

Service Delivery/Specialized Skills Training (SST)

The Making It Work Service Delivery module introduces the basic structure of early childhood intervention visits using the early intervention coaching framework as developed by M’Lisa Sheldon and Dathan Rush. Further training on the coaching framework can be found on the ECI website under [Coaching Families](#). As a review, every service delivery visit, utilizing the coaching framework, should consist of the following five components:

- Joint Planning
- Observation
- Action/Practice
- Feedback
- Reflection

The specialization and individualization of the service occurs during these five steps. Every child and family will have different discussions during joint planning, different activities will be observed, and different strategies should be used during the action and practice phase. Additionally, feedback will be individualized to the family and will be based on the strategy being taught and practiced. Likewise, the reflection phase will be individualized to the unique needs of the child and family.

The activities used during the action and practice phase for each visit should:

- Assist the parent in supporting their child’s development across domains with an emphasis on strengthening cognitive skills, positive behaviors and social interactions, and
- Promote the parent’s confidence and competence in addressing their child’s development.

According to [Texas Rule 350.501\(4\), Specialized Skills Training](#)

SST visits should "...include skills training and anticipatory guidance for family members, or other significant caregivers to ensure effective treatment and to enhance the child's development." By definition anticipatory guidance is "guidance provided by an expert or knowledgeable group to those with a particular interest (e.g., parents), anticipating likely upcoming concerns." (Medical Dictionary) When provided with practical developmental information prior to significant physical, emotional and psychological milestones, parents are better able to anticipate impending changes, maximize their child's developmental potential and identify their child's special needs.

There are numerous examples of the types of activities that can be used during SST visits in this workbook. Remember, each SST visit will be individualized to the needs of the child and family. Even SST visits for the same child should not look exactly the same from week to week. Each of the five phases of the SST visit should evolve and change based on the child's progress.

Family Engagement

No matter which strategies are being used, parent or caregiver engagement during SST is crucial for the coaching framework to be effective. You can promote parent engagement by including "return demonstration" as part of the action/practice portion of the visit. Return demonstration allows the EIS to ensure that the parent understands how to use the strategy or activity the EIS has taught. They can model back what was shown to them. Return demonstration occurs in an SST visit when:

- The parent immediately practices an activity the EIS taught.
- The parent shows the EIS a videotaped example of the parent implementing a previously taught activity with the child.
- The parent demonstrates how she has used the strategy during a routine and discusses the successes or challenges.

Different parents will have varying degrees of ease demonstrating their understanding of a concept. It is important to help all parents feel comfortable with this process. If parent learning is emphasized throughout the pre-enrollment and IFSP process, parents will be prepared for the approach, and you will be able to move toward complete implementation of this valuable technique.

Documentation

Documenting your service is an important and necessary part of your work. You can use your documentation as a tool to support the coaching process. Reflect with the parent about what was planned for the family to do since your last visit, how well the

plan was implemented and what worked and what didn't work. Discuss and document your observations of the parent's demonstration of the planned activities. This gives you an opportunity to give positive feedback to the parent, tweak the activity in some way if needed, and demonstrate your suggestions for changes or next steps. Then document your feedback to the parent, and together, plan what the family will do until the next visit. Documenting all of this information will provide the family reminders of everything that was discussed and strategies to implement until your next visit. Documenting all of these activities takes time, so remember to include this time when you plan for the visits on the IFSP. Depending on the needs of the family, you can document as you go, or at the end of the visit. More information about documentation of SST visits can be found in the Documentation of SST Section.

Coaching Practices Resources

[Coaching Families Training Module](#)

[Texas ECI Coaching Fidelity Checklist](#)

[Coaching Quick Reference Guide by Dathan Rush and M'Lisa Shelden – \(PDF\)](#)

Activity – Coaching Practices

From the Tips and Techniques PDF sheet listed above in the Coaching Resources section think about two new ways you can demonstrate coaching when working with families.

Try these out and discuss the expectations and results with your supervisors.

New Strategy I will implement:	
Expectation:	Results:

New Strategy I will implement:

Expectation:

Results: