CASEtools
Instruments and Procedures for Implementing Early Childhood and Family Support Practices

Checklists for Providing/Receiving Early Intervention Supports in Child Care Settings

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This *CASE*tool includes a description of the development and use of two *Checklists for Providing/Receiving Early Intervention Supports in Child Care Settings.* The checklists are based on the current evidence for use of natural learning environment practices and coaching as an interaction style for building the capacity of the child care provider to promote child learning and development. The *Providing Early Intervention Supports checklists* are used by an early intervention practitioner to self-assess whether or not he/she has necessary knowledge of the child care program and uses the characteristics of natural learning environment practices and coaching. The *Receiving Early Intervention Supports checklists* are used by the child care provider to ensure that evidence-based supports are provided by the early intervention practitioner working in the context of the child care setting.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this *CASE*tool is to describe the development and use of the *Checklists for Providing/Receiving Early Intervention Supports in Child Care Settings.* The two sets of checklists include practice indicators of key characteristics of natural learning environment practices (Dunst, Bruder, Trivette, & Hamby, 2006; Dunst, Bruder, Trivette, Raab, & McLean, 2001; Dunst, Herter, & Shields, 2000; Dunst, Trivette, Humphries, Raab, & Roper, 2001; Work Group on Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments, 2007) and coaching as an interaction style for building the capacity of important individuals in the life of the child to promote child growth and development (Rush & Shelden, 2011). An early intervention practitioner who understands, uses, and masters the checklists is implementing evidence-based practices for working with a child care provider. A child care provider who uses the checklists with early intervention practitioners working in his/her setting is ensuring that the visiting professional is adhering to practices known to have positive outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities in inclusive settings. This paper includes an overview of providing/receiving early intervention supports within the context of child care settings, a description of the *Checklists for Providing/Receiving Early Intervention Supports in Child Care Settings*, and guidelines for using the two sets of checklists. Both sets of checklists are included in the Appendix.

EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORTS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CHILD CARE SETTINGS

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that early intervention services be provided in natural environments. Child care settings can be natu-

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ral environments for young children if these settings are inclusive of children who are typically-developing and not created for the primary purpose of caring for, educating, or treating children with disabilities (IDEA, 1997). For early childhood practitioners responsible for supporting a child with a disability in a child care program, the features of an inclusive setting have further meaning. Routinely pulling a child out of the group context to provide specialized therapy or instruction violates the basic premise of inclusive practices and does not meet the federal regulatory guidelines for serving young children in natural environments. The primary role of the early intervention practitioner coming into a teacher's classroom or program is to build the capacity of the teachers or caregivers in the children's lives to ensure that child learning and development is occurring not just when the early childhood practitioner is present (IDEA).

High quality, inclusive classroom settings are full of development-enhancing learning opportunities that occur as part of everyday routines and activity settings. Competent early childhood teachers work creatively and diligently to facilitate learning opportunities throughout the day that are based on the interests of the children enrolled in the program. These learning opportunities cross all developmental domains and provide many valuable learning experiences for children with all types of abilities. Teachers also have varying attitudes, levels of experience, and expertise related to teaching and supporting young children with a wide range of abilities. Using coaching as the interaction style to support teachers in inclusive settings to successfully promote the participation of all children in the classroom environment is an effective strategy for early childhood practitioners (Rush & Shelden, 2011).

When supporting teachers in early childhood settings, coaches must consider several key issues that are inherent to working in formalized early childhood settings. Just as early childhood practitioners must respect family environments when supporting children in their homes, coaches must also spend time developing an understanding of the teachers' or programs' philosophy of education and classroom management. Classroom environments, especially high quality settings, are very busy. Coaches in early childhood settings must remember and respect the demands on the teachers' time to support and manage an active classroom environment. Although the teachers have many responsibilities, making time and setting the stage for a shared planning process regarding the coach's involvement in the classroom is critical. Pre-planning and discussion will maximize the teachers' abilities to make time for coaching sessions. Additionally, early discussions about teacher-specific or classroom-specific issues can lay the groundwork for administrative involvement and support in the process.

Developing an understanding of the educational philosophy of the program and teacher is one of the first steps in developing a partnership. For a coach to be successful in an early childhood classroom, he or she must gain an in-depth understanding of the guiding philosophical principles of the agency, program, and teacher. Because coaching is dependent upon building on the coachee's current abilities, expertise, and knowledge, gathering information (i.e., talking with teachers, reading program materials, observing teachers in their classrooms) prior to initiating coaching conversations will lay the groundwork for a collaborative partnership between the early childhood coach and teacher. Without an understanding of the philosophical framework, a coach could inadvertently share information that conflicts with a program's standards or valued practices. In addition to not being helpful, a coach could quickly lose credibility with the coachee having the best of intentions in mind.

When a family agrees to participate in an early intervention program, for example, their agreement to participate does not guarantee that the child care provider or preschool teacher will be interested in participating or even feel the need for support. For children enrolled in early intervention and involved in formalized early childhood settings, invitation of the child care provider or preschool teacher early in the planning (i.e., IFSP) process is essential. A plan written by the family without inclusion of the teacher or child care provider will not adequately address the needs and priorities across the child's environments. Different environments place varying demands on children and often require a variety of skills and abilities for success. The adults in the environments possess different abilities and experiences related to a child's specific needs. To ensure success for all involved in the process, identification of priorities across environments as well as strengths, needs, and learning opportunities is required. The early childhood coach can often help bridge communication between the early childhood classroom and home environment. The coach can provide specific support in both settings, but also support parents and teachers in communicating directly with one another to maximize consistency and continuity of care for the child.

Child care providers receiving early intervention supports should also know and understand how evidence-based supports and services are effectively provided and ensure that the practitioners coming into the child care setting for a child with an Individualized Fam-

ily Service Plan are implementing practices that support successful participation of the child. The checklists serve as a tool for the child care provider to assist the early intervention practitioner in understanding more about the environment, establishing shared expectations of how the practitioner will support the child care provider, and delineating how together they will foster the child's learning and development.

CHECKLISTS FOR PROVIDING/RECEIVING EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORTS IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS

The checklists were developed using the characteristics and implementation conditions of coaching and natural learning environment practices. The indicators were based upon a review of relevant research and were revised following feedback from practitioners and other professionals considered proficient in the use of the practices. The checklists were designed to be used only in inclusive child care settings because segregated settings are not considered natural environments under Part C of IDEA. The two tools (*Providing/Receiving Early Intervention Supports*) each contain three checklists intended to capture both the understanding and actions necessary for working within a child care environment.

- *Preparing Supports*. This checklist includes practice indicators necessary for understanding the child care environment (e.g., expectations, program philosophy, schedule).
- *Providing Supports.* This checklist includes indicators for the characteristics of coaching and the use of natural learning environment practices.
- *Planning Follow-up Supports.* This checklist includes indicators for what the child care provider and early intervention practitioner will do in between visits and during subsequent visits (i.e., communicating with parents, going on home visits, flexible scheduling).

USE OF THE CHECKLISTS

The two checklists contain practice standards that support the understanding and use of factors known to promote optimal child learning within the child care setting. For each indicator, the early intervention practitioner or child care provider is asked whether he/she knows and/or demonstrates use of the practice. Each checklist also includes a section for the program or practitioners to develop a plan for making desired improvements in their practices. Individuals can use the checklists to conduct an assessment to examine the use of coaching and natural learning environment practices. A self-assessment could be accomplished by the practitioner reflecting on his/her practices as a team member, and determining whether the practices are consistent or inconsistent with each practice indicator. The early intervention practitioner and child care provider could also periodically use the checklists directly with one another to assess how they are operationalizing the practices. The *Program Planning* section can be used to develop plans for changing practices and identifying the supports needed to make practices consistent with the indicators on the checklists.

CONCLUSION

The *Checklists for Providing/Receiving Early Intervention Supports in Child Care Settings* each include three sets of indicators defining the use of coaching and natural learning environment practices within child care settings. The checklists are useful as benchmarks and standards for determining the extent to which the early intervention practitioner is implementing coaching and natural learning environment practices. The checklists also provide a basis for programs and practitioners to increase their knowledge and understanding of the practices and develop plans for improvement or refinement of coaching and natural learning environment practices within the child care setting.

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CHECKLISTS FOR *PROVIDING* EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORTS IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS

(Note: This checklist is intended for use only in inclusive settings)

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Checklist Description

The Mission and Key Principles for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments indicate that the focus of intervention is to build the capacity of parents and other care providers to support the growth and development of the children in their care. These checklists include practice indicators of the key elements for building the capacity of child care providers in early childhood programs or child care homes. The three checklists describe different stages of support for caregivers in child care environments: (a) preparing supports, (b) providing supports, and (c) planning follow-up supports. For each indicator, determine whether or not the practitioner is adhering to the aspect of the practice described.

Use of the Checklists

The expected indicators for working with child care providers are listed within the checklists for each practice area. Listed below each indicator are questions that may be used by an early intervention program administrator, team leader, or supervisor to determine the extent to which the practitioner understands and/or is able to operationalize the indicator. A practitioner can use the checklists to conduct a self-assessment to examine his/her current knowledge and skills related to working with child care providers. A self-assessment could be accomplished by the practitioner reflecting on whether his/her knowledge and skills are consistent or inconsistent with each indicator. Response to each question should ultimately be "yes." If not, the Plan section may be used by the child care provider to develop strategies for addressing any identified needs.

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CHECKLISTS FOR *PROVIDING* EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORTS IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS

(Note: This checklist is intended for use only in inclusive settings)

Practitioner's Name: _____ Date: _____

Child's Name: _____ Child Care Facility: _____

PREPARING SUPPORTS	**Circle the response that indicates your level of knowledge of the child care program.**	**YES**	**NO**
	Do you know the philosophy of the child care provider/program?	Y	N
	Do you know the expectations the child care provider/program has for early intervention services?	Y	N
	Does the child care provider/program know your expectations for working with the child care provider rather than "pulling the child out for therapy?"	Y	N
	Do you know the schedule of the child care classroom?	Y	N
	Do you know the activity settings, centers, classroom routines, and activities?	Y	N
	Do you know the child's interests within the context of child care classrooms?	Y	N
	Have you observed in the classroom as part of the functional assessment prior to the development of the IFSP?	Y	N
	Was the child care provider/program involved in the development of the IFSP?	Y	N
	Do you have a plan for what to do if the teacher is absent or no longer works in the child's classroom?	Y	N

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PROVIDING SUPPORTS	**Circle the response that indicates your level of knowledge of the child care program.**	**YES**	**NO**
	Does the teacher share with you what the two of you had planned for him/her to do within the context of classroom activities between your visits?	Y	N
	Do you observe the teacher interacting with or supporting the child's participation in classroom activities?	Y	N
	Do you intentionally model (i.e., explain actions, give teacher an observation, model, and debrief) for the teacher while you interact with the child within the context of a classroom activity?	Y	N
	Do you support the teacher in reflecting on her knowledge and practice before sharing your information and ideas, or modeling with the child?	Y	N
	Do you assist the teacher in figuring out ways to promote the child's participation within classroom activities and routines?	Y	N
	Do you use the toys and materials in the classroom when you model for the teacher, rather than taking toys and materials in to use with the child?	Y	N
	Do you assist with the other children so the teacher can try some of the ideas the two of you have generated to promote the child's participation in an activity?	Y	N
	Are you focused more on supporting the teacher rather than working directly with the child?	Y	N
	Do you provide affirmative (i.e., acknowledge what they are already doing well) and informative (i.e., share new information, ideas, and resources) feedback to the teacher?	Y	N
	In addition to practice opportunities in the classroom, do you also meet with the teacher one-on-one to provide opportunities for reflection and planning?	Y	N

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PLANNING FOLLOW-UP SUPPORTS	**Circle the response that indicates your level of knowledge of the child care program.**	**YES**	**NO**
	Do you develop a joint plan with the teacher for what he/she is going to do to support the child in between your visits?	Y	N
	Is the plan something extra that the teacher must do or is it easily incorporated into her involvement with the child?	Y	N
	Do you develop a plan for what you and the teacher intend to focus on at the next visit and are you going at a time during which the activity or routine would actually happen?	Y	N
	Do you plan your visits on varied days/times in order to support the teacher across different classroom activities and routines?	Y	N
	Do you have a mechanism in place for communication with the parent(s) about what occurs at the child care?	Y	N
	Do you also at least occasionally see the child in the family context to support the family's ability to promote the child's participation within routines and activities at home and in the community?	Y	N

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CHECKLISTS FOR *RECEIVING* EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORTS IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS

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Checklist Description

The Mission and Key Principles for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments indicate that the focus of intervention is to build the capacity of parents and other care providers to support the growth and development of the children in their care. These checklists include practice indicators of the key elements for child care providers to enable early intervention providers to better support and build the capacity of child care providers in early childhood programs or child care homes. The three checklists describe how child care providers can work with early intervention providers within the different stages of support for caregivers in child care environments: (a) preparing supports, (b) providing supports, and (c) planning follow-up supports. For each indicator, the child care provider determines whether or not he/she is adhering to the aspect of the practice described.

Use of the Checklists

The expected indicators for working with early intervention practitioners are listed within the checklists for each practice area. Listed below each indicator are questions that may be used by child care providers to determine the extent to which he/she understands and/or is able to operationalize the indicator. A child care provider can use the checklists to conduct a self-assessment to examine his/her current knowledge and skills related to working with early intervention practitioners. A self-assessment could be accomplished by the child care provider reflecting on whether his/her knowledge and skills are consistent or inconsistent with each indicator. Response to each question should ultimately be "yes." If not, the Plan section may be used by the child care provider to develop strategies for addressing any identified needs.

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CHECKLISTS FOR *RECEIVING* EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORTS IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS

(Note: This checklist is intended for use only in inclusive settings)

Practitioner's Name: _____ Date: _____

Child's Name: _____ Child Care Facility: _____

PREPARING SUPPORTS	**Circle the response that indicates your level and type of support provided to the early intervention practitioner.**	**YES**	**NO**
	Do you share the philosophy of the child care provider/program with the early intervention practitioner?	Y	N
	Do you share with the early intervention practitioner your expectations for early intervention services?	Y	N
	Do you share with the early intervention practitioner your expectations for working with him/her rather than he/she "pulling the child out for therapy?"	Y	N
	Do you share your classroom schedule with the early intervention practitioner?	Y	N
	Do you share your classroom activity settings, centers, routines, and activities with the early intervention practitioner?	Y	N
	Do you share the child's interests within the context of your classroom with the early intervention practitioner?	Y	N
	Do you have the early intervention practitioner observe in your classroom as part of the functional assessment prior to the development of the IFSP?	Y	N
	Do you ask to be involved in the development of the IFSP?	Y	N
	Do you have a plan with the early intervention practitioner for what to do if you are absent on the day of the early intervention practitioner's visit?	Y	N

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PROVIDING SUPPORTS	Circle the response that indicates your level and type of support provided to the early intervention practitioner.	YES	NO
	Do you share with the early intervention practitioner what the two of you had planned to do within the context of classroom activities between his/her visits?	Y	N
	Do you have the early intervention practitioner observe you interacting with or supporting the child's participation in classroom activities?	Y	N
	Do you ask the early intervention practitioner to intentionally model (i.e., explain actions, give you something specific to observe, model, and debrief) for you while he/she interacts with the child within the context of a classroom activity?	Y	N
	Do you reflect on your knowledge and practice before the early intervention practitioner shares information and ideas or models with the child for you?	Y	N
	Do you work with the early intervention provider to figure out ways to promote the child's participation within classroom activities and routines?	Y	N
	During visits by the early intervention practitioner, do you require him/her to use the toys and materials in the classroom when he/she models for you, rather than bringing toys and materials in to use with the child? Note: Assistive technology for a child would be an exception.	Y	N
	Do you have the early intervention practitioner assist with the other children so you can try some of the ideas the two of you have generated to promote the child's participation in an activity?	Y	N
	Do you have the early intervention practitioner focus more on supporting you rather than only working directly with the child?	Y	N
	Do you ask the early intervention practitioner to give you feedback (i.e., acknowledge what you are already doing well, share new information, ideas, and resources)?	Y	N
	In addition to practice opportunities in the classroom, do you make time to meet with the early intervention practitioner one-on-one to provide opportunities for reflection and planning?	Y	N

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PLANNING FOLLOW-UP SUPPORTS	**Circle the response that indicates your level and type of support provided to the early intervention practitioner.**	**YES**	**NO**
	Do you develop a joint plan with the early intervention practitioner for what you are going to do to support the child in between your visits?	Y	N
	Is the plan developed during the visit something extra that you must do or is it easily incorporated into your involvement with the child?	Y	N
	Do you develop a plan for what you and the early intervention practitioner intend to focus on at the next visit and does the early intervention practitioner visit at a time during which the activity or routine would actually happen?	Y	N
	Do you plan the early intervention practitioner's visits on varied days/times in order to support you across different classroom activities and routines?	Y	N
	Do you have a mechanism in place for communication with the parent(s) about what occurs with the early intervention practitioner at the child care?	Y	N
	Do you ensure that the early intervention practitioner also at least occasionally sees the child at home to support the family's ability to promote the child's participation within routines and activities at home and in the community?	Y	N

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