

## Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

### RBI 102: Frequently Asked Questions

### February 2015

This document is intended to respond to questions received from teams across Nebraska who are implementing the Ecomap and Routines Based Interview (RBI). To share other questions, please contact statewide RBEI coordinators: Sue Bainter [suebainter@yahoo.com](mailto:suebainter@yahoo.com) or Cindy Hankey [cahankey@gmail.com](mailto:cahankey@gmail.com).

#### Question 1: What is an Ecomap?

The Ecomap is a **graphic** (map or drawing) of the family, which represents their informal (friends, extended family), and formal supports (doctors, services coordinators, providers), along with the strength of those supports. The mapping process takes only 10-15 minutes and is a succinct way of gathering critical family ecology information while at the same time conveying the message that EI/ECSE is concerned with the whole **family**....not just the “target child”. For more information about the ecomap go to: [http://www.education.ne.gov/Movies/EarlyChildhood/RMI2010/The ECO-Map.mov](http://www.education.ne.gov/Movies/EarlyChildhood/RMI2010/The_ECO-Map.mov)

Understanding the social supports of families is positively linked with achievement of early intervention (EI) outcomes (Dunst, 2000). It is critical to understand the people with whom families are connected - so as to utilize their existing supports without inventing new ones (McWilliam, 2011). While informal conversation is often used to gather this information over time, the Ecomap is a process that will gather the same information in a far more efficient way...*upfront*...where it is most useful in the development of the IFSP/IEP.

#### Question 2: What is an RBI?

The RBI is a semi-structured **interview** used with families, teachers, and child care providers in order to gain meaningful information about how a child participates in everyday activities. Well-done RBIs typically take 1½-2 hours. The RBI has proven itself to be an effective tool for systematically gathering information about:

1) the child’s level of independence; 2) the kinds of social relationships he/she has (including his/her communication); and 3) how engaged he/she is within everyday activities. Families, teachers, and child care providers share information in response to interview questions pertaining to these 3 areas within the home, preschool or child care setting. Families are asked to rate their satisfaction with each of the routines identified. Child and family strengths, challenges and priorities are identified during this process, and then rank ordered. For more information:

[http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/rbi2/nutshell/assessment\\_outcomes.pdf](http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/rbi2/nutshell/assessment_outcomes.pdf)

#### Question 3: Why use an Ecomap and RBI?

The Ecomap and RBI offer a method of gathering relevant assessment information to develop meaningful IFSPs/IEPs. They also enable EI/ECSE teams to meet new requirements for both child AND family assessment. Specifically, the new regulations require the following: **for child assessment:** 92 NAC 52 006.07 “an assessment of each infant or toddler with a disability must be conducted by ‘qualified personnel’ (as per 92 NAC 52 003.22) in order to identify the child’s unique strengths and needs and the early intervention services appropriate to meet those needs.....and include the following: a review of the results of the evaluation conducted under 92 NAC 51-006.06, personal observations of the child; and the identification of the child’s needs in each of the developmental areas in 92 NAC 52-006.04”; **for family assessment:** 480 NAC 3-006 “with the family’s permission, family assessment must be based on information obtained through an assessment tool and also through an interview with the family to identify the family’s resources, priorities, and concerns and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family’s capacity to meet the developmental needs of the family’s infant or toddler with a disability”.

#### Question 4: Who should do the Ecomap and RBI?

It is most effective to have 2 interviewers doing the Ecomap and RBI—a primary interviewer who asks the questions and a secondary interviewer who takes notes. Because the family assessment is a Nebraska requirement for services coordination and the interview itself directly impacts the responsibilities of the services coordinator as outlined in 480NAC 3-003 (see list below), the services coordinator must be one of the two interviewers. The other interviewer involved in the RBI must be an early intervention services provider (as per 92 NAC 003.22), preferably the “most likely” primary provider for the family. In other words, if the RBI is used as the district’s child and family assessments, the 2 interviewers **MUST** include both an early intervention services provider (as per 92 NAC 003.22) and a services coordinator, both of whom are trained in the RBI process.

Responsibilities of the Services Coordinator (as outlined in 480 NAC 3-003) which correlate with the information gained from the RBI include but are not limited to:

1. Assisting parents of eligible children in obtaining access to EI services, including coordinating the performance of screening (if applicable), evaluations and assessments;
2. Facilitating and participating in the development, review and evaluation of IFSPs;
3. Assisting families in identifying available service providers, including health and medical;
4. Coordinating and monitoring the delivery of available services in a timely manner;
5. Informing families of their rights and procedural safeguards;
6. Coordinating the funding sources for early intervention services; and
7. Facilitating the development of a transition plan to preschool or other services, if appropriate.

#### Question 5: What skills are needed to do an RBI?

McWilliam (2010) recommends that the people doing the interview have:

- Knowledge of child development for appropriate follow up questions
- Knowledge of family functioning for appropriate follow up questions
- Interview skills so that an easy and informal conversation can take place.

Interviewing is a skill.....it takes instruction, practice, and feedback!

#### Question 6: When should the Ecomap and RBI be done?

Many teams have identified “intake” as an effective time to complete the Ecomap. The RBI should be completed prior to the development of the IFSP and updated at the 6 month review (McWilliam, 2010). Some teams fit the RBI into intake; others do the RBI during evaluation. Some teams schedule the interview at a separate visit occurring between evaluation and the IFSP/IEP; while still others complete the interview at the actual IFSP/IEP meeting....lots of options. Teams will find the best option for each child/family after careful consideration of many factors.

#### Question 7: What is the RBI information used for?

Teams use the priorities of the family to develop functional and measurable IFSP/ IEP outcomes. Outcomes resulting from a family interview are not discipline specific or generic (“I want my child to talk”). They are not missed test items. They are a direct reflection of the child’s participation, independence and relationships within their everyday routines. Finally, gathering information about child development can be used to score the required GOLD entry assessment. One tool.....multiple purposes. For more information about developing functional IFSP/IEP outcomes:

[http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/rbi2/nutshell/Purpose\\_of\\_child\\_outcomesC.pdf](http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/rbi2/nutshell/Purpose_of_child_outcomesC.pdf)