GOODNESS OF FIT
FAMILY AND CHILD ENVIRONMENT

GENETICS
FAMILY
RELATIONSHIP
ENVIRONMENT
CHILD
A Baby is Born
What makes you think
the kid is mine?
Are You My Mother?

Eye contact – starting communication on day 1
The Apple Never Falls Far From the Tree
Like Father, Like Son

[Image of a man and a child shaving]
Berger Look-alike Meter

Child looks more like mom, by 3%

Wonder who your kid or baby resembles more? Click here to find out!
The Human Brain is designed to seek patterns and similarities

- What are colors? (ans. a pattern)
- What are letters? (ans. a pattern)
- What are shapes? (ans. a pattern)
- What are numbers? A sequence? (ans. a pattern)
- What is sorting? (ans. a pattern)
- What are similarities and differences (categorizing)? (ans. patterns)
- What is repetition? (ans. a pattern)
But what IF the apple does fall FAR from the tree?
What does it mean to BE different?

Stellaluna

and

The Salamander Room
ALL snowflakes are made up of the same elements
\[ H_2O = \text{water} \]

Of all the snowflakes made over the entire history of the planet -
It's unlikely that any two snow crystals,
have ever looked completely alike.

We are all the same, we are all different
What makes us different?

- Child
- Family
- Biology/Genetics
- Abilities
- Culture
- Temperament
- Environment
Temperament Theory

Nature (inborn individual differences) 60%

AND

Nurture (parenting) 40%

influence development = Who we are
Nature and Temperament Theory
Common ground

Various theoretical approaches agree temperament:

• is biologically based
• refers to individual differences
• is modifiable by environment
• exhibits a relative degree of stability over time
Nine Temperament Traits

- Sensitivity
- Intensity
- Activity
- Biological rhythmicity
- Adaptability
- Approach/withdrawal
- Persistence
- Distractibility
- Mood

The Different Temperament Types
Flexible, Fearful or Feisty
Difficultness Concept

• Concept of difficultness is universal (been described & measured in many cultures)

• Difficultness is also culturally embedded – every culture defines it differently

• Difficultness describes the relationship between the child and his environment.
Pieces of the Puzzle

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...
AND ME AND US
Getting to Know YOU!

• What is your temperament?
• What is your child’s temperament?
• What are other family member’s temperament?
• Do we all have to be the same temperament for a good fit?
A GOOD FIT begins with the parent, not the child. Expecting children to make adjustments to ‘fit’ us, is NOT fair. We are the ones who need to be aware and willing to make things “fit” well for the child.

This is the selfless part of being a parent.
A Good Fit means:

Parents/Families/Adults match their demands or expectations with what the child is able to do, given the child's temperament, age and abilities.
When adults around a child recognize the child's temperament, the child feels recognized for who they are, not merely what they can do.

“You love me no matter what, even with all of my imperfections”

Unconditional Love
When there is **NOT** goodness of fit, children (or adults) often become anxious, defiant, or out of control.

They do not know why they are feeling these ways and neither do those around them.

Often they become labeled as problems or having some disorder when all of this could have been avoided with a little effort to create a better fit.
Goodness of fit requires thinking about:

• how children will get along with other children.

• the choice of activities for children

• choosing a school

• medical treatment
Goodness of Fit Model

Implications:

• Sensitive & effective parenting requires parents to adapt their expectations to provide a **good fit** with their children’s temperament

• Parents of children with challenging temperaments may need help understanding/managing behaviors

• Well-being of children and parents is promoted when **goodness of fit** exists.
GOODNESS OF FIT

Demands and expectations of people and the environment are compatible with the child’s temperament

Support

Structure

meet needs of child’s temperament ______while ______ meeting parents’ and family needs

meet needs of child’s temperament while ______ ______ meeting school & daycare needs

respect child’s temperament ______ but ______ setting limits on behaviors

______ ______
Temperament issues where parents often polarize

• **Sleep:**
  - Getting to bed
  - Night waking
  - Getting in parents’ bed

• **Mealtimes**
  - Sitting at table
  - Eating new food
  - Eating all food

• **Social skills**
  - Toilet training
  - Adjusting to preschool
  - Compliance
Your Turn!

Goodness of Fit for a Deaf Child
What does it look like?
Relationships
Environment
Focused on Strengths
Communication
Empathy
Time
The Irreducible Needs of a Child
(What every child must have to grow, learn and flourish)

On-going nurturing relationships
Physical protection, safety and regulation
Experiences tailored to individual differences
Developmentally appropriate experiences
Limit setting, structure and expectations
Stable supportive communities and cultural continuity

From the book by the same name
Dr. Stanley Greenspan and Dr. T. Berry Brazelton
Seven Goals Parents Want for Their Children

Independence (future self-care)

Academic Success

Attractiveness (friendships, personality, appearance)

Athletic/Fitness/Healthy

Productivity (work/career/contribute to society/ self-supporting)

Self-Confidence

Sexuality/Procreation (family/children)

*As identified by Dr. Maria Trozzi and Dr. T. Berry Brazelton
For too long in the Field of Early Intervention and Deaf Education:

We have focused on a child’s weaknesses:
We believe that children will get ahead when we spend the most time on the areas where they are the most challenged.
• In the long run, children don’t make their biggest contributions in life in their areas of weakness.

• Children overcome weaknesses, but they rarely excel in them or end up building their lives’ work around activities that make them feel depleted.
Child’s Strengths and Interests

There are three kinds of strengths:

Activity Strengths (the things you do that energize you)

Relationship Strengths (the things you do with and for others that make you feel energized and proud)

Learning Strengths (the ways that learning makes the most sense to you).
Relationships
Responsive adults

- Eye Gaze: Secure Attachment
- Smiles: Able to ‘read’ cues
- Affect: Self-worth
- Tone: Love and care
- Body language: Nurturing
- Structure: Limits
Environment

• Physical safety and protection

• Age and individually appropriate experiences

• Opportunities to experiment and explore

• Full access to information and clear, unambiguous communication
“The entire EHDI system has employed a medical model of providing information on newborn hearing screening, diagnosis, and intervention of hearing loss within the first 6 months of life. We’ve been very good at providing the necessary information, but sorely lacking in the emotional support necessary to carry families through the process.”
Imagine waking up one day and...

- Having everyone you encounter understand the ways in which you are unique and extraordinary.
- Everyone viewed the things you did as needed contributions.
- Rather than looking for what is wrong with you, people pointed out what is right with you?

If that happened, you would be super-charged.

- You would feel free and released from the burden of having to defend yourself.
- You would be psyched to jump out of bed and get to work.
- You would feel, well, strong.

Wouldn’t it be nice, if just one day of your life could be like that?

– from Your Child’s Strengths