

Communication Between Home Visits in Routines- Based Early Intervention: A Supplement to the Getting Ready Approach

(Part I Guidance Document)

The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidance for Early Intervention (EI) professionals trained in the Getting Ready (GR) Approach to enhance communication occurring between visits. Communication between visits is a key component of the GR Approach (Marvin, Moen, Knoche, & Sheridan, 2020) *.

Professional-Caregiver Between-Visit Communication



Why Enhance Communication Between Visits?

- ✓ EI research is clear: intervention for the child and family occurs between their visits with professionals.
- ✓ EI experts promote communication as an integral component of service delivery that leads to improved caregiver involvement and engagement.
- ✓ The GR Approach guides professionals to build parent-child interaction during and in-between visits as part of naturally-occurring learning opportunities.
- ✓ Development of a home visit plan, including communication between visits, leads to successful, collaborative partnerships between professionals and caregivers.

Communication Between Visits Strengthens Routines-Based Home Visiting

Consistent, clear, and open communication supports caregivers. Providers and services coordinators (SCs) can use communication between visits with caregivers by:

- ✓ Reminding caregiver of routines that provide the best opportunity to practice an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcome.
- ✓ Asking what's working and what's not in terms of strategies to support child progress.
- ✓ Providing opportunities for caregivers to ask questions when clarification or support is needed.
- ✓ Documenting progress toward child and family outcomes.
- ✓ Celebrating with caregivers when progress is made or new skills are learned.

GR Strategies to Promote Communication Between Visits

The GR Approach utilizes the GUIDE to facilitate implementation. Part of the Main Agenda section of the GUIDE is called the Home Visit Plan and supports the caregiver to carry out ideas and strategies between visits. It is jointly developed by the provider or SC and the caregiver. The Home Visit Plan also includes how the provider or SC and the caregiver will communicate between home visits about the Plan. Examples of GR strategies used to enhance communication between visits are included in the following table:

GR strategies	Definition	Examples
<p>Communicate openly and clearly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask open-ended questions • Use active listening • Check for parent understanding • Respect families' preferred language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider calls to make sure the next visit time works for the family and also asks the parent about how the specific strategy they are using for mealtime is working. • SC emails to schedule a face-to-face visit with the family. The SC checks with the family to see if they understand the strategy the provider suggested by using open-ended questions. • SC text messages the parent to remind her of the date and time the next IFSP meeting is scheduled and checks for understanding of what will happen at the meeting. SC checks on any new priorities. • Provider sends a document of new signs the family requested using key vocabulary in the family's home language. • SC sends a parent contact information to apply for funding for families who have children with autism in the family's native language.
<p>Encourage parent-child interaction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use routines to support the interaction • Arrange the environment to support the interaction • Set up the interaction to match the developmental needs of the child • Make sure the interaction is enjoyable for the parent and child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parent sends a short video of her child, a few days after the visit, pointing to what she wants at afternoon snack time showing an enjoyable time for both the parent and child. • Family sends the provider a snapshot of their child's list of new words they have heard during the identified routines. • Family sends the SC a picture of the child scooping sand at the park after a visit where the discussion was about trying new learning opportunities. The SC calls the parent to affirm how the parent positioned the child so the child could watch how their brother scooped the sand.

GR strategies	Definition	Examples
<p>Affirm parent competencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge parent ideas to support their child’s learning • Acknowledge the actions of parent that support their child’s progress • Describe to parents how those actions link to progress • Acknowledge the ideas and activities the parents do to achieve family outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The day after a home visit, the parent sends a short video to the SC and provider. Her child is laughing at the dog chasing a ball and looking at Dad when the ball stops. Dad says “more?” The child looks, and Dad throws the ball. The provider or SC affirms the parent by linking the strategy of pausing that was tried during a home visit. • Provider emails parent to ask her how using a preferred snack and a snack the child does not like to increase the chances of success with making a choice. The parent emails back that it’s working. The provider acknowledges the parent’s efforts. • Parent sends a short video of bath-time. The SC sends back an email to recognize the parents’ action toward achieving the family outcome of finding a bath chair.
<p>Make mutual/ joint decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use recent observations to guide discussions and decisions • Use data from recent assessments and observations • Establish agreement about next steps in developmental goals for the child • Determine strategies together with the family for both child and family outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent informs the SC they have completed the necessary paperwork for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The SC calls the parent and they jointly decide the next steps for the paperwork. • SC emails the family to thank them for letting the team come to their home for the family assessment and uses the priorities the family identified to guide a discussion of what will happen at the IFSP meeting with the priorities. • At a home visit, Dad shared he was concerned about his son having autism. Dad and the SC decide together that Dad will make an appointment for an evaluation. Dad later called the SC to let her know he had made the appointment and asked if they could talk about the evaluation at the next visit.

GR strategies	Definition	Examples
<p>Focus parent's attention on child's strengths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orient parent's attention toward child's specific developmental strengths and needs • Identify child's strengths and needs as focus for all interactions. Share child's strengths "in the moment" Share strengths based on past observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent sends a video of snack time to the provider. The provider emails the parent to comment about how well the child picked up the spoon and shares that the next step would be to work on scooping food. Provider asks if parent wants to discuss scooping with the spoon on the next visit • The parent calls the SC to let her know they heard the child try to say "dinosaur" when the parent was getting a drink for the child • The provider emails the parent her home visit note and shares data to show that the child was using single sounds during the Routines-Based Interview (RBI) and now is trying a word with three different parts
<p>Share developmental information and resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Relevant</i> developmental observations are based on recent assessments/ observations • Describe what comes next in the child's development • Information and resources are shared by professional and parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a parent sends a list of new words they heard during morning snack, the provider responds by sending the parent a resource that includes next steps for language. • The parent sends a picture of the child making up and down marks and asks what the next step would be? The provider responds with "Great-now look for and encourage marks that go other directions such as across." • The SC emails the parent a brochure about a Down syndrome support group that she received from another parent.

GR strategies	Definition	Examples
<p>Use observations and data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe child within routines • Describe what the child can do and is trying to do • Describe the child's progress related to IFSP outcomes • Include formal and informal assessment data <p>Consider how observations and assessment data can inform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • next steps for IFSP outcomes • the strategies to support the steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parent sends a video of her child's tantrum after he is told "no TV" and is placed in the "time-out chair." • The provider contacts the parent to get some more information and brainstorm some strategies mom can immediately try before the next visit. • The provider sends her home visit note to the SC and the SC makes herself a note to document progress on the family's goal
<p>Model, suggest, and practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate how to use a strategy during a routine • Check for understanding of the strategy • Provide a specific suggestion for something to try with the child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider sends a short video using a doll to model how to help their baby roll over during playtime. • The parent reports to the SC in a text that Dad is helping the baby roll over during playtime. • The provider receives a picture of child smiling in the tub with blocks. The provider responds back by saying "I am so glad the blocks worked. What would you think about adding some other toys? Let's talk at the next visit."

Learn More About Getting Ready Strategies

To learn more about how to access the Getting Ready training and implementation, contact your regional Routines Based Early Intervention (RBEI) Technical Assistant for training at: https://edn.ne.gov/cms/sites/default/files/u1/pdf/RBEI_TA_Providers_Map.pdf

Also, consider reading [Marvin et al. \(2019\)](#) *Getting Ready Strategies for Promoting Parent Professional Relationships and Parent-Child Interactions* published in the *Journal of Young Exceptional Children*.

A full list of citations are included in the companion document (Part 2) entitled **Communication Between Home Visits Research and Professional Practices: Guide for Administrators.*