

Reconceptualizing Family-Centered Partnerships in Parent-Implemented Interventions

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Parents are recognized as having a significant impact on their young child's learning and development. Parent-implemented intervention (PII) is an evidence-based practice that provides parents with ample opportunities to learn and implement new strategies that support their child's development. However, implementation of these training programs in the field of early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) is often practitioner-driven, which may diminish positive outcomes for children and families and negatively impact the effectiveness of PII. Delivering PII without careful attention to the family's strengths and resources can compromise parents' sense of agency and create barriers to parent-practitioner collaboration. In response, this paper describes a framework for PII in EI/ECSE that moves toward a more holistic parent-practitioner relationship and supports family-centered PII partnerships that emphasize the cultural contexts of families and practitioners. A thorough description of the framework and its key constructs are provided. **Key words:** *culturally sustaining, early childhood special education, family-centered, parent-implemented interventions, partnership*

EARLY childhood is a significant period of social-emotional development, setting the stage for how children view themselves, others, and their interactions with their environment (Honig, 2002). Although multiple factors contribute to a child's overall development, families undoubtedly play a critical role (Bagdi & Vacca, 2005). Parent-child interactions shape how children learn to manage their emotions, relationships, and impulses throughout life (National

Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002). Parents (a term we use to be inclusive of all primary caregivers) are also recognized as having a significant impact on their child's ongoing learning (Powell & Dunlap, 2010; Trivette, Dunst, Hamby, 2010). Therefore, parent involvement in children's early learning experiences is critical in fostering the child's whole development.

One way to provide parents with ample opportunities to learn and implement new strategies that support their child's development is parent-implemented intervention (PII). PII is an evidence-based practice in which parents and other caregivers implement all or most of an intervention practice with their child to facilitate the child's development in multiple domains, such as communication or play skills, or decrease challenging behaviors (National Autism Center, 2015; Steinbrenner et al., 2020). Practitioners often support parents to

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implement PII using a variety of methods, including didactic instruction, modeling, or coaching. PII in the field of early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) aims to improve the effectiveness, generalizability, and maintenance of interventions by supporting parents in embedding many teaching opportunities in the child's daily routines (Brookman-Fraze, Vismara, Drahot, Stahmer, Openden, 2009). PII is often used with other evidence-based practices, such as naturalistic interventions, video modeling, or social narratives, or embedded within manualized interventions, including Project Improving Parents as Communication Teachers (ImPACT) and Stepping Stones Triple P (SSTP) (Besler & Kurt, 2016; Harrop, Gulsrud, Shih, Hovsepyan, Kasari, 2017; Ingersoll & Dvortcsak, 2019; Olcay-Gul & Tekin-Iftar, 2016; Steinbrenner et al., 2020; Turner, Markie-Dadds, Sanders, 2010). Empirical research has supported the effectiveness of PII in improving parents' use of naturalistic teaching strategies, children's social skills, and parent well-being (Casagrande & Ingersoll, 2017; Meadan, Angell, Stoner, Daczewitz, 2014; Wong et al., 2015), thereby strengthening the parent's capacity to actively support their child's growth and development (Dunst & Trivette, 2009).

The practice of actively including families in their child's intervention dates back multiple decades, when value statements supporting family-centered approaches were established in the literature (see Shelton et al., 1987). Dr. C. Everett Koop, the Surgeon General of the United States, also strongly advocated for the role of families with the medical community, Congress, and multiple funding agencies (Hostler, 1999). The family's role in their child's care continued to evolve (e.g., Dunst & Trivette, 1996; Hanson & Randall, 1999), supported by the work of multiple scholars who helped shape PII into how it is practiced today. Though PII in EI/ECSE vary in target skills and intervention strategies, most PII currently in use

involve a structured parent training program through which parents learn to deliver interventions in their home and community (Ingersoll, Wainer, Berger, Pickard, Bonter, 2016; Rollins, Campbell, Hoffman, Self, 2016; Whitehouse et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2015). Implementation of these training programs is often practitioner-driven and may be problematic for several reasons. In addition to increasing parent stress (Brookman-Fraze, L., & Koegel, R. L. 2004), practitioner-driven PII models commonly overlook the family's strengths and resources, thereby compromising parents' sense of agency, neglecting family culture, creating barriers to collaboration, and ultimately impacting the effectiveness of PII (Zaghlawan & Ostrosky, 2016). In light of the potential shortcomings that may accompany a practitioner-driven model for PII implementation, there is a need for incorporating more collaborative, family-centered, and culturally sustaining parent-practitioner partnerships in the implementation of PII (Stahmer & Pellecchia, 2015).

The purpose of this paper is to describe a framework for parent-practitioner partnership in PII implementation in EI/ECSE settings (e.g., early intervention, developmental preschools, and inclusive preschools) that synthesizes the foundations of family-centered approaches, educational partnerships, and culturally sustaining pedagogy. Our aim is to build upon efforts in EI/ECSE to move away from practitioner-driven PII models, to one that holistically considers the family and practitioner's cultural contexts in collaboration and partnership. We seek to strengthen calls to support child and family outcomes in a culturally responsive manner (Division for Early Childhood, 2014). The proposed framework aims to guide researchers and practitioners in continuing to design family-centered PII, identifying areas for improvement in their current family collaboration practices, and promoting parent-practitioner relationships through a culturally sustaining approach. The

primary audiences for this framework are EI/ECSE researchers and practitioners who support young children (i.e., infants through preschoolers) and their families. Other audiences for this framework may include professional development providers, faculty in teacher education or pre-service provider education programs, and others interested in promoting positive outcomes for families of young children.

Notably, many EI/ECSE researchers and practitioners currently emphasize the family's perspective in PII. Parents who participated in PIIs that incorporate caregiver coaching report feelings of empowerment and feeling that their contributions are important for their children's learning (Garnett, Davidson, Eadie, 2022; Stahmer et al., 2017). Incorporating caregiver coaching practices in PII provides parents with multiple opportunities to reflect on their practices and engage in problem-solving (Rush, Shelden, Hanft, 2003). Coaching often involves interactive processes, such as joint planning, information sharing, and guided practice with feedback, that require collaborative parent–practitioner partnership (Friedman, Woods, Salisbury, 2012; Rush & Shelden, 2011). Thus, practitioners and researchers have increasingly recognized coaching as a foundation for successful PII implementation (Kemp & Turnbull, 2014). However, Kemp and Turnbull (2014) found that descriptions of the term “coaching with parents” vary widely, ranging from a relationship-directed process to a practitioner-driven process, pointing to a need to focus on the establishment of strong parent–practitioner partnership to support the coaching process in PII implementation. Recent studies featuring PII employ a nonprescriptive approach to intervention, leaning on parents' knowledge of their children's strengths and interests (e.g., Salisbury et al., 2018) to guide intervention. Parent-mediated approaches, in which parents apply concepts learned from practitioners to family routines, support their relevance to family contexts

(Schertz, Odom, Baggett, Sideris, 2018). The proposed framework *extends* this emphasis on parent expertise, by explicitly regarding the role of cultural context for all partners, including families, practitioners, and the community. Furthermore, the proposed framework seeks to animate a long tradition of family-centered values (e.g., Shelton et al., 1987 and Dunst & Trivette, 1996) by recognizing how the strategies practitioners use in PII can strengthen the family's cultural practices and daily routines, advance the practitioner's reflective practice, and promote the community's cultural plurality.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARENT–PRACTITIONER PARTNERSHIP

Parent–practitioner partnership requires intentional efforts to cultivate. Various circumstances, including sociocultural contexts and training experiences, influence both the family and practitioner as they build relationships. Guidance for parent–practitioner collaboration should be based on multiple factors that can influence parent–practitioner dynamics, such as family, practitioner, and cultural considerations.

Examples of family-related factors include the supportive or challenging experiences parents endured earlier in their lives, the health and development of the child, current family stressors, parents' access to resources, and available social and service support. The complex interaction between these numerous factors can significantly influence a child's development (Guralnick, 1997; Raver, 2002). During PII, practitioners become enmeshed in support systems that affect family dynamics, interacting with the family's already existing resources and social support. Parent–practitioner collaboration may conflict with other family circumstances if the PII plan does not view the family holistically and consider how it interacts with other family-related factors. To strengthen the positive impact of PII activities, practitioners need to comprehensively assess the family's strengths,

needs, and other environmental factors, as they build partnership with parents. This need calls for a PII framework that guides practitioners in holistically approaching parent–practitioner collaborations.

Another factor that should be considered for promoting a strong parent–practitioner partnership is cultural context. Similar to national population trends, early childhood programs serve a population of children and families that is increasingly more culturally and linguistically heterogeneous (Aud, Fox, KewalRamani, 2010). The resident population of the United States has increased overall and has become more ethnically diverse since 2010 (Jones, Marks, Ramirez, Rios-Vargas, 2021). This demographic shift proves to be an essential consideration when anticipating the needs of practitioners as they prepare to work with a progressively diverse group of children and families (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). In contrast, the majority of practitioners serving families of young children primarily identify as White and female (Aud et al., 2010; Whitebook, McLean, Austin, Edwards, 2018) and primarily espouse European-American values and perspectives (Lee, Ostrosky, Bennett, Fowler, 2003). Practitioners who do not identify as White may still engender perspectives of the dominant culture in which they are educated and professionally trained (Greenfield & Quiroz, 2013). Correspondingly, early childhood practitioners report that they do not feel knowledgeable about how to effectively support culturally and linguistically diverse children and their families (Banerjee & Lunckner, 2014). While family-centered approaches have regarded the importance of family culture for many years (Shelton et al., 1987), many practitioners need support applying these principles to their work with families. In light of the reported cultural and linguistic mismatch between families of young children with disabilities and the practitioners who serve them (Aud et al., 2010; Musu-Gillette et al., 2016; Whitebook et al., 2018), the provision of

practical applications grounded in relevant EI/ECSE theoretical frameworks is needed to respond to this call and to support the practitioners serving increasingly diverse communities.

GUIDING THEORIES AND PRACTICES FOR PARENT–PRACTITIONER PARTNERSHIP

The framework we present acknowledges the strengths and needs of multiple participants in the child’s environment, as well as their influence on child and family outcomes. This collaboration framework draws from an evolution of theory and practice in parent–implemented interventions and family–professional models, including family-centered approaches, educational partnerships, and, most recently, culturally sustaining pedagogies. In the following section, we broadly describe how the child’s practitioners, family, and community may come together in PII to promote positive outcomes for the child and family and how these outcomes extend to the child’s community. This is followed by a description of the framework and its key constructs.

FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACHES

Family-centered approaches include several overlapping models focused on the importance of the role of the family, such as family-centered care (Shelton et al., 1987), family-centered theory (Bamm & Rosenbaum, 2008), and family-centered practice (Dunst & Trivette, 1996; Turnbull, Turbiville, Turnbull, 2000). Recognized as a cornerstone of EI/ECSE service provision, family-centered approaches share a set of essential values that have evolved over the past several decades to honor the significance of the family’s role in their child’s services and guide positive family–practitioner relationships. For instance, family-centered care established a collaborative process in health care service delivery to

support the role of families caring for children with special health care needs (Hostler, 1999). In *The Elements of Family Centered Care*, Shelton and colleagues (1987) promote the family as the “constant in the child’s life,” with calls to honor the “racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity of families,” and a statement recognizing the need to incorporate family strengths. Similarly, family-centered practice shares roots with family-centered care and was conceptualized from an ecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Family-centered practice is applied in service provision when “Professionals view families as equal partners. Intervention is individualized, flexible, and responsive to the family-identified needs of each child and family. Intervention focuses on strengthening and supporting family functioning. Families are the ultimate decision-makers” (Espe-Sherwindt, 2008, p. 137). While family-centered approaches have included multiple principles over time, the term family-centered practice is most commonly found in EI/ECSE literature to describe the values of reflected broadly in these models (Dunst & Espe-Sherwindt, 2016).

Family-centered practice has essential characteristics that endorse respectful parent–practitioner collaboration, including a flexible and individualized approach to family needs, responsiveness to family culture and priorities, a focus on enhancing family strengths, and regard for family authority in the decisions which affect their child’s educational choices. Families have strongly advocated for more family-centered service provision for their children (Hostler, 1999). In a recent study that explored parents’ perspectives on early childhood behavior support processes, parents reported that they experienced effective partnerships when they engaged in family-centered, reciprocal communications with practitioners who were familiar with the family’s home contexts and who prioritized the family’s voice (Kelly,

Harbin, Spaulding, Roberts, Artman-Meeker, 2022). Family-centered practice counters earlier practitioner-driven or child-centered models (Dunst, Johanson, Trivette, Hamby, 1991), in which EI/ECSE practitioners centered their work almost exclusively on the skills of the child with limited consideration for the role of the primary caregivers in the child’s life (Peterson, Luze, Eshbaugh, Jeon, Kantz, 2007). In this approach, the early childhood practitioner is assumed to be the expert in child development and intervention, with less regard for family input and participation. Conversely, the tenets of family-centered practice center the parent and other caregivers as the primary agents in their child’s growth and development, with practitioners assuming a supportive role. Family-centered practice has been conceptualized to promote positive family outcomes essential to successful PII, including improved parent competence and confidence (Espe-sherwindt, 2008; McCollum, Gooler, Appl, Yates, 2001). However, despite over 30 years of recommendations for providing family-centered practice, its implementation in EI/ECSE remains uncertain and inconsistent, with many practitioners continuing to use child-centered or practitioner-driven models when interacting with the families they serve (Hebbeler & Gerlach-Downie, 2002; Kelly et al., 2022; Peterson et al., 2007). It is essential that the field critically considers facilitators to family-centered practice and what we can do to ensure its implementation henceforth.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Educational partnerships aim to improve developmental outcomes for children via the establishment and maintenance of successful partnerships among schools, families, and community participants (Sheridan, Moen, Knoche, 2017; Tushnet, 1993; Welch et al., 1992). Key participants in educational partnerships are parents and

practitioners navigating pedagogical and didactic issues together (Oostdam & Hooge, 2013). *Pedagogical* partnerships emphasize the cooperation of parents and practitioners to maintain their connectedness, while *didactic* partnerships focus on parents' direct participation in the child's learning process. Each of these styles is critical in PII and reflects conceptualizations of open, responsive, and equal partnerships in EI/ECSE (Dunst & Espe-Sherwindt, 2016). This focus on parent–practitioner partnership and parent participation is especially significant as we consider the collaborative relationship necessitated in PII and the need for practitioners to support parent learning of parent-identified interventions (McCollum et al., 2001).

According to Tushnet (1993), developing a successful educational partnership involves several steps, beginning with the need for partners to first identify shared goals and then determine if the proposed partnership is an appropriate approach for the stated goals. Collaborative educational partnerships call for an intentional acknowledgment of the division of responsibility and shared decision-making among equal partners (Welch et al., 1992). This stands contrary to practitioner-driven approaches to PII, in which the parent's primary role is to implement the chosen intervention according to professional recommendations with little input (Barton & Fettig, 2013; Steinbrenner et al., 2020). Though educational partnerships share similar components with family-centered practice, it extends the latter by encouraging partners to recognize the limits of their expertise and value what the other person brings to their interaction. With this comes a recognition that each set of knowledge is unique and may reciprocally complement or extend one another. Tushnet (1993) notes that parent–practitioner partnerships may be challenging to maintain as they require a foundation of trust and understanding, along with a shared interest in innovative problem-solving. Oostdam and Hooge (2013) highlight another point that is relevant to parent–practitioner

collaboration: the necessity for partners to both see themselves as competent in their role and to be able to act on their own initiative. These are important factors as we consider the positions of both parents and practitioners as learners in the PII partnership working toward a common goal.

CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PEDAGOGY

Inspired by preceding works in the literature base, such as *culturally relevant pedagogy* (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and *culturally responsive pedagogy* (Cazden & Leggett, 1976; Gay, 2000), *culturally sustaining pedagogy* (CSP) “seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 95). It expands on these preceding asset pedagogies, also aimed at countering the deficit approaches to teaching and learning that have perpetuated throughout decades of educational practices in the United States. Such deficit approaches view the languages, literacies, and cultural ways of being of many individuals and communities of color as deficiencies to be resolved so that they may learn the dominant cultural practices demanded by educational systems (Paris & Alim, 2014). Banerjee and Luckner (2014, p. 45) also described these systems as framed by “White middle-class normative parameters of competence,” which many practitioners have absorbed either through upbringing or enculturation. This perspective of privileging dominant values may lead to deficit thinking in practitioners (Klinger et al., 2005; Rogoff, 2003) and negatively impact parent–practitioner collaboration during PII.

On the contrary, culturally sustaining pedagogy invites educational systems to recreate themselves as institutions in which the diverse practices of families and young children are valued and supported (Paris & Alim, 2017). Both heritage cultural practices (“ways racial and ethnic difference was enacted in the past”: Paris & Alim, 2014) and contemporary community practices are

embraced. In the context of PII, such practices are found in the ongoing, daily routines of family homes and communities. In doing so, the pervasiveness of Whiteness can be recognized and interrogated in the interest of disrupting monocultural and monolingual educational practices and sustaining cultural pluralism (Wynter-Hoyte, Braden, Rodriguez, Thornton, 2019). Family-centered approaches have a history of honoring family cultures, embedding interventions in family routines, and centering family-identified priorities (Dunst & Espe-Sherwindt, 2016; Shelton et al., 1987). This is especially relevant in PII as we consider the nature of supporting families with implementing developmentally supportive strategies in the context of family relationship and routines. A genuinely family-centered approach includes an acknowledgment of the family's and practitioner's cultural contexts, with relevant actions taken by practitioners and programs to demonstrate respect and regard for family practices. By aligning family-centered PII partnerships with the vision of culturally sustaining pedagogies, we widen our lens of influence to include not just young children and their families, but also their communities. While evidence of the application of culturally sustaining pedagogical approaches is limited in EI/ECSE, its use in early childhood contexts shows support for children and families in multiple domains of learning, such as multilingual language practices (Wang, Thomas, Cahill, 2022). The practices we apply to partnerships have the potential to result in positive outcomes for communities as we uphold families' participation in both heritage and contemporary culturally shaped daily routines, activities, and linguistic practices. This is especially salient as we consider the isolation felt by families in EI/ECSE and the significant role of community in supporting families of young children with disabilities (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Espe-Sherwindt & Serrano, 2020; Schwartz & Rodriguez, 2001).

REIMAGINING PARENT–PRACTITIONER PARTNERSHIPS IN PII

In an effort to recognize the many factors supporting positive outcomes for the child and family (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998), we propose a framework for critical reflection that augments PII partnership. This framework holistically considers the family and practitioner's cultural contexts in collaboration and partnership. It envisions how parents and practitioners can sustain family and community cultural practices through the embedded interventions parents implement with their children. The following sections address the role of collaboration in PII partnerships, the contributions each participant brings, and the growth they may experience in their work together. Our introduction of the framework includes a description of how it extends the current parent–practitioner collaboration approaches available in PII through its emphasis on reflection and critical dialogue. Figure 1 and Table 1 illustrate the components this framework recognizes, including its partners, their contributions, and the growth they experience. We will present these components beginning with those found in the middle of the framework and working our way to the outermost circles.

CRITICAL UNDERSTANDINGS FOR PII

Uniquely central to this framework is the need for practitioners to engage in reflection and critical dialogue to sustain the daily practices of young children and families they partner with for PII. Kalyanpur and Harry (1997) suggest that when EI/ECSE practitioners actively participate in reflection and discourse as a foundational, ongoing practice in their work, they enter discussions and interactions with families from a more responsive and respectful position, potentially establishing a *posture of cultural reciprocity*. In the current model, the practitioner addresses a set of critical

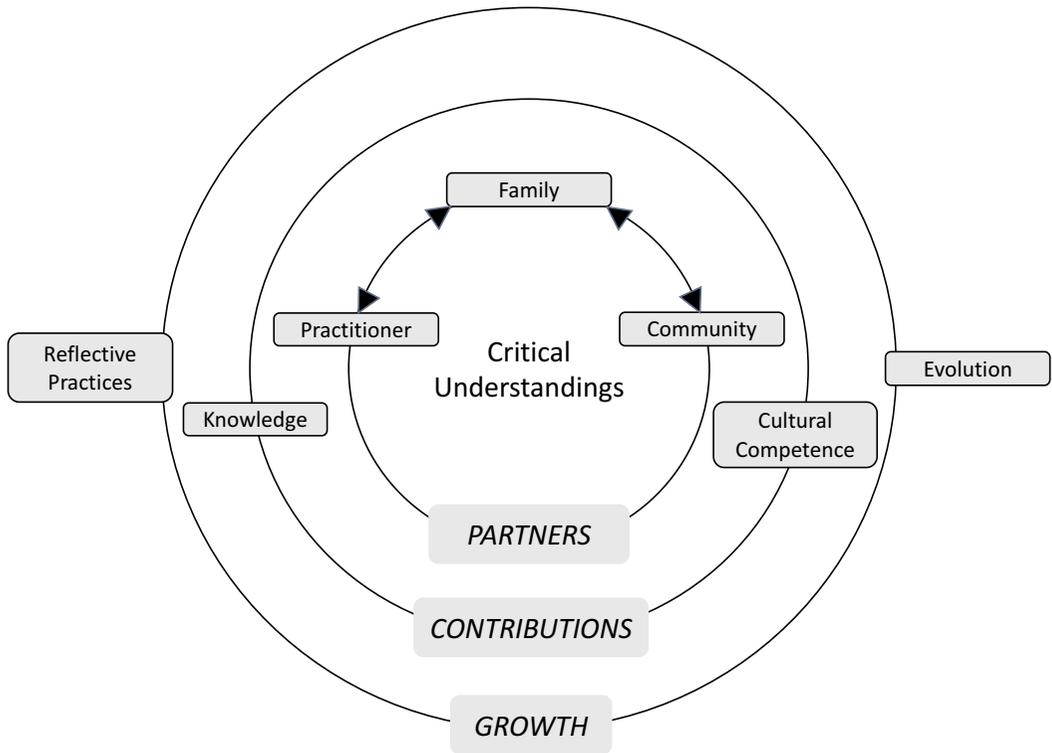


Figure 1. Framework for critical reflection in PII.

understandings in their reflective work, as adapted from Paris (2016) (see Table 2).

Initially, the practitioner aims to “understand systems of inequality and their positions of privilege or marginalization within it.” This involves comprehending the systematic structures that perpetuate racialized, cultural, linguistic, and ability-based inequalities in the EI/ECSE settings (e.g., the disproportionate rates in which children of color are suspended and expelled) (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). Practitioners should grow awareness of their own relative privilege and marginalization within these systems to navigate and address these inequalities. Second, the practitioner should understand how systems of EI/ECSE can perpetuate or disrupt these inequalities. This entails recognizing how the policies, educational approaches, and status-quo practices may contribute to perpetuating existing

inequalities (e.g., white children can be regularly perceived as “good” because early childhood classroom expectations are developed based on predominantly white, middle-class ways of being and learning) or serve as a foundation to disrupt them by implementing inclusive and culturally responsive strategies (Broderick & Leonardo, 2016; Love & Beneke, 2021). Third, practitioners understand the historical and current deficit approaches as they apply to culture, language, and ability (e.g., when educators ascribe to deficit perspectives of children experiencing poverty, children with disabilities, multilingual children, they often use practices narrowly focused on addressing perceived deficits, rather than richer learning opportunities provided to other children) and how asset approaches can counter these (Adair, Colegrove, McManus, 2017). This involves appreciating asset-based approaches and

Table 1. Core Components of the Framework for Critical Reflection in PII

Component	Description
Critical Understandings	Throughout parent-implemented interventions, practitioners constantly engage in five critical understandings (see Table 2) to sustain the cultural practices of young children and families.
Partners	Direct (practitioner and parent) and indirect partners (child and community) are interconnected and influence one another.
	Family (Child and Parent) The parent actively shapes and influences PII activities. The child influences PII activities without active involvement in decision-making process.
	Practitioner A direct partner who influences PII activities with the parent.
	Community The community that the family member belongs to and indirectly influences PII activities.
Contributions	Knowledge The family provides critical information about their child, daily routines, beliefs, and strengths. The practitioner contributes their knowledge of child development, instructional strategies, and intervention supports.
	Cultural and Linguistic Competence Parent’s heritage and contemporary community cultural and language practices they acquire through ongoing interaction with their community.
Growth	Reflective Practices Parents can attain more nuanced understanding of their cultural positions and practices. Practitioners can achieve a better understanding of how their work can sustain the cultural practices for both the family and the community.
	Evolution The collaborative partnership indirectly influences the growth and strength of the community. In turn, the community’s cultural and linguistic practices evolve.

how to incorporate the strengths, resources, and cultural assets to counter deficit narratives and foster inclusive learning environments (e.g., understanding that

families of color may resist deficit positioning by refusing disability labeling or engaging in culturally meaningfully parenting and appreciating such acts as family advocacy and

Table 2. Five Critical Understandings for Parent–Practitioner Partnerships in PII

Critical Understandings
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand systems of inequality, and positions of privilege or marginalization within them. 2. Understand how systems within ECSE can perpetuate or disrupt these inequalities. 3. Understand the historical and current deficit approaches as they apply to culture, language, and ability, and how asset approaches can counter them. 4. Understand the limited nature of the current parameters of achievement for children and families in ECSE. 5. Understand the necessity of engaging in collaborative relationships centered on a foundation of care and dignity.

Note. Adapted from Paris (2016).

engagement) (Love & Beneke, 2021). The practitioner should also understand the limited nature of current parameters of achievement for children and families in EI/ECSE. This refers to acknowledging the narrowness of conventional measures of achievement in EI/ECSE. It includes recognizing that the existing measures may not adequately capture the diverse capabilities, strengths, and progress of children and families in EI/ECSE contexts (e.g., young children of color have increased likelihood of being labeled as requiring intervention because developmental assessments largely reflect predominantly white, middle-class ways of thinking and learning) (Souto-Manning & Rabadi-Raol, 2018). Finally, the practitioner must understand the necessity of engaging in collaborative relationships centered on a foundation of care and dignity. The practitioner can achieve this understanding by prioritizing the principles of care, respect, and mutual understanding to create inclusive, supportive, and culturally responsive learning environments for children and families. In addition to the individual practitioners and parents participating in these partnerships, their communities will indirectly benefit as well, as these critical understandings support a culturally pluralistic society (Paris, 2016). This humanizing effort animates our current recommended practices in EI/ECSE in which “practitioners build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity” (Division for Early Childhood, 2014). Family-centered, collaborative PII extends the practices on which EI/ECSE is founded (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1977) by recognizing the value provided to all partners when they move away from a monocultural and monolingual society to one that is culturally and linguistically diverse (Paris, 2012).

These five critical understandings are foundational components of this framework and extend family-centered approaches in EI/ECSE. These reflective practices could occur individually or in a small group setting, depending on the practitioner’s available colleagues and resources. Ongoing reflective practice potentially enables the practitioner to engage in more supportive interactions with the families they work with in PII. Practitioners may be more open to recognizing and embracing the cultural and linguistic competence (Paris, 2012) of the children and families they work with. They may understand how their work helps children and families connect to the communities from which they draw cultural and linguistic wisdom and competence. They may understand the problematic practice of essentializing family culture or making assumptions about families’ practices. Finally, practitioners who take a reflective and open stance in their work with families may create a safe space for families to look critically at hegemonic cultural practices in educational systems, especially regarding race, gender, and sexuality (Paris & Alim, 2014). The application of these practices will be discussed further throughout the description of this framework.

PARTNERS

The establishment and maintenance of ongoing, collaborative relationships are foundational when practitioners and parents partner in PII activities. We define *PII activities* as the process of planning, implementing, and reflecting on intervention practices parents implement with their child to facilitate their child’s development. Parents whose children are enrolled in early childhood programs have reported that their relationships with program staff are key determinants for their engagement in these programs (Underwood & Killoran, 2012). In this framework, collaborative

partnerships are based on care and dignity (Paris, 2016), allowing the parent and practitioner to develop complex understandings of one another and reject deficit views.

In the spirit of collaboration, this approach to parent–practitioner partnership recognizes the need for common goals, shared decision-making, and a sense of belonging, competence, and agency for both the parent and the practitioner (Oostdam & Hooge, 2013; Tushnet, 1993). At the initial stages of the partnership, they develop shared goals. Examples of shared goals in the EI/ECSE might include identifying the desired child and family outcomes of the intervention, the strategies parents choose to engage in with their child, and the routines and activities in which parents will implement them. These partnerships are sometimes entered as a matter of circumstance, such as when a child enters a teacher’s preschool classroom or a toddler is assigned to work with an early interventionist in the course of service delivery. Regardless, an open acknowledgment of the partnership’s establishment is required, paired with a recognition of the common goals shared among the parent–practitioner partners.

In this framework, we recognize four key partners: the practitioner, the parent (inclusive of all caregivers), the child, and the community. Similar to Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) model of ecological systems theory, all partners are interconnected and influence one another. For the purposes of this framework, the child and the parent are recognized as *family*. The practitioner and parent are recognized as direct partners who actively shape and influence intervention activities. Correspondingly, the child and community are considered to be indirect partners, broadly influencing the parent–practitioner partnership, though not by active involvement in the decision-making process. Despite this, the presence of the community and what it offers in the collaborative partnership is significant. The *community* will refer to the community belonging to the

family member, as it represents the class of practices most commonly underprivileged in a formal PII relationship and most profiting from a conscious intention to sustain its cultural integrity (Paris & Alim, 2014).

CONTRIBUTIONS

For a successful collaborative partnership to develop, the parent and practitioner build trust through ongoing dialogue regarding their respective roles and how they will support PII activities (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1997; Tushnet, 1993). We define *contributions* as the understandings and resources that each participant brings to their work together. When exchanged between the practitioner and parent, we refer to these contributions as *knowledge*. Contributions exchanged between the family and their respective communities are recognized as *cultural and linguistic competence*.

Knowledge

In the collaborative partnership, the family contributes a body of knowledge that is wholly unique to that of the practitioner. They provide critical information about their child, their daily routines and practices, their beliefs, their concerns about their child, and their strengths. While the parent and practitioner both aim to support the family’s identified outcomes, they differ in their emotional attachments to the child (Barblett & Maloney, 2010; Oostdam & Hooge, 2013) and their potentially differential cultural practices. It is the practitioner’s responsibility to continue to maintain shared decision-making with the parent (Tushnet, 1993), while privileging the parent’s choices, emphasizing the parent’s strengths, and supporting their capacity to promote their child’s development (Dunst et al., 1991; Espe-Sherwindt, 2008). In collaboration with the parent, the practitioner supports the parent through a process of reflecting on their dreams for their child and the family strengths which sustain

these dreams, providing opportunities for observation, dialogue, and guided practice, opportunities for self-assessment, and additional self-reflection regarding their use of strategies for PII.

In this partnership, the practitioner may contribute their knowledge of child development, instructional strategies, and intervention supports targeting young children (Rush et al., 2003; Snyder, Hemmeter, Fox, 2015). Their knowledge, and how they share it with the family, will be informed by their reflections on the critical understandings (Table 2). As they support the parent with PII activities, the practitioner prioritizes the parent's choices in the strategies chosen for the intervention and emphasizes an acknowledgment of the family's dreams and strengths. It is through these acknowledgments that practitioners can foster relationships with the parent founded on care and dignity, while bringing focus to the family's cultural and linguistic practices (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014). Additionally, through these actions, the practitioner directly supports the parent in advocating for and sustaining the contributions the family exchanges with their community.

Cultural and linguistic competence

Unlike the knowledge the family shares with the practitioner, the contributions they share with their community have deeper roots. These contributions refer to the parent's *cultural and linguistic competence* (labeled as "cultural competence" in Figure 1), which can be described as the heritage and contemporary community cultural and language practices they acquire through ongoing interaction with their community. The ability to concurrently maintain access to dominant cultural practices, such as dominant language learning, is essential for families (Paris, 2012). These cultural and language practices are regarded as dynamic and shifting, engaged in an ongoing exchange with the individuals who identify with them (Paris, 2012), and may be theoretically similar to cultural

elements found in Bronfenbrenner's (1977) macrosystem. They incorporate broad practices, including tangible experiences and events, such as the celebration of cultural holidays or family traditions, as well as intangible experiences, such as cultural ways of knowing, family values, and language (Morrison, Robbins, Rose, 2008). This framework recognizes that the parent shares such cultural and language practices with their community in a reciprocal process that significantly contributes to the parent's strengths and sense of competence. This deeply rooted cultural and linguistic competence supports them in the strategies they incorporate with their child. Practitioners may help the parent reflect on and recognize their implicit capacity to support their child's development in PII activities (e.g., community relationships or specific parenting practices passed on to them from their families). In their work with parents, practitioners in EI/ECSE are called to promote family competence and build on existing family strengths (Division for Early Childhood, 2014). Individuals' cultural and linguistic practices are a significant source of this competence, which the practitioner must honor to successfully navigate their partnerships and help to sustain the community's cultural plurality (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014).

GROWTH

As the parent and practitioner engage in an ongoing coaching partnership, so also do they engage in a continuous process of growth, with marked opportunities for self-awareness and understanding. As is the case with the contributions they share, *growth* is experienced by partners differentially: through reflective practices for the parent and practitioner (Rush et al., 2003) and through an indirect process of *evolution* for the community.

Reflective practices

By engaging in reflection, both the parents and the practitioner can attain a more

nuanced understanding of their cultural positions, their cultural and linguistic practices, and especially for practitioners—how their work can sustain the cultural practices for both the family and the community (Paris, 2012; Wang et al., 2022). The practitioner's reflective practice will be based in the critical understandings, and established prior to and throughout their partnership with families. As the parent and practitioner continue their collaboration, opportunities for growth continue. For the practitioner, this growth may lead to innovations they make in their collaboration and coaching practices with families and children to support positive family and child outcomes. For the parent, growth may be demonstrated through greater awareness of their parenting competence and the cultivation of developmentally supportive interactions with their children. As an indirect participant, the child is provided an opportunity to grow via ongoing skill development, high-quality interactions with their parent, and a sustained connection to their cultural and linguistic practices. As the practitioner supports the parent's process of reflection, action, self-assessment, and self-awareness in the context of PII activities, the practitioner extends their learning. They also benefit from providing frequent opportunities for parents and colleagues to offer feedback on their partnership practices, further informing their own process of ongoing self-reflection.

Parents and practitioners also experience growth through a process of critical dialogue, which allows them to communicate their perspectives and interrogate their own practices (e.g., Kalyanpur & Harry, 1997). These partners have an opportunity to interrogate their cultural and linguistic practices and understand how these practices may intentionally or unintentionally adhere to the European-American values, perspectives, and norms ubiquitous in EI/ECSE (Banerjee & Luckner, 2014; Lee et al.,

2003; Paris & Alim, 2017). As they work together to identify and plan for strategies parents want to embed in activities with their child, parents and practitioners can choose to move away from perpetuating dominant culture values, perspectives, and norms. They may elect to reflect upon, explore, honor, and sometimes interrogate their culturally shaped practices. While open dialogue on these topics is encouraged among practitioners and parents within the PII partnership, they may choose instead to share this process with colleagues, friends, family, or other community members. Ultimately, ongoing reflection is essential in this collaborative, family-centered, culturally sustaining approach to PII.

Evolution

As touched on previously, the community experiences growth as well, though this is recognized as an organic process indirectly influenced by the parent-practitioner partnership. Growth and evolution at a community level contract and expand over time. As its members grow and change through their interactions with each other and with their environments (Rogoff, 2003), communities experience an ongoing and gradual process of evolution. Participation in PII activities may contribute positively to this evolutionary process. For instance, as the practitioner and family experience growth through ongoing self-reflection, dialogue, and advocacy for cultural practices, the community opportunistically strengthens. In turn, as the community evolves, the cultural and linguistic practices that its population demonstrates may evolve as well. It is this constant evolution that invites the parent-practitioner partners to honor both the traditional and the contemporary cultural and linguistic practices (Paris, 2012). Furthermore, the practitioner can consider how they support the growth of a more culturally and linguistic pluralist society, while promoting positive outcomes for the children and families they serve.

CONCLUSION

This framework responds to current concerns in the field of EI/ECSE regarding the increasing heterogeneity of the population of children and families served, in contrast to the limited cultural and linguistic representation of our workforce and the European American, middle-class values underlying field-wide practices. It expands on previous approaches to PII by simultaneously promoting positive outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families, enhancing partnership practices for practitioners, and centering considerations for sustaining the cultural and linguistic practices of families and communities. We share this framework to further guide practitioners supporting parents with PII, and those supporting practitioners in the field (e.g., researchers and administration), toward a service delivery model that is founded on care and respect for all families and their communities. The specific strategies' practitioners use may vary depending on their community. Therefore, we provide a broad guide rather than a set of

applicable strategies. To review, practitioners center reflective and critical dialogue practices at the beginning of and throughout their partnership with the family. To foster collaborative relationships with the family, practitioners leverage the family's strengths in working towards family-identified outcomes, while affirming the cultural and linguistic competence families share with their communities. All partners potentially experience growth through their work together in implementing PII. These may include differential opportunities for the parent and practitioner related to practice self-reflection and critical dialogue, greater recognition of their competence, and relevant skill development. Collaboration between the parent and practitioner may positively contribute to the ongoing process of evolution occurring within their communities. In summary, this framework aims to provide a springboard for how the various partners in a PII partnership can work collaboratively to promote child and family outcomes while sustaining the communities that support them.

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