



Supporting Parent Engagement and Reflection in the Early Intervention Journey

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Learning Objectives

1

Participants will be able to identify three ways in which to support families in reflecting on their exploration of language and communication Opportunities

2

Participants will be able to identify three ways to empower parents in the journey of early intervention.

3

Participants will be able to identify three ways early interventionists can follow the family's lead in supporting family outcomes.

Reflections through the years





What does reflection mean to Early Interventionists?

Wires...Tests... Deaf?.....



Remember
when?

What were your
expectations vs
what were your
experiences?



A photograph of a woman with dark hair tied in a bun, smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding a baby wrapped in a light-colored blanket. To her left, another baby is partially visible, looking towards the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall with a light switch visible on the right. The text "We encourage professionals to slow things down....just a bit....." is overlaid in white at the bottom of the image.

We encourage professionals to slow things
down....just a bit.....

Respecting the process of building trust....

Dialogue Rapport Collaboration
Trust Decisions
Respect
Opinions
Information
Expectations
Feelings



cf. Moeller, Brown (2000)



Research Themes

Hopkins, K. & Puhlman 2025)
Empowering Families of Deaf
Children: A Qualitative Study on
Parental Experiences in Early
Intervention

- ▶ Impact of meeting Deaf and hard of hearing adults
- ▶ Impact of parent connections
- ▶ Importance of Following families' lead
- ▶ Overwhelming amount of information



Overwhelming Amount of Information

“I remember there being a notebook, I think I still have the notebook in my office, and just being like well, there's a notebook. And that was overwhelming at the time. You know, I had a young baby, and I was like, I don't know when I'm gonna have time to read a notebook, and I remember thinking it seemed it seemed a lot, I was supposed to read, and then I had this baby.....”

Strength Search (a learning tool)

- ▶ Tell us about your baby
- ▶ *Who* are the members of your family
- ▶ *What* are your interests (jobs or hobbies)
- ▶ *Where* do you get support (friends, neighbors, church)
- ▶ *How* do you like to go about tackling a challenge
- ▶ *When* do you prefer that others assist you
- ▶ *Why* do you prefer certain formats to learn new info
- ▶ Setting the stage for trust

Supporting Reflection

- ▶ Empowering parents
- ▶ Part of the overall cyclical process
- ▶ Ability to change...and maybe not follow the professional
- ▶ Learning to follow your child



Checking Back In (a learning tool)

Discussions with parents

- ▶ What did they tell you
- ▶ What made sense
- ▶ What was confusing
- ▶ What info do you need
- ▶ What will be helpful

Empathic Responses

- Reflecting back
~ It sounds as if ...
- Extending, clarifying
~ Tell me more.
- Questioning open ended
~ What did you think?
- Summarizing, synthesizing
~ It appears that ...



Initial decision making

- ▶ All opportunities explored....truly explored
- ▶ Parents first steps in the decision process
- ▶ Stress continuous conversation:
 - ▶ trial and error mentality
- ▶ Importance of meeting other parents and Deaf adult:
 - ▶ see the possibilities for their child

Remember....its a journey.....



Reflecting Together

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a green zip-up sweater. In her arms, she holds a young child with light brown hair, who is looking off to the side. The child is wearing a colorful striped shirt. They are sitting on a couch or bed with a blue patterned blanket and a red blanket visible in the background. The overall lighting is soft and indoor.

► It is important to give families time to explore...reflect...change.....question...

► Reflective practice encourages us to shift from a place of certainty to one of curiosity and wonderment



Sometimes a change is needed.....

- ▶ Goodness of fit for family
- ▶ Language Development
- ▶ Poor outcomes over time

Professional should embrace change with the family – even if you disagree and continue to assess and reflect together



Parent Reflections

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