

Supporting Families

Social and Communication Development

Determining the Meaning of Challenging Behavior


Positive Behavior Interventions and Support

Teaming to Build a Behavior Support Plan

Intervention in Everyday Settings

Supporting Families


Positive Beginnings: Supporting Young Children with Challenging Behavior 1



Learner Objectives

- ❖ Participants will acknowledge priorities, issues, and concerns for families with children with challenging behavior
- ❖ Participants will have an awareness of family-centered practices for children with challenging behaviors


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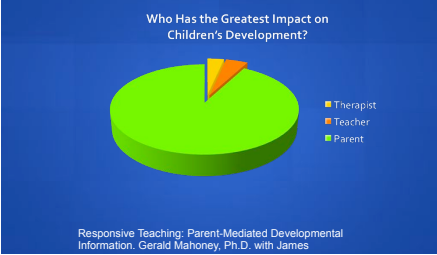
Why Family Participation?

- ❖ Primary force behind the child's development now and in the future
- ❖ Vested interest in child's behavior
- ❖ Available for interaction and communication throughout the day
- ❖ Shared information, support, and skills
- ❖ Improved child and family outcomes

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Who Has the Greatest Impact on Children's Development?



Responsive Teaching: Parent-Mediated Developmental Information. Gerald Mahoney, Ph.D. with James


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**Activity:
Barriers to Participation**

- ❖ Given that family participation improves family and child outcomes, why is it challenging in many situations?
- ❖ Turn to a partner and share some of the barriers and challenges you have faced, particularly for children with challenging behaviors.
- ❖ As a large group, list your ideas.

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Why Family Participation Fails or Frustrates

- ❖ Differences in expectations
- ❖ Differences in knowledge
- ❖ Differences in values
- ❖ Differences in perspectives

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From the Family's Shoes to Yours...

- ❖ Imagine you and your 2-year-old twins, Austin and Abigail, are meeting friends at the park. It's been weeks since you tried to do anything fun with the kids and even longer since you spent time with a friend your own age. Living away from family, working part-time while your partner is overseas with the military, and caring for the twins has taken incredible energy. Lately, Austin has been especially consuming. He screams and throws himself on the ground when expected to follow directions and he hits, kicks, and bites other kids at childcare when he wants something they have. He has "pitched fits" as your grandpa calls them in the grocery store, at the gas station, and at the doctor's.
- ❖ What are you feeling? Walk in her shoes!



The Family's Perspective

- ❖ Like all families, parents of children with challenging behavior worry about their child's safety...
 - For example, do others understand when he asks for help, expresses pain or illness, or makes requests to use the bathroom, get a drink, or play with a toy?



Jamaal's Mom

"Nothing is more important to me than being Jamaal's mom. He is beautiful and such a gift from God. I am so blessed."





Joslyn's Fears for Jamaal



"He doesn't have ways to let others know what he is thinking, what he wants, what he needs. People often don't know he is happy or sad or scared or hurt. I worry they will just punish him when he isn't being bad; he just doesn't know."



The Family's Perspective *continued*

❖ Like all families, parents of children with challenging behavior want their child to learn...

- For example, will he learn to write his name, know his letters, begin using numbers to prepare for the future as a successful adult?



Gus' Dad

"They told us he couldn't stay because he didn't use the Montessori materials the right way. They didn't want Gus in their program."





The Family's Perspective *continued*

❖ Like all families, parents of children with challenging behavior fear their child will not make friends and have fun...

– For example, will he/she be invited to birthday parties, be chosen for games because social skills are limited and behaviors are harmful to others?



Realistic Fears...



“Gus kicks dust, oblivious to a friend imitating him...”

– Gus' mom



A Good Day

“A good day can be so simple...”

– Gus' mom





Families Have Challenges Too...

❖ Parents are tired. There is fear of the next episode of challenging behavior, frustration from the last, and an edge of tension for each moment. Add that to the constant supervision the child needs, and exhaustion is paramount.



Families Have Challenges Too... continued

❖ Parents are confused by the services, professionals, and systems. Families are anxious about the labels, diagnoses, and jargon used by the providers. They wonder about the future for their child.



Labels & Name Calling...





Family Emotions & Fears

- ❖ Parents are embarrassed when their child acts out or tantrums or when others stare or criticize in public or in their community activities.



Brendan's Story

- ❖ A case study, pre PBS and post-PBS
- ❖ Child with Autism Spectrum Disorder eligibility
- ❖ Family Involvement



Brendan – Before PBS





Brendan's Family – Before PBS



How People Viewed Us

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Brendan – With PBS



Family Emotions & Fears continued

❖ Parents feel vulnerable and are hurt by comments from family and friends criticizing their child and their parenting. Add this to fears, embarrassment, and exhaustion.

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“He just didn’t get his way...”

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**Activity:
Family Voices...
Family Feelings...**

- ❖ What did you hear?
- ❖ What surprised you?
- ❖ What is important for you from these quotes and clips?
- ❖ What can you do to remember the important messages you have heard?
- ❖ What actions are needed in daily communications with families?

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Best Intentions



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**Family-Centered
Participation**

- ❖ Embraces the unique and lasting relationship between family members
- ❖ Recognizes the family as the context for assessment, intervention, and establishes mutual goals
- ❖ Is bi-directional with open and ongoing communication
- ❖ Respects and adapts to the multiple and diverse responsibilities and roles of families

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Family-Centered Participation continued

- ❖ Provides adequate information, resources and support for the family to make informed decisions
- ❖ Offers information and opportunities for participation in a timely, sensitive, and individualized format
- ❖ Is committed to growth and change
- ❖ Is respectful of the family's choices and role of decision maker



Learner Objectives **Section 2**

- ❖ Participants will explore strategies for:
 - Enhancing communication gathering and giving between families and team members
 - Identifying effective methods for “getting and staying in touch with families!”



Building Relationships with Families

- ❖ Listen to and value information shared by families
- ❖ Share information with sensitivity
- ❖ Empower the family by helping them access resources
- ❖ Emphasize the child's and family's capabilities and strengths
- ❖ Help the family build new and meaningful dreams for their child's future
- ❖ Provide supports within the authentic activities of the family
- ❖ Focus on improving the quality of life rather than on “fixing the child”



Initial Communications

- ❖ Establish partnership process
 - Everyone is an expert...and everyone is a learner
- ❖ Set the stage for proactive caregiver participation
 - Prepare caregivers for process; seek input for plan
 - Offer examples, opportunities, alternatives: Functional Assessment is a novel experience
- ❖ Initiate capability vs. disability point of view
 - Communicative competence as basis for behavioral intervention
 - It's not about the behavior – it's the function of the behavior

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Conversation Starters for Identifying Family and Caregiver Routines

Ask about:

- ❖ Typical day
- ❖ Nights, weekends
- ❖ Regularly or frequently scheduled appointments/events
- ❖ Sibling activities
- ❖ Family activities/events
- ❖ Preferences
- ❖ Expectations

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Powerful Questions

- ❖ What's working well for you now?
- ❖ What worry wakes you up at night?
- ❖ If you had an assistant for a day, what would you be doing? What would your assistant be doing?
- ❖ What has been an accomplishment for you and your child that makes you happy?
- ❖ What community activities do you feel you are missing where you would like to participate?
- ❖ What makes a day challenging?
- ❖ What makes a day good?

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All About Me

Who are the important people in my life?
What activities do I like to do at home and in the community?
How do I play with children, adults, and toys?
What does my family want me to be able to do?


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Ongoing Communication

- ❖ Ongoing communication evolves from initial interviews and conversations
- ❖ Filling out the forms is just the start
- ❖ Building relationships with families requires time, trust, listening, sharing, and caring

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Why Go “Beyond” Forms and Interviews?

- ❖ Gives the family “more” voice in the process
- ❖ Provides meaningful information for the family and team members
- ❖ Increases ease of putting information into functional family words on the IFSP/IEP and Support Plan
- ❖ Individualizes routines for the identified outcomes for the child and family
- ❖ Supports actual implementation through adequate and accurate information

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Reminders for Supporting Ongoing Communication

Check the:

- ❖ Language and nonverbal communication you use
 - Primary language
 - Body language
 - Cultural perspective
- ❖ Materials you use to gather and give information
 - Reading and writing levels
 - Public or private
 - Perspective (strengths based, deficit model)



Reminders for Supporting Ongoing Communication continued

Check the:

- ❖ Methods you use for communication
 - Problem-solving and decision making strategies
 - Levels of directiveness, cooperation, explicitness
- ❖ Formats for reporting progress and results
 - Authority vs. partnership
 - Confidentiality and emotional safety



Julius' Insight

“I need them to help me know what to do. I don't want them to tell me what to do.
 He's my son. I know him and my family and how we do things.”



**Reminder:
Variables that Impact
Communication**

- ❖ Family history, culture, and values
- ❖ Personality or learning style
- ❖ Child-rearing beliefs
- ❖ Stressors and logistics (e.g., work or school schedules, family and community responsibilities)
- ❖ Time and resources (e.g., number of back-up babysitters, health insurance, transportation, finances)



**Reminder:
Variables that Impact
Communication continued**

- ❖ Language use and educational level
- ❖ Clarity of roles and expectations
- ❖ Physical and mental health, abilities and disabilities of family members
- ❖ Knowledge about and perceptions of challenging behavior



**Activity:
Options that Work**

- ❖ With a small group, identify communication strategies that you have used or believe are potentially positive options for communicating with families.
- ❖ Share the small group ideas with the large group to develop a master list of strategies.



Key Points

- ❖ Communication is a bidirectional process
- ❖ The “give and take” can help build trust and promote collaborative relationships
- ❖ There is no one “right” way to communicate with families
- ❖ Keys to success include frequent, positive, and strengths-based interactions



Problem-Solving as a Communication Strategy with Families

- Step 1: Defining the problem with information
- Step 2: Generating ideas
- Step 3: Evaluating ideas and choosing solutions
- Step 4: Developing and implementing the plan



Problem-Solving

- ❖ Step 1: Defining the problem with information
 - What is the problem?
 - Who is affected? How?
 - What do they believe about the problem?
 - What is the impact?
 - What could happen if it is ignored?
 - What could happen if it is addressed?
 - What are the facts? What is believed?
 - When, where, how, and who should join in the problem-solving process?



Defining the Problem: What and Why?

- ❖ Essential to determine what the problem is prior to determining how to solve it
- ❖ Perceptions and assumptions must be identified
- ❖ Data helps identify who should be involved and the structure of the problem
- ❖ New definitions should be viewed as “working hypotheses” and open to further clarification
- ❖ Too much information can limit creativity and enthusiasm for the process



Problem-Solving

- ❖ Step 2: Generating ideas
 - What has been tried? What worked? What didn't? Any ideas why?
 - What recipes or guidelines have worked before?
 - What other ideas should be considered?
 - Suppose we couldn't do it the way we always have, what should we do?
 - What have I always wanted to try?
 - What could technology offer? Additional resources of people, time, money?



Generating Ideas: Who and How?

- ❖ Initially involve only those directly affected, interested, and able to contribute – more (people) isn't necessarily better
- ❖ Be informal but organized and systematic
- ❖ Keep a record for easy review; set a time limit
- ❖ Defer judgment – no criticizing, commenting, chuckling, teaming up. Be creative!
- ❖ Build on each other's ideas – group intelligence is good – more (ideas) are better
- ❖ Visualize the solution ... what did it take?



Problem-Solving

- ❖ Step 3: Evaluating ideas, choosing solutions
 - What key factors must be considered?
 - What ideas "jump" to the top of the list?
 - How can ideas be combined to improve quality?
 - Are there any that can be eliminated as not feasible due to the key factors?
 - What has been ignored that should be reviewed?
 - Have any new ideas come up for consideration?
 - What looks like the best solution?
 - What might go wrong? What is the back-up plan?



Choosing Solutions

- ❖ Watch the process
 - All voices, all ideas, all equal
 - Monitor emotion, tone, language
 - Stay on task and watch time
- ❖ Use visuals to enhance memory
 - Highlight key factors for constant review
 - Underline, circle, check BUT gently... opinions change as the process continues
- ❖ Clarify, review, sequence
 - Address best and worst case scenarios
 - Be willing to try new things



Problem-Solving

- ❖ Step 4: Developing and implementing the plan
 - What should be tried first?
 - What is an alternate plan?
 - Are resources (people and objects) available?
 - Who will do what? When? How?
 - What are the most important steps to prevent problems?
 - Who will monitor actions?
 - How will we know if it works?



Developing the Plan: What, When, Where, Who

- ❖ Address questions... now and later
- ❖ Share the responsibilities (but not everyone has to be equal)
- ❖ Get it in writing (but remember not all adult learners will respond... you can!)
- ❖ Establish a plan for communication
- ❖ Be realistic with timelines
- ❖ Put "first things first"



Problem-Solving Together

- ❖ Choose the right approach
 - One size does not fit all
 - Use ready made solutions when appropriate
 - More isn't better... enough is just right
 - Include informal supports and mentors
 - Promote independence
- ❖ Timing is essential
 - Don't wait too long... think prevention or early intervention... not crisis
 - Plan enough time for the process
 - Follow-up consistently and revise as needed



Problem-Solving Together

- ❖ Set the stage
 - Be prepared... setting, people, materials
 - Be sensitive to all the participants
 - Orient the group or individuals to your plan
 - Provide options and have back-ups if needed
 - Establish roles to increase participation, organization, efficiency, focus
 - Stay organized and keep participants engaged
 - Be prepared for disagreement; use consensus building strategies or voting



What's the Outcome of Collaborating with Families?

- ❖ Family members share what is important for their child and family;
- ❖ Family information is integral to implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and refining the Positive Behavior Support Plan and the child's everyday intervention;
- ❖ Families support their child by identifying and participating in typical activities and routines for teaching and learning;
- ❖ Increases child's outcomes because programs are implemented in many environments;
- ❖ Family members generalize strategies used across routines and into community settings;
- ❖ AND..... The gift of Family Empowerment!
