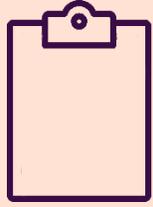




Back to the Field

Evaluation



One of the most common pandemic concerns for early intervention (EI) providers was evaluations. Not only are evaluations a key component of the eligibility process, but they are also the piece of the EI process in which even EI providers using coaching and natural learning environment practices (NLEP) often need to see specific movements, reactions, and behaviors in order to provide a fair assessment. Still, EI practitioners are creative, and we learned some key lessons about evaluation during teleintervention.

Know Your Tools

It's easy to rely on one or two tried and true evaluation tools without understanding how they work or why you are using them. Tele-intervention taught us to dig into evaluations to understand how they could be administered and challenged us to find tools that fit the specific needs of children and families.



TAKEAWAY: Understand how the evaluation tools you use work, how they can and cannot be modified, and how you can tailor them to children and families.

Ask About Routines

We often reduce evaluation tools to a series of yes/no questions or pass/fail tasks rather than understanding how they fit into a child's day. The inability to use our clinical skills to get certain responses made us consider how and when these seemingly random lists of skills become relevant in family life.



TAKEAWAY: Rather than asking yes/no questions like "does your child have a word for drink?" try an open ended, routines-based question like "what does snack time look like for your child?"

Share What You Know

Many providers take pride in and rely on a "sense" of a child's abilities based on training and experience that is difficult to translate to a less experienced practitioner or a parent. During tele-intervention, however, we had no choice but to break these gut instincts down into concrete concepts that could be explained to caregivers in a way that allowed them to share in the information-gathering process.



TAKEAWAY: Think about the concepts you just know "by instinct" or "with your gut" and practice explaining them to colleagues or parents in simple ways that build others' knowledge and understanding.



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