

Breakout Sessions

2018 IDTA Conference



Touchpoints: A Developmental and Relational Model for Working with Children and Families

Dr. Brazelton's concept of "Touchpoints" represents opportunities for clinicians and educators to help parents and children through difficult and predictable phases of development. Developmental growth spurts become opportunities for hope and confirmation for parents caring for children with developmental delays. As a child approaches a spurt, he often experiences periods of frustration and disintegration or regression. This is likely to be an anxiety-laden time for parents. If parents understand the underlying reason for their child's regressive behavior, they can support and comfort their frustrated child, and not just be baffled by him.

Since there is a predictable map in each developmental line, early child educators and child care providers can join with parents in their struggle to understand by sharing with parents the concept of the next spurt, how powerful it is, how critical it is and why it leads to a child's unwanted behavior. Each biobehavioral shift or "Touchpoint," which occurs just before a new spurt in development, becomes a powerful opportunity for entering into the system of the parent and infant or young child. As providers and parents grow closer in their efforts to understand the child's behavior, they can share their dreams for her future and face differences in beliefs about what children need to learn and grow with comfort, confidence and mutual respect.

Presented By: Dr. Joshua Sparrow MD

PLAY Project Techniques: Practical Coaching Tips for Parents of Children with ASD

The PLAY Project is an evidence-based, parent implemented, intensive autism early intervention program that uses video feedback to help parents learn methods, techniques, and activities to help engage their child. In this workshop video examples will help workshop participants learn practical PLAY techniques for successfully interacting children who have autism.

Presented By: Dr. Richard Solomon MD

Infant Massage... Bundles of Benefits for Babies & Caregivers

Infant massage is implemented by parents & other caregivers which supports responsive and sensitive interactions between a caregivers & their young baby. The practice of infant massage has numerous benefits for both the child & caregiver as documented in the research. It can assist parents in being more confident handling and touching their newborn, providing relief, and fostering relaxation. Each aspect is important in supporting mutual enjoyment of the parent child relationship and in the attachment and bonding process. Parents become more attuned in reading their babies cues through massage which supports DEC Recommended Practices INT 1 & INT 3. This session provides participants with an overview of the research to support the benefits of infant massage for infants, toddlers, and their parents. Participants will identify cues parents & babies use with one another to engage and disengage from interaction through video review & discussion. Practical strategies for embedding infant massage into family care routines will be explored. Resources and additional information will be provided to learn more about infant massage for families in their region.

Presented By: Lynn Barts, MA/CIMI

Happiness in the service of.....

The neuroscience is clear, happiness has been found to have many benefits from modulating cognition and creative problem solving to better health and improved quality of life. Early Intervention providers have the distinct privilege and responsibility of being at the front end of a child's developmental path. So, why not begin happy? In this workshop session participants will be introduced to the recent neuroscience findings related to effects of happiness. Participants will learn specific ways to incorporate happiness into their intervention sessions. The concept of synthetic happiness will be introduced and examined. Utilizing self-reflection, we will consider the ways each of us views life events and how we can re-frame our thinking from a happiness perspective. Whether seen as a short-term positive emotion or a long-lasting sense of meaning and satisfaction with one's life, happiness cuts across the spectrum of diversity and is worth exploring as an intervention strategy.

Presented By: Jennifer Rosinia, PhD

Feeding in Early Intervention: A Trauma-Informed Approach

According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013), childhood trauma consists of any event in a child's life that is perceived to be psychologically distressing. Additionally, children in Early Intervention may have experienced traumatic stress as a result of a hospitalization or medical intervention. This talk will focus on helping practitioners who are supporting children with feeding needs and or medical complexities (1) recognize signs of trauma, (2) support parents who have experienced trauma in relation to their child, and (3) provide specific trauma-informed strategies to help children during mealtimes and/or feeding therapy. Additionally, participants will learn about the developmental impact of childhood trauma and how to support parents as they seek to help their infants learn and grow. Practitioners will leave this workshop with specific strategies to help parents approach feedings and mealtimes with less anxiety. This talk will also explore how the therapeutic relationship between parents and therapists can serve as an important support to parents who are struggling with the after-effects of trauma. Video examples, short case studies, and reflection questions will guide participants as they interact with course content.

Presented By: Karen Dilfer, OTRL and Stephanie Cohen MA, CCC_SLP

Practical Posture and Positioning Strategies for the Developmental Therapist

Postural stability and control is a central tenet affecting a child's progress in all five developmental domains, making it imperative for the early interventionist to understand in order to address the specific goals in the IFSP in a well-rounded manner. This breakout session will provide participants with an understanding of typical postural development which will then lead into an overview of atypical postural control. In order to fully support a family with their comprehensive plans, an early interventionist must be able to identify and address postural control issues that may be affecting a child's ability to participate in their family's routines. Attendees will also learn how to provide families with the ability to problem solve postural control difficulties utilizing common household items, which supports two main EI principles of supporting families and active participation of families. This also addresses the need for early interventionists to provide the highest quality of services by addressing the child's needs in the physical domain that may be affecting their development in the other domains of cognitive, adaptive, communication, and social/emotional development. By being able to manage the postural needs of the child in the physical domain, the early interventionist can more effectively address the needs in the other four domains as well as provide a comprehensive plan to address the child's and family's needs.

Presented By: Dr. Darcy Armbruster PT, DPT, CCI

Reality Bites: Exploring Biting Behavior in Young Children

Dealing with biting at home or in group care calls on a variety of strategies to prevent and discourage biting and to promote pro-social behavior. Through discussion, you will have the opportunity to explore your own emotions and work on practical solutions to decrease this challenging behavior. Participants will be able to recognize why biting in children is emotional for the children, parents, and themselves. Through reflective discussion, participants can identify why biting is such an emotional event and how this emotion can sometimes escalate the behavior. Addressing this emotion in the parent or caregiver can help a provider support that parent/caregiver in learning about typical sensory development and oral exploration. In addition, participants will learn about adult responses to biting that promote safe attachments and positive behaviors. Providers always have a goal of promoting safe attachments between children and parents and discussion and activities around adult responses to biting can help them educate and support families in building these safe connections. Finally, participants will discuss and examine environmental reasons for biting, by learning ways to support families to adjust their environments to help with biting behaviors, providers can adjust these suggestions to fit more naturally in a specific family's day or home.

Presented By: Susan Mrazek, PhD

Build Relationships, Build Resilience: Supporting Families with Trauma

This training will outline the basics of trauma and its effects on families. This will allow therapists to be able to recognize signs of exposure to trauma in children and families they work with in the Early Intervention System. This training will provide concrete strategies for therapists to build trust and rapport with families in order to shape and support protective factors into family system. Doing so will allow therapists the ability to build growth and resilience in family systems to empower families to combat further effects of trauma.

Presented By: Maggie Mosca, MSW, I/EC MHC-C

20/20 Sight Does Not Mean Good Visual Skills

This session will provide an explanation and description of the primary visual skills necessary for early learning and development. Tracking, binocular vision, visual spatial processing, and visual analytical skills will all be defined and described. The signs and symptoms of difficulties with each visual skill will be detailed. Screening and evaluation techniques for the different visual skills will be shared and demonstrated. Objective techniques, observation techniques and standardized testing will be shared. Developmental milestones for individual visual skills will be shared so that the therapist will recognize developmental delays and share these with the families and other professionals. Therapies to facilitate the development of visual skills will be discussed and demonstrated so that the therapist can initiate these in therapy and demonstrate appropriate activities for families to practice at home. The therapist will learn how to recognize whether the child is responding appropriately to their developmental therapy, or whether the program needs to be adjusted. The session will also provide the DT with the knowledge to determine whether another professional should be consulted for recommendations, or for co-management of goals.

Presented By: Dr. Neil W. Margolis, O.D., F.C.O.V.D., F.A.A.O.

Regulation to Communication: Determining Developmental Intervention for Children on the Autism Spectrum

Contemporary views of child development offer speech-language pathologists a more integrated way to understand the origins of both typical development and atypical derailments in the comprehension and production of language. A growing body of research documents the pervasive and persisting difficulties in regulation, engagement, intentionality, shared meanings, and comprehension that children on the autistic spectrum struggle with throughout their lives (Colle & Grandi, 2007; Hobson, 1993; 2000; Laurent & Rubin, 2004; Shumway and Wetherby, 2009). The science of child development and the realities of the developmental disruptions in children with autism serve as the catalyst for finding more dynamic and developmental ways of conceptualizing assessment and intervention.

Despite the fact that many children on the autism spectrum are functioning at early levels of communication, social, and emotional development, intervention goals for these children continue to prioritize the production of language. Few current assessment tools and intervention programs for children with ASD embrace a perspective with a focus on the breadth and depth of capacities that are foundations for later development. The presenters have worked with many children whose therapeutic and educational goals do not seem to reflect the profile of developmental gaps that the children are experiencing. Part of the dilemma is that speech-language pathologists are often unsure of how to assess and develop intervention programs for children who are chronologically at an age where speaking is expected. Rather than starting from the child's problem in language production, an assessment approach, which systematically addresses powerful interpersonal and communicative capacities, such as the joy of interacting with others, is needed.

In this session, the presenters will offer a perspective for determining developmentally appropriate intervention goals for children on the autism spectrum. Bloom and Tinker's (2001) Intentionality Model, Nelson's (2007) work on the development of meaning and comprehension, and Greenspan and Wieder's (1994) DIR - Developmental Individual Difference Relationship - based approach have served as the major sources for generating the thinking presented here. Developmental capacities from regulation to engagement to intentionality to shared ideas and meanings to comprehension to production will be discussed at six stages of language-communication acquisition (Gerber & Prizant, 2000) spanning birth to 3 years of age. Children with ASD at various chronological ages and across language-communication stages will be presented to illustrate how a child would be assessed using this model and how this assessment would be used to generate intervention goals. Videos of intervention

sessions will be shown to demonstrate how goals and strategies for foundational capacities can be implemented in individual as well as group sessions within an educational program. By showing children at different chronological ages, we can begin to tackle the difficult question of how to continue to prioritize foundational developmental capacities when the child you are working with is older and yet, functioning at earlier levels of development.

Presented By: Linda Cervenka, M.S. CCC-SLP and Michele Ricamato, M.A. CCC-SLP