

Starting Out In Family Centered Early Intervention

The Building Blocks For Success

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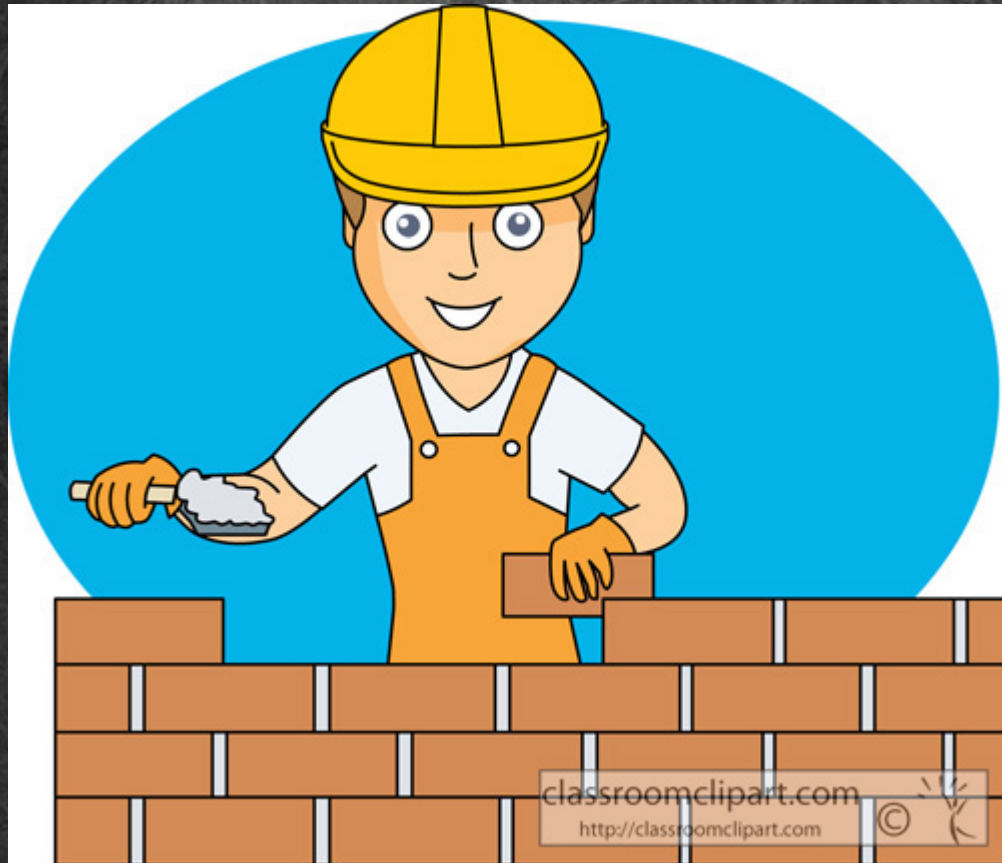
With special thanks to Nanette Thompson and Paula Pittman for their expertise and willingness to share their creative energy with me to help me grow professionally; without them this presentation would not be possible.

To Build An Effective Early Intervention Program You Have To Start With The Basics

Gather all of the materials you need



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Build A Foundation

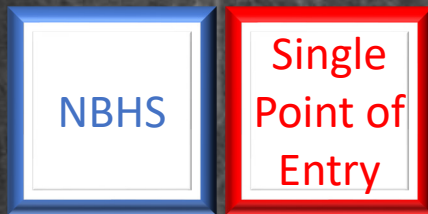
Newborn Hearing Screening

- All children need to be screened at birth, and referred on for more testing if there is a suspected hearing difference
- Follow-up diagnostic testing must be made available and accessible to families



Single Point of Entry Into Early Intervention

- Once the child has a diagnosis of being deaf or hard of hearing, referral should be made to one agency or location that will ensure the child and family will receive the early intervention services they need



Leadership

- You must have a strong leader at the helm who can bear the weight of the challenge of starting a program and creating a program that effectively meets the needs of children and families



Systematic Way To Monitor And Track Progress

- Before you begin providing services, determine what assessments you will use to monitor progress and create a way to track that progress over time – child progress, family progress, staff progress, program progress



Selection Of Core Curriculum

- Select a core curriculum, or a combination of curricula or create hard guidelines of materials you will present to families so that a standardization of information given to families is followed, given needed flexibility to meet individual family/child needs



Obtain Sustainable Funding

- Without sustainable funding, even the most amazing, effective programs will eventually be forced to shut down.



Dedication

- Establishing and sustaining an effective early intervention system takes an extensive amount of energy, time and money. You must have a leader and staff who are completely dedicated to the launch, efficacy and sustainability of the program.



Vision

- Not only do you need a strong leader and a committed team, you also need someone or group of individuals on your team who have a clear vision for what your early intervention program will look like, and how you can continue to create a new vision as you build each phase of the program.



Interagency Collaboration

- Deaf and hard of hearing children and their families need support from multiple professionals who typically work for a variety of different agencies. In order to establish an effective early intervention program and sustain it, a collaboration between all of those professionals and agencies or departments is necessary.



Agreement, Trust and Release

- We are a profession burdened by philosophical bias, territorialism and infighting. In order for an early intervention program to be truly successful, all parties involved must lay down their philosophical talisman and turn the focus on the individual needs of the child and family. When we can agree that all communication approaches have value, and all languages have value, we can begin to walk this journey together with families and children without division.



This Foundation, When Strongly In Place, Will Allow Us To Build A Strong And Effective Program



Building Effective Early Intervention Services

- What are the building blocks of effective home-based early intervention services?



Access

- Children who are deaf or hard of hearing deserve to have full access to communication and language. Determining what communication opportunities and approaches allow the child to have full access to language in all environments is essential to the success of the child and overall the success of your program. Helping parents understand the importance of this is critical.

Brainstorm

- Brainstorm possibilities and options with parents/caregivers and other team members. It's okay not to have all of the answers, but it's not okay to ignore the issues due to uncertainty.

Collaborate and Connect

- Connect parents with other parents and other families who have children who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Connect families with resources and professionals who can support them in the journey of raising a deaf child
- Connect families with Deaf adults, Deaf Mentors and Role Models and the Deaf Community

Focus on Daily Routines

- True language happens all day, everyday in every routine and environment the child is involved in. Demonstrate the skill/strategy and coach and support parents as they incorporate that skill in their daily routines.

Educate, Expand and Encourage

- Educate parents about typical language development and how language will develop in their child who is deaf or hard of hearing. regardless of the communication approach(es)/language(s) that the child and family are using.
- Expand the language through expanded vocabulary, expanded syntax, expanded pragmatics
- Encourage and affirm the positive things you see happening in the home. Reinforce the many skills the parents already have and use with their child.

Family Needs

- Be mindful of life situations that may be occurring within the family and that may require immediate attention.
 - health and well being of the child or a family member
 - financial burdens
 - lack of sleep
 - stress

Grief

- Providers must always keep in mind the impact that grief can have on a parent's ability to take in new information and apply strategies and skills that are being shared.

Hearing Aid/Cochlear Implant Use

- Assist families in understanding hearing loss and audiograms, how listening devices can assist their child to access information with the residual hearing he or she possesses.
- Share strategies to help parents with the struggle of keeping listening devices on little ones.
- Provide information regarding the benefits and challenges of listening devices so parents can make informed decisions about which device would be of greatest benefit to their child.

Individualize Services

- Be flexible and ready to make changes to accommodate for a child and/or family's specific needs and priorities. Allow the family to guide their own services and advocate for the needs of their family and child.

Join the Family

- Join the family by listening, observing, honoring and respecting the family, their desires, dreams and hopes for their child and their family. Make cultural adjustments and learn all that you can about the family, what they value and believe and support that in any way you can.

Key Concepts

- Keep it simple! Focus on key concepts that will enhance the child's development of communication, language and listening skills, honoring what the parents are currently doing and adding information and ideas when and where you can. Add one new skill each week until the family has a storehouse of strategies and skills that they implement naturally.

Language Acquisition and Early Communication

- Emphasize the importance of early communication and language skills for their child who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- Begin with early communication skills like the value of eye gaze, gaining joint attention, turn-taking and early imitation.
- Teach parents how to use language strategies that will enhance the development of their child's language skills.
 - narrating the day
 - using comments and explanations with the child
 - "one plus" rule

Monitor Outcomes

- Choose appropriate assessments for children who are deaf or hard of hearing to monitor individual child outcomes, adjust goals and strategies to ensure the child leaves the program on language level.
- Gather assessment information on children in the program as a group and evaluate program success as a whole.

Provide Non-Biased Information

- Providers must continually examine their own beliefs and biases in order to ensure that information that is provided to family regarding communication and language opportunities is delivered in an open and unbiased way, helping families examine the benefits and challenges of each approach and exploring how the approaches can be used as tools to enhance the child's language development and overall comprehension.
- Help parents match their child's abilities with a communication/language approach or approaches that will enhance their child's skills and abilities.

Remain Open-Minded

- Providers do not have the privilege of being judgmental. In order to fully partner with a family, providers must remain open-minded. In order to effectively serve and team with families, open-minded in terms of family lifestyle, communication approaches, listening devices, religious beliefs, etc.

Partner

- Early intervention is first and foremost about relationship. It is within the trust and respect of the relationship between the parents/caregivers/family and the early intervention provider that success will develop. This partnership is the first that families often create with a professional educator, and can shape the way parents interact with and advocate for their child throughout his or her academic career.

Use Effective Questions

- Using effective questions with parents will allow the provider to hear the true concerns of the family and will also prevent the early intervention provider from dominating the home visit. Using good open-ended questions and attentively listening to the family will help the provider follow the lead of the parents/family.
- Use open-ended questions with the child as well, encouraging the development of critical thinking and more complex use of language.

Read, Read, Read!

- Incorporate the use of books in as many home visits as possible. Coach families as they read with their child, helping them incorporate open-ended questions and complex language concepts into their storysharing.
- Incorporate Deaf adults into your visits to model how to take advantage of the visual environment to enhance the book sharing experience and to make books come alive.

Show the Skill or Strategy

- Model the skill or strategy that you are explaining to the family, then engage the parent to take over the interaction and give feedback to the parents as they practice the skill with their child.
- Discuss what worked well during the interaction with their child and what didn't seem to work as well.
- Incorporate the skill or strategy in a variety of activities, environments and routines, expanding the child's opportunities to use and develop new language skills.

Be a Team Player

- Work with the family to develop a good team to meet the needs of their child who is deaf or hard of hearing as well as their family as a whole. Discuss communication and advocacy strategies with the parents, encouraging them to take the lead with the team. Move from a place of dependency to a place of independence...in other words, work yourself out of a job!

Utilize Your Tools!

- Use the child's audiogram, developmental checklists, assessments and curricula to create a well defined program and path for each individual family you serve, focusing on obtaining information that will help the child develop his or her full potential in every developmental domain.

Value

- Value the family. Have confidence in the family's strengths and take advantage of those strengths to advance the child's language.
- Value the child, honor and respect his/her abilities and needs.
- Value involvement of parents and deaf or hard of hearing adults in your services to families and in the early intervention program.

Ask, “Where Are We Going?”

- Sometimes parents are unclear as to where they want to go as it relates to their child’s development, or as it relates to the information or skills they need to address their child’s needs. Help them develop clear goals through discussing assessment results and observing what the child is doing. Be honest and gentle.

Explain, Explain, Explain

- Think out loud. Parents want and need information!
- Always provide the rationale for the activities you are doing and information you are sharing.
- Explain your actions with the child as well and teach the parents to do the same, allowing the child to learn about thought processes and understand “theory of mind” language.

Talk About the Why

- Parents cannot follow through on a strategy unless they understand WHY it is important, HOW it fits into their goals for their child, WHAT they can do on a daily basis to enhance their child's language, and WHERE these strategies can lead them.

Zest for Success

- As a provider, maintain very high expectations for the children you serve. This passion for excellence will be contagious and parents will begin to catch the vision of all that their child can do and can become. Brainstorm with parents to continue creating successful language experiences for their child.

• “The promise of all early intervention testing, services, and programs can only be realized if families are recognized as the earliest and most important resource for the deaf and hard of hearing child and therefore must be treated as fully informed, equal, and collaborative partners by professionals who have appropriate training and experience.”

- *National Agenda: Moving Forward on Achieving Educational Equality for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students*

