

The Decision Tree

Child Indicator Seeds for Success



Tips for Engaging Families in Child Indicator Discussions

While information about the child indicators should be shared with families throughout the early intervention experience, it is especially important when completing the Assessment for Service Planning and when determining ratings. Families are critical members of the decision-making team, and serve as the primary source of insight into a child's ability to integrate the domain specific isolated skills found on assessment instruments into functional participation in everyday activities.

It is important that descriptive, functional information about children is gathered from families.

- 🌱 When gathering information from parents and caregivers, limit the questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no" response and those questions that are multiple choice. For example, "Does Anthony drink from a regular cup or sippy cup?" Rather, ask questions that allow parents and caregivers to tell you what they have seen. Of course, sometimes you will need to ask yes/no or multiple choice questions, but it is best to start with open-ended questions. When more specific information or clarification is needed, it may be appropriate to ask yes/no or multiple choice type questions.
- 🌱 On occasion you can provide further context by asking the parent or caregiver to think of the last time something happened and then describe it. By asking about a recent activity, the parent can recall the situation and explain it in more detail.

Sections IIB Daily Activities and Routines and IIC Family Concerns, Priorities, and Resources of Virginia's IFSP is a critical source of authentic information, which yields rich descriptions about the child's engagement, independence, and social relationships in the context of all that happens in a typical day.

- 🌱 Discuss with the family how information gathered from the family is used in planning the assessment and in developing IFSP outcomes, strategies and services since the focus of supports and services is on increasing the child's participation in family and community activities that are important to the family.
- 🌱 Explain that the family assessment information helps the team identify the child's strengths and needs, understand the family's priorities in relation to the three child indicators, and identify opportunities for incorporating intervention strategies into the child's and family's life.

The *Child Indicators Booklet* provides scripts to assist in explaining the child indicator rating process to families and questions and prompts that can be used to guide team conversation about the child's functioning in the three indicator areas.

Prompt family members to provide rich descriptions of children's true abilities by asking questions such as:

- What kind of cup does your child drink from?
- How independently?
- How much spilling?
- How much and how often?
And so on.

Additional Parent Interviewing Strategies:

- Use restating- repeating the exact words
- Summarize and invite opportunities to correct
- Avoid back to back and compound questions
- Cautiously use why questions
- Listen more than talk

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

Stephen R. Covey