



Parents Speak Out Partnering with Families on Embedded Interventions

In a conversation with Christine, a mother of a child with developmental delays, family leaders from across the nation provide their views on embedded interventions and building partnerships.

Perceptions of Teachers That Some Parents Are Extremely Demanding

“Most of the [community college] students that I work with share the feeling of the teacher [Jackie] in this module. They have limited experience and education with working with children with special needs. They come to [my community college] class with many questions. They describe some of the parents to be extremely demanding with concerns for their children.”

—Lisa Stein, parent & community college faculty

Families' Perceptions About How to Get Their Idea Across

“After reading Lisa Stein's comments on her [community college] students talking about the ‘extremely demanding’ parents, it brought back concerns I had initially after my son was enrolled in his program. I immediately felt push-back from his teachers when I encouraged certain embedded interventions to be used in the classroom, or trying to explain that my son was ready to be challenged in new ways. I didn't want to be perceived as the demanding parent, and I wanted to develop a good relationship with his teachers.

“But it seemed like the expectations that I had for Luke and what the teachers had just didn't line up. They talked about things like what is ‘developmentally appropriate,’ while I talked about what Luke was actually doing and showing an interest in at home.

“I must confess that I haven't done anything to change the situation. If I get push back on ideas now, I generally nod my head, and then work on that skill with my son at home. For example, most recently, I shared that my son was expressing interest in the alphabet. I thought that encouraging letter recognition could help engage my son in a variety of activities, like reading, making verbal sounds, etc. I was told that it was too early to introduce letters, and that they'll do that next semester. So I worked on it at home. One month later my son knew all his letters. Daily we engage in verbal play attempting to make letter sounds. I can introduce new books easily (which was always a challenge before) by pointing out the letters and sounding out words.”

—Christine Lindauer

“I believe that even the National Association for the Education of Young Children (leading professional association for early childhood educators). NAEYC is rethinking ‘developmentally appropriate.’ The most disabling aspect of a disability is people's perceptions of what is not possible. In just one month, Luke has cast a new light on what he can learn. Bravo!”

—Cherie Takemoto

Handout 1.6

“It is something I really need to remind myself of everyday. As a mother on day one, we are supposed to do everything for our child. It's letting go of that little hand and realizing the potential of a child. It's difficult with some children when they don't give you the clues of a typically developing child, who will put up a fuss to do it themselves or struggle to find a way.”
—Christine Lindauer

“I must say that I have had the same experiences, which is why my husband and I started early on videotaping our home activities with our son. We realized that the only way that we could get the professionals to understand our goals and expectations had to be by showing them what we were doing. I have to say that more often than not the teachers and therapist were impressed by what we had been able to accomplish with our son, Jonathan. I was often referred to as the neurotic mom. My husband would often respond to this by saying, call it what you want, but for us it means hope and goal setting with meaningful expectations. So, Christine, at times we will pick and choose our battles, but most often go with your gut and try to get them to hear you out and understand. Only after you feel that you have exhausted all possibility give in. You will find that once they understand your ultimate goal they will collaborate.”
—Lourdes Rivera-Putz

“Your advice is timely. Recently, we've been taking more videos of Luke at home, filming some of these types of embedded learning activities. Others have asked if his teachers have seen any footage like this before and agreed that they could learn a lot from it. I'm thinking that a format like this would not only be clear for the teachers to understand, but also be a more friendly approach. In the sense of ‘Check out these videos to see what works for me at home’ instead of ‘I think you should be doing x,y,z in the classroom.’ When I just try to explain what I do at home, I feel like the teachers aren't really listening, perhaps thinking that what works at home isn't relevant. If they saw it in video format, perhaps would think otherwise.”
—Christine Lindauer

“I agree that the video or writing a vision or mission statement is a great way to keep your hopes and dreams alive. I have kept my two-sentence vision statement for my daughter on the mirror for years and have had to go back to it time and time again as others told me that I had unrealistic hopes and dreams. A video would be another way to keep remembering and have your thoughts and dreams nearby no matter what.”
—Mary Murray

Credits

Parents Speak Out was developed by CONNECT's National Family Expert Panel. Members include Sophie Arao-Nguyen, Sharman Davis Barrett, Kathy Brill, Theresa Cooper, Samtra Devard, Nancy DiVenere, Christine Lindauer, Tricia Luker, Mary Murray, Nancy Peeler, Lourdes Rivera-Putz, Rich Robison, Lisa Stein, Cherie Takemoto, Aracelly Valverde, and Conni Wells. These family experts are leaders of national family organizations, faculty in universities, and key personnel in state educational agencies. They represent over 300 years of parenting expertise.

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