



Learning at Home
Supporting Parents to Promote Infant-Toddler Development

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Presenters:
 Brenda Jones Harden, PhD, Professor,
 University of Maryland Early Childhood
 Education/Early Childhood Special Education
 Program

Facilitator: Emmy Marshall, NCECDTL

 

Session Objectives

At the end of this presentation, you should be able to:

- Understand parent-child interaction is the cornerstone of learning at home for infants and toddlers
- Use strategies that foster parent-child interaction
- Support parents in promotion of his/her child's development of cognitive and emergent language skills
- Understand the importance of play and routines for learning at home



Learning at Home Session Agenda

Here's what we're doing today:

1. Parent-Child Interaction: The cornerstone of learning at home
2. Children learn best through their interaction with primary caregiver(s)
3. Strategies for supporting parents in fostering their child's cognitive and language skills
4. Fostering parent-child interaction by
 - Promoting caregiving routines as opportunities to support child's development
 - Following child's lead in play
 - Using stimulating activities and materials



Learning at Home: Parallel Process

Parallel Process

“ Do unto others as you would have others do unto others”Jereee Pawl & Maria St John

- How people are treated affects how they feel about themselves and how they treat others
- How HV understands and treats parents influences how parents understand and treat their babies
- Be WITH parents so they can be WITH their babies



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Learning at Home: Relationships

Infants and toddlers learn best in context of relationships

- Imitation
- Exploration with support of “secure base”
- Interaction and relational play



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Parent Education to Facilitate Learning at Home

- Didactic vs. *experiential*
Active, learn from doing in the moment of the HV
- Knowledge vs. *skill* building
Focus on **how** of childrearing/development, which is practiced during HV
Learning **what** of child development/rearing arises from interaction with child
- De-contextualized vs. *contextualized*
Linked to parents’ current experiences with their children in context of HV

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Parent-Child Interaction: Cornerstone of Learning



- *Sine qua non* of home visiting work with young children and parents
- Component of “contract” with parent
- Jointly determine place in home where interaction can occur
- Jointly choose toys and materials that foster interaction
- Jointly decide who should be part of interaction (father, siblings)

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Fostering Parent-Child Interaction

- Observing/assessing parent-child interaction informs intervention
 - Developmental needs of child
 - Parental capacity for interacting with child
- Teaching “in the moment”
- Identifying strengths
 - “heaping praise”
- Limiting focus on weaknesses
 - Scaffolding
 - Wondering
 - Speaking in baby’s voice
 - Direct intervention with those who cannot initiate positive behavior



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Fostering Parent-Child Interaction

Promote positive parental behaviors within parent-child interaction

- Responsiveness
- Attunement/empathy
- Emotional expressivity
- Emotional availability
- Following child’s lead
- Mutual regulation
- Joint attention
- Parental focused attention

Affective sharing

- Praise for child’s actions
- Sharing cultural/family rituals



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Promoting Child Cognition in the Home

- Enhance parent knowledge re:
 - Developmental stages and processes
 - Sensitive periods
 - Brain development
- Engage in discovery of objects, actions, events
- Focus on things in which child shows interest
- Facilitate sense of mastery



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Promoting Child Cognition in the Home



Create a cognitively stimulating home environment

- Limited TV and other technology
- Limited use of infant restraints
- Appropriate use of light/dark
- Child-centered space
- Variety of people, objects, events
- Display of pictures, books and other representations of the world
- Items child can explore safely that provide opportunity to learn

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Promoting Child Cognition in the Home

- Promote cognitively-stimulating parent-child interaction
- Emphasize joint attention
- Offer culture-specific learning activities (e.g., songs, dances)
- Provide opportunity for imitation
 - Social
 - Language
 - Object



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Promoting Child Cognition in the Home



- **PLAY to enhance cognition**
- Perceptual & exploratory play
 - Fitting objects in objects
 - Matching activities
 - Objects with different textures/functions
- Symbolic play
 - Familiar objects
 - Dolls representing humans
- Cause-effect play
- Play schemes/narratives
 - Scenes/events in home
 - Relational experiences

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Promoting Child Language in the Home

- Be responsive when children initiate communication
- Engage in nonverbal communication (emotion expression)
- Use child-directed language (focus on what child is saying/doing)
- Use self-talk and parallel talk
- Help children expand language
- Support bilingual development
- Attend to individual development and needs
- Engage infants with books and stories
- Be playful with language
- Create a communication-friendly environment

Peter Mangione, WestEd

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Promoting Child Language in the Home

Encourage parents to elicit language within parent-child interaction

- Listen to and respond to all vocalizations
- Repeat infant's sounds and words
- Label objects
- Narrate play and routines
- Use gestures (bye-bye, so-big)
- Give directions (transition from simple to complex)
- Read to babies daily or tell them stories



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Promoting Child Language in the Home

Encourage parents to elicit language within parent-child interaction

- Use "caregiverese" (child-directed speech)
 - Sing-song voice
 - Say words very clearly with all sounds emphasized
 - Use short sentences
 - Use familiar words
 - Connect words to objects/actions



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Parent-Child Interaction: PLAY

- Follow child's lead
- Use interactive toys
- Use toys/objects in home
- Bring toys to leave in home
- Limit quantity of toys and materials
- Narrate play (what parent and child do)
- Introduce turn-taking



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Parent-Child Interaction: PLAY

- Express positive emotions
 - Home Visitor praise for parents
 - Parent praise for child
- Identify teachable moments
- Focus on small interactions
- Address developmental benefits of parental activities
- Use self-expression/cultural activities



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Parent-Child Interaction: ROUTINES

Feeding

- Emotion regulation
- Vocabulary, pragmatics of communication
- Counting objects
- Experiencing textures
- Fine motor and adaptive skills (e.g., using utensils)



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Parent-Child Interaction: ROUTINES

Bathing

- Vocabulary, pragmatics of communication
- Experiencing physical properties of objects
- Cause/effect and perceptual problem-solving

Diapering/Toileting

- Vocabulary, pragmatics of communication
- Sensory experiences
- Fine motor skills
- Self-control



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Parent-Child Interaction: ROUTINES



Hairdressing

- Vocabulary, pragmatics of communication
- Fine motor skills
- Emotion regulation

Dressing

- Fine and gross motor skills
- Cause/effect, goal orientation, and perceptual problem-solving
- Perception: color, matching, size

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Parent-Child Interaction: ROUTINES



Discipline

- Affective expression
- Emotion regulation
- Verbal reasoning
- Empathy
- Impulse control
- Compliance to and internalization of standards

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Concluding Remarks

- Parents are children's first and most sustaining teachers
- Parent support of development most predictive of later outcomes
- Improvement of parental skill in context of parent-child interaction
- Home visitors engage in strategies to facilitate parent-child interaction
- Use of play and routines in context of parent-child interaction
- Young children's development best facilitated through interaction with primary caregivers
- EHS home-based programs prime venue to enhance parental skill in promoting child development

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Have Questions?

Contact us at
ecdtl@ecetta.info or
 call (toll-free)
 1-844-261-3752



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