



## Section B: What Informs Your DSP?

# Before You Begin...

- There are a number of considerations to be made before you begin to put together a DSP for any child
- Its critical that what informs your DSP does not come from one single source, but from several
- Please keep in the mind the following considerations as you create your DSP

# From a Family's Perspective

- Parenting does not come intuitively
- What to do is not obvious to everyone
- There is a fear of asking – because don't we all enter parenting “just knowing” what to do
- The connection between the experience parents/caregivers have with their child, their relationship with the child, and the child's development is not always clear
- The impact on brain development is not well understood

# Keep Culture in Mind

- Change of social economic status
- Racism / discrimination
- Lack of Validation of Attachment Practices
- Stress within the Family
- Lack of Informal Support
- Lack of Awareness of Formal Support
- Discomfort Seeking Formal Support

# Keep Culture in Mind

**Culture is not always about ethnicity.**

**Every family has its own culture**

**Be a “student” of the family**

(Source: Attachment Across Cultures, (2010) <http://www.attachmentcrosscultures.org/eindex.html> )

# The Power of Observation

- Observing infants is hard
- Observing their mental health is even tougher
- Often, we fall back on whether they meet their physical milestones
- But today we know that careful and thoughtful observation can make inform our practice

# Key Messages to Give Caregivers

- **You are an expert about your child!**
  - No one knows this child and their current development like you do.
- **Be a partner in setting goals!**
  - This plan can provide you, and everyone else involved in the child's life with a consistent set of common goals that everyone can collaborate on.
- **Wait times don't have to be wasted time**
  - This is your opportunity to make the most of the wait times, regardless of how long or short.
- **Keep it simple**
  - Activities and strategies don't have to be overly complicated or involve a lot of time. Even the smallest change can have a big impact.

# What Should Inform Your Plan

- **Discussions with Parents/Caregivers**

- Conversations with parents are an opportunity to gather insight and learn about the family
- Meaningful conversations with all/any caregivers can be insightful

- **Developmental Screen**

- Ensure you are using a validated screening tool
- Ensure your tool looks closely at social and emotional development

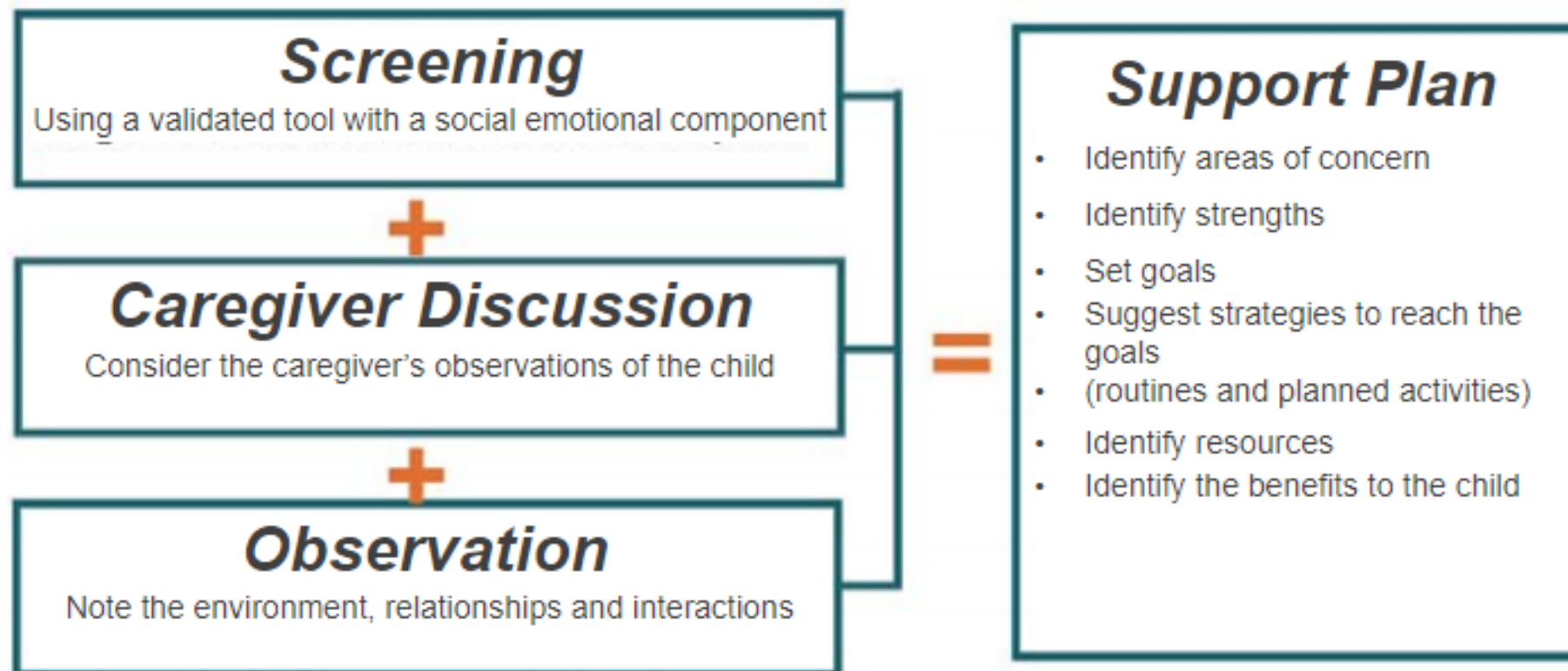
- **Observations**

- Learn about a child through frequent observations
- Team Consultation
  - Share what you learn about a child with the team – others may see something different or have insight into what you have observed



# Screening, Caregiver Discussions and Observations

A DSP is developed from the results of a developmental screening tool, observations of the child, and family/ caregiver input.



# Additional Considerations

## Things to consider:

- How much can the family handle?
- How many children with different needs?

## What is the biggest concern?

- Sometimes you don't create a full plan
- Doing something is better than doing nothing

# Focus on Strengths

- ASK QUESTIONS with the goal to understand!
  - Who do you have in your life as a support?
  - What do you normally do?
  - When do you feel connected – on the good path?
  - Where do you come from?
  - Why do you do things the way you do?
  - **How would you like me to support you?**
- Don't make assumptions
- Be a “student of the family”

# A Child's Differences are GIFTS

## Western view of behaviours

### May be seen as negative

- Hyperactive
- Sensory concerns
- Hypervigilant
- Oppositional
- Selective Mutism
- Autistic

## Indigenous view of behaviours

### May be seen as positive

- Energetic
- Sensitive to environment
- Sensitive/ Attuned to Others
- Strong willed & independent
- Listening and observing
- Closer to the Creator

# Strategies Must be Relationship-Based

- Development at this age is dependent on relationships
- Relationships are the conduit through which a child experiences the world and begins to form constructs/ideas about the world
- Relationships are essential for the positive development of self-regulation
- When positive, relationships are a profound protective factor
- For some parents, the guidance of a strategy can provide an understanding they have never had

# Writing a Plan vs. Verbally Sharing Strategies

- Provides a **consistent picture** of what the child needs
- Ensures **everyone** is working towards the same developmental goals
- Provides a **set of strategies** that can be consistently used by caregivers
- It becomes a **reference document** you can use to frame each visit/meeting/session with a family
- Keeps **everyone focused** on the child's developmental needs and the ways a family needs to be supporting those
- Difficult to monitor progress
- Easy for parent to forget
- Easy for practitioner to forget what was spoken about
- Lots of room for interpretation
- Difficult to ensure consistency among caregivers
- Easy to forget child's developmental needs and stay focused on challenging behaviours

# We Have Tried to Make It...

- Meaningful – to caregivers, you and other practitioners working with a child
- Practical – you can copy and paste 95% of the plan directly from hand in hand – but we encourage you to customize it
- Reflect the science – incorporates what we know about early mental health, brain development, epigenetics & relationships

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