Slide 1:
No Narration

Slide 2:
By the second half of the 20th century, new ideas in biological science, psychology, and human services had begun to redirect thinking about disability. Evidence of this can be found in the provisions of the education law that was enacted since the 1960s.

Slide 3:
Chapter 2 presents four influences that gained prominence during the later decades of the 20th century. These trends have had significant impact on medical, therapeutic, and educational treatment. As a result of these fundamental ideas, social expectations and opportunities for children with disabilities and their families have changed in significant ways. These four trends are:

- The theory that intelligence is “plastic” and can be changed by environmental influences
- Systems theories, which take social interactions as well as biological heredity into account
- A social model of disability, which reframes the nature of disability
- The normalization principle, which redefined objectives for human services

Slide 4:
This lesson discusses family systems theory and ecological theory as they influenced treatment and opportunity for children with disabilities and their families. Family systems theory and ecological systems theory offered new ways of thinking about the family and the context of human development. Both theories have provided the theoretical bases for much of the research and recommended practice in the field of early intervention.

Slide 5:
Research had produced compelling evidence that heredity was not the only determinant of human potential. It then became important to discover other factors that also influence developmental outcomes. Investigators and theorists needed new, alternative conceptual models to advance their understanding.

Slide 6:
Families had been understood primarily as groups of individuals who were bound together by marriage and bloodlines. Biological relationships among individual family members were viewed as being most important. This model permitted stable issues such as paternity, birth order, and gender to be considered. However, family systems theory offered a new way of thinking about the dynamic aspects of family life (Cornwell, J. R. & Korteland, 1997). To understand family systems, begin by imagining a group of small, hollow, metal tubes of various lengths.

Slide 7:
Now, imagine that the tubes are interconnected by lines, as a in a set of wind chimes. In this configuration, each tube is part of a system. When one part of the wind chime is moved, it is possible to observe that all the other parts also are affected. Similarly, families are systems of unique, interconnected individuals. A change in one member affects the rest of the family. Family systems theory provides a way to conceptualize family members as interacting with and mutually influencing one another.
Slide 8:
In *family systems theory*, the family is regarded as a unit that functions as a dynamic system. Each family member has unique characteristics, a relationship to each of the other family members, and to the family as a whole. Each family member influences, and is influenced by, each of the other family members. Any change in the characteristics of one member, or in the relationships between family members, affects the entire family system.

Slide 9:
Family systems theory presumes that child and family have mutual influences. The child’s characteristics and actions affect other family members as well as the overall functioning of the entire family. Likewise, the family influences the development of the child. For example, an infant’s ability to see her mother’s smile, hear her voice, and feel her touch may motivate the child to smile, move, and vocalize. The baby’s behaviors may motivate the mother to smile, play with, talk to, and hold her child more.

Slide 10:
*Child characteristics can affect the nature of interactions, family relationships, and child development in many possible ways. What if a child is unable to hear, see or respond to the mother’s caregiving efforts? How might the characteristics of the baby influence the feelings and actions of the mother? How might the mother’s feelings and her responses to her child influence her relationships with other family members?*

Slide 11:
Of course, the composition of the family unit, the characteristics of individuals within the family, and the nature of interactions among family members are not the only environmental factors that influence the developing child. Just as changes in the air current affect a wind chime, social systems outside the family can impact development. *Ecological systems theory* offers a way of seeing development within the context of various, mutually influencing systems.

Slide 12:
The *ecological systems theory of human development* views the family as a system that is part of other social systems with which it mutually interacts. The child is understood as developing within the context of multiple levels of social systems that interact and influence one another. These levels include the:
- **microsystem level** - the child’s most immediate social contexts (e.g. the facility where the child was born and initially cared for, the family, the child care program) have direct influence.
- **mesosystem level** - interactions between the child’s various microsystems.
- **exosystem level** - the various community structures and services (e.g. employment opportunities, educational systems, health care systems, etc.) which do not directly include the child, but which have indirect effects on the child’s development; and
- **macrosystem level** - the overarching cultural values, social attitudes, and ideologies that influence systems at all levels.

Slide 13:
Think about your own family system. Your family members may be directly included in workplace settings, a child care program, your local school, or place of worship. How do **mesosystem level** interactions among these various settings affect your family? What about **macrosystem level** influences, such as the educational system, health care system, economic opportunities? How do social attitudes and cultural values, which are **exosystem level** influence you and your family?

Slide 14:
Urie Bronfenbrenner is credited with bringing the *ecological systems* perspective to research in human development and to public policy (Thurman, S. K., 1997). In 1923, at age six, he had immigrated to the U.S. from Russia with his parents. While employed as the research director at New York State Institution for the Mentally Retarded, his father had expressed grave concerns about the debilitating effects of institutionalization on young children. Urie Bronfenbrenner earned a Ph.D. in psychology, and later became Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at Cornell. His
work contributed greatly to the establishment of the Head Start program in 1965, and to early intervention programs for young children with disabilities and their families. (117)


Slide 15:
Head Start was launched in 1965, as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty. Based on Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems principles, the program focused on the whole child within the context of family and community systems. It included services to assist parents in meeting the developmental needs of their children, and involved parents in decision-making aspects of the program. In 1972, federal law required at least 10% of Head Start enrollment opportunities to be set aside for young children with disabilities.

Slide 16:
Both the ecological systems theory and family systems theory revolutionized thinking about the influence of environmental conditions on human development. The theories offered a basis for research which has demonstrated that providing supports at various levels, can enhance outcomes for children at developmental risk and for their families. Each theory has contributed important assumptions about human development that are foundational to early intervention research, policy, and practice.

Slide 17:
References:

Slide 18:
References:

Slide 19:
- Bronfenbrenner Life Course Center, Cornell University College of Human Ecology
- http://www.human.cornell.edu/che/BLCC/About/People/urie.cfm
- Family Systems Theory ( Bowen Theory)
- Office of Head Start, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families
- http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/
Chapter 2: Later 20th Century Influences on Treatment and Opportunity for Children with Disabilities
Lesson 2: Family Systems and Ecological Systems Theories

Outcome: Early intervention personnel demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical, historical, philosophical, legal and organizational components that provide the foundation for Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and South Carolina's BabyNet early intervention system.

Later 20th Century Influences
- Family Systems and Ecological Systems Theories
- Social model of disability
- Theory of "plastic" intelligence
- Normalization Principle
- Treatment and Opportunity

Family Systems Theory
A newer way of conceptualizing families

Family as a Group of Units
- Blood and marriage ties among family members
- Individuals inherit their characters from parents
Children in Family Systems

- Child characteristics and behaviors
- Characteristics of family members and family as a whole

Ecological Systems Theory
A way of viewing development in context

Multiple Systems Interact
- Child
- Microsystem
- Mesosystem
- Exosystem
- Macrosystem

Activity 1
Baby is unresponsive to Mother. How do you think that may affect Mother’s...
- feelings of competence as a parent?
- motivation to interact with her child?
- relationships with other family members?
Consider your own family. How do ecological systems influence your family system?
- Mesosystem
- Macrosystem
- Ecosystem

We as a nation need to be reeducated about the necessary and sufficient conditions for making human beings human. We need to be reeducated not as parents—but as workers, neighbors, and friends; and as members of the organizations, committees, boards—and, especially, the informal networks that control our social institutions and thereby determine the conditions of life for our families and their children.

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) with Young Friends

Summary
- Families members influence one another.
- Each child develops within the context of a unique family system.
- Families function within the context of other systems which directly or indirectly influence child development.

Policy
- Identity factors that influence child development:
  - Provide appropriate social support for families raising children who are at developmental risk due to poverty/disability.
  - Support child development at multiple system levels within family & community.
- A broader basis is established for research on issues related to disability and human development.
- More opportunities are created for participation of young children with disabilities in community-based services.
- Greater attention is given to parent involvement in decision-making.

Effects
- A broader basis is established for research on issues related to disability and human development.
- More opportunities are created for participation of young children with disabilities in community-based services.
- Greater attention is given to parent involvement in decision-making.

References

References
Resources

Bronfenbrenner Life Course Center, Cornell University College of Human Ecology
http://www.human.cornell.edu/che/BLCC/About

Family Systems Theory (Bowen Theory)
http://www.thebowencenter.org/pages/theory.ht

Office of Head Start, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs