

FAMILY ACTION LEARNING TEAM

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 28, 2016

Meeting Participants: Amber, Correy, Damaris, Jackie, Laverne, Melissa, Paula, Richard, Towana, Traticia
 Ready/Ready Staff: Rachael Burrello, Mary Herbenick
 Guest Speaker: Natalie Tackitt

SYSTEMS CHANGE TARGET: Engage families as partners and change agents in the community	
A. Agenda Item: Parent education segment: Social-emotional development (prenatal to age 5)	
<u>Summary of Discussion</u>	<u>Action Items</u>
<p>Natalie Tackitt, certified Parenting Educator from Children’s Home Society, gave a presentation on social-emotional development for young children. Natalie leads an effort to bring parent educators into pediatricians’ offices, to answer questions and talk with parents during well-child checkup.</p> <p>Families reflected that when they hear “social emotional development,” they think of the following: children interacting with others on level for their age; meeting milestones for development; how children feel and interact with their world; and coping skills, how well a child deals with problems or challenges.</p> <p>Natalie discussed how parents are both a “mirror” that reflects their children’s behavior, and a “window” that helps children see and understand the world. Without social emotional skills, it’s very hard for children to do academics, so social emotional development is important for school success. Find more details about the presentation at the end of this document.</p>	<p>For more information on Children’s Home Society, visit https://www.chsnc.org/ (See contact info for Natalie Tackitt at end of notes)</p> <p>For more information, watch the Brain Builders video on YouTube.</p> <p>You can watch the video on the Still Face Experiment on YouTube.</p>
B. Agenda Item: Update: 100-Day Challenge Celebration & Overview of Last Meeting	
<u>Summary of Discussion</u>	<u>Action Items</u>
<p>The 100-Day Challenge Celebration</p> <p>In February, Ready for School, Ready for Life held the Early Childhood Summit, and people who attended formed 12 teams to take on 100-Day Challenges. The teams chose subjects or issues in the early childhood system that interested them, and had 100 days to work on creating strategies to address the issue.</p> <p>On May 24th, the community came back together for the 100-Day Challenge Celebration to share what they had learned and what they had accomplished. Amber and Damaris both led 100-Day Challenge teams, and shared about the teams they led, what their projects were, how they addressed root causes, and how the teams went into analysis and addressed issues they had both faced in their own experiences.</p>	<p>Find out more about Damaris’s 100-Day Challenge Team and their work in Safe & Stable Homes/ Financial Literacy on the Ready for School, Ready for Life website.</p> <p>Find out more about Amber’s 100-Day Challenge Team and their work in Families As Change Agents (and how that became the Family ALT!) on the Ready for School, Ready for Life website.</p>

<p>The Celebration had presentations on different topics from different teams. All of their work can be found on the Ready for School, Ready for Life website.</p> <p>Overview of the previous meeting</p> <p>Family Action Learning Team (ALT) is part of Ready/Ready’s permanent structure, and will have input into processes and strategies of the systems change work and with other community partners and organizations seeking family feedback and participation. Feedback from the Family ALT will be used to directly affect decision making.</p> <p>Some examples of how Family ALT has already influenced organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the last meeting, the 100-Day Challenge team working in Developmental Screenings tested some questions on wellness visits and developmental screenings. Families gave feedback, which the team used to help build their recommendations for the community. • The families who attended the last meeting asked for training on social-emotional development, so Ready/Ready brought a presenter to give a talk on it at this meeting. • Families gave feedback on the last meeting, which drove the agenda for the June meeting — more time for open discussion, a raffle for a gift card at the end of the meeting, etc. <p>The team talked about how to spread the word about Ready/Ready and Family ALT, and how to reach out to other families directly and share information and resources, as well as communicating between meetings.</p>	<p>Learn more about the 100-Day Challenges on the Ready for School, Ready for Life website.</p> <p>Learn more about the 100-Day Challenge Team on Developmental Screenings and their recommendations on the Ready for School, Ready for Life website.</p>
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C. Agenda Item: Information Sharing with ALT and with Community

<u>Summary of Discussion</u>	<u>Action Items</u>
<p>Key questions to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the team want communicate out to other families? • How does this group want to do its work between meetings? • How will the team build something that will be updated consistently? • How will the team build a following? • How does the team administer the page? <p>Family ALT Communication</p> <p>Facebook makes it easy to stay connected between meetings, which the team feels is important. Team members who participated in Photovoice shared that using Facebook group chat was a good way to stay connected and also do some work between meetings.</p> <p>Amber and Damaris also shared their experiences using Basecamp, a collaboration app designed for work teams. Ready/Ready staff will give a Basecamp tutorial at the next team meeting.</p> <p>Community Engagement</p> <p>Participants observed that one good thing about Facebook is that you can share information with your whole network. If there is information that</p>	<p>READY/READY STAFF: Prepare and present Basecamp tutorial for next meeting.</p>

<p>directly affects the community that should be shared, the team can amplify it out. Making the page public would make it easier to build a following and communicate to more families, since it is available by phone app, and offers the ability to track events.</p> <p>The team also discussed possible partnerships with child care and school groups —elementary schools, Head Start sites, and other child care settings. A possible long-term goal could be to have a group of Family ALT members who have an ongoing partnership with the schools. Connections with Guilford Parent Academy are critical, too.</p> <p>Guilford Free Play Project</p> <p>Families provided feedback on this project, including selecting the location. Staff developed and distributed a flier for the event, which will be held from 9:30 - 11:30 am near the playground at the Lindley Park Recreation Center (2907 Springwood Drive, Greensboro, 27403). This project will continue every month on the 2nd Saturday. We will look for different parks in different locations around Greensboro and High Point.</p>	
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D. Agenda Item: Next Agenda	
<u>Summary of Discussion</u>	<u>Action Items</u>
<p>To make participation easier, the group agreed to select consistent dates/times to meet each month. The group agreed to the third Monday.</p> <p>The team also talked about how to better promote participation from High Point. Under consideration: (1) switching Family ALT meetings between Greensboro and High Point (i.e. meet one month in Greensboro, one month in High Point); (2) starting a High Point specific Family ALT.</p> <p>Family ALT members chose “cognitive development” as the next area of school readiness they would like to explore.</p>	<p>READY/READY STAFF: Identify expert in cognitive development to come to July 18 Family ALT meeting.</p>

Meetings will be the 3rd Monday of each month. Here’s the schedule for the remainder of the year:

- **July 18**
- **August 15**
- **September 19**
- **October 17**
- **November 21** – This is the Monday before Thanksgiving. Let us know if this date does not work for you.
- **December 19**

All meetings will be from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Locations will be announced ahead of time.

See notes about Natalie’s presentation on social-emotional development on the next page.

MORE ABOUT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NATALIE TACKITT):

Contact:

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Some facts:

- Every other organ in the body is finished growing when a baby is born, except the brain. From birth to 3, a baby's brain completes 80% of its growth. This is the foundation for the "house" of lifelong learning that's getting built. For babies, "learning" is not about teaching them to read or count. Instead, everything is about interaction.
- From birth to 3, children create over 700 connections per second in the brain.
- The brain does not finish growing until about 25, so it can still change.
- Three important parts of the brain are:
 - The brainstem. This part is in charge of things we don't control, like breathing, blinking, and heartbeat.
 - The limbic system. This is the "emotional" part of the brain, and reacts to our interactions with the world and other people.
 - The cerebral cortex. This is the "control" part of the brain that helps us "keep our cool" and make good choices.

Repeated use makes connections in the brain stronger. If a child is in a calm environment where they know they will be taken care of, it strengthens the "control" part of the brain. A stressful environment puts pressure on the limbic system, and makes the brain more likely to express emotions like anger. This is called high limbic irritability. You might see this in people who have "road rage," or who always seem ready to "blow up" about small things.

Interactions shape young children's brains. Social emotional development happens all within the relationships in a child's world.

To understand more about how interactions can make a child feel safe or feel stressed, and how that affects social emotional development, families watched a short video on the "still face experiment." In this experiment, a parent does two different things with their infant, and gets very different responses:

1. Interacts normally, smiling and responding to the infant, touching and playing, looking at things when the infant points, etc. When the parent is responsive, the baby is active and engaged.
2. The parent does not respond, and keeps their face blank. When the parent is not responsive, the child quickly becomes stressed and unhappy. When the parent responds again by smiling and talking and interacting, the infant begins to "cheer up" and play again.

One participant has done this experiment in her academic program, where it was done with first-time mothers, and observed how emotional and difficult it is for the parent and the child. Families found the video "rough to watch," but felt hopeful because it was clear that some of the damage from stress can be repaired. If a child is used to having love and care, they still will have stress sometimes, but if they know you will get to them, they will be okay—even if they are crying now! When a child gives up on crying even when they are stressed, that can be a sign that they will have social emotional issues.

The group reflected on their own experiences with social-emotional development with their children and in their own lives. They realized that they had already done the “serve and return” behavior from the Brain Builders video by waving to the infant present in the room and reaching back toward him when he reached out his hands and pointed.

Families also talked about what happens when the communication link is broken, like in the Still Face Experiment video. If a parent ignores a child and doesn’t respond, then that can become “normal” to the child. Then when good interaction happens, they don’t recognize it or can’t cope with it. When dysfunction becomes their normal, it takes even more repetition of healthy interaction to bring them back on track for good social-emotional development. So when good interaction comes, they don’t recognize or can’t cope with it. Dysfunction becomes normal to them, and it takes more repetition to get back to normal. In foster care, for example, there’s a lot of work that needs to be done, with kids who develop responses to chronic neglect like being needy or being guarded.

Families reflected on their own lives and talked about people who made them feel loved, and how that made them feel special. A common theme was that those people made them feel loved by being responsive, listening, being there, and simply paying attention to them.