Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: The Efficacy of a Family-School Partnership Model on Behavioral and Relational Outcomes

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April 28, 2009
Why Family-School Partnerships?

“The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children’s achievement in school and through life... The research continues to grow and build an ever-strengthening case. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.”

(Henderson & Mapp, 2002)
Why Partner with Families?

- Learning occurs across many settings and contexts.
- There are several systems that interact to support a child’s development.
- Children spend more time out of school than they do in school.
- Maximizing the extent to which these systems work together on behalf of the child can close the achievement gap for students who are not succeeding in school.
Developing Pathways to Partnerships

Prerequisite Conditions:
These “3 A’s” must be in place for Actions to be accepted and effective

- **Approach**
- **Atmosphere**
- **Attitude**

Actions
Communicating a tone of partnership through bidirectional home-school communication and fostering family involvement in learning at home

Successful learning opportunities and outcomes for children

(Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008)
Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

- Promotes and supports *home-school partnerships* in the context of cooperative and collegial problem-solving
- Emphasizes meaningful parental/family engagement in education
- A vehicle by which to foster constructive, goal directed, solution-oriented services for children
- An extension of traditional (teacher) consultation that goes beyond the school setting and brings parents into the decision making process
Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

Based on the assumptions that:

- Consistency and congruency in approaches, attitudes, and actions across home & school systems are important.
- Structured, joint problem solving facilitates clear communication, shared goals, and congruent practices.
Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: A Definition

- A strength-based, cross-system problem-solving and decision-making model wherein parents, teachers, and other caregivers or service providers work as partners and share responsibility for promoting positive and consistent outcomes related to a child’s academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008, p. 25).

- All stages of consultation (from problem identification to plan evaluation) are conducted with parents and teachers together, in a simultaneous (rather than parallel) manner.
Needs Identification
Needs Analysis
Plan Implementation
Plan Evaluation
Conceptual Bases: Ecological-Behavioral Theory

- Combines the empirical technology of behavioral analysis with the conceptual advances of ecological theory
- Allows for a comprehensive and functional understanding of a student’s needs
- Recognizes the importance of cross-setting intervention and data-based decision making
- Stresses the importance of looking at the entire system surrounding clients, as well as coordinating these systems
CBC Outcome Goals

- Address the needs that consultees have for students
- Obtain comprehensive data over extended time (temporal) and place (context)
- Improve skills and knowledge of all parties
- Establish consistent programming across settings
- Monitor effects (and side effects) of interventions systematically across settings
- Enhance generalization and maintenance of treatment effects
CBC Relational Goals

- Improve communication and knowledge about the child, family, and classroom
- Increase commitments to educational goals
- Use consultee strengths to address needs
- Promote greater conceptualization of a student’s needs
- Increase the diversity of expertise and resources available to address concerns
CBC Relational Goals

- Promote shared ownership for solutions
- Establish and strengthen home-school partnerships
- Strengthen the mesosystem – the connections, linkages, and relationships across home and school
- Provide opportunities for parents and teachers to become engaged and empowered
- Encourage parents to establish roles and beliefs in their ability to effectively contribute to their child’s learning and development
- Facilitate teachers’ perceptions about meaningful roles for and participation of parents
Video Example
Stages of Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

- Problem/Needs Identification
- Problem/Needs Analysis
- Plan Implementation
- Plan Evaluation

See http://fsp.unl.edu/future_module3.html
Problem/Needs Identification

Goals Include to:

- Identify strengths of the child, family, teacher, systems
- Behaviorally define the concern or need as it is represented across home and school settings
- Explore environmental conditions that may be contributing to or motivating problem behaviors (antecedent, consequent, and sequential conditions)
- Determine a shared goal for consultation
- Establish a procedure for the collection of baseline data across settings
Goals Include to:

- evaluate and obtain agreement on the sufficiency and adequacy of baseline data across settings
- identify setting events, ecological conditions, and cross-setting variables that may be impacting the target concerns
- collaboratively design an effective intervention plan across settings that is sensitive to setting-specific variables
Plan Development

- Consultant, parent, and teacher together discuss general strategies and plans to be included in a treatment package across home and school settings.

- Strategies should be related to the environmental factors that contribute to the behavior.

- The closer the congruity and coordination of plans across settings, the better!
  - Home programs may involve home-school notes, procedures for enhancing learning environments and opportunities outside of school, etc.

- Brainstorming techniques are often useful to generate ideas openly from parents and teachers.
Goals Include to:

- monitor implementation of the intervention across settings
- provide training to parents and teacher, if necessary
- assess behavioral side effects and contrast effects; is the treatment causing any unforeseen problems or effects?
- determine the need for immediate revisions in the plan
- continue data collection procedures across settings
Treatment (Plan) Evaluation

**Goals Include to:**

- determine if the shared goals of consultation have been attained
- evaluate the effectiveness of the plan across settings
- discuss strategies and tactics regarding the continuation, modification, or termination of the treatment plan across settings
- schedule additional interviews if necessary
- discuss ways to continue conjoint problem solving or shared decision making
Early Research Findings: Outcomes
(see Sheridan, Clarke, & Burt, 2008)

- CBC provides an effective mechanism for addressing the needs of children with behavioral, academic, and social-emotional concerns (Guli, 2005; Sheridan, Eagle, Cowan, & Mickelson, 2001)
  - Social-emotional: Colton & Sheridan (1998); Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Elliott (1990)
CBC has been shown to be effective across unique practice contexts, including Head Start classrooms (Sheridan, Clarke, Knoche, & Edwards, 2006) and pediatric/medical settings (Lasecki et al., 2008; Sheridan et al., in press).

CBC has been demonstrated to be efficacious with culturally diverse clients (Sheridan, Eagle, & Doll, 2006).

Outcome research to date has utilized small-n experimental studies and replication designs, consistently resulting in convincing results.
Early Research Findings
(see Sheridan, Clarke, & Burt, 2008)

- **Process Research:**
  - CBC establishes a collaborative context for joint planning, decision making, problem solving (e.g., Erchul et al., 1999; Sheridan et al., 2002).
  - Relational communication studies demonstrate bidirectional communication and reciprocal relationships in CBC (Grissom, Erchul, & Sheridan, 2003).

- **Social Validity Research:**
  - CBC is acceptable to parents, teachers, school psychologists (including relative to other approaches; e.g., Freer & Watson, 1999).
  - Perceptions of goal attainment within CBC are high (Sladeczek et al., 2001)
Current Research

- A 3-cohort randomized trial testing the efficacy of CBC was funded by IES in 2005.

- Aims of the study were to determine the efficacy of CBC, immediately and at one year follow up on:
  - child externalizing behaviors;
  - parent engagement, self-efficacy, and involvement;
  - teacher beliefs and attitudes about parent involvement; and
  - parent-teacher relationships immediately and at one-year follow up.
Participants & Design

- 203 K-3 students and their parents and teachers from 26 schools participated over 3 years.
- Classrooms were randomly assigned to treatment or control conditions.
- Students with disruptive classroom behaviors (e.g., non-compliance, aggression) were selected based on teacher nomination, ratings on a short behavioral inventory, and the *Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders* (*SSBD*; Walker & Seversen, 1990).
- Assessments conducted at baseline and post-CBC; follow up assessments conducted in the following academic year.
Select Measures

- Behavioral Assessment Scale for Children (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004)
- Social Skills Rating Scale (Gresham & Elliott, 1990)
- Direct classroom observations using PDA-based INTMAN technology
- Family Involvement Questionnaire-Elementary (Manz, Fantuzzo, & Power, 2004)
- Parent Participation in Problem Solving (Author)
- Parent-Teacher Rating Scale (Vickers & Minke, 1995)
- Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992, 2002) scales measuring teacher beliefs about parent involvement, efficacy for helping children, invitations for involvement; also parent role construct, self-efficacy
CBC Implementation

4 to 5 conjoint consultation sessions occurred over 8 to 12 weeks in small groups with parents of 2 to 3 students and the classroom teacher.

Identification and frequency of target behaviors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Compliance</th>
<th>Engaged Time</th>
<th>Interference</th>
<th>Aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* 16 different home behaviors collapsed into 4 categories 18 different school behaviors collapsed into 4 categories Total # behaviors targeted at home: 115 Total # behaviors targeted at school: 180
Cross-Setting
Interventions

- Consultation team selected interventions for students’ behavioral plans from a *Behavioral Strategies Toolkit* with standardized protocols for evidence-based behavioral strategies, matched to function.

- All students’ behavioral plans contained a *motivation component* (e.g., token economy, reward menu) and a *home-school communication system*.

- Additional training and support for parents and teachers were scheduled as needed.

- Fidelity of intervention implementation assessed via self-reports, permanent products, and direct observation (classroom only).
## Intervention Implementation

### Intervention categories and frequencies across home and school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Antecedent/Environment</th>
<th>Skill Building</th>
<th>Positive Consequence</th>
<th>Reductive Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home</strong></td>
<td>113</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
<td>106</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**

All cases included a home-school communication system, such as home-school note.

34 different home intervention components collapsed into 4 categories.

40 different school intervention components collapsed into 4 categories.

Total # intervention components at home: 353

Total # intervention components at school: 404
Data Analyses

- Effect of CBC on child outcomes and parent/teacher relationships
  - 3-level multilevel model (time points within individuals within teachers) examining the fixed effect of time by treatment interaction ($\gamma$)

- Mediating effect of the parent-teacher relationship was tested
  - Path analysis with a bootstrap method (Shrout & Bolger, 2002)

- Moderating effect of teacher beliefs was tested
Current Research

Findings: Students

- CBC produced **significant improvements in child behaviors** relative to a control group.
- After controlling for the severity of behavior problems at baseline, children in the CBC group relative to controls demonstrated statistically significant differences in
  - **externalizing problems** ($\gamma = -2.60; t(162) = -1.98; p < .05$)
  - **adaptive skills** ($\gamma = 1.99; t(158) = 1.99; p < .05$)
  - **social skills** ($\gamma = 3.66; t(164) = 2.40; p < .05$)

*Sheridan, Glover, & Kwon (2009)*
CBC Student Effects: Externalizing Behaviors

Pre Post

CBC Control
CBC Student Effects: Adaptive Skills

![Graph showing the comparison of CBC and Control groups before and after intervention. The graph indicates an increase in adaptive skills for both groups, with the CBC group showing a steeper increase.]
CBC Student Effects: Social Skills

Pre Post
Current Research
Findings: Parents

Relative to control parents, those who participated in CBC reported to increase their:

- *active participation* in educational problem solving ($\gamma = .556; t(87.84) = 3.83; p < .001$);
- *overall family involvement* in their child’s education ($p < .05$);
- *involvement in home-school conferencing* ($p < .01$); and
- improvements in *parent involvement* appear to *continue for at least one year* follow up.

*Sheridan, Glover et al., 2008*
CBC Parent Effects:
Participation in Problem Solving
Current Research
Findings: Teachers

- Relative to control teachers, positive outcomes for CBC teachers include:
  - more positive beliefs about parental involvement ($\gamma = .271; t(74.91) = 2.94; p < .01$)
  - more positive beliefs about parents’ efficacy for helping children succeed in school ($\gamma = .191; t(75.18) = 2.26; p < .05$)
  - better communication with parents ($\gamma = .61; t(89.93) = 3.6; p < .001$)
  - better overall relationship with parents ($\gamma = .16; t(174) = 2.53; p < .01$)

Sheridan, Glover et al., 2008, 2009
CBC Teacher Effects: Beliefs About Parent Involvement

![Graph showing CBC and Control groups pre and post comparison. CBC group shows an increase in beliefs, while Control group shows a decrease.](image)
CBC Teacher Effects: Perceptions of Parent Efficacy
CBC Teacher Effects:
Communication with Parent
CBC Teacher Effects: Relationship with Parent
Mediation: What Accounts for the Effects?

- Investigated whether the parent-teacher relationship mediates CBC’s effects
  - Answers the question: Does the parent-teacher relationship account for CBC’s efficacy?
- The parent-teacher relationship accounted for the positive CBC effect on children’s increased adaptive skills
  \((\gamma = .16; t(174) = 2.53; p < .05)\)
- Suggests significant implications for how consultation is practiced

*Sheridan, Glover, & Kwon, 2009*
The parent-teacher relationship mediates the effects of CBC on child adaptive behaviors.

χ²(2) = 1.65, p = .44
CFI = 1.00
RMSEA = .00
Moderation: What Influences the Effect?

- Investigated whether teachers' cognitive set vis-à-vis parental involvement and efficacy moderated CBC effects
  - Teacher beliefs about parent involvement
  - Teacher perceptions of parent efficacy
- Answers the question: *Under what conditions can we expect the effects of CBC to be greatest?*
Moderation: Teacher Beliefs and Perceptions

- Slope (pre – post) for adaptive skills in CBC group is significantly greater when teachers at baseline:
  - Express positive beliefs about parent involvement ($\gamma=3.59$, $t(131)=2.43$; $p < .01$)
  - Endorse perceptions that parents can be effective (parent efficacy) in helping their children succeed in school ($\gamma=2.85$, $t(131)=2.69$; $p < .05$)

- No significant differences between high and low groups for control participants
Initial teacher beliefs about parent involvement moderate the relationship between CBC/control and adaptive skills ($p < .01$).

Initial teacher perceptions about parent efficacy moderate the relationship between CBC/control and adaptive skills ($p < .05$).
Discussion of Findings

- CBC appears to result in important outcomes for all parties:
  - Significant improvements in child behavior
  - Significant improvement in parent participation & involvement
  - Significant improvement in teacher attitudes & teacher-parent communication/relationships
Discussion of Findings

- For some outcomes, effects of CBC are moderated by teacher attitudes
  - The effect of CBC is bolstered when teacher beliefs and perceptions about parents is high
  - Points to the importance of teacher training in parent roles and efficacy, even before CBC practice

- For some behaviors, CBC effects occur through the parent-teacher relationship
  - Points to the importance of attending to the parent-teacher relationship within the context of ongoing CBC practice
Ongoing Research

- Still investigating outcomes as assessed via direct observations and parent daily reports (via HLM)
- Still investigating other mediators, such as implementation fidelity, parent/teacher engagement, and continuity across home and school
  - Exploring measurement issues associated with fidelity
  - Exploring conceptual and empirical issues related to engagement and continuity
Discussion of Findings

- Still investigating other moderators, such as target behavior, student disability status/special education services
- Follow up data collection still underway
  - Will answer questions regarding maintenance of effects
- Need to determine application and efficacy in the context of “authentic” practice
- Need to explore efficacy with other behaviors (e.g., academic) and in other settings (e.g., rural)
Final Thoughts Regarding Best Practice

- Always focus on both outcomes AND process/relationships
- Use strengths of families, teachers, systems to promote effective problem solving, strengthen relationships
- Effective use of CBC strategies can:
  - Support continued, intentional approaches to joint problem solving
  - Encourage continuity and consistency in interventions to support students
  - Strengthen skills in all parties; support implementation fidelity
  - Provide a context for families and teachers to feel engaged and empowered
  - Promote data-based decision making across settings
  - Provide opportunities for accountability
General Resources


*Other references available upon request*
Thank You!!

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