



Slide Handouts: Family – Ask the Expert

Recommended Practices Modules

Module 5

Module 5: Lesson 1

Family: Ask the Expert

The slide features a blue header with the text 'Recommended Practices Modules' on the left and 'Module 5' in a grey box on the right. Below this is a large blue banner with 'Module 5: Lesson 1' in white. The main content area has a white background with a blue border. At the top of this area is the text 'Family: Ask the Expert'. Below the text are four blue silhouettes of children in a row, showing a progression from a crawling baby to a young child standing and holding a ball.

Welcome to Module 5 Lesson 1. Family: Ask the Expert.

Lesson Objectives

- To describe family practices
- To identify key characteristics of recommended practices related to families

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The objectives of this lesson are to describe family practices, and to identify key characteristics of recommended practices related to families.

Introduction

- What are family practices?
- What does the research say about effective family practices?
- What are the implications for how we work with young children, particularly young children with disabilities, and their families?

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This lesson will help you understand why family practices are important in your work with children by considering the following questions:

- What are family practices?
- What does the research say about effective family practices?
- What are the implications for how we work with young children, particularly young children with disabilities and their families?

What Are Family Practices?

Family practices refer to ongoing activities that:

1. Promote the active participation of families in decision-making related to their child (e.g., assessment, planning, intervention);
2. Lead to the development of a service plan (e.g., a set of goals for the family and child and the services and supports to achieve those goals); or
3. Support families in achieving the goals they hold for their child and the other family members. (DEC, 2014).

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Family Practices: Three Themes



- Family-centered practices
- Family capacity-building practices
- Family and professional collaboration practices

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Family practices encompass three themes:

Family-centered practices, family capacity-building practices, and family-professional collaboration.

Family-Centered Practices

- Treat families with dignity and respect
- Individualized, flexible and responsive to family's needs
- Support families in making informed decisions
- Involve family members in acting on choices



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Family-centered practices are practices that treat families with dignity and respect; are individualized, flexible, and responsive to each family's unique circumstances; provide family members complete and unbiased information to make informed decisions; and involve family members in acting on choices to strengthen child, parent, and family functioning.

Family Capacity-Building Practices

- Opportunities for families to strengthen existing parenting knowledge and skills
- Opportunities for families to develop new parenting abilities



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Family capacity-building practices are practices that provide opportunities for families to strengthen their existing parenting knowledge and skills as well as to develop new parenting abilities.

Family and Professional Collaboration Practices

Build relationships with families to achieve mutually agreed upon outcomes and goals.



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Family and professional collaboration are practices that build relationships between families and professionals who work together to achieve mutually agreed upon outcomes and goals that promote family competencies and support the development of the child.



DEC Recommended Practices

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- F1. Practitioners build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity.
- F2. Practitioners provide the family with up-to-date, comprehensive and unbiased information in a way that the family can understand and use to make informed choices and decisions.
- F3. Practitioners are responsive to the family's concerns, priorities, and changing life circumstances.
- F4. Practitioners and the family work together to create outcomes or goals, develop individualized plans, and implement practices that address the family's priorities and concerns and the child's strengths and needs.
- F5. Practitioners support family functioning, promote family confidence and competence, and strengthen family-child relationships by acting in ways that recognize and build on family strengths and capacities.
- F6. Practitioners engage the family in opportunities that support and strengthen parenting knowledge and skills and parenting competence and confidence in ways that are flexible, individualized, and tailored to the family's preferences.
- F7. Practitioners work with the family to identify, access, and use formal and informal resources and supports to achieve family-identified outcomes or goals.
- F8. Practitioners provide the family of a young child who has or is at risk for developmental delay/disability, and who is a dual language learner, with information about the benefits of learning in multiple languages for the child's growth and development.
- F9. Practitioners help families know and understand their rights
- F10. Practitioners inform families about leadership and advocacy skill-building opportunities and encourage those who are interested to participate.

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The 2014 DEC Recommended Practices include the following family practices. Continue when you have finished your review.

ASK THE EXPERT

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About the Expert

Carol Trivette is an Associate Professor at East Tennessee State University where she teaches masters and doctoral students within the Department of Early Childhood Education. With colleagues, she continues to work on the promotion of practitioners' practices that enhance the capacity of all families to support their child's learning through research and dissemination efforts.

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Dr. Carol Trivette will answer the following questions about family practices in early childhood.

What Does the Research Say?

Understanding how to build the capacity of parents is critical. Research has examined the practices that build the capacity of parents. First, by focusing on the knowledge and skills that the family already has, second, by identifying the knowledge and skills that the family sees as important and third, by providing parents opportunities and experiences where they feel successful supporting their children. Research shows that when parents have trusting relationships with professionals and professionals ensure that their interactions with parents' strengthens the parents' beliefs that they can meet their children's needs, then positive outcomes for families and their young children with disabilities are demonstrated. Positive family outcomes include enhanced parental well-being and positive parent-child interactions.

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Ask the Expert. Dr. Carol Trivette will answer the following questions about family practices in early childhood: What does the research say? Why is this important? Why is this important for children with disabilities?

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Research also shows that the use of capacity building practices with parents has a positive effect on child outcomes.

Compared to other frequently researched topics in the field such as parent-child interactions, there are few experimental research studies the focus on family practices. However, there have been several meta-analyses conducted by different research teams that used correlational studies regarding family practices. These meta-analyses have reported positive effects of family-centered, capacity-building practices on parents and children with disabilities. One research area that needs more study is appropriate practices with families of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have children with a disability.

Why Is This Important?

The important role that families play in the lives of young children is well-documented. Parents are the primary provider for meeting their children's physical, social-emotional, linguistic, and cognitive needs. Many practitioners understand the important role of families in the development of their children. With this knowledge, practitioners must then use their expertise to support parents who then help their children. The practitioner's goal is to work with the parents to enhance the child's development. This goal requires an additional set of practitioner skills beyond the skills used when working directly with the child. Practitioners need the expertise to enhance the parents' competence by building their knowledge and skills, in a way that allows parents to feel confident they can support their child's development.

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Practitioners must understand how to implement essential family-centered, capacity building practices. The practices that are important for practitioners to use with all families include those that demonstrate respect for the family and build trust with the family by listening and honoring the uniqueness of their culture and beliefs. Practitioners need to provide the family with accurate, complete, and unbiased information so that the family can make their own decisions. Intervention practices in the home must be developed around the strengths of the child, the strengths of the family, and the priorities important to the family. Working in collaboration with the family, the practitioner can promote positive outcomes for the parents and the child.

Why Is This Important for Children with Disabilities?

First, families with young children with disabilities may face many of the challenges (e.g., financial insecurity, lack of time to get things done, care for elderly family members) that other families experience. They may also have many of the strengths (e.g., time management skills, engaging personalities, extended family support) that other families possess. However, families with young children with disabilities may have additional challenges that result from their children's disability; for example, higher medical costs, inconsistent child behavior or performance, and greater interactions with professionals and services. Practitioners need to use their expertise to support the family's active participation in meeting their challenges.

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Bottom Line

Families of children with disabilities who access services want to help their children grow and develop. They often want new or more knowledge and skills about how to support their children's development. They want to feel competent and confident about how they support their children. Practitioners should work with families in ways that meet their requests for knowledge and skills in a manner that enhances the families' confidence and competence in their abilities to help their children reach their full potential.



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Summary

In this lesson, we learned that building the capacity of parents is critical. Research shows that trusting relationships between parents and practitioners help to build parent confidence and competence that they can meet the needs of their child, which in turn positively impacts both child and family outcomes. Practitioners serving families of young children with disabilities must use their expertise to support active family participation to help their child develop and learn.



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Check Your Knowledge



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Now let's take a moment to check what you've learned.

References and Resources



References

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This concludes Module 5 Lesson 1. Thank you for participating. For more information, see the resources here.