

A Framework of Effective Practices and Strategies to Promote Resilience

Voss & Lenihan (2016)

1. Identify Personal Bias

- Reflect on our experiences, values, and attitudes related to poverty.
- Read articles and explore websites about poverty.
- Be present, non-judgmental, and selfless.
- Find the strengths in each family.
- Recognize priorities may be different than ours.
- Watch, listen, learn.
- Hold high expectations for achievement.

2. Build Relationships

• Parent-Professional

- Use positive statements about the child and family—be specific.
- Instill a sense of confidence and self-worth.
- Provide feedback and authentic affirmation to make families feel comfortable.
- Use language the family understands and explain new terms.
- Talk with caregivers about their lives to know what their tangible and intangible contributions can be.
- Support families in determining what they can and want to contribute.
- Ask meaningful questions and listen, listen, listen.

• Parent-Child

- Recognize and acknowledge the positive aspects of child-caregiver interaction.
- Note appropriate attachment between child and caregiver.
- Comment on child's strengths and development.
- Provide resources for caregivers to develop positive relationship with child—print, online, and community resources.

3. Assess Family Needs

- Identify strengths of the family.
- Assess with team members, when appropriate.
- Determine type of poverty experienced by the family— financial, emotional, mental, physical, support systems, role models.
- Consider Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in recognizing family priorities.
- Determine the best time and place to meet with the family based on the family's needs.
- Observe trends in communication access; keep previous contact information and extended family contacts.
- Use a written agreement that discusses roles and responsibilities of early intervention provider and family.
- Guide families in documenting appointments and sessions.

4. Provide Resources and Support

• Listening Technology

- Seek funding to provide free hearing screenings to childcare programs in neighborhoods with limited resources.
- Find pediatric audiology programs that provide services at low or no cost.
- Seek funding to provide hearing aid batteries at low or no cost.

• Access to Services

- Obtain gas cards or bus passes from community resources to support transportation needs
- Assist in arranging medical transportation for audiology services

- Host an open house for community agencies that provide services for families
- Meet with the family at the local public library to encourage use of the library for literacy
- Create a list of medical clinics that provide free or reduced cost services
- **Food, Housing, Health**
 - Identify community resources for food assistance such as the “backpack snack” programs or community garden programs found in many communities
 - Explore governmental agencies at the state and local level that may provide support such as Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Regional Centers
 - Develop collaborative relationships with social workers and social service programs in the community
 - Use appropriate snack activities during sessions to encourage the use of healthy snacks
 - Create a list of food pantry locations and contact information
 - Use the Individual Family Service Plan team social worker to assist in goals related to food, housing, and health
 - Be aware of religious organizations in the community that the families may connect with for support
- **Keep everyone safe**
 - Discuss safety concerns as related to scheduling of time and place of family sessions, lead paint poisoning, and access to outdoor play
 - Protect children from child abuse and neglect by providing resources and support and by using Johnson’s Observe Understand & Respond: The OUR Children’s Safety Project

5. Increase Awareness and Advocate

- **Agency-wide**
 - Participate in activities with colleagues to increase agency-wide effective practices such as book study, poverty simulation, and resource simulator.
- **Community-wide**
 - Be aware of legislative initiatives that could provide support for children living in poverty and advocate with governmental leaders for the implementation of such policies.

6. Educate Families on Quality Instruction

- Identify quality instruction within the intervention program
- Use relevant, authentic, and multi-cultural activities and materials
- Implement play activities recommended by American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Play and Learning Strategies (PALS)
- Avoid bringing toys and equipment that the family wouldn’t typically have in their home
- Teach families how to create activities out of materials in their home such as building towers, cards and puppet theaters from cereal boxes, or using towels, sheets, clothes pins, toilet paper tubes etc. for dramatic play
- Use daily routines such as mealtime for listening and language development
- Bring materials for an art project and leave some materials behind so that families can use the materials to recreate or extend the activity
- Sing songs, recite rhymes, and participate in movement and fingerplays
- Encourage caregivers to teach you the songs they use or remember from their childhood
- Provide written descriptions of activities you use in your session to encourage repetition
- Establish family support groups for parent-to-parent interaction and learning
- Support families in selecting quality childcare by using resources such as Childcare Aware (<http://www.naccrra.org/> or www.childcareaware.org/)
- Teach families about the characteristics of quality early childhood education.