

Optimizing Early Childhood Mental Health: The Need for an Integrated Approach

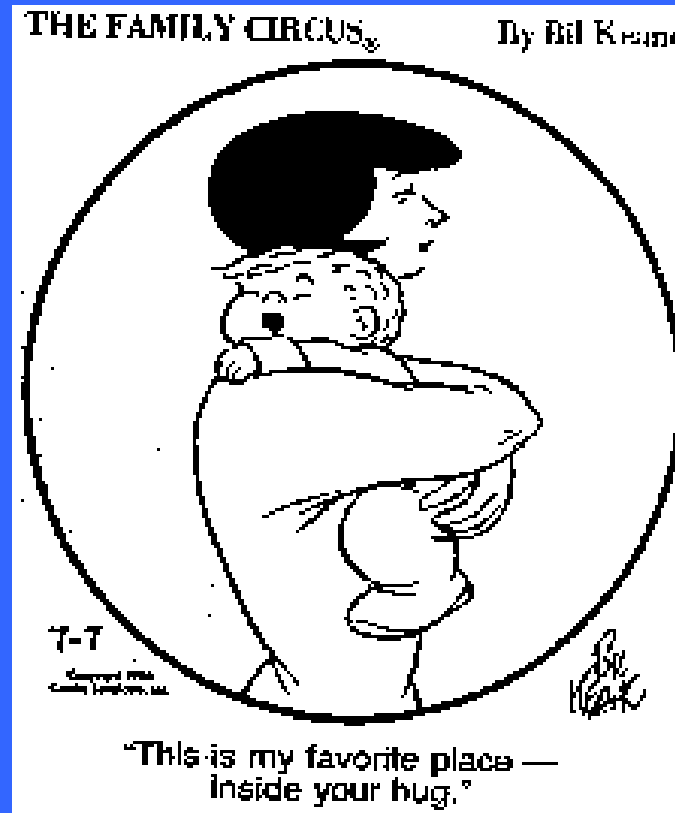
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What we hope for in early emotional development

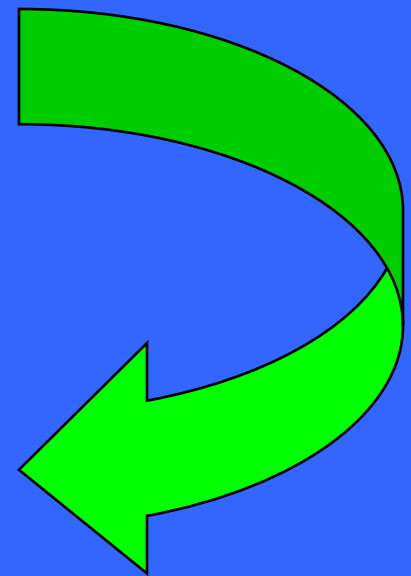
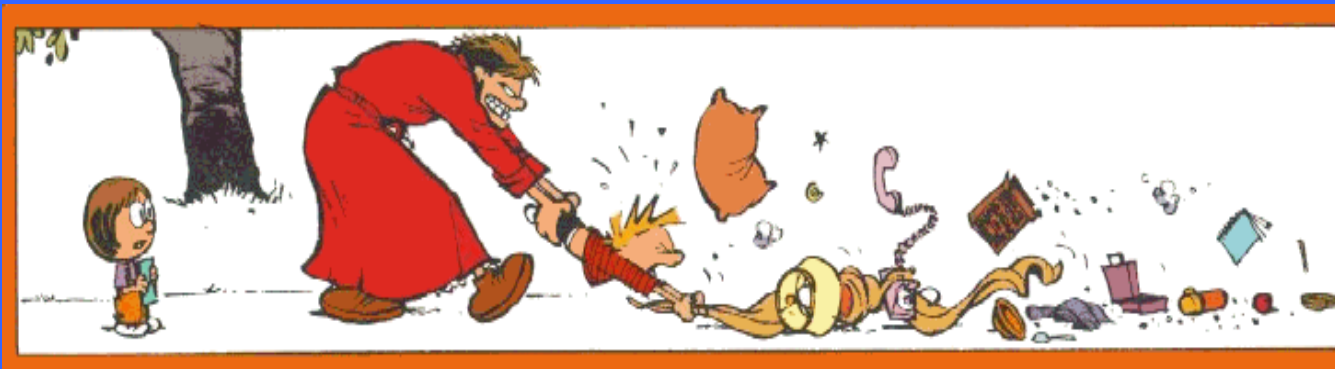


"This is my favorite place - inside your hug."

What Sometimes Happens in Early Emotional Development



How can an integrated approach help?



Where are we now... where do we need to grow?



What is Happening in Pediatrics

- The Current state of Social-Emotional Screening :
 - AAP Policy Recommendations
- Challenges and barriers to identifying social-emotional problems in primary care



American Academy of Pediatrics Initiatives

- Algorithm for developmental surveillance & screening (July 2006) in primary care
 - Administration of formal screening tools at 9, 18, 30 months
 - Personal-social domain included
 - Recommendations for screening behavioral & emotional disorders currently under consideration

American Academy of Pediatrics Initiatives

- AAP Task Force on Mental Health
 - Developing a mental health tool kit including screen mental health concerns across childhood, including early childhood

⇒ **Easier said than done**



The Challenge of Assessing Social-Emotional Development

- Developmental Shift vs. Developmental Deviance
 - Infancy is a time of rapid developmental shifts
 - Rapidly shifting nature of young children's development poses a challenge for assessment
 - “Developmentally appropriate behaviors” : tantrums, noncompliance, aggression in toddlers (Keenan, 2000)
 - Resistance to identify psychopathology in infancy (Emde, 2001)
 - Many professionals believe that all early social-emotional problems are developmentally transient (Briggs-Gowan, 2006)

So, What IS Healthy Social-Emotional Development?



And why does it matter?

Healthy Social Emotional Development Allows a Child to....

- Display, regulate and control his emotions
- Form healthy attachments with others
- Demonstrate empathy for others
- Play and learn with others

⇒ **Socially relate and connect with others**



“This is my favorite place — inside your hug.”

What Does WORRISOME Social-Emotional Development Look Like?



- Inability to socially relate to others
- Lack emotional regulation
- Behaviors interfere with the ability to maintain family routines, or ability to go out in public
- Behaviors interfere with interpersonal relationships
- Can serve as a challenge to the caregiving system, and disrupt the early parent-child relationship

(Carter, 2004)

Why Social-Emotional Development Matters

- Understanding early social – emotional development can help us with the early identification of
 - Developmental Pathology
 - Child psychopathology
- Early identification of social-emotional disturbances is essential to provide services that can optimize a child's developmental and behavioral potential

The Evidence for Early Psychopathology

- Prevalence of social-emotional disturbances in children under the age of five is 7-24% with the median falling at ~10% (Briggs-Gowan, 2001; Mathiesen, 2000)
- There is increasing evidence that young children manifest signs of early psychopathology, and behavior problems which emerge early are likely to persist (Briggs-Gowan, 2006)
- Early social-emotional disturbances can impact family functioning, and the quality of the early parent-child relationship (Briggs-Gowan, 2001, Sameroff, 2000)
 - Increased parental stress
 - Disruption of family life
 - Can result in a cycle of more coercive parent-child relationships

The Challenge of Assessing Social-Emotional Development

- Challenge of integrating data from multiple sources
 - Parents may under-report symptoms because of stigma associated with child mental health (Jellinek, 2003, Horwitz, 1998)
 - Parent report may demonstrate reporting bias
 - Parental affective symptoms can introduce a reporting bias (Briggs-Gowan, 1996)
 - Challenge of obtaining data from multiple informants
 - Single parent families
 - Other caregivers (e.g. day care providers)
 - Behavior can vary in different settings: direct observation is helpful

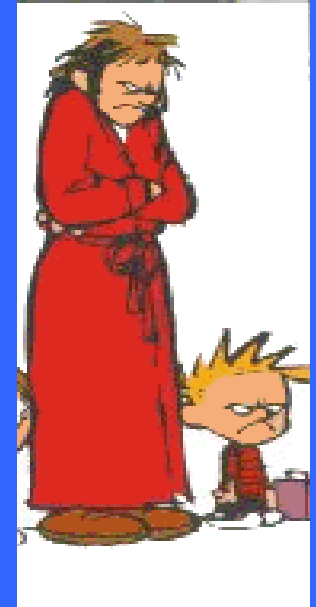
The Challenge of Assessing Social-Emotional Development

- The challenge of assessing impairment
 - Difficult to quantify impairment in young children
 - Young children's development is embedded within the caregiving context (Carter, 2004)
- Infant development is intimately related to the quality of the early parent-child relationship (Zeanah, 2001)

Child Behavior and the Caregiving Context

- Previous research has suggested that in the first three years of life, most clinical disturbances manifested as child behavioral problems, are more usefully conceptualized as **relationship disturbances.**

(Zeanah, 2000)



Optimizing Early Emotional Health Requires an Interdisciplinary Focus

- Understanding how infants and parents influence each other over time is a necessary prologue to the understanding of developmental problems and recommendations for appropriate treatment. (Sameroff, 2004)

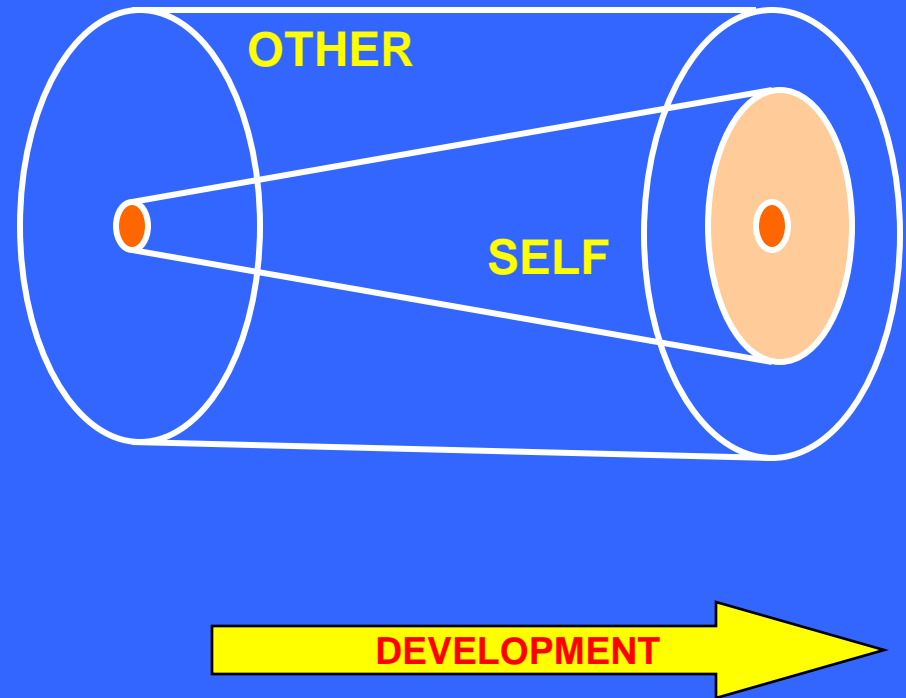


- This approach requires “...a central focus on [and understanding of] the infant as embedded within a variety of dynamically interacting contexts.” (Zeanah, 2000)



“Dynamically Interacting Contexts”

- The infant exists *in relationship with others* who provide the nutrition for both physical and psychological growth.
- The balance between *other-regulation* and *self-regulation* shifts as the child is able to take on more and more responsibility for his or own well-being



Optimizing Early Emotional Development: A Focus on Infant Mental Health

- Infant mental health is about understanding infants within the context of family relationships and how they are supported by community relationships.
- Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development. (Zero to Three)

The Current Challenge: An uphill battle at times...

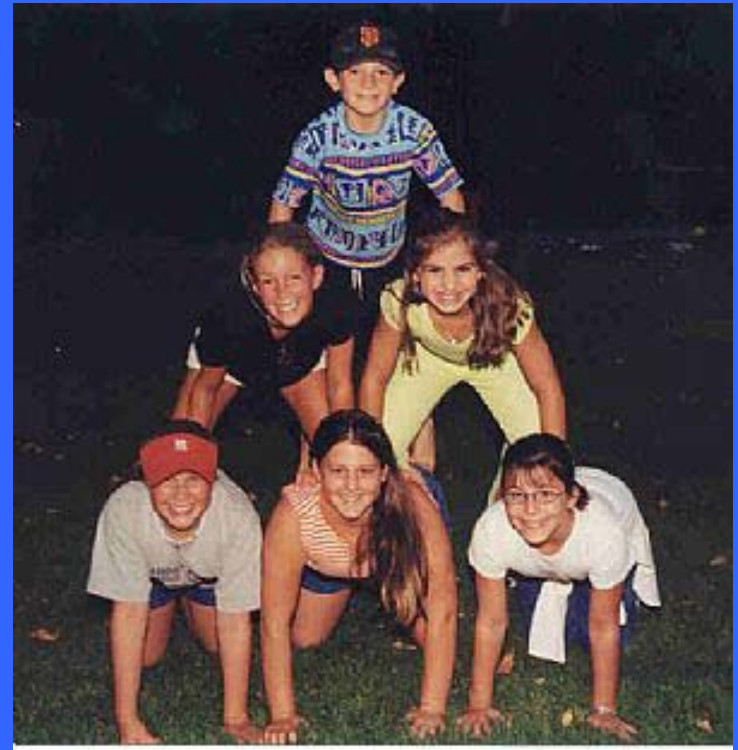
- Pediatric providers have limited time to do developmental /behavioral screening
- Lack of adequate reimbursement
- Pediatric providers are often not trained to do screening
- Pediatric providers are unaware of community resources once a problem is identified



(Sices, 2003; Squires, 2003, Kaye, 2006)

We don't need to work alone.....

- Pediatric providers do not need to address these issues in isolation....
- Can partner with the early childhood community to support the needs of the family



“It takes a Village to Raise a Child”

- A Multidisciplinary approach to supporting early social-emotional development: the need for community partnerships
 - Screening is just the beginning...
 - Early Childhood Providers are an important liaison to optimize social-emotional development
 - Changing the culture of the team:
 - Incorporating an **emotionally-focused** perspective in the well-child visit

The Road Ahead....



How can we change the face of pediatric care?

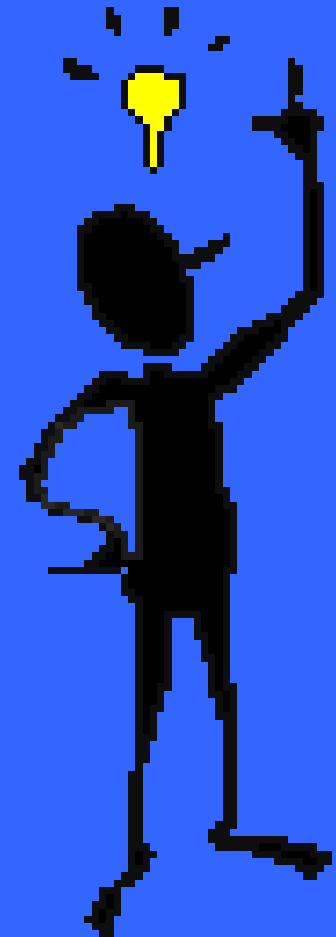
Putting on Our Social-Emotional Glasses

- **One Model of Integrated Behavioral Health**
- Partnering with Community Providers to Optimize Early Emotional Health
 - Early Childhood Intervention



Remember the Mission of ECI:

- **Mission Statement**
 - ECI supports families to help their children reach their potential through developmental services
 - Early intervention responds to the critical needs of children and families by:
 - providing support to families
 - Informing them of available resources
 - promoting development and learning
 - fostering hope in families that no matter what the situation, things can get better
- ⇒ Supporting a child's early social-emotional development



Supporting Early Relationships

Helping Parents **S.O.A.R.** : The Role of ECI

- **S:** Support parents in their parenting role:
building a therapeutic alliance
- **O:** Observe child, parent and dyadic interactions
- **A:** Assimilate the information : putting it all together
- **R:** Reflect, Reframe, Reinforce, Rediscover, (or Refer when necessary)

ECI: Valuable Behavioral Health Partners

- Child behavior and development is neither a function of the infant alone, or of experience alone.
- Within the transactional model, the development of the child is a product of the dynamic interactions of the child in social context of the family
- ECI providers have an opportunity to observe child and parent behavior, identify strengths and vulnerabilities, and *in partnership* with the pediatric provider, suggest strategies to optimize early emotional health



Child Behavior



Parent Behavior



Dyadic Interactions



Child Behavior Outcomes

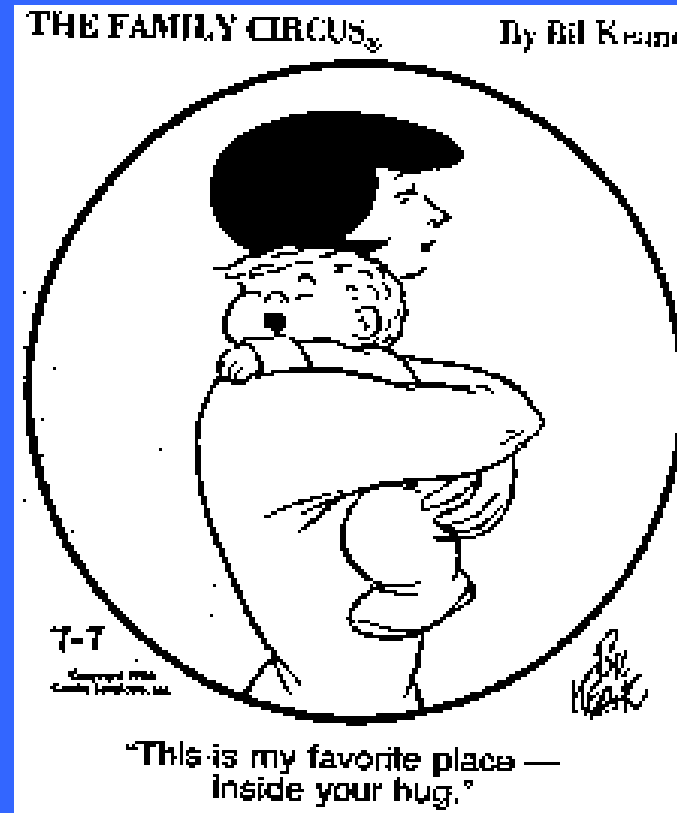
Summary

- Identifying social-emotional concerns in primary care is often difficult.
- Early intervention providers are a valuable source of information and a helpful resource for pediatricians

⇒ Early intervention providers are important partners with pediatric providers to optimize early social-emotional health



What we hope for in early emotional development



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