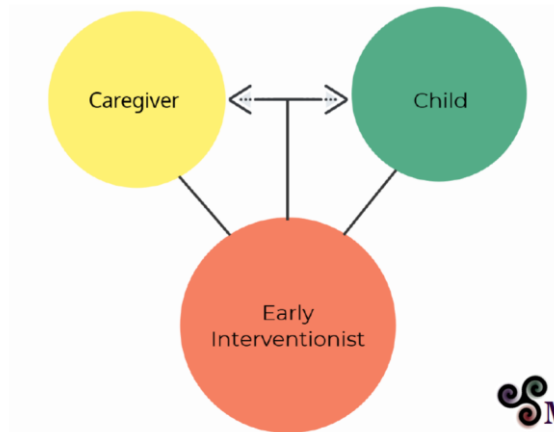


# Triadic Strategies in Early Intervention



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This is a North Dakota Early Intervention Professional Development Core Concepts Training Presentation about using triadic strategies in early intervention.

# The North Dakota Early Intervention System (NDEIS)

Early Intervention system includes **both** the EI Service Coordination and the EI Service Provision


- Regional Early Intervention (EI) Program *is the same as* EI Service Coordination and EI Service Provision
- EI Service Coordinator *is the same as* Developmental Disabilities Program Manager (DDPM)
- EI Primary Early Intervention Professional *is the same as* Home Visitor or Primary Early Intervention Provider (PEIP) or Early Interventionist
- EI Professionals is the same as EI Service Coordinator and EI Provider

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Lets look a little deeper into how we use terminology around early intervention services in North Dakota. The early intervention system includes both EI service coordination and EI service provision. The regional early intervention program is the same as EI service coordination and EI service provision. The EI service coordinator is the same as the developmental disabilities program manager (DDPM). The EI provider is the same as the home visitor or primary early intervention professional, also called a PEIP, or an early interventionist. EI professionals can be used to refer to an EI service coordinator or an EI provider. This is the terminology that will be used to distinguish the different roles in this presentation.


# Core Values of Family Centered Practice



The best place for children to grow up is in families.

Providing services that engage, involve, strengthen, and support families is the most effective approach to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

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Family-centered practices are the foundation of early intervention. This information was reviewed in the family-centered practices presentation. Family-centered practices use what is important to the child and family in the delivery of services. Family-centered practices include caregivers that interact with the child throughout the day, including parents, neighbors, childcare providers, extended family, and foster families. The term caregiver refers to any person that is supporting the child in interactions throughout this presentation.

# Think about the role of the early interventionist

**The role of the  
early interventionist in the  
natural environment is to  
recognize and expand on the  
caregiver's strengths to  
promote confidence and  
competence.**



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First, think about one of the roles of the early interventionist during home visits. In the natural environment, the role of the early interventionist is to recognize and expand on the caregiver's strengths to promote confidence and competence. But, how do we do this?

# Natural Learning Opportunities



**It is the ordinary activities that make up families' everyday lives that provide young children many different kinds of learning opportunities.**

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Remember that it is the ordinary activities that make up families' every day lives that provide young children with many different kinds of learning opportunities. It is not just in play that young children learn new skills, in fact, kids spend a lot more time doing other activities during their day. Although play is important, it is the routines that happen each day that can make a difference. Early intervention can have a big impact during natural learning opportunities.

# Natural Learning Opportunities



Young children learn best when they have many chances to participate in everyday activities that are interesting.



Adults support children's learning when they respond to their child's behavior in ways that help the child practice and try new things.



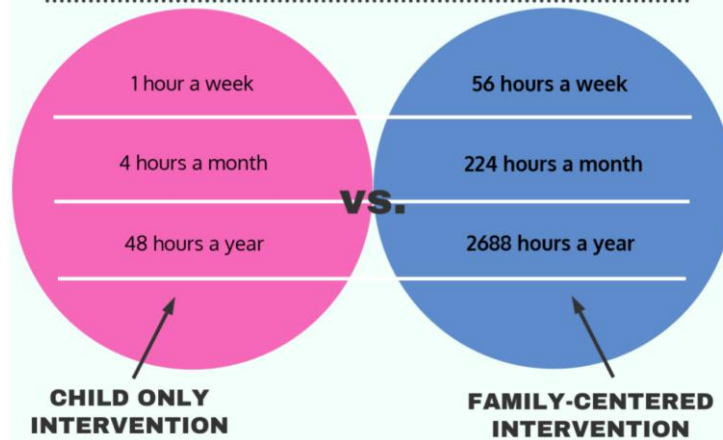
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Children should have as many natural learning opportunities as possible. Young children learn best when they have many chances to participate in everyday activities that are interesting. Caregivers support children's learning when they respond to behavior in ways that help children practice and try new things.

In Early Intervention, it is what happens in between home visits that matters...

## HOURS OF SERVICE



Fettig, 2016; McWilliam, 2000

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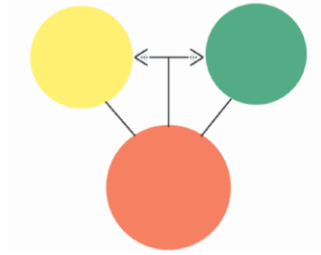


Based on the principles of early intervention, it is what happens in between home visits that matters! This graphic shows the difference between the number of hours of service, or practice, between a child-only intervention like direct therapy, versus a family-centered intervention like early intervention services. Early intervention has the possibility of impacting several thousand more hours of practice per year. This is why it is important to understand what children and families are doing each day. When an activity is important to the family, and it is already a part of what they and other caregivers do, there are many more natural learning opportunities. When a family is assigned something that is NOT a part of their day, the family will have to remember to fit it in their day and practice. Early intervention is much more impactful when it is around natural learning opportunities.

# What are Triadic Strategies?

**Triadic strategies are used by early interventionists to promote caregiver-child interaction.**

- The strategies help to expand and build interactions that are pleasurable for the adult and child to support development.
- The strategies recognize and strengthen the natural competence of caregivers as they interact with the child.



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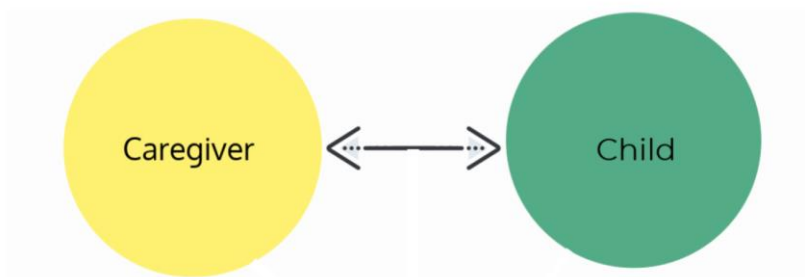
So what are triadic strategies? These are the things that early interventionists do to support what is happening between the child and the caregiver. Triadic strategies are used by early interventionists to promote caregiver-child interaction. The strategies help to expand and build interactions that are pleasurable for the adult and the child to support development. The strategies recognize and strengthen the natural competence of caregivers as they interact with the child.



# Promoting Dyadic Interactions

The dyad is the interaction between the caregiver and the child.

The early interventionist is not a part of the dyad.

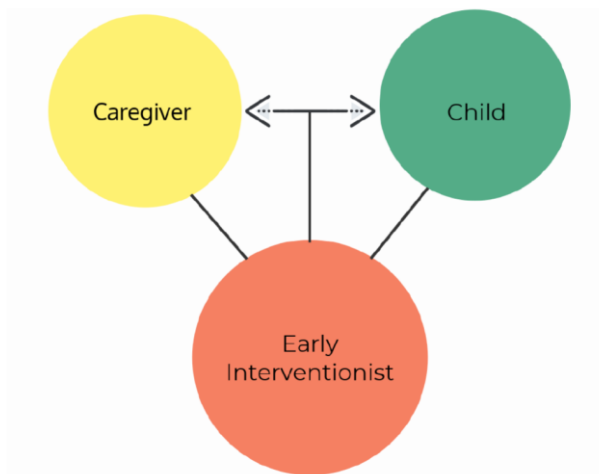


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Dyadic interactions are important when discussing triadic strategies. The dyad refers to the interaction between the caregiver and the child. In early intervention, the interactions in the dyad are the focal point of services, and specific strategies are used to strengthen the dyadic interactions. What does this look like?

## The Intervention Triad



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In this graphic, you can see the dyad of the caregiver and child. The early interventionist forms the triad; the early interventionist is observing and supporting the interactions of the caregiver and child. What strategies can we use to support this type of a relationship?

McCollum and Yates (1994) developed six triadic strategies designed to offer early interventionists a way to think about home visits.

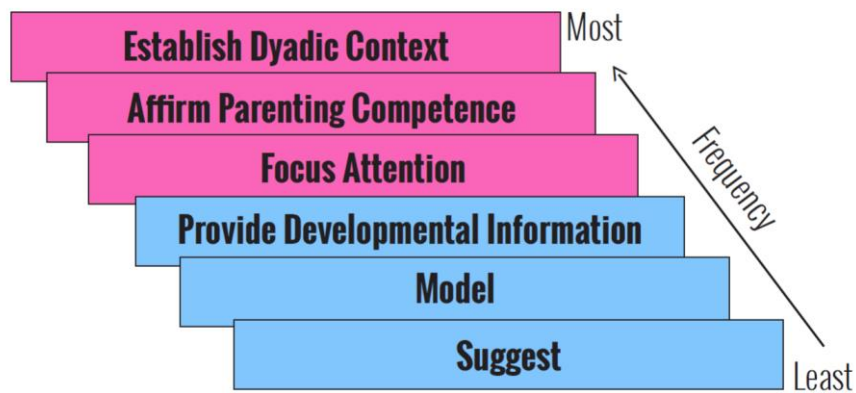


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McCollum and Yates (1994) developed **six triadic strategies** designed to offer early interventionists a way to think about home visits. The strategies are listed here. Let's talk about them in more detail.

## Triadic Strategies: Use strategies at the top most often

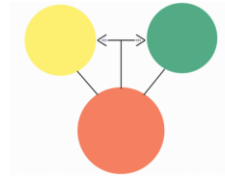


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Here are the six triadic strategies. Note that the three strategies of Suggest, Model, and Provide Developmental Information are at the bottom of this graphic. The three strategies in blue should be used the *least often* while the top three strategies in pink, which are Establish Dyadic Context, Affirm Parenting Competence, and Focus Attention, should be used more often. Let's review each of the strategies.

## Strategy: Establish Dyadic Context



Elements of the environment  
are arranged or rearranged to increase  
the probability of  
developmentally matched, mutually enjoyable  
caregiver-child interaction.

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The first strategy is Establish Dyadic Context, which means that the environment is arranged- or rearranged- to increase the likelihood of the caregiver and child having an enjoyable interaction. This is a strategy that should be used as often as possible. Early interventionists can encourage caregivers to consider the environment and how it can be managed to create natural learning opportunities. This may involve supporting caregivers in thinking about being near each other and being able to see each other, rather than focusing on the early interventionist. It may be helpful to arrange spaces and materials to make the area comfortable and safe while promoting successful positive interactions.

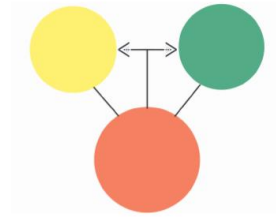


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An example of establishing dyadic context would be beginning a home visit where the parent is on the couch folding laundry and the interventionist is on the floor with the child. The early interventionist could begin by helping the child move to where the parent is sitting to engage in the everyday activity of folding laundry. The interventionist may help the caregiver see their role by sharing information like “Danny likes helping you fold laundry and being able to see what is happening. Look at his smile when he can help and see your face!”

## Strategy: Affirm Parenting Competence



Developmentally supportive interactions are warmly recognized and expanded upon, as are characteristics of child competence.

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The second strategy is Affirm Parenting Competence. This means that the early interventionist is promoting developmentally supportive interactions, and recognizing them with the caregiver so that they can be expanded upon in the activity and other settings. The early interventionist may help the caregiver identify and then reinforce developmentally appropriate behaviors, while also promoting child competence. Adult learning principles should be used to support the caregiver and child interactions, recognizing that caregivers are knowledgeable.



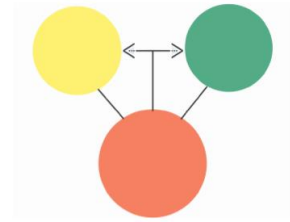
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To use the strategy of Affirm Parenting Competence, talk about what the caregiver is doing well and expand on it. For example, if the mom, Sarah, is on the floor dressing her child, Ava, and comments “Time to put on your socks, Ava. Where is your foot?..... Here is your foot!” The early interventionist can tell Sarah how wonderful her comments to Ava were by saying, “You told Ava exactly what you were going to do next and then named the item, which is helpful for her to learn the name. You also used wait time to let her think about where her foot is! This is important to say because it gives Ava time to respond.”



## Strategy: Focus Attention



Aspects of the interaction  
are commented on, questioned, or  
expanded to draw the caregiver's attention to  
particular competencies or actions.

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The third strategy is Focus Attention. This strategy focuses on commenting on, questioning, or expanding on aspects of a caregiver-child interaction to draw attention to specific competencies or actions. With this strategy, the early interventionist can explain how adaptations by the caregiver make a difference, ask the caregiver to interpret the child's actions, or use commenting and questioning to help the caregiver expand on an interaction.

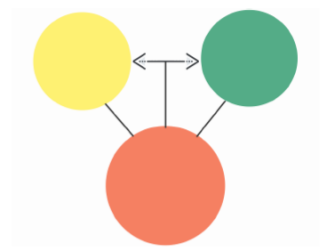


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When using the strategy of Focus Attention, the early interventionist might explain how adaptations by the caregiver can make a difference. The early interventionist may say to the mom, Tanya, “It is great that you chose to sit behind Tommy to help support him as he explores the grass and leaves- this is helping him to sit well.” The early interventionist might also ask the caregiver to interpret her son’s actions by asking, “What do you think he wants when he grabs the leaf and taps it on your leg?” A question like this focuses on the dyadic interaction and the meaning of the activity.

## Strategy: Provide Developmental Information



Information about the child's development, actions, routines and activities is shared while participating.

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The next strategy is Provide Developmental Information. This strategy is used when providing information to caregivers. With this strategy, the early interventionist may share information and link it to the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcomes and development, or provide connections to routines, child development, and family priorities. This strategy can also be useful to consider and celebrate progress the child is making while explaining the "why" and being specific about the connection to routines.

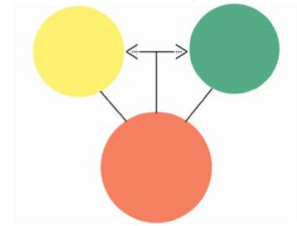


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When Providing Developmental Information, give detailed information and the “why.” For example, if the child, Trey, is crying and his mom, Bree, is uncertain of what to do, the early interventionist could say, “Trey is crying- put into words what he is feeling. He might be upset about not getting a chance to try what you showed him.”

## Strategy: Model



**Within interactions, the early interventionist momentarily takes on the role of caregiver to demonstrate or evaluate other strategies.**

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In the Model strategy, dyadic interaction roles are momentarily taken on by the early interventionist. This means that a new dyad is formed between the early interventionist and the child for a short amount of time while the caregiver watches. The early interventionist will model a strategy within a routine with the child, and while doing this, the early interventionist will name and describe the steps being used so that the caregiver can try it on their own. The early interventionist could also ask the caregiver about the best way to use the strategy so that it is the best fit for the family routine.

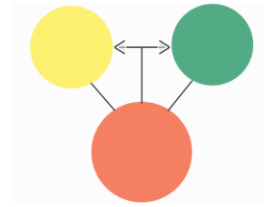


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When using the Model strategy, Tri's dad, Dan, is frustrated because his son is having difficulty using a spoon to feed himself. The early interventionist may ask the caregiver's opinion about what way would be best for implementing a strategy. The early interventionist might say, "You can hold his arm right above the elbow from behind or at the side. Which would be most comfortable for you?"

## Strategy: Suggest



The early interventionist provides the caregiver with specific suggestions to try with the child during routines, activities, or play.

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The final strategy is Suggest. With the Suggest strategy, the early interventionist provides the caregiver with a specific suggestion for something to try with the child during routines, activities, or play.

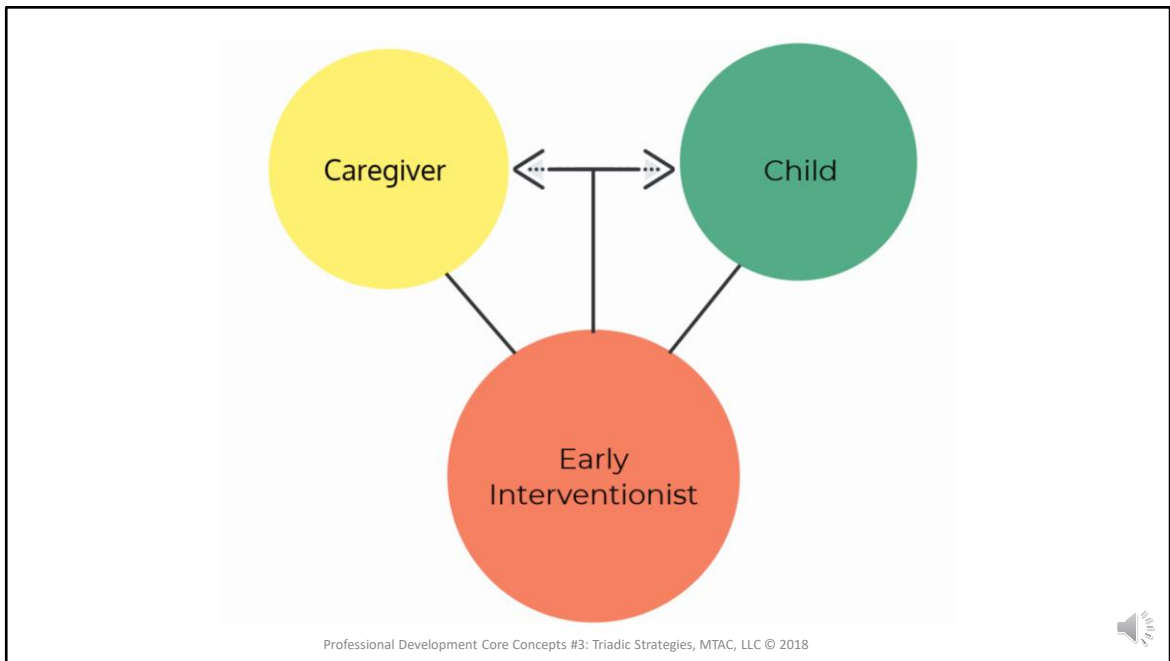


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When using the Suggest strategy, the early interventionist gives specific suggestions to the caregiver about things to do with the child. The early interventionist may say, “Since she understands what you say to her and she knows how to make choices, try asking which one she wants, the watering can or the wheelbarrow. If the objects are out of sight, she will have to rely on her words rather than pointing. How does that sound?”





The goal of using the triadic strategies is to promote interaction in the caregiver-child dyad. The early interventionist should be more of an observer rather than taking over the interaction for the caregiver.

## Guiding Principles

- Choose a Triadic Strategy
- Think about the key outcomes of competence, confidence, mutual enjoyment
- Re-adjust when needed
- Provide a supportive environment
- Put yourself in the caregiver's shoes
- Wait and observe the interaction
- Think about the dyad's strengths



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Think about using these guiding principles with the triadic strategies. Be mindful of choosing a triadic strategy to work on during a visit, and share this information with the caregiver. Remember to provide a supportive and positive environment for the caregiver and child. Sometimes it helps to take the perspective of the caregiver and put yourself in their shoes. Don't rush to suggest and model, instead, wait and observe the interaction. Consider the strengths of the caregiver-child dyad and work from there. Remember that the key outcomes are competence, confidence, and mutual enjoyment! And finally, always re-adjust your strategy when needed.

## Remember...

- Be wary of the **model** and **suggest** strategies, which are the most directive strategies. These strategies can have negative consequences.



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Remember to be wary of the **model** and **suggest** strategies, which are the most directive strategies- these strategies can have some negative consequences if the early interventionist is constantly taking over the interaction. Also, if suggest is used too often, the caregiver may become overwhelmed, and the routine may not even end up looking like the original routine.

# Triadic Strategies

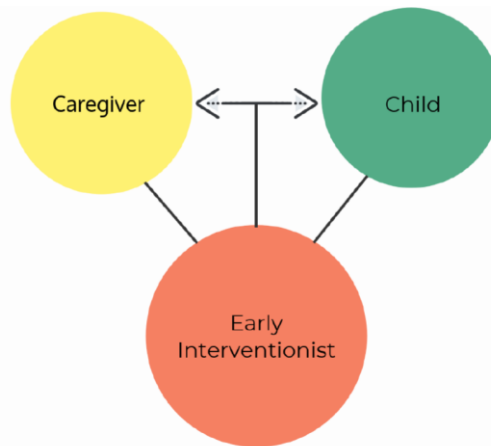


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Keep the top three pink strategies of Establish Dyadic Context, Affirm Parenting Competence, and Focus Attention, in mind to use the most often during visits.

## Triadic Strategies Reflection: Over the next two weeks, consider the triadic strategies



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Over the next two weeks, consider the triadic strategies. If you are an EI service coordinator or EI provider, it might be helpful to choose one family that you will be very comfortable in using these strategies, and a second family that will challenge your skills as an EI professional. If you are a caregiver, consider how triadic strategies are reflected in home visits with professionals. If you are a service coordinator, consider ways that you could support the implementation of the triadic strategies. This could be through conducting a thorough assessment of caregivers to understand who is in the major role of caregiving for the eligible child. It may include engaging caregivers (and primarily parents) in a conversation about strengths, or engaging caregivers in a conversation about their own learning styles.

## Reflection: Putting it Into Practice

**Early Interventionists:** Choose one family to use the triadic strategies with over the next month. Consider how this changes your intervention during home visits. Questions to consider:

- What strategies worked best for you with the family?
- How did using the strategies change your intervention?



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In reflection for early interventionists, choose one family to use the triadic strategies with over the next month. Consider how this changes your intervention during home visits. What strategies worked best for you with the family? How did using the strategies change your intervention?

## Reflection: Putting it Into Practice

**Service Coordinators:** Did you set the stage for early intervention by sharing with the family that the focus of early intervention is about supporting caregivers in their everyday activities?



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In reflection for service coordinators, did you set the stage for early intervention by sharing with the family that the focus of early intervention is about supporting caregivers in their everyday activities?

## Reflection: Putting it Into Practice

**Caregivers:** Did you feel the primary focus of your most recent visit was helping you make minor adjustments to your routines?



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For caregivers, did you feel the primary focus of your most recent visit was helping you make minor adjustments to your routines?



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Special thanks to the Professional Development Workgroup for their hard work and dedication in vetting materials!

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