

Research Highlights

Topic: Positive Behavior Support

Park, J., & Turnbull, A.P. (2002). Quality indicators of professionals who work with children with problem behavior. *Journal of Positive Behavior Intervention*, 4(2), 118-122.

BOTTOM LINE

Sixteen focus groups were conducted with 69 families of children with disabilities. The qualitative study yielded the data that are presented here. Findings indicate that families value three particular traits in professionals who work with their children who have problem behavior. First is respect for their children. Second is the extent to which the professionals have the skills and experience to meet the special needs of these children. Third is the level of commitment to the child and his or her family the professional adopts.

TIPS

- Focus on a child's strengths and preferences instead of focusing only on what the child is unable to do.
- Provide workshops to teach best practices to educational professionals enable them to improve their service to families.
- Because medical professionals are usually the first professionals families come in contact with after their children are diagnosed, to provide medical professionals with knowledge about resources and services available to children with disabilities and their families, so that they can pass along this information to the families.

KEY FINDINGS

- Parents in this study indicated that it is particularly valuable for professionals who work with their children who display challenging behavior to
 - respect the children, treat them with dignity, and have a positive attitude towards them.

KEY FINDINGS

cont.

- - have the skills and experience to meet the children’s special needs effectively, including being trained in positive behavior support (PBS), having the skills to facilitate inclusion, and being willing to learn new things.
 - be committed to the child and his or her whole family, as well as to be willing to go beyond what is required.
 - Partnerships between professionals and families are most productive when the professionals treat the children with dignity and respect, display positive attitudes towards them, and consider the child’s strengths, preferences, and humanity.
 - A lack of training and adequate qualifications on the part of professionals and paraprofessionals appears to contribute to the degree of distress experienced by the families of children with problem behavior, as unqualified professionals tend to provide ineffective interventions.
 - Professionals who have positive attitudes towards children
 - recognize and value the uniqueness of each child.
 - believe in the child’s potential for learning.
 - envision the child’s capacity for future accomplishments.
-

METHOD

- The 69 respondents were part of 16 focus groups of a larger, qualitative study on family quality of life and partnerships between families and professionals from Kansas City, Kansas; Granville County, North Carolina; and New Orleans, Louisiana.
 - Transcripts were recoded to examine which characteristics parents thought were most important for professionals who work with their children with challenging behavior.
-

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Ruef, M.B., & Turnbull, A.P. (2002). The perspectives of individuals with cognitive disabilities and/or autism on their lives and their problem behavior. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 27(2), 125-140.
- Ruef, M., & Turnbull, A.P. (2001). Stakeholder opinions on accessible informational products helpful in building positive practical solutions to behavioral challenges of people with mental retardation and/or autism. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 36(4), 441-456.

RELATED
PUBLICATIONS
cont.

Turnbull, H. R., Turnbull, A.P., & Wilcox, B. L. (2002). Family interests and positive behavior support: Opportunities under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. In J. Lucyshyn, G. Dunlap, & R. Albin, (Eds.), *Families and positive behavior support: Addressing problem behavior in family contexts* (pp. 349-370). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Turnbull, A.P., & Turnbull, H.R. (2002). Comprehensive lifestyle support for adults with challenging behavior: From rhetoric to reality. In J. Lucyshyn, G., Dunlap, & R. Albin (Eds.), *Families and positive behavior support: Addressing problem behavior in family contexts* (pp. 57-72). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Lawson, H. & Sailor, W. (2000). "School-linked services" and the reinvention of the American community. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 33(2).

Sailor, W., Scott, T. M., Nelson, C. M., Freeman, R., Smith, C., Britten, J., & McCart, A. (2000). Using information technology to prepare personnel to implement functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral support. *Exceptionalities*, 8(3), 217-230.

Sugai, G., Horner, R.H., Dunlap, G., Hieneman, M., Lewis, T., Nelson, C., Scott, T., Liaupsin, C., Sailor, W., Turnbull, A.P., Turnbull, H.R., Wickham, D., Ruef, M., & Wilcox, B.L. (2000). Applying positive behavioral support and functional assessment in schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 2, 131-143.

This research was conducted in collaboration with the Beach Center on Disability. It was funded by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Families of Children with Disabilities of the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation and Research (H133B980050) and private endowments. For more information, contact the Beach Center on Disability at 1200 Sunnyside Avenue, 3111 Haworth Hall, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045-7534. Phone: 785-864-7600. Email: Beachcenter@ku.edu. Website: www.beachcenter.org.

Permission granted to reproduce and distribute this research brief.
Please credit the Beach Center on Disability.