

ACTIVITY 2

Teams

Activity Purpose: The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), released a series of recommended practices in 2014 for the field of early intervention and early childhood special education. There are seven domains, which include: assessment, environment, family, instruction, interaction, teaming and collaboration, and transition. The intention of these recommended practices is to provide professionals and families with guidance around effective ways to promote the development of young children with developmental delays and disabilities. This session will provide participants with the opportunity to explore the teaming and collaboration strand as it relates to the COS process and consider the characteristics of effective teams. Additionally, participants will consider characteristics of effective teams and strategies for facilitating smooth COS discussions.

Difficulty Level: Introductory Level – Awareness & Intermediate Level – Application

Estimated Time: 60 minutes

Materials:

- Internet access & TV/computer
- Chart Paper
- Markers
- Audio for online module
- Handout:
 - *DEC Recommended Practices for Teaming & Collaboration*

Activity Instructions:

Part 1 – Effective Teams?

1. In building on the discussion from the previous session, as a large group ask:
 - a. What are the characteristics of effective teams?
 - b. What challenges do you face in working as part of a team?
 - c. How can you overcome those barriers?
 - d. Are there any special considerations for COS teams?
 - a. In thinking about the COS process, how can professionals ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate and contribute to the conversation about the child's functioning and ratings?

Part 2 – DEC Recommended Practices

1. Provide participants with the handout titled, *DEC Teaming & Collaboration Practices*, chart paper and markers.
2. Read the general description as well as the five practices aloud to the participants.

3. Divide the group into five groups, assigning each group one of the five DEC recommended Teaming and Collaboration practices.
4. Ask the individual groups to come up with concrete examples of how they could use their assigned practice during the COS process and to write down their examples on their chart paper.
5. Come back as a large group and have each of the smaller groups share the recommended practice as well as the concrete examples they came up with. Encourage the participants to think of additional examples during the discussion.

***Note for facilitator:** considering providing context about DEC and the recommended practices to the participants.

Part 3 – COS Facilitation

1. As a group, watch the following brief online module, *Child Outcomes Facilitation Tools*, regarding ways to facilitate conversations about the COS process (skipping the last slide): <http://eitp.education.illinois.edu/AdobePresenter/SC/Section7/3.2ChildOutcomesTools/>
2. After watching the module, consider the following discussions prompts:
 - a. What tips for facilitation stand out to you?
 - b. How do the strategies in this module align with the DEC recommended practices?
 - c. What strategies for facilitation do you and your teams already use?
 - d. What strategies would you like to use?
 - e. What other strategies are important to consider when facilitating COS discussions?
 - f. Why is it important for teams to make accurate ratings/decisions?

Division for Early Childhood (DEC) 2014 Recommended Practices

Teaming and Collaboration

Educational programs and services for young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities, by their nature, always involve more than one adult. The quality of the relationships and interactions among these adults affects the success of these programs. Teaming and collaboration practices are those that promote and sustain collaborative adult partnerships, relationships, and ongoing interactions to ensure that programs and services achieve desired child and family outcomes and goals.

It is a given that the family is an essential member of the team and that the team includes practitioners from multiple disciplines as needed. The teaming and collaboration practices we present include strategies for interacting and sharing knowledge and expertise in ways that are respectful, supportive, enhance capacity, and are culturally sensitive.

We recommend the following practices to support teaming and collaboration:

TC1. Practitioners representing multiple disciplines and families work together as a team to plan and implement supports and services to meet the unique needs of each child and family.

TC2. Practitioners and families work together as a team to systematically and regularly exchange expertise, knowledge, and information to build team capacity and jointly solve problems, plan, and implement interventions.

TC3. Practitioners use communication and group facilitation strategies to enhance team functioning and interpersonal relationships with and among team members.

TC4. Team members assist each other to discover and access community-based services and other informal and formal resources to meet family-identified child or family needs.

TC5. Practitioners and families may collaborate with each other to identify one practitioner from the team who serves as the primary liaison between the family and other team members based on child and family priorities and needs.

