

Tackling Disproportionality in Early Intervention and Special Education

Latrice and Jeremiah Case Study

Latrice is a 26 year old mother of four children. Her youngest son, Jeremiah, is 19 months old. Latrice has noticed that Jeremiah does not communicate like his older siblings or the other children (his age) in the apartment building. Her son's speech delays and behavior problems are troubling. Latrice has shared her concerns with other family members and they have all shared in one way or another, "He will grow out of it," "All children come in to this world in their own way," "Give him time", "You need to discipline him so he knows not to talk like that or do those things". Latrice has started to embrace these thoughts and is apprehensive about the screening and assessment process. The home visitor has already shared with the parents that the results from the screening and assessments will reveal issues in his development and that he may have some type of disability.

Questions for Reflection

1. What is your first impression about this family scenario?
2. What concerns do you have about how the early interventionist responded to this parent's concerns and perspectives?
3. Focusing on cultural dynamics, what does this scenario tell you about the family and how you may approach screening and assessment?
4. What would be some responsive approaches to this parent/family?
5. How do you think culture may affect this family's choices?
6. Any other thoughts/comments?

Two-year, Ten-Month-Old Boy Case Study

Early Head Start, Head Start, and early intervention programs are mechanisms by which providers may collaborate with tribal communities and families. Effectiveness of programs depends on successful coordination between tribes and programs (in EI, EHS, HS).

A two-year, ten-month old boy is in the Part C early intervention program. His mother speaks Keres at home. His teacher has concerns about the child's ability to communicate effectively. The child has difficulty with language (i.e. inability to utilize consonant sounds, articulation errors, and delays in expressive and receptive communication). He has limited words to express himself. The staff is also concerned about the child's behavior in the home-based setting; citing the following examples:

- difficulty communicating wants and needs;
- becoming frustrated and acting out when he does not get his way; and
- with drawing from activities and peer interactions.

Questions for Reflection

1. Should the staff be concerned?
2. Is there a relationship between the child's communication and behaviors?
3. To what extent could other factors be contributing to or account for the observed behaviors?
4. How should the staff approach the family with their concerns? Underlying causes?
5. What screening procedures could help determine whether further assessment is needed?
6. What are culturally and linguistically recommended practices in assessing this child?
7. What appropriate culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions can be developed to support this child in the home environment?
8. Since the child is almost three, what coordination activities need to take place if there is no Head Start program in the community?

Closing Activity-Handout

Questions for participants:

1. What did I feel?
2. What will I do?
3. What question(s) did this topic raise for me?
4. What strategies, ideas, thoughts can I take back with me to use in my work?