Recipes for Success: Active Ingredients for Promoting a Parent's Use of Everyday Child Language Learning Practices

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The things early childhood practitioners do to engage a parent to use any type of early childhood intervention practice matters a great deal if a parent is likely to learn to use the practice for promoting a young child's learning and development. Coaching, mentoring, training, and teaching are just some of the ways early childhood practitioners promote a parent's use of early childhood intervention practices.

This *Everyday Child Language Learning Tool* includes a description of the capacity-building adult learning procedures that can be used by early childhood practitioners to promote a parent's understanding and use of the *Center on Everyday Child Language Learning* interest-based child language learning intervention practices (Dunst, Trivette, & Raab, 2013a, 2013b). The adult learning procedure is based on findings from a research review of how people learn (Bransford et al., 2000), more than 50 studies of different adult learning methods (Dunst & Trivette, 2012; Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby, 2010), and results from studies using the capacity-building approach for promoting practitioners' use of different kinds of practices (Dunst & Raab, 2010; Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 2011; Trivette, Raab, & Dunst, 2012). All of this information was used to develop the adult learning procedure and tip sheets described in this paper (Dunst & Trivette, 2009; Raab, Dunst, & Trivette, 2013).

Adult Learning Procedure

The adult learning procedure includes methods for (1) describing and (2) illustrating a practice for a parent; the methods for having a parent (3) use the practice and (4) assess what a child did when the child experienced the practice; the methods used to have a parent (5) reflect on his or her understanding and using the most important characteristics of the practice; (6) the methods used to identify new capacity-building learning opportunities to further develop a parent's understanding and mastery of the practice.

The research we have conducted shows that it is important to include as many of the six steps as possible when promoting a parent's use of a practice. It is especially important that steps four through six be explicitly incorporated into any coaching or intervention session. We have found that doing only steps one and two of the adult learning procedure are not effective for promoting a parent's use of a practice.

Four tip sheets have been developed, one for each of the four components of the *Center on Everyday Child Language Learning* model. The Appendix includes the four **Step-by-Step Tip Sheets** that describe the different steps for identifying and providing a child interest-based learning opportunities; the everyday activities that are used as sources of interest-based child learning activities; the methods for increasing child participation in everyday learning activities; and the use of responsive teaching to promote child language learning when a child is involved in everyday activities. Each of the tip sheets includes a description of the six steps of the adult learning procedure

as well as a description of specific things that can be done to promote a parent's understanding and use of the different practices.

Implications for Practice

The tip sheets for any one of the four practices can be used by a practitioner to plan a coaching or intervention session with a parent. A practitioner might make notes or otherwise list the particular activities or exercises he or she plans to do with a parent on the tip sheets to be used as a kind of coaching plan. The tip sheets can also be used by a practitioner to do a self-assessment of how well a coaching or intervention session was conducted. A supervisor or colleague and a practitioner together can review a coaching or intervention session to determine what might be done to improve a practitioner's use of the adult learning procedure.

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Appendix

Step-by-Step Tip Sheets

1. Interest-Based Child Learning
2. Everyday Child Learning Activities
3. Increasing Child Participation in Everyday Learning Activities
4. Responsive Teaching

Step-by-Step Tip Sheet for Interest-Based Child Learning

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1. **Introduce information about child interests and the importance of using child interests as the foundation for learning.**
   - Explain what child interests are
   - Explain the basis for children's engagement and learning in interest-based activities and why
   - Describe personal interests
   - Describe situational interests
   - Explain child cycle of mastery figure

2. **Provide examples, demonstrate, or otherwise *illustrate* for the parent how to identify child interests.**
   - Provide the parent examples of interest indicators and ways to identify child interests
   - Point out and show the parent examples of indicators of his/her own child's interests

3. **Involve the parent in actively *identifying child interests*.**
   - With a parent, observe his/her child and use interest indicators to help the parent recognize child interests
   - Use the *Child Interests Activity List* with the parent to identify child interests

4. **Assist the parent in *examining* what was done, what happened, and what worked when he or she identified child interests.**
   - Refer to the *Child Interest Checklist* to help the parent examine what he/she did
   - Assist the parent in examining his/her ability to identify child interests
   - Provide the parent feedback that assists the parent to identify child interests

5. **Determine what the parent *understood* and the extent to which the parent was able to *identify child interests*.**
   - Determine if the parent understands the importance of interest-based learning
   - Determine if the parent is able to identify his/her child's interests

6. **Determine what *additional* opportunities will be provided to build upon the parent's understanding and ability to identify child interests.**
   - Determine the additional opportunities that can build on the parent's abilities to identify child interests
   - Help the parent decide if his/her child was interested in selected activities
   - Help the parent expand his or her understanding and use of child interests as a basis for child learning

Step-by-Step Tip Sheet for Everyday Child Learning Activities

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1. ***Introduce*** **information about everyday learning activities and how they are selected.**
   - Describe both family and community activities
   - Describe how selecting a variety of activities as contexts for learning must:
     - Be based on the child's interest,
     - Have opportunities for language learning, and
     - Happen frequently or could happen frequently

2. **Provide examples, demonstrate, or otherwise *illustrate* for the parent the selection of everyday activities that have language learning opportunities.**
   - Provide the parent different examples of everyday family and community activities that have language learning opportunities
   - Use different examples you know from the family's life and community life
   - Provide the parent examples of how to select activities as contexts for child learning

3. **Involve the parent in actively trying out and *selecting* everyday language learning opportunities.**
   - Use the CECLL *Selecting Interest-Based Everyday Activities* tool with the parent to help him/her practice selecting interest-based activities
   - Use the *Interest Activity List* with the parent to select interest-based everyday activities for his/her child's learning

4. **Assist the parent in *examining* what was done, what happened, and what worked when everyday language learning activities were selected.**
   - Refer to the Everyday Activities Checklist to help the parent examine his/her practice
   - Help the parent determine whether selected activities are interest-based, have language learning opportunities, and happen or could happen often
   - Provide the parent feedback on his or her selection of interest-based everyday activities

5. **Determine what the parent *understood* and the extent to which the parent was able to *select* everyday language learning activities.**
   - Determine if the parent is able to use the *Interest Activity List* to select interest-based everyday language learning activities

6. **Determine what *additional* opportunities will be provided to build upon the parent's understanding and ability to select everyday language learning activities.**
   - Determine additional opportunities that can build on the parent's abilities to select activities as contexts for language learning
   - Help the parent decide whether to continue, discontinue, or modify the selected activities
   - Help the parent expand his/her understanding and use of everyday activities as contexts for child language learning

Step-by-Step Tip Sheet
for Increasing Child Participation
in Everyday Learning Activities

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1. *Introduce* **information about everyday child language learning opportunities and how learning opportunities are increased.**
   - Describe why it is important to increase learning opportunities
   - Discuss the importance of having lots of learning opportunities across activities (*breadth*)
   - Discuss the importance of having lots of learning opportunities within activities (*depth*)
   - Describe the importance of using frequently occurring activities

2. **Provide examples, demonstrate, or otherwise *illustrate* for the parent how to increase language learning opportunities.**
   - Provide examples of language learning opportunities within and across selected activities
   - Use CECLL practice guides with a parent to highlight examples of language learning opportunities across and within different activities.
   - Show the parent how to plan to increase language learning opportunities (e.g., weekly activity schedules)

3. **Involve the parent in actively *trying out* and *increasing* everyday language learning opportunities.**
   - Have the parent use an activity reminder schedule to increase the frequency of child participation in selected activities
   - Have the parent identify ways to increase language learning opportunities within an activity

4. **Assist the parent in *examining* what was done, what happened, and what worked when language learning opportunities were increased.**
   - Help the parent examine the language learning opportunities that were provided in selected activities
   - Help the parent determine whether the child had increased opportunities to participate in the interest-based language learning opportunities
   - Help the parent determine whether child language learning was increased as a result of participation in activities

5. **Determine what the parent *understood* and the extent to which the parent was able to *increase* everyday language learning opportunities.**
   - Determine if the parent can increase child language learning opportunities *within* and *across* activities
   - Determine if the parent can use an activity reminder schedule to increase the frequency of child participation in selected activities

6. **Determine what *additional* opportunities will be provided to build upon the parent's understanding and ability to increase everyday language learning opportunities.**
   - Determine ways to further the parent's abilities to increase child language learning opportunities
   - Help the parent examine the language learning opportunities that were provided
   - Help the parent determine additional activities that could provide interest-based language learning opportunities

Step-by-Step Tip Sheet for Promoting Parents' Use of Responsive Teaching

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1. ***Introduce* information about responsive teaching and its important features.**
   - Explain adult response to child-initiated behavior in everyday activities
   - Describe the components:
     - Attention to child interests/signals/behavior
     - Responsiveness to child behavior to encourage continued engagement
     - Responsiveness to child behavior to encourage elaboration
   - Use the *Caregiver Responsive Teaching Checklist* as a guide in providing information about the practice to the parent.

2. **Provide examples, demonstrate, or otherwise *illustrate* for the parent what responsive teaching looks like.**
   - Use CECLL practice guides with a parent to illustrate examples of responsive teaching strategies
   - Demonstrate responsive teaching strategies to a parent (use the *Caregiver Responsive Teaching Checklist* as a guide)
   - Point out responsive teaching strategies the parent uses in everyday activities

3. **Involve the parent in actively trying out and *doing* responsive teaching.**
   - Observe the parent trying out responsive teaching strategies in an activity and provide feedback
   - Help the parent plan how he/she can practice using responsive teaching strategies in the different selected activities

4. **Assist the parent in *examining* what was done, what happened, and what worked when responsive teaching was used.**
   - Jointly with the parent, examine the parent's practice to determine what responsive teaching strategies were used
   - Help the parent examine what happened and what worked when responsive teaching strategies were used

5. **Determine what the parent *understood* and the extent to which the parent was able to *use* responsive teaching strategies.**
   - Determine if the parent can use responsive teaching strategies in ways that promote his/her child's language learning

6. **Determine what *additional* opportunities will be provided to build upon the parent's understanding and use of responsive teaching strategies.**
   - Determine additional opportunities that can build upon the parent's abilities to use responsive teaching strategies
   - Determine ways to advance the parent's abilities to be responsive to his/her child's attempts to communicate