



Updates

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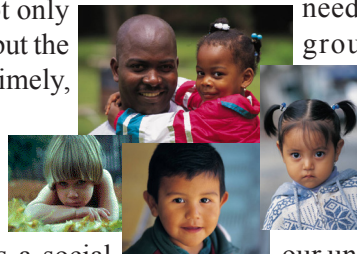
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Impressions of the Presentation by Brenda Jones Harden

by Harrie Freedman

On March 25th, Brenda Jones Harden, MSW, PhD, facilitated the statewide conference, "Who is at Risk? Supporting the Well Being of Infants, Toddlers and their Families through Relationship-Based Intervention." Her presentation was extremely well received by the audience of over 120 participants from a wide variety of organizations and programs. Dr. Harden's presentation style was not only dynamic, genuine and compelling, but the content of her material was also timely, meaningful and accessible. Her talk was beautifully illustrated with stories and videos from some 25 years of experience home visiting families of infants and toddlers as a social worker, a developmental psychologist and researcher.



Dr. Harden began with a cogent review of risk and vulnerability in the early years, emphasizing the significance of risk factors on the caregiver's ability to provide nurturing parenting to their children. Her focus was always on the child in relationship to their caregiver and supporting the caregiver's ability to mitigate against the many stressors and risk factors that may be present in their lives. That is, can the parent foster attachment with the infant or toddler in the face of the challenges of poverty, violence, substance abuse and maltreatment? What are ways that we, as interventionists, can support the parents and their children in these circumstances?

Her caring and respect for families was very evident in her presentation. She validated our own experience with families, that no matter how tragic and difficult their lives may be, love their children and want to be the very best parents they can be. She reminded us that we are partners with

families and they are our teachers as we take the journey with them on behalf of their babies.

At the core of her presentation was the *relationship-based approach* to intervention. This, of course, is the core of all our work with families. We, the audience, were privileged to listen, share and explore the day-to-day realities of doing this work through the expertise of Dr. Harden. She helped us articulate the issues about engaging families, working with resistance, and with the challenges of cultural diversity. Together, we explored the foundations of addressing the needs of the family while staying focused on the needs of the child. We are always grounding our work in the observations and assessments of the parent-child relationship and interaction.

Dr. Harden was able to facilitate our understanding of linking teachable moments with families to identify and establish small but realistic goals in our work with a family. By moving from our understanding of what is important and meaningful to the parent to a small and doable goal in order to promote the development of the child, we can build a bridge of our intervention in a way that can lead us to celebrate success with the family. We were validated in our understanding that we do make a difference in the lives of families torn by the tragedy of poverty, drugs and violence.

Dr. Harden concluded her presentation by helping us understand that we are our most important "tool" in our "tool kit" of interventions. ***We must care for ourselves and attend to our own growth and development in order to sustain our ability to continue this work.*** Self-awareness, reflective supervision, balancing our lives, and appreciating small changes in families were identified as important strategies for nurturing ourselves as the

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nurturer of the families we serve. All-in-all, this was a very worthwhile day spent in reflection and learning.

Resources mentioned by Dr. Harden that are available through LINC (1-800-827-6380 or 272-0281) here at the CDD:

Squires, J. et al. (2002). *Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE)*. Paul H. Brookes Publishers Co., Inc.

Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood, published by *Zero To Three* and the companion book: *DC:0-3 Casebook*.

Zeanah, C.H. (2000). *Handbook of Infant Mental Health*, 2nd edition. Guilford Press.

Pawl, J. & St. John, M. (1998). *How You Are is as Important as What You Do...in making a positive difference for infants, toddlers and their families.* *Zero to Three*, June/July.



The Role of the "New" Therapist, Re-Evaluation and the IFSP

by Nancy Rasch



When a therapist (OT, PT, SLP) receives a referral from an early intervention program for a child who currently has an IFSP that specifies supports and services in that therapist's specialty area, questions arise about the need for re-evaluation. Is the "new" therapist required to re-evaluate the child in order to establish goals and a plan of intervention?

Currently, there is no requirement for formal re-evaluation of a child because of a change in a clinician from the same discipline. The new clinician does not revise the IFSP document. The new clinician is now a member of the team who contributes information to the family with other team members. The family, with the input from all of the team, decides the functional outcomes that fit best with their child and their daily life. The role of all early interventionists, including the therapy clinicians, is to provide information and ideas to families and team members to support the development of the child and family's goals. The decisions about the most beneficial ways to be involved with the child and family are also discussed. For example, is direct therapy needed for language stimulation or grasping toys, or could the therapist serve as a consultant to the team and family about ways to encourage these skills?

As a new therapist involved with a family and their child, it is important to review the child and family's needs, the current IFSP, and any documentation that is relevant to the delivery of service to the child and family. Time spent with the family is an opportunity to continue ongoing assessment of needs and evaluation of how the child is doing, especially in the context of the family's everyday activities. The contact, progress or clinical notes are used to describe the child's performance, progress toward outcomes, conversations with the family, as well as any new ideas or strategies.

Following conversations over time with the family and other team members, the therapist may feel there is a need for a change in strategies or services. This is when the therapist can dialogue with the family, service coordinator and other team members to explore the need for these changes. If the family agrees to changes in supports and services based on information discussed with the team, a revision of services is requested. Through the process of amending or revising the IFSP with the team and service coordinator, the therapist reflects his/her impressions, recommendations and findings in a formal manner for the record.

Childhood Terminology in Navajo Now on the Web



Our CSPD project for the Bureau of Indian Affairs with the Navajo Nation has launched the **Early Childhood Glossary for Special Education Terminology in Navajo** now available on the Internet. This web tool provides definitions of terms in English and Navajo, with the auditory component to hear the terms spoken in both English and Navajo. As a tool for Navajo speaking staff, interpreters, and families, the glossary was developed from the earlier Project Na'nitin here at the CDD. It has been expanded to support understanding of terms in the Navajo language for better service and communication. Check it out at: <http://cdd.unm.edu/ec/cspd> and go to Tools and Documents on the menu options.

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The IFSP document is not a prescriptive plan of treatment and is not determined by the specialty services in isolation. Therapists provide strategies for intervention to support family-centered, functional outcomes. Also, the IFSP is not a medical model plan of problems, modalities and interventions. Rather, it reflects what families consider important outcomes to them with therapists providing the strategies to support their goals.

Models of delivery, approaches and opinions frequently differ among providers and across settings. These differences can create difficulties for families when clinicians are not providing information in a family-centered manner. If clinicians attempt to impose different models of planning, interventions and types of service delivery, they can introduce conflict into the care and planning for the child. There will always be challenges to be flexible, creative and dynamic in order to provide quality services in the best interest of families in a professional and ethical manner.

Therapists need to be guided by the spirit and intention of early intervention through its model of ongoing assessment and collaborative decision making. As a result, the IFSP becomes truly the family-centered document created through an ongoing relationship with the family, who ultimately determines what is important to them and life with their child.



Welcome! Early Childhood Division Staff

Miquela Rivera, PhD, joined the ECEP staff in February 2004. A licensed psychologist, Miquela spent the last five years overseeing CYFD's three Early Care Bureaus (Child Care Services Bureau, Family Nutrition Bureau, and the Office of Child Development), and three special programs (Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Grant, Head Start Collaboration Grant, and Children's Trust Fund). Prior to that, Miquela was in private practice in Albuquerque and Tucson. Early in her career, she worked in Community Mental Health and employee assistance programming. Miquela was born and raised in Santa Fe. You can contact her at: 272-3825 or mirivera@salud.unm.edu

Ellen Kivitz is a senior program therapist, OTR/L, who joined the ECEP team in February 2004. She is an occupational therapist who has worked in Albuquerque with young children and their families for over twenty years. Ellen

has worked in a variety of agencies, including private practice, special preschools and university settings; and most recently was the pediatric clinic supervisor at ExplorAbilities. Her professional areas of interest are early identification of children with special needs and parent education & advocacy. She can be reached at: 272-3813 or ekivitz@salud.unm.edu

Maria Lawrence is the latest to join ECEP in March 2004 as an Administrative Assistant III. She is responsible for coordinating the clinic schedule, processing client billing, maintaining daily correspondence, and generally assisting the ECEP team's readiness for outreach and metro area clinics. Maria holds an A.A.S. in Paralegal Studies and is working toward her B.S. in Special Education. She can be reached at: 272-2943 or melawrence@salud.unm.edu



Bird Podzemny joined the ECN team as a Family Specialist in March 2004. She has worked at the University of New Mexico in the Dean of Students Office and continues to work with the LOBOrientation program as a Facility Trainer for Diversity. She has an MA in Counseling from UNM and has worked with all ages of children. She has spent the last 8 years with her greatest challenge in her role as the mother of three rambunctious boys ages 8, 4, and 2. She is looking forward to meeting many new grownups and can be reached at: 272-6511 or bpodzemny@salud.unm.edu

Anna Salazar is a native New Mexican who has joined the Early Childhood Division as an Administrative Assistant III. She previously worked for an insurance agency, being their "jack-of-all-trades," helping out with everything from computer support to insurance quotes. She will work for the Division's REACH and ICOP Projects. She has a BBA in business management from UNM. She would like to eventually earn a masters degree in management information systems. In her spare time she likes to travel, read, swim, and avoid being bored as much as possible. You can reach her at: 272-3844 or at amsalazar@salud.unm.edu



In March, we celebrated National Social Worker Month by honoring our very own Monica Armas Aragon, MSW, social worker for the ECEP program. She is responsible for intake coordination for Albuquerque area referrals to ECEP, and provides follow-up and support as needed to families after their evaluation. **Congratulations Monica!**

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1-800-827-6380 or 272-0281

Visit our Website at <http://cdd.unm.edu/ec>

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