



Early Intervention Clearinghouse

<http://eiclearinghouse.org>

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Coaching: An Essential Part of Early Intervention

By Meg Bracco Liebreich, PT

Infants and toddlers learn best by joining in everyday activities with the ones who love and care for them. That includes you, your child's siblings, and other family members and caregivers. In early intervention (EI), your team also includes the providers who work with you to support you in making an impact in your child's development.

These providers act as coaches, meaning your providers work with you to help you best support your child in building their current skills and creating new ones. Coaching in early intervention is a way to provide family-centered care that actively involves YOU!

We know that you are the expert on your child and your family. Your EI providers will use their expertise in child development to act as your coach, to sit on the "sidelines" to help you discover new ways to support your little one as they grow, learn, and develop to reach the goals you set together when developing your Indi-

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COACHING

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visualized Family Service Plan.

Coaching starts with exploring what you want for your child and family (your priorities), the ideas you have, and the strategies you may have tried already. Together, you and your EI provider will come up with ideas, and your provider will guide you forward.

Early intervention focuses on the interactions between you (and other caregivers) and your child during and between sessions—during all the wonderful interactions and activities that happen throughout the day. (We know that it's the family who provides the “real” EI by creatively adapting your caregiving methods to facilitate your child's development while balancing all the needs of the rest of the family.)

Sometimes, coaching is simply a watchful eye or a listening ear, observing as you and your child play and providing feedback and support. Other times, your coach may ask questions to help you dig deep and discover new ways to support your child's development.

For example, your physical therapist may help you find a new way of positioning your little one so they can sit upright to play on the floor or to crawl while chasing their siblings. Your speech therapist may coach you on waiting for your toddler

to look or point at the bucket for more blocks before you hand them one, and then gradually progress to using signs or sounds to ask for blocks.

Your occupational or developmental therapist may observe meal or bath time to help find ways to make these routines go more smoothly.

Coaching will look different depending on your family's priorities, your strengths, and your areas of concerns or challenges at any given time. You and your provider will come up with a plan together depending on what you may need at that particular moment.

Coaching is an important part of your family's early intervention journey. Parents and providers work together to identify what is going well, what areas may be challenging, and how to best support your ability to promote your child's development to facilitate their participation in your family and community's activities.

While no one knows all the answers all the time, together we can share our knowledge and information, problem solve, and develop a plan to best support your family!

Meg Bracco Liebreich is a physical therapist in the early intervention system.

Early CHOICES Launches New Education Series on Inclusion

Early CHOICES (www.eclre.org) is an inclusion initiative of the Illinois State Board of Education. It promotes increasing high-quality inclusive early care and education for each and every child birth to age 5. Its goal is to increase the number of children with disabilities receiving specialized services in regular early care and education settings.

Early CHOICES is excited to offer “Inclusive Education Series for Families,” a free series of six webinars being held through April 2022.

For more about the series, visit <https://go.illinois.edu/choices>

The series includes topics that explore key ideas about inclusion for caregivers of children birth through age 5. Topics range from defining inclusion to understanding the benefits of inclusion.

Early CHOICES has recently ramped up its social media efforts. Thanks to the federal preschool development grant, Early CHOICES has been able to expand its reach from birth to age 5 across parental and educational systems.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Early CHOICES has been focusing on making sure families, childcare agencies, schools, and communities come together inclusively to build systems so children with disabilities are included in each and every aspect of their day.

We invite you to join with Early CHOICES. It has launched a social media campaign (#IllinoisIncludes) to support inclusion and change mindsets so that others are united locally, nationally, and globally to promote inclusion and inclusive opportunities for children with disabilities and their families.

Follow Us on Facebook and Twitter!

 @eicclearinghouse

 [Facebook.com/eicclearinghouse](https://www.facebook.com/eicclearinghouse)

The Family's Role in Early Intervention Visits

No one knows your child better than you. During early intervention visits, whether in person or virtually, your provider wants to see your interactions with your child and provide you with ideas and strategies you can use to support your child between visits.



Beginning the Visit

- Talk with your provider about anything new since your last visit. Have your routines changed? Any new or developing skills?
- Talk with your provider about goals from the last visit. What did you try and what worked?
- Talk with your provider about that day's focus for the visit. What are your next steps for the day?



Observation and Practice

- Your provider will watch your interactions with your child during your regular routines using your toys and materials.
- Your provider may help you find a new way to interact or play with your child.
- Your provider may model an activity or part of a routine and ask you to observe. You will then be invited to try the strategy or activity with your child.

Reflection and Feedback

- You and your provider will talk about what worked during the visit and what to try before the next visit.
- Your provider will ask questions about what you would like to focus on during the next visit.

During Live Video Visits

- Place the tech device where the provider can see both you and your child.
- Your provider wants to observe your interactions with your child. If your child won't focus on the tech device (phone, iPad, etc.) for the length of the visit, that's OK.
- Be prepared for tech issues such as lag time with audio, choppy video, or dropped Internet.

 For more information, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at <https://eicclearinghouse.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.

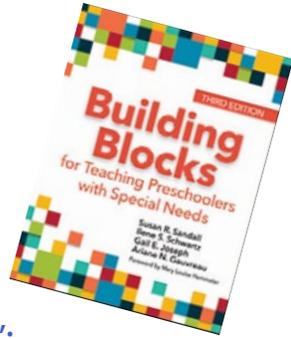


Inclusion Resources

Books

Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers With Special Needs

Susan Sandall
Paul H. Brookes, 2019
LC 4019.2 .S213b 2019

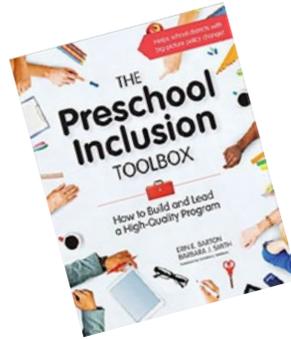


It's More Than "Just Being In": Creating Authentic Inclusion for Students With Complex Support Needs

Cheryl Jorgensen
Paul H. Brookes, 2018
LC 1201 .J6699 2018

The Preschool Inclusion Toolbox: How to Build and Lead a High-Quality Program

Erin Barton and Barbara Smith
Paul H. Brookes, 2015
LC 4019.2 .B37 2015
Also available as an **eBook**

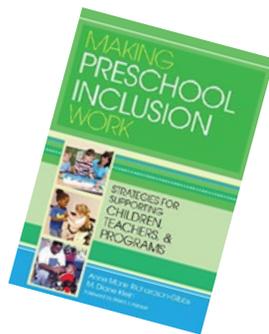


Seahorse's Magical Sun Sequences: How All Children (and Sea Creatures) Can Use Yoga to Feel Positive, Confident and Completely Included

Michael Chissick
Singing Dragon, 2016
WB 890 .C448 2016

Making Preschool Inclusion Work: Strategies for Supporting Children, Teachers, and Programs

Anne-Marie Richardson-Gibbs and M. Diane Klein
Paul H. Brookes, 2014
LC 4019.3 .R53 2014
Also available as an **eBook**

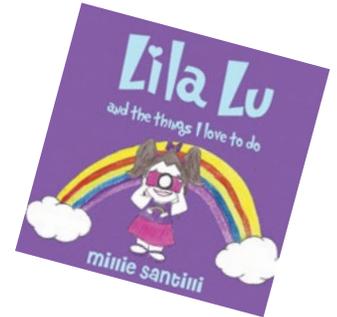


The Whole Spectrum of Social, Motor, and Sensory Games

Barbara Sher
Jossey-Bass, 2013
GV 1203 .S4953 2013

Lila Lu and the Things I Love to Do

Millie Santilli
Stillwater River, 2018
PZ 7.1 .S2638Li 2018



Just One of the Kids: Raising a Resilient Family When One of Your Children Has a Physical Disability

Kay Harris Kriegsman
Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013
HQ 773.6 .K75 2013

Videos

Preschool Inclusion
StarNet: Early Childhood
Western Illinois University, 2018
Part 1: Moving Illinois Forward
Part 2: Reflections on the Process

Web Resource

Understanding Inclusion
Early CHOICES
<https://www.eclre.org/good-to-know/understanding-inclusion/>

eBooks Are Here!

You can now check out and download eBooks instantly, using the cloudLibrary or Overdrive app on most devices. For more detailed instructions, visit **[eclre.org/resources/library/ebooks/](https://www.eclre.org/resources/library/ebooks/)** or click on one of the icons on the right.



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State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Update

We recently received feedback on the report we submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs in April. Strengths noted include a rapid transition to live video visits, support from local leadership teams, improved data quality, continued progress toward goals, and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Areas needing more information were also noted.

Our next step is to bring stakeholders together to discuss our progress and plans for expanding these efforts beyond our three pilot areas. In the meantime, leadership teams continue to support providers' use of coaching and engagement practices.

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[eiclearinghouse.org/es/
newsletter/2021fall-sp](http://eiclearinghouse.org/es/newsletter/2021fall-sp)



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