Using Developmental Assessments to Empower Families

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Overview

- The role of families in child development and wellbeing
- The NICU -- the first step in a continuum of developmental care
- How the BNBAS fits into early intervention requirements
Overview

- An Overview of the BNBAS
- Developmental resources post discharge -- an overview of IDEA, Part C
- Developmental follow-up and tracking
The role of families in child development and wellbeing

Brain Research has demonstrated the threat of stress (especially chronic stress) to the developing brain of a child.

This research also confirms that children flourish in safe, stimulating and loving homes.

There is now a sense of urgency to provide optimum environments for children, especially very young children 0-3 years old.
The role of families in child development and wellbeing

PET scans (Positron-Emission Tomography) comparing an abused/neglected and healthy brain.

Research affirms that the environment a child grows up in determines in a significant way the actual growing brain.

Graven Conference 2/2/07
The role of families in child development and wellbeing

- Parents are their children’s first and most important teachers and role models.
- The relationship created between parents and infants during the earliest years of life has a profound impact on later growth and development, self-esteem, school performance and life achievements.
The role of families in child development and wellbeing

- Parents need to acquire the knowledge and skills that allow them to mediate their child’s environment
  - Assist children in attaining developmental skills;
  - Managing children's behavior in the course of daily routines; and
  - Engaging their children in play and social interaction.
The NICU -- the first step in a continuum of developmental care

NICU staff have a wonderful opportunity to facilitate the beginning of a beautiful parent/infant relationship through parenting education.
The NICU -- the first step in a continuum of developmental care

Parent education is the process of providing parents and other primary caregivers with specific knowledge and childrearing skills with the goal of promoting the development and competence of their children.
The NICU -- the first step in a continuum of developmental care

The Brazelton Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale (BNBAS) is one tool that can be utilized to support this process.

- It is a developmental assessment that provides opportunities for education and parent empowerment by discovering not only the baby’s beautiful and unique competencies, but their own, as well.
- It is an effective strategy that helps parents understand their infant, not just from a health perspective but as a developing human who sends cues and seeks interaction with the world.
Purpose of Administration

- Medical staff
- High developmental risk
- Staff concerns
- Parent concerns
- Parent education
- Follow-up
- Grieving process
BNBAS: Introducing the Process

- Schedule exam with parents
- Provider overview of the exam
- Facilitate parent education
BNBAS: Introducing the Process

Hierarchy of Infant Competencies

- Self-Regulatory
- Social Interaction System
- State System
- Motor System
- Autonomic System
Parent Empowerment through Education

- Parent Communication-Cues
- Autonomic System
- Motor System
- State System
- Social-Interaction System
- Self-Regulatory (Als-Synactive Theory)
Parent Empowerment through Education

- Autonomic System - stress and stability cues, communication
- Motor System - back to sleep, infant massage, root/suck, palmar grasp, positioning & handling, swaddling
- State System - facilitation
- Social-Interaction - vision, communication
- Self-Regulatory - self-soothing strategies
Recommendations

- Kangaroo Care
- Positioning, handling
- Further studies
- Developmental Care Plan
- Early Intervention
- OT, PT, Speech
- EI-vision
- Feeding- NOMAS, Oral Motor, lactation, feeding supports and education
Next Steps – Early Intervention

Children’s experiences in everyday settings and activities begin in Early Intervention. The relationships that providers form with children & families --- the ways they guide and support families in parenting children (with disabilities) -- sets the stage for the child’s and family’s lifetime experiences.

Adapted from Pip Campbell 2002
Developmental resources post NICU discharge -- an overview of IDEA, Part C

What is IDEA, Part C?
- Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C Program (in Florida known as early steps)

What is the philosophy underlying early intervention?
- Early intervention is most effective when provided in every day routines and activities of young children with disabilities and their families
Developmental resources post NICU discharge -- an overview of IDEA, Part C

- Support and promote parents’ competence and confidence in providing their children development -- enhancing learning opportunities

- The family is active in decision-making about the planning, implementing and evaluating services
What are Routines, Activities and Places?

- **Family routines**
  the usual events that are customarily a part of families’ schedules

- **Everyday activities**
  that a family does with their infant or toddler

- **Everyday places**
  that families and typically developing children frequent, day-in and day-out
How the BNBAS fits into early intervention requirements

- Serves as framework for looking at the differences between premature and term infant behavior/development.
- Is an effective teaching tool for parents and an initial connection to best practices in early intervention
- Provides almost limitless areas of discussion with and education for parents
  - Focuses on the unique strengths and needs of each member of the parent/infant team.
How the BNBAS fits into early intervention requirements

- Enhances parents’ competence confidence
  - Helps them and to recognize and understand infant cues and to maximize everyday routines such as diapering, feeding, and going to the grocery store.
- Eases the transition into early intervention if the child needs it.
- Helps parent effectively communicate and advocate for their baby’s needs.
Developmental follow-up and tracking

- Referral to Part C

- Developmental Screening/Tracking
  - Examples:
    - Ages and Stages Questionnaires
    - Battelle Developmental Inventory 2 Screener

- Family Assessment
  - Concerns
  - Priorities
  - Resources
Developmental follow-up and tracking

- Evaluation and Intervention
  - Norm reference eligibility evaluation
- Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP)
- Intervention
- Updates
- Transition
Summary

The BNBAS

- Is an effective teaching tool for parents in understanding infant development
- Should be sensitive to the needs of parents who will come to learn about and accept their infant at their own pace
  - Parents may respond differently than is anticipated and the nurse or developmental should be responsive to individual needs
- Is the initial connection to best practices in early intervention.
Brazelton: For More Information

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