

Early Intervention Teaming Tidbits



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The purpose of this Learner’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>**

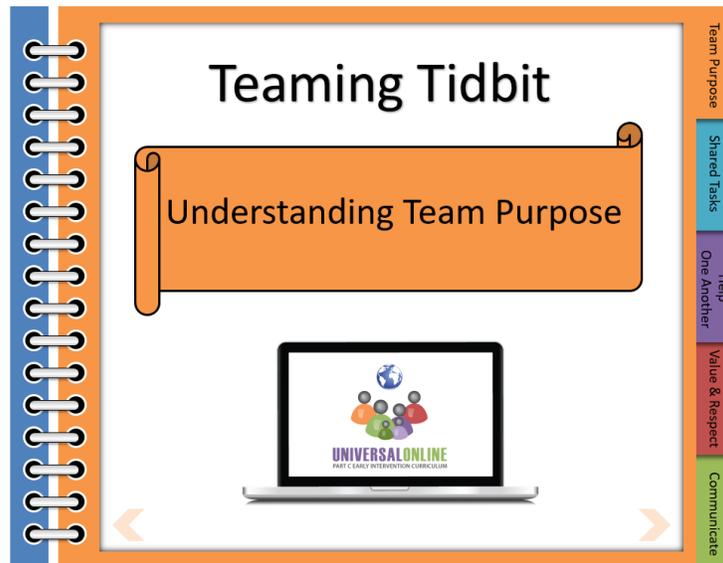
Citation of the work should not suggest that the developers of the Universal Online Part C Early Intervention Curriculum endorse you or your use of the work.

Learner's Guide Overview

This Learner's Guide is a tool to support early intervention personnel as they participate in training activities. The guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the online "Teaming Tidbit" modules. It is not a "stand alone" resource for distribution. It includes a general outline of content covered within each Tidbit, space to take notes as you follow along, "optional" reflection activities, "Learner's Guide" reflection activities, things to consider as it relates to teaming challenges presented, and additional resources and references.

	<p>General content and a place to take notes</p>
	<p>Optional reflective activity suggested in the Tidbit</p>
 <p>Learner's Guide</p>	<p>Learner's Guide reflection activity</p>
	<p>Things to Consider</p>
	<p>Resources</p>

Learner'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.



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



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



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

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.”



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:

- ✓ 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:

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=jA6lOf9A298>) 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>.

- 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.”



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:

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

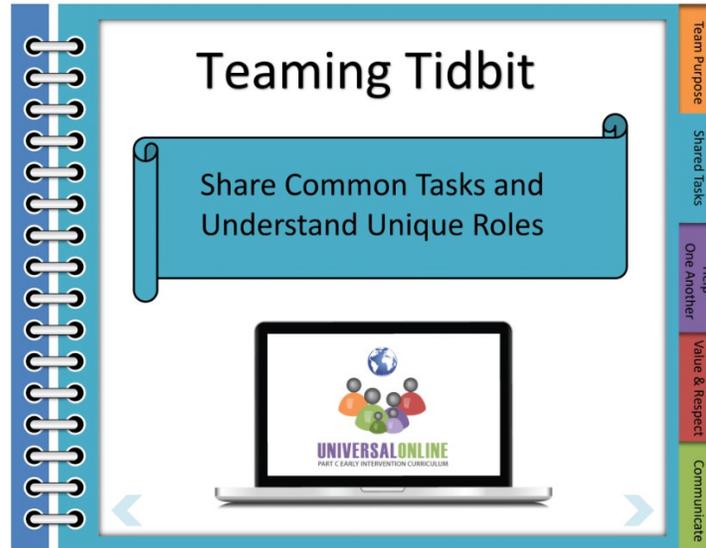
Additional Suggestions:

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

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>.
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Learner'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.



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



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



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

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.



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:

- ✓ 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.



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

- “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.



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 family is the expert about their child
- ✓ Families share common team tasks too.
- ✓ 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.
 - 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: 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.



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

<https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>.

- 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

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.

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Rush, D. & Shelden, M. (2011). *The early childhood coaching handbook*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

Learner's Guide



Teaming is important because...



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



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

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.



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:

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ What do you know and what do you need to know?
- ✓ What do your team members know?
- ✓ How can you work together?



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

<https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>

- 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.



Has this ever happened to you? What would you do if you were Sonjay? Are there other team members who might be involved? What did 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:

- ✓ 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.

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.
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- 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
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Learner's Guide



Value and respect are important because...



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?



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

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.



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?



Things to Consider:

- ✓ 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:

- 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>

- Seven Norms of Collaboration: A Supporting Toolkit

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.



Has this every 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:

- ✓ 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.



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

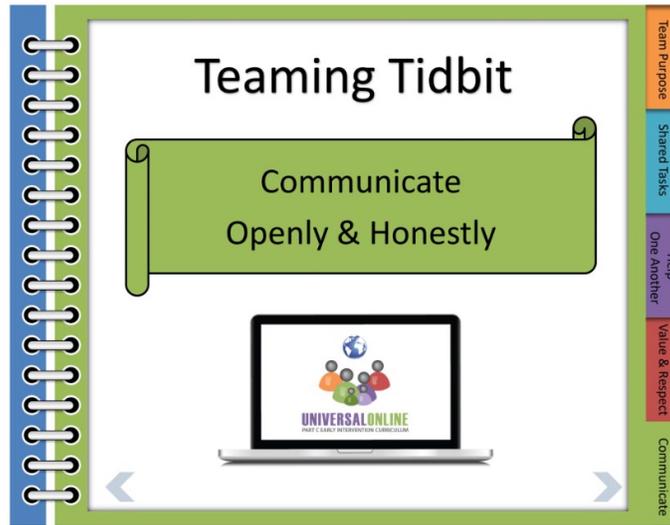
<https://tinyurl.com/EITeamingTidbitResources>

- Family Centered Practices Checklist

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.>
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Communication is important because...



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



What does open and honest communication look like to you?

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.



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:

- **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>

- How to improve Team Communication the Ultimate Guide which is helpful resource for teams as a whole
- 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.



Learner's Guide

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:

- ✓ 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 you 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:

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's 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?



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

- 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

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>).
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