

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. There are many opportunities for team members to assist each other to expand their knowledge and learn to use new practices. This practice guide includes different things team members can do to actively and meaningfully support other members to grow and learn.

[See a video of this Learning Guide](#)

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 all members.
- Taking time to really get to know other team members' interests, skills, and areas of expertise helps identify who on the team can provide which type of assistance when needed.
- Offering support or guidance to another team member in a non-judgmental manner demonstrates a willingness to offer advice or assistance without a fellow team member having to ask.
- Using mutually beneficial, authentic learning experiences with team members provides opportunities to explore new ideas, learn new practices, and even to learn from mistakes.
- Be sure to allow sufficient time for all team members to increase their knowledge and skills through practice and reflection. Using relationship-based practices to mentor or coach other team members is an especially effective approach for "learning" new ways of working with young 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 leave of 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.



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.

For more activities and ideas about effective teaming and collaboration, see online resources such as a [chapter excerpt from *Family-Centered Early Intervention*](#) by Sharon A. Raver and Dana C. Childress.