

Parent-Child Relationships: the Cornerstone to School Readiness in the Home-Based Option Webcast Viewers' Guide

Welcome to the EHS NRC/OHS Webcast-- *Parent-Child Relationships: the Cornerstone to School Readiness in the Home-Based Option!*

To make the most of this training experience:

- ✓ Review the key points and outline before the conference begins. These handouts are designed to help you prepare for the webcast.
- ✓ Schedule some time for reflection and/or discussion after the webcast. Use the Applying the Information handout individually or with your team. In most cases, discussing information, strategies and ideas as a team is the best way to think about what is already in place in your program and how to use or enhance connections with families.
- ✓ Use the handouts to discuss new information and to plan for the future.

Introduction

Overview

Many home visitors have expressed concern that they will be measured by a child's progress in his school readiness goals, and they will be faced with the dilemma of working directly with the child vs. working through the parent on the parent-child relationship. A secure parent-child attachment drives positive learning outcomes for infants and toddlers.

The “parent is the child’s first teacher” is an often-used phrase, but how does this happen? This webcast will feature a discussion between Brenda Jones Harden and Kadija Johnston exploring why the parent-child relationship and the resulting social-emotional development of the child is so critical to the future success of the infant or toddler. It will address how the home visitor supports the baby’s development through his interaction with his parent(s) during home visits and group socializations and throughout the rest of the week. In the absence of a secure attachment, how can the home visitor encourage the development of the bond that is so key to learning and exploring? What if the parent has not experienced a supportive parenting relationship themselves? What strategies can home visitors use to enhance the social-emotional development of the baby and the engagement of the parents when the parent is overwhelmed by their own needs and not emotionally or developmentally available to engage in this relationship? This webcast will address these questions and more with experts in the field from a variety of perspectives.

Key points discussed will be:

- School readiness in the home-based option takes place in the context of the parent-child relationship.
- Social-emotional skills are the foundation that infants and toddlers need to develop for later school and life success.
- The skills and dispositions that the home visitor uses to engage parents during the home visit are critical to the success of the home-based option.

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- In the absence of a secure attachment, there are strategies the home visitor can use to encourage the development of the bond that is so key to learning and exploring even when the parent is not emotionally available.

Faculty

Moderators

Jennifer Boss, is the Director of the Early Head Start National Resource Center (EHS NRC). In her role as Director, Jennifer leads management level EHS NRC staff in work plan development and monitoring, and supports effective and collaborative work teams, utilizing the skills, experience, and knowledge of EHS NRC staff to the highest potential. Jennifer keeps abreast of developments in the early childhood/infant-toddler field in order to guide the staff of the EHS NRC in its work, and to provide the very best and up to date information for Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs, OHS, and the field at large.



Jennifer received her Master's of Social Work degree from Howard University, and completed post-graduate clinical training at the Yale University Child Study Center and the Washington School of Psychiatry in Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health. During her career Jennifer has worked as a child and family therapist, an adoptions social worker, a home visitor and supervisor with an Early Head Start program, a trainer and a technical assistance provider. Jennifer has co-authored articles and book chapters, as well as conducted numerous trainings on the subject of early childhood development and early childhood mental health.

Connie Phillips, is the Early Head Start Director with the Onslow County Partnership in Jacksonville, North Carolina. This program was an initial grantee under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Connie has served as program director since the initiation of the program three years ago. Connie holds a Master of Arts in Education- Special Education degree from East Carolina University. Prior to working with Early Head Start, Connie worked with the Onslow County Schools for 33 years as a special educator and compliance specialist. In this capacity she provided training and mentorship to fellow educators and administrators. Ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations and procedures as they relate to exceptional children was her area of focus. Additionally, Connie served as the school system's Section 504 Coordinator.

Federal Staff

Angie Godfrey, is the Infant and Toddler Specialist in the Office of Head Start supporting Early Head Start Services.

Prior to joining the Office of Head Start in December, 2008 Angie was director of the American Indian and Alaska Native Technical Assistance Project. She worked with the project for 5 years. Prior to that, she worked as the Senior Early Childhood Associate for AIAN, providing support to 44 Early Head Start grantees.

Angie worked several years as adjunct instructor at Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria VA, teaching infant and toddler courses for infant toddler child care providers. She is also the former Head Start Director for a Head Start program in Alexandria, VA.

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David Jones, LMSW, is the Home-Visiting Specialist in the Office of Head Start. He is co-lead for Mental Health and Fatherhood as well. He was the Director of Family Support Services at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. He implemented their Early Head Start program, targeting adolescent parents providing home and center based services. He developed the nationally recognized Father's First Initiative and the Bronx Fatherhood Program one of NY City's most successful programs serving 16 – 24 year old non-custodial fathers. He provided consultation for other Head Start Programs. He was awarded a William Randolph Hearst Foundation fellowship in 2001 and In 2005 The Visiting Nurse Association of America (VNAA) selected him as Innovator of The Year for his outstanding work with fathers.

Presenters

Brenda Jones Harden, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Human Development/Institute for Child Study at UMCP where she teaches courses on child development, infant/toddler child care, and the development of and interventions for children at environmental risk. Her current research projects are: 1) the functioning of young foster children and their families; 2) the development of children reared with psychologically at-risk parents; 3) the implementation and evaluation of an Early Head Start initiative on children experiencing "toxic stress"; and 4) the evaluation of a literacy-based rural home visitation program. She is the author of numerous publications, including the Zero to Three published book, *Infants in Child Welfare: A developmental perspective on policy and practice*. Dr. Harden's clinical and empirical work to promote the development of environmentally at-risk children has spanned a 30-year period. She currently works with several Early Head Start programs in the Washington, DC metropolitan area to develop higher quality services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families. She also trains Early Head Start personnel in infant-toddler development, family development, and home visiting.

Kadija Johnston, Kadija Johnston L.C.S.W is the Director of the Infant-Parent Program, at the University of California, San Francisco. She has worked in the field of infant and early childhood mental health since 1985, initially coordinating a therapeutic nursery school; and then as an infant-parent psychotherapist home visitor and mental health consultant. She helped to develop the Program's consultation component in 1988, which now serves as a model for other organizations, locally and nationally. For the last two decades, Ms. Johnston has been supervising and training mental health professionals in the provision of a range of mental health services to children birth through 5 years of age.

Ms. Johnston writes and presents nationally on infant and early childhood mental health. Her recent articles on the subject have appeared in the *Infant Mental Health Journal* and *Infants and Young Children* and a chapter in the 3rd edition of the *Handbook of Infant Mental Health*. Ms. Johnston co-authored *Mental Health Consultation in Child Care: Transforming Relationships With Directors, Staff, and Families* with Dr. Charles Brinamen, published by ZERO TO THREE for which they were awarded the Irving B. Harris Book Proposal Award for contributions to early childhood scholarship.

Home Visitors

Joyce Bennett, Monongalia County EHS, Monongalia County Board of Education, Morgantown, WV
Ms. Bennett has been a home visitor for Early Head Start for 17 years.

Silvia Ramos, Lourie Center EHS, affiliate of Adventist Health Care, Rockville, MD. Ms Ramos has been a home visitor with Early Head Start for 5 years.

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Head Start Program Performance Standards – Home- Based Option

- **1304.21(b)(1)(i)(ii)&(iii) Child development and educational approach for infants and toddlers.**
- **Sec. 1304. 21 (b) (1) Child development and education approach for infants and toddlers.** Grantee

and delegate agencies' program of services for infants and toddlers must encourage (see 45 CFR 1304.3(a)(5) for a definition of curriculum):

ii. Trust and emotional security so that each child can explore the environment according to his or her developmental level; and Opportunities for each child to explore a variety of sensory and motor experiences with support and stimulation from teachers and family members.

- **1304.21 (b) (2) Grantee and delegate agencies must support the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers by promoting an environment that:**

iii. Encourages the development of self-awareness, autonomy, and self-expression; and;

iv. Supports the emerging communication skills of infants and toddlers by providing daily opportunities for each child to interact with others and to express himself or herself freely.

- **1304.21 (b) (3) Grantee and delegate agencies must promote the physical development of infants and toddlers by:**

v. Supporting the development of the physical skills of infants and toddlers including gross motor skills, such as grasping, pulling, pushing, crawling, walking, and climbing; and

vi. Creating opportunities for fine motor development that encourage the control and coordination of small, specialized motions, using the eyes,

mouth, hands, and feet.

Sec. 1304.53 Facilities, materials, and equipment.

(a) Head Start physical environment and facilities.

(1) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide a physical environment and facilities conducive to learning and reflective of the different stages of development of each child.

(2) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide appropriate space for the conduct of all program activities (see 45 CFR 1308.4 for specific access requirements for children with disabilities).

(3) The center space provided by grantee and delegate agencies must be organized into functional areas that can be recognized by the children and that allow for individual activities and social interactions.

Sec. 1306.33 Home-based program option.

(a) Grantees implementing a home-based program option must:

(1) Provide one home visit per week per family (a minimum of 32 home visits per year) lasting for a minimum of 1 and ½ hours each. [48 home visits for Early Head Start]

Grantee and delegate agencies must support the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers by promoting an environment that:

iii. Encourages the development of self-awareness, autonomy, and self-expression; and;

iv. Supports the emerging communication skills of infants and toddlers by providing daily opportunities for each child to interact with

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(2) Provide, at a minimum, two group socialization activities per month for each child (a minimum of 16 group socialization activities each year). [24 group socializations for Early Head Start]

Sec. 645A. EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS. [42 U.S.C. 9840A]

(i) Staff Qualifications and Development-

(1) HOME VISITOR STAFF STANDARDS- In order to further enhance the quality of home visiting services provided to families of children participating in home-based, center-based, or combination program options under this subchapter, the Secretary shall establish standards for training, qualifications, and the conduct of home visits for home visitor staff in Early Head Start programs.

(2) CONTENTS OF STANDARDS- The standards for training, qualifications, and the conduct of home visits shall include content related to—

(A) structured child-focused home visiting that promotes parents' ability to support the child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development;

(B) effective strengths-based parent education, including methods to encourage parents as their child's first teachers;

(C) early childhood development with respect to children from birth through age 3;

(D) methods to help parents promote emergent literacy in their children from birth through age 3, including use of research-based strategies to support the development of literacy and language skills for children who are limited English proficient;

(E) ascertaining what health and developmental services the family receives and working with providers of these services to eliminate gaps in service by offering annual health, vision, hearing, and developmental screening for children from birth to entry into kindergarten, when needed;

(F) strategies for helping families coping with crisis;

(G) the relationship of health and well-being of pregnant women to prenatal and early child development.



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Applying the Information

The questions below are meant as a guide for either personal reflection or group discussion. Ideally, teams will work together to consider their program's approach to addressing how parent-child relationships can support school readiness in the home-based option.

1. Does your home-based program have a philosophy of school readiness? How is your philosophy communicated to home visitors, supervisors, managers and parents?
2. Do you currently include the following in your home-based option service plans, policies and/or procedures:
 - the number of home visits and group socializations families receive;
 - how and when home visits are made up if canceled;
 - where and with whom home visits may take place;
 - guidelines for implementing the "School Readiness Action Steps for Infants and Toddlers?"
3. If you are a home visitor:
 - A. Describe or think about a home visit or a series of them with a family where the parent took on the role of his/her child's "teacher".
 - What role did you play in engaging the parent(s)?
 - What would you repeat?
 - What would you change?
 - B. Describe your most challenging experience of engaging parents as their child's "teacher".
 - What was your role in this experience?
 - What was the parent(s) role?
 - What was the child's role?
 - What would you do differently?
 - What would you repeat?
4. If you are a supervisor, describe or think of a reflective supervision session or series of them where a home visitor recognized that the parent, not she/he, is the "teacher".
 - Describe your role in contributing to this reflection.
 - What would you repeat in future sessions?
 - What would you do differently in future sessions?

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5. What reflective practices/supervision does your program provide to staff to support their relationships with families? What more would you like to see provided?
6. Think about examples of “pivoting” as defined by Victor Bernstein (described by Brenda Jones Harden). How might home visitors use this strategy during home visits? What can supervisors do to support this practice?
7. Kadija Johnston talked about making sure you are “not the most entertaining person in the room”. What are some reflective strategies you can use to make sure the focus is on the parent-child relationship?
8. What professional development would support home visitors in using daily routines/routine caregiving in the home to enhance children’s readiness for school?



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EHS Tip Sheet No. 32: What Types of Play Materials Can be Used From the Home to Create Purposeful Learning Experiences for Infants or Toddlers During a Home Visit?

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Curriculum/Planning/EHSTipsheet-32.pdf>

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Photos: Courtesy *Early Head Start National Resource Center*

"We avoid the pull to make ourselves the most lively engaging figure in the room: Instead, helping to shine a light on the parent's prominence in their child's, and their own eyes."

Kadija Johnston

