

Book Review

Auditory-Verbal Practice: Toward a Family Centered Approach

Auditory-Verbal Practice: Toward a Family Centered Approach

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This is an important, comprehensive work that will not only support the growth of family support skills in listening and spoken language professionals, but of all rehabilitation practitioners. In that sense, it is somewhat unfortunately titled. It would be a loss if the readership of this book were confined to listening and spoken language professionals.

Ellen Rhoades and Jill Duncan divide the book into three separate sections: "Auditory-Verbal Practice," "Systemic Family Perspective," and finally, "Family-Based Auditory-Verbal Intervention." The chapters and sections flow well and are very well integrated, and the writing is clear and engaging throughout. The research bases of the discussions presented are exhaustive and current. This book would be worth reading for the literature reviews alone, but it offers much more than that. The editors and contributing authors provide not only the basic information to enable the novice reader to better evaluate evidence and understand practice, but extensive discussions that will challenge even lifelong students of family-centered intervention and listening and spoken language development.

The first section, "Auditory-Verbal Practice," provides the theoretical, historical, and evidentiary bases for auditory-verbal practice (AVP). The authors' use of the term "practice" versus "therapy" is intentional, as the term "therapy" immediately connotes a non-normative process and puts the emphasis on the professional rather than on collaborating with the families to best support listening and spoken language development for children with hearing loss. The third chapter in this section provides a discussion of ethical considerations related to AVP that will both challenge and inform. Indeed, that is the case throughout this book. The editors and authors do not shy away from potentially contentious issues, but meet them head on with a balanced, thorough discussion. Issues such as the locations in which AVP is carried out, the potential dangers of communicating a "more is better" philosophy to families, a narrow focus on parents (usually mothers), and the typically higher socioeconomic status and majority culture membership of both traditional families and practitioners are examined in a fearless, even-handed way within the theoretical framework of family-centered practice.

The second section, "Systemic Family Perspective," lays the groundwork for a family-systems approach to intervention. This section provides a breadth

of information that will support the development of systemic thinking in new practitioners, and depth that will enhance the understanding of more experienced readers. Chapters include discussions of enablement and environment, circles of influence (based on the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner), and an introduction to systemic family therapy and core constructs of family therapy. If there is a danger in this book, it might be in the temptation of newer practitioners to take on the role of a family therapist. The editors and authors are clear that this is not their intent, but argue, convincingly, that the theoretical bases of this discipline can provide insight regarding how practitioners might more effectively engage family systems versus individuals in supporting optimal listening and spoken language development.

The final section, "Family Based Auditory-Verbal Intervention," provides a rich array of "how to" advice to enable readers to become more family centered in their practice. Chapters address progressive steps toward more family-centered practice, socio-emotional considerations, ways to support families, family-centered assessments, application of family therapy constructs to listening and spoken language specialist practice, a family intervention framework, and an excellent discussion by Mary McGinnis of appropriate goals to support providers. The section closes with two family retrospectives that highlight the need for and benefit of an equal collaboration between family systems and practitioners in relation to achieving optimal listening and spoken language outcomes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

This book has an impressive international list of contributors including certified listening and spoken language specialists (LSLSs), educators, family therapists, and parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The editors state that it is intended as a text for graduate students in educational audiology, deaf education, speech-language pathology and early childhood special education. I would extend that to all of rehabilitation medicine, including physicians, occupational and physical therapists, psychologists, administrators, and policy-makers. Many organizations and practitioners espouse adherence to family-centered practice, but the practical application of this philosophy varies tremendously. This book will, I hope, serve as a means to clarify not only what we mean when we say we practice family-centered intervention, but how that philosophy might look in actual practice. I have ordered this book for both my practice and academic libraries, and plan to make several of the chapters required reading for my annual LSLS seminars with speech-language pathology graduate students. I strongly encourage others to do the same.

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