ENGAGING FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES:
Systematically Planning to Create Positive Experiences and Meet Expectations
OBJECTIVES:

- Describe diverse family structures and cultures
- Explore family experiences when discovering and managing disability
- Identify strategies for supporting families of children with disabilities
POLL #1
ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

National/State Government

Local Community

Family

Child
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY – FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

- Family factors: family size, cultural background, primary and secondary language, geographic location, religious affiliation
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY – FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

- Family factors: family size, cultural background, primary and secondary language, geographic location, religious affiliation

- Individual factors: health, education, personality, coping styles
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY – FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

- Family factors: family size, cultural background, primary and secondary language, geographic location, religious affiliation

- Individual factors: health, education, personality, coping styles

- Risk factors: poverty, substance abuse, domestic/community violence
The Turnbull’s Family Systems Theory – Family Interactions

- Marital
The Turnbull’s Family Systems Theory – Family Interactions

- Marital
- Parental
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY – FAMILY INTERACTIONS

- Marital
- Parental
- Sibling
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY – FAMILY INTERACTIONS

- Marital
- Parental
- Sibling
- Extended family relationships
The Turnbull’s Family Systems Theory - Family Functions

- Affection
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY - FAMILY FUNCTIONS

- Affection
- Socialization
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY - FAMILY FUNCTIONS

- Affection
- Socialization
- Economic
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY - FAMILY FUNCTIONS

- Affection
- Socialization
- Economic
- Daily care
The Turnbull’s Family Systems Theory - Family Functions

- Affection
- Socialization
- Economic
- Daily care
- Self-esteem
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY - FAMILY FUNCTIONS

- Affection
- Socialization
- Economic
- Daily care
- Self-esteem
- Spiritual
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY - FAMILY FUNCTIONS

- Affection
- Socialization
- Economic
- Daily care
- Self-esteem
- Spiritual
- Recreation
THE TURNBULL’S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY - FAMILY FUNCTIONS

- Affection
- Socialization
- Economic
- Daily care
- Self-esteem
- Spiritual
- Recreation
- Education
The Turnbull’s Family Systems Theory – Family Functioning within Life Stages

- Typical developmental stages
  - Birth and early childhood (0 – 8)
  - Childhood (8 – 11)
  - Adolescence (11 – 21)
  - Adulthood (21 +)

And the transitions between each
CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Definitions of “Nuclear Family”

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Definitions of “Nuclear Family”
- Family leadership and decision making

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Definitions of “Nuclear Family”
- Family leadership and decision making
- Culturally responsive communication

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Definitions of “Nuclear Family”
- Family leadership and decision making
- Culturally responsive communication
- Relationships with cultural community leaders

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Definitions of “Nuclear Family”
- Family leadership and decision making
- Culturally responsive communication
- Relationships with cultural community leaders
- Continuous reflection

Knowing your own experiences can help you identify how to adapt or accommodate for the different experiences of others.
POLL #2
Self-Assessment Resource

ONE FAMILIES’ STORY
When you enrolled your son in the program, how did they learn about your family?
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – ENROLLMENT

- How do you:
- Welcome all families
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – ENROLLMENT

How do you:

- Welcome all families
- Partner with special education partners *during* enrollment
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – ENROLLMENT

How do you:

• Welcome all families
• Partner with special education partners during enrollment
• Gather relevant information
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – ENROLLMENT

How do you:

- Welcome all families
- Partner with special education partners during enrollment
- Gather relevant information
- Use or implement screening and referral practices (See Watch Me Thrive: Birth to Five)
What would have been the best way for programs to share their observations with you?
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – COMMUNICATION

How do you:

- **Maintain** positive relationships with families
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – COMMUNICATION

How do you:

- **Maintain** positive relationships with families
- **Build** positive relationships with other providers
Systemic Approaches To Family Engagement – Communication

How do you:
  • Maintain positive relationships with families
  • Build positive relationships with other providers
  • Keep families informed
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – COMMUNICATION

How do you:

- **Maintain** positive relationships with families
- **Build** positive relationships with other providers
- Keep families informed
- Stay informed of special education and related services
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – COMMUNICATION

How do you:

- **Maintain** positive relationships with families
- **Build** positive relationships with other providers
- Keep families informed
- Stay informed of special education and related services
- Share information with other providers
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – COMMUNICATION

How do you:

- **Maintain** positive relationships with families
- **Build** positive relationships with other providers
- Keep families informed
- Stay informed of special education and related services
- Share information with other providers
- Stay “on message”
WHAT KIND OF TRAINING AND SUPPORT DO YOU THINK STAFF NEEDED?
How do you:
  • Ensure staff:
    ○ Understand typical child development
    ○ Can identify developmental red flags
    ○ Know how to share information with families
    ○ Partner well with special education partners
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – HUMAN RESOURCES

How do you:

- Ensure staff:
  - Understand typical child development
  - Can identify developmental red flags
  - Know how to share information with families
  - Partner well with special education partners
- Provide ongoing support to enhance staff-family relationships
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – HUMAN RESOURCES

How do you:

- Ensure staff:
  - Understand typical child development
  - Can identify developmental red flags
  - Know how to share information with families
  - Partner well with special education partners
- Provide ongoing support to enhance staff-family relationships
- Problem-solve challenges as they arise
Once the program shared their concerns, how did they work with you to plan to support his needs?
How do you:
- Use existing information to plan for families of children with disabilities
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – PLANNING

How do you:

- Use **existing information** to plan for families of children with disabilities
- Make all family activities **accessible**
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – PLANNING

How do you:

- Use existing information to plan for families of children with disabilities
- Make all family activities accessible
- Individualize for families of children with disabilities
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – PLANNING

How do you:

- Use **existing information** to plan for families of children with disabilities
- Make all family activities **accessible**
- **Individualize** for families of children with disabilities
- **Collaborate** with partners to address comprehensive needs and reduce duplication
Systemic Approaches to Family Engagement – Planning

How do you:

- Use **existing information** to plan for families of children with disabilities
- Make all family activities **accessible**
- **Individualize** for families of children with disabilities
- **Collaborate** with partners to address comprehensive needs and reduce duplication
- Represent the **diversity** of family cultures and structures in planning
What kind of information did they collect about your son’s development? Do you know how they used it? Did you have access to it?
How do you:
- Obtain and record parental/guardian consent
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – DOCUMENTATION/RECORD-KEEPING

How do you:

- Obtain and record parental/guardian consent
- Collect information from families and partners
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – DOCUMENTATION/RECORD-KEEPING

How do you:

- Obtain and record parental/guardian consent
- Collect information from families and partners
- Track and maintain relevant information
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – DOCUMENTATION/RECORD-KEEPING

How do you:

• Obtain and record parental/guardian consent
• Collect information from families and partners
• Track and maintain relevant information
• Protect families’ confidentiality
How do you:
- Obtain and record parental/guardian consent
- Collect information from families and partners
- Track and maintain relevant information
- Protect families’ confidentiality
- Link your information with your partners
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – DOCUMENTATION/RECORD-KEEPING

How do you:

- Obtain and record parental/guardian consent
- Collect information from families and partners
- Track and maintain relevant information
- Protect families’ confidentiality
- Link your information with your partners
- Provide families with information about how you collect, track, and maintain their information
How do you:
  - Review the *level* of family engagement
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – MONITORING/PROGRAM REVIEW

How do you:
- Review the level of family engagement
- Engage families in evaluation/assessment
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT – MONITORING/PROGRAM REVIEW

How do you:

- Review the **level** of family engagement
- **Engage** families in evaluation/assessment
- Determine success in meeting family’s needs
How do you:

- Review the **level** of family engagement
- **Engage** families in evaluation/assessment
- Determine success in meeting family’s needs
- Use monitoring or review information to make programmatic changes
OUR SON TODAY AT AGE 15

- Poor eye contact
- People confuse him
- Lacks organization

BUT...

- Best big brother
- 3.9 GPA, all honors
- Great friend
- Loving and helpful
MOVING FROM LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING TO PLANNING

- Gathering Information
- Understanding Families' Experiences
- Planning to Meet Families' Needs
SIDE NOTE: THE BENEFITS OF FORMAL WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

- Mechanism for relationship building
- Supports organizations in blending approaches
- Streamlines planned activities
- Works out the “kinks”
Pulling Systems Together for Inclusive Environments

Enrollment

Monitoring/Program Review

Record-Keeping

Communication

Planning

Human Resources
Now What?

- Ask families to get involved
NOW WHAT?

- Ask families to get involved
- Review existing information
NOW WHAT?

- Ask families to get involved
- Review existing information
- Break things down into actionable tasks
Now What?

- Ask families to get involved
- Review existing information
- Break things down into actionable tasks
- Work step-by-step
Now What?

- Ask families to get involved
- Review existing information
- Break things down into actionable tasks
- Work step-by-step
- Collaborate with partners and community advocates
Now What?

- Ask families to get involved
- Review existing information
- Break things down into actionable tasks
- Work step-by-step
- Collaborate with partners and community advocates
- Prioritize what matters most to your program
POLL #3
RESOURCES

 Early Childhood News Update
  https://earlychildhoodnewsupdate.wordpress.com

 The Beach Center on Family and Disability
  http://www.beachcenter.org/

 Center for Parent Information and Resources
  http://www.parentcenterhub.org

 Harvard Family Research Center
  http://www.hfrp.org
QUESTIONS
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