

3 MONTHS

Preparation

"It is crucial to have the courage to meet every family without preconceptions or prepared programs, to come open-minded and ready to listen not knowing in advance what form our intervention may take."

Donna Karl, NBAS Manual, 1995

Prepare with an open mind.
Recognize that you bring to the interaction.

Gather materials: Baby TALK Developmental Perspectives curriculum for three months, toys with high-contrast for looking, toys for grasping and collaborators information.
Have additional information ready to meet the specific needs of an individual family.

Assessment

Note the environment and activity level within the community-based encounter setting.
If encounter is at home, assess the environment and availability of other people in the child's life.
Assess the structure of family.

Affiliation

"The most important non-verbal listening strategy is to pause for at least 3 seconds before speaking after asking a question; it will seem like a very long time, but many studies show that, even for people who have something to say, they may need at least 2 ½ seconds to finish or phrase it."

Harlow, 1966, "Understanding Newborn Behavior and Early Relationships," 2007

Use OPERA listening:

Open-ended questions
Pause
make Eye-contact
Repeat
Avoid judgment, Ask opinion, Ask the last

Use affiliation strategies such as the following involving Mom as much as possible:

"Tell me about your baby."

Sociability—Communication

How do you know your baby wants your attention?
What does your baby do to get your attention?
What kinds of new things can she do now?
What makes your baby happy?
How is her temperament emerging? Same as, or different from yours?

Parental Confidence—Advice Management

How do you manage parenting advice? Has any of the advice been helpful?
Do you ever compare "parenting notes" with other parents?
Do you find yourself comparing your baby to other babies?
What feelings do you experience when meeting with other parents?

Daily Routines

Has your baby developed a regular pattern to her sleeping, feeding and playtime?
Does your baby fall asleep on her own or does she need your help?
Does she settle down easily after night time feedings?
Who else can help with the baby during the night?

Observation

Simply look at the baby with the parents for 10-30 seconds.

“Let’s just watch the baby for awhile.”

Do the parents seem receptive to your conversation? If not, why do you think not?

How does Mom/Dad appear? Rested, happy vs. tired, sad?

If other adults are present what role do they play? Support vs. “Gatekeeping?”

Observe parent-child relationship:

Is there parent-child interaction? Is there eye contact? Talking to the baby? Holding the baby?

If the baby is fussy, how do the parents react?

Does the baby smile? Does the baby coo?

Observe parental responsiveness to baby’s interactive cues.

Observe the baby:

Is the baby interested in reaching? Are there safe toys in the home?

Is the baby placed on his tummy during wakeful periods for play?

Is the baby demonstrating head control?

Observe parent-child relationship with siblings:

How are the older children adapting?

How is Mom coping with dividing her attention?

What expectations are placed on the older children?

Developmental Behaviors

Elicit or notice expected behaviors using Baby TALK Developmental Perspectives curriculum for three months.

Through baby’s emerging capacity to relate to the external world, elicit or note expected behaviors and the meaning parents are making of the behaviors: tummy time, reaching and grasping toys, kicking, imitation of sounds and head control.

How can you support parent? Modeling? Address concerns?

What is today’s critical issue?

When a child demonstrates atypical behavior what are ways I can support parents?

System of Support

Note who parent “brings into the room” with her during conversations.

Listen for evidence of the support system.

Observe who comes to the encounter with the family or who else is in the home.

If the baby is in a childcare situation on a regular basis, note parent’s interactions and feelings about the caregiver.

What community resources has she used, or might she use?

Baby TALK and System of Care

How can Baby TALK support you? How can I support you?

Introduce Baby TALK services appropriate for this family.

Offer appropriate Baby TALK materials.

Make referrals as needed.

Provide advocacy as needed.

Reflection-On-Action

How do I feel about this encounter?

How did I connect with the family?

What did I learn about the parent/infant relationship?

Did I facilitate the parent/infant relationship or did I just interact with the infant while the parent watched?

Did I hear or understand a concern from the family that I can follow-up on?

What do I need to document about this family today in order to prepare for the next encounter?

How might I change my approach for the next encounter to “become ever better?”

Documentation

Complete Baby TALK Personal Encounter documentation form.

What sort of record do I need to make to capture this encounter?

What do I need to do to provide follow-up for this family?

How/where will this family encounter Baby TALK in the future?