



What Does Research Say About: Primary Service Providers

The History

Researchers in the field of early childhood have been exploring the impact of providers moving in and out of families' lives for more than 15 years. The results have been consistent: an increase in the number of providers decreases overall family functioning and quality of life. For this reason, many early intervention programs have begun to use a primary service provider (PSP) approach to teaming to reduce the number of professionals directly involved in a family's life.

New Research

García-Grau, McWilliam, Martínez-Rico, and Morales-Murillo published a study in 2018, on factors impacting family quality of life. In it they say "A small number of professionals, as discussed in this article, can have a positive impact on child functioning, because it allows the primary service provider to coordinate interventions the natural caregivers carry out and to build a strong relationship with the family" (p. 61).

Garcia-Grau, P., McWilliam, R. A., Martinez-Rico, G., & Morales-Murillo, C. P. (2019). Child, Family, and Early Intervention Characteristics Related to Family Quality of Life in Spain. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 41(1), 44-61.

A Few More Articles

Shelden, M. L., & Rush, D. D. (2013). *The early intervention teaming handbook: The primary service provider approach*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing, Inc.

Dunst, C., Hamby, D., & Brookfield, J. (2007). Modeling the effects of early childhood intervention variables on parent and family well-being. *Journal of Applied Quantitative Methods*. 2(3), 268-288.

Sloper, P., Greco, V., Beecham, J., & Webb, R. (2006). Key worker services for disabled children: What characteristics of services lead to better outcomes for children and families? *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 18(5), 259-282.

What does that mean for me?

Children will make progress.

Some worry that PSP teams will not provide enough services and children, especially children with complex needs, will not make progress. Research shows no correlation between number of services provided and developmental progress. (Shelden & Rush, 2013)

Families will be healthier.

These studies also show that families are healthier and happier when they have fewer people coming into and out of their lives. PSP teams are a way to simplify early intervention for families while still ensuring that children learn and grow. (Dunst, Hamby, & Brookfield, 2007)

For more information on how PSP teams work, research on teaming in early intervention, and supports for growing a PSP team, contact us at www.FIPP.org