

What is the SSIP?

The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) is a multi-year, multi-phase plan that describes how Texas will improve outcomes for children with disabilities served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C.

Initiated in April 2014, Texas' SSIP focuses on strategies and activities designed to substantially increase the growth of positive social-emotional skills in infants and toddlers who entered ECI services below age expectations in this domain. As part of the federal SSIP process, Texas was required to select and implement one evidence-based practice that would support the goal of substantially increasing infants and toddlers' social-emotional skills.

Texas Chooses Coaching

In spring 2015, through face-to-face meetings and webinars with ECI programs and key stakeholders, Texas chose coaching as the evidence-based practice to be implemented. Developed by Dathan Rush and M'Lisa Shelden, the coaching framework is the centerpiece around which Texas' SSIP intended outcomes and implementation activities were developed.

Regarded as a highly effective and capacity building practice, coaching supports the seven key principles for providing early intervention services in natural environments, particularly embodying the first two principles. Foremost, infants and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences

and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts; and all families, with the necessary supports and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development.

The 5 Steps of Coaching

Using a framework that focuses on the five key steps, ECI programs across the state have been learning and reinforcing the coaching practice with their families over the past two years. Through **joint planning, observation, action/practice, feedback** and **reflection**, ECI practitioners have been working alongside parents and caregivers to ensure that the support, guidance and tools necessary to actively help their child grow, learn and develop skills are available and practiced.

Demonstration Sites Update and Next Steps

With a few demonstration sites having fully implemented the coaching practice for a year or more, and important lessons learned, it's time for ECI to roll out the evidence-based practice statewide. All contracted ECI programs will be required to implement the coaching practice through the use of an implementation protocol, refined tools and resources, enhanced training, and targeted technical assistance. The state office is aiming to provide training on the implementation protocol within the first few months of 2019, with statewide roll out occurring soon after.

What kind of data and outcomes did we see with the demonstration sites? Were practitioners implementing the coaching practice as intended, and as observed by their supervisors? Here's a glimpse:



of supervisors noted that the ECI provider actively engaged the parent or caregiver in planning for the session, including discussing the joint plan that was developed at the previous session.



of supervisors indicated that before suggesting new strategies or providing suggestions or feedback, the provider observed the parent or caregiver using strategies taught in previous sessions.



of supervisors indicated that the provider used a routine or activity for practice that engaged the child, and that typically occurs for the family or caregivers.

The data and feedback from demonstration sites tell us in broad terms that:



We have a great training in [Coaching Families](#).



Programs are being intentional about implementing the coaching practice.



We have a solid foundation from which to build and grow to support all Texas ECI programs in implementing coaching — a family focused, proven practice.

The 5 Steps of Coaching: What Are They. How Do They Work.

A great way to explain coaching is to show it. Watch these video clips of an OT visit from ECI MHMR Tarrant County. To view each of the video clips, go to the [Coaching Families](#) training module, and click on the name of the video located in the left-hand navigation.

Notice how the OT demonstrates concurrent documentation as she writes her service delivery progress note throughout the visit. The service delivery progress note from this visit is located on [page 5](#) for your review. The progress note documents the entire visit, not just the segments seen in the videos.



Joint Planning (watch Joint Planning Video 1)

- Review the goals on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) at each visit to learn about progress or setbacks and to ensure the goal is still appropriate.
- Find out what has happened since the last visit.
- Assess priorities together.
- Decide which routines to target next.
- At the end of the visit: discuss what the family will focus on before the next visit and what the family would like to work on during the next session.



Observation (watch Observation Video 1)

- Watch the child to see what skills are being used.
- Watch the caregiver engage the child in activities they have already been doing.
- Ask the caregiver to show you the challenges the child is having in a specific activity or setting.
- Always observe what is already happening before you offer suggestions. This is a good opportunity for you to informally assess the child's skills.



Action/Practice (watch Action/Practice Video 1)

- Suggest strategies for the caregiver to try.
- Intentionally model the strategies if needed.
- Ask the caregiver to demonstrate the strategies within the selected routine/activity.
- Discuss other activity settings that could benefit from implementing the newly learned knowledge, skills or strategies.
- Ask the caregiver what actions or strategies they might try to achieve.

The 5 Steps of Coaching: What Are They. How Do They Work. — continued

To view each of the video clips, go to the [Coaching Families](#) training module, and click on the name of the video located in the left-hand navigation.



Feedback (watch [Feedback Video 1](#))

- Tell the caregiver things you see that he/she is doing well.
- Discuss with the caregiver things that might need changing and why.
- Tell the caregiver things you see the child is doing that he/she may not have picked up on.
- Discuss with the caregiver how the child reacts using different strategies.



Reflection (watch [Reflection Video 1](#))

- Ask the caregiver how he/she thinks different activities are going throughout the session.
- Ask what he/she would like to do differently.
- Discuss things that are important for the caregiver to continue doing.
- Ask about the caregiver's concerns.

Benefits of Implementing the Coaching Approach

- The Coaching Approach supports the caregiver in feeling confident and competent by promoting their ability to:
 - ~ Reflect on interactions with the child.
 - ~ Develop a plan for future interactions.
 - ~ Support the child in all areas of development.
- The Coaching Approach promotes learning in the family's natural environment.
 - ~ Learning occurs through interactions with familiar people.
[Helpful Hint — Remind the family they are the experts about their child and the most important people in their child's life.]
 - ~ Intervention should occur during regular, daily activities: meal time, bath time, changing diapers, getting dressed, shopping, driving to day care, household chores, etc.
[Helpful Hint — Use the typical and preferred activities of the family. If you include intervention in an activity that is not typical for the family (e.g., playing on the floor), intervention is less likely to occur outside of the ECI visits.]



To discover what is happening in the photo, watch the Action/Practice Video 2 in the [Coaching Families](#) training module.

Service Delivery Progress Note

Read this sample progress note of the OT visit.

Child's Name: Mia

Local/TKIDS #: 1234567

Contact Type: OT

Location: Home

Medicaid #: 098765

Therapist: Carol

Present: Mom, OT and Child

Date: 06/02/2016



I. IFSP Outcomes (specify) Addressed: [Joint Planning]

1) Mia will be able to bite and chew three pieces of a banana using her molars to chew rather than her front teeth by her third birthday.

2) Mia will be able to step over door thresholds and walk on uneven surfaces like the grass in the front yard without having to have help when we are walking

out to the car to go on an outing by her third birthday.

3) Mia will be able to dress and undress herself (elastic waistband shorts or pants and a pullover shirt) without help, every morning for 2 consecutive weeks.

II. What has happened since the last visit and what will we be working on during this visit? [Joint Planning]

Mom reports Mia is sitting in her highchair and eating small amounts of what the family is eating. Mia has tried mashed potatoes, cheese sticks, green beans, popsicles, and has started to use a spoon, too.

Mia is still weak from not being able to walk for 40 days while in the hospital and is having trouble with walking on different floor surfaces. Mom also reports she is trying to give Mia pieces of food by handing it to her or by cutting it up into small pieces so she can feed herself. She reports Mia is now able to tolerate small bites. Mom reports Mia's arms are still weak from her hospitalization but is able to get up and down the stairs by holding on to her, but it is still hard for her.

OT discussed with mom things we might try and work on today including some strengthening activities, dressing skills and feeding. Mom was in agreement with the plan for today's visit.

III. What did we observe and practice today? What was the feedback provided? [Observation and Practice]

Mia practiced working on her dressing skills at the start of the therapy session. She practiced pulling her shorts down and was able to do this independently however needed help with pulling her shorts up.

OT demonstrated to mom how to help Mia hook her thumbs in the waist band. Mia was able to grab her diaper but had difficulty with the elastic waist band because she has lost some of her strength. Mom was able to demonstrate the technique taught and helped Mia be successful in pulling up her shorts.

Mia then wanted to kick the ball. OT showed mom how to have her kick the ball without holding on to the couch so she can work on her balance and core strength. Mia was able to kick the ball several times without holding on to her mom or the couch.

OT then demonstrated how to practice placing her on her knee and slowly tilting her from side to side to work on her core strength. Mom returned the demonstration. Mia had a lot of difficulty with this task and had to hold on to her mother's leg. OT gave mom feedback and suggestions to mom to hold Mia's pelvis higher at first then as Mia gains core strength she can bring her hands down further on Mia's pelvis. OT also suggested mom let Mia crawl up and down the stairs to gain core and leg strength during her daily routine.

After exercising, Mia was ready for a snack. She sat in her highchair and took small nibbles of the banana. OT coached mom in figuring out ways to teach Mia to chew over her molar ridge and also to think of other foods that are soft like the banana. Mom was able to make several of her own suggestions.

After eating, Mia washed her hands at the sink while standing on a stool. She did not have any difficulty with touching the water or leaning forward as she has in the past.

IV. What will parent/caregiver work on between visits and what is the plan for the next visit? [Reflection and Feedback (Overlap)]

Reviewed what mom will work on between visits including practicing core strengthening during play and diaper changes, as well as practice modeling for Mia how to take bites and move food to her back molars for chewing. OT and mom reflected on what she would still like help with and she asked that we continue to practice improving Mia's feeding skills.

Tips On Maximizing the Coaching Experience

Question:

How can I implement Coaching when it is sometimes difficult to get the parent or caregiver to participate? Do you have any recommendations to increase parent involvement during visits?

Answer:

We understand that sometimes it is difficult to engage parents in visits, especially if they are not familiar with the ECI approach to early intervention. Here are a few tips that may help you foster these relationships with parents.

- **Set clear expectations and explain the ECI approach at the initial visit.** Remind the parents that they are the person who their child learns best from and they have the most impact on their child's development. Explain to parents that ECI provides help to support their child's learning and development through coaching them. Let them also know that they will be expected to take an active role in each visit.
- **Interventions should take place during regular daily routines that are most important to them.** Use the families' typical and preferred activities in order to promote engagement. If your visits are always taking place on the floor and focus primarily on play, parents are not likely to carryover the strategies they have learned between your visits.
- **Stop and listen to the parents.** Parents know their children best and will tell you what a priority is for them and their child, if you ask the question.
- If you have tried these suggestions and a parent is still not engaged in the visit, you may want to reach out to the service coordinator or another provider on the team and ask for help in talking to the parent. **It may be time to have a crucial conversation.**

Occupational Therapist Talks About the Coaching Model



We welcome your input!



Email your feedback, suggestions or questions related to the *ECI Connection* newsletter to eci.connection@hhsc.state.tx.us. Messages to the *ECI Connection* mailbox should pertain only to the newsletter.

Coaching Resources are Readily Available

Here is a list of the technical assistance products you can access to help you with understanding Coaching.

- [Coaching Families Training Module](#) is a training module designed to support service providers in delivering evidence-based practices.
- [Texas ECI Coaching Fidelity Checklist](#) allows a supervisor or peer to assess a provider's visit incorporating the coaching framework. It can be accessed in the *Coaching Families Training Module*. [Will be updated before statewide rollout.]
- [Texas ECI Coaching Checklist — Self Assessment](#) allows providers to complete a self-assessment based on their visits.
- [Supervisor's Guide for Coaching Fidelity](#) tool assesses ECI providers' use of coaching. This document provides additional guidance and tips for supervisors to consider when observing a staff person and providing supervision related to their observations.
- [Coaching Information for Families Tip Sheet](#) gives families an overview of the coaching framework and the components they can expect to participate in during ECI visits.
- [Virginia Early Intervention Professional Development Center](#) hosts a webpage with multiple resources about coaching in Part C intervention to include a facilitation guide, videos, webinars, articles and handouts.
- [Family Guided Routines Based intervention Overview Module](#): An early intervention approach in which caregivers use their everyday routines and activities as the context for helping their child.