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

- Family members express their concerns and priorities to the practitioner.
- Family members seem interested in learning more about Early Intervention services and resources.
- Family members feel that they are adjusting to new circumstances and are supported in their decisions regarding their children.

A Quick Peek

Luis and Carla are finally home as a family. Their twins, Lily and Louisa, were born prematurely and spent a month in the hospital’s neonatal intensive care unit. It was a difficult and sometimes frightening time for Luis and Carla, but the girls have been discharged and are doing well. Their physician and a hospital social worker talked to them about early intervention services. While the babies are doing well, they are showing some mild delays due to their prematurity, and Lily struggles with some reflux and oral sensitivity.

At first Luis and Carla were nervous about meeting the EI service coordinator, Molly, and having strangers come into their home. When Molly first talked to the parents, she was very courteous, asked only a few questions over the phone, and worked with them to find a good time to meet. During the home visit, Molly shared what she had learned from the referral information and asked them to tell her their story as they were ready. She listened quietly and only occasionally asked a clarifying question.

Luis and Carla felt very comfortable with her and shared their concerns about their babies’ health and development. Molly made sure she understood their priorities. Then she began to talk about resources and discuss how the EI program might be able to help. Both new parents felt relieved and told Molly they looked forward to her next visit.

Transition from Hospital to Home

When a family transitions their child from a hospital stay into early intervention services, it is important for them to feel comfortable and respected in their communication with early interventionists. Early interventionists should gather information from family members/patients about their experiences in the hospital in a sensitive and respectful manner. Learning about a family’s concerns and priorities before and during a transition is an important first step in the process of building trust, beginning a new relationship, and developing an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) that is responsive to the family’s desires and needs.

Learning Guide: Gathering Information About Family Concerns

- Ask family members about their preferences regarding a convenient time and place to meet before they prefer to meet in the hospital or wait until their child has been discharged and is at home.
- Be sure that parents/family members know they can invite other people to the meeting if that would be helpful to them.
- Once the meeting is scheduled, send a follow-up confirmation via phone, email, or mail, depending on family preferences for communication.
- Review any records or information sent by the hospital before the meeting to be prepared with a clear understanding of the course of treatment and any concerns about the infant.
- Be prepared to answer family members’ questions and share information and resources as appropriate.
- Ask the family members if they would like to share their story about their experiences in the hospital or other events.
- Be prepared to answer family member questions and share information and resources, as appropriate.
- Be sure to use active and reflective listening skills as the parents/family members share their story and any concerns.

Learning Guide: Gathering Information About Family Concerns

- Ask parents/family members about their preferences regarding a convenient time and place to meet. Determine if they prefer to meet in the hospital or wait until their child has been discharged and is at home.
- Be sure that parents/family members know they can invite other people to the meeting if that would be helpful to them.
- Once the meeting is scheduled, send a follow-up confirmation via email, text, or mail, depending on family preferences for communication.
- Review any records or information sent by the hospital before the meeting to be prepared with a clear understanding of the course of treatment and any concerns about the infant.
- Be prepared to answer family member questions and share information and resources, as appropriate.
- Ask the family members if they would like to share their story about their experience in the hospital or other events.
- Be sure to use active and reflective listening skills as the parents/family members share their story and any concerns.
- Ask parents/family members about any concerns, priorities, or goals they might have for improving their own comfort and support regarding their infant.
- Be sure to use active and reflective listening skills as the parents/family members share their story and any concerns.

http://www.ectacenter.org/decrp/

Watch a video of this Learning Guide

Among online resources about facilitating the transition from hospital to home are:

- An Early Interventionist’s Guide to Prematurity
- Early Intervention Strategies for Success: Listening to the Family’s Story

Both are from the Virginia EI Professional Development Center.