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Building the Capacity to Support Children's Language Learning through Naturalistic Communication Strategies

A number of years ago, a landmark study conducted in Kansas captured the attention of early interventionists and researchers across the nation, showing how important early experience with language is for children's language development. In their book, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Lives of American Children* (1995), Drs. Hart and Risley describe their longitudinal study (Hart & Risley, 1992) in which they measured the amount of language that children heard in their home during monthly observations conducted when children were between 6- and 36-months of age. They documented that children who heard more language in their home developed vocabularies that far exceeded those of children who were exposed to less language in terms of the amount of talk they heard. Over time, the differences in children's every day experiences made for staggering differences in the cumulative amount of talk they heard in their homes. Those differences in experience and the impact on children's development persisted as children entered school (Walker, Greenwood, Hart & Carta, 1994). Children who heard less language in their homes when they were babies were more likely to have poor school readiness skills, lower spoken language and lower reading skills compared to the children who heard more language in their homes (Walker et al., 1994).

That study, along with other research, suggests that environments for young children should be language-rich and provide opportunities for children to hear vocabulary (Burchinal et al., 2000; Huttenlocher, et al. 1991; NICHD, 2000), have opportunities to engage in shared book reading (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998), and participate in conversations (Snow, Tabors, Dickinson, 2001). Although key intervention strategies have been found to promote language and early literacy skills (Kaiser, Hancock & Nietfeld, 2000; Tannock, Girolametto, & Siegel, 1992; Warren, Yoder, Gazdag, Kim & Jones, 1993;) in practice, they are only rarely used by teachers or parents (Phillips & Adams, 2001; Schwartz et al., 1996; Smith, Warren, Yoder & Feurer, 2004).

Given the connection between early communication skills and later language development and early literacy outcomes (Lonigan, 2006; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Warren & Walker, 2005), there is a need to translate language intervention research into practice that can be readily used by parents, teachers and interventionists. Our research group at the Juniper Gardens Children's Project at the University of Kansas has conducted a series of studies documenting the use of naturalistic communication interventions by parents and early educators to promote the communication of infants and toddlers. Most recently, our *Model Demonstration Center for*

Building the Capacity... continued

Promoting Language and Literacy Readiness in Early Childhood, one of three centers funded through the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), has been evaluating a model using evidence-based practice for increasing the use of naturalistic communication interventions in homes and community-based early education programs. In this work, we have partnered with three Part C infant-toddler programs in Kansas to improve the quality of early language-learning and literacy experiences provided to very young children with special needs. This intervention uses intentional naturalistic intervention approaches (Kaiser, Hancock & Trent, 2007) designed to increase the communication and early language and literacy skills of infants and toddlers (Walker, Bigelow, Harjusola-Webb, 2008) and to promote the continuity of intervention through the transition into preschool. The intervention strategies are derived from responsive intervention (e.g., Tannock & Girolametto, 1992), prelinguistic and milieu teaching (e.g., Kaiser, Hancock, & Nietfeld, 2000; Peterson, Carta & Greenwood, 2006; Warren et al., 2008), and dialogic and shared book reading (e.g., Cole, Maddox, & Lim, 2006; Justice & Pullen, 2003; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998), which have extensive research supporting their use.

In this Model Demonstration Center, these interventions have been individualized for children and families and delivered through a collaborative professional development model (Walker, Harjusola-Webb, Small, Bigelow & Kirk, 2005) to increase their implementation across routines and activities (Woods, Kashinath, & Goldstein, 2004) that occur in homes and early education programs. The language-promoting strategies disseminated and evaluated through this Center include environmental arrangement, following a child's lead, commenting and labeling, time delay, and expansion as described in a Manual and DVD (Walker, Small, Bigelow, Kirk, & Harjusola-Webb, 2004). To provide continuity of intervention, when children transition into Part B Section 619 or preschool at 36 months, most of the same strategies are used during play and early literacy activities through *Language is the Key: A Program for Building Language and Literacy in Early Childhood* (Cole, Maddox, Notari-Syverson, & Lim, 2006). A way to facilitate this continuity is for teachers to embed these strategies into their current practices and routines, and/or to include the strategies as "homework" for parents so as to bridge goals worked on in preschool to homes. Intervention coaches and staff from the Model Demonstration Center support Part C *tiny-k* and Part B intervention providers with their

effort to build the capacity of parents and teachers to use the intervention strategies across daily activities and routines with their children.

To encourage regular use of the intervention strategies and to measure the fidelity with which the intervention is delivered, parents and teachers self-record their use of the intervention. In addition, Part C and Part B intervention providers record which strategies they cover during regular home or program visits; documenting what they review with the parent (or teacher) and what intervention strategies they observe being used. The Model Demonstration Center staff observe parents' and teachers' use of the intervention strategies and child communication on a regular basis, providing reports and graphs as feedback to parents and teachers about their use of the intervention strategies and child outcomes. In this way, multiple ways of ensuring that the intervention is being implemented are used to document intervention fidelity (e.g., Fixen, Naom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2006).

In the next section, we briefly describe the strategies from the *Promoting Communication Manual* (Walker, Small, Bigelow, Kirk & Harjusola-Webb, 2004) and the strategies used in the *Language as Key Manual* (Cole et al., 2006) that are used in this Center after children reach 36 months of age or enter preschool. Each set of strategies are outlined in intervention manuals and DVDs, provided to parents and teachers.

Strategies for Promoting Communication and Language

Strategies from the *Promoting Communication Manual* (Walker et al., 2004) are designed to be used with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers across daily activities, such as during play, book activities, or daily routines such as meal time and bath time:

Arranging the Environment to Promote Communication

- Having books to read in a quiet, comfortable area, and throughout the house or classroom
- Encouraging regular and predictable routines, such as by reading stories together at bedtime after bath time each night
- Displaying pictures at child's eye level
- Providing opportunities for exploring the environment by making some toys and books accessible to children throughout the day

Building the Capacity... continued on page 3

Building the Capacity... continued

Following Child's Lead/Being Responsive

- Noticing and talking about the child's interest, activity, or materials
- Using the child's interest to provide opportunities for communication
- Allowing the child to lead the focus of the activity
- Ask open-ended questions about the toy or activity in which the child is showing interest
- Giving choices throughout activities, and in transitions to new activities

Commenting and Labeling

- Describing the child's actions, toys, activities, or interests
- Labeling children's actions, feelings, or materials
- Commenting about the activity in which the child is engaged
- Talking about the pictures in a book, or what you both see on an outing



Imitating and Expanding

- Imitating is repeating a child's vocalizations or words
- Expanding is adding something new to what the child said
- Adding to the child's talk by describing in a slightly more complex way
- Adding more complex, or alternative descriptors

Asking Open-Ended Questions

- Asking who, what, when, where, why questions that children can answer in multiple ways, with more than a "yes/no" response
- Ask questions related to child's play or interest, or to routines
- Pause a moment after questions, and if there is no answer, fill in the answer yourself
- Balance questions with other types of talk

Time Delay/Fill in the Blank

- Planning a delay during a predictable routine so that the child has the opportunity to fill in the blank in a song or common phrase with which they are familiar
- Children practice talking during predictable phrases, such as "Twinkle, twinkle..."

Positive Attention and Praise

- Attending to, and being positive about child communication, or attempts at communication
- Playing with children provides positive attention
- Positive attention for communication and prosocial behavior creates opportunities for children to practice skills, and encourages additional communication and positive behavior

Providing Choices

- Providing choices encourages the child to communicate preferences
- Provide choices by offering a variety of options for toys, activities, or books
- Present choices in daily routines, such as meals, dressing, or clean-up activities

Intervention strategies from the *Language is Key Manual* (Cole et al., 2006) include the same strategies used for infants and toddlers described above, but have an increased emphasis on using books and play as the context for encouraging communication.

Comment and Wait for Child to Respond

- Similar to commenting and labeling, above, talking about what the child is interested in at the moment and pausing to allow time for the child to respond

Ask Questions and Wait for Child to Respond

- This involves open- and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions typically require a more complex response
- Pause to wait for a response, and if the child does not respond, offer a brief answer and continue the activity

Respond by Adding a Little More Information

- Similar to Imitating and Expanding above, repeat what the child says, and then add some new information to make it a little more complex

Following a Child's Lead

- Follow a child's lead when using these strategies. Children are more likely to talk about topics in which they are interested

Waiting for a Response

- Pause, and wait at least 5 seconds to allow time for a response. Children need time to think and turn thoughts into words. This also lets a child know we are interested in what the child has to say.

Building the Capacity... continued on page 4

Building the Capacity... continued

Findings and Contribution

Through this Center, we have documented that infants and toddlers communicate and begin to use language at a higher rate and perform significantly higher on communication and measures of early literacy readiness when their parents and/or teachers use these intervention strategies with a higher level of fidelity compared to when adults use the strategies less frequently (Walker, Bigelow, Atwater et al., 2010). These results replicate previous findings with young children in inclusive child care in which we documented that child care providers' strategy use was a significant predictor of child communication at 36 months and of children's communication over time. Through the collaborative work on this Model Demonstration Center we are uncovering important information about how early intervention providers through Part C and Part B Section 619, and in early education settings can help to build the capacity of parents and teachers to use naturalistic language-promoting strategies with infants, toddlers and preschoolers with special needs. This project is ongoing and we are following this group of children through kindergarten to provide information about school readiness related to early communication and literacy development as they transition into school.

Drs. Dale Walker and Kathryn Bigelow are research faculty at the Juniper Gardens Children's Project, an affiliated program of the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies at the University of Kansas. *The Model Demonstration Center for Promoting Language and Readiness in Early Childhood* is funded through the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Graduate Research Assistants include: Laine Johnson and Emily Meyer. Intervention Coaches: Joyce Shontz, M.A., and Sean Stacey, M.A. The Evaluation Supervisor is Dr. Jane Atwater, and Peggy Miksch, M.A., is the Dissemination Advisor.

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Building the Capacity... conclusion

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The Collaborative Calendar of Events

View at www.kskits.org/training



| DATE | EVENT/CITY | CONTACT / REGISTRATION |
|---------|--|--|
| 1/12/12 | <i>Evaluation and Eligibility Training</i> - Topeka | TAESE – Register online at: http://ksdetasn.org/cms/index.php/register-for-event/general/evaluation-and-eligibility-training-january |
| 1/23/12 | <i>Kansas Infant Toddler Service Coordinator Meeting via Webinar</i> | Registration at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q7SHB7S |
| 1/24/12 | <i>Reading Comprehension Strategies for Children with ASD: Early/Emergent Reading Stage</i> - Webinar | Kansas Instructional Support Network: Sarah Hoffmeier at (913) 588-5981 or shoffmeier@kumc.edu Registration link: https://kansasasd.webex.com/kansasasd/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=661788835 |
| 2/14/12 | <i>Evaluation and Eligibility Training</i> - Salina | TAESE – Register online at: http://ksdetasn.org/cms/index.php/register-for-event/general/evaluation-and-eligibility-training-february |
| 2/16/12 | <i>Learn the Signs. Act Early. Supporting Families in Early Intervention Using a Public Health Campaign</i> - Webinar | Kansas Instructional Support Network: Sarah Hoffmeier at (913) 588-5981 or shoffmeier@kumc.edu Registration link: https://kansasasd.webex.com/kansasasd/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=667668496 |
| 2/23/12 | <i>30th Annual KDEC Conference: Evidence-Based Practice: Real Life Applications</i> - Wichita | Carolyn Nelson (785) 478-2173 jn-cn@msn.com Registration and other information available at: http://www.taese.org |
| 2/24/12 | <i>Nutrition Makes a Difference</i> - Topeka | Easter Seals Capper Foundation, Risa Flanders at (785) 272-4060 ext 7152 or at rflanders@capper.easterseals.com |
| 2/25/12 | <i>2012 Together We Can Learn Conference</i> - Topeka | Families Together, Inc. Information available at: http://2012togetherwecanlearn.eventbrite.com/ |
| 2/24/12 | <i>Developing a Sensory Strategy Plan via Evidence-Based Data Collection to Treat Sensory-Based Problem Behavior</i> - Topeka | Easter Seals Capper Foundation, Risa Flanders at (785) 272-4060 ext 7152 or at rflanders@capper.easterseals.com |
| 3/3/12 | <i>Families Together – Team Empowerment Conference (TEC)</i> - Wichita | Families Together Administrative Center: (888) 815-6364 (KS parents) or (316) 945-7747 or email: Connie@famielsttogetherinc.org |
| 3/8/12 | <i>Evaluation and Eligibility Training</i> - Wichita | TAESE – Register online at: http://ksdetasn.org/cms/index.php/register-for-event/general/evaluation-and-eligibility-training-march |
| 3/31/12 | <i>Families Together - Team Empowerment Conference (TEC) - Health Focused</i> - Salina | Families Together Administrative Center: (888) 815-6364 (KS parents) or (316) 945-7747 or email: Connie@famielsttogetherinc.org |
| 4/10/12 | <i>Evaluation and Eligibility Training</i> - Overland Park | TAESE – Register online at: http://ksdetasn.org/cms/index.php/register-for-event/general/evaluation-and-eligibility-training-april |
| 4/12/12 | <i>A Multi-disciplinary Discussion using a Behavioral, Nutritional, Oral Motor and Sensory Issues Approach to Evaluate Children with Oral Aversion and Feeding Difficulties</i> - Webinar | Kansas Instructional Support Network, Registration link: https://kansasasd.webex.com/kansasasd/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=663659396 |
| 4/13/11 | <i>More Than Rock, Paper, Scissors!: Effective Occupational Therapy Approaches To Support The Teaching & Learning Of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders</i> - TBA | Kansas Instructional Support Network, Registration link: http://www.kansasasd.com/news_attach/TS_RegistrationAPR11.pdf |



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Virtual Kits New Online Resource

The Internet has made a terrific impact on the way we are able to access and disseminate information. We have all come to expect the **newest information** to be readily available on the **topics most important** to our work and those we serve. In order to provide this level of information services to our constituents, the KITS team has created a new resource on our website – [Virtual Kits](#).

Virtual Kits has been developed as a tool to help you quickly find relevant and reliable web-based resources on topics important to our field and our practices. In recognition of the rapid rate at which new information is disseminated on the Internet, this section of the KITS website will be continually updated. New Virtual Kits will be developed in response to your feedback and requests.

Each Virtual Kit will offer the following content:

Virtual Kits QT

The Virtual Kit will begin with a "Quick Take" summary of its rationale and purpose.

Show me now! (I need this information tomorrow.)

This section will provide links to 3-5 websites on the topic, with the best available information we have identified to date.

What does this look like in practice? (I have a little more time to read about this.)

This area will provide more links to information on practical application

of practices consistent with the best available information we have identified to date, including levels of evidence to support the practices, when available.

What does the KITS Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) have on this topic?

A few related resources, currently available from the KITS ECRC, will be listed in this section.

How can I find training on this topic?

This segment will provide links to KITS training resources, including our collaborative training calendar, related technical assistance packets and online training modules, as well as professional organizations or state agencies that provide training or courses related to the topic.

What if I still need help?

Contact information for KITS team members or representatives from state agencies that support early intervention and early childhood special education will be listed here.

If this Virtual Kit was helpful, you might also like...

... one last section of other links to additional or related information.

Evaluation

We hope you will follow this link to provide valuable feedback on the Virtual Kit and suggestions for future Virtual Kit development.

Virtual Kits currently available:

- Becoming an Evidence Based Practitioner in Early Intervention/ Early Childhood Special Education
- Brain Research In Early Childhood
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice

APPLICATIONS FOR RECOGNITION IN BEST PRACTICE

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) identify, on a yearly basis, as many as three early intervention and as many as four early childhood preschool programs from across the state that demonstrate application of best practice in a component of their program.

Applications for the 2012 awards have been sent to all subscribers of the KITS Infant-Toddler Network, Preschool Programs and Network Coordinator list services. Application packets are also available to download from this KITS website link:

<http://kskits.org/resources/#Application>

Submitted applications will be reviewed by a panel of Kansas professionals in the fields of early intervention and early childhood special education. Each recipient will be presented with a certificate of recognition and an award of \$1,250 during the 2012 KDEC Conference in Wichita on February 23-24.

Please direct questions regarding the Application for Recognition in Best Practice to: Dave Lindeman at lindeman@ku.edu

Completed applications must be postmarked on or before Friday, January 13, 2012.



Transition to Kindergarten: Ready Children, Ready Families, Ready Schools

Transition planning is already underway for many kindergarten eligible children in preschool programs across the state and we know it will kick into high gear after the winter break. New resources from the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at Indiana University (IU) provide evidence-based practice recommendations and tools to support families and educators in promoting kindergarten readiness. Following a review of the existing research literature on the topic, the Early Childhood Center at IU conducted observations in kindergartens across the state of Indiana. The purpose of the study was to answer 3 questions: How do children in kindergarten spend their time? What skills are expected (and demonstrated) most often in kindergarten classrooms? What does instruction look like? (Conn-Powers, Cross, & Dixon, 2011).

Findings from the kindergarten study are described in *The First Days of Kindergarten and What They Mean for Preschool Teachers*, a paper posted on the Promoting School Readiness website <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageId=3445>

Implications and recommendations for preschool teachers lead to a series of brief papers on *Preparing Children for Kindergarten* aimed at bridging the differences identified between preschool and kindergarten routines and expectations, specifically during arrival, whole class instruction, seat work and learning centers.

A second series of short papers to come out of the study examines individual components of readiness. For example, *All Children Ready for School: Ready Families* includes a review of evidence-based practices and examples of a universal design for learning (UDL) approach to implementation for *all families*. All would make good handouts for families and educators involved in planning for transition to kindergarten.

Other products of the kindergarten study are also available for download, including:

- Conn-Powers, M. (2010). [Essential Skills for Kindergarten: Checklist](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/EssentialSkills.pdf). (<http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/EssentialSkills.pdf>)
- Carpenter, L., Cole, P., & Cross, A. F. (2008). [Tip Sheets for Early Educators on Promoting School Readiness](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/Tip_sheets_all.pdf). (www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/Tip_sheets_all.pdf)

- Dixon, S. D., & Beard, C. (2011). [School Readiness: What Teachers Expect. What Parents Can Do](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/What_teachers_expect.pdf). (http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/What_teachers_expect.pdf)

Keep watching this website for outcomes and future products of their current study of skills and routines in preK classrooms. Additional information and resources supporting the transition to kindergarten can also be found in the KITS TA packet: [Are They Ready for Kindergarten? The Pros and Cons of Redshirting Young Children](http://www.kskits.org/ta/Packets/Ready_forKindergarten.shtml). (http://www.kskits.org/ta/Packets/Ready_forKindergarten.shtml)

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Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for Families

The Federal and state tax credit such as Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) can put thousands of dollars in the pockets of families and working individuals with children to help them pay for living expenses. EITC is a tax credit for low-income individuals and families who work and have low wages. It is used to lower any state income tax owed or, if the credit is larger than what is owed in state taxes, a refund check is mailed to the taxpayer.

There are millions of dollars available in tax credits and much of that money is never claimed. If you are a single parent, or a couple who has children; and you have worked part time or full time, you may be eligible to receive a federal EITC refund up to \$5,751. When filing your 2011 tax returns during the 2012 tax-filing season, please remember to request information regarding eligibility for the EITC benefit.

For more information visit the Kansas Department of Revenue web site <http://www.ksrevenue.org> or call the IRS toll-free at 1(800) 829-1040 to locate a free tax assistance site in or near your county or residence or <http://www.irs.gov>

Foundations of Early Self-Determination

The *Foundations for Self-Determination in Early Childhood* is a grant-funded project for building family-professional partnerships within early childhood services, ages 3-5 years, addressing needs of young children and their families and teachers in order to develop skills that will lead to later self-determination skills. Jean Ann Summers and Susan Palmer from the Beach Center, University of Kansas, are Co-Principal Investigators on this Department of Education, Institute for Educational Sciences activity project. The purpose of the Foundations Study is to develop strategies that parents, preschool teachers, and other staff can use to help young children with disabilities learn to make choices, solve problems, stay with activities longer, and gain more self-control of their emotions and behavior, all precursors for success in K-12. Adults can make adjustments in home and school environments, and provide useful supports for children to be included in classroom, home and community activities. This project focuses on building effective and robust family-professional partnerships in order to support young children through routines-based discussions, setting short-term goals for home and school, and sharing what works for a child as the Foundations process unfolds. This project is a collaborative effort between the University of Kansas, Iowa State University, and Montclair State University in New Jersey.

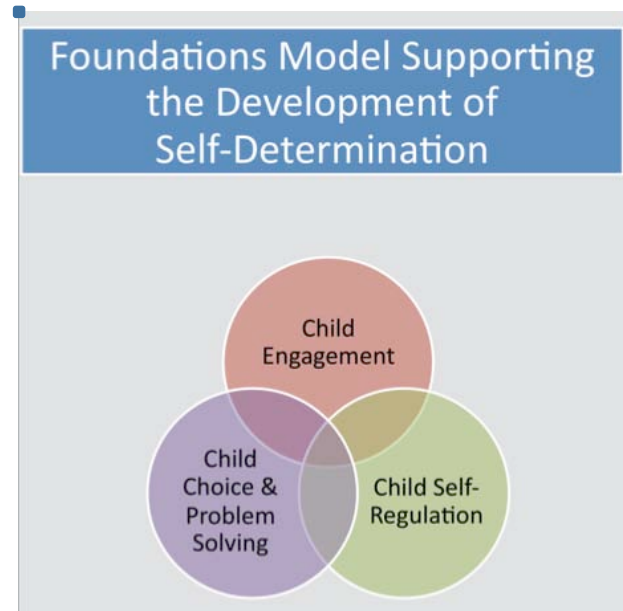
Self-determination involves making choices, setting goals, decision-making, and self-advocacy when children are older, but how can we start during early childhood to promote school success in later years? We focus on the idea of building foundations for later self-determination skills when children are young so that families and caregivers can provide young children opportunities for practice and guidance in the skills they need to promote independence at a later age (Palmer et al. 2011). Linking foundational early childhood curriculum elements and the construct of self-determination assists us in maximizing outcomes for young children with disabilities, through support of caring adults.

Benefits/Outcomes

Young children can benefit from adjusting their home environment, providing support for choice making, and honoring preferences (Brotherson, Cook, Erwin & Weigel, 2008). Choice making and simple problem solving may increase children's later participation in school and community activities (Agran, Blanchard, & Wehmeyer, 2000). The Foundations model supports

families and teachers to consider the needs of a young child, coordinate information for home and school, and develop relevant short-term goals using the four-part Foundations of Early Self-Determination model (See Figure 1 below). The four simple components guide families and teachers to *assess*, *select*, *try it*, and *reflect* on the results.

Figure 1



The *Assess* section of our process begins with the practitioner and family, working with a facilitator to meet to talk about child routines at home and school (McWilliam, Casey & Sims, 2009). A short-term goal is set for both home and school as part of the *Select* component. We help the participants develop a set of criteria, which we use to create a Goal Attainment Scale, which makes sure both the family and teacher are in agreement about markers for success. Once the goals for the child are selected for home and preschool, both the teacher and the family member *Try It*, in order to see if the goals are achieved over the course of six to eight weeks. A feature of the model is that we ask both the teacher and family member to video the child trying out the strategy. At the end of *Try It*, the family-teacher dyad with the help of the facilitator *reflect* on how the process worked for both themselves and the child. They reflect upon "What worked best?" "What they could have changed?" and if there was a logical "Next Step" in implementing additional goals for the child.

[Foundations of Early ... continued on page 10](#)

Typically, at the end of two cycles of goals, families and practitioners have increased their communication, mutual support, and ability to partner with one another regarding child outcomes. In particular, looking at the videos has been an eye-opener for the families and teachers. We have also found that the experience has improved the quality of the partnerships between the families and teachers who participated.

In this third year of study, we are currently recruiting programs serving children ages 3 through 5 years, their teachers, and families, to be participants in our study. Please contact Jean Ann Summers at jsummers@ku.edu or Susan Palmer at spalmer@ku.edu if you would like to find out more about Foundations for Self-Determination in Early Childhood.

Submitted by Susan Palmer, Vera Stroup-Rentier and Jean Ann Summers.

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Part B ECSE Preschool Coordinator's Corner



Transition from Part C to Part B ECSE Preschool – Part B Indicator 12

Our Birth to Five Summits were very successful. We had over 300 attendees from across the state participate in early childhood transition training. Please go to our Early Learning Services Unit (ELSU) website at <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4425> for many resources including; Transition, State and Local Memorandum Of Agreement's (MOA), Interagency Coordinating Councils, Screening, Referral and Follow-up. We have posted the self-assessments, requirement grids and other resources utilized at these summits.

Recently, districts were notified of Indicator 12 data results from last school year. Each year we are improving with this compliance indicator! If you need technical assistance with transition, please contact Tiffany Smith at tsmith@ksde.org or go to the TASN website to request Individualized Technical Assistance from staff with KITS at <http://ksdetasn.org/cms/>

Early Childhood Outcomes- Outcomes Web System (OWS)- Part B Indicator 7

At the upcoming 2012 KDEC Conference February 23 & 24th, KSDE and KITS staff will be presenting information and a data drilldown guide to support Part B ECSE preschool programs in understanding their early childhood outcome data, evaluating their current early childhood outcome reporting process, and identifying patterns in their data that can lead to improved services to Kansas children and families.

Early Childhood Special Education Indicator Technical Assistance

Please go to the TASN website to request Individualized Technical Assistance or to get information regarding the Kansas SPP Indicator Improvement Resources, Public Reports and other useful links. <http://ksdetasn.org/cms/>

There are many resources available regarding Early Childhood Transition (Indicator 12), Early Childhood Outcomes (Indicator 7) and Least Restrictive Environment (Indicator 6) for Early Childhood, as well as the other Part B Indicators.

Submitted by Tiffany Smith
Early Childhood Part B ECSE Coordinator
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Part C Coordinator's Corner

"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow". – Einstein

Now, far be it for me to claim to be as intelligent as Einstein, but I think this quote sums up where we are in the early intervention program in Kansas. We have learned a lot in the past nine months. We are approaching each day as an opportunity to make a difference, we are having fun doing it, and we have great hope for tomorrow.

Learn from yesterday! In preparation for writing this article, I took a few minutes to look back on the short time that the current team has been together at KDHE and am amazed at all that has been accomplished. Here are just a few of those accomplishments:

- We have had a verification visit from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- We have made numerous additions and improvements to the ITS Database.
- We have developed a more comprehensive plan for General Supervision of Kansas' Part C program.
- We have developed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Kansas Department of Education around transition at the age of three and provided training on transition to every network.
- We have begun development of a statewide Individualized Family Service Plan and supporting documents.
- We have drafted the federally required Annual Performance Report for FFY 2010 (equivalent to SFY 2011), due February 1, 2012.
- We have developed a 3-year Strategic Plan for our team at KDHE that began in the fall of 2011.
- We have developed, and are monitoring, 23 Corrective Action Plans that were implemented in September 2011 regarding transition activities. Two programs have already made enough improvements to be released from their agreements.
- We continue support and augmentation of evidence-based practices and the primary provider service delivery model at the local program level.
- We are well underway in our planning for and implementation of the new Federal Part C Regulations, published in September 2011 and effective in October 2011.

Live for today! I know it is a cliché, but one of the things I have learned in life is that you have to learn to enjoy where you are when you are there.

We at KDHE are working very hard to strike a balance between learning from the past, knowing what we need to do now and planning for the future. I think we all should take note of how well the children we serve live in the moment and take life as it comes. As it applies to our work in early intervention I think of this quote from Stacia Tauscher, "We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today."

As for hope for tomorrow, we at KDHE have great hopes for the future! We have a great staff, great local networks and providers and the future is bright. The Infant Toddler Services team took time in the fall of 2011 to look toward the future and where we want to be in administering the Part C program in the State of Kansas. Our team has set forth the following Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles and Goals.

Vision: All children and families will have an equal opportunity to experience childhood and family life.

Mission: Infant and Toddler Services provide the foundation and framework to build network capacity for creating positive outcomes for children and families.

Guiding Principles:

- To be a trusted, creative team with a commitment to positive attitudes and relationships.
- To seek opportunities to accomplish meaningful change for children and families.
- To be a positive, efficient and effective resource for our partners and local networks.
- To have a willingness to act when change and/or work needs to be accomplished.
- To value fun and open, positive communication focused on the current needs of the system.

Goals:

- Goal I: Infant-Toddler Services will operate internally as an efficient, predictable and well-documented system.
- Goal II: To have an experienced, knowledgeable and collaborative culture built on trusting relationships.
- Goal III: To have a system of support that meets the Part C SPP/APR Related Requirements and maximizes the strengths, talents and interdependence of all involved.

We are striving to become more efficient and more effective at the job we do at KDHE and, most of all, have fun and enjoy each day. I hope you have a Happy New Year!

Submitted by Sarah Walters, Part C Infant-Toddler Coordinator, 785-296-2245, swalters@kdheks.gov



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 Mailing address: 2601 Gabriel,
 Parsons, KS 67357

Early Childhood Resource Center

New to the ECRC

Promoting First Relationships

The KITS Early Childhood Resource Center has the *Promoting First Relationships* materials for review. Providers of services to young children or others who didn't have the opportunity to attend the Promoting First Relationships training can gain valuable information on early relationships.

These materials cover issues critical to supporting and guiding caregivers in building nurturing and responsive relationships with children, including:

- Theoretical foundations of social and emotional development in early childhood;
- Consultation strategies for working with parents and other caregivers;
- Elements of a healthy relationship;
- Promoting the development of trust and security in infancy;
- Promoting healthy development of self during toddlerhood;
- Understanding and intervening with children's challenging behaviors; and
- Developing intervention plans for children and caregivers.

The materials include: manual, DVD, handouts on CD, and picture cards. The kit contains both English and Spanish materials. More information on materials and training can be found at: <http://www.ncast.org>.

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**DID YOU
KNOW...**

**... that the KITS ECRC
has over fifty resources available on
the topic of transition?**

Here are just a few of the titles available from our lending library. Check one out today!

- *Building Bridges to Kindergarten*
- *For Parents: Transitioning Your Child – Early Intervention to Preschool*
- *Mariah's Story, A Study in Age 3 Transition*
- *Planning for Terrific Transitions*
- *Real Facts From Real Schools*
- *Step Ahead at Age 3*
- *Together We Succeed*
- *Transition Magician*

Technology for Tots

Whether you're contemplating uses for the iPad in your practice or have been using it for a while, you'll find something of interest in the Tots-n-Tech April 2011 e-newsletter devoted to the topic of how the iPad can help children with disabilities.

<http://tnt.asu.edu/home/news>

This user-friendly issue starts with "What is an iPad?" and "How much does the iPad cost?" and progresses through "Added features", "Useful Apps", and "Helpful Websites." At the Tots-n-Tech website you can sign up for the newsletter and download resources including the Assistive Technology Self-Assessment, AT Resource Briefs, AT Research Briefs, and publications by Tots-n-Tech project staff.

A University of Kansas researcher is among those currently investigating the use of the iPad to benefit young children with disabilities. Muriel Saunders, assistant research professor at KU's Life Span Institute, in her work helping young children with cortical visual impairment (CVI) to develop language skills, found children who typically didn't look at people or objects were "enthralled" with the iPad. Noting that no research has been conducted documenting the benefit of the iPad for children with CVI, Dr. Saunders plans to write a grant proposal to the National Institutes of Health to conduct a comprehensive study. Read more about Dr. Saunders work at

<http://www.news.ku.edu/2011/october/5/ipad.shtml>

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2012 KITS Summer Institute Linking Assessment, Instruction and Individualized Interventions

June 5-8, 2012

Wichita State University

Registration is now open at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PMB6F3S>

Start planning now to attend the 2012 KITS Summer Institute!

Spend four days with other early childhood professionals and learn about developing an intentional link between ongoing assessment and instruction. Understanding effective and efficient strategies for assessing children's skills, which in turn leads to instructional decisions, is a critical skill for all early childhood professionals. Also, linking decisions about instruction to early learning standards and the early childhood outcomes is vital in the age of accountability.

In addition, you will earn two hours college credit from one of our six collaborating universities (The cost of tuition and enrollment fees varies by university and are the responsibility of the Summer Institute participant). KITS provides all materials as well as lodging, meals, and a travel expense subsidy. Individual presenters and daily topics will be identified and posted as that information becomes available.

Kansas Inservice Training System

Training for Early Childhood Professionals and Families

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