Collaborating with Families to Provide Positive Behavior Supports for Young Children with Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood Classrooms

Scott A. Spaulding
Elizabeth M. Kelly
University of Washington

Acknowledgements
• Research team
  • Kathleen Meeker
  • Carol Davis
  • Carly Roberts
  • Jarek Sierschynski

• Collaborators
  • Bit Bamboo, LLC

The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R324A180061 to the University of Washington. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.

Objectives
1. Describe five “best practices” for collaborating with families throughout a functional assessment and behavior intervention process.
2. Describe how current early childhood educators are collaborating with families regarding behavior supports.
3. Develop a plan for collaborating with families throughout the assessment and intervention process.
Family role Coaching

Family-educator partnerships

PBIS framework

- Communication
- Respect
- Trust
- Commitment
- Equality

Fettig, Schultz, & Ostrosky, 2013
Turnbull, Turnbull, Erwin, Soodak, and Shogren, 2011

Best practices for family-educator collaboration in early childhood

- Building trusting, respectful partnerships through culturally competent interactions
- Providing families with up-to-date, comprehensive, unbiased information
- Working with families to create shared goals
- Developing culturally responsive, individualized behavior support plans that address both the strengths and needs of the child
- Promoting family confidence and competence providing behavior supports through active engagement

Family collaboration in behavior support

“Clear communication and collaboration”
• Important for behavior support
• Seems logical for our technology
• But...
  • How do schools communicate and collaborate with families?
  • How is it done, and is it sufficient for implementing effective supports?

How we collaborate in behavior support

Online coaching and collaboration tool that guides school teams in the implementation of an evidence-based process for delivering supports to teachers of students with persistent challenging behavior

Integrated Behavior Support and Teacher Coaching System for Early Childhood Settings (ibestt-EC)

Development and Innovation Project:
• Year 1: Feedback from early childhood practitioners
• Year 2: Pilot the revised technology, implementation
• Year 3: Develop training materials
• Year 4: Evaluate the intervention using series of single-case designs
Fall 2018 Workshop-Purpose

• To design ibest-EC with input from educators and community members
• To learn about how educators are partnering with families to provide young children with positive behavior supports

Workshop-Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 behavior specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Asian American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Two or more races</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures

Small groups
Video taped facilitated discussion
Transcripts
Coded data
Workshop - Small groups

Questions

1. What works well in your setting for collaborating with families around behavior?
2. How do you engage families in supporting children’s positive behavior in your setting?
3. How do you currently let families know what’s happening related to their child’s behavior?
4. What could be improved in your setting to collaborate with families around behavior?
5. What are the risks in communicating with families around positive behavior support?

Family collaboration is important in all aspects of behavior support!

1. Showing empathy
2. Supporting families during transitions
3. Communicating with families
4. Building community

Family collaboration: 4 emergent themes

1. Showing empathy

“I had a mom last year and she was one of those parents. I think some of these kids may need a lot of unconditional love. I really think this is a very difficult job, and they are not always as great and they are not always ready to wrap around and wrap around those families. And often times it’s the preschool teachers who write with the kids more than just the teaching, I think it’s a lot about just being there. I don’t know if this is the best teaching, but they wrap around the whole family.” 

Kelly & Spaulding, IECC Conference, Tacoma, WA (2019)
Family collaboration: 4 emergent themes

1. Showing empathy
2. Supporting families during transitions
   1. Birth-to-three → Preschool
   2. Preschool → Kindergarten
   3. Morning home → Preschool

"We had a lot of kindergarten nights where it was just like a drop in, talk to the other parents who are going to kindergarten, find out if your kids are going to the same school, have some coffee and just like talk about what is scary for you and what is exciting."

"And that happens with birth to three coming to preschool as well. When parents are used to the birth to three services and then they come to preschool and they're like, "What? We used to have a teacher come visit our home, and we used to have goals around family stuff and it's like teaching them that difference". I think for my preschool setting, one thing that worked really well... is teaching parents how to be advocates. Which I think ties into that idea of what kind of FBA are you going to be getting into the future and how do you ask the right questions and what are the [parent advocacy] resources... and all of those different things that we can teach our families about."

Kelly & Spaulding, IECC Conference, Tacoma, WA (2019)

Family collaboration: 4 emergent themes

1. Showing empathy
2. Supporting families during transitions
3. Communicating with families
   • Modes of communication
   • Always communicating positives along with challenges
   • Communicating all three tiers/levels of positive behavior support (not just when behaviors are challenging)

"...and I think the more you feel valued as part of a community, the less challenging behaviors you're going to see in your classroom."

"We also do family and community connections. So, cause we don't have students on Thursday, we ask parents to come in and have a conversation with the family in the sense of changing or different, or something that they're going through, we say, 'How are you going to see all these organizational changes? What's a way to connect with families as well. I really feel like I get to know them and then I get to know their siblings...""

Kelly & Spaulding, IECC Conference, Tacoma, WA (2019)
Plan for family collaboration activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>How do you demonstrate this in your current setting?</th>
<th>What is one additional way that you could demonstrate this in your setting?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing empathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting families during transitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next steps: Family Focus Groups

Development and Innovation Project:

- Year 1:
  - Design workshops with early childhood practitioners
  - Focus groups with families
  - Revise technology

What would you ask families about educator partnerships?