The Importance of Looking, Listening and Learning from Your Work: Relationship-Based and Reflective Practice

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Who is in the room?

Turn to a partner and introduce yourself and share why you choose this session to attend.

Objectives

- Define the concepts of relationship-based and reflective work
- Explore benefits and challenges in implementing reflective practice
- Practice using the “Look, Listen and Learn” model approach in supporting staff that work with young children and families
Zero to Three Mission Statement

Our mission is to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life.

Our History

Founded by leading researchers, clinicians, and thinkers in the study of infancy and the early years, ZERO TO THREE is the foremost thought and practice leader in the field of early childhood development.

Levers for Change
Someone You Turn to…..

What do they DO?
What do they SAY?

Relationships That Are Supportive

Allow us to…
• Think more clearly.
• Get a new perspective.
• Feel supported and safe.
• Try new things.

Where does learning happen?

“No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship.”
(James Comer)
The idea that a new experience in relationships at any level could translate into changes in other relationships is called the "parallel process".

- The "Ripple Effect" or “Pass it Forward"
- Role of supervisor is to support staff to have strong secure relationships with families (and coworkers).
- Supervisors are the constants in the lives of the staff
  - “How can I help you do what you need to do?”
**Parallel Process**

- Allows staff to be a positive constant in the lives of their families.
- Allows parents to be a positive constant in the lives of their children.

**The Platinum Rule**

*Do unto others as you would have others do unto others*  
Jeree Pawl

*From this point on, I plan to treat people exactly how they treat me. Some will be glad. Others should be scared.*

*yourcards.com*
How You Are Is As Important As What You Do

- How we are with staff/families—our attitudes, beliefs, and values—influence our relationships with them in important ways.

- Sometimes the message you want to give staff/families is not the message they receive.

- When you receive responses from staff/families that puzzle you, it’s worthwhile sitting down and talking about it.

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How You Are Is As Important As What You Do

- Think of a time when you jumped to a conclusion in your work with a staff member/family. What impact did this have?

- How do you deal with the strong feelings you sometimes have when you interact with a staff member/family?

- How do you manage your own reactions?

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Relationship-Based Practice

…entails supporting quality relationships that are characterized by trust, support and growth that exists among professionals, parents, children and program leaders.
Characteristics of Relationship-Based Work

1. Mutual and Shared Goals
2. Commitment to Growth and Change
3. Commitment to Reflection
4. Respect for Individuals
5. Sensitivity to Context
6. Open Communication
7. High Professional Standards

Bertsch, 1996

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Relationship Building Skills and Strategies

- Asking Questions and Wondering
- Active Listening
- Pointing Out the Positive
- Not Knowing

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Turning Judgments into Wonderings

- Why do they let him sit in the cabinet all day?
- I wonder how it feels for that parent to have a child who is so overwhelmed by sensory stimuli that he wants to spend most of the day curled up in a kitchen cabinet.
- Why doesn’t Mom ever want to play? Doesn’t she want to learn how to help Katie?
- I wonder what Mom is trying to tell us by not joining in when you and Katie are playing.
- Why do Mom and Dad get so frustrated when Caden doesn’t like some of the foods they offer—that is normal for a toddler!
- I wonder how it feels for Mom and Dad when Caden throws the food they prepare for him.

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Active Listening

- **Stop**
- **Look**
- **Listen**
- **Respond**

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Active Listening - **STOP**

- Stop what you are doing
- Pay attention to the speaker
  - This tells the speaker you are focused on them
  - And that they are important

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Active Listening - **Look**

- Make eye contact
- Face the speaker directly
- Maintain supportive/attentive stance
  - Body language
  - Facial expression
- Watch for non-verbal cues from the speaker (or other group members)
  - Tells about their thoughts and feelings
Active Listening - Listen

- Listen to WHAT is being said
- Attend to:
  - Words
  - Tone
  - Body language
- May be communicating several messages (some unspoken)

Active Listening - Respond

- Respond in way that shows
  - You have been listening
  - You understand
- Demonstrate you are listening
  - Mmm-hmm, nods, touch, smiles
- Reflect back what you has been shared
  - To confirm you attentiveness
  - To reinforce your understanding of the situation

Pointing out the Positive

- For Being
- For Doing
- Concept of 4:1
Parallel Process: Pointing out the Positive

• Praise does encourage caregivers to initiate interactions – BUT:
  95% of home visitor’s praise was about the child, not caregiver actions

(Brady et al., 2004. JEI, 26(2), pp.146-159)

It’s Okay to “Not Know”

Sometimes you just really don't know!

• Sometimes this encourages the other person to clarify their thinking.
• Sometimes this encourages the other to discover their own solutions.
Reflective Practice

Is a way of working that encourages staff members to:

1) **Slow down**, filter their thoughts and more wisely choose actions and words

2) **Deepen** their understanding of the contextual forces that affect their work, and

3) **Consider** the possible implications of their interventions:
   a) **While in the mist of their work**
   b) **Afterword** in a way that influences their next steps

Heffron & Murch, 2010 – p.6

Reflection in Action
Paying Attention

- Awareness of the interplay between our personnel and professional life (and stressors).
- Attending to our feelings does not necessarily mean disclosing or acting on these feelings.
- Using our feelings in ways and situations that will benefit the client (coworkers).
- Remember: What is mentionable is manageable.

Paying Attention

### Reaction

- Immediate
  - No planning
  - Reacting based on our own feelings
  - Not taking into account other’s feelings/person’s history
  - “Putting out fires”

### Reflection

- Slow down
- Plan
- Self-aware
- Aware of other’s feelings/person’s history
- Preventing the next fire

Why are we reactive?

- Need for rapid change
- Keeping the lid on Pandora’s box
- The need to please
- The need for control and omnipotence
On reflection, why do you sometimes react vs. respond?

Turn to someone who haven’t spoken to yet today and share your reflections.

You will each have 90 seconds to speak. While your partner is speaking, your job is use active listening techniques.

Framework for Reflective Practice

Effective Responses

Step 1: Look

1. Find a partner.
2. Face your partner and observe for 30 seconds.
3. Turn away from your partner and change 5 things about you.
4. Face your partner and observe all the details and share the changes you see.
5. Sit down when you have found all 5.
Look: Carefully observe the situation

In the beginning, we collect information:

- What are your five senses telling you?
- Tone of voice?
- Body language?
- Self-awareness
  - Are your “hot buttons” being pushed?
  - Note your immediate “gut” feelings

Step 2: Listen

Step 2: Actively listen to those involved as they share their experience.

- Make eye contact
- Face the speaker directly
- Maintain supportive/attentive body language and facial expression
- Demonstrate you are listening
  - Mmm-hmm, nods, smiles
- Reflect back what you have been shared
  - “Correct me if I am wrong, but I hear you saying…”

Step 3: Learn

Learn from and about the situation before responding.

- Use open-ended and reflective questions
- Turn judgments into questions
- Point out the positive
- Acknowledge when you don’t know
- Reflect together on the possible range of next steps:
  - What have you already tried? What are you thinking about trying?
  - Where should we go from here?
  - What will we do the same/differently next time?
Please stay in touch!

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References


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