

Seeds of Partnership Website Video Descriptive Text Transcription

High Quality Early Learning Environment, HQELE

Key Element: MiraCosta Child Development Center Overview

Partnering with Service Providers

http://www.seedsofpartnership.org/hqele/video/service_providers.html

(Description: Center Director seated in front of a large window)

Those individuals of support staff and related service personnel teach us how to be even more intentional. I think by default we're probably teaching them not to be less intentional but perhaps more open to the child's interpretations or investigations. Or let's let that run a bit before I clamp down on it or what have you. So I think there's some mutual gain there.

(Description: Child with visual impairment smiling with an adult)

We could probably do better. It's not like we walk in and say what's your philosophy? Let's see if I can work here but, in a sense, you do. You see it in the manner in which the environment is presented or the way people communicate with each other,

((Description: Child and adult together holding on to bells)

how children are referred to, the ways you communicate with parents. It most typically might be on floor consult with a particular child, what their positioning or an adaptation. It might be a staff in-service

(Description: Center Director seated in front of a large window)

but it could also be an observation or a staff consult in another classroom to help us gain perspective. Not for referral or diagnostic purposes but just for curriculum adaptations and modifications of the environment.

(Description: Child and adult reading book together on couch)

I've had the chance, I suppose, to put together a team of professionals, who have continued to engage in conversations about what we believe

(Description: Center Director seated in front of a large window)

and therefore, what it should look like. The most effective teachers again, those good observers that they are

(Description: Adult and child look at braille puzzle together)

are picking up on their colleagues' cues, and their co-teachers cues as well as anything. But it's not a natural process, it's something that has to be practiced and learned. And I think particularly when people are trained in a very differential way, maybe disciplinarily, more directive in a teaching approach versus more hands-off.

(Description: Center Director seated in front of a large window)

There's no classroom that should demand either or. They would demand both and so what we've tried to do is see the specialists or the service providers or the therapists that come to our program have a value to add to our context. And we think they believe in a similar way that we have valued to add and that means that sometimes it's different but we create planning times together. We actually plan for and have paid prep times that are just for the classroom team and we may have other time that include our consultant staff, every other Friday is an example. I think that it's an ongoing process so I don't know that we have a formula per se but I think it's important to recognize that it isn't supposed to be natural or comfortable. It should have a little challenge to it. And the comfort comes out of, sort of finding the ways in which you fit the pieces together but we recognize right up front the value or the expertise that others bring to that and therefore we try to create a respectful partnership in the process. Parents are coming to us with private therapists and in order to account for their hours, they want to do it here. Holy cow, that's a whole other layer of adults.

(Description: Center Director and Teacher Yi-Cheng standing in classroom together)

And so we're learning how to work with consultants, some of whom are trained, they're trained more like with discrete trials or ABA and this is not a discrete trial/ABA sort of classroom. So how do you find that balance, that blend between home and school? What generalizes? What's unique to here? What can't be done here must be done at home. That's a whole new layer that we're learning and that we didn't anticipate this year. More recently, we've had a lot of private agencies

(Description: Program Specialist Katie sitting on couch in classroom)

wanting to come in and their children receive services here. It's never, that hasn't been quite the push before. We've always had, of course the school districts who we would work very closely with who would want to come and provide services while their children were here at the center. But having private agencies wasn't something that was, there wasn't a real push for that. Recently, we've had, in just the last two years, a lot of outside agencies want to come in and do a lot of therapies right here. As parents are opting out of traditional special education options, they want to have them here in this type of a setting but also still receive all of their services. And we were kind of torn about how we could go about that and how could we make that happen here with the multiple adults and other aspects that would change our environment and the feel of it? And we wanted to stay true to who we were. We wanted to stay true to what we truly

believed about children so it was quite a discussion that we had as a staff. About how, how are we going to do this? We wanted to partner with them because we wanted their children here. Because we knew that, or we felt this was the best place for them. So how can we make this happen? And it's happening in our center, probably, in almost every classroom now.

(Description: Children and adults walking together holding hands)

And one thing that we have found was that we went in and we were able to start to build a relationship with those agencies and say this is how we've really believed that children learn and we really want you to be a part of this and we want to make sure that we're meeting these child's needs

(Description: Program Specialist Katie sitting on couch in classroom)

and that you're able to get your goals met. But this is the way in which our philosophy is and how we go about it. Talk to them about what it is that they wanted and what it is that they were going to provide. And so, by getting their, what they felt that they needed to do and us conveying what our philosophy, and how we really felt, talking to them about that individual child and how we can meet their needs. They now come into our classrooms on a pretty consistent basis in our, and just a part of our classroom, no other child really knows any different. That they're just a part of the room, it's just another teacher in the classroom and they've been able to still meet that child's needs, still work on those goals that they feel that are important. They're able to go into the booth and sit and observe and then go in and work with the child on the floor. And with the other teachers and teachers then learn from them some of the techniques that they're using

(Description: Children and adults sitting around table drawing)

so when they're not here, they're able to then use those. And we've really, really worked hard at partnering with them, and building that relationship of, ok, this is how, what we need to maintain.

(Description: Program Specialist Katie sitting on couch in classroom)

Because this is what we firmly believe that we want children in natural setting. And we don't want this direct hand-over-hand here. We want them to be able to have a little bit more freedom but we also want them to receive the services that their parents are asking for and that you feel and that you're passionate about. And so we've kind of figured out how to have that middle ground with them where we kind of meet them where they are and they meet us where we are and it's been very, very successful and we work really hard at relationship. Relationships is something that's key to us and our program with children, with families, and also with all those agencies that do come into the school districts. So sometimes there's times when I say, "We're never going to compromise who we are, but everybody's going to give a little." So that we can have a

relationship and make this work in the long run and that we can absolutely meet that child's needs. So we've learned how to kind of do that delicate balance of more of the direct nature of some of the services that they want to provide with our more subtle way of going about things.