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Applying Maslow's Hierarchy to the Parent/Teacher Relationship

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APPLYING *MASLOW'S HIERARCHY* TO THE PARENT/TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

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PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

- Develop a better understanding of *Maslow's Hierarchy* as it applies to the parent/teacher relationship

- To learn and exchange *strategies* for fostering positive, working relationships with parents of children with disabilities

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS SESSION

- Legal:
  - Parental involvement in the IEP process is required by law (IDEA, 2004)
- Educational:
  - Research shows that students whose parents are involved in their educational process achieve higher academically than their peers.
- Practical:
  - No one knows a child better than their own parent(s). Their input, support, and partnership is essential.
- Personal/Professional:
  - Teachers and schools play a powerful role in the life trajectories of students with disabilities and children from poverty

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- SES and Disability
- Maslow's Hierarchy
- The IEP Meeting
- General Strategies
- Conclusion

SPECIAL EDUCATORS

- Define your role/priorities as a special educator:

PARENTS

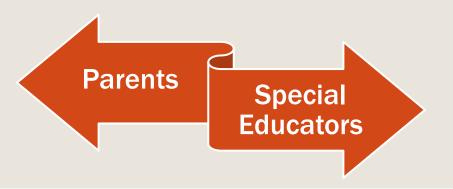- Define your role/priorities as a parent:

ROLES

Parents → ← Special Educators

Or?

← Parents | Special Educators →

CONSIDER…

"Poverty . . . may be a greater hardship than having a child with a disability"
(Thurston & Navarrette, 2003, p. 45).

POVERTY AND DISABILITY

- **Poverty and low SES are empirically linked with disability**
  - **Study 1** (Blair & Scott, 2002):
    - Sample: 159, 129 children in the state of Florida
    - Method: linked birth records with school record data
    - Findings:
      - "30% of LD placements among boys and 39% of LD placements among girls were attributable to what can be considered low SES markers" (Blair & Scott, 2002, p. 19).

  - **Study 2** (Thurston & Navarrette, 2003):
    - Sample: 263 low income mothers from 4 states (Kansas, Tennessee, Texas, Florida)
    - Method: Descriptive statistics and group comparisons (Chi square)
    - Findings:
      - 40% of mothers reported having a child with a disability
      - 2x s as many mothers who did not complete 8th grade had a child with a disability

IMPACT OF POVERTY ON STUDENTS

- Poor attendance & participation
- Increased frequency of relocations
- Poor brain development
- Illiteracy & low achievement
- Learners unready to learn
- Inadequate parental support
- Demand on exceptional education services

Wishon, P. (2009, November). When the economy falters: Poverty, culture, and education [PowerPointslides]. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Virginia Association of Colleges of Teacher Education and Association of Teacher Educators of Virginia, Sweet Briar, VA

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

- Family Impact
  - Class system – "Haves" and "Have-nots"
  - The disparity between America's rich and poor is the largest since 1928

- Effects
  - Family Stress & Dysfunction
  - Substance Abuse
  - Gang Activity
  - Homelessness
    - Approximately 1 out of every 50 children in America are homeless...about 1.5 million in all.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS FROM LOW SES BACKGROUNDS
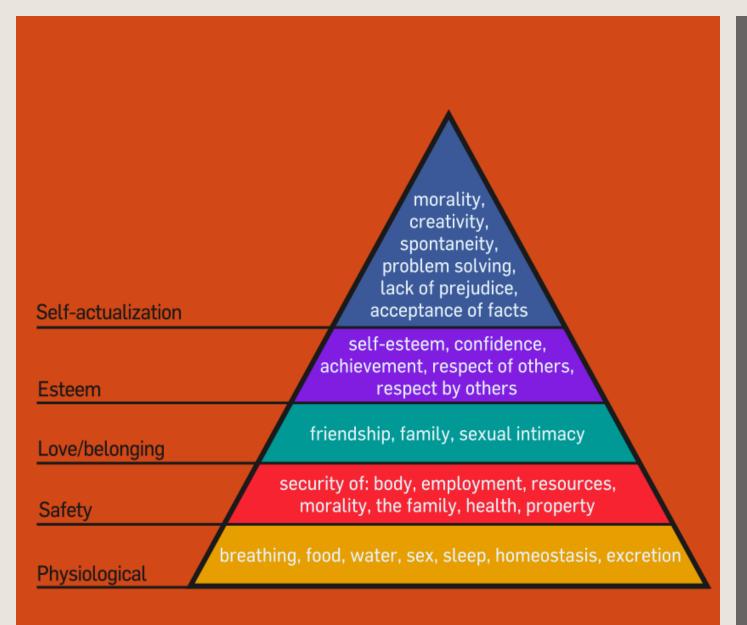
- Focused on coping and survival
- Little formal education
- Low self-esteem/self-confidence
- Uncomfortable around teachers
- Materially and emotionally stressed

See Thurston, L. P., & Navarrete, L. A. (2011). Rural, poverty-level mothers: A comparative study of those with and without children who have special needs. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, *30*(1), 39-46.

FURTHERMORE...

*"The IEP process places demands on parents **beyond** what is often expected in other types of family-school partnerships"*

~Newman, 2005, p. 7-4

Self-actualization

morality,
creativity,
spontaneity,
problem solving,
lack of prejudice,
acceptance of facts

Esteem

self-esteem, confidence,
achievement, respect of others,
respect by others

Love/belonging

friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Safety

security of: body, employment, resources,
morality, the family, health, property

Physiological

breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs

MASLOW'S (1943) HIERARCHY

- "A theory of Human Motivation"

- Grounded in psychology, includes elements of motivation

- Hierarchy begins with the most basic, fundamental needs; ends with self-actualization

- Basic level needs must be met before there can be a focus on higher level needs are focused

- Has been applied to:
  - Business
  - Marketing
  - Counseling
  - Psychology

SELF-ACTUALIZATION
ESTEEM
SOCIAL
SAFETY
PHYSIOLOGICAL

APPLIED TO STUDENTS

- Free and reduced breakfast & lunch
- Attention to proper lighting, heating, ergonomics, etc.
- School nurse on staff
- Focus on school culture and classroom community
- School counseling for social/emotional challenges
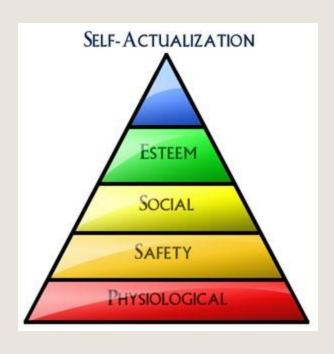- Student centered classrooms
- Gifted programming

PARENTS?

- A thorough and systematic review of the literature reveals that Maslow's Hierarchy has not yet been specifically applied to parents.

PHYSIOLOGICAL

- *"Can I put food on the table tonight?"*

- *"Will there be enough at the end of the month to pay the electric bill?"*

SAFETY

- Economic/financial safety
- Personal security
- Social

"Will this job offer health insurance?"

"Am I safe in this shelter?"

"Will this neighborhood be safer than where we came from?"
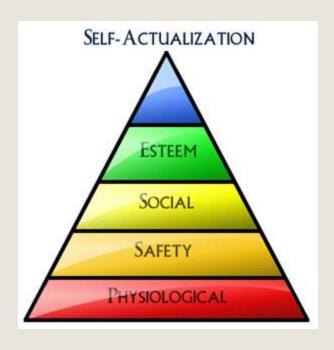
SOCIAL/LOVE/BELONGING

"Am I dressed right?"

"Will they see my point of view"?

"Why do I come when they have decided everything already?"

"I don't remember the meaning of the acronyms being used by everyone in this meeting... I feel like they are speaking another language"
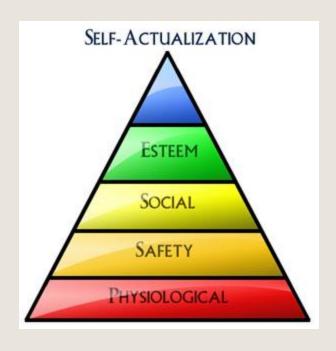
ESTEEM

"Will they value my opinion?"

"Do they think I am a bad parent?"

SELF-ACTUALIZATION

"Am I a partner in my child's educational process?"

"Did I help solve some problems?"

THE IEP MEETING

"Parents often view the IEP meeting as an opportunity for educators to brief them on the failures of their child" (Fish, 2006, p. 57)

RESEARCH ABOUT PARENTS PERCEPTIONS OF THE IEP MEETING

- Many parents feel guilty, intimidated, disenfranchised, alienated, and embarrassed
- Educators dominate the decision making process
- Recipients of information rather than collaborators
- Perceive their input is often not welcomed, respected, or valued
- Describe their experience at the meeting as traumatic, confusing, and complicated
- Reluctant to ask questions or reveal their lack of understanding of the process
- Ill equipped; at a disadvantage because they don't know the terminology
- Desire to be treated as equal partners in the process

- Fish, W. W. (2006). Perceptions of parents of students with autism towards the IEP meeting: A case study of one family support group chapter. *Education, 127*(1), 56-68.
- Fish, W. W. (2008). The IEP meeting: Perceptions of parents of students who receive special education services. *Preventing School Failure, 53*(1), 8-14.

PLANNING FOR THE MEETING

- Practice reframing: "Reframing provides a way for teachers to build a new perspective and vocabulary around the child and family. . . . Most negative behaviors can be viewed from a positive perspective" (p. 208)
  - State the behavior in observable terms, rather than labeling the type of behavior (e.g., "he threw a chair at a peer" rather than "he is violent and dangerous")
- Talk to the parents about the IEP meeting (the purpose, welcome them to bring information)
- Make parents aware of any potential conflicts ahead of time
- Ask parents if they have any concerns they would like you to address in the meeting
- Provide parents with clearly labeled DRAFT reports that will be discussed at the meeting

Weishaar, P. M. (2010). Twelve ways to incorporate strengths-based planning into the IEP process. *The Clearing House, 83*, 207 – 210.

PRESENTATION AT THE IEP MEETING

- Make nametags if it is a large group or there are people who the parents may not know
- Seat the parents next to the person taking notes and share the notes with the parents
- Begin the meeting with each person in attendance making a statement about the student's strengths and abilities.
- Address participants respectfully and professionally.
- Solicit parent input about goals for the future (discuss what the student can do and what you want the student to be able to do).

Weishaar, P. M. (2010). Twelve ways to incorporate strengths-based planning into the IEP process. *The Clearing House, 83,* 207 – 210.

"Remember that IEP team decisions have a profound effect on the student and family."

Weishaar, P. M. (2010). Twelve ways to incorporate strengths-based planning into the IEP process. *The Clearing House, 83,* 207 – 210.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS

For:
- teachers
- schools
- administrators
- teacher educators

KNOW YOUR STUDENTS' PARENTS

Subgroups of Parents	Ideas for Involvement
Two-Career Parents	Put things in print. These parents will read and keep informed.
Involved Parents	These parents are at school. The issue may be over involvement. Sometimes boundaries are necessary.
Non-Working and uninvolved Parents	This occurs at both end of economic spectrum. Phone banks where parents call for updates. Home contact is powerful.
Surrogate Parents	These are grandparents, foster parents, etc. Often need emotional support (e.g., assign mentor who touches base with them monthly).

Payne, R.K. (2005). *A framework for understanding poverty (4th ed.).* Highlands, TX: aha! Process, Inc.

HIDDEN RULES OF ECONOMIC CLASS

	Poverty	Middle Class	Wealth
Possessions	People	Things	"One of a Kind" objects, legacies, pedigrees
Personality	Is for entertainment, sense of humor is highly valued	Is for acquisition and stability. Achievement is highly valued	Is for connections, financial, political, social connections highly valued
Clothing	Clothing valued for individual style and expression of personality.	Clothing valued for its quality and acceptance into the norms of middle class. Label important.	Clothing valued for its artistic sense and expression. Designer important.
Time	Present most important. Decision made for moment based on feelings or survival.	Future most important. Decision made against future ramifications.	Traditions and past history most important. Decision made partially on basis of tradition decorum.
Education	Valued and revered as abstract but not as reality. Education is about facts.	Crucial for climbing success ladder and making money.	Necessary tradition for making and maintaining connections.
Language	Casual register. Language is about survival.	Formal register. Language is about negotiation.	Formal register. Language is about connection.
Driving Forces	Survival, relationships, entertainment.	Work and achievement.	Financial, political, social, connections.
Destiny	Believes in fate. Cannot do much to mitigate chance.	Believes in choice. Can change future with good choices now.	Noblesse oblige.

STRATEGIES: ON THE PERSONAL LEVEL

- Make a "good phone call home" the first week of school. **Note only positives!**
- Ask parents their preferred mode of communication (phone, email, agenda, conference, etc.)
- Schedule meetings according to their schedules
- Compliment their parenting skills
- Ask for their input and suggestions
- Ask them what works at home
- Use language that reinforces you are a partnership/team in the educational process of their child
- Prepare parents for taking an active role in the IEP meeting
- Be sensitive to cultural diverse values

STRATEGIES: PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

- Know questions/techniques to facilitate conferences
- Stay away from judgments; use data
- Identify vague qualifiers
  - "It's better"…..better than what?
- Identify fuzzy verbs
  - "always"
- Identify the emotion in a statement
- Identify the hidden rules or beliefs

STRATEGIES: SCHOOL LEVEL

- Ensure translators are available
- Assist with transportation and child-care for parents with young children
- Educate families about special education law
- Offer programs for fathers and extended families
- Provide life skills and life management workshops
- Offer computer classes
- Targeted outreach to parents of children with disabilities
  - Support groups
  - Forums for sharing and receiving information and support
  - Connect parents to services and programs in the local community

STRATEGIES: ADMINISTRATIVE

- Release time
- Special recognition
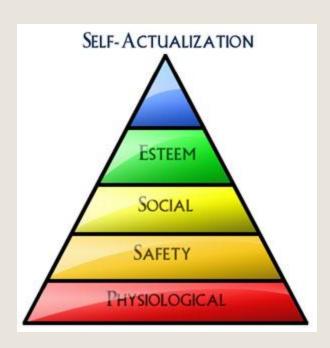- Compensatory funding
- Scheduling accommodations
- Moral support

- From:
  - Rock, M. L. (2000). Parents as equal partners: Balancing the scales in IEP development. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 32*(6), 30-37.

STRATEGIES/IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER TRAINING

- Teach strategies to improve parent involvement
- Explore difficult social and cultural issues
- Field experiences in schools with critical needs
- Field experiences in schools with cultural differences
- Provide Relevant and Enriching Professional Development
- Student reflections that examine the impact of their differences from others
- Examine the impact of poverty on learning & development
- Use culturally relevant curriculum
- Develop students of culture and difference

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES?

RESOURCES

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RESOURCES

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