The Duet Project: Early Engagement, Future Success

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Today’s Agenda

1) Background of our agency and the Duet project
   • Development of materials and curriculum
   • Pilot study

2) A Community-Academic Research Partnership

3) Benefits, Challenges and Unexpected Issues of Community-Academic Partnerships

4) Next Steps and Recommendations
Maternity Care Coalition

The mission of Maternity Care Coalition (MCC) is to improve maternal and child health and wellbeing through the collaborative efforts of individuals, families, providers and communities.
MCC’s Comprehensive Approach

- Direct Services to Families
- Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)
- Public Policy and Advocacy
MCC’s Direct Services to Families

• Parenting support through home visiting

• Serving pregnant women and families with children ages 0-3 in Southeastern Pennsylvania

• MOMobile Model
  o Healthy Families America
  o Early Head Start
  o Healthy Start
  o Managed Care Outreach
  o Cribs for Kids
  o Safe Start
The Duet Project: 
*Early Engagement, Future Success*

- Language ability in early childhood predicts school readiness and achievement
- The “30-million word gap”: children in poverty hear significantly fewer words than their more affluent peers
- Quantity and quality matter
- It’s not just talking *to* our children but *with* our children that develops the communication foundation for infants and young toddlers
Background of the Duet Project

Community-Academic Research Partnership
Partnership with Dr. Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and her team at Temple University’s Infant and Child Laboratory; and other national early child development experts.

Partnership Goal
Develop, implement and test an intervention to enhance parent-child communication and language development.
WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS FOR AN ACADEMIC INSTITUTION WORKING ON A RESEARCH INITIATIVE WITH A COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION?
Why Duet?

To build a strong communication foundation, improve child language outcomes, and promote school readiness

- Increase parents’ knowledge of early childhood development
- Enhance children’s language development, early learning and school readiness
- Help parents find opportunities for activities with children that present opportunities for “conversational duets”
Planning Phase

- Monthly meetings with Maternity Care Coalition staff, Temple partners and national experts via Skype
- Working group meetings
- Joint development of a culturally competent and playful curriculum
- Pilot Testing
The Duet Project

• Engaging video vignettes featuring an animated child narrator and live-action video

• Temple experts provide a six session in-depth training to MCC Home Visitors (“Advocates”)

• Advocates deliver six training modules to families in the home

• Randomized evaluation with 60 families from Healthy Families America, Early Head Start and Healthy Start
Duet Project: Intervention Principles

- Awareness and Knowledge
- Creating Opportunities
- Conversational Duets
- Scaffolding

Harmonizing
Intervention Module Sample

1. Look, the cereal box. Would you like some cereal?
   - Mine!

2. You’re right, Ashley! These are all oatmeal. Oatmeal has so many different flavors. Which one would you like?
   - Oatmeal!

3. What I didn’t realize was how the way I talked with my baby could make all the difference in her life.
   - You found a yellow flower!

4. That’s a good guess. Birds do fly, but this is something different. Is it a bus or a plane?
   - Bus

Maternity Care Coalition
Innovation

• Targeted at families with young toddlers 15-24 months

• Taking research out of the lab and into the community

• Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach, where community and academic partners work side-by-side in an equal partnership
Foundation for Community-Academic Partnerships

- Shared Commitment
- Relationship-building: Trust and Respect
- Transparency
- Defining roles
- Defining expectations
- Communication and Problem-Solving
Temple University Gives Their Insight

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS FOR AN ACADEMIC INSTITUTION WORKING ON A RESEARCH INITIATIVE WITH A COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION?
Expect the Unexpected
Applied research is “messy”
## Benefits of Partnership

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<tr>
<th>MCC Team</th>
<th>Temple Team</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Capacity building agency-wide</td>
<td>- Translation of theory into the community</td>
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<td>- Knowledge development for programs, research and advocacy</td>
<td>- Maternal and child health expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Access to experts</td>
<td>- Community-Based Participatory Research</td>
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<td>- Benefit to staff and clients</td>
<td>- Publications and presentations</td>
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<td>- Long-term impact on families and communities</td>
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Lessons Learned

• There will be setbacks and frustrations
• Build in time for relationship-building
• Learn each others’ institutional cultures
• Set up systems for communication and problem-solving
• Discuss data ownership and funding up front
What’s Next?

• Implementation
  • Direct Services to Families

• Research
  • Evaluate and Disseminate Outcomes

• Public Policy and Advocacy
  • Federal, State and local (Philadelphia) Initiatives
  • Read by 4th
  • Mayor’s Running Start Initiative