

**Right from Birth: A Model of
Professional Development that Builds
on the Science of Early Child Brain and
Behavior Development**

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Purpose of Session

- Provide information about an evidence-based professional development model – “Right from Birth” - to improve the quality of child care, including infant-toddler care
- Highlight research findings to date from a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) testing different formats for delivery of professional development
- Share stories from the field about challenges and successes

Right from Birth Project

- ❖ Mississippi Public Broadcasting, Mississippi State University, and the Rameys (Georgetown U) developed integrated materials for training child care providers
- ❖ Grounded in scientific findings about “what matters” in young children’s lives, particularly “The Seven Essentials” associated with positive cognitive and brain development
- ❖ Previously used to train more than 5000 caregivers in workshop series that showed the 12-episodes of the TV series “RFB” and provided hands-on activities to demonstrate major points
- ❖ Now subjected to rigorous trial of efficacy that compare different levels of intensity of training (professional development)

Two levels of intensity for “Right from Birth” training/PD model

- A series of professionally-guided interactive workshops with built-in assessments of learning (3 sessions @ 3 hours per session)
- A highly intensive form of side-by-side, daily coaching, known as “The Rameys’ Immersion Training for Excellence” (RITE), for 1-month (20 days)

Strengths of the “Right from Birth” Model include

- Foundation of solid research evidence from the past 30+ years
- Clear focus on a specific and small set of interactive activities that must be offered every day to all children (“The 7 Essentials”)
- T.V. program helps to bring alive the scientific principles for caregivers (also can be re-viewed as needed)

Why test a highly intensive, coaching form of training?

- Few training programs produce large or lasting caregiver change. Typically, training is brief, slow, and has minimal demands on caregivers.
- The theory guiding the RITE model is: new ways of caring for children require literally hundreds of practice sessions before they become “natural”
The RITE model is designed to re-train the brain.
- Stamina is very important in providing high quality care for young children. Caregivers need to see an expert model this in a side-by-side fashion in many situations.

The Seven Essentials for All Caregivers and Parents

- 1) To encourage active exploration
- 2) To mentor children in “the basics” (appropriate for age and culture)
- 3) To celebrate each child’s new skills (development)
- 4) To help children rehearse and extend new skills
- 5) To protect from harsh and inappropriate treatment
- 6) To provide language-rich interactions and promote language and literacy development
- 7) To guide and limit children’s behavior (positive socialization starting at about 12 – 18 mos.)

■ Ramey & Ramey, Right from Birth, 1999

Why The Seven Essentials are So Important

- Each of the Seven Essentials is related to benefits in young children's school readiness
- Each of the Seven Essentials is linked to aspects of brain development and functioning
- The Seven Essentials apply to all cultures, as well as to children with special needs
- With training and practice, caregivers can become highly skilled in The Seven Essentials (and they report greater satisfaction in their work with children)



Ramey & Ramey, Right from Birth, 1999

How to Apply “The Seven Daily Essentials” into Childcare Settings

- Incorporate The Seven Essentials into natural caregiving routines, arrival/leaving, everyday learning opportunities
- Strive to offer The Seven Essentials multiple times, with variation, throughout the day for each child
- Adapt the activities to be increasingly challenging, interesting, and fun for both child and adult
- Use to develop shared goals with families and promote children’s early learning in ways that connect home and childcare

How the RITE Coaching occurs

- Coach and caregiver get acquainted and plan
- Evaluation of the learning environment sets the stage for self-review (using the Family Day Care Rating Scale and the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale, for example)
- An observational checklist based on The Seven Essentials is completed by the coach at start (and continues to be used with every coaching session)
- Joint review of information collected and a consideration of needs of children in setting
- Daily coaching (immersion training) begins – all day long for 20 days (over 4 or 5 consecutive weeks)

What each RITE Day is like...

- The RITE Coach models many instances of The Seven Essentials (and explains as needed)
- Coach continuously reinforces positive caregiving by the provider and makes suggestions throughout the day
- Coach helps plan for and support environmental enrichment, re-arrangement, increased health and safety practices
- Coach avoids direct criticism or confrontation; instead finds ways to address issues or potential problem behaviors that are adapted to style/needs of caregiver

Challenges

- Participation of family homes and licensed child care centers in the summer (which operates differently than school year)
- Staff turnover (usually after RITE completed)
- Thinking about how to sustain initial impressive gains observed after RITE coaching
- The issues that accompany unregulated child care which make it difficult to have this become a universal model to drive up quality of child care

Promising Results

- The research on the effectiveness of the model continues. Results analyzed so far show:
 - Family child care providers willingly participate in technical assistance provided in the home using the intensive model and make major changes in their behavior toward children
 - The RITE model works in different settings – home care, child care, Head Start, and school pre-K classrooms
 - There is variation in caregivers' readiness to change their ways. We now are exploring what the factors are that lead to greater success in improving the quality of child care and education – and in sustaining these gains.

Implementation on a Larger Scale

- The on-site technical assistance model has been used in Mississippi for 6 years
- Funding of the model has been through a combination of state, federal, private and foundation contributions and grants
- The model is still being revised based on the results obtained at various sites with more emphasis on measuring child outcomes than in the initial stages and ensuring higher intensity of the on-site coaching

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