

Session # D-5

Title: Parental Perspectives Concerning Child Care for Children with Special Needs

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SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Parents don't always feel they can disclose the special needs of their children to other families or even caregivers unless it is obvious they have had the training and skills to handle the situation. They also may not disclose their children's special needs to their employer, unless difficulties arranging and keeping child care make disclosure necessary.

Major policy issue but unknown to public because many families do not disclose. Reality is that 1 in 5 families have a child with special needs. Research implications---parents develop strategies to keep their jobs and keep child care. Parents often have to choose between keeping their jobs or accessing services because health care and mental health services are often available only during working hours.

Research findings are that children are not accepted for child care due to their special needs; and if a provider does enroll them, parents are called often at work to handle child care problems, disrupting their work. Considering expulsion from child care: 1/4 parents asked to remove their child for behavioral issues vs. 1/10 for physical issues. Some families try to handle child care by tag-team parenting, and attempt to rearrange their work schedules so that they can care for the child at home.

Nearly 20% of US children have emotional or behavioral problems which provide unique challenges to access services, keep up with regular school, or make transportation arrangements. Work-family integration problems are particularly acute for parents having children with emotional or behavioral challenges; 48% of parents of children with emotional or behavioral problems had to quit work at some time to care for their children at home. Children with behavioral needs are 20% more likely to be expelled from child care, than children without those challenges.

The ideal situation for families that have children with special needs may be inclusive child care arrangements. Inclusion consultants and mental health consultants should be supporting the workers who need to gain strategies and knowledge so that care providers and parents have honesty in communication as partners, and then the care givers can assist and support the children and families.

Montana's experience is that children with disabilities are equally represented across early childhood programs. Inclusion embedded in existing early childhood courses==Just in time training to handle a particular issues arising right now Connect with Child Find Project if you are a child care provider.

Child Care Plus+, the Center on Inclusion in Early Childhood at the University of Montana researches and exemplifies that children are equally represented across early childhood programs; for training trainers on how to embed inclusion; and for connecting with child Find.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

How do you get early intervention IDEA funding into child care? Can tap into it depending on the community. Usually you only received reimbursement for a few hours of services for a child in child care.

Need to get more employers supporting these services.

Any good examples of R &Rs that know which providers best include children with special needs? Not really—because of ADA can not say who is willing to include special needs children but can say who has experience

Council on Disabilities can confer with R & R to assist in knowledge for referrals. Can include working towards inclusion in your training programs.

Group size does matter but family child care is often hard to get into

KEY POINTS

Families will not disclose unless it is clear they are in an accepting atmosphere with, knowledgeable workers

If we want workers to keep their jobs we need to know sources of appropriate child care as the percentage of workers who will face this is growing

Inclusive child care is possible

