Quality of Caregiver Interactions with Infants and Toddlers: Identifying and Supporting Responsiveness

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Q-CCIIT

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Our Goals for Today

- **Motivation for the session**

- **Importance of responsive interactions**
  - **Interactive discussion around a conceptual framework**

- **Defining and identifying responsive interactions**
  - **Video examples with guided discussion**

- **Capturing and Supporting Interactions**
  - **Observation as a tool for professional development**

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The Q-CCIIT Observation Tool

- **ACF's goal was to provide the field with a new measure to assess the quality of caregiver-child interactions for infants and toddlers in nonparental care**

- **The new measure should be**

  - **Reliable and valid**

  - **Based on research on infant and toddler development**

  - **Useful for multiple purposes (professional development, accountability, research)**

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Standards for Non-Parental Care

- **Approximately one-half of infants and toddlers are involved in weekly, non-parental care, including in Early Head Start.**

- **The *Head Start Performance Standards* recognize the need to support child development for all children (45 CFR 1304.21(a)) including infants and toddlers (45 CFR 1304.21(b)). According to the standards, care should be:**

  - **developmentally appropriate**
  - **set limits**
  - **plan routines and transitions to build trust**

Observation Settings

- **Licensed nonparental care in the following settings:**
  - **Center-based child care**
  - **Family Child Care (FCC) homes**

- **Classrooms characteristics:**
  - **Infants and toddlers**
  - **Two or more children between birth and three years (36 months) of age**
  - **Single age or mixed age classrooms**
  - **English or Spanish speaking classrooms**

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Importance of Responsive Interactions for Infants and Toddlers

- **Responsiveness – a foundation for positive interactions**

- **A conceptual framework for measuring quality**

- **Developing the Q-CCIIT observation tool**

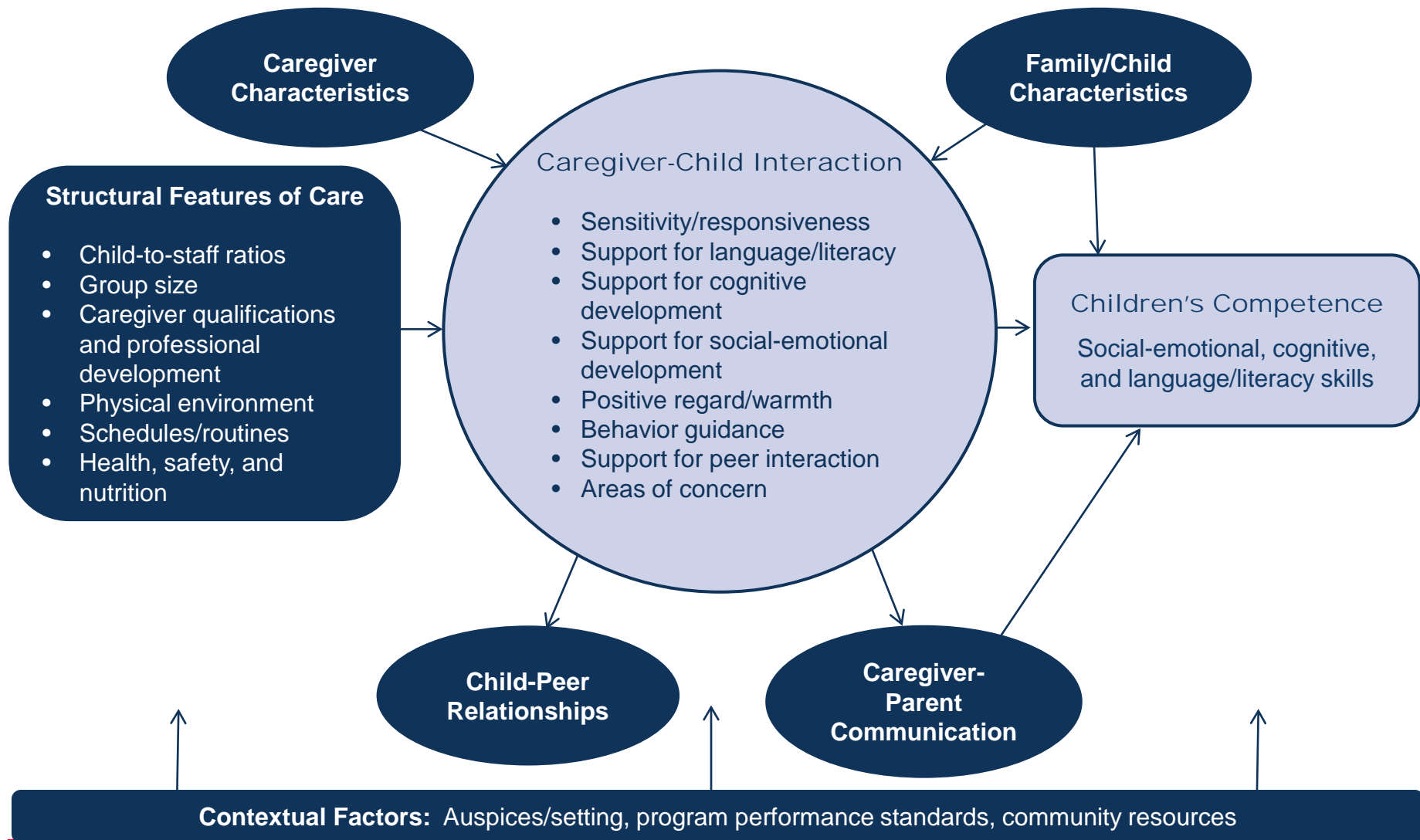**MATHEMATICA**
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Responsive Caregiving

- **Responsiveness involves being sensitive to the child's cues and recognizing and responding to the child's needs and interests.**

- **Responsiveness can be physical (touching, adjusting position, getting closer to the child) or verbal (involving words; for example, talking, humming, singing).**

- **Caregivers should watch for and respond to children's cues.**

- **Responsiveness is a key element of the Q-CCIIT instrument.**

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Q-CCIIT Conceptual Framework

Caregiver Characteristics

Family/Child Characteristics

Structural Features of Care

- Child-to-staff ratios
- Group size
- Caregiver qualifications and professional development
- Physical environment
- Schedules/routines
- Health, safety, and nutrition

Caregiver-Child Interaction

- Sensitivity/responsiveness
- Support for language/literacy
- Support for cognitive development
- Support for social-emotional development
- Positive regard/warmth
- Behavior guidance
- Support for peer interaction
- Areas of concern

Children's Competence

Social-emotional, cognitive, and language/literacy skills

Child-Peer Relationships

Caregiver-Parent Communication

Contextual Factors: Auspices/setting, program performance standards, community resources

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Translation of the Framework into an Observation Tool: the Q-CCIIT

The Q-CCIIT Observational Tool

- **Measures caregiver support for**
  - **Social-emotional development**
  - **Cognitive development**
  - **Language and literacy**

- **As well as**
  - **Areas of concern**

- **All behaviors are rated on a scale of 1 to 7, with behavioral descriptions at 4 anchor points**

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Responsive Social-Emotional Interactions

- **Supporting social-emotional development includes:**
  - **Fostering independence**
  - **Establishing secure relationships**
  - **Encouraging exploration**

- **Elements of responsive Social-Emotional Interactions:**
  - **responsiveness to different types of cues**
  - **relationship building**
  - **support for peer interactions**
  - **positive limit setting**
  - **responsive routines**
  - **promoting a sense of belonging**

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Responsive Cognitive Interactions

- **Cognitive development reflects how children engage in their environment:**
  - **To think**
  - **To act upon things**
  - **To learn about the world**

- **Caregivers support cognitive development by:**
  - **Providing experiences where children can explore, play, and pretend**
  - **Scaffolding to help children solve problems**
  - **Presenting new ideas and choices**

Responsive Language and Literacy Interactions

- **Support and extend children's language development—what they understand and communicate**

  - Conversational turn-taking, questioning, extending children's language, using different types of talk, and sharing books

- **Responsive—wait and watch, match child's communication**

- **Exposure to rich and varied language—including book sharing**

- **Verbal (words) communication**

- **Nonverbal communication**

  - Movement, gestures, vocalizations

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