

## EARLY INTERVENTION

### FOCUS TOPIC INTERVENTION: WORKING WITH YOU

#### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Helping a Family Help Their Child—Intervention
- Family Focus
- Evidence-Based Early Intervention
- Conceptual Framework
- Getting Connected
- Family Resources

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# Family Focus



## Early Intervention In Georgia

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

MARCH 2007

### Family Focus by Jackie Price, BCW Parent

Babies Can't Wait has been an amazing experience and very beneficial to our entire family. I do have to admit, however, it was not what I had expected. As a mother, I sensed a delay in Bronson's speech development and sought the support of Babies Can't Wait. Once he was accepted into the program, I believed that the actual speech sessions would remedy Bronson's speech obstacles. I was surprised to learn that the anticipated clinical approach was not the avenue we would be taking. Even though the plan of action was different than I had originally expected, there was still an organized strategy with desired benefits. I just did not realize how much my family would be part of the equation. The Babies Can't Wait speech sessions gave us excellent methods to help us help our son.

Our assigned speech therapist arrived and began explaining the coaching model approach. The coaching model involved getting to know the child in his environment. I was taught to listen to his word sounds and grunts with a fresh set of ears to help target the areas of concentration. This

also helped me to recognize advancements in his speech and relay new obstacles. We recognized his strengths and weaknesses and used that to seek our desired results. I was coached on how to use tools that were less threatening to Bronson. We used his love for cowboys, hats, and boots to create new patterns and sounds. His dad and sister also became involved in the activities and games. The pressure was lifted off the child to perform a certain task. He was not expected to behave in a textbook manner. We found ways of having therapy in everyday situations through play. Bronson was not defined as a child with speech delays, rather he was Bronson who played and had fun and we worked speech into his activities.

Bronson's response was incredible. In less than 6 months, he went from pointing and grunting to using 3- 4 word sentences and being comfortable and confident to be around others that were

non-family members. I remember a major concern of mine was, will he ever be able to form a sentence? Our therapist took the time getting to know Bronson in his environment and could discern the sentences were already there, we just needed the techniques to help him verbalize his thoughts and ideas. Bronson's new-found ability to verbally express his wants and needs has also exposed aspects of his remarkable personality. He is much less frustrated and much more willing to enter new situations. The Babies Can't Wait model may not have been what I had anticipated, but the results definitely surpassed my expectations. Our family has a great sense of admiration and ownership in the advancements that Bronson has made. We are thrilled with Bronson's development and are delighted to have been a part of the journey. The Babies Can't Wait support contributed greatly to our entire family's development.

**"Our family has a great sense of admiration and ownership in the advancements that Bronson has made. We are thrilled with Bronson's development and are delighted to have been a part of the journey." Jackie Price, Parent**

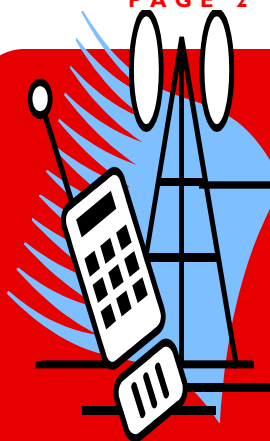
### Helping a family help their child: Intervention by James Ernest, Ph.D., BCW Technical Assistance (TA) Unit

As a family moves through the process of determining eligibility for Babies Can't Wait (BCW) and deciding on outcomes and needed supports for their family and child,

there is always one thing on a family's mind. What exactly are BCW staff going to do to my child and when? Most of the time when we think of "intervention" we

think of people doing things to us. This isn't what BCW is all about. BCW is moving to an evidenced-based approach of providing sup-

*(Continued on page 3)*



## BCW Families: GETTING CONNECTED

### How can I take a more active role in Babies Can't Wait?

#### At the Family Level:

- Participate in evaluations & assessments
- Be prepared and share at IFSP meetings
- Be an active participant not just an observer during each early intervention visit
- Take advantage of naturally occurring learning opportunities for your child throughout the day

#### At the Program Level:

- Parent Newsletters
- Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC)
- State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)
- Parent Trainers

# Getting Connected by Project SCEIs

## Family Opportunities for Involvement in Early Intervention

*Have you ever thought of getting more involved in Babies Can't Wait? Would you like to "give back" to the program? Would you like to have input in local and state planning and policy decisions that affect young children with disabilities? There are lots of opportunities for you!*

#### Parent Newsletter

Many districts publish Babies Can't Wait newsletters for parents and service providers. Parents are invited to submit articles, share their story, or include their child in a Family Spotlight. Call your service coordinator or parent educator for more information. (All items are subject to editing and review.)

#### Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC)

Each health district has an LICC which is a group of parents and service providers who share an interest in early intervention services. Parents are encouraged to attend meetings and serve on the council and various committees. Ask your Service Coordinator or Parent Educator for a schedule of meetings.

#### State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)

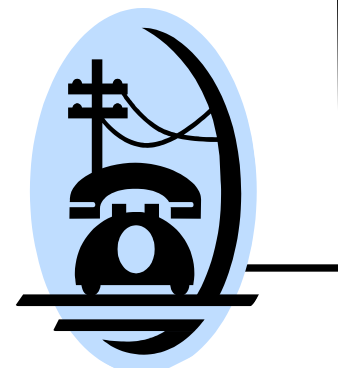
The SICC advises and assists the Georgia Department

of Human Resources in making policies and implementing procedures for Georgia's Babies Can't Wait Program. Federal law requires that parents be represented on the council. All Council members are appointed by the Governor. The Council includes parents of children aged 12 or younger with disabilities. Speak with your Parent Educator for more information about meetings or how to submit public comments to the Council.

#### Parent Trainers

Project SCEIs (Skilled Credentialed Early Interventionists) provides six workshops, offered at introductory and advanced levels, which cover a variety of topics of interest for parents and service providers in early intervention. Each workshop is taught by a professional-parent team. Parent participation is an important part of the workshop as the parent trainer

presents the parent/family focus on the topics being discussed. Parents help provide valuable information about family needs, how services were provided to them, and suggestions on how service providers can be more effective. While all parents in the BCW program can attend SCEIs workshops for free, parent trainers are paid for their participation. Speak with your Parent Educator for more information about being a Parent Trainer.



## Sometimes Talking to Another Parent Helps by Project SCEIs

#### Babies Can't Wait Parent Educator Program

The Babies Can't Wait (BCW) Program introduces families to a variety of early intervention professionals trained to work with children with special needs. The Parent Educator Program has been developed to provide a parent resource to Babies Can't Wait families. BCW recognizes that sometimes it's just easier to talk to another parent who is well-trained and knowledgeable about the BCW system.

Parent to Parent  
of Georgia  
1-800-229-2038  
[www.parenttoparentofga.org](http://www.parenttoparentofga.org)

Parent Educator  
Program  
Project SCEIs  
1-404-651-0162  
[http://education.gsu.edu/sceis/Parent\\_Education.htm](http://education.gsu.edu/sceis/Parent_Education.htm)

If you would like to talk to a Parent Educator, ask your service coordinator to give your name and telephone number to the parent educator for your district or contact the BCW Central Directory which is managed by Parent-to-Parent of Georgia at 1(800)229-2038 or in Atlanta at (770)451-5484.

For more information on the Parent Educator Program, visit the Project SCEIs website or contact the SCEIs office at 404-651-0162.

# Provider's View by Jennifer Thomas, Speech Language Pathologist

Babies Can't Wait is a developmental program designed to help families and children become more successful in their daily activities. That's always been true, but with the new coaching approach, we can really make that happen. Families are members of a team that consists of a physical therapist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, early intervention specialist and service coordinators. One member of the team is selected as a primary provider who makes the ongoing home visits.

The initial visit begins by identifying what happens in the family's day, what the family (and child) likes and is good at, and how the child participates in all the activities of the day. Most importantly, we figure out what is important to the family. Instead of talking about what the child is not doing, we talk about

what he is doing and how he does it. Parents' understanding of how their family works, how their child learns, and what motivates their child is the most important resource that we have just begun to utilize. I continue to give information, share strategies that work with kids, and show families how to help their kids. But with the new approach, I share that information in different ways. Some parents learn through conversation, some families like to read information, and some families need to see it in action. Instead of telling families how to "work on" making skills better, we talk about what families are doing and lots of times, we even do those activities (i.e. mealtime, diapering, dressing). When we need help and more expertise from another provider such as a physical therapist, she visits with us.

Those skills we used to "work on" become activities that a child does naturally during his/her day. When families embrace an idea, they are able to figure out how to make it work at their house. Sometimes I tell families that I know "what to do" to help kids, but they know "how" to make it happen for their family. When the focus is on participation in daily activities, we're able to talk about the child as a kid who plays, communicates, moves, and interacts with family members...not as a child who cannot talk or walk.

I knew that one family had embraced the coaching approach when I walked into their home, and Mom showed me all of the new ways she was playing and interacting with her child that encouraged him to talk

*(Continued on page 6)*

**"Now, when families leave our program, they can continue to help their child learn, and they know how to find and use available resources."  
Jennifer Thomas, Speech Language Pathologist**

## Helping a family help their child: Intervention cont.

*(Continued from page 1)*

ports. There are three components to this: natural environments, coaching style of interaction, and the use of a primary coach within a team context.

who interact with the child in natural environments. The term natural environments simply means the places that any infant or toddler typically are- in the family's home, community settings, a family child-care setting, or a child development center. As BCW staff provide supports/services, they may interact with a family in the home, at the park if this is a place that the child goes to often,

tional activities for longer periods of times. The resulting skills and abilities that are learned are more likely to be generalized to other settings, activities, times of day, etc. Children are more likely to develop to their potential when they are provided learning opportunities found in natural environments.

### Coaching Style of Interaction

The formal way of defining this approach is to say that the coaching style of interaction is a type of capacity-building, help-giving practice. Quite a mouthful! The informal way of describing this is to say that the BCW professional (sometimes called the primary coach) is there to provide help so that the people who are a consistent part of the child's life feel confident in their ability to help their child participate, learn and develop. The primary coach provides support to

*(Continued on page 4)*

**Evidence-Based Practices**  
**"Practices that are informed by research,** in which the characteristics and consequences of environmental variables are empirically established and the relationship directly informs what a practitioner can do to produce a desired outcome."  
 (Dunst, Trivette, & Cutspec, 2002)

**Natural Learning Environments Activity Settings) are..."**  
 "...experiences and opportunities afforded developing children as part of daily living, child and family routines, family rituals, and family and community celebrations and traditions."  
 Dunst, Hamby, Trivette, Raab, & Bruder 2000

### Natural Environments

First, BCW staff will be working with the family and other caregivers

natural environments leads to children being engaged in more func-

# Helping a family help their child: Intervention cont.

(Continued from page 3)

families/caregivers by asking questions about what they do with their child during the day, observing, hands-on modeling, and sharing information. BCW's goal is to develop the family/caregiver's competence so that their interactions are responsive to their child's needs.

The law that funds BCW (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004) defines part of the role of early intervention in a nut-shell: "To help families increase or enhance their ability to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities or developmental delays. The purpose of early intervention is to support parents and other caregivers (such as grandparents, childcare workers, foster parents, etc.) in developing the knowledge (competence) and confidence needed to help the child learn." (See 20 U.S.C. 1471(a))

Using a coaching approach with families and caregivers results in the child having many more chances each week to practice and learn new skills than he or she would if practice was only happening while the Early Intervention staff was there. It is like the old saying, "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime."

### Teaming in the Coaching Approach

When a family receives supports/services through BCW, they have access to the professional wisdom of a team of individuals with various professional backgrounds and

person that will see the family consistently on an on-going basis. The PC may visit everyday for a period of time, a couple of times a week, or once a month. This decision is made by the team and this includes the family. It might be that after visiting with a family, the PC or family member thinks that they need to seek additional information from the team about an issue. It might be that

the parent wants to figure out strategies so that the child can follow an older sibling outdoors to play in the garden.

The PC could talk to the team during the weekly meetings and seek examples of evidence-based

### Operational Definition of Coaching

Coaching is an interactive process of reflection and feedback used to provide support and encouragement, refine existing practices, develop new skills, and promote continuous self-assessment and learning. (Shelden & Rush, in press)

### Primary Coach Model

The primary coach focuses on coaching of the identified learner(s) as the primary intervention strategy to implement jointly-developed, functional, discipline-free IFSP/IEP outcomes to promote increased child learning and participation in real-life activity settings with coaching and support from other team members. (Shelden & Rush, in press)

### Frequency Issues

- Two hours/week = 2% of total waking hours of a one year old child
- Diapering, feeding, playing—each happen at least 2000 times by the child is one year of age
- Just 20 everyday activities would equal 40,000 learning opportunities by age one. (Dunst, 2001)

### Characteristics of the Primary Coach Model

- One staff member or contractor of the program acts as the primary coach to the care providers and is selected based on expertise in child development, family support, and coaching. (Shelden & Rush, in press)

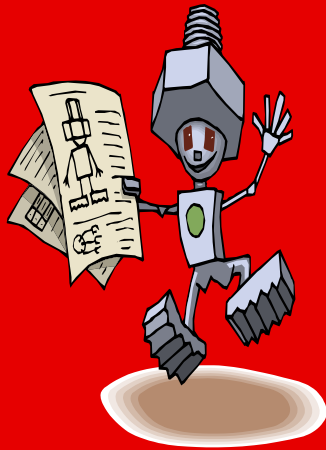
experience (e.g. educators, service coordinators, therapists, occupational speech-language pathologists). Along with the service coordinator, the primary coach (PC) is the other

strategies that could help the family. It may be that the team decides another team member should co-visit with the PC to help the family develop strategies. The important part about this evidence-based approach to providing supports/services is that the team members work together toward the goal of helping parents and caregivers develop their own competence and confidence. Empowering families to help their children is a life-long strategy that research indicates helps children the most.

### The Purpose of Early Childhood Intervention

IDEA: THE LAW

To enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities H.R.5 SEC. 631 (a)(4)



## NUTS 'N BOLTS

### ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS IN EARLY INTERVENTION

#### FOR PROVIDERS:

- ☑ **SHARE INFORMATION, EXPERTISE, AND SKILLS ACROSS TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINE BOUNDARIES**
- ☑ **CONTINUOUS LEARNING TO EXPAND THEIR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES**

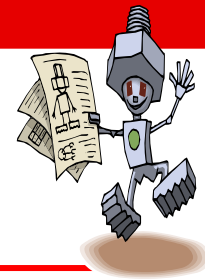
#### FOR FAMILIES:

- ☑ **BE PRESENT AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN ALL VISITS**
- ☑ **SELECT THE DAILY ACTIVITIES AND ROUTINES**
- ☑ **INFORM BCW IF SERVICES ARE NOT MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUR CHILD AND**

Adapted from Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia: Philosophy and Considerations for Individualizing Early Intervention Services 2003

## What's a Person to Do?

### Roles and Expectations In Early Intervention



#### Part 3: Intervention

*Knowing what to expect may help your family feel more comfortable as you journey through the Babies Can't Wait (BCW) program and allow you to take a more active role in the early intervention process.*

*As during the previous steps through your Babies Can't Wait journey, your confidence (trust) and competence (knowledge) in the early intervention process is continuing to increase. You are becoming more familiar with what you can expect as a family and what you can expect from the other members of your early intervention team such as your service coordinator and providers.*

If the child was found to be eligible for BCW after the evaluations and assessments were completed, the team (which includes the family) developed the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) to plan and guide the actual intervention process.

The laws are pretty clear that one of the requirements of early intervention is that it helps *families* increase or enhance their ability to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities or developmental delays. This means that the purpose of BCW is to help build the capacity of families and other caregivers (such as grandparents, childcare providers, foster parents, etc.) to meet the special needs of the child. In the past, the focus was often to work only with the child. Research and experience now show that children can make more lasting and meaningful gains if the family and caregivers are taught how to support the child in meeting those needs.

This may look and feel a bit different than you had imagined. Think of it this way. You are the expert on your child. You are the agent of change for your child. You know him/her far better than anyone else could, and you spend more time with your child than anyone else. The Babies Can't

program's conceptual framework (see page 6), will focus on providing you with the supports and knowledge you need to help guide your child through life's everyday activities. You will not be expected to become a therapist but you can expect to learn new strategies that you can use to support your child as he/she participates in everyday routines and activities. (i.e. snack time, bath time, park time, etc.).

Another important purpose of early intervention is to help support and enhance the development of children. Research shows that one of the best ways to do this is to provide supports and resources to the family in the child's natural environment, doing what he/she needs to do (like eating, diapering, etc.) and wants to do (dreams, wishes, hopes).

Things that are really important to the child and family.

Your coach will have conversations with you regarding what activities your family participates in or would like to participate in during the week. You'll begin to see all of the opportunities for your child to practice so that he/she can achieve the priorities that you identified as a family during the development of the IFSP.

Using their combined expert knowledge, the coach and team members will support you as you build your capacity to support your child. This in turn will allow your child to use his/her existing abilities to develop new skills and improve participation and functioning. The team can only be with a child and family until they turn three. But if they've helped families learn to meet the needs of their child, there can be a life-long impact.

#### Role of Service Providers

- (1) **Consulting with Parents**, other service providers, and representatives of appropriate community agencies to ensure the effective provision of services in that area;
- (2) **Training parents and others** regarding the provision of those services; and
- (3) **Participating in** the multidisciplinary team's assessment of a child and the child's family, and in the **development of** integrated goals and outcomes for the individualized family service plan.

(IDEA Sec. 303.12 Early Intervention Services '97)

Wait team members are experts in child development and family support. Their role, according to federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is to consult with parents and other service providers to ensure effective provision of supports/services and to train parents and others regarding providing those supports/services. It's a way to build the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities.

The bottom line is that the BCW team is there to work with you as the family and caregivers. That is why it is so important that you be present and actively participate in all visits. *Your participation* is the key ingredient that will help insure success for your child. The BCW team, guided by the

# Conceptual Framework

Research indicates that some ways of providing supports and resources to children and families are more effective than others. In order to consistently provide Babies Can't Wait families the supports and resources in the best possible manner, Georgia has adopted five ideas or concepts. These concepts are supported by the research on effective early intervention. They also represent the intent of the federal law known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

These evidence-based ideas form the backbone or **conceptual framework** that guides early intervention in Georgia.

Families have long been recognized as a very important part of the early intervention process. You are the EXPERT on your child, and Babies Can't Wait provides staff with expertise in child development and

family supports. The conceptual framework provides the foundational structure needed to support the teaming between parents and providers (coaches) that is needed to help children succeed.



Adapted from Conceptual Framework for Evidence-Based Practices in Early Intervention Dunst (2000)

New	Traditional
<p><b>Promotion Models</b> Focus on promoting competence and positive functioning</p>	<p><b>Treatment Models</b> Focus on remediation of a disorder, problem, or disease, or its consequence</p>
<p><b>Capacity-Building Models</b> Provide opportunities for people to use existing abilities and develop new skills</p>	<p><b>Expertise Models</b> Depend on professional expertise to solve problems for people</p>
<p><b>Strength-Based Models</b> Acknowledge the assets of people and help them use these assets to improve functioning</p>	<p><b>Deficit-Based Models</b> Focus on correcting a person's weaknesses or problems</p>
<p><b>Resource-Based Models</b> Describe practices in terms of a wide variety of formal and informal supports within a community</p>	<p><b>Service-Based Models</b> Describe practices primarily in terms of professional services</p>
<p><b>Family-Centered Models</b> View professionals as agents of families and responsive to family desires and priorities</p>	<p><b>Professionally-Centered Models</b> View professionals as experts who determine the needs of a person from their own as opposed to the other person's perspectives</p>

## Alphabet Soup

- Coaching Approach/ Primary Service Provider:** A family-centered system for providing supports to children who are enrolled in Babies Can't Wait and their caregivers. A single person is selected from the support team to be the primary coach. This team member will use coaching as the key intervention strategy to build the capacity of parents and other care providers to use everyday learning opportunities to promote the child's develop-

ment. The coach has regular contact with and full access to the entire team and can plan co-visits if needed.

- Intervention:** The activities, supports, resources, and services necessary to enhance the development of the child and the capacity of the family to meet the special needs of the child.
- Natural Learning Opportunities:** Opportunities that oc-

cur within the context of an activity setting which promotes the child's growth and development. For example, all of the different learning opportunities that might occur at home, the park, grocery store, the restaurant, or at Grandma's.



## Words To Know

## Provider's View cont.

(Continued from page 3)

more and talk more clearly. Then, she shared that she tried some of the things I mentioned, but they just "didn't happen naturally during their day, so they didn't work." That's a

mom who had embraced the idea of participation, trusted her judgment for what would work for her family, and appreciated her child and all that he does.

In the end our goal is still the same,

for kids to be successful in what kids do. With this approach, families learn how to identify what their child needs to do to participate, how their child learns, and what motivates their child. Now, when families leave our program, they can continue to help their child learn, and they know how to find and use available resources. And that's what early intervention is all about.

*"Those skills we used to 'work on' become activities that a child does naturally during his/her day."*



Local Program Contact Info

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Mailing Address Line 1  
Mailing Address Line 2  
Mailing Address Line 3  
Mailing Address Line 4  
Mailing Address Line 5



## Featured Family Resources

Families enrolled in Georgia's Babies Can't Wait program frequently indicate a need to locate additional resources for their children and family members. Each issue of the Family Focus will feature a few of the numerous resources currently available to support families on their early intervention journey. If you would like to share additional resources, please forward your recommendations to [listen@valdosta.edu](mailto:listen@valdosta.edu).

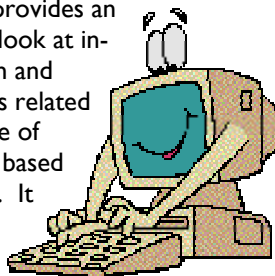
**Babies Can't Wait:** Georgia's statewide interagency service delivery system for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. Phone 1-888-651-8224 or visit their website. <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw>

**Circle of Inclusion:** Available in

five languages, this site provides and demonstrates inclusive educational programs for children birth through age eight. Recommended for families considering childcare or preschool for their child. Be sure to visit the Links page for information on various child and family-related topics. <http://www.circleofinclusion.org>

### Coaching in Early Childhood:

Developed for both early intervention professionals and families, this site provides an in-depth look at information and resources related to the use of evidence based practices. It includes re-



search, references, FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions), and learning modules that will provide a deeper understanding of "evidence-based natural learning environment practices" and how they are supported through coaching. <http://www.coachinginearlychildhood.org>

### Tools for Life: Increasing Access to Assistive Technology:

Provides information and resources for Georgia residents who need assistive technology. Site includes several different areas ranging from an equipment loan library, recycled computers, assistance understanding learning disabilities, and finding funding for assistive technology. <http://www.gatfl.org>