



Early Intervention Clearinghouse

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Positive Talk Builds Confidence

Babies and toddlers tune into messages from their caregivers. They are aware of their caregivers' emotions and listen to their words. Because very young children are deeply connected with and tuned into their caregivers, it is vital that parents and caregivers be mindful about sharing messages that are a source of encouragement and positive energy.

Turning "don't climb on the coffee table!" into "let's go find a safe place in the back yard for you to climb" or turning "stop screaming!" into "I hear you're angry when I tell you there's no more cereal" can help caregivers feel calmer. Young children also follow positive directions more readily than negative discouragements.

Positive talk is not only beneficial for babies and toddlers. Positive talk and positive thinking also are important for parents and caregivers of children receiving early intervention services. Negativity can rear its ugly head when we are feeling discouraged or feeling impatient. Families in early intervention may be coping with their

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You Are What Your Child Needs

Parents and caregivers of infants and toddlers often describe moments when they are watching, waiting, wondering, and worrying about their young children. They wonder whether their fussy baby is getting enough sleep or worry about whether their picky toddler is eating enough fruit and vegetables. They may find it hard to wait for a child to begin to crawl or talk and wonder about when their child may reach this milestone.

The love that parents and caregivers of young children feel for their rapidly changing infants and toddlers may be part of the reason this worrying and wondering begins. Parents and caregivers want to give infants and toddlers the best start they can. It is normal to worry whether they have enough resources or knowledge to help their child reach their fullest potential. They may wonder whether having more books, more toys, or signing their child up for more classes is what their child needs to grow and thrive. They may spend time worrying and wondering whether they are giving their child enough. This worry can lead to discouragement and feelings of inadequacy as a parent or caregiver. They may wonder: “Am I what my child needs?”

Each child in early intervention develops on a unique timeline. Early intervention families may find themselves worrying or wondering about whether their child is doing okay as they watch their child and wait for their child to



reach particular milestones or skills. It can be difficult to avoid comparing your child’s progress to those of infants and toddlers who do not have a developmental delay or disability. This comparison can cause even more worry, which can be overwhelming.

In these moments, it is important to remember that *you are what your child needs*. He needs a loving caregiver who wants to help him grow. Every time you interact with your child by talking, playing, and doing daily tasks, you are building your child’s brain and helping his body become stronger and more skillful. You also are not alone. Reach out to your EI team, family, and friends for support and help.

Remember as a parent or primary

caregiver, you have the most interactions and opportunities to watch your child discover her world. Share your observations and the things you wonder about with your EI team.

Sometimes you will need to wait to connect with an EI team member until the next EI session. While you wait, you can write down, video, or photograph the behaviors or skills you are wondering about.

Reaching out to your EI team can help you set aside worries about whether you are giving your child all that he needs. *Remember, you are what your child needs!* Involved, caring parents and caregivers working with their EI team to achieve outcomes give children a strong start.

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child’s complex medical or educational needs. Their development may not follow the typical progression of peers their age. This can lead to a negative cycle of thinking that gets in the way of noticing the important progress an infant or toddler is making in early intervention.

We can mindfully acknowledge these negative thoughts and reframe them with positive thinking, which can

help us keep a positive attitude as we work toward EI outcomes. Reframing doesn’t make our sadness or frustration go away, but it can help us be more resilient and optimistic about the challenges we face with our child.

Here are a few examples of reframing negative thoughts into more positive ones.

When you think “my child can’t hear my voice due to hearing loss,” reframe it by thinking, “I know I am connecting

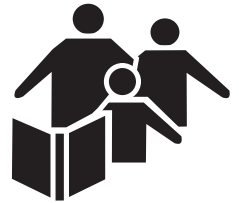
with my child when we look into each other’s eyes.”

“My toddler cries and falls apart because he can’t use words to tell me what he wants” can become “we’re working on learning important words in sign language to help him communicate.”

“My friends are celebrating their babies’ first steps, but my child can’t walk” can become “Let’s enjoy my child’s new crawling skills by trying to climb on a pile of pillows to help build her muscles.”

Six-Month Review: An Important Part of the EI Process

A key part of early intervention is monitoring the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), celebrating the progress, and modifying the outcomes, strategies, and supports as a team. The six-month review is an opportunity for families and other team members to talk, solve problems, and plan together!



Who needs to be there?

At a minimum, the service coordinator and the family or caregivers must be present. However, if changes to the IFSP are needed, the full IFSP team must be present to discuss and reach consensus.

What happens prior to a six-month review?

Service coordinators will provide at least a 10-day notice to families and request a six-month progress report from the other team members. Before the scheduled review meeting, the EI providers supporting the family will submit a six-month report, which must summarize the child's progress and response to intervention related to the IFSP outcomes.

How can I prepare for my family's six-month review?

You may want to ask yourself the following questions:

- Has my child made progress?
- Do the outcomes require different or additional services?
- Have my priorities for my child/family changed?
- What additional services might my child need in the future?
- Has my child met the IFSP outcomes? Are new outcomes appropriate?
- Has my family met the IFSP outcomes? Are new outcomes needed?
- Has my child's developmental/social/medical history changed?

How will the six-month review affect my child and family?

A six-month review is required by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is also an opportunity to take stock of your child's and your family's progress toward meeting IFSP outcomes. The team may agree that significant progress has been made, some outcomes have been achieved, and/or that the family requires continued support to achieve the stated outcomes. Whatever the consensus, the IFSP might shift in terms of outcomes, strategies, or early intervention service frequency/intensity. The overall goal is to improve your child's and your family's success in early intervention.

Written in collaboration with the Illinois Early Intervention Training Program.

 For more information, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at <http://eiclearinghouse.org>

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Early Intervention.



Resources for Mindful Parenting

Awakening Joy for Kids

James Baraz and Michele Lilyanna
Parallax Press, 2016
BF 637 .M37 B2319 2016
Also available as an **eBook**



Growing Up Mindful: Essential Practices to Help Children, Teens, and Families Find Balance, Calm, and Resilience

Christopher Willard
Sounds True, 2016
BF 723 .M37 .W554 2016
Also available in **Spanish**

Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and Their Parents)

Eline Snel
Shambhala, 2013
WB 890 .Sn271 2013
Also available in **Spanish**



The Little Book of Mindfulness: 10 Minutes a Day to Less Stress, More Peace

Patrizia Collard
Gaia Books, 2014
BF 637 .M4 C654 2014
Also available in **Spanish**

Mindful Parenting for ADHD: A Guide to Cultivating Calm, Reducing Stress, and Helping Children Thrive

Mark Bertin
New Harbinger, 2015
WS 350.8 .B4621 2015



Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness With Children

Thich Nhat Hanh
Parallax Press, 2011
BQ 5612 .N49 2011
Also available in **Spanish**

A World of Pausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness

Frank J. Sileo
Magination Press, 2017
PZ 8.3 .S582 2017



Five-Minute Mindfulness Parenting

Claire Gillman
Fair Winds, 2016
BF 637 .M37 G416 2016
Also available as an **eBook**

Growing Mindful: Mindfulness Practices for All Ages

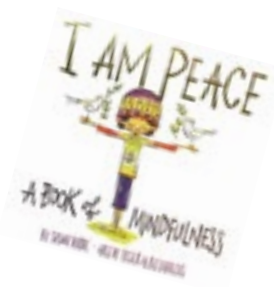
Mitch Abblett
PEI, 2015
BF 321 .A23 2015
Also available in **Spanish**

Mindful Games Activity Cards: 55 Ways to Share Mindfulness With Kids and Teens

Susan Kaiser Greenland and Annaka Harris
Shambhala, 2017
BF 637 .M4 G73 2017
Also available as an **eBook**

I Am Peace

Susan Verde
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2017
WB 890 .V583 2017
Also available as an **eBook**



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State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Third Quarter Update

Phase III, Year 2 is wrapping up, and SSIP activities continue across the state. Local leadership teams (LTs) and CFCs in the three pilot areas (Aurora, Williamson County, and East St. Louis) continue to offer professional development and focused conversations around the Child Outcomes Summary process.

The next major activity in the SSIP is building capacity for the use of family-centered practices. Five of the DEC Recommended Practices will drive the majority of this work. A resource package of activities to support family engagement will be developed to support the LTs with this activity.

The annual report on the SSIP was due to the Office of Special Education Programs on April 2, 2018. This report will be available on the IDHS website at <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=36192>

We welcome everyone's input, so if you have any comments, please e-mail them to cguillen@illinois.edu.

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