

# Natural Environments: Inclusive from the Beginning



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*Presented by:*

***“Early Intervention in Natural Learning Environments: A  
Model to Build Capacity Across State Systems”***

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# Objectives

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By the end of the two day training, participants will be able to describe the IFSP process using natural learning environments and a family-centered, primary provider, functional intervention approach. In order to do this, participants will:

- Develop a script to describe early intervention to families, community providers and other stakeholders;
- Elicit activity settings (family and community) and related learning opportunities for two “case studies” and one of their own;
- Develop outcomes and measurable, functional, integrated short-term goals;
- Describe examples of functional assessments conducted in family and community activity settings;
- Develop intervention plans that include collaborative consultation, adaptations, supports and situated learning strategies; and
- Describe the importance of data collection during and between intervention visits.



# Early Intervention

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- Family centered
- Team based service delivery
- Natural environments



# P.L. 99-457: The Law

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- To enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities to minimize their potential for developmental delay;
- To reduce the educational costs to our society, including our nation's schools, by minimizing the need for special education and related services after infants and toddlers with disabilities reach school age;
- To minimize the likelihood of institutionalization of individuals with disabilities and maximize the potential for their independent living in society;
- To enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities; and
- To enhance the capacity of state and local agencies and service providers to identify, evaluate, and meet the needs of historically underrepresented populations, particularly minority, low-income, inner-city, and rural populations. (see 20 U.S.C. § 1471 (a))



# Family

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We all come from families. Families are big, small, extended, nuclear, multi-generational, with one parent, two parents, and grandparents. We live under one roof or many. A family can be as temporary as a few weeks, as permanent as forever. We become part of a family by birth, adoption, marriage, or from a desire for mutual support. As family members, we nurture, protect, and influence one another. Families are dynamic and are cultures unto themselves, with different values and unique ways of realizing dreams. Together, our families become the source of our rich cultural heritage and spiritual diversity. Each family has strengths and qualities that flow from individual members and from the family as a unit. Our families create neighborhoods, communities, states, and nations.

Developed and adopted by New Mexico's House Memorial 5 Task Force on Children and Families and the Coalition for Children. 1990.



# Family-Centered

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- Care that recognizes and respects the pivotal role of the family in the lives of children. It supports families in their natural care-giving roles, promotes normal patterns of living, and ensures family collaboration and choice in the provision of services to the child.



# Family Centered

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Principles to Practice

Challenges?



# General Role of Service Providers: The Law

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- Consulting with parents, other service providers, and representatives of appropriate community agencies to ensure the effective provision of services in that area;
- Training parents and others regarding the provision of those services; and,
- Participating in the multidisciplinary team's assessment of a child and the child's family, and in the development of integrated goals and outcomes for the individualized family service plan.





# What Is A Team?

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A group of people who are working together and share a common philosophy and common goal for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.



# Collaborative Consultation

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Interactive Relationship

Mutual Respect

Defined Outcomes instead of issues

Equality of Participants



# Team Process & Collaboration

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Principles to Practice

Challenges?



# Natural Environments: The Law

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- To the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the child, early intervention services must be provided in natural environments, including the home and community settings in which children without disabilities participate
- Natural environments are settings that are natural or normal for the child's age peers who have no disability

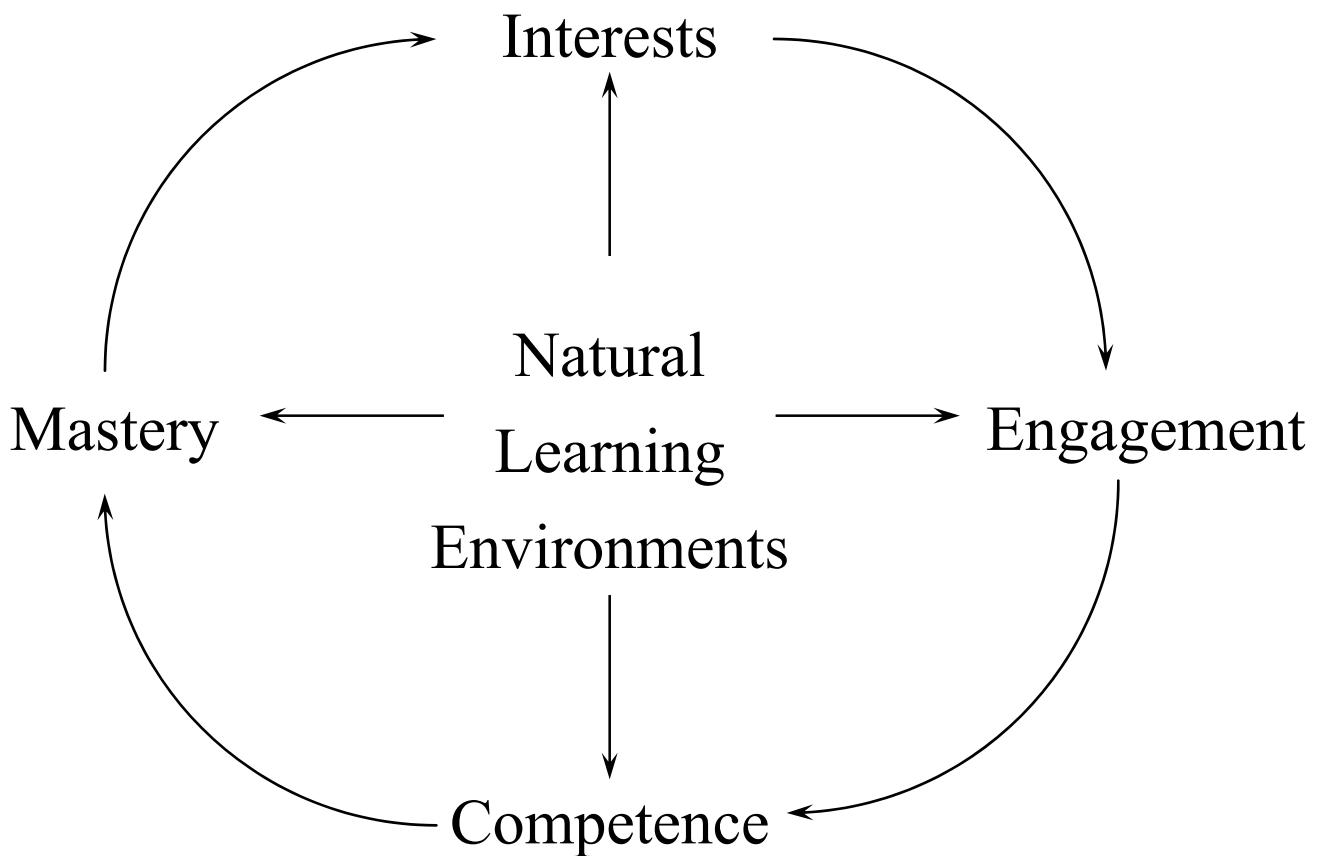


# Activity Setting

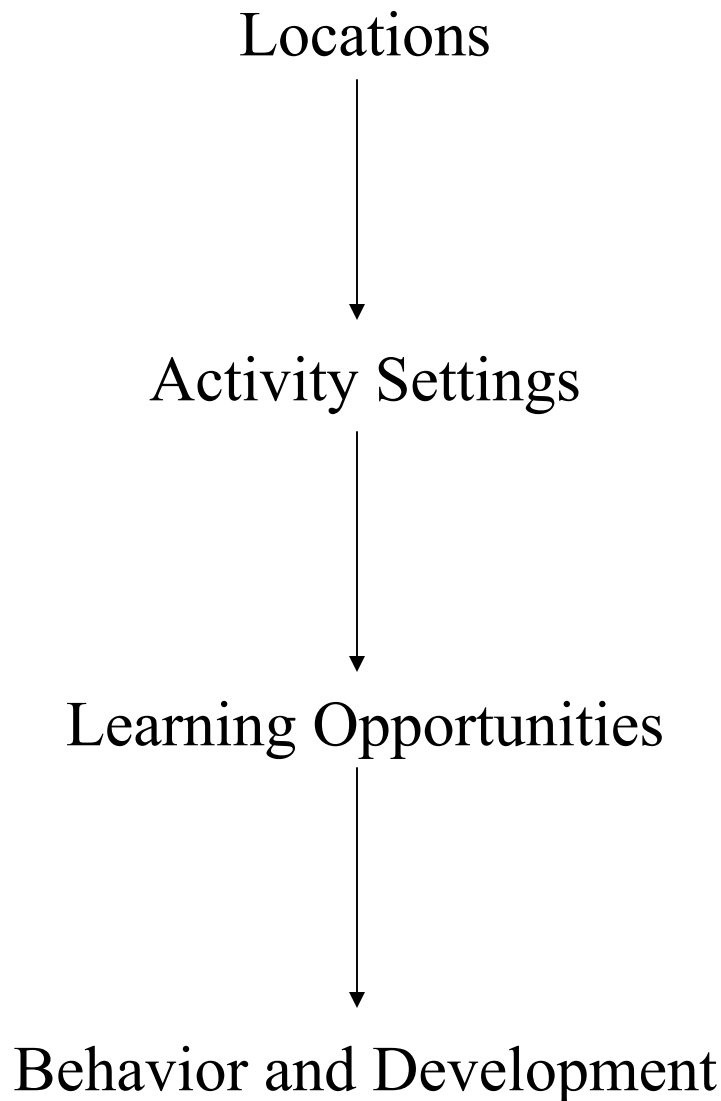
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Everyday family and community experiences, events, situations, and so forth providing children learning opportunities having development-enhancing (or development-impeding) qualities and consequences.

# Creating Learning Opportunities



# Relationship Between Locations, Activity Settings, Learning Opportunities, and Behavior and Development





# Natural Learning Environments Are:

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The places where children experience everyday, typically occurring learning opportunities that promote and enhance behavioral and developmental competencies.





# Natural Learning Environments

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## Re: Activity Settings

Principles to Practice

Challenges?



# IFSP Model

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1. Family centered practices of listening and being responsive
2. Team collaboration supporting a primary provider
3. IFSP derived from, and using child participation in family identified activity settings as the context for learning.



**IFSP**

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The process by which the family determines the changes they want to see for themselves and their child.



# IFSP Promising Practices

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- Natural environments creates a new philosophical framework for early intervention (Dunst, et. a.l., 1998)
- Families can identify numerous learning opportunities for their children in a variety of natural environments (Dunst, et. al. 1998)



# IFSP Development

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## Outcomes and Objectives:

- To Enhance Family Capacity
- To Enhance Child Competence
- To Expand Participation in Existing and New Activity Settings



# The IFSP Process

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- Identifying the family's concerns, priorities and resources that are important to the family: beginning a partnership
- Identifying the family's activity settings: the value of home and community
- Identifying the child's developmental strengths and needs in the context of the family's activity settings: functional assessment strategies
- Identifying collaborative outcomes:
  - To enhance family capacity
  - To enhance child competence
  - To expand activity settings



# The IFSP Process (Cont.)

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- Promoting participation in activity settings:
  - adaptations
  - supports
  - intervention strategies
- Assigning responsibilities across team members:
  - collaborative consultation and primary provider
  - building community capacity
- Evaluating progress:
  - the child
  - the family
  - the community



# Evaluation, Eligibility, Assessment

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- Evaluation for Eligibility
  
- Evaluation for Diagnosis
  
- Assessment During
  - Intake
  - Eligibility Evaluation
  - Intervention





# Activity Setting Recording Form

Interventionist: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>EXISTING ACTIVITY<br/>SETTINGS</b> | <b>NEW ACTIVITY<br/>SETTINGS</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                       |                                  |
|                                       |                                  |
|                                       |                                  |
|                                       |                                  |
|                                       |                                  |
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|                                       |                                  |
|                                       |                                  |

# Activity Setting Intervention

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interventionist: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

| Location | Activity Setting | Frequency | Learning Opportunity | Why is it Important |
|----------|------------------|-----------|----------------------|---------------------|
|          |                  |           |                      |                     |
|          |                  |           |                      |                     |
|          |                  |           |                      |                     |
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# Functional Assessment

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- Naturalistic Observation
- Child Participation and Learning
- Influence of the Social and Physical Environment
- Identification of Adaptations and Supports



# Functional Outcomes

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- Based on Family Outcome
- Team Derived
- Functional
  - Effects Interaction with Activity Setting
- Integrated
  - Discipline Free
- Measurable in Family Terms
- Last Short-Term Objective



# Short Term Goals

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- Task Analysis of Current Functioning to Functional Outcome
- Integrated
- Measurable Behavior
- Specifies:
  - Conditions
  - Criterion for Mastery
- Developmentally Appropriate



# Situated Learning

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- Becomes a part of everyday natural environments
- Emphasizes the acquisition of functional competence
- Makes possible increased child participation in those environments
- Is both social and nonsocial



# Intervention Strategies

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- Instructional Practices
  - Contingent Responsiveness
  - Response Contingent Learning
  - Incidental Teaching
  - Responsive Teaching



# Data Collection

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## What to Look For:

- Intervention Success
  - Family Using Strategies?
  - Using Them Correctly?
  - Child Responding to Strategies?
- Generalization
  - Of Target Behaviors
  - Intervention Success Across Activity Settings
- Changes in Intervention Plan
- Schedules
- Activity Setting Matrix



# Daily Schedule

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

|             | <b>ACTIVITY SETTINGS</b> |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>TIME</b> |                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|             |                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|             |                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|             |                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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