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EHDI Annual Conference

Using Materials in the Home for EI Sessions: The How and the Why

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>> All right, we are going to begin. Remember that we do have in the booklet that you can give feedback and stuff, and if you want further information. Also our exits, be aware of them on the back and the side and behind me right here if there was a fire or anything. It is very quick, and afterwards if you have any questions, Betsy, are you willing to stay behind? All right, thank you guys, appreciate you coming.

>> BETSY MOOG BROOKS: I feel like I am speed dating. I haven't ever speed dated, but I am guessing this is what it must feel like.

I even challenged the time she was giving me in the last talk. I was like no, don't I have more time?

For those of you who have just come into the room, I am Betsy Moog Brooks. I am the executive director at the Moog Center for Deaf Education in St. Louis. However, even though this does not make sense, I continue to provide direct child service and also provide parent support to families in the home. I currently have a caseload of about 12 children that I see regularly, children and families. Then within our school building I also provide a lot of service that happens as well.

This afternoon when I submitted this proposal it was to be a 60 minute presentation, so those of you who submitted, understand that you then get back your time and it is moved down to 25 minutes. So for the sake of time, when we talk about using materials in the home, I am going to be focusing on routine based activities as opposed to things you can make out of a tissue box or what you could do with a bowl from a plastic cereal container because I need more time to be able to cover all of the topics that I originally suggested.

So I just want to ask again, are there any parents still in the room? Good. Welcome, all right. Then I am going to assume most of the rest of you are providers providing service to children? Okay, great. So we will move right along.

These are my learner objectives. In short what I am hoping that you learn is how to take advantage of routine -- the child's routine during the day to be able to provide support to the family. And you are going to understand the rationale for that and why we should not be bringing our toys into the home by the end of this presentation.

I will begin by talking about the rationale for using materials in the home. And what you should know is that my doctoral work many years ago was on this exact topic. So what I did my work on was parents -- providing parent support, and during that time, you are going to be seeing some quotes from providers and things related to this whole concept of bringing toys into the home. It was at a time when we were just beginning to move from being in charge and we did not care if parents were in the room with us when we went into the home, to you should not be doing anything unless you are doing it through the parent.

This first slide is about the rationale for using the materials and explaining that caregivers have easy access to the materials in their home. There is a lot of things about this. If we bring the materials in, it certainly sends the message that what they have in their home is not good enough, because if it was we would be using it.

It also sends the message that you need these kinds of items, and if you don't have them then your child will not be successful. Because of what you have in your home was good enough, I would not be bringing my things to use because what you have in your home would be good enough for me as well.

The other problem is if we bring things in, we then take them out. And if we take them out, then we have not left the caregiver with the materials to repeat the activity we just worked on with that caregiver. So there is no way for that caregiver to then practice or redo that same activity.

It is also really important for caregivers to have the opportunity to think about and practice what they are going to do when they are engaging with their child, especially if we think about the way that we are using a parent coaching model in today's society. That we are expecting the parent to be engaging in an activity with the child, and if we bring our things into the home, there is no way for that parent or caregiver to prepare for what they are going to have to do now in front of us. So if you think about, those of you who are providers whether a speech therapist or a teacher, whatever you did for your practicum experiences, if you showed up to teach and the person then handed you the lesson and you did not get to read it ahead of time and you did not know what the goals and objectives were and you were expected to teach while that person critique you, it just seems ridiculous when you think of it that way.

But it took our society and education way too long to figure out of the manner in which we were engaging the parents didn't really make sense. So if you think about it that way, that if you bring something into the home with the expectation that the parent is going to use it, how could I possibly do that effectively if they did not get any warning until we showed up. Okay?

I am hoping that that is enough for you -- you don't have to admit it if you are doing it, but I'm hoping that is enough you to say I am not doing that anymore.

We need to be able to set up a situation so that the caregivers can feel a sense of control and so that they have an opportunity to think about what they are going to do with the child, especially when we are there trying to support them.

Let me just set the scene. What I want to talk about is this concept that I just explained about traditional coaching versus what I am going to refer to as real-time embedded coaching. In traditional coaching, it is what I experienced when I was a student teacher. At the onset of what I was going to do, the teacher said you are going to teach this vocabulary lesson now. And this is what I am going to be looking for and this is what I am expecting. Then I did the vocabulary lesson will she scribbled on a yellow legal pad and made me nervous. And when it was over she would flip it around and I would just scan it to see if I could find anything positive on that piece of paper.

And then she would tell me all of the things that I did not do correctly, and in my head I was like oh yeah, I did that. That is what I thought had happened. The problem was that I probably in my head was actually doing it, but I wasn't necessarily doing it or saying it during my interaction with the child.

But because she waited until I was finished to correct me, it wasn't very valuable. And so what I want to talk about is what I have termed real-time embedded coaching. That instead of waiting until it is over and then I can't go back and change it because it is past, that while the parent is actively engaged with the child that I am able to provide a little snippet of help while that is happening so that I can effect change in the moment. Then the parent sees that enhancement happen right then and there. I can then say that was fantastic, you did that exactly correct. You modeled, the child imitated, that was perfect.

And that way when it is finished the parent knows some good things happened and wasn't feeling like I was as a student, please dear God let there be something nice on this piece of paper. My experience which is 40 years long, 36 of which is providing parent coaching, many times at the end of the session when I asked the parent how you think that went or how do you feel about it --

>> CAPTIONER: Audio seems to have cut out.

>> Testing.

>> BETSY MOOG BROOKS: That is what she is the room monitor. She has had a lot of practice, she has been here all day saying the same thing over and over again.

The thing about real-time embedded coaching is that in the moment if the parent realizes that whatever they did differently makes a difference, it will increase the likelihood that they will do it again. And because you point it out, they will feel proud of what they did as opposed to feeling defeated.

This also talks about planning together at the beginning. So you are talking about what it is, what the expectation is and the parents deciding what they want that to be. And then reflecting on it in the end. That is a whole full-day workshop on this one slide, but I wanted to just put it out there.

To review, real-time embedded coaching is the act of providing support through suggestions and reinforcement while the caregiver is actively engaged with the child. It can occur -- that coaching can occur at the beginning before they start the activity, during the activity, and after. But the embedded coaching is happening while they are actually engaged with the child.

Good, I am on time. Sort of. Sort of.

We also need to take into account when we are working with adults how adults learn. This slide explains what we know about adult learners through research and practical experience. That the adults need to feel that they are being respected, and that idea that we bring a toy into the house is absolutely not respecting the adult. That is the opposite of respecting that person. That they feel that they are in an environment conducive to learning and that they feel safe. So if they get to have some control and be in charge, first of all the next part of our job easier because we are not then lesson planning the activity for the adult and using the session time to explain our lesson plan.

Instead we are taking what we know as a provider and applying it to whatever the parent or caregiver has chosen to do when engaging with the child. So if they decide to wash dishes before they decide to do the laundry before they decide to do a puzzle or they decide to make lemonade, it doesn't matter what they are doing because the principles as the provider that we are applying to support them remain the same. We are just giving over what it is they are going to do to the parent which allows the parent to think about it before we get there.

Okay?

The parent then can immediately apply what they learned because we are doing that for the embedded coaching. The learning is very relevant, it is happening in the moment. They are engaged in the process very much so. And we are altogether focused on the same goals -- to get the child to learn vocabulary and language.

I didn't say this at the beginning, but again as was true in the previous presentation, if you are working with a family who was using sign language, this all absolutely applies in the exact same way.

Now I am going to show you a few words or quotes from some providers. I am going to pause and just let you read this on your own so I am not reading to you.

All right, are we good? Okay.

So this quote is a comment regarding the change to implementation that we did at the Moog Center. We did what I would call traditional coaching, and then many years ago we switched over to more of the real-time embedded coaching. It was a process to get it really embedded, but we flipped.

The other thing that we switched was bringing toys into the home, and I actually went to the state and got the state to believe that we as teachers of the Deaf should not have to follow the rules. That we were different than everyone else, and that the only way we could do our job was if we brought the toys into the home. And the state fell for it. So we for years after we were all told don't bring toys into the home, we continue to do it and I was able to get the state to believe that it was for diagnostic purposes.

So that just tells you how much I did not believe in the change. But we did make it. But we did not start out making it.

So this tells you and this reinforces it. This is from a provider who had provided what I will say was traditional coaching. Then we made this change and we did not bring the toys and anymore and have the parents do it. You can see from this that her statement provides a description for the rationale for using materials in the home. And she explains the perspective of what happens when providers select the activities. And bringing the necessary toys and materials for the caregiver/child session. This is just one of my favorite quotes because it supports everything about why not to do it all in one slide.

And explains what happens when the providers flip the rules and the outcomes for the caregiver and provides the provider selects the expectation and plans the activity ahead of time.

There is going to be this next quote. This is three quotes. I'm going to look at each of these, I will read these to you because I have comments.

We are going to look at these one at a time because I want to be able to comment on them.

These comments also have to do with the change in using toys that the caregiver has selected and not the toys that I had convinced the state we had to bring into the home. They also address the idea that the caregiver participates in the planning of what those activities should be. And it really changed the format of our sessions, and I think it also really helped the caregivers feel like they were making a difference for their children.

The three quotes are related to changing practice and making caregivers responsible for planning, which I think is also scary to providers. But I think it is also really important, and most caregivers will rise to the occasion. Just like when you raise the expectations for children, they rise to the occasion. If you raise the expectations for caregivers, they too in most cases will rise to the occasion. So let's look at them one at a time.

The first one reads I always started out with some kind of demonstration. And remember, that is the provider talking. Now I start out with more of a discussion about what they think they should do with that toy. So that is a discussion with the caregiver. Together we talk about how we could incorporate what we are currently working on, so whatever vocabulary or language, into whatever activity they have brought with them. The reason it says brought with them was this was a provider who provided services at our center and the parents were bringing the activities to the center.

Allowing the caregiver to select the activity means that the caregiver had that opportunity to think about what they would be doing with the child for more than two seconds. Even if they just grabbed a puzzle as I went out the door, they then can think about the puzzle while they are driving to the center. Or even if they look at their watch and they like oh gosh, she is coming in 10 minutes, I need something to do, and then she finds whatever it is she is going to do, pastor gives her 10 minutes to be thinking about it.

I think when we make the parents be accountable, it makes the parents be accountable. And that helps them.

That next quote, the parents begin responsible for figuring out what to do with the toys for the book. This doesn't happen necessarily for all parents right away, but eventually they begin to understand oh, we should be working on joint attention. Oh, we should be working on vocabulary. Oh, I should be working on modeling words. Those kind of things.

The third quote we developed more as a team, whereas before I think we almost at this hierarchy we were up here. I think this too is very important. This third quote, the messages about the importance of working together and allowing the caregiver to feel respected and valued which takes us right back to one of those principles that we learned about adult learners.

So now very quickly we are going to talk about using the child's daily routine in the home and having those be activities for which you as a provider support the parent. It is absolutely true that there could be all kinds of activities. Doll houses and cars and trucks and things like that in the home. But I'm going to focus because of time on those things that don't require you to do anything except just live your life. Okay? All right.

The rationale for using these routine activities is that they are opportunities that occur naturally without planning anything. If you just think about moving through the course of a day. And because it is the routine of the child, it means every day the same activities are probably going to come up which then provides the opportunity for repetition.

And the caregivers have opportunities to think about and practice engaging a child related to vocabulary that they are working on, language they are working on, how to manage the materials or the props or whatever it is they are using to engage the child. And the provider is able to somewhat that, and you can support it week to week to week because the parent is practicing all of the time doing these activities naturally. They are not having to say we need to do another puzzle to practice. You are already changing the child's clothes, you are already giving the child a bath, you are already washing the dishes. Those things are already happening, you just have to bring the child into those things.

These are the kinds of things that can be happening that are routine activities. So I just have some examples. Caring for the child, changing the child's diaper. That is going to happen multiple times in a day and would give the caregiver the opportunity to practice that multiple times. And the language around that, if I brainstorm quickly is wet and dry, dirty and clean, there is all of the body parts, there is the clothing that one is wearing. There is talking about stinky and yucky and throwing away the diaper, getting a new diaper. There is all of that language that surrounds that situation.

The same is true with getting dressed and undressed. This happens at a minimum twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. That is another time to be talking about all of the things that happen surrounding clothing.

We can't go into all of the great detail, but if you just to think that way. Feeding the child at mealtime, that is going to happen at least three times a day. There is all of the vocabulary and language surrounding that.

The child brushing his teeth. All of the things that go with brushing the teeth. The bathroom, the sink, the faucet, turning the water off and on, is the water hot or cold or warm. All of those things.

All of those things become activities where we can be increasing the child's vocabulary and their language as we look around what we are doing and we think about it, broadly about the experience and specifically about the vocabulary and language.

I also have your talking about in the home washing the dishes, loading and unloading the dishwasher, doing the laundry. I love doing laundry. Well, I don't actually love doing laundry but I love talking to parents about doing their laundry.

There is so much related to the laundry for a young child. You've got all of the dirty clothes and you've got a whole laundry process. This could take months just teaching the child the vocabulary of the laundry. The clothes are dirty and then they are clean, they are white and then they are drive. All of the language about pouring the detergent in, finding the dryer sheet, folding the clothes, then the whole thing about the language around the possessive. Is it dad's shirt, the comparatives, my shirt is bigger than your shirt, database make sure is the biggest. There is just so many things about the laundry that can happen and I didn't even get into all of the colors or the stripes or the plaids and all of those things.

Unloading the groceries. Grocery shopping is also something that I really love. I have four children and my husband is a pharmacist, so he was home often during the day. And then he would leave and go to work and I would come home. He never figured out -- well, I guess you never tried to figure out how to go grocery shopping with four children. So I always have my four children with me when I went to the grocery store, and to me it was a pleasure because of my nature of being a teacher. I had jobs for everybody. You are assigned to the produce or you are assigned to the dairy. And it is so easy for me to switch that over to helping families teach all of that to children, because that is how I kept my four children engaged.

But it gives you the opportunity to talk about grocery shopping before you go, to talk about it in the car, to talk about it when you get to the store. All of those things. There is just so many things to do.

So again, I chose to talk about all of the things that happen in a routine instead of talking about the toys in the home because I had a limited amount of time which is probably up at this point.

So I think that as a summary -- as a summary, bringing your toys into the home suggests that your toys are better. Bringing your toys into the home suggests that your toys are necessary for the child to learn. Bringing your toys into the home limits the caregiver's opportunities to prepare. And leaving your toys at the office is really best practice.

All right, I think I did it. And then if anyone has any questions, I can be here for a little while if you want to come up and talk to me. Thank you.