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FAMILY CENTERED CARE

# NEWSLETTER

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## FAMILY CENTERED CARE

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health-Children and Youth version implicitly recognizes the influence of the family-context in which the child lives on outcomes of health, activities and participation. In the same way, family-centred care (FCC) recognizes the importance of a supportive family and community on child health and participation outcomes. In this way, Family Centered Care places the family at the centre of the child's life. Family Centered Care:

- Recognizes the family as the child's primary source of strength and support, and the parent(s) as the experts in understanding their child's abilities and goals
- Promotes and welcomes the active participation of the parents and of the child in decision-making, and the participation of all members of the family
- Recognizes that the family itself functions within a community that is guided by a set of cultural beliefs, laws, policies, and institutions that indirectly influence a child's development

As pediatric occupational therapists it is ingrained within us to make sure that we aim at providing family centered care. But it is equally important for parents to see the need for this kind of service. As parents you are spending the maximum amount of time with your child. You know your child best. Hence, it is essential that you bring up the concerns of your child and discuss with your therapist. Partner with your therapist for intervention planning. Your therapist can help you understand what will be age appropriate, skill appropriate and developmentally appropriate for your child. Thereby, help you set and achieve a SMART goal, which is just right for your child.

**Importance for professionals: Why should we adhere to**



**this type of service?**

As therapists it is important for us to see not just the child, but also the whole family along with the child as a unit. It is essential for us therapists to take into account the primary concerns of the parents while designing an intervention plan for the child. This will help us define child specific goals keeping in mind the child's potential. But, remember that you see the child for just an hour/two per week, as opposed to all the hours that the child spends back at home with his/her family. Therefore we must empower the child's caregivers with effective knowledge of their child's conditions, handling skills and potential prognosis. This is Parent education. It promotes improved carryover of the strategies and techniques that we use in the sessions with our child. It also helps the parents understand their child, learn how to approach their child, interact and engage with their child. Hence, therapeutic outcomes really depend on the

family's involvement and follow up of the strategies and program at home. Therefore, working with parents for a family centered plan is key to successful intervention. Research also states the efficacy of Family Centered Practice has been documented in improving child-related outcomes ([Dunst, 2002](#); [Morris & Taylor, 1998](#)), parental satisfaction ([Law et al., 2003](#); [O'Neil, Palisano, & Westcott, 2001](#); [Van Schie, Siebes, Ketelaar, & Vermeer, 2004](#)), and parental participation ([Dunst, Boyd, Trivette, & Hamby, 2002](#)).

### **Importance for parents and families: Why advocate for this type of service?**

As parents, look for a therapist who believes in and provides family-centered care. You have a tough job! Raising your child with special needs can influence your time use, health, and choice of activities. This can impact your physical, emotional and mental health. It is important to address your own health while looking after your child. Your child's occupational therapist can be of help. As parents you are the best judge of what your child can do and can't do functionally. There will also be things that are pressing concerns for you that you think your child is having difficulties with. These challenges may be subconsciously further impacting your physical health and emotional wellbeing. Bring them up with your therapist, let your therapist use their clinical expertise if need be, to help you understand and implement the best ways to achieve these specific goals. Research shows that parents receiving more family-centered care reportedly experience better emotional wellbeing, with less depression and distress. Hence, be your own advocate whilst advocating for your child and ensure that you are well informed, know what to expect for your child's future and be actively involved in partnering with the therapist in the process of intervention planning for your child

In my experience, with individualized family-focused intervention, children achieve targeted goals, acquire functional skills, and show accelerated rates of developmental progress. This kind of intervention places an emphasis on parents and professionals working together to help the child excel and family function smoothly.

As Occupational Therapy professionals, we at Reach realize that families are interdependent, and intervention with the child can have an important impact on life participation for the entire family, especially the parents. To provide a good family-centered intervention, we strive to understand individual functional barriers for the child, parents, and other family members. Working with the family as a unit helps us ensure that the child is in a happy environment working each day to reach and function at his/her highest potential.

*“With individualized family focused intervention, children achieve targeted goals, acquire functional skills, and show accelerated rates of developmental progress.”*



For any question or concerns regarding the newsletter please write to us on:

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