



**Beyond Bubbles and Blocks**

Information for EI Professionals

**Do you know the importance of caregiver reflection?**

Caregiver reflection is one of the key components of relationship-based caregiver coaching. Reflection is an opportunity for the caregiver to think about their knowledge and use of skills as well as problem solve with the EI Specialist. Reflection typically occurs during and/or after action/practice but can occur at other times during the visit as well. Reflection helps the caregiver discover how what they do and don’t do impacts their child’s behavior, learning, and development.

Throughout the visit, the EI Specialist has a sense of curiosity in exploring the caregiver’s experiences and priorities by asking open-ended, non-leading, reflective questions and statements such as “I wonder…”, “I noticed that…”, “How does he let you know…”. It is important for the EI Specialist to pause and allow the caregiver time to process and respond. As the caregiver responds, the EI Specialist listens open-mindedly, nonjudgmentally.

**How is reflection related to the MA EI Key Principles and Core Values?**

Reflection is aligned with the MA EI Key Principles by ensuring that caregivers play an active and vital role in the intervention process during and between EI visits. Reflection promotes a partnership between the EI Specialist and caregivers that is collaborative, strengths-based, individualized, family-centered, and based on respect. Reflection promotes caregiver competence and confidence, thereby building caregiver capacity.

**How is caregiver reflection related to PIWI?**

PIWI emphasizes that the role of the EI Specialist is to partner with the caregiver to address their concerns and priorities for their child. PIWI requires the EI Specialist to be intentional with how they interact with the caregiver to support that caregiver’s relationship with their child. Through reflection, the caregiver becomes more aware of their child’s abilities and needs as well as their own. Additionally, through reflection, the caregiver gains ideas for achieving mutually pleasurable interactions with their child at home and in their community.

The EI Specialist can use the triadic strategy, focus attention, to promote caregiver reflection. When the EI Specialist uses this strategy, it helps draw the caregiver’s attention to particular skills or actions of themselves or their child.



Providing opportunities for caregiver reflection is an important part of best practice during EI visits. Caregiver reflection promotes the Massachusetts Core Values and Key Principles and is aligned with PIWI. Using reflection can enhance the caregiver’s understanding of their child’s developmental agenda and expand their capacity to support that agenda. This increases the likelihood of the caregiver meeting their family’s IFSP outcomes. Reflection promotes the Family Outcomes part of the federal reporting requirement for Part C programs, particularly that caregivers will be able to help their children develop and learn.

**Reflect on how you are promoting caregiver reflection**

* To what extent are you asking questions or commenting to encourage the caregiver to reflect?
* How are you helping the caregiver to review and analyze what they already know or are doing?
* How are you helping the caregiver figure out what they need to achieve desired outcomes?
* To what extent are you modeling your own reflections and thoughts?
* How are you being intentional about incorporating caregiver reflection into your sessions with families?
* Are you aware of your own biases and how they may impact your use of caregiver reflection?
* 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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