Getting to Know Families in Early Intervention: Gathering and giving information that matters

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Building Family Capacity from the Beginning
A Two Way Street

Families: who they are, what they do, what they value

Early ACCESS providers: Who we are, what we do in EA, what we value in EA
Stuck in a Rut?

“Sometimes I feel like I just go through the motions. I ask all the questions that I’m supposed to ask, the forms get signed, and I start to get to know the family. But I don’t know what the family gets out of it. I wonder what they think when I keep asking them all these questions.”
“I want families to know what to expect, and also to learn more about their actual lives and routines so that we can develop outcomes that are functional, but also so we can get to know what makes them tick.”
But the forms! The paperwork! The timelines!
So how can we “up our game” and make this truly reciprocal?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gathering</th>
<th>Giving</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◆ Learning about a families routines</td>
<td>◆ Sharing about WHY routines are important for their child’s development</td>
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<td>◆ Learning about who are important people in a child’s life</td>
<td>◆ Sharing why it is important to include multiple partners when embedding intervention.</td>
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<td>◆ Learning about a family’s priorities and hopes for their child</td>
<td>◆ Sharing information about how intervention can support those priorities, and how they can be made into outcomes</td>
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Getting to Know Families

- What do you think are the most important things to learn about a family early on?
- What tools are you currently using to support you, if any?
- What does each tell you about who a family is, what they do, and what they value?
# Structured/Semi Structured Interviews

## Pros
- Prompt us to be thorough
- Some are widely used
- Some have evidence-bases
- Some have trainings that accompany them

## Cons
- We may get “stuck” on the protocol and miss important things that we notice
- We may forgot to share important pieces of information with families if we are focused on the protocol—one way street?
Informal Tools (Handouts, Ecomaps)

- **Getting to Know Your Child**
  - **Toys and Objects**
    - Favorite
    - Least Favorite
  - **Activities and Games**
    - Favorite
    - Least Favorite
  - **People and Playmates**
    - Favorite
    - Least Favorite
  - **Food and Drinks**
    - Favorite
    - Least Favorite
  - **Places**
    - Favorite
    - Least Favorite

- **Community MAP for Success in Early Intervention**
  - Map of the child's environment with locations like home, school, church, friends, etc.
  - Visit [http://mapspace.com](http://mapspace.com) for a blank map for you.
Observations

◆ Watching a caregiver and child interact during a visit can be a goldmine to learn about who families are, what they do, and what they value!

◆ We may watch incidentally, but do we observe purposefully, as part of the getting to know you process?

◆ What kind of information are we missing if we skip this step?
The Value of Multiple Methods of Information Gathering
Pulling it all together

- State work team generated an organizer as a store house for tools to help us gather information

- “Living” google doc that agencies can copy over to their drives and edit as they add/substitute other tools

- [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16Wah4zDJWGKTcztiryGExirtxgPF8Dd](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16Wah4zDJWGKTcztiryGExirtxgPF8Dd)
Sharing Information with Families

- Who we are in early intervention
- What we do in early intervention
- What we value in early intervention
Checking in to see what families know about Early ACCESS

- This is an important step!
- What have they heard about EA before?
- What do they think services typically look like?
Sharing information about Early ACCESS

- Iowa Family Support Network page
  - [http://www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org/early-access-iowa/parents-family](http://www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org/early-access-iowa/parents-family)

- Handouts/Materials

- Video clips of EI
Sharing information about FGRBI

- FGRBI page
  - [http://fgrbi.fsu.edu/](http://fgrbi.fsu.edu/)

- Handouts/Materials
  - [http://fgrbi.fsu.edu/approach.html](http://fgrbi.fsu.edu/approach.html)

- Video clips of EI
  - [http://fgrbi.fsu.edu/video/ParentModule/presentation.html](http://fgrbi.fsu.edu/video/ParentModule/presentation.html)
What we do…Sharing more about coaching in routines and activities

After checking in to see what families already know about EI, how do we share information about the coaching approach used in EA?

- Do we **mention** coaching, or do we **describe** what it looks like?
- Do we **show examples** to families about what coaching is and **WHY** we coach?
- Do we **describe** coaching in terms of building their ability to support their child between intervention sessions?
- Do we **build** the family’s understanding that they drive their child’s development in their interactions with the child?
How about routines?

Explaining routines in a developmental context

- Children learn by interacting with their families doing everyday things.
- Routines support child learning –
  - they are repetitious and predictable,
  - they can be expanded as a child grows.
- Embedding intervention gives children opportunities to practice new skills.
How do we individualize this process for families?

- ... For a teenage parent?
- ... For a couple who is newly separated?
- ... For a grandparent who is a primary caregiver?
Key Takeaways

- Reciprocal process of gathering and giving information that should start the process of building family capacity
- Importance of multiple methods and in individualizing for families
- You have tools to help you
- Goals of learning and sharing who we are, what we do, and what we value to help begin our partnership with families in EA