

Review

Auditory-Verbal Practice: Toward a Family-Centered Approach. Edited by ELLEN A. RHODES and JILL DUNCAN, CHARLES C. THOMAS. Pp. 401. Springfield. 2010.

This is a book of many parts for many different people — be it educators, therapists, parents, students or simply those wanting to know more about tried and tested methods that work with deaf children. It doesn't shy away from presenting professionals' dilemmas and challenges around demonstrating impact in auditory verbal practices. It draws together in a clearly argued manner, the key elements, which define family centred work. The structure of each chapter is especially helpful in signposting readers, including as they do, a preamble, an overview and a summary. Thus the book reflects precisely, its own claim as a 'field guide'.

This book stresses the need for practitioners to develop and embed family-centred practice in early intervention programmes for deaf children.

Rhodes and Duncan collaborate with psychologists, counsellors, education specialists, auditory-verbal and family therapists, and parents in the book's three main sections made up of 15 chapters. The main sections provide distinct but complementary views of AVT's history, garners families' views on choice and engagement, includes a helpful overview of practice and outlines theoretical underpinnings and validation for family-centred practice.

Section one tackles the history and core constructs of Auditory-Verbal Practice. In this chapter, we are told that auditory-based learning goes back to the French physician Jean Itard who 200 years ago claimed that deaf children could be trained to hear words. It explains key post World War II development of wearable amplification and the influence of pioneers like Beebe, Griffiths and Pollack. In this foundation chapter, evidence based practice and ethical considerations are soundly reinforced.

The second section, explores research evidence and theories underpinning family influence on children, with particular attention to hearing impaired children. Six chapters (8–14) focus on methods, variables and realities of family centred practices. Chapter 8, by the chief editor, explains that very few early intervention programs are more than professional directed, family-allied, or at best, family focused. In chapter 10, Anita Bernstein and Alice Eriks-Brophy provide practical tips for supporting families relative to different variables, including single parents, bilingual families, grandparents, etc. Chapters 11 to 13 explore the realities and challenges of working in a truly family-centred fashion.

The 10 guiding principles for family-centred practice used by the Parent Infant and Preschool Program (2009) are described in chapter 14 alongside aspirational goals for early interventionists.

By far the most powerful and motivating chapter of the book is its final chapter with three accounts of real parental experiences, which highlight gaps in the existing system.

Reaching the end of the book, we are left wanting just a little more. More on the potential solutions to the dilemmas facing families with deaf children, especially in respect to system-wide responses and on 'where to next' in impact evidence for AVT.

Rhodes and Duncan set out to provide a 'field guide' for practitioners. With support from credible contributors they have achieved that aim. This is a valuable resource to deaf education and early intervention. It is both thought provoking and a pleasure to read.

Speech, Language and Hearing Centre

ROSE JOHNSON