Team Members Helping One Another to Learn and Grow

Early childhood intervention teams include practitioners from different disciplines working together to provide the most effective interventions for a child and family. Team members have unique skills, abilities, knowledge, and experiences that, when shared with others, make for a stronger whole.

You’ll know the practice is working if...

● Team members say they feel supported in coming up with real solutions to their concerns or goals.
● Team members use a variety of adult learning opportunities when helping one another.
● Team members describe changes they have made in their work with children and their families.

A Quick Peek

Beth, an early intervention practitioner, shares with her EI team members how frustrated she is that nothing she has suggested seems to help Darian, Markus’s dad, who is having a battle every morning trying to leave the house on time. He says it is because he cannot get Markus to cooperate in getting dressed. Darian says nothing she has suggested works. Rather than jumping in with more suggestions to try to solve the problem for Beth, other team members agree to take some time and engage in a respectful conversation with her. Using open-ended questions, they encourage Beth to tell them more about what Dad has tried, what getting through the morning routine is like, what Markus is doing before being asked or dressed, and then what suggestions she has made in the past that Dad did not think worked.

After some give-and-take among team members, Rick offers to go with Beth to observe so that Beth can use some of the questions the team just modeled for her. Rick suggested they could set up a time to actually observe the dressing routine, and then Beth and Darian could try out some things together that Beth might support on later visits. Beth agrees and thanks everyone, including Rick, for his offer. She leaves to call Darian to see if this is agreeable with him.

Learning Guide: Practicing Mutual Support Among Team Members

● Keeping an open mind and willingness to both share and receive information and expertise with other team members establishes a climate where honest, respectful, and supportive feedback becomes the norm among members.
● Taking time to really get to know other team members’ interests, skills, and areas of expertise helps team members provide feedback that can contribute to the learning process when needed.
● Offering support or guidance to another team member in a non-judgmental manner demonstrates a willingness to offer assistance or support to the learning needs of another team member.

● Using mutually beneficial, authentic learning experiences in team membership provides opportunities to explore new ideas, learn new practices, and even change perspectives that may have been mistaken.

A video of this Learning Guide is available. For more activities and ideas about effective teaming and collaboration in early intervention access online resources such as a chapter excerpt from Family-Centered Early Intervention by Sharon A. Raver and Dana C. Childress.