



the **Ounce**

C7 - Teacher Training Innovations: Findings from the Early Childhood Professionals Program



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Presentation Agenda

- ❑ **Overview** - Welcome and Introduction, Goals & Objectives, Family Engagement in Birth to Three Center-Based Programs
- ❑ **ECPP Project** – Context of ECPP, Use of Baby TALK® model in Early Care and Education
- ❑ **Implementation and Beyond** – Planning, Methods, Findings, Applications, Implications

Goals & Objectives

- ❑ Describe the Early Childhood Professionals Program (ECPP)
- ❑ Share findings from ECPP
- ❑ Share effective strategies used in the ECPP
- ❑ Discuss application of ECPP in other settings
- ❑ Examine implications

Family Engagement

The National Landscape

❑ Office of Head Start National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family>

❑ The Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) National Learning Network

<http://qrisnetwork.org>

What is Family Engagement?

□ What is the difference between

- Family Engagement
and
- Family Involvement



Research tells us...

- ❑ Relationships are the environment for infants and toddlers
www.developingchild.harvard.edu
- ❑ Increased dialogue around supporting development during the critical early years through collaboration with families (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2005)
- ❑ The relationship between programs and parents is mutually beneficial and complementary in supporting development (Ritchie & Willier, 2008; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2005)
- ❑ Engaging parents positively effects parent/child and parent/teacher relationships as well as improved parental confidence around parenting skills (Hughes & MacNaughton, 2000; Fantuzzo. Perry & Childs, 2006)



ECPP: The Context

Illinois State Board of Education, Prevention Initiative for Birth to Three Programs



“To provide early, continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services, including intensive parenting education and support, to help families build a strong foundation for learning to prepare children for later school success.”

ECPP: The Context

Ounce of Prevention Fund

Partners with Illinois State Board of Education and Chicago Public Schools Community Partnership Program in Prevention Initiative

Ounce Institute

Providers of training and professional development to ensure high quality programming and services in early childhood programs



ECPP: The Context

- ❑ Chicago Public Schools Community Partnership Program, Prevention Initiative (PI) for Birth to Three Center-Based Programs

- ❑ Among the requirements of PI Center-Based Programs
 - Full time Family Support Specialist
 - Family Engagement Model

ECPP: Selection Process

for Birth To Three Center-Based PI Programs

- Expressed interest
- Administrative buy-in
- Demonstrated commitment to professional development
- Recent implementation of the Baby TALK ® model or existing commitment to the model by
 - Family Support Specialist
 - Infant Toddler Specialist
 - Supervisors
- Groupings of classroom teaching teams

ECPP: Implementation

□ Professional Development Sessions & Support



- (3) Three separate 5-hour sessions: Several weeks to one month between sessions
- Baby TALK facilitator & teachers: on-site reflective support after each session

ECPP: Implementation

❑ **Additional implementation components tested and proven ineffective with participants**

- Self-reflection assignments between sessions
- Informal connections via email, phone, and text between Baby TALK facilitators and teachers

ECPP: Evaluation Tools

- ❑ Anecdotal feedback from participants during on-site reflective visits
- ❑ Pre-training and post-training surveys, including narratives
- ❑ Training evaluation

Baby TALK® Critical Concepts: Applied in ECPP

❑ Prized Possession



Critical Concepts

Training Methods

❑ Mission

Expectations Exercise

❑ Systems Building

❑ Going Where
Families Are



Baby TALK ® Critical Concepts: Applied in ECPP

Critical Concepts

- Relationships
- Coming Alongside
- Collaboration
- Tell me about your baby

Training Methods

BT Approach to Families

Culture Exercise



Baby TALK ® Critical Concepts: Applied in ECPP

Critical Concepts

- Parallel Process
- Facing Difficult Issues
- Becoming Ever Better

Training Methods

Scenarios/Role Play



ECPP: Findings Summary

- Family Engagement
- Collaboration with Families
- Reflective Practice

ECPP Finding: Family Engagement

The training series helped participants gain confidence and concrete strategies for engaging families.

- “...need to listen more and ask, not just solve problems.”
- “Focusing on a hesitant parent can make an impact.”
- “Being more flexible is important, specifically thinking about being in someone else’s shoes”
- Asking, “How do you see your child”?

ECPP Finding: Family Engagement

Teachers expanded their thinking to include a family orientation.

“The most rewarding thing about working with parents is:”

Before...

- “They really appreciate what their children learn everyday.”
- “When they are happy with my work and let me know that.”

After...

- “To get to know different families and cultures, being able to accommodate to their needs.”
- “When you have good communication and you build that trust.”

ECCP Finding: Family Engagement

Even with strategies and shifts in orientation, teachers require on-going support because of the nature of the challenges and the need for systemic support of their work to engage families.

ECPP Finding: Collaboration with Families

Teachers demonstrated an understanding that collaboration with parents is key to supporting child development.

Before...

- “I know a lot about a child because she/he is in my classroom 8 hours or more, but I don’t know his/her life when he goes home.”

After...

- “I need to learn about his/her background.”

ECPP Finding: Collaboration with Families

Teachers communicated that they felt less like the “expert” of the child.

“The hardest thing about working with parents is:”

Before...

- ❑ “Molding parents and positively guiding them in raising their child”

After...

- ❑ “Bridge building, learning how to climb the bridge together”



ECPP Finding: Collaboration with Families

Teachers began to think beyond child development to the developing child in the family.

“It is important to ask parents about what books or toys their child is enjoying at home”

Before...

- ❑ “Showing, talking, pointing, and providing words that a child does not have is very crucial for the child's love of early literacy.”

After...

- ❑ “Only a parent knows his/her child better than we do. Parents could let us know their child's likes and dislikes to better know their child.”

ECPP Finding: Reflective Practice

The ECPP training series cultivated awareness of reflective practice among teachers.

- ❑ “...sometimes in getting to know families at the start, it is difficult for both of us.”
- ❑ “I need time to build a relationship.”
- ❑ “I used to judge more, and now I am trying to be more sensitive.”

ECPP: Challenges of the Training

- ❑ Early care and education culture
 - Teachers vs. Parents
 - Teachers vs. Administration
 - Working in infant/toddler settings
 - Families facing risk factors
- ❑ The unique experiences of the participant
- ❑ Time, compensation, staff turnover
- ❑ Administrative and supervisory support

Global Application

- ❑ Content
- ❑ Methodology
 - Includes
 - » Relationship-based principles
 - » Parallel process
 - Creates an atmosphere to
 - » Cultivate self-awareness
 - » Support ongoing competence

Implications

We propose:

- ❑ State Quality Ratings systems for infant and early childhood programs embed family engagement across all quality components
- ❑ Higher Education programs in infancy and early childhood embed family engagement in their courses and in their practicum experiences
- ❑ Professional development for infant/toddler and early childhood teachers integrate family engagement knowledge and skills
- ❑ Technical assistance to infant and early childhood programs incorporate family engagement

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