

Module 6: Promoting Communication in the Home

Section: Techniques and Strategies



Activity 6.3: Involving All Caregivers in Supporting a Child's Language and Communication at Home

- A. Reinforce with the family the importance of involving all caregivers in learning the skills needed to facilitate language and communication development. Make sure that everyone involved with the child's care understands:
 - what the child can/cannot hear and understand (with and without his or her hearing aid and/or cochlear implant),
 - learning strategies to promote visual communication, and
 - learning strategies to support auditory communication (as appropriate for the child).
- B. As much as possible, include child care providers, extended family members, and others who interact with the child on a regular basis in home visits and other educational sessions. This may involve changing the location and time of home visits to enable visits at a child care setting or at the home of other family members.
- C. Ensure home visit notes are written clearly and with easy-to-follow directions on how to implement the strategies so all caregivers can get the same information.
- D. Use technology to include more people. Use a service like Skype, Facetime, or Google video chat to include a working or out-of-town parent or other caregiver. Share the entire session or do a short check-in at the end of the session. Use whatever strategies work best for the family. For families who may not have access to technology, guide the parent in feeling comfortable enough with the concept to teach others. Check in with the family to follow up on if they have had the opportunity to share information in this way.

- E. Be flexible in how you communicate. Some families love sharing information over Skype. Others may prefer a phone call, text message, e-mail, or even a Facebook message. Ask the family what communication works best for them.
 - F. Video specific strategies to share with other caregivers and family members. While some families may want to record the entire session, often a short demonstration is all that is needed. Include both yourself modeling a strategy and family members trying a strategy.
 - G. Spend time teaching the parent how to be the teacher. Have the parent practice explaining and modeling the strategy as if they were teaching their spouse, child care provider, or other caregiver. Send the parent a copy of the video to share with others involved in the child's care.
 - H. For families who have family members or caregivers who speak a language other than English, make a video of a family member demonstrating the skill using their home language, or have the family write down coaching instructions in that language.
 - I. Involve other professionals (e.g., occupational therapist, physical therapist) who may also be working with the child and family. If possible, join therapy sessions to exchange tips and expertise with the other professional.
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