


New York Center for Child Development


An Introduction to the Incredible Years Principles: A Framework for Program-, Classroom- and Child-Specific Consultation

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Today's Agenda

- Brief overview and review of project
- The Background: Understanding the Incredible Years Model
- The Topics:
 - Building positive relationships, proactive teaching, attention and praise, coaching children's skills, managing challenging behavior
- The Application: Using IY concepts in consultation work




Format of Today's Training

- Lunch 12-1
- Mid-morning and -afternoon breaks
- Interactive learning
 - Videos
 - Discussion
 - Partner 'buzzes'
 - Group brainstorming
 - Role plays/practice activities




The Background



Review of Early Childhood Mental Health

- Mentally healthy infants and young children have the developing capacities to
 - Experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially acceptable ways
 - Form close and secure adult and peer relationships
 - Explore the environment and learn
 - All in the context of family, community, and culture


Adapted from:
http://main.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=key_mental



Review of ECHMH Consultation

- “A **problem-solving** and **capacity-building intervention** implemented within a **collaborative** relationship between a professional consultant with **mental health expertise** and one or more individuals with other areas of expertise - primarily child care, child development, and families – or individuals with child care responsibilities.” (Cohen & Kaufmann, 2000)

Review of ECHMH Consultation



- What ECMHC does/is:
 - Promotes social-emotional development
 - Addresses challenging behavior
 - Primarily indirect services
 - Impacts child, family, staff, and outcomes
 - Culturally sensitive
 - Family focused
- What ECMHC is not:
 - Formal diagnostic evaluations
 - Therapeutic play groups
 - Individual/family/staff therapy
 - Family support groups

(Horen, 2016)


Review: the Consultative Stance



- Mutuality of endeavor
- Avoid position of expert
- Wondering not knowing
- Understanding another subjective experience
- Consider influence
- Hearing and representing all voices
- Centrality of relationships
- Parallel process
- Patience

(Johnston & Brinamen, 2006)

Review: Case-Specific Consultation



- Addresses the factors that contribute to an individual child's and/or family's difficulties functioning well, developing optimally, and/or engaging in an early care and education setting
- Typically provided to staff and families about concerns related to individual child
- Collaborative process of problem-solving and formulation of a plan to address the child's presenting challenges in adjustment and development.

(Cohen & Kaufmann, 2005)

Review: Programmatic Consultation

- Focuses on the early care and education program as a whole
- Works in collaboration with program leadership
- Addresses how factors related to program structure, policies, procedures, professional development, philosophy, and mission as they relate to/impact the social-emotional development of the children and families.


Developmental Applications

- Today's training is based on the Teacher Classroom Management and Incredible Beginnings Programs, designed for teachers of children age 3-8 and infants to preschool, respectively.
 - NOTE: this is not the official "Incredible Years TCM or IB training." To be officially trained, *with fidelity*, participants need to attend 6 workshops given over the course of an academic year. Teachers you work with may have been through this training series.
- The principles and strategies are meant to be universal for young children.
- The application of the strategies, however, need to be developmentally appropriate.

IY Pyramid


- The foundation is based on building positive relationships.
- The first half emphasizes social competence and cooperative behaviors.
- The second half focuses on reducing behaviors you want to see less of.

Teaching Pyramid*




Introductory Activity at Tables

- The basics:
 - Name, role in program, type/location of program, early childhood/consultation experience
- Discuss:
 - Based on what you know about early childhood classrooms, what do you think could be a possible concern (aside from individual child behavior)?




The IY Principles




The Incredible Years Principles


- Building positive relationships
 - Parents and children
- Proactive strategies
 - Physical space/placement
 - Rules/routines
 - Visual prompts
 - Transitions
 - Effective commands

 **The Incredible Years Principles**


- Praise and positive/differential attention
- Coaching children's skills
 - Language development
 - Academic, social, emotion coaching
 - Problem solving
 - Emotion regulation

 **The Incredible Years Principles**


- Addressing minor misbehavior
 - Distraction/redirection
 - Natural and logical consequences
- Managing challenging behavior
 - Active/planned ignore
 - Time out to calm down
 - Discipline hierarchy
- Incentives/behavior charts
- Behavior plans

 **Other related issues**

- Threaded throughout IY principles, we often discuss other related issues...
 - ECMH concepts/knowledge base
 - Specific mental health concerns
 - Separation anxiety, trauma, etc.
 - Self-care for teachers
 - Development of teaching team
 - Program communication
 - Administration dynamics
 - Others?




The IV Principles: Getting into the Details




Building Positive Relationships with Children

- Foundation of a child's (and parent's!) experience in childcare/school is relationship with the providers and teachers
- One positive relationship can make a difference BUT some children are difficult to build relationships with...
- Brainstorm:
 - What does a difficult child look like?
 - What is a difficult child experiencing (feeling, thinking)?
 - What is the provider of a difficult child experiencing (feeling, thinking)?
 - What is the parent of a difficult child experience (feeling, thinking)?




Building Positive Relationships with Children

- Benefits/barriers exercise
 - What are the benefits of building positive relationships with children and families?
 - What makes it hard/gets in the way?




Relationship Building Principles

- Value of child-directed play
 - Gives child some control over their world
- Principles of child-directed play
 - Encourage curiosity, creativity
 - Follow child's lead and stay with child's pace
 - Be attentive/appreciative audience
 - Don't focus on "correct" way/rules
 - Observe and respond – try not to ask questions or correct/ criticize their choices in play
 - Allow child to change his/her mind
 - Curb desire to give too much help/take over the play
 - Laugh and have fun!



Building Positive Relationships with Children


- Play!
 - It's fun, builds trust/closeness
 - Means for how children learn
- Listening to/learning about children
 - Interest surveys
 - Conversation/special time/individualized attention
- Building relationships through support at important times of day
 - Transitions
- Show children you trust them
 - Special jobs, being a helper
 - Giving choices



Examples of Relationship-Building Strategies


- Listening Bear
 - A teddy bear that goes home with child who has demonstrated exceptional listening that day.
 - Bear's job is to watch and participate in family home life.
 - Parents can write what the listening bear saw, heard...
 - Bear is brought back with journal which is shared with the group.
- Happy Grams: Brief written statement announcing a child's success, accomplishment, special or enjoyable moment during the day
- Other ideas...?

Building Relationships with Parents




- General strategies for parent engagement
 - Greeting parents
 - What/when/how share information about the child with his/her parent
 - Providing information: Newsletters, fliers/handouts in the classroom
- Working with ‘difficult’ parents
- Communication between teaching staff and administration

Building Relationships with Teachers



- Observation first!
- Check in: Start with them as people and their goals as teachers
- Learn their process/approach/ preferences
- Meet them where they are
- Treat them as “the experts” (because they are!)
- Be an empathic, listening ear


Review of Components of ECMHC




(From Gil's 10/28 presentation)

Building a working alliance (mutuality of endeavor)

- Helper rather than authority: There is no place for hierarchy in consultation
- Collaborator rather than expert-mutuality and reciprocity
- Generative solutions through collective problem solving
- Engage the classroom team: Network
- Engage the family from the start and include them as members of the team
- Promote a posture of: wondering, authentic interest and reflection
- Support the consultees as holders of valuable knowledge and agents of change




WIGGLE BREAK



Preventing Problem Behavior

Overview


- Being reactive to negative behavior is natural, but it undermines our ability to think strategically.
- Being *proactive* can make problem behaviors less likely to occur.
- Today we will highlight...
 - Structuring the physical space
 - The importance of rules/routines
 - Effective transitions




Preventing Problem Behavior

Management of Physical Space


- Considerations for space arrangement:
 - Materials (varied, developmentally appropriate, enough for multiple children, not overwhelming)
 - Rotate toys for novelty, engagement, safety
 - Promotion of social interaction (puppets, two-child games, etc.)
 - Specific areas for specific materials with picture labels
- Use of space
 - Able to see all areas
 - Teacher presence around the space

**Preventing Problem Behavior**
The Importance of Rules


- Children need to know what the expectations are
- Considerations for establishing rules...
 - Keep them simple (2-5 rules for toddlers/ preschoolers)
 - Rules need to be taught (and practiced!)
 - Use visual cues to depict rules
 - Catch them being 'good' (following rules)
 - Clear consequences when rules are broken
 - Can have classroom rules and also area/activity-specific rules (important to review at relevant time)


**Preventing Problem Behavior**
The Importance of Routines

- What makes a young child more anxious than anything else?
 - Not knowing what comes next!
- ALL early childhood learning environments should have predictable routines.
 - Toddlers/preschoolers rely heavily on external routines as they learn how to self-regulate.
 - This is why Mondays and returns from holidays can be so difficult (Great point to connect with teachers!)

**Preventing Problem Behavior**
The Importance of Routines


- Considerations for building routines...
 - Schedule of activities should happen at the same times each day, with some room for flexibility.
 - Routines should have a balance of active/seated, teacher-directed/child-directed, vigorous/quiet activities.
 - A visually represented schedule should be used.
 - Activity durations should be developmentally appropriate.

 Video Examples: Routines

 Preventing Problem Behavior
Effective Transitions


We need one volunteer willing to share with us something they LOVE to do.

We do this to children
ALL THE TIME


 Preventing Problem Behavior
Effective Transitions

- Considerations for effective transitions...
 - Warnings (5 minutes, 2 minutes) ease the transition.
 - Young children should *never* be waiting.
 - Singing = transition magic.
 - Bells, claps, other instruments used consistently
 - Children are given ample time to transition
 - Next activity should start when a group of children are ready, not waiting for every single child to be ready.


Video Example: Effective Transitions




MID-MORNING
BREAK



Clear Commands




- Testing the waters...
 - All children will test adults, it is a normal part of development and a way they seek to feel independent and autonomous
 - Research shows: typical children “fail to comply 1/3 of the time and difficult children even higher rates...”
- Limit setting and re-directing should be clear and consistent.




Clear Commands

- Guidelines for commands that work!
 - Get their attention (be physically close)
 - Be specific
 - Avoid criticism
 - Tell them what TO DO instead of what not to do
 - Give statements not questions
 - One instructions at a time
 - Deliver commands slowly
 - Be positive and polite
 - Model behaviors you want to see




Clear Commands

- Can give choices if needed, as long as they achieve the desired outcome
 - You can walk to the circle by yourself or I can help you walk there
 - Be concrete with younger children (show objects, point to options)
- Avoid unclear, vague, or negative commands
 - Normal to get frustrated
 - Avoid criticizing/questioning: e.g., “What did I ask you to do?” “Why did you do that?”
 - What do you do to stay calm in these moments?




Video Examples: Clear Commands




Provider Attention and Praise

- Attention as a social reward
 - Positive relationships = children like you and want your attention
 - Rewards don't have to be tangible... attention, praise, encouragement, appreciation, warmth = social rewards
- Can use attention (social rewards) to get desired behaviors




“Children who need love the most, ask for it in the most unloving ways; the same can be said of children in need of positive attention, praise, and encouragement.”

(Incredible Years, 2008)




Effective Praise

- Benefits and barriers exercise
 - Why is it important to praise a child?
 - What gets in the way/makes it hard to praise?



Effective Praise


- What makes an effective praise?
 - **Specific** -describe the particular behavior
 - **Immediate**-use immediately after behavior occurs
 - **Pure**-do not mix praise with criticism
 - **Genuine**-thinking about affect/tone
 - **Individualized**-how comfortable is child with praise?
 - **Small steps**-focus on the process not product



Ways to Use/Coach Teachers to Use Praise

As prevention...

- Model behavior you want to see
 - Praise self, co-teachers
- Promote expected/existing positive behaviors
 - e.g. "catch them being good;" adherence to rules, etc.
- Build self-concept (praise +behaviors, effort, persistence)
- Motivate other children
 - **Proximal praise** (praise the child who is showing desired behavior, rather than correct the child who is off-task)




Ways to Use/Coach Teachers to Use Praise


As an intervention...

- To bring a shy child 'out of his/her shell'
- To shift the 'difficult' behaviors
 - Children who show "difficult" behaviors need more frequent attention and praise
- To change a 'bad' reputation of a child
 - Compliment circle
 - **Positive forecasting** statements ("This was hard for you today. You will have a chance to try again tomorrow, and I know you can do a better job.")

Video Examples: Attention and Praise




Introduction to "Coaching" Skills




- "Coaching" is a term used in Incredible Years which indicates commenting on the child's behavior and activity and picking out certain knowledge or skills you want to highlight.
- It can be focused on language, academic, social, emotional, problem solving skills.
- When you provide descriptive commenting you are using descriptive commenting (e.g. just describing what you see, giving the "play by play")
- It is NOT done in the moment that the skill is needed (e.g. coaching emotion regulation skills mid-tantrum)

Introduction to "Coaching" Skills



- An example of academic coaching would be "Sarah is putting the red triangle on the green square" when the child is building with colored blocks.
- Coaching also essential as it exposes children to more language.
 - Kids who have language rich experiences during the first 3 years of school can have a larger vocabulary than some of the parents of kids who come from less language rich environments.

 **Language Development**

Common Mistakes:

- Giving too many commands at once
- Using too many words
- Using “adult” tones
- Asking rhetorical questions: questions you’re not really looking for an answer for
 - “Why are you doing that?”
 - “What did I ask you to do?”
 - “Who said you could do that?”
- Asking too many questions
 - Order to “wh” question development:
 - Where? What? Who? Why? When?


 **Language Development**

Strategies for supporting language and communication

- Slow down / wait
- Gesture
- Start with 2-step commands
- Giving choices
- Sounds! (Especially with babies)
- Repeat
- “One-up” rule
- “I wonder...”
- Make thoughtful reading choices


 **Video Example: Language Dev.**

Coaching Academic Skills




- What are some **academic skills** that are developmentally appropriate to teach or “coach” your children?


Video Example: Academic Coaching



Coaching Social and Emotion Skills




- What are some **social skills** that are developmentally appropriate to teach or “coach” your children?
- What are some **emotions** that you notice in the children you work with?




Emotional Regulation

- Emotional regulation refers to a person’s ability to adequately control his/her emotional responses (next step after Emotion Coaching).
- Babies are not developmentally equipped to self-regulate, so they rely on parents for co-regulation.
- Toddlers and preschool age children require co-regulation as well, but can begin to learn how to self-regulate.
- Emotional regulation can be taught by teaching strategies and by teaching emotional literacy, but takes PRACTICE
 - *Sometimes teachers need practice themselves*



Video Example: Social/Emotion Coaching




WIGGLE BREAK




Addressing Minor Misbehavior

- Addressing minor misbehavior
 - Distraction/redirection
 - Engage in different activity, as a helper, redirect the desire toward a more productive activity
 - Natural and logical consequences
 - “If you play with the paint and it spills, then there is no more paint to use at the easel.”
 - “If you throw the toy, it means you cannot use the toy safely, so I’ll have to put it away.”



Managing Challenging Behavior


- Active/planned ignore
 - Let child know the expected behavior in order to get help/desired item or action
 - Turn body away/no eye contact
 - Do not engage except to monitor safety (and then interact as minimally as possible)
 - Let other co-teachers/staff know what you are doing
 - Re-assure other children



Managing Challenging Behavior


Handling Tantrums

- A common language mistake when a child is having a tantrum: “Use your words.”
- Rule of thumb: the more intense the tantrum level, the lower the language/communication level
 - Armageddon Stage: No words, maybe no communication at all, keep child safe
 - Slightly Better Than Armageddon Stage: Say to nearby peers, “She’s upset, she’ll be OK.”
 - Just Crying Stage: “You’re getting calmer. You’re going to be OK.” (Not “You’re OK.”)
 - Whimpering/Sniffing Stage: try to help child rejoin with language



Managing Challenging Behavior


- A word on time out
 - Most programs do not allow Time Out...
 - But most classrooms have some version of it
 - ‘Time out to calm down’/thinking chair/breaks
- Discipline hierarchy
 - See handout
- Incentives/behavior charts
- Behavior plans



Possible Mental Health Concerns


- Separation anxiety
- Trauma
- Learning/developmental disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Environmental stressors

Key is not to diagnose, but to think about (and help teachers think about!) underlying causes/meaning of behaviors!




Managing Separation Anxiety as ‘underlying meaning of behavior’


- Separation anxiety is a normal aspect of development. It can come in intense “phases” or as a normal part of transitioning into new and unfamiliar situations.
 - The first separation anxiety phase usually occurs around 18 months of age.
 - There can be a resurgent separation anxiety phase around 30 months (2 ½ years). But any toddler or preschooler coming to school for the first time, or even returning to school, may experience separation anxiety to some degree.


 **Managing Separation Anxiety**
as 'underlying meaning of behavior'

- A child should have a clear idea of when the parent is coming and going.
- Parent and provider should use clear, concrete language when saying goodbye and when telling them when they will see you next ("soon," and "later" mean nothing to young children).
- Parents should say goodbye: waiting until child seems OK and then slipping out can cause anxiety.
- Be sure that whatever you tell them actually happens.

 **Managing Separation Anxiety**
as 'underlying meaning of behavior'

- Oftentimes it's the separation anxiety of the *parent* that needs to be managed the most
 - Separation anxiety handout for parents
 - If possible to touch base with parent to let them know when a child has calmed, that can make the process easier

 **The Application**



Review of ECHMH Consultation

- What ECMHC does/is:
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 - Culturally sensitive
 - Family focused
- What ECMHC is not:
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(Horen, 2016)



Review: the Consultative Stance

- Mutuality of endeavor
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- Centrality of relationships
- Parallel process
- Patience

(Johnston & Brinamen, 2006)



Components of an ECMHC

- Observation
- Modeling
- Coaching/cueing ('in vivo' or in teacher meetings)
- Discussion in teacher meetings
 - Parallel process
 - Reflection
 - Activities, worksheets, model/practice strategy, etc.
 - Follow-up

Applying the IY strategies as an MHC



- Read the following scenarios as a group...
- Small group discussion:
 - What are the consultation issues here?
 - What would you address/not address in the moment?
- Role play/practice
 - How would you address it in teacher meetings?
 - Plan for trying new strategy/follow-up?

Building Relationships



- Ms. Gemma complains constantly about one of the parents in her classroom. She describes her as disengaged and not caring about her son's behavior. Ms. Gemma says that Mom "practically shoves him in the classroom" and she rarely has the chance to talk with Mom about anything that goes on in school.

Physical Space/Presence



- Mr. Nick is really interested in art projects. He has some great ideas for creative activities that the children seem to like. However, you notice that he tends to sit at the art area every day for most of the morning. At the same time, not many children stay in that area after the first 15 minutes of free play. Instead, there is a high concentration of children in the dramatic play and block areas.

Teaching Rules



- Miss B. describes one of her goals as “getting children to sit and listen at circle time.” During your time in the classroom, you notice that children are on the rug but often move around, lay on the ground, or talk to/poke at each other. They are rarely engaged in the circle time activities. Some children even start to wander way to other areas.

Classroom Routines



- Small group/Partner activity...
What routines have you seen/would you expect in programs?

What might be some challenging points in the schedule?


– As a group, possible solutions to challenges

Effective Transitions




Brainstorm!


In small groups, discuss successful transition songs/activities, and chose one to teach the larger group.

 Clear Commands and Labeled Praise

- Partner activity sheet (in packet):
 - Re-wording Ineffective Commands
 - e.g. "Stop running"; "What did I tell you to do with your shoes?"
 - Labeled praise worksheet

 Coaching children's skills

- Language development
- Academic, social, emotion coaching
- Problem solving
- Emotion regulation

 Practice activity

- Buzz:
 - What would you say to a parent of a child with social skills challenges/ aggressive behavior?
 - Specific topics of conversation
 - Strategies
 - How to scale it to the teacher/classroom?
- Practice

Discipline Hierarchy and Behavior Plans


- Review of discipline hierarchy
- Sample behavior plan as a group

Putting it all Together

- View video vignette
- Break into teams of 4-5
- 1) Conversation with the teacher:
 - What is your goal for the situation?
 - What is your goal as a consultant?
 - What would your plan be next?
- 2) Behavior plan in small groups
 - Keep in mind how you could create this plan WITH the teacher(s)

Summary and Wrap-Up

- Review of pyramid and topics
 - Positive relationships
 - Proactive strategies
 - Clear commands
 - Effective praise
 - Coaching skills
 - Managing challenging behavior
- Remaining questions?
- Evaluations!



"Teaching Pyramid"
