Using the Family Check-Up to Promote Positive Behavior Support and Home-School Collaboration

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Family Check-Up Team

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Session Overview

• Background for family-centered services to promote positive behavior support

• The Family Check-Up

• Using the Family Check-Up to promote positive behavior support during the transition to kindergarten
Session Overview

- Background for family-centered, school-based prevention

- The Family Check-Up

- Using the Family Check-Up to promote positive behavior support during the transition to kindergarten
By targeting these systems with a focus on creating effective, nurturing environments, we can change the ecology of youth development.

(Biglan, 2015; Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 1992; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998)
I know my daughter and I know what a huge and sensitive and compassionate heart she has, and I knew that the school could not see into the heart of Mathilda, but I could.
The Family Check-Up is an ecological, family-centered intervention that strengthens family systems and promotes home-school connections.

(Dishion & Stormshak, 2007; Stormshak & Dishion, 2009)
Strengths and Needs Assessment

- Brief, pragmatic assessment, from parents’ perspective
- Focus on proximal aspects of social-emotional and behavior strengths and
  - Stays on-task; Is liked by other children, Cooperates with adults, Gets sad, worried, irritable
- Utility for school clinicians, teachers, and administrators
  - Creates opportunities for proactive outreach

Dishion & Stormshak (2007)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Wave</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Teacher Concern Scale</th>
<th>Parent SDQ Total Score</th>
<th>Teacher SSIS Academic Comp.</th>
<th>Parent School Success Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Fall</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Spring</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Fall</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Spring</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Cut-Off Scores on the SANA based on Conditions of the SDQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Borderline</th>
<th>Sensitiv.</th>
<th>Specific.</th>
<th>AUC</th>
<th>Abnormal</th>
<th>Sensitiv.</th>
<th>Specif.</th>
<th>AUC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K Fall</td>
<td>1.617</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.689</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Spring</td>
<td>1.694</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.744</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Spring</td>
<td>1.783</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1.811</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Fall</td>
<td>1.706</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1.788</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considerations during Assessment

- Use proactive family support in kindergarten to strengthen school initiatives by supporting parents in promoting goal-directed positive changes and creating home-to-school links.

- Consider motivational interviewing as a communication approach to engage families as their child enters kindergarten to maximize their motivation during the transition to school.
Family Check-Up

• Initial Interview
  o Establish a collaborative set
  o Developmental History
  o Family History
  o School Concerns, Home Problems
  o Problems of Greatest Concern
  o Spouse/Partner Support
  o Strengths of target child and Family

Dishion & Stormshak (2007)
Considerations for the Initial Interview

• Engage school staff that support families when contacting and meeting with families to support their child.

• Create straightforward communication systems that make it easy and reinforcing for families and school staff to interact about their child.
Ecological Assessment
  - Parent survey
  - Home observations
Family Check-Up

• Parent Feedback
  o Combine interview, self-report data, home observation ratings
  o Rainbow Sheet
  o Menu of Options
## Family Check-Up: Parent Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care for Child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Well-Being</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Coping Strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Adults/Support Network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Substance Use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Color Scale](Area of Strength: Needs Attention)
## Family Check-Up: Parent Feedback

### Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Emotional Health</th>
<th>Peers</th>
<th>School Success</th>
<th>Coping and Self-Management</th>
<th>Other:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

![Color Scale]

- **Area of Strength**
- **Needs Attention**
# Family Check-Up: Parent Feedback

## Parenting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-Child Relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Parenting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Solving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Color bar indicating areas of strength and needs attention]
Considerations for Parent Feedback

• Menu of options
  o Brief interventions
  o Parent groups
  o Family therapy
  o Parent skill training
  o School interventions
  o Ecological management

• Link the targets of intervention directly to outcomes that matter to parents, such as grades and attendance.
Research with the Family Check-Up

- Early Adolescence
- Early Childhood
- School Entry
## Effects of the Family Check-Up

| Behavior          | • Aggression  
|                  | • Peer deviance  
|                  | • Risky sexual behavior  
|                  | • Substance Use  
|                  | • Depression  
| Parenting        | • Positive Parenting  
|                  | • Limit Setting  
|                  | • Monitoring  
|                  | • Maternal Depression  
| School           | • School engagement  
|                  | • Grades  
|                  | • Attendance  
|                  | • Teacher Rated Behavior  

(Dishion et al., 2008; Dishion, Nelson, & Kavanagh, 2003; Connell & Dishion, 2008; Stormshak, Connell, & Dishion, 2009; Stormshak, Fosco, & Dishion, 2010; Stormshak et al., 2011; Van Ryzin, Dishion, & Stormshak, 2012)
All families of kindergarten students across five elementary schools in an urban district in the Pacific Northwest U.S. were invited to participate.

Four of the five schools were Title I schools.

Primary caregivers of 365 children provided consent and were randomly assigned to the FCU condition or a school-as-usual control condition.

On average, caregivers were 33.90 years-old ($SD = 6.32$) and approximately 89% were female.

About 58.6% of caregivers reported as White, 22.1% reported multiple races/ethnicities, and 13.4% reported as Hispanic/Latino.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristics</th>
<th>% Total N = 365</th>
<th>% FCU n = 190</th>
<th>% Control n = 175</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD) child age</td>
<td>5.45 (0.50)</td>
<td>5.52 (0.50)</td>
<td>5.38 (0.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child gender (female)</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child race/ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>59.18</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple races/ethnicities</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children received special school services</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children attended preschool</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Family Check-Up therapists were doctoral-level psychologists who were trained to criterion in the Family Check-Up.
  - Fidelity was continually checked during implementation.

• The Family Check-Up was delivered during kindergarten and every year thereafter.

• The Family Check-Up process capitalizes on caregiver motivation during the transition to school.
  - Motivational interviewing was integrated throughout the process (Miller & Rollnick, 1991).
  - Guided parents’ decision-making and encouraged motivation to change.

• The top five topics covered with caregivers during meetings included child behavior, child academic skills, positive parenting, child emotional health, child peer relations.
Family Check-Up Implementation

• Of the 190 families in the FCU condition...
  ...144 (76%) completed the initial meeting and assessment
  ...143 (75%) completed a feedback session, and
  ...95 (50%) completed follow-up sessions.

• The average family in the intervention group received 4.36 total contacts (range = 0.00 to 26.00).

• At the conclusion of each contact, FCU therapists rated caregiver engagement during the session from 1 (weak) to 3 (strong), with an average of 2.81 (SD = 0.30).
• Variables were calculated from measures completed in kindergarten (T1) and second grade (T3)

• Latent child behavior problems variables were calculated from caregiver and teacher versions of the *Strengths and Needs Assessment* (Moore et al., 2016) at T1 and T3

• Latent effective parenting strategies were calculated from four measures caregivers completed at T1 and T3: limit setting, negative parenting, parent efficacy, and parent warmth.
Structural Equation Model for Tests of ITT Effect on Child Behavior

![Diagram of structural equation model showing relationships between variables such as Teacher Concerns Fall, Teacher Concerns Spring, Parent Concerns Fall, Parent Concerns Spring, and Child Behavior Problems at T1 and T3, with regression coefficients and R-squared values.]
Structural Equation Model for Test of Mediation Hypothesis
Results

• Parents engaged in the intervention at a high rate: 75% completed the FCU and 50% completed follow-up sessions.

• The Family Check-Up was associated with improved change in parenting skills, and changes in parenting skills in turn predicted reductions in child behavior problems.
Implications

• Use a brief, pragmatic family assessment to promote engagement in family-centered services
• Establish collaborative relationships with families early and engage school personnel
• Collect information about family and school ecological contexts
• Use motivational interviewing as a method of communication
• Link use of positive behavior support to targets that matter to parents
• These preliminary findings support designing a study to test a complete model that will examine impacts of the Family Check-Up on a range of outcomes, as well as the influence of moderators and mediators.

• A new grant from the Department of Education is allowing us to follow these families into middle school.
  ▪ We are examining the impact of early vs. late intervention on behavior and adjustment.

• We are moving Family Check-Up modules to an online format.

• A key focus is on promoting uptake and sustainability of the Family Check-Up in school districts and community mental health settings.
Thank you!

Questions?

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