



Early Intervention Teaming Tidbits



Early Intervention Teaming Tidbits

The purpose of this Facilitator's Guide is to be a companion tool for facilitators supporting individuals completing the Universal Online Part C EI Curriculum **Teaming Tidbits**. The **Teaming Tidbits** provide challenges, scenarios, and resources to support quality teaming behaviors. Quality teaming was first introduced in the [Foundational Pillars of Early Intervention Modules](#).

Foundational Pillars of Early Intervention – Quality Teaming Behaviors



Teaming Tidbits

Understanding Team Purpose

Share Common Tasks and Understand Unique Roles

Help One Another Learn and Grow

Value and Respect One Another

Communicate Openly and Honestly

Teaming Tidbits Background

The Early Intervention Teaming Tidbits series are developed by an international workgroup that formed out of the Early Intervention-Early Childhood Professional Development Community of Practice (EI-EC-PD-CoP). Members of the workgroup have extensive experience developing and delivering early intervention training. These five modules are part of a Universal Online Part C Early Intervention Curriculum that may be used to support quality early intervention practices.

The Teaming Tidbits include five modules that cover topical areas related to quality teaming practices in early intervention. The Tidbits are available in two formats:

1) Self-paced asynchronous online format developed in Articulate; and 2) PowerPoint presentation with slide notes illustrating key aspects of the different Tidbits.

The information in these Tidbits are applicable to every Part C program. Trainers may choose to insert state specific information in the PowerPoint presentation or may want to use state specific information as extension activities. The Tidbits can be viewed by an individual or a group of participants. Although the Tidbits are designed to be viewed online, trainers may choose to use the PowerPoint without the recorded audio to present the modules in a face-to-face or webinar format using the slide notes.

The Tidbits and their content may be used without charge for instructional purposes but may not be used for commercial gain. Facilitators may choose to use all or part of the presentation.






Whether you choose to use all or part of the presentation, you must credit the work in the following manner:

**Early Intervention-Early Childhood Professional Development Community of Practice. (2020).
Teaming Tidbits. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/universalEITeamingTidbits>**

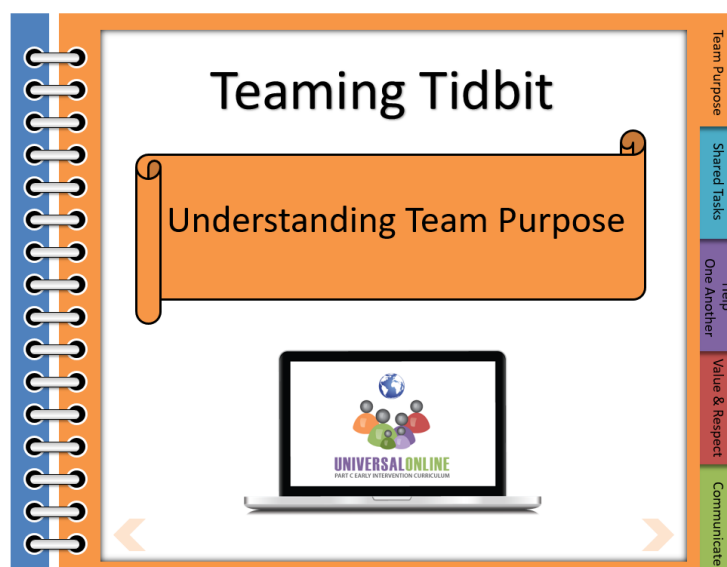
Citation of the work should not suggest that the developers of the Universal Online Part C Early Intervention Curriculum endorse you or your use of the work.

Facilitator's Guide Overview

This Facilitator's Guide is a tool to support individuals, organizations, and institutions providing training for early intervention personnel. The guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the online "Teaming Tidbit" modules. It is not a "stand alone" resource for distribution. Facilitators using this guide are expected to have content knowledge of the information in this module as well as skills needed for group facilitation. The role of the facilitator using this guide is to provide support, stimulate discussion, and answer questions from participants navigating through the Teaming Tidbits.

	Module activity that encourages participants to take notes in their Learner's Guide
	Optional reflective activity suggested in the Tidbit
	Facilitator's Guide reflection activity
	Things to Consider
	Resources

Facilitator's Guide



All members must understand that a team's purpose is to work together to support the EI program's mission and vision. The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices on Leadership, Family, and Teaming and Collaboration acknowledge the importance of having a shared understanding.

To begin the discussion of "Understanding Team Purpose," the facilitator can ask learners to respond to questions or finish statements that correspond with the slides in the teaming tidbit.



It is important for all team members to understand the team's purpose because....

Suggested responses may include:

- *Understanding the team's purpose supports collaboration and agreement related to why the team members work together.*
- *Having an agreed-upon purpose keeps all members on the same page; therefore, decreasing the likelihood of challenges or conflicts.*



What is your program's stated purpose? Who can help you figure this out if you are not sure?

Allow your learners to take turns sharing their program's stated purpose. Consider supporting them as they brainstorm who might help the learners determine their program's stated purpose if they are not aware of it. Suggested responses may include:

- *Asking a team member/administrator.*
- *Exploring materials that share information about your program with others (e.g., handouts, website).*



When there is a team member who doesn't believe in the team's purpose I...

Allow your learners to take turns sharing how they navigate having a team member that does not believe in the team's purpose. Suggested responses may include:

- *I feel frustrated when a team member does not believe in the team's purpose.*
- *I am confused about how to navigate this challenge.*
- *I am not sure how to talk to my team members about this challenge.*

This Tidbit includes two teaming challenges that support learners as they explore the topic. Following each scenario, there are questions, statements and additional resources the facilitator may use to encourage discussion.

Teaming Challenge – Scenario 1:

Claire is a certified teacher and a service coordinator. She has been providing special instruction and service coordination for three years. A new Physical Therapist, Susan, has joined Claire's team. Susan attends an IFSP meeting with Claire as part of her initial training. Claire notices that Susan seems to be upset when the team discusses goals and strategies for the child and especially when the team plans services. When Claire and Susan get back into the car, Claire asks if she is ok. Susan says, "I really wanted to work for the early intervention program because I love babies, but I can't plan goals and offer strategies outside of the motor domain. I certainly can't make recommendations for services that aren't PT. This violates my PT license and goes against my professional ethics."



The facilitator may consider asking the following questions to engage the learners:

- Uh oh! Has this ever happened to you?
- What questions might you have for Susan?
- What types of support or resources could you offer her if she doesn't understand how to carry out the team's purpose?"



Things to Consider: The facilitator may ask the following questions to engage the learners further.

- ✓ What makes her uncomfortable with this philosophy?
- ✓ What specific practices does she feel oppose her professional ethics and licensure?
- ✓ What did her training include?
- ✓ Has she ever seen this approach carried out by another PT?

Additional Suggestions: The facilitator may utilize these activities to engage the learner when additional content is desired.

1. Share examples of other IFSP outcomes and goals where motor activities are included across outcomes.
2. Suggest your team member shadow or find another more experienced provider in their professional discipline to observe how this is done in practice.

3. Watch and discuss Early Intervention – Changing the Mindset (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jA6IOF9A298>) which is a short video that provides insights from practitioners who have evolved their practices.

**Resources to Explore:**

All resources for the Teaming Tidbits can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>. Facilitators can use the references below to provide team members with additional information about the *Understanding the Team's Purpose*, including similarities across professional discipline competency areas.

- Professional organization position statements
- Cross Disciplinary Competency Alignment Article
- Key Principles Crosswalk

Teaming Challenge – Scenario 2:

Kenneth, a service coordinator, is at an initial IFSP meeting for a family who is new to early childhood intervention. After developing the IFSP outcomes, the team moved to discussing the type, frequency, and intensity of services that are needed to support the family.

Kenneth asked Sheila and Tyson (the parents) what types of support they needed to help their son meet his IFSP outcomes. Tyson said, “Well, I thought we would be getting two times a week speech therapy and three times a week PT. That’s what our pediatrician said Tony needed. I have a copy of the prescription.”



The facilitator may consider asking the following questions:

- Uh oh! Has this ever happened to you?
- What would you say to Sheila and Tyson in this situation?
- What resources could you offer them?
- What could you have done differently prior to the IFSP meeting?”

Things to Consider: The facilitator may say the following statements to engage the learner further in this scenario.



- ✓ Acknowledge the family’s and physician’s perspective.
- ✓ Remember the pediatrician is part of the team.
- ✓ Share, explain and revisit the mission and team purpose when families enter early intervention and throughout several points in time, including the IFSP meetings.

Additional Suggestions: The facilitator may utilize these activities to engage the learner when additional content is desired.

1. Share and discuss a video: Early Intervention: A Routines-Based Approach- Part 1: Traditional vs. Routines (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpxGC6G0HMY>).
2. Review and discuss “Do the Math” (<http://tactics.fsu.edu/pdf/HandoutPDFs/TaCTICSHandouts/NaturalEnvironment>

[s/math.doc](#)) which helps explain how ongoing support to families increased the child's practice throughout every day activities.

3. Identify, distribute, and review public relation materials that explain and illustrate their program's mission and purpose.



Resources to Explore: All resources for the Teaming Tidbits can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>. Facilitators can use the references below to provide team members with additional information about the *Understanding the Team's Purpose*, including similarities across professional discipline competency areas.

- Early Intervention, IDEA Part C Services, and the Medical Home: Collaboration for Best Practice and Best Outcomes
- American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement: The Role of the Medical Home in Family-Centered Early Intervention Services

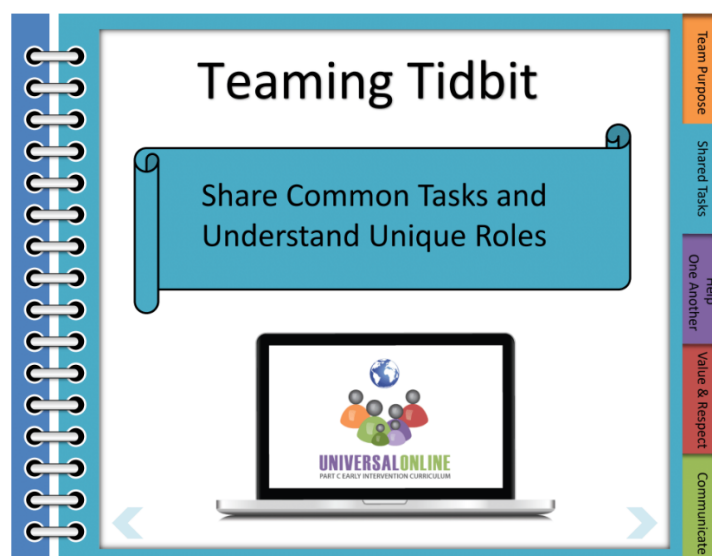
Wrap Up: The facilitator may wrap up the content by

- Sharing that families can always choose to access services outside of Early Intervention. Consider asking learners if they were aware of this or if they have had families that sought services outside of EI.
- Sharing final quote with the learners.

References

- Division for Early Childhood. (2014). DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices>.
- McWilliam, R.A. (Ed.) (2010). *Working with families of young children with special needs*. New York: Guilford Press. ISBN-978-160623-539-3.
- McWilliam, R. A. (2010). *Routines-based early intervention: Supporting young children and their families*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes. ISBN-13: 978-1-59857-062-5 or ISBN-10: 1-59857-062-5.
- Keilty, B. (2017). *Seven essentials for family-professional partnerships in early intervention*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Keilty, B. (2010). *The Early Intervention Guidebook for Families and Professionals: partnering for success*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Facilitator's Guide



When working in Early Intervention we all have the same mission and common goal, to improve the lives of children and families by helping them to become active, successful participants throughout their lives in a variety of settings. To work together as a successful team, members must share their knowledge and expertise with one another. The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices in Leadership, Family, and Teaming and Collaboration recognize the uniqueness team members bring to the relationship and the importance of sharing knowledge, expertise, and decisions with one another.

To begin the discussion of “Share Common Tasks and Understand Unique Roles,” the facilitator can ask learners to respond to questions or finish statements that correspond with the slides in the Teaming Tidbit.



It is important for all team members to bring a unique perspective influenced by their experiences, culture, education, training, and ongoing professional development because...

Suggested responses may include:

- *It is important for each of us to bring a unique perspective so that we can support the child's overall development.*
- *It is important that we bring a unique perspective so that we can learn to relate to and engage with families of different backgrounds.*
- *It is important because the more perspectives we have, the stronger our team can be as we work together to support children and families.*
- *Team members can support each other in areas of needs through their unique experiences and background.*



What are the common tasks and unique roles of team members that allow them to work efficiently together?

Allow your learners to take turns sharing common tasks and roles of team members. Suggested responses may include:

- *Sharing the number of professionals on their teams and the roles those individuals serve (e.g., speech language pathologist, service coordinator).*
- *Sharing common tasks including conducting evaluations, completing family-driven interviews, writing IFSP outcomes, and home visits.*



The assets I bring to the team are... I share my areas of expertise by...

Allow your learners to take turns sharing what assets (strengths) they bring to the team and their areas of expertise. Answers here will vary based on background. It may be helpful to brainstorm potential strengths of the learners prior to the facilitated activity. Then, if learners struggle to identify their own strengths, you can suggest areas of expertise or areas you feel are assets.

This Tidbit includes two teaming challenges that support learners as they explore the topic. Following each scenario, there are questions, statements and additional resources the facilitator may use to encourage discussion.

Teaming Challenge – Scenario 1:

Johan is an early childhood educator seeking input from Will, an Occupational Therapist on the team, so they can work together on strategies related to an IFSP outcome. Johan would like to coordinate a time to meet Will at the family's home so they can work together during one of their visits to address an outcome related to mealtime.

Will seems hesitant to help and says he doesn't have time to meet and that he is focused on providing supports related to fine motor development. Johan feels that Will doesn't understand the importance of sharing their unique expertise with one another so they can work together on common tasks, including IFSP outcomes.



The facilitator may consider asking the following questions to engage the learners:

- Uh oh! There seems to be a misunderstanding about what are the shared tasks and importance of understanding the unique roles each person brings to the early intervention team.
- Has this ever happened to you?
- What would you say or do?



Things to Consider: The facilitator may provide the following suggestions to engage the learners further.

- ✓ Clarify the reasons you are seeking support
- ✓ Ask questions to better understand why your teammate is hesitant to engage in this shared task.
- ✓ If necessary, reflect with a supervisor or another team member and see how they may support your request.

Additional Suggestions: The facilitator can also discuss how to enlist team members to:

- Ask for the whole team's input on the outcome you are addressing.
- Arrange another time to talk with the team member who has the unique expertise you seek outside of the home visit to discuss strategies.
- Provide positive feedback to let your team member know how helpful their unique perspective is.

The facilitator can also share other ways to help team members clearly identify roles and shared tasks.

- Review your program's written guidance on shared tasks.
- Engage in an open conversation with the team about what it means to share tasks.



Resources to Explore: All resources for the Teaming Tidbits can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>. Facilitators can use the references below to provide team members with additional information about the *Share Common Tasks and Understanding Unique Roles*, including finding a common lens across disciplines. The facilitator may ask learners to explore the following resource(s)

- "Finding a common lens" article.

Teaming Challenge – Scenario 2:

Mairead is working with Brett and his father, Michael, who is the primary caregiver. Mairead understands that children learn best when interacting with familiar caregivers during their routines (e.g. meal time, story time, etc.). When she arrives at her most recent visit, Brett's father says "Oh look, your teacher is here. Go sit and play with her." Brett grabs her hand and takes her into the other room and Michael excuses himself to the kitchen so he can do the dishes.



The facilitator may consider asking the following questions:

- Uh oh! It seems like Michael has a different expectation or understanding of his role than Mairead does.
- What would you do in this situation?
- Has this ever happened to you?
- What did you say or do to help the parent better understand their role in early intervention?



Things to Consider: The facilitator may say the following statements/questions to engage the learner further.

- ✓ The family is the expert about their child.
- ✓ Families share common team tasks, too.
- ✓ The facilitator may also discuss the following: If you find yourself in a situation like Mariead it would be important to pause and reflect on why the family member might have acted in this manner. Ask learners to respond to the following:
 - What conversations have you had with the family to clarify their role on the team?
 - How have you and other team members described EI to the family?
 - How have you explained what happens on an early intervention visit?
 - What do you know about the family's culture that may impact their participation?

Additional Suggestions: The facilitator may also discuss the following - If something like this happens it may help to invite the family to join you and revisit conversations or resources related to:

- The important and unique expertise the family brings to the team.
- Natural environments and the family's role during a home visit.
- Family priorities and the relevance of the IFSP outcomes and strategies to the family.
- Shared tasks families and providers work on together.
- Family routines and the best time and place for the visits to occur where the family can actively participate.

The facilitator may discuss when and how these conversations can occur. Additionally, asking your learners to engage in role play to practice these conversations may be helpful.

Resources to Explore: All resources for the Teaming Tidbits can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>. Facilitators can use the references below to provide team members with additional information about the *Share Common Tasks and Understanding Unique Roles Tidbit*, including exploring the family's role on the team.

- The Family's Role in Early Intervention: How You Can Help Your Child
- Families are Full Team Members Checklist
- Participating on Your Child's Team
- Sharing What You Know with Your Team

Wrap Up: The facilitator may wrap up the content in this module by

- Sharing the quote listed.

References

Division for Early Childhood. (2014). DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices.>

- Keilty, B. (2010). *The early intervention guidebook for families and professionals: Partnering for success*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- National Institute of Corrections. (2020). Evidence-based decision making. Retrieved from <https://info.nicic.gov/ebdm/node/63>
- Rush, D. & Shelden, M. (2011). *The early childhood coaching handbook*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

Facilitator's Guide



To begin the discussion of “Help One Another Learn & Grow,” the facilitator can ask learners to respond to questions or finish statements that correspond with the slides in the teaming tidbit.



Teaming is important because...

Suggested responses may include:

- *Teaming is a time to address concerns and challenges.*
- *Teaming helps us to engage in open and honest dialogue with each another.*
- *Teaming helps us to learn and share information with one another so we can better support children and families.*
- *Teaming allows us to set goals that lead to collaboration and better engagement with children and families.*



Although we know it is important to work together as a team, it can be complicated. Why do you think teaming is complicated?

Allow the learners some time to share why they believe teaming is complicated. Consider asking them to share some challenges they have had with teaming.



I have received or given support to help another team member grow and learn...

Allow your learners to take turns sharing when they have provided support that led to the learning and growth in another team member. Suggested responses may include:

- A time when they collaborated with a professional from a different discipline to strengthen that team member's services/supports.
- A time when they provided professional development/training to members of their team.

This Tidbit includes two teaming challenges that support learners as they explore the topic. Following each scenario, there are questions, statements and additional resources the facilitator may use to encourage discussion.

Teaming Challenge – Scenario 1:

Marisa recently attended a professional development opportunity where she learned some new ideas and strategies that she wants to share, discuss, and apply with her team members. Unfortunately, her team members do not always set aside time for learning and growth opportunities and Marisa often finds herself without anyone to partner with as she tries new things.

In fact, she sometimes gets resistance from team members when she asks for help implementing a new strategy and finds herself stuck doing the same things, she has always done so she can be a team player. Sometimes this leaves her feeling conflicted because some of the things other team members are currently practicing don't appear to be aligned with evidence-based practices.



The facilitator may consider asking the following questions to engage the learners:

- Uh oh! Has this ever happened to you?
- What can or would you do to turn the challenge into an opportunity for you and your team to learn and grow?



Things to Consider: The facilitator may provide the following suggestions to engage the learners further.

- ✓ A team that gets together to learn about new evidence-based practices, and shares their knowledge and skills, has a much better chance of providing effective interventions that meet the unique needs of individual children and their families. *The facilitator may also ask the learners when (and if) they have collaborative meetings scheduled with team members.*
- ✓ What do you know and what do you need to know?
- ✓ What do your team members know?
- ✓ How can you work together? *The facilitator may spend time here problem-solving challenges (e.g., if the team does not schedule regular meetings, this can be an opportunity to discuss the importance of gathering consistently to collaborate).*

Additional Suggestions: The facilitator can discuss some additional practices to help the

learners learn and grow from their team members. The facilitator can ask the learners if these practices occur with their team. These include:

- Sharing resources and research from the professional development opportunities.
- Meeting with your team for a discussion where everyone can ask questions and learn together.
- Partnering with a team member to share ideas, strategies and practices and seek support.
- Building in opportunities to learn and grow with team members on a regular basis (e.g. co-visits, phone calls, video conference calls, IFSP meetings).
- Inviting team members to attend future professional learning opportunities with you.



Resources to Explore: All resources for the Teaming Tidbits can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>

The facilitator may ask learners to explore the following resource(s)

- Teaming and Collaboration Checklist

Teaming Challenge – Scenario 2:

Sonjay is a service coordinator who has been partnering with Claudia and Jorge, the parents of Roberto since he entered early intervention. Sonjay has shared information about transitioning at age three every time they have met, starting at intake. The time has come for transition planning as Roberto approaches 30 months of age.

On this visit Sonjay reviews transition options, discusses potential risks to delaying the transition timelines, and the family has expressed that they are not interested in making the referral to a local education agency at this time. Sonjay is disappointed and not sure what else he can do. He feels the parents are struggling with the decision to proceed and is not sure how to help them grow and learn during this time of transition.



The facilitator may consider asking the following statement/questions:

- Has this ever happened to you?
- What would you do if you were Sonjay?
- Are there other team members who might be involved?
- What would you do or say to turn the challenge into an opportunity for your team, including the family, to learn and grow through this process?



Things to Consider: The facilitator may say the following statements/questions to engage the learner further.

- ✓ Families are full team members when they participate in all aspects throughout their journey in early intervention. Families are the most knowledgeable about their child and family life and have much to contribute to child and family interventions. Families build trust and rapport with their team as they learn and grow together.
- ✓ The facilitator may also discuss the following:

- When team members, such as Roberto's parents, are not on the same page as the service coordinator or provider, there needs to be time to explore questions and concerns through a meeting or a conversation.
- The purpose of this discussion would be to learn about the family's hopes and what can be done. This may take place through multiple encounters which is why transition planning is an ongoing process.

Additional Suggestions: The facilitator may also discuss the following additional practices:

- Allow for adequate time for open dialogue and engage in periodic discussions to learn from one another.
- Present new information to one another in a variety of ways (e.g., discussions, group problem solving, handouts, visits to school or community programs).
- Invite another team member the family trusts to engage in dialogue with the family about their hopes, dreams and fears.
- Connect the family with another family who can share their experiences.

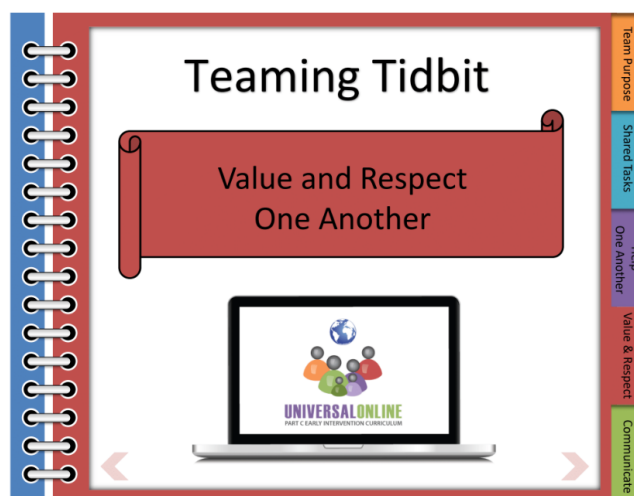
Wrap Up: The facilitator may wrap up the content in this tidbit by

- Sharing the quote listed.

References

- Division for Early Childhood. (2014). DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices.>
- Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N. Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2000). Schools that learn. A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education. New York: Doubleday and Currency.
- Keilty, B. (2017). *Seven essentials for family-professional partnerships in early intervention*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (2020). Teaming and collaboration practitioner practice guide 1 of 3: Families are Full Team Members. Retrieved from https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/TC-1_Families_Are_Full_Team_Members_2018.pdf
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (2020). Collaboration to learn and grow checklist. Retrieved from https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/TC_Collaboration_Learn_Grow_2018.pdf
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (2020). Teaming and collaboration practitioner practice guide 3 of 3: Team members helping one another to learn and grow. Retrieved from https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/TC_Collaboration_Learn_Grow_2018.pdf

Facilitator's Guide



To begin the discussion of “Value and Respect One Another” the facilitator can ask learners to respond to questions or finish statements that correspond with the slides in the teaming tidbit.



Value and respect are so important because...

Suggested responses may include:

- *Respect is a key element to building strong relationships.*
- *Respecting and valuing others demonstrates that you are willing to listen to the ideas and feelings of others.*



Although we know it is important to value one another, sometimes team members do not treat others with respect. Have you experienced challenges where a team member was not respecting you?

Allow the learners some time to share their experiences with others. The facilitator may consider sharing a personal experience here as this may be a more challenging topic to discuss for some.



My team members demonstrate respect for one another by...

Allow your learners to take turns sharing ways they have seen or demonstrated respect for one another. Suggested responses may include:

- *When a team member really listened to my thoughts and perspective.*
- *When I was included in a team discussion.*

This Tidbit includes two teaming challenges that support learners as they explore the topic. Following each scenario, there are questions, statements and additional resources the facilitator may use to encourage discussion.

Teaming Challenge – Scenario 1:

Leona and Ushi are your fellow team members. Leona, a Speech Language Pathologist, has more than 15 years of experience in early intervention. Ushi, an Occupational Therapist, has worked within the school system for over 30 years and has been working in early intervention for nearly a year. Both are confident in their skills and abilities.

Leona has expressed concerns about Ushi to you and other team members. You've heard her complain that Ushi can't keep up with the pace, is too old, and doesn't have enough experience in early intervention. Ushi feels Leona doesn't like her but doesn't know why. She has shared that her portion of their team assessment report is always rewritten by Leona. The tension between Leona and Ushi is becoming noticeable during team meetings and you have concerns about how this may impact the family and the quality of the team.



The facilitator may consider asking the following questions to engage the learners:

- Has this ever happened to you?
- What would you do if you were caught in the middle of two team members who were at odds?
- Have you ever felt you were not respected or valued on a team?



Things to Consider: The facilitator may provide the following suggestions to engage the learners further. A team that gets together to learn about new evidence-based practices, and shares their knowledge and skills, has a much better chance of providing effective interventions that meet the unique needs of individual children and their families. *The facilitator may also ask the learners when (and if) they have collaborative meetings scheduled with team members.*

- Listen objectively without taking sides.
- Share respectfully and honestly your feelings and concerns for how behaviors impact the team.
- Consult with a supervisor to support you as needed.
- Suggest your team members talk with a supervisor or team leader for support and solutions.
- Support and encourage both individuals as valuable members of your team.

Additional Suggestions: The facilitator can discuss some additional practices to help the learner's value and respect each other. The facilitator can ask the learners if these practices occur with their team. These include:

- If your team has established "norms of collaboration" with regards to professionalism, respect, value, and team boundaries, share and refer to it.
- If your team has not already developed or articulated clear behaviors or norms you may want to explore the Seven Norms of Collaboration: A Supporting Toolkit. <https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>



Resources to Explore: All resources for the Teaming Tidbits can be found here

<https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>

The facilitator may ask learners to explore the following resource(s):

- Teaming and Collaboration Checklist

Teaming Challenge – Scenario 2:

The Murdoch family includes triplets who were born at 27 weeks and were recently discharged from the NICU. The family has lots of questions about what to expect for their babies. They are still trying to figure out their new and challenging routine at home. Mrs. Murdoch is visibly tired and expresses her frustration with everything she is trying to manage with insurance bills, sleep schedules and the various services and supports being offered to their family at this time.

Candi plans for the assessments and upcoming Individualized Family Service (IFSP) meeting with the family. She feels she is the target of Mrs. Murdoch's frustrations. Candi is not sure what she is doing wrong and feels many of Mrs. Murdoch's comments show a lack of trust and respect towards her.



The facilitator may consider asking the following statement/questions:

- Has this ever happened to you?
- Have you ever been in a situation like this where you just couldn't do anything right with a family?
- What would you do to establish respect and value in the family's eyes?



Things to Consider: The facilitator may say the following statements/questions to engage the learner further.

- ✓ Even if you have tried some of the suggested practices, remember that sometimes a team member may not always make a good fit with a family for a variety of reasons. If this happens, remind the family they can choose a different provider and give information they need to initiate this request.

Additional Suggestions: The facilitator may also discuss the following additional practices:

- Engage in reflective practice with another team member or supervisor to determine how you may improve your practice and interactions.
- Talk with another parent through a parent training center to gain insight on a parent's perspective.
- Have an open-ended discussion with the family to make sure the support you are offering is currently what they need and want.
- Consider the family circumstances. Experiences and culture and identity what you need to learn more about. Things like formal and informal supports and immediate concerns related to child development.

Wrap Up: The facilitator may wrap up the content in this tidbit by:

- Sharing the quote listed.

References

- Division for Early Childhood. (2014). DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices.>
- Heathfield, S.M. (2020). How to demonstrate respect in the workplace. Retrieved from <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-demonstrate-respect-in-the-workplace-1919376>
- Keilty, B. (2017). *Seven essentials for family-professional partnerships in early intervention*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Manning, G., Curtis, K., & McMillen, S. (1996). *Building community: The human side of work*. Cincinnati, OH: Thomson Executive Press.
- Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N. Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2000). *Schools that learn. A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education*. New York: Doubleday and Currency.

Facilitator's Guide



To begin the discussion of “Communicate Openly and Honestly,” the facilitator can ask learners to respond to questions or finish statements that correspond with the slides in the teaming tidbit.



Communication is important because...

Suggested responses may include:

- *Communication is the exchange of information AND meaning among early intervention team members as they support the family and one another.*
- *Communicating a message in an open and honest way is only one part of this communication. It is essential to also make sure the meaning and intent of the message is understood.*
- *Teams communicate via spoken, written and non-verbal language during formal and informal interactions such as team meetings, home visits, memos, phone calls, emails, etc.*



Although we know it is important to communicate with our team members, it can be challenging. Why do you think communication is challenging?

Allow the learners some time to share why they believe teaming is challenging. Consider asking them to share some challenges they have had with communication.



What does open and honest communication look like to you?

Allow your learners time to consider what open and honest communication looks like. Ask them to share examples of what they have observed among teams.

Suggested responses may include:

- *A time when providers from different disciplines developed a joint plan together.*
- *A time when a disagreement occurred, and two providers worked together to come to a solution.*

This Tidbit includes two teaming challenges that support learners as they explore the topic. Following each scenario, there are questions, statements and additional resources the facilitator may use to encourage discussion.

Teaming Challenge – Scenario 1:

Jessica, a special instructor, and Elijah, a physical therapist, are both working with Tommy, a two-year-old. Jessica and Elijah have not spent much time working together as they both work towards an IFSP outcome related to Tommy's ability to climb stairs independently.

On a recent visit, Tommy's mother reported to Jessica that Elijah left a plastic step and would like Tommy to practice on this step 10 times per day. Tommy's mother questioned why she couldn't practice on the actual steps in the home. Jessica also has questions and concerns about this recommendation and doesn't know how to communicate this with Elijah since they don't know each other well.



The facilitator may consider asking the following statement and questions to engage the learners:

- Uh oh! Has this ever happened to you?
- Have you ever had to engage in conversation with someone about their practices who you don't know well?
- How might you communicate in an open and honest way to address your concerns?



Things to Consider: The facilitator may provide the following suggestions to engage the learners further. Then, after discussion, the facilitator may ask the learners if they have used any of these strategies.

Before the conversation:

- ✓ Make time to get to know the other person to build trust and rapport
- ✓ Clarify what it is you want to discuss and schedule a time to meet.
- ✓ Plan for how and where the meeting can happen and who should be present.
- ✓ Consider what materials you will need to effectively communicate such as checklists, DEC Recommended Practices, etc.

During the conversation:

Establish a safe and welcoming climate in which a discussion can occur.

- ✓ Be a good listener and consider your non-verbal language including body language.
- ✓ Ask questions to better understand your team member and the practices they use.
- ✓ Share concerns, perspectives, and resources and consider how they support IFSP outcomes.
- ✓ Discuss and problem-solve solutions.

After the conversation:

- ✓ Reflect on what went well and ways you can improve your communication.
- ✓ Follow up on any activities you committed to complete.
- ✓ Send a thank you note to the team member(s) who took time to participate.
- ✓ Identify ways you might continue to build trust and rapport.



Resources to Explore: All resources for the Teaming Tidbits can be found here

<https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>

The facilitator may ask learners to explore the following resource(s)

- How to improve Team Communication the Ultimate Guide which is helpful resource for teams.
- The five stages of team development: A case study.
- Collaboration and Teamwork with Families and Professionals (book chapter).

Teaming Challenge – Scenario 2:

Patrick is facing a challenging situation as he tries to figure out the best way to communicate and connect with a family he has been working with for a few months. Over the last few months, the family has cancelled their visits more than they have kept them and for the last three visits he has arrived only to find no one home. When he calls to confirm or reschedule, the family is apologetic and has a valid reason for missing the appointment. Patrick isn't sure the best way to communicate the expectations and shared responsibilities of a home visit.



The facilitator may consider asking the following questions:

- Uh oh! Has this ever happened to you?
- What would you do if a family was not at their home for three visits in a row when you arrive?
- How do you use open and honest communication to determine what the problem may be?



Things to Consider: The facilitator may say the following statements/questions to engage the learner further.

- ✓ Each family is unique. Life events and family priorities are fluid and may impact a family's participation in early intervention.
- ✓ In this scenario is it important to consider what might be the reason for the missed visits. Providers may want to personally reflect on what they know about this family.

- Something may have changed in the family's life circumstances.
- Other team members may be having similar experiences.
- Perhaps Patrick said something during a previous visit that was difficult for the family.

Additional Suggestions: The facilitator may utilize these activities to engage the learner when additional content is desired.

When you are ready, it will be important to engage in a conversation with the family, over the phone or in person, using open-ended questions to gain an understanding of what's happening. Questions you might ask of the family include:

- What are your current priorities and how do you see your participation in early intervention?
- What is different or has changed within the family life?
- Are there other times, locations or routines that might work better for the visit?
- Are they interested in continuing to work with you as a provider?
- Facilitators can also suggest use of a tone of voice that is polite and professional and be sure to create a climate where open dialogue and discussion can happen. If the family chooses to discontinue their services with you, it is important to let them know they may return at any time and that they may contact their service coordinator if they wish to return to the system or choose another provider.
- Facilitators should also let providers know that if they are unable to continue to serve the family due to a lack of responsiveness, then be sure the family has received written prior notice of this change. If this is the case, be sure to check the policies and procedures within your EI system to ensure you understand what communications and timelines are expected when there is going to be a change in provider.



Resources to Explore: All resources for the Teaming Tidbits can be found here <https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>

The facilitator may ask learners to explore the following resource(s)

- Early Intervention Strategies for Success Blog
- The ECTA Center Teaming and Collaboration Practitioner Guide
- Promoting Family Engagement: Communicating with Families
Do's and Don'ts of Effective Communication with Parents

Wrap Up: The facilitator may wrap up the content in this module by

- Sharing the quote listed.

References

Division for Early Childhood. (2014). DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended->

[practices.](#)).

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (2020). Teaming and collaboration practitioner practice guide 3 of 3: Team members engaging in quality communication. Retrieved from

https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decrp/PGP_TC2_qualitycommunication_2018.pdf

Steen, M. (2020). The 6 phases of a difficult conversation: A strategy guide for teachers. Retrieved from

<https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/teachers-difficult-conversations-6-phases/>