

Preventing Child Neglect and Unnecessary Out-of-home Placements in At-risk Families

Problem Statement

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Parents with Learning Difficulties

- Intellectual disabilities, borderline ID, brain injury, autism, FASD, severe learning disability (N. American definition)
- Ableist presumption of incompetence and inability to benefit from parent education
- Primary concern is child neglect
- Children at risk for intellectual, school and behavior problems when appropriate services and supports not provided

Child Removal from Parents with Learning Difficulties

1. Over-represented in Child Protection Services
2. 35 states include parental disability as sufficient grounds for termination of parenting rights (parentalrights.org)
3. TPR-2 to 5 times higher (Laliberte et al., 2017; Rebbe et al., 2020)
4. 56% not living with their kids (Stancliffe et al., 2021)
5. Numbers probably worse for Black and indigenous parents with learning difficulties
6. Lack of appropriate services (McConnell et al., 2011)
7. Long term detrimental effects of foster care on children (Font, 2020).
8. US spends 10x more on foster care and adoption than reunification programs.
<https://talkpoverty.org/2019/08/23/government-more-foster-adoption-reuniting/index.html> (2019)



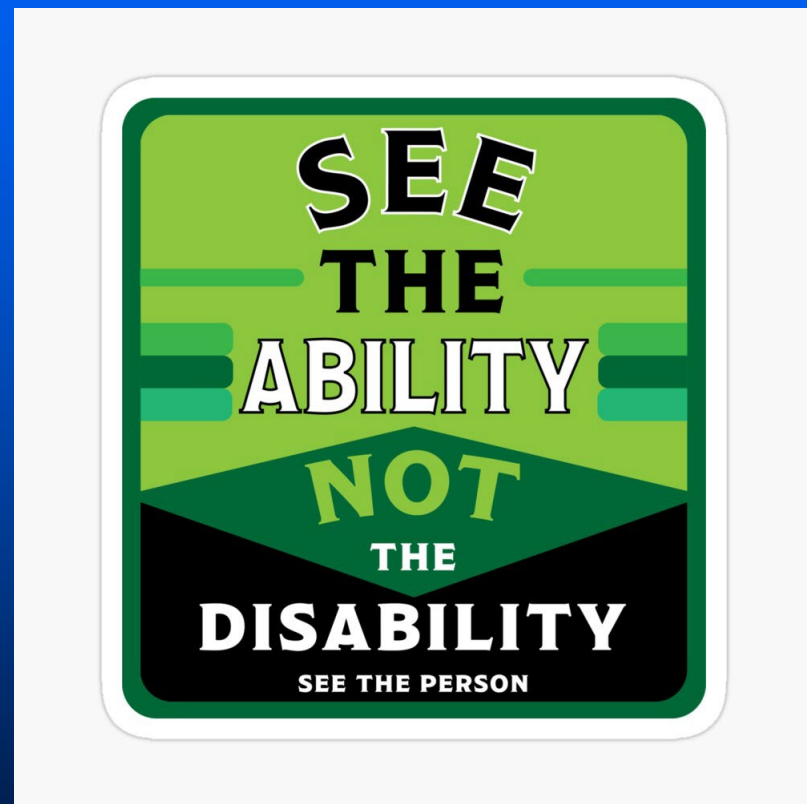
Services do not match needs and learning style

- Do not take contextual view – e.g., effects of poverty, trauma, stigmatization, social isolation
- Diagnostic overshadowing – blame all problems on parent's cognitive impairment
- Unrealistic and vague expectations
- Held to a higher standard
- Biased workers not experienced in working with persons with cognitive disabilities
- Reading materials and discussions of abstract concepts
- Teaching too much at one time or too quickly
- Focusing only on mistakes
- Assuming correspondence between knowledge and skills
- Basing judgments on subjective impressions (confirmation bias)

USDOJ/DHHS Technical Assistance (2015, 2020)

ADA applies to parenting!

- ADA Title 2
- Rehabilitation Act Section 504
- Family First Prevention Services Act (2018)
- CAPTA - reauthorization - 2021



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Solution Statement

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Child Neglect

- One of the most serious public health problem
- 76% of all U.S. child protection cases and 78% of child maltreatment fatalities (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2021)
- Related to poverty
- Lifelong physical and mental health implications (Rozanski et al., 2021).



Multi-focused Solutions

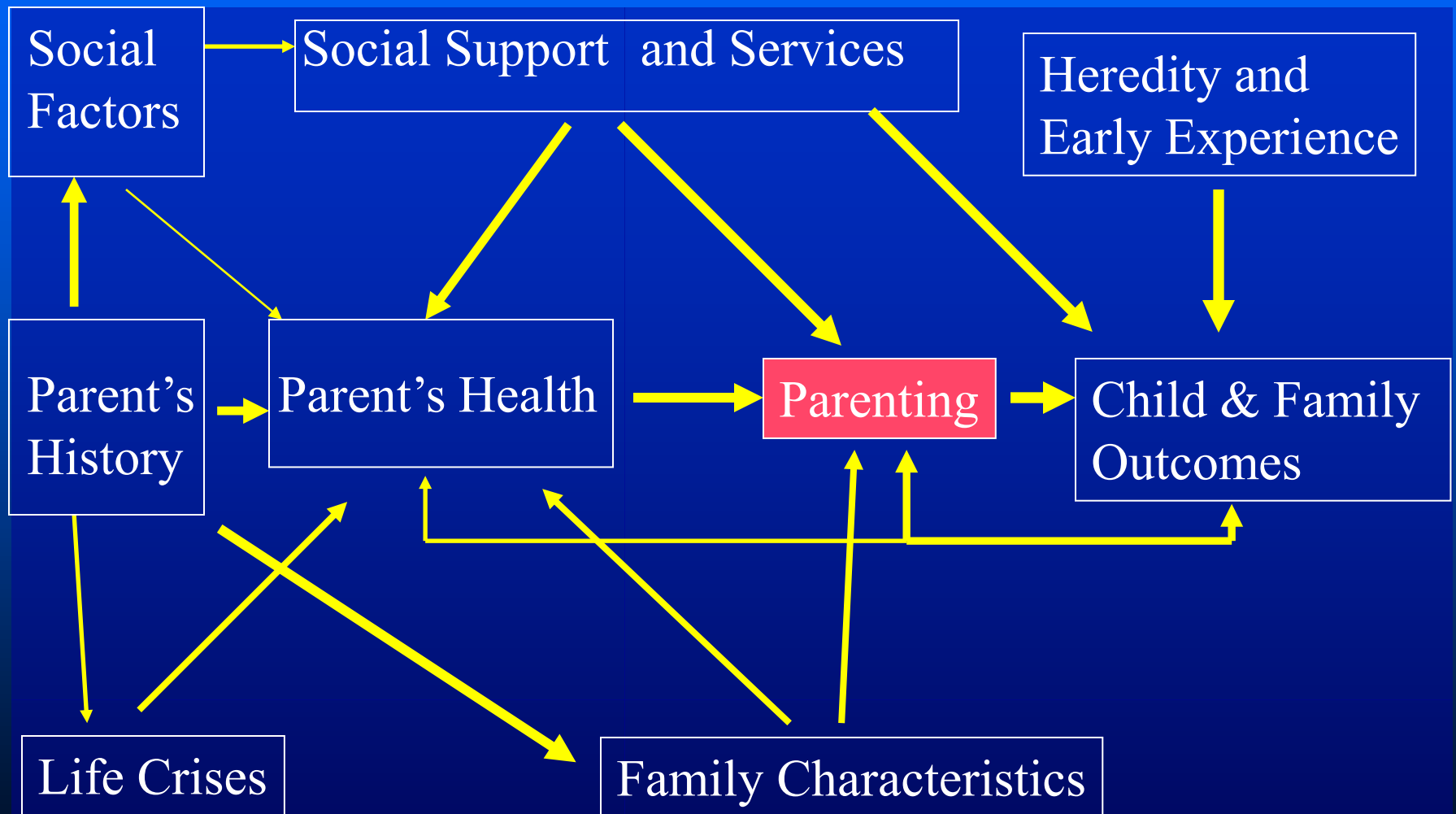
Coordinated
Supports and
Services


Professional
training

Research

System
changes

A Contextual-Interactional Model (Feldman, 2002)





Coordinated
Supports and
Services

poverty
alleviation

building
natural and
peer
supports

parenting
training

self-
advocacy

child
services

sexual
health

daycare

pre, peri-, and post
natal
care

substance
use
programs

co-
parenting

CPS

mental health
programs

couples
therapy

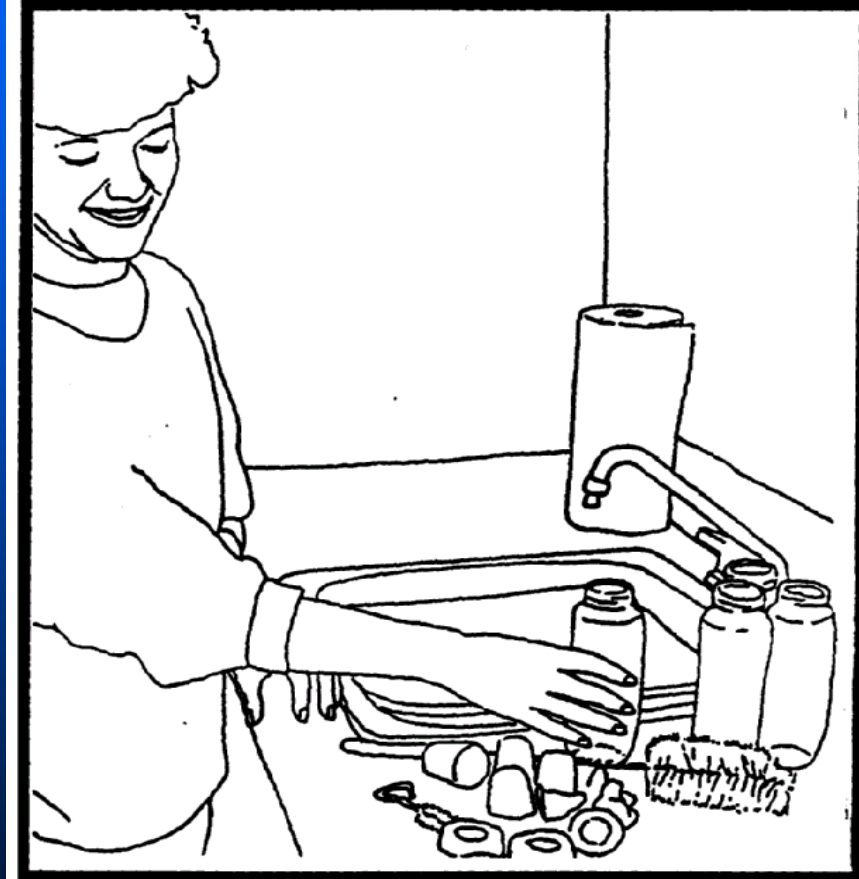
case
coordination



parenting
training

Step-by-Step (SBS) Parenting Program[©]

(Feldman, 2023)



Effective Parent Training for Parents with Learning Difficulties

- Collaborative (with parents, CPS, services, natural support network)
- Setting-based (i.e., in the home and community, not classrooms)
- Skill-focused and individualized
- Racially, ethnically, and culturally-sensitive
- Based on objective, functional, comprehensive assessment

Step-by-Step (SBS) Parenting Program[©] (Some peer-review publications)

JOURNAL OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

1986, 19, 23-37

NUMBER 1 (SPRING 1986)

PARENT EDUCATION PROJECT II. INCREASING STIMULATING INTERACTIONS OF DEVELOPMENTALLY HANDICAPPED MOTHERS

JOURNAL OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

1989, 22, 211-222

NUMBER 2 (SUMMER 1989)

MAURICE A. FELDMAN, FAY TOWNS, JUDITH BETEL,
ARNOLD RINCOVER, AND CARL A. RINCOVER

SURREY PLACE CENTRE AND THE METROPOLITAN
ASSOCIATION FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED

JOURNAL OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

1992, 25, 205-215

NUMBER 1 (SPRING 1992)

PARENT EDUCATION PROJECT III: INCREASING AFFECTION AND RESPONSIVITY IN DEVELOPMENTALLY HANDICAPPED MOTHERS: COMPONENT ANALYSIS, GENERALIZATION, AND EFFECTS ON CHILD LANGUAGE

MAURICE A. FELDMAN, LAURIE CASE, ARNOLD RINCOVER,
FAY TOWNS, AND JUDITH BETEL
SURREY PLACE CENTRE, TORONTO

TEACHING CHILD-CARE SKILLS TO MOTHERS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

MAURICE A. FELDMAN
SURREY PLACE CENTRE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

AND

LAURIE CASE, MARIA GARRICK, WANDA MACINTYRE-GRANDE,
JAYNE CARNWELL, AND BRUCE SPARKS

The Effects of Parent Training on Weight Gain of Nonorganic-Failure-to-Thrive Children of Mothers with Intellectual Disabilities

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Queen's University and
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Kingston, Ontario

Maria C. Lau
Surrey Place Centre
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Self-Directed Learning of Child-Care Skills by Parents With Intellectual Disabilities

Injures and Trauma
Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 1-10
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Research in Developmental Disabilities, Vol. 14, pp. 387-408, 1993
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Preventing Child Neglect: Child-Care Training for Parents with Intellectual Disabilities

Effectiveness of Home-Based Early Intervention on the Language Development of Children of Mothers With Mental Retardation

Maurice A. Feldman
Surrey Place Centre and the University of Toronto
Bruce Sparks and Laurie Case
Surrey Place Centre

Behavior Analysis: Research and Practice
2015, Vol. 15, Nos. 3-4, 187-200

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2372-9414/15/\$12.00 http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/bap0000022

Evaluation of a Game-Based Parent Education Intervention to Increase Positive Parent-Child Interactions in Parents With Intellectual Disabilities

Child Abuse Review Vol. 16: 120-129 (2007)
Published online in Wiley InterScience
(www.interscience.wiley.com) DOI: 10.1002/car.950



Munazza

Can Childhood Neglect be Assessed and Prevented Through Childcare Skills Training?

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Karola Dillenburger
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Effectiveness of a Child-Care Training Program for Parents At-Risk for Child Neglect

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the University of Toronto
LAURIE CASE and BRUCE SPARKS, Surrey Place Centre, Toronto

Step-by-Step Parenting Program[©]

Comprehensive Parenting Capacity Assessment

- contextual analysis (strengths-needs)
- functional assessment of parenting knowledge and skills
- Evaluate receptivity to training

Skill Assessment Observations

- In family home
- Day in the life... (or multiple visits)
- Do not prompt
- Re-assure parents
- No other workers present
- Use validated checklists whenever possible

Direct observation of parenting skills – Task Analysis



STEP-BY-STEP PARENTING PROGRAM DRESSING A NEWBORN CHECKLIST	Score ✓, x, NA	Comments
1. Picks safe place - e.g., bed, change table, couch	✓	
2. Stays with baby the whole time* (* = safety step)	✓	
3. Check diaper	x	
4. Changes diaper if necessary (see Diapering checklist)	NA	<i>diaper dry</i>
5. Stretches clothing to make it easier on baby	x	
6. Holds neck open so it doesn't scrape nose and ears	✓	
7. When dressing, puts hand in from end of sleeve, grasps baby's hand and pulls sleeve over arm with other hand	x	<i>Had difficulty</i>
8. When undressing, pulls sleeve with one hand, lifts shirt off shoulder with the other	NA	
9. Wraps child in blanket or towel when not dressed	✓	
10. Talks to and soothes baby	x	
TOTAL NO. OF ✓	4	
TOTAL NO. OF STEPS CORRECT AND INCORRECT	8	
Percentage correct (=total no. ✓/ total steps correct and incorrect x 100%)	50%	<i>needs training</i> ©2023, Maurice Feldman

Competency-Enhancing Approaches

Enhanced Behavioral Skills Training

- Concrete discussion
- Task analysis
- Pictorial posters and picture books
- Live and video modeling
- Practice
- Positive feedback & reinforcement
- Corrective feedback
- Role playing
- Game formats
- Generalization
- Maintenance

Step-by-Step Parenting Program Picture Books

BOTTLE FEEDING

1. Get full bottle and towel.
 - Towel is for spills and burping.



2. Check the temperature of the formula on your wrist.
 - Should be room temperature.



3. If formula is cold; put bottle in hot water for 2 minutes.
 - You can use hot tap water or heat water on the stove.
 - Check formula temperature again.



SBS Parenting Program Adherence Checklist – Training of Basic Child-Care Skills

	Adherence Steps (Abbreviated)	Score (✓, X, NA)	Comments
1	PE explains general rationale and methods of teaching procedures.		
2	PE watches the parent perform the skill just before starting training to determine with which steps she is having difficulty and how well skill is maintained from last visit.		
3	PE gives simple rationale for why the skill needs to be trained		
4	PE questions client to ensure comprehension of instructions or explanations.		
5	PE uses one or more of the following coaching/prompting techniques in training as needed: (a) simple, clear verbal instructions, hints, and prompts; (b) modelling; (c) roleplaying; and (d) permanent prompts (e.g., Step-By-Step picture books and audio, posters, day timers).		
6	PE models specific missed or incorrect steps and explains while modelling.		
7	PE then allows parent to try again as soon as possible after the model, records performance on checklist and provides feedback.		
8	PE asks parent to practice several times in the presence of the parent educator.		
9	PE initially focuses on what the parent is doing correctly.		
10	PE gradually intersperses non-judgmental, but specific corrections, especially at the beginning of training.		
11	PE tries to give at least 3 positive feedback statements to every one corrective statement.		
12	PE ends training session on a positive note about the parent's performance.		
	(c)2023, M. Feldman	Percentage	

Family Preservation Results

- Before Step-by-Step involvement
 - ❖ ~80% of parents LOST their children.
- After Step-by-Step involvement
 - ❖ ~80% KEPT their children

(Feldman et al., 1992; 1993)

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