Meeting the Challenges, Part III: Assessing Your Program's Readiness to Work with Parents with Intellectual Disabilities

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Which parents are we talking about?

☑ Cannot travel alone

☑ Reading & writing problems

☑ Erratic appointment keeping

☑ "Poor historian"

☑ $ problems

☑ Overwhelmed

☑ Difficulty with child management

☑ Covering-up

☑ "Benefactor"

☑ History

Which parents are most likely to succeed?

- **NOT IQ**
- **Spouse/significant other**
- **Extended family**
- **$$**
- **Number of children**
- **Mental health / substance abuse**
- **Comprehensive services**
- **Willingness to take advantage of those services**
- **Attitude of service providers**

Keys to Success:
Programs That Can Make a Difference!

Keys to Success*

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Program characteristics

	Not yet in place	Partially in place	Fully in place
1. Staff has a philosophy that promotes respect of the competence and integrity of the family.	1	2	3
2. Staff has training on effective approaches and strategies to work with parents.	1	2	3
3. Intake process eliminates waiting list and minimizes paperwork.	1	2	3
4. Professional roles and responsibilities are clear yet flexible.	1	2	3
5. Sufficient staff time for planning and processing is available and protected.	1	2	3

*Families/parents = parents with intellectual disabilities

PRINCIPLES OF EMPOWERMENT

-- Dunst, Trivette & Deal, 1988

1. Assume that parents are competent . . . or are capable of becoming competent.

2. Create opportunities for parents to become competent.

3. Meet needs in ways that promote parents' sense of control.

These principles work for parents with intellectual disabilities/challenges, too!

Keys to Success*

	Not yet in place	Partially in place	Fully in place

Your relationship with families

	Not yet in place	Partially in place	Fully in place
6. Relationship-building is a primary goal of staff-parent interaction.	1	2	3
7. Parents have ongoing and consistent opportunities for input and decision-making.	1	2	3
8. Warmth and respect are consistently conveyed to parents.	1	2	3
9. Family strengths and priorities are identified through parent-provider interactions.	1	2	3

Families/parents = parents with intellectual disabilities

Putting It All Together

Supports

Needs

Strengths

Family

Help-giver
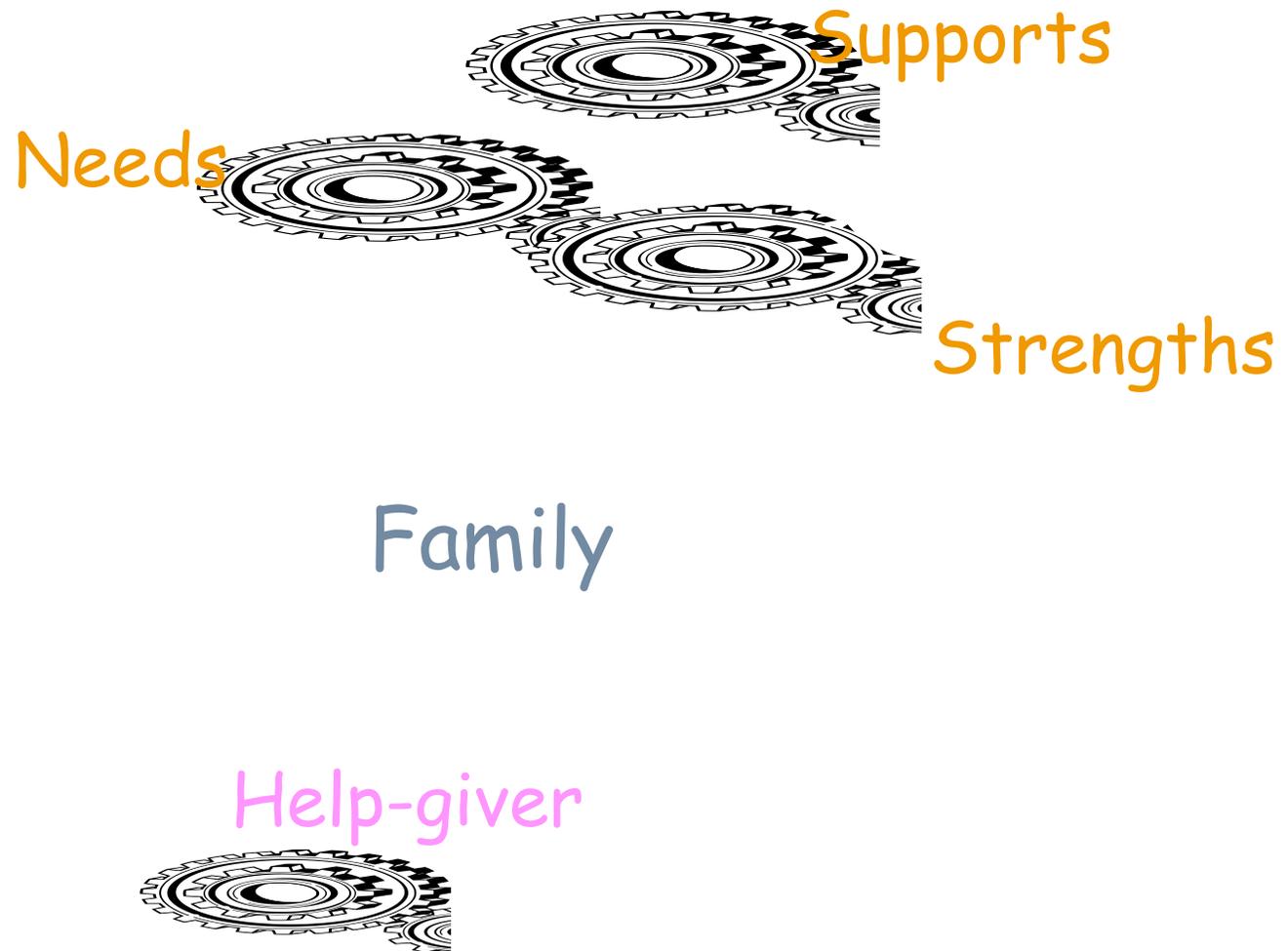
What is a "need"?

For a need to be a "need," there must be . . .

- Awareness of discrepancy

- Perceived impact on well-being

- Awareness of potential resource

- Perception that they can

  access the resource

-- Dunst, Trivette & Deal, 1988

Keys to Success*

	Not yet in place	Partially in place	Fully in place

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Intervention and teaching new skills

	Not yet in place	Partially in place	Fully in place
10. Providers work to shift the balance between risks and opportunities.	1	2	3
11. Effective help-giving strategies are utilized.	1	2	3
12. Activities and interactions are implemented in ways that promote the development of self-esteem, social skills, internal control, role comprehension and problem-solving.	1	2	3
13. Providers choose teaching strategies and materials that match the learning needs of individual parents.	1	2	3
14. The family's informal support system is identified, built upon & expanded.	1	2	3

*Families/parents = parents with intellectual disabilities*

Mother's age
Parent education
Income
SES

RISKS | Job stability | OPPORTUNITIES

Pregnancy
Number of children
Residential stability
Marital status
Marital stability
Child temperament
Infant separation
Parental mental health
Parental health
Parental self-esteem >
Parental locus of control >
Parental social skills >
Coping strategies >
Parenting style >
P-C interactions >
Nutrition
Accidents/toxic substances/illnesses
Alternate caregivers
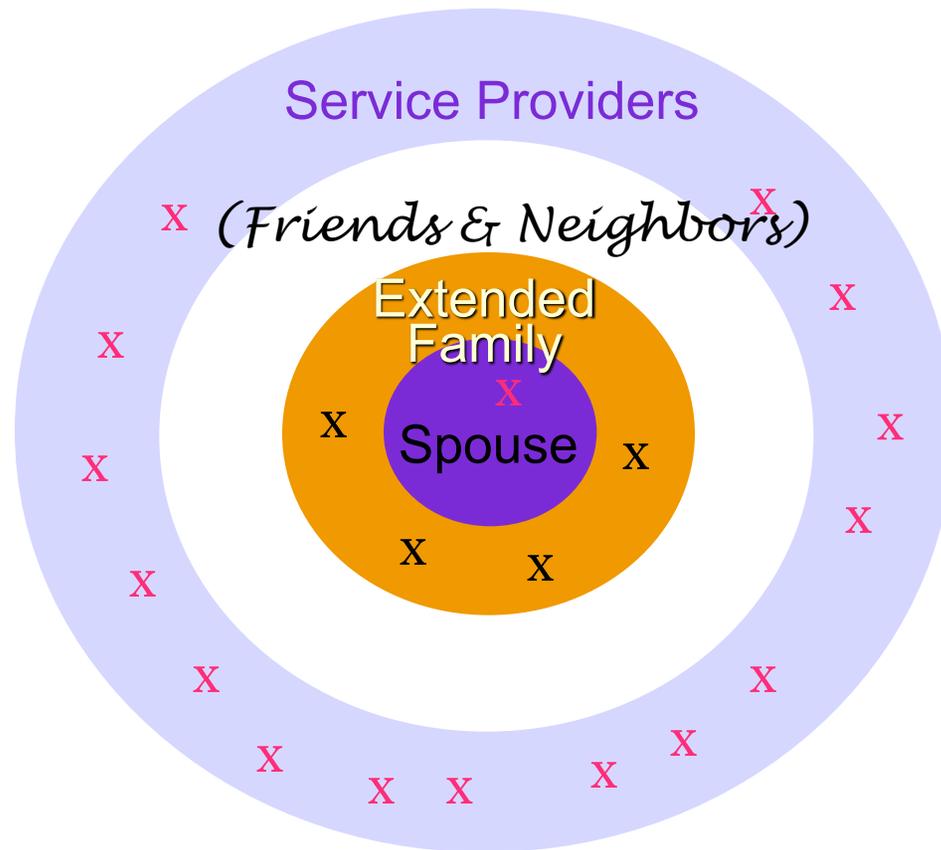Extended family
Extrafamily support   -- Dunst, 1993
Life events

Putting Together the Puzzle
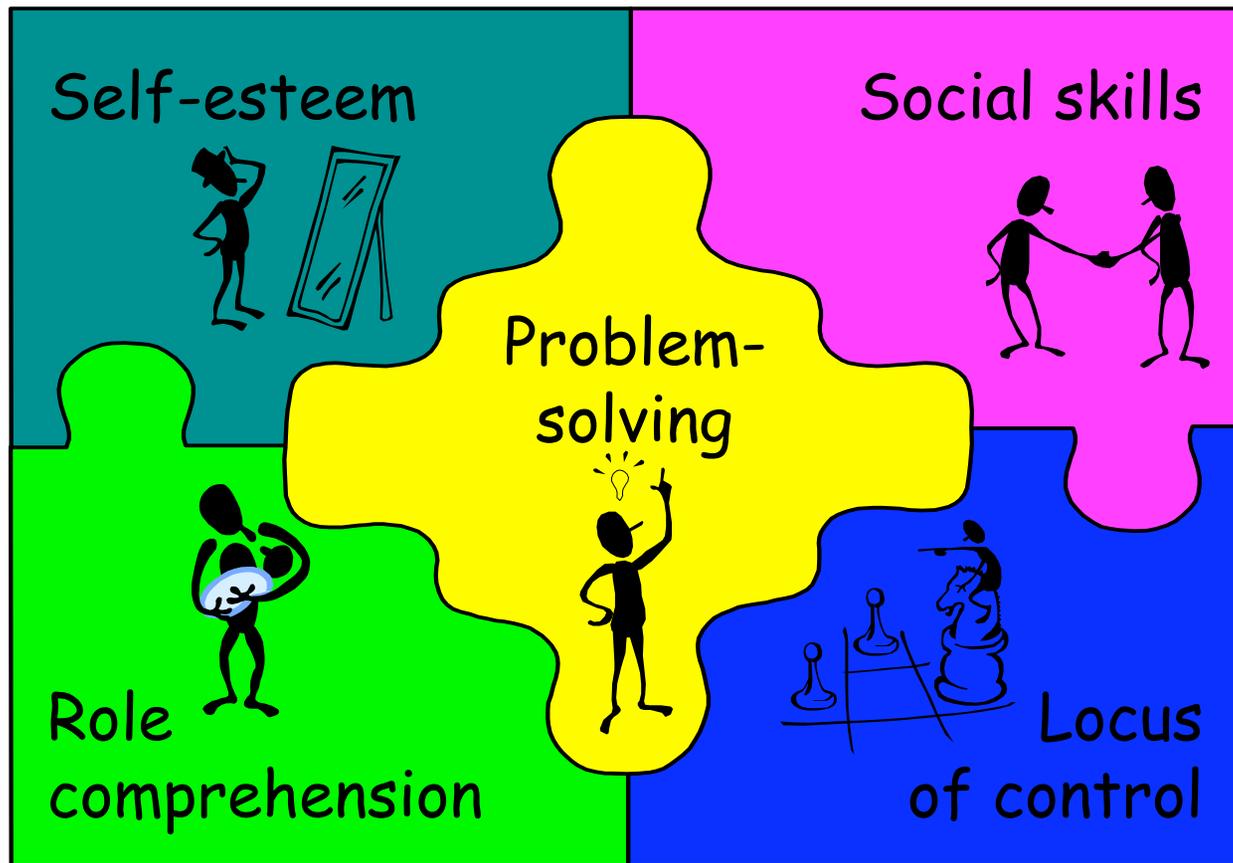
Where do families turn for support?

Keys to Success*

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Coordination

	Not yet in place	Partially in place	Fully in place
15. Communication and collaboration occur among all agencies involved with the family.	1	2	3
16. Transition among supports and services is planned in ways that expand a family's network of supportive partnerships with providers.	1	2	3
17. Strategies for evaluating progress focus on relevant child and family outcomes.	1	2	3

Families/parents = parents with intellectual disabilities

Evaluating Progress

How can we demonstrate that . . .	Strategies/Tools
1. A trusting relationship has been established?	• Attendance • •
2. Parents have made gains in the 5 key areas?	• *Profile for Looking at Change* •
3. We have assisted families to expand their support networks?	• Periodic "Eco-Mapping" • •
4. We have met our program outcomes? *(Any adaptations needed for this group of families??)*	• Assessments from your curricula • IFSP outcomes •
5. ?????	• •