

Contemporary Practices in Early Intervention

online training modules and provider resources to enhance
the knowledge and skills of early intervention service providers

Family Assessment

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C requires that the Individualized Family Service Plan process include “a family-directed assessment of the resources, priorities, and concerns of the family and the identification of the supports and services necessary to enhance the family’s capacity to meet the developmental needs of the infant or toddler” (IDEA, 2004 SEC. 636. a. Individualized Family Service Plan. (2)) Through careful and thoughtful family assessment of strengths, concerns and priorities, families and early intervention service providers build outcomes and provide services and supports that assist the family in promoting their child’s development.

Benefits of Family Assessment

- Establishes rapport with family
- Tailor interventions to family and develop individualized strength-based outcomes
- Provides understanding of family system
- Helps family to identify their strengths

Components of Family Assessment

- Family Resources: strengths, abilities, and formal and informal supports that can be mobilized to address family concerns, needs or desired outcomes
- Priorities
- Concerns
- Strengths

How is Family Assessment Performed?

- Informal Conversations
- Formal
 - Family Needs Scale (Dunst, Cooper, Weedledreyer, Snyder & Joyce, 1988)
 - Family Needs Survey (Bailey & Simeonsson, 1990)

Common Perceptions and Challenges to Family Assessment

- Uncomfortable
- Intrusive
- Methods are unclear
- Family shares “too much”
- Family wants provider to identify resources, priorities, & concerns
- Family declines to participate
- Family culture

Tips for service providers

- Be self aware
 - Family Voices Family Centered Care Self-Assessment Tool
 - Family tool
http://www.familyvoices.org/pub/projects/fcca_FamilyTool.pdf
 - Provider Tool
http://www.familyvoices.org/pub/projects/fcca_ProviderTool.pdf
 - Users Guide
http://www.familyvoices.org/pub/projects/fcca_UsersGuide.pdf
 - National Center for Cultural Competence Self Assessment Checklist for Early Intervention Providers
<http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/documents/Checklist.EIEC.doc.pdf>
 - Other Checklists and tools
<http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/foundations/assessment.html>)
- Listen carefully
- Identify important decision makers in the family and understand how to interact

Additional Resources

Building on Families Strengths: Research to Application

<http://www.clemson.edu/fyd/bfs.htm>

Bailey D., B.& Simeonsson, R. J.(1990). Family Assessment in Early Intervention. Prentice Hall.

Bailey, D.B. & Simeonsson, R. J. (1990). *Family Needs Survey*. FPG Child Development Institute, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Available at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~publicationsoffice/pdfs/familyneedssurvey.pdf>

Dunst, C. J., Cooper, C. S., Weeldreyer, J. C., Synder, K. D. & Chase, J. H. (1988). Family Needs Scale. In *Enabling and empowering families: Principles and guidelines for practice*. C.J. Dunst, C.M. Trivette, & A.G. Deal (Eds.), Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books

Family Voices <http://www.familyvoices.org/>

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC)
<http://www.nectac.org/topics/families/famassess.asp>

National Center for Cultural Competence
<http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/index.html>

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