

Cradle to Career Education: The Role of Early Childhood Special Education as the Foundation For Learning

Task Force on Quality Inclusive Schooling
March 25, 2011
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Albany, New York

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Critical Issues

- Neurons to Neighborhoods report supports that prenatal, neonatal, early developmental factors impact educational outcomes.
- “Relationships” are the cornerstone for effective teacher-child relationships.
- Early education experiences provide the foundation for learning
- Inclusive settings maximize opportunities for young children with disabilities

Windows of Opportunity?



Brains are like faces....Similar, yet unique.



- Growing over time.
- Can be scarred, can heal.
- Change by experiences – positive nurturing is essential
- Impacted by nutrition.

Poverty and Children in the Early years

This year in this economy:
more than 1 in 5 , are poor,
the majority living in working families
The burden of poverty falls disproportionately
on minority children,
1 in 3 Black
1 in 3 Latino
1 in 10 White children.

The Cycle of Poverty and Race

- Black boy born in 2001 now in 5th grade had a one in three risk of going to prison if born in poverty - has a 30% chance of now being in special education.
- A Latino boy born in 2001 now in 5th grade had a one in six risk of going to prison , but if born in poverty – has a 30% chance of now being in special education
- Disparate educational opportunities

REF : Children's Defense Fund

The Biology of Adversity Suggests a Compelling New Theory of Change to Enhance Both Learning and Health *

- “ Because excessive activation of the body’s stress response systems can lead to long-term disruptions in brain architecture, immune status, metabolic regulation, and cardiovascular function ...
- ...better life outcomes could be achieved by decreasing the number and severity of adverse early experiences and by strengthening the relationships that protect young children from the harmful effects of toxic stress. “

* October 10, 2010 presentation by Jack M. Schonkoff – Creating the Future of Early Childhood Policy and Practice – A talk on the 10th Anniversary of National Research Council Comm on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development - *Neurons to Neighborhoods*

Important Lessons from Neurons to Neighborhoods

- All children are born wired for feelings and ready to learn.
- Early environments matter and nurturing relationships are essential.

THEREFORE we must

- Increase the understanding of the impact of behavior, emotion and *executive functioning on learning*
- Improve child outcomes by transforming the lives of the parents.

Why Relationships are Key : The Securely Attached Child

- *AS preschoolers* : higher self esteem, to positively engage/respond Learn More
- In *middle childhood*, more likely to be accepted by their peers
- In *adolescence*, the capacity for intimacy, self-disclosure, and successful functioning in mixed gender peer groups evolved

THESE children will be less likely to be referred for social reasons

Children with early relationship problems are more likely to

- Exhibit behavior problems e.g. *hyperactivity, conduct disorders, and aggression*
- Having difficulties adjusting socially
- Performing more poorly on measures of school readiness, expressive language and verbal comprehension
- Poorer cognitive development (although findings are contradictory) Hooper, & Cooper, 1996; Murray, Hipwell, Hooper, Stein, & Cooper, 1996).

Early Childhood Research:

Children who had attended child-initiated preschool classes had significantly better performance than children whose preschool experiences had been academically directed programs.*

Early Childhood Education has a life long impact on social adjustment outcomes and leads to reductions in delinquency, welfare dependency, and teenage pregnancy, and increases in educational and employment levels

\$1 spent on preschool saves between \$4 - \$8 in later social service costs to society (Barnett, 2007)

*Marcon, R. (1999) Differential Impact of Preschool Models on Development and Early Learning of Inner-City Children: A Three-Cohort Study *Developmental Psychology* 35, Issue 2, 358-375

Effective Early Childhood and Special Education

4. Explicit Child Directed Instruction
3. Embedded Learning Opportunities
2. Modifications and Adaptations
1. Quality Early Childhood Program

* Sandall, S, Schwartz, I, Joseph, G. (2002) *Young Exceptional Children*, 4(3), 3-9.

CONNECT MODULES

CONNECT

FPG Early Childhood Community

- Provides web-based, instructional resources for faculty and other professional development providers
- Hosts online discussions and provides resources for early childhood practitioners, researchers and families.
- Resources include the CONNECT Modules - free, web-based modules and resources for early childhood instructors and learners.
- Registration not required for most sections.

CONNECT Modules Learning Cycle

- Step 1: Dilemma** – Consider a dilemma.
- Step 2: Question** – Turn the dilemma into an answerable question.
- Step 3: Evidence** – Consider key sources of evidence.
- Step 4: Decision** – Integrate sources of general evidence, different perspectives, and unique contexts to make an informed decision.
- Step 5: Evaluation** – Evaluate the practice decision.

Four Modules

- **Module 1: Embedded Interventions**
Learn about the practice of embedded interventions to help children participate in a variety of early learning opportunities and environments promoting high quality inclusion.
- **Module 2: Transition**
Learn about practices to help support children and families as they transition among programs in the early care and education system.

- **Module 3: Communication for Collaboration**

Learn about effective communication practices that can be used to promote collaboration with professionals and families in early care and education, and intervention settings.

- **Module 4: Family-Professional Partnerships**

Learn about building trusting family-professional partnerships when working with families of young children.

Sample Module

Module 3

Communication for Collaboration

- Learn about effective communication practices that can be used to promote collaboration with professionals and families in early care and education, and intervention settings.

Step 1

In Step 1 you read about a practice dilemma and watch videos presenting two perspectives – one from a classroom teacher and one from a speech therapist - about how best to support the IEP goals of a four-year-old named David and his family.

[Step 1: Dilemma — Communication and the IEP](#)

Step 2

▪ **In Step 2** you turn this practice dilemma into an answerable question, with a focus on finding out whether intentional communication practices are effective in promoting collaboration with other professionals and families. You can:

- Use a step-by-step process to write an answerable question

Step 3

In Step 3 you consider key sources of knowledge about communication, including the best available research evidence about the effectiveness of communication practices, policies and professional guidelines, and experience-based knowledge about communication for collaboration. You can:

- Read a definition of *effective communication*
- View video examples of active listening, seeking information, joining and supporting
- Read a research summary on communication practices
- Listen to audio interviews with experienced-based family members & practitioners

[D. Experience-Based Knowledge — Early Childhood Community](#)

Step 4



In Step 4 you integrate these sources of evidence with the perspectives of collaboration partners to make an informed practice decision, and complete an implementation plan related to your decision. You can:

- View additional videos that share individuals' professional perspectives
- Complete activities that summarize, integrate, and make recommendations
- Create an implementation plan

Step 5

In Step 5, you considered ways to evaluate the communication plan. You can:

- Decide how you will collect and analyze data
- Use a simple tool to aid in self-reflection and get feedback from others
- Use the results to improve the plan

Using additional CONNECTS Resources

- [YouTube - CONNECT Modules: Instructor Webinar Series -- Nadya Pancsofar](#)