

Professional Roles in Early Childhood Intervention

Chances are you will be working with professionals who say they are family-centered or use family-centered practices. When this is the case, you and your family should expect to be treated in certain ways and be actively involved in decision-making and actions to achieve family-identified outcomes and goals. This practice guide includes things that are helpful to know about family-centered practices.

Learning Guide: Working Together to Achieve Family Outcomes

- You and your family should expect to be treated with dignity and respect at all times. Professionals should acknowledge your family's unique situation and be sensitive to your family's circumstances and concerns.
- You should expect to have professionals listen to your concerns and priorities. You should feel that professionals are really trying to understand you and your family from your point-of-view.
- You and your family should be seen as able to manage your life circumstances with necessary supports and resources, and not broken and needing to be fixed. Professionals should look for and acknowledge your family strengths.
- All families at some time in their lives need different kinds of supports and resources. You should expect to be provided honest and complete information so you can make informed decisions about which supports and resources are best for your family.
- You should expect professionals to be responsive to your own, your child's, and your family's changing life circumstances. If your child's or family's situation changes, professionals should be willing to adjust how they work with and help your family.
- You should expect both child and family interventions to be based on what is best for you and your family. Interventions should improve child and family life and not be a burden. If things don't feel right or don't make sense to you, you should feel free to share your concerns with professionals working with you and your family.
- You will want to be a key player in providing your child learning opportunities and obtaining resources and supports for your family. Avoid having others do everything for you. You want your family to become more capable and not become dependent on others.
- Professionals should work together with you as a team. Remember that two heads are better than one. You should feel free to ask for and expect to receive advice and suggestions in response to your requests.

Watch a video of this Learning Guide

You'll know a professional is family-centered if ...

- He or she provides the information you need to make informed decisions
- You and a practitioner work well together
- You play a central role in achieving family-desired outcomes

A Quick Peek

Amanda is a single parent whose 3-year-old son, Adam, has motor delays and is not yet walking. Amanda especially enjoys bicycling on trails in a park not too far from where she lives. She would like to have Adam be part of this activity but cannot afford a bike trailer for her son. Amanda tells a practitioner who works with her family that she found an organization that would be able to provide a bike trailer free-of-charge if it would be of benefit to Adam's health.

Amanda and the practitioner brainstorm about different options and mom remembers that Adam's physician

suggested he be outside more often. Amanda explains her situation to the physician and the benefits to Adam. The physician agrees that the bike trailer will provide Adam lots of different health-related benefits. Amanda and her son now get to spend lots of time together while both enjoy being outside.



Learn more about family-centered practices in [**Having Faith in Families: A Cornerstone in Family Centered Practice**](#) by Marilyn Espe-Sherwindt.