Equipment You Will Actually Use:
Elevating Family Priorities in Assistive Technology Selection

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Objectives:

Participants will:
1. Discuss effective strategies for asserting family priorities for AT selection.
2. Identify community resources and funding sources and how families can access them.
3. Develop realistic timelines to use in planning decisions.
4. Use a tool to communicate effectively with families and service providers to inform AT decisions and transition planning.
Equipment and dependency...

• Lowering expectations
  • Too many options
  • Too few resources
  • It’s my job to know the equipment

• Overprescribing
  • How much can we get
  • Doing everything we possibly can

• When help giving becomes toxic
Toxic Help giving

Fig. 1. Practice-based theory of family-centered helping giving depicting the direct and indirect influences of helping on self-efficacy beliefs and parent, family, and child behavior and functioning.
Resource Based Practices and Assistive Technology:

- Identify Priorities
- Identify Options
- Select
- Access
- Evaluate
Formal vs. Informal:
- Building capacity beyond Part C and Part B services
- Building social capital

Ask before you tell:
- When will you share information?
- When will you use demonstration?
- When will you do something for the family?

Think outside the box!
Pros and Cons:
- Consider access as well as function
- Keep an open mind

The family takes the lead

Consider:
- Must have vs. nice to have
- What will they do when I walk out of the door?
- What are non-negotiables?
- When can we talk about this again?
“Abandonment of AT devices (ie, rejecting their use) has been reported as a frequent occurrence when parents, other caregivers, or teachers cannot adequately support the child’s device use or maintain its use within desired activities and routines (eg, Mistrett, 2001; Parette & McMahon, 2002).”

Campbell, P. H., Milbourne, S., Wilcox, M. J. (2008)
Supporting Role:
- Explaining every step
- How will you do this next time?

Rethinking letters:
- Write letters together
- Use the team
- Deciding when to do something for the family
Planning for the future

Family growth        Practitioner growth

Making a plan for next time:
➢ Including transitions
➢ Life doesn’t end at 3, 6, 8, or 21
➢ Building individual self-advocacy

Resource Based Practices and Assistive Technology:
Taken as a whole, the results of these surveys suggest that early intervention providers reject myths about the underutilization of AT with infants and toddlers but report use of AT interventions only after children are past their second birthdays.”

“Parents and family members in our survey reported that over 70% of the time they located and tried devices without the assistance of providers. In addition, their average reported success rate with AT devices was 46.6%; if AT is to realize its promise for infants and toddlers with disabilities, success rates well above 50% will be required.”

Wilcox, et al. (2006)
Barriers & Factors Related to AT Underutilization

• Provider beliefs/attitudes about AT
• Funding issues
• Availability of AT
• Provider knowledge of AT use and decision making with young children
• Family’s level of involvement in selection of AT
• Family expectations, attitudes, and/or beliefs about AT

Wilcox, et. al. (2006)
Resource Based Practices and Assistive Technology:

- Individual & Family
- Teacher
- Administrator
- Therapy Team
- Physician
- Vendor
- Funding Source
Resource Based Practices and Assistive Technology:
How can caregivers and self-advocates take control?

• Planning and research
• Clear communication
• Focus on function
• Ask good questions
How can other team members get out of the way?

• Ask good questions
• Share information and options instead of making decisions
• Build families’ capacities to communicate with all team members
• Remember the one constant is the family- you will not be there forever
Equipment You Will Actually Use

Determining the need for equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we often do:</th>
<th>What we don’t do enough:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on</td>
<td>Focus on</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Diagnosis/Precedents</td>
<td>• Priorities in context!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Classroom/community convenience</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Eligibility</td>
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“We can see that good intentions, valuing the device, and being trained in its use just isn’t enough. It looks like we need a broader conversation about barriers, including the practicalities of incorporating a device into daily activities and routines, especially at home. We definitely need to address operational competency and buy-in, but our families and other stakeholders are likely to need more support than that. The authors remind us to keep communication at the center of the conversation, rather than the technology. After all, the device is only the tool—communication is the point.”

DeCarlo, et.al. (2019).
Resource Based Practices and Assistive Technology:

Focusing on the Priority

• Is there something your child needs help to do?

• Is there an area in your child’s life where you would like to see more independence?

• Is there something that could help your child achieve a goal?

• Can the technology help with a short term or long-term goal?
Team Based Learning
Questions?
References:


Survey

Please complete this survey. If you share your contact information we will keep you updated on new tools, materials, and trainings as they are launched.

Mark Resource-Based Intervention Practices as the training you attended.