



**Beyond Bubbles and Blocks**

Information for EI Home Visitors

**Do you know the importance of caregiver action/practice?**

Action/practice is one of the key components of relationship-based caregiver coaching. With action/practice, EI Specialists provide opportunities for caregivers to try out and practice using previously learned intervention strategies across contexts and newly learned skills with their child during the early intervention visit.  Action/practice can consist of planned or spontaneous opportunities in context or through role plays with the EI Specialist to strengthen caregivers’ knowledge and skills. Specifically, action/practice provides caregivers opportunities to practice, improve, reflect upon, and receive feedback on existing or new skills with support from their EI Specialist.

**How is action/practice related to the MA EI Key Principles and Core Values?**

Action/practice is aligned with the MA EI Key Principles by ensuring that caregivers play a vital role in the intervention process, during and between EI visits. With action/practice the caregiver is the one directly interacting and working with their child. Action/practice promotes a partnership between the EI Specialist and caregivers that is collaborative, strengths-based, individualized, family-centered, and based on respect. Action/practice promotes caregiver competence and confidence, thereby, building caregiver capacity.

**How is action/practice related to PIWI?**

PIWI emphasizes that the role of the EI Specialist is to partner with caregivers to address their concerns and priorities for their child. The EI Specialist is a resource to the caregivers in further developing

their relationship with their child. PIWI supports the dyad- the caregiver/child relationship.

More specifically, each of the dyadic strategies strengthens the dyad. The triadic strategies, particularly *establishing dyadic context*, promotes the caregiver-child interaction and relationship. Creating an encouraging and collaborative relationship with caregivers helps caregivers feel safe, comfortable, and supported as they practice strategies with their child during everyday activities to strengthen and promote their competence, confidence, and mutual enjoyment.



In sum, providing opportunities for caregiver action/practice is an important part of what should be happening during and between EI visits. Caregiver action/practice promotes the Massachusetts Core Values and Key Principles and is aligned with PIWI. It also promotes the Family Outcomes part of the federal reporting requirement for Part C programs, particularly that caregivers will be able to effectively communicate their child’s needs and help their children develop and learn.

**Reflect on your use of action/practice**

* Are you listening to the caregivers’ priorities so that you can joint plan with them regarding which strategies they will practice with their child and in which daily activities/routines (during and between visits)?
* Are you creating opportunities during your EI visits to have the caregiver directly work with their child to practice strategies to support their child’s development and learning?
* How are you being intentional about incorporating caregiver action/practice into your sessions with families?
* Are you aware of your own biases and how they may impact your use of caregiver action/practice?
* How can caregiver action/practice help you understand the family, their culture, along with their everyday activities/routines?
* How can caregiver action/practice help you to better support and strengthen caregiver-child interactions?
* How can caregiver action/practice help the caregiver to support their child’s development and learning?
* During and after caregiver action/practice are you giving the caregiver a chance to reflect before offering feedback/suggestions? Are you affirming their competence?

**References**

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