program (a preschool program in a school) may be appropriate. There may be mainstream or home-based opportunities in your county which would be appropriate if your child could be successful in a regular community preschool environment, but just needs some adaptations at his preschool or consultation in the home. Know that the team you are

meeting with is advocating to help children be successful. The school staff wants to do everything they can to make this transition smooth.

Once the I.E.P. meeting is held, services will begin as soon as possible. If your child will be transitioning into an E.C.S.E. classroom, the county will typically need time to arrange for bus transportation and then your child can start school. If your child is starting school in September, there may be a classroom orientation. If your child is starting school during the school year, ask the teacher if you can come for a brief visit one day before your child begins. This way your child can see the classroom, meet the teachers, and see where he will be going once he leaves you. After your visit, talk with your child positively about how much fun they are going to have at school. I highly recommend not sending your child on a big yellow bus at 2-4 years old waving goodbye to you without them understanding where they are going. Ask the teacher what supplies you should send with your child and what the daily routine will be. If you have any individualized concerns such as toileting issues or allergies, discuss these things with the teacher prior to the start of school.

Sending your child to school really can be a wonderful experience. Your child will be cared for in a supportive and nurturing environment. By working together with your child’s teacher and therapists and by supporting their efforts, you will see wonderful progress in your child and what they will be able to accomplish. You will also grow as a parent in knowing what is best for your child, restoring your hope, and feeling confident that you are placing your child in a program where they are going to develop and be successful and happy.

Best wishes for a smooth transition!