



KIT

"Keeping In Touch"

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Resource Article

Lee Ann Jung, PhD, our KIT Consultation Corner expert for the next few months, authored this month's featured article.



The article titled "More is Better: Maximizing Natural Learning Opportunities" was published in the *Young Exceptional Children Journal* in the spring of 2003. While written over five years ago, this article remains a pivotal piece for providers and programs striving to advance the practical and quality application of early intervention in natural environments.

In this article, Jung addresses the reality that more intervention is better. However, more intervention does not equate to more visits by early intervention providers. "More is better," means more natural, meaningful and contextually relevant learning opportunities, NOT more discipline specific services aimed at remedying domain-based deficits. Learning is what happens between intervention visits through the enjoyable and recurring routines and activities that make up the child and family's day-to-day life.

With a focus on maximizing natural learning opportunities, Jung discusses the relevance of shifting service provision questions from "How significant is the child's delay or disability?" and "Does this family have the resources follow-through?" to "How often will the child's intervention likely need to be changed?" and "How often does the family need support to be comfortably using intervention strategies?" Clearly, the latter two questions reinforce the goal of early intervention to support families' ability to enhance their child's development rather than doing it all for them or basing service decisions on the significance of the child's delay versus the family's priorities.

By capitalizing on children's natural learning opportunities and working with families to embed strategies into the routines and activities that are meaningful to them more intervention is truly possible.

Jung, L. A. (2003). More is better: Maximizing natural learning opportunities. *Young Exceptional Children*, 6(3), 19-26.

On the WWW

The web resource this month is the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC).

www.militarychild.org

This nonprofit worldwide organization identifies, raises awareness, and implements programs to address the challenges highly mobile military families face. According to the coalition, military children generally move from six to nine times during their kindergarten through senior year in high school. Add another move or two during the preschool years and the child may move over ten times before he/she graduates from high school.

It is understood that transition is a natural part of military life, but families do not always have all the information needed to facilitate smooth transitions. This is one mission of the MCEC – to develop systems, processes, and information to support transitioning military children and parents.

The MCEC website includes an array of transition related resources and information links to help transitioning families.

What Do the Data Say?

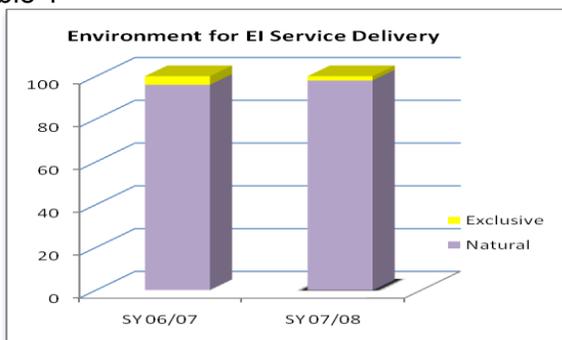


What percentage of services did Army Early Intervention programs provide in the home or other community-based natural environments during the last DOD reporting year?

To answer this question, data from the U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) EDIS Annual Report of Compliance, September 2008 were reviewed. During the most recent Department of Defense (DOD) reporting year (01 July 2007 through 30 June 2008 referenced as a school year [SY]) 98% of services across Army EDIS early intervention programs were provided in natural environments. This represents an increase of 2 % from the previous year (SY 06-07).

The increase from the past DOD reporting school year is illustrated in Table 1. The table shows the distribution of natural and exclusive settings where early intervention services were provided. Within the Special Needs Management Information System (SNPMIS) providers enter the location of service based upon a drop down menu. For reporting purposes, the menu options were reduced to natural and exclusive settings. Natural settings include locations where young children typically spend time (e.g., home, childcare settings, community based activities and outings, and community playgroups that continue to exist with or without children with delays/disabilities). Exclusive settings include locations where children with delays/disabilities receive early intervention services exclusive of peers or natural settings or circumstances (e.g., clinical settings). These data reflect the diligent efforts Army EDIS programs have made to provide early intervention support and services in natural environments.

Table 1



Consultation Corner



From March through July 2009 the consultation corner topic will be:

Best Practices in Early Intervention Home/Community Based Support and Services

Over the next few months, Lee Ann Jung, PhD will be the consultation corner specialist sharing her knowledge and expertise on providing early intervention in home and community settings.

Lee Ann Jung, PhD, is an associate professor in the department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of Kentucky, where she joined the faculty in 2002. Before coming to Kentucky, Lee Ann worked in early intervention for eight years in the roles of service coordinator, special instructor, assessment team coordinator, and program administrator. She is the higher education representative for Kentucky's Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) and has served as chairperson of the ICC. Lee Ann is a leading expert on IFSP development, and her research in this area includes the largest study of IFSP quality to date.

Lee Ann is a frequent national speaker and consultant on topics of service delivery models, IFSP development, family support, and web-based technology in early intervention. Lee Ann serves on the editorial boards for the Journal of Early Intervention and Young Exceptional Children, and her work has appeared in major peer-reviewed special education journals. Her publications in Young Exceptional Children are among the most cited from that journal and are used regularly by numerous programs, state systems, and the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. Lee Ann is a graduate of Auburn University.

Continuing Education for KIT Readers

In line with the topical focus on Early Intervention Home/Community Based Support and Services, KIT readers are invited to receive continuing education contact hours for reading the five monthly KIT publications (March – July 2009) and then completing a multiple choice exam about the content covered in these KITs.



If you are interested, complete the exam online at www.edis.army.mil and upon successful completion, you will receive a certificate of non-discipline specific continuing education contact hours.

Please send your KIT ideas via email to:
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