

The Decision Tree

Child Indicator Seeds for Success



Evidence Based Practices for Ongoing Service Delivery

In last month's Update, we explored evidence based practices (EBP) for identifying the context and criteria for IFSP outcomes. This month, we'll explore strategies for keeping it meaningful to families during ongoing intervention and service delivery.

Remember the IFSP! During each early intervention visit, use the IFSP and discussions with the family about what worked/what was challenging since the prior visit to decide the priorities for and focus of the visit including: a) assisting the family in problem solving issues and challenges; and b) assisting the family in identifying naturally occurring learning opportunities.

- Begin each visit by asking focused open-ended questions to identify significant family events or activities and how well planned routines and activities have been going. **Revisit your joint plan!**
- Listen, observe, model, teach, coach and join the ongoing interactions of the family and child.
- Encourage the family to observe and assess the child's skills, behaviors, and interests, a continual part of ongoing functional assessment. **Observation!**
- Reinforce the family on the strategies they use that support their child's learning, giving specific examples. **Feedback!**
- Ask if there are any new issues and concerns the family wants to talk about. Explore if these concerns need to be address as new IFSP outcomes; if so, plan an IFSP review. **Develop a new joint plan!**

During each intervention visit, participate with the family or caregivers and the child in activities and/or routines as the context for promoting new skills and behaviors.

- Apply knowledge of current research and evidenced based practices in early intervention to the development and implementation of strategies and interventions with the child and family (e.g., participatory learning, strength and asset-based interventions, interest-based learning, parent-mediated practices, coaching practices, resource-based interventions, relationship-based intervention, responsive care-giving).
- Plan and match learning experiences, strategies and adaptations to individual characteristics of the child and family (e.g., work with Jason's aunt to help her feel more comfortable with him during bath time, so his mom can give his twin, Jack more attention). **Action/Practice!**
- Use materials, interactions and locations that are familiar, of interest to, and motivating for the child and family during intervention (e.g., help the mother get comfortable feeding the baby in different parts of the house so that they don't feel isolated from the rest of the family).
- Support and facilitate family and child interactions as primary contexts for learning and development (e.g., 5 year old brother crawls along the floor with toddler to find objects during playtime).
- Support parents' and caregivers' ability to implement strategies and activities within everyday routines and activities. **Reflection!**

Coaching Improves Child and Family Outcomes

Coaching builds the capacity of family members to promote the child's learning and development. This includes being with the people the child wants and needs to be with and doing what the child likes and needs to do (Shelden & Rush, 2001).

The key people in a child's life gain competence when a coach supports them in blending new or existing knowledge, skills, and experience to interact with a child in daily situations, and then assess and perhaps improve upon the results (Fenichel & Eggebeer, 1990).

The early childhood practitioner who uses coaching facilitates a dynamic exchange of information based on the learner's intentions and current level of skills necessary to promote the child's participation in family, community, and early childhood settings (Bruder & Dunst, 1999; Hanft, Rush, & Shelden, 2004).