



Learning from Families' Experiences

SESSION

3

Facilitator's Script



1 hour,
35 minutes total



5 minutes

When Concerns Arise— Learning from Families' Experiences

Introduction and Overview

Welcome to our session, "When Concerns Arise—Learning from Families' Experiences." My name is _____. I represent the voice of _____ (family, early intervention, early care and education). Facilitating with me today are _____ (name/voice) and _____ (name/voice).



Facilitators briefly introduce themselves and describe the unique background and experiences they bring to this session.

In this session, we will cover information that is important to families and service providers. We will hear from several families about their experiences when they first suspected their son or daughter was not developing as they expected. We will also hear from service providers about what they did to support families during this time.



Add participant introductions/openers, as needed.

Review Learning Outcomes and Agenda.

See Facilitator's Guide.

Learning Outcomes



Handout #1: Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes for this session are:

- ◆ *Participants will consider strategies that families have identified as being effective when discussing concerns about a child's development.*
- ◆ *Participants will identify family-centered, collaborative practices that provide information and referrals for resources and support.*

Agenda

Agree on Ground Rules

Embrace Possibilities

- View DVD: *Embrace Possibilities*
- Small-Group Discussion
- Large-Group Share-Back

Wrap-Up

Reflections/Continuous Improvement



5–10 minutes

Agree on Ground Rules

When concerns arise or a child is identified as having a disability, emotional issues arise for families as well as service providers. We want to acknowledge this and create a safe place to explore these important issues.

See Facilitator's Guide.

Chart and post ground rules.



1 hour,
5 minutes total

Embrace Possibilities

View DVD: *Embrace Possibilities*

The DVD that you are about to see is entitled *Embrace Possibilities*. The purpose of the DVD is to share information from the perspectives of families and early care and education and early intervention service providers about identifying an infant or toddler with a possible delay in development or a disability. This DVD presents primarily the perspectives of mothers, so be sure to consider fathers' perspectives as well and share them when you discuss the DVD in your small groups.



20 minutes

Handout #2: Acknowledgements: *Embrace Possibilities*

Handout #3: Guided Viewing: *Embrace Possibilities*



Please take out the Guided Viewing Handout #2 and record your thoughts to the following questions as you view the DVD:

- ◆ *What stories did the families share regarding initial identification of their child's disability?*
- ◆ *How did families get information, support, and resources?*
- ◆ *What did service providers do to support families?*



Start DVD: *Embrace Possibilities* (15 minutes)



20 minutes

Small-Group Discussion



Ask for initial reactions to the DVD before moving into small groups.

Please move into small groups. Discuss the questions on the “Guided Viewing” handout, as well as your own experiences communicating when there have been concerns about a child’s development. You have 20 minutes for your small-group discussion. Then we will come back together and share some of your ideas with the large group.



25 minutes



Large-Group Share-Back

What stories did the families share regarding the initial identification of their child's disability?



Add any of the following key points not mentioned by the group:

- ◆ *Hard to keep a "stiff upper lip;" afraid for her child*
- ◆ *Wanted a specialist opinion now—did not want to wait until later*
- ◆ *Was sad; thought she was the only one with a child with a disability*
- ◆ *Was told that she had a mongoloid child; told to institutionalize her*
- ◆ *Dream is shattered; need training*
- ◆ *Parents don't choose to have a child with a disability*



How did families get information, support, and resources?



Add any of the following key points not mentioned by the group:

- ◆ *Got information from the early intervention team and together learned how to take care of their child*
- ◆ *Parents received information and support from other families*
- ◆ *Service providers wanted to assure families that their children will be safe and well cared for*
- ◆ *Family members gave support to the staff*
- ◆ *Family members taught child care providers about their children*
- ◆ *Families wanted information so they can help their child*
- ◆ *Families wanted to know the law so they can advocate for their child*



What did service providers do to support families?



Add any of the following key points not mentioned by the group:

- ◆ *Respect families' cultures*
- ◆ *Connect with other families that face similar issues*
- ◆ *Explain choices to families*
- ◆ *Early intervention specialists work with early care and education service providers; they have a close relationship with the child and family member*
- ◆ *Listen*
- ◆ *Work on solutions together*
- ◆ *Respect family member privacy/confidentiality*
- ◆ *Respect individual family member choices and coping styles*

It is important for children to have significant men and other extended family members in their lives (for example, fathers, partners, friends, grandparents, aunts, and uncles).



What can you do to ensure that fathers and other extended family members are included in the initial identification of their infants and toddlers with disabilities?



Add any of the following key points not mentioned by the group:

- ◆ *Assume that fathers are interested; avoid asking for or only talking to the mother*
- ◆ *Specifically invite fathers to be involved, respecting gender and cultural practices*
- ◆ *Create a welcoming environment; include positive images of fathers and children*
- ◆ *Use male staff members who can interact with men/fathers*
- ◆ *Have two signature lines so both parents can sign forms*
- ◆ *Provide flexible hours for services/activities to be better able to include men, such as evenings and weekends*
- ◆ *Ask other family members (like grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) for their observations about the child's development or issues they are noticing*

When providing resources for families, make sure to include resources that target fathers, such as the website for the Fathers Network at www.fathersnetwork.org.



5 minutes

Wrap-Up

Today we listened to families as they shared their experiences of when they first learned about concerns about their children.

Some key points to remember are:

- Families and staff experience a range of emotions when they first suspect a child may have a disability.
- Information and support are critical to families in the early stages of identification.
- Families come with a wide variety of experiences, so listen first.
 - Respect individual family member choices and coping styles.
 - Ensure that all family members have the opportunity to be involved in ways they choose from the beginning.
 - Respect each family’s privacy and confidentiality.



Are there any questions or comments about the training today?



Review Learning Outcomes.

See Facilitator’s Guide.

*10 minutes*

Reflections/Continuous Improvement

We would like to give you an opportunity to think about how this session applies to your work situation. Please take a few minutes and list 2–3 strategies you can start to use right away.



Gather Continuous Improvement feedback.

See Facilitator's Guide.

Your suggestions for improvements help us to make our sessions responsive to your needs as learners. We'd like to hear about what worked for you in this session and what could be done to facilitate your learning.



Divide a piece of chart paper into 2 columns, as shown. Entitle 1 column **"What Worked?"** and the other column **"Suggestions for improvement."**

What worked?	Suggestions for improvement

Chart participants' comments without rebuttal or discussion. Facilitators can act on these suggestions, as appropriate, in future training sessions.





What worked for you today?

What suggestions for improvement do you have?

We appreciate your participation today.

End training session