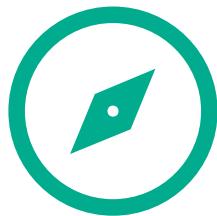




The Coordinator's Companion



Practical Tools for Training, Coaching, and Reflective Practice with
Early Learning Specialists

ParentChild+ National Center
Updated 2026

Welcome

This guide supports Coordinators in their day-to-day work by bringing together practical tools, reflection prompts, and examples for planning training, leading weekly team meetings, and supporting Early Learning Specialists' professional development over time.

You do not need to read this guide cover to cover. Use it flexibly and return to sections throughout the year based on staff experience, site needs, and current priorities.

What this guide is

- A practical companion for turnkey training, supervision, and coaching
- A collection of ideas, prompts, and examples you can adapt
- A resource grounded in real practice, reflection, and shared learning

What this guide is not

- A script or checklist to follow step by step
- A compliance document
- A replacement for your agency's policies or professional standards

How this guide is organized

This guide is organized into three parts: 1) an opening section on mission, school readiness, and program operations; 2) a middle section with training and professional learning activities aligned to core values and presented in a consistent format; and 3) a final section addressing professional boundaries and ethics.

How to use it

- Support initial ELS training and onboarding
- Pull one activity or prompt into weekly team meetings
- Use coaching sections as conversation starters in 1:1 supervision
- Revisit core values when reflecting on practice or coaching goals
- Adapt language, pacing, and examples to fit your local context

This guide reflects ParentChild+'s belief that learning happens through relationships, reflection, and practice. Just as Early Learning Specialists partner with families, Coordinators support staff through the same strength-based, collaborative approach.

Editor's Note: 2026 Update

This update reflects Coordinator feedback calling for clearer expectations, more practical examples, and stronger connections between data and practice. In response, this version emphasizes usability, flexibility, and a stronger focus on coaching, reflection, and practice-based learning.

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Quick Start Checklist for Coordinators

If you are new to the role or opening this guide for the first time, start here.

- Skim the Core Values sections to ground yourself in ParentChild+ practice
- Review the Onboarding Checklist when welcoming new staff
- Choose one Team Activity to try in an upcoming meeting
- Use one reflection prompt in supervision this month
- Return to sections as questions or challenges arise

There is no expectation to use everything. Start small, use what is helpful, and build from there.

ELS Onboarding Checklist

For use when hiring or training new Early Learning Specialists

Planning: Before Getting Started

- Enter new ELS work email and demographic information into DAISY
- Email Elevate@parentchildplus.org to ensure ELS access to Elevate before the start date
- Ensure ELS has access to the Staff Portal
- Review turnkey training content in Elevate and the Staff Portal

ELS Training Requirements

- Plan to adapt your ELS training and professional development to your agency's context, community needs, and professional codes or boundaries. Tip: When possible, link operational steps to family outcomes to help ELSs understand the "why?" behind the work.
- You must complete at least 16 hours of live training before ELS begins home visits. Please note: Asynchronous training in Elevate does not count toward the 16 hours. These resources are meant to reinforce live training (for example, watching videos together or assigning videos followed by group reflection).
- Retain training agenda for fidelity checks (KEEP or Certification)
- Set time to meet for two hours each week. Provide ongoing support through weekly two-hour team meetings and planned professional development days.

Additional Mandatory Training

- Schedule Mandated Reporter Training
- Assign the relevant DAISY Learning Program (must be completed within 30 days of hire)
- Invite all ELSs to ParentChild+ assessment trainings and Communities of Practice
- Support ELS learning with Elevate courses on home visit practice, especially Developmental Parenting and Best Practice Principles
- Continue weekly supervision and ongoing professional development days
- In the first months of hire, plan a live observation of ELS practice and integrate coaching cycles to guide mastery of facilitation skills and ongoing professional growth
- Use data and reflection tools (for example, observation forms, feedback loops, and DAISY reports) to inform coaching and continuous improvement
- Introduce ELSs to site leadership, key community partners, and the State Director

ParentChild+ Mission, Theory of Change, and School Readiness

Mission

Our mission is to ensure that all children, regardless of their race, socio-economic status, or zip code have equal possibilities from the start, long before children enter school.

School readiness

At ParentChild+, we work with families, caregivers, and communities to support not only early literacy and school readiness, but early opportunities. ParentChild+ defines “school readiness” in early childhood as

The extent to which a child and their family are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes and supported by stable, culturally responsive learning environments necessary to enter formal education settings.

Child-level school readiness includes the development of social and emotional competencies, communication abilities, and cognitive readiness in a supportive learning environment, all of which are foundational to school success.

We believe school readiness begins long before the classroom, in the daily interactions between young children and their families or primary caregivers within their communities and cultures.

Theory of Change

Sustained, culturally responsive relationships, supported through reflective supervision, coaching, and shared learning, are central to strengthening parent-child interaction and early school readiness.

The tools in this guide are designed to support a parallel process, or how Coordinators train and support Early Learning Specialists mirrors how ELSs partner with families. This document emphasizes learning through practice, reflection, and data-informed decision making, and is intended to be adapted in ways that honor local context, community knowledge, and family strengths.

Eligibility: Who ParentChild+ is Designed to Serve

ParentChild+ serves families with children ages two to three years (16 to 30 months at enrollment) living in communities with limited access to early learning opportunities and family support.

The program prioritizes families experiencing economic insecurity, using income as a proxy for structural barriers to resources rather than as a measure of family capacity or motivation. ParentChild+ assumes that families are already supporting their children's learning in meaningful ways, and that equitable access to relationships, materials, and systems amplifies those strengths.

Family eligibility is determined by local sites based on household income relative to local cost of living and eligibility for public systems of support, consistent with funder requirements. Coordinators and Early Learning Specialists are not responsible for eligibility verification beyond understanding the populations the program is intended to reach.

This training focuses on how practitioners support families through relationship-based, strength-centered practice, regardless of the specific pathway by which families enroll.

Team Activities to Explore

- Reinforce this concept by inviting staff to share, “What school readiness means in your community?” as part of onboarding.
- “In pairs, define “readiness” in your own words: What does it look like with the families you serve?” How might the definition vary amongst families? In your community?

Program Implementation and Operations

Why this matters

Consistent, high-quality, relationship-based home visiting at scale depends on strong program operations. When data systems and day-to-day logistics are clear and well used, teams can deliver services reliably, learn from practice, and make timely improvements. Data from assessments, scheduling, and session documentation supports shared accountability and continuous learning across families, staff, and sites.

Equally important are operational routines such as visit scheduling, family communication, adherence to the annual calendar, and organization of program materials. Together, these systems protect fidelity and quality while enabling practitioners to reflect on practice, respond to family goals, and strengthen implementation over time.

In practice

- Use developmental screeners (ASQs) and parent-child interaction assessments (PIEL, PICCOLO) to track child and family growth.
- Watch a model visit and identify how data shows up in practice.
- Collect caregiver input through satisfaction surveys to guide program adjustments.
- Monitor dosage (frequency and length of visits) to ensure families receive the full model, and that services remain predictable, reliable, and responsive to family schedules.
- Record observations, family goals, and referrals in the Reflection Record (case notes) to document progress, guide reflection, and support continuity across visits.
- Review operational tools in supervision to connect data with coaching and quality improvement.

Site insights 😊

- Coordinators report it's important to link day-to-day operations and data tasks to family outcomes.
- Coordinators can reinforce that operational tools are not separate from practice, but are one way the program honors family goals, practitioner learning, and shared responsibility for quality. For example,
 - Review a Reflection Record entry, what does it say about family goals? How can an ELS support those goals? This might be a topic to address and brainstorm together in weekly team meetings.
 - Watch a recorded or live visit and identify how data shows in practice.

Team Activities to Explore

Operations training should highlight why operations matter by using practical examples that show how data collection, documentation, and scheduling connect directly to family goals, practitioner reflection, and coaching conversations. Coordinators have the following resources to review with their teams:

- Operations presentations and program implementation workbooks – Such as step-by-step overview of assessments, dosage, and reporting systems (available in the Staff Portal or Elevate).
- DAISY Learning Program – Data entry and reporting platform that supports fidelity checks and continuous improvement (Elevate).
- Zendesk Questions and Resource Hub – Updated instructions, DAISY FAQs, and program operational protocols (DAISY)

- Assessments - ELSs are invited to biannual assessment training to strengthen skills in observing, documenting, and sharing child, family, and provider progress. Check the training calendar at www.parentchildplus.org
- Forms Checklists – Required forms and documentation for both the Family and HBCC model (available in DAISY and the Staff Portal).
- Reflection Record – Tool for case notes that captures progress, observations, and referrals.
- KEEP Form – Core fidelity monitoring tool for both models.

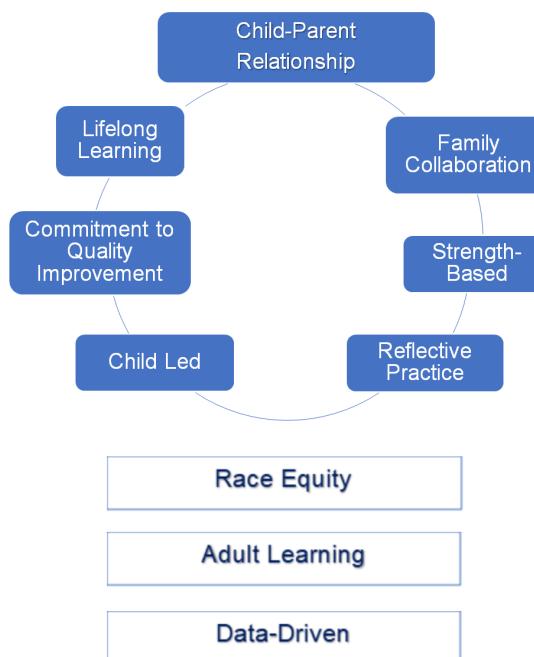
Relevant Elevate content

A menu category to explore for program implementation and operations are “Family Model” and “HBCC - Home Based Child Care.”

Search for the “operations” tag for courses like,

- Being a Mandated Supporter: What Is It and How Do I Do That?
- Offering Year-Round Programming and Rolling Enrollment
- Race Equity Framing for Choosing Books in Early Childhood Education + Anti-Bias Book Selection

ParentChild+ Core Values



Training Plan for ELSSs: Supporting Diverse Adult Learners

Program Framework 1: Race Equity

Why this matters

Basic program operations include the data systems and organizational practices that support consistent, reliable service delivery and make high-quality, relationship-based home visits possible at scale. Data collection through assessments, scheduling, and session documentation supports shared accountability, learning, and continuous improvement across families, staff, and sites. Equally important are day-to-day logistics: scheduling visits, communicating with families, following the annual calendar, and organizing program materials. Together, these systems support fidelity and quality while helping practitioners reflect on practice, respond to family goals, and strengthen implementation over time.

Examining ParentChild+'s work through a race equity lens ensures that our values guide daily practice, decision-making, and resource allocation at every level of the program. This strengthens our mission to close opportunity gaps by supporting parents and caregivers through culturally grounded, relationship-based practice and by addressing inequities in access to early learning supports.

Race equity in training is ongoing. We adapt and enhance curriculum to reflect diverse voices, reduce bias, and build "leaderful" communities where staff, families, providers, and partners co-create best practices.

In practice

- Recognizing families and child care providers as experts on their own lives, cultures, and priorities.
- Hiring from the communities we serve, prioritizing cultural and linguistic alignment, and advocating for livable wages as essential conditions for high-quality programs.
- Designing training and professional development that must reflect the identities, languages, and lived realities of staff, families, and providers.
- Examining internal culture and leadership practices, including diversifying the Board of Directors, to address structural inequities.
- Identifying and addressing implicit biases in practice, supervision, and decision making.
- Taking a stance against racism and committing to equity in all aspects of the work.
- Working intentionally at local, state, and national levels to advance racial equity across systems, including home visiting, health, social services, and education.

Site insights 😊

- Coordinators appreciate the focus on race equity and want it to be actionable for ELSs.
- Coordinators can support this work by helping ELSs connect equity concepts to concrete choices during visits, such as language use, material selection, pacing, and how family goals are framed. Some reflection activities they suggest include:
 - How does race equity link to specific home-visit interactions (e.g., choosing books, responding to cultural differences)?
 - For example, share a recent visit where identity or culture shaped your interaction: What did you notice about language, power, or assumptions?"

Team Activities to Explore

Social identity mapping: Reflect on how identity shapes opportunities, power, and perceptions. How does my identity shape how I observe and interpret family actions or behaviors? What assumptions might arise in this scenario, and how can curiosity shift your response?

Observation vs. assumption: Practice distinguishing neutral observation from judgment, particularly when interpreting family behavior across cultural contexts.

Case study: Analyze a family scenario – whose voice is missing, what barriers exist, what data could shift our thinking?

Guide sheet check: Review guide sheets for clarity, readability, and cultural relevance.

Relevant Elevate Content

A menu category to explore is “race equity.” You can also search for courses with the “**race equity**” tag, such as:

- Cultural Representation in ParentChild+ VISMs and Activities
- Keynote Race Equity: Building Authentic Partnerships with Culturally Diverse Families to Support Children's Positive Educational Experiences
- Race Equity Framing for Choosing Books in Early Childhood Education + Anti-Bias Book Selection
- Seeing Ourselves: The Power of Racial Identity in Education
- Transforming Practices to Support Early Math Learning of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children
- What Does Language Justice Mean for Early Learning?
-

Program Framework 2: Data-Driven

Why this matters

At ParentChild+, data is a tool for learning and shared decision making. It helps teams understand what is happening in practice, how families experience the program, and where adjustments can strengthen relationships and outcomes. Data supports responsiveness to family priorities and a shared understanding of impact across families, staff, and funders.

We encourage teams to draw on assessments, surveys, and everyday conversations to ask a few key questions. What are we doing? How is it landing with families? What is working in this community, and what might need to change?

Data is not about compliance or checking boxes. It is a practice grounded in real interactions. Family goals, coaching conversations, visit observations, and referrals all generate information that helps teams notice patterns over time. Used thoughtfully, data highlights strengths, surfaces gaps, and guides small changes that improve consistency and quality.

Meaningful use of data depends on strong observation and child development knowledge. Early Learning Specialists need to understand typical development, expected variation, and how development shows up in everyday behavior. This allows them to describe what they see accurately, share information with families in supportive ways, and use data to inform facilitation rather than replace it.

In practice

- Gather regular feedback from families, providers, and partners.
- Sharing observations and assessment results with families in ways that affirm strengths, invite reflection, and support caregiver decision-making.
- Use surveys, focus groups, and advisory boards to adapt programs.
- Track progress with baseline/follow-up tools and share impact stories.
- Build simple systems to collect and share data for decisions.
- Use feedback to shape training, coaching, and supervision.
- Track staff growth and program performance through feedback and observations.
- Participate in data quality check-ins.
- Complete action steps in between check-ins.
- Complete regular internal data quality reviews.

Site insights 😊

→ Coordinators note that it is essential to introduce data tools (such as the ASQ or surveys) in a relational, strength-affirming way that positions families as partners in understanding their child's development:

- How might you introduce a new assessment, so families experience it as supportive, informative, and useful for their own goals, rather than evaluative? This is an activity to explore with your team.
- Can ELSs choose one small data point and describe what story might it say about your site, families, or providers?

Team Activities to Explore

Data walk: Post de-identified program outcomes data and let staff walk through and note surprises.

Data huddles: Review an assessment (such as the ASQ or CCIS) to identify family or provider strengths, emerging goals, and opportunities for supportive coaching questions.

Milestone-to-practice bridge: Use assessment results (e.g., ASQ items) as a starting point to identify relevant developmental skills, then translate those skills into observable behaviors and facilitation strategies during visits.

Observation vs. assumption: Rewrite a reflection line as observable behavior.
Small goals: Commit to one new practice for two weeks.

Skills inventory: Brainstorm how data guides training needs.

Role play: Practice introducing data collection systems like surveys and assessments to families and providers: What is their role? How do they support families' understanding of child development?

Feedback loops: Map how info flows (family → staff → leadership), identify gaps and how your team can use data to address those gaps.

Using data: Reflect on a past decision shaped by data; review a sample survey to plan improvements.

Can we trust the data? Use a small dataset, for example survey results, movie ratings, or sports stats, and go through data quality checklist. Is important information missing? Do any values look wrong? Are there numbers that don't make sense? Share and discuss

what you found, how you would fix the dataset, and whether you feel comfortable making an important decision using the data.

Relevant Elevate Content

The following menu categories should be used to explore program data collection and assessments. This content is mandatory for all programs using DAISY.

- DAISY Training Courses: Family Model
- DAISY Training Courses: HBCC
- DAISY Live Trainings and Webinar Recordings
- Assessments and Evaluations
- DAISY Support - DAISY Help is accessed through the Zendesk support system, located in the bottom right corner of the platform under the "?" icon. Use this feature to contact DAISY Support, submit help requests, or request reports. Please complete the required DAISY Learning Program before submitting basic support questions, as many issues stem from incomplete training or user error.

Program Framework 3: Adult Learning

Why this matters

Malcolm Knowles' framework highlights that adults learn best when training respects autonomy, builds on lived experiences, and connects directly to real-world practice. In ParentChild+ home visits, the immediate adult learner is the parent or caregiver, supported by the Early Learning Specialist as a facilitator or coach. Early Learning Specialists are also adult learners, supported through reflective supervision, coaching, and ongoing development from Coordinators.

This creates a **parallel process**: how Coordinators support and engage Early Learning Specialists mirrors how Early Learning Specialists support and engage families.

In practice

- Autonomy and choice: How do you support ELSs to help shape content and priorities?
- Experience as the core foundation: How do you connect new ideas to what participants already know?
- Purpose and relevance: Use job-related case studies tied to daily responsibilities.
- Readiness to learn: How do you frame content (like paperwork and assessments) around the immediate, practical needs of the families or providers?
- Internal motivation: How do you create space for ELSs to apply ongoing PD training to their own challenges?
- Learning through mistakes: How can you normalize errors as opportunities for professional growth?
- Collaborative co-creation: Engage learners in designing activities or solutions together.
- The role of positionality: How do you acknowledge identities and power dynamics to build an inclusive peer learning community?

- How can Coordinators model the same curiosity, affirmation, and shared problem-solving with ELSs that ELSs are expected to use with families?

Site insights 😊

→ Coordinators resonate with adult learning theory's focus on autonomy, experience, and relevance, particularly when professional development reflects the same strength-based, relationship-centered approach expected in home visits.

- How can the ELS identify a small, achievable goal for themselves that strengthens their facilitation of parent-child interaction?
- How can Coordinators support accountability for those goals?

Team Activities to Explore

Baseline Knowledge Check

- What knowledge do your ELSs already have about child development and developmental milestones?
- Do ELSs facilitate parent-child interaction? How do you know or assess this as a supervisor?
- What is their prior experience working with children? Child development? What is their prior experience with the field of home visiting?
- What inspired them to take on this role?
- As a group, define what ParentChild+ values mean in your work.

Practice-Based Reflection

- Learners can set one training goal for themselves tied to facilitation of parent-child interaction.
- “What does _____ look like on a visit?” (e.g., facilitation or parent collaboration).
- Watch a video clip: What did you notice about how the ELS supported the parent’s response? Discuss what “child-led play” or “strength-based feedback” looks like.
- Walk us through how an ELS might set a visit goal with a caregiver.
- How might ELSs handle boundaries with a caregiver?
- How does an ELS know if a family is engaged during visits?

Culturally Responsive Practice

- What does culturally responsive practice look like in home visiting? How do ELSs adapt praise or questions when working in a family’s home language?”
- How does an ELS adapt when working with families or child care providers whose backgrounds differ from your own?
- Ask caregivers, “What do you want out of the program?” or “What’s your goal?”

Core Value: Facilitating the Parent–Child Relationship

Why it matters

At ParentChild+, strengthening everyday parent–child interaction is the primary way early learning and school readiness outcomes are supported. Research consistently shows that when caregivers respond sensitively and consistently to their children, children build stronger language, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills. These skills are foundational for school success and social–emotional development.

The role of the Early Learning Specialist is not to lead activities, but to support caregivers in noticing, interpreting, and responding to their child’s cues. When caregivers are positioned as the leaders of interaction, learning becomes more meaningful and more likely to continue between visits

In practice

- The ELS supports the caregiver as the primary driver of interaction during the visit. This means creating space for observation, waiting, and reflection so caregivers can see how their child initiates, responds, and explores.
- The ELS highlights and names moments of connection, helping caregivers recognize how their everyday responses support learning and regulation. Books and toys are tools to support interaction, not the goal of the visit. When a child’s interest shifts, it is appropriate to set materials aside and follow the child’s lead.
- Facilitation focuses on strengthening the relationship between the caregiver and child, not completing an activity. Even small shifts, such as stepping back, asking open-ended questions, or commenting on strengths, can deepen engagement and support development.

Site insights 😊

- Coordinators note that ELSs benefit from explicitly linking facilitation moves to child outcomes. During training or video reflection, Coordinators can guide ELSs to observe what happens next after a facilitation move. For example, how does a child respond when the caregiver waits, narrates, or follows their lead?
- Naming parent strengths is not about directing play. It is about reinforcing the caregiver’s role and strengthening the relationship that supports the child’s learning and development.
- Emphasize that observing and naming parent strengths is not about directing play, but about strengthening the relationship between parent and child that supports the child’s development and learning.
- Encourage discussion around how even subtle shifts towards facilitation, like prompting a parent to scaffold instead of the ELS doing it with the child directly, can deepen the child’s learning and sense of connection to their caregiver.

Team Activities to Explore

Observation practice: “Watch this video of a parent and child reading together. What cues do you notice from the child, and how does the parent respond? What child skills might be strengthened when parents observe and respond to their child’s cues?”

Role-play: “Pretend you are coaching a parent during play. How would you highlight a ‘serve and return’ moment in real time?”

Reflection activity: “Think of a time you saw joy in a parent–child interaction. How did the ELS or parent contribute to that moment?”

Discussion: “Why do you think joy and playfulness matter in strengthening attachment?”

Link to child development: “How would you explain to a parent that responding to a child’s cues builds skills like language and self-regulation?”

Relevant Elevate Content

Search for courses with the “**ELS best practices**” or “**facilitation**” tags, such as:

- Best Practice Principles of ParentChild+ Home Visiting
- Developmental parenting: strengthening parent–child interactions
- Introduction to the PICCOLO: An Instrument for Playing to Parenting Strengths
- Strategies to Help Incorporate Developmental Parenting in ParentChild+ Visits
- Understanding and Promoting Everyday Human Interactions

Core Value: Family Collaboration + Engagement

Why this matters

ParentChild+ works best when families and child care providers are treated as true partners in their child’s learning. Collaboration builds trust, aligns visits with family priorities, and honors the knowledge families already have about their children, routines, and culture. When families feel respected and heard, they are more likely to stay engaged, complete visits, and try strategies between sessions.

Collaboration supports lasting change because families are not just participating in activities. They are making decisions about how learning fits into their daily lives.

In practice

- The ELS builds trust from the start by asking open-ended questions, listening carefully, and acknowledging families' experiences, values, and expertise.
- Family goals are developed together and documented in the Reflection Record to guide visits and support continuity over time. Goals help anchor visits in what matters most to the family, rather than a preset agenda.
- The ELS consistently positions the caregiver as the child's first teacher by highlighting strengths and inviting the caregiver to lead interaction during visits.
- Visit pacing, materials, and strategies are shaped by family priorities. Books, toys, and activities are selected in response to family goals and routines, not used simply to "get through" content.
- Coordinators support collaboration by creating a team culture where ELSs experience the same respect, shared decision-making, and trust they are expected to foster with families.

Site insights 😊

- Sites share that collaborative goal setting is motivating but can feel rushed without structure. Rather than revisiting goals every visit, ParentChild+ encourages brief check-ins that may happen every two to three weeks. These moments are opportunities to notice progress, celebrate strengths, and adjust focus as needed.
- ELSs also report that broad, open-ended goal setting can feel overwhelming. When helpful, goal conversations may be narrowed to a specific focus, such as a child's communication or behavior, while still honoring the family's broader priorities.
- Coordinators often use supervision and team meetings to reflect on family goals by asking questions like, "What small progress did you notice toward this family's goal?" or "How did today's interaction support that goal?"

Team Activities to Explore

Open-ended questions: In pairs, practice questions that surface family routines and values, such as "What does your child enjoy doing with you?" or "What feels most important for your family right now?"

Goal restating: Practice restating a family's goal in plain language, then brainstorm how an ELS might support that goal during a visit.

Quick links: Given a sample family goal, practice linking it to an activity or interaction. For example, "Since you want more words, let's use this book to name things together."

Using past goals: Review a previous Reflection Record entry and practice connecting that goal to the current visit. For example, “Last time you mentioned wanting your child to use more words. Would it be helpful to try a few ideas during play today?”

Relevant Elevate Content

Search for courses with the “**collaboration**” tag, such as:

- Parent Engagement and Retention
- Addressing Family Isolation & Engagement through the Virtual Space
- Best Practice Principle #2: Family Collaboration + Engagement
- Developmental Parenting
- Keynote: Understanding Virtual Engagement: What We Know and How We Can Use Lessons Learned to Inform Our Work.

Core Value: Strength-Based Approach

Why this matters

A strength-based approach starts from the assumption that families are already supporting their children’s learning in meaningful ways. When practice focuses only on gaps or concerns, it can overlook the language, routines, relationships, and cultural practices that children rely on every day. Naming strengths builds caregiver confidence and increases the likelihood that positive strategies will be repeated between visits.

Research and practice both show that caregivers are more likely to try and sustain new strategies when their existing strengths are noticed and reinforced. Strength-based practice does not ignore challenges. It creates a foundation of trust and confidence that makes it easier to address questions, concerns, or areas for growth together.

In practice

- The ELS consistently notices and names what caregivers are doing well during the visit, using specific, observable language. This “sportscasting” of strengths is a core facilitation skill and should happen throughout every visit.
- Assessments such as the ASQ, PIEL, and PICCOLO are used first to highlight child strengths and caregiver support of learning before discussing areas to monitor or build. This helps families see assessments as informative and supportive rather than evaluative.
- Video, when used, helps make strengths visible. Short clips from visits or PICCOLO recordings allow caregivers to see concrete examples of positive interaction and understand why those moments matter for their child’s development.

- The ELS recognizes and affirms culturally rooted caregiving practices, such as storytelling, shared meals, sibling caregiving, or multilingual communication, and connects these practices to how children learn and develop.

Site insights 😊

- Coordinators report that strength-based practice is most effective when it is modeled consistently in supervision. When Coordinators regularly name ELS strengths during supervision and team meetings, ELSSs feel more confident using the same approach with families.
- Practitioners also benefit from concrete examples of reframing. Reframing does not minimize challenges. It helps identify existing practices that can be built, while still addressing goals or concerns. For example,
 - “The parent does not read” may reflect strong oral storytelling or conversation that can support language development.
 - “The family lives in a crowded apartment” may reflect close relationships, shared caregiving, or strong routines.

Team Activities to Explore

Strength spotting: Watch a short video clip or review a visit note. Each ELS names two specific strengths they observe using clear, descriptive language rather than general praise.

Developmental lens: Practice naming a child behavior as both a strength and a developmental indicator. For example, persistence during play can be linked to emerging problem-solving skills.

Role play: In pairs, one person plays the caregiver and the other practices naming a strength during an activity and linking it to child development. For example, “I noticed how you waited before stepping in. That helps your child build confidence.”

Goal linking: Given a sample family goal, brainstorm how the ELS could connect that goal to an existing family strength during the visit.

Relevant Elevate Content

Search for courses with the “**strengths**” tag, such as:

- Best Practice Principle #3: Building on Strengths, Values, and Culture
- Developmental Parenting: Strategies for Promoting Parent Confidence and Competence: A Strengths-Based Approach
- Introduction to the PICCOLO: An Instrument for Playing to Parenting Strengths
- Learning from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families

- Strengths and Protective Factors
- Transforming Practices to Support Early Math Learning of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children

Core Value: Child-Led Practice / Child Development Focus

Why this matters

Children learn best when adults follow their interests and support what they are already trying to do. Child-led play naturally supports language, early literacy, executive function, and motor development. When adults respond to a child's cues and curiosity, learning is deeper and attention lasts longer, even when the activity shifts.

Child-led practice depends on strong knowledge of early child development. Early Learning Specialists need to understand typical milestones, expected variation, and what children's behavior communicates at different ages and stages. This knowledge allows ELSs to observe accurately, support caregivers with confidence, and scaffold learning intentionally rather than relying on scripted activities or redirecting play.

Strong child development knowledge helps ELSs follow the child's lead while supporting the next developmental step, instead of controlling the interaction or focusing on completing an activity.

In practice

- The ELS invites the caregiver to lead play and exploration with the child, using books, toys, and prompts as flexible supports rather than fixed activities.
- The ELS models simple scaffolding strategies, such as narrating play, asking open-ended questions, or extending the child's ideas, and explains how these moves support learning.
- The ELS helps caregivers understand how everyday play builds skills by naming the developmental domains involved in clear, accessible language.
- Books and toys support interaction, but they are not the goal of the visit. When a child's interest changes, the ELS supports the caregiver in following the child's lead rather than redirecting attention back to the material.
- If a child disengages, the ELS helps the caregiver notice cues and adjust the interaction, reinforcing that responsiveness, not task completion, drives learning.

Site insights 😊

- Practitioners report that milestone information is most helpful when it is connected directly to what they observe during visits, rather than presented as a checklist.

- Coordinators can support learning by guiding ELSs to notice how facilitation moves affect the child's engagement, persistence, or communication. For example, what changes when a caregiver waits, follows the child's idea, or comments on effort?

Team Activities to Explore

Milestone to play: Review a developmental milestone and identify how it shows up in everyday play or routines.

Linking ASQ to practice: Use an ASQ item to identify a developmental goal, then practice framing an open-ended coaching question for caregivers.

Follow the child: Role-play a visit where the child shifts activities suddenly. Practice joining the new activity and naming the skills being developed.

Scaffolding practice: Watch a short clip of child-led play and identify one way the caregiver could support the next step without taking over.

Relevant Elevate Content

A menu category to explore is **"child development and early learning."** Or search for courses with the **"early learning"** tag, such as:

- The Staff Portal includes resource lists for ELS training and child development learning within the "Family Model Program Implementation" section.
- Block Play: Hands-On STEM Learning in a (Sometimes) Virtual World
- Dialogic Reading
- To Screen or Not to Screen: Considerations in the Current Environment
- Transforming Practices to Support Early Math Learning of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children
- Supporting Development with the ASQ-3 and Practical Ideas + Activities at Home
- Understanding and Handling Behaviors Regarding Transitions: At Home or in a Virtual World

Another tag to explore is **"developmental delays,"** with courses like:

- Autism is My Superpower! Supporting and Celebrating the Neurodivergent Child
- Supporting Families with Children on the Spectrum
- The Art of Autism: Understanding the Spectrum

Core Value: Reflective Practice

Why this matters

Reflective practice helps adults make sense of children's behavior by considering thoughts, feelings, and intentions. When Early Learning Specialists slow down and reflect, and invite caregivers to do the same, families build language for emotions and strategies for responding thoughtfully. This supports children's regulation, attachment, and learning across everyday routines.

Reflection is not about overanalyzing or second-guessing decisions. It is about noticing what is happening, how it feels, and what it might mean before deciding what to do next. This reflective stance supports school readiness by helping caregivers respond intentionally rather than reactively.

In practice

- The ELS wonders aloud about what a child might be feeling or communicating, using simple, everyday language that caregivers can recognize and use themselves.
- The ELS helps caregivers connect children's behavior to routines, limits, and expectations, explaining how consistency and safety support learning and emotional regulation.
- The ELS uses supervision and self-reflection to notice their own reactions, assumptions, and stress responses, especially during challenging visits.
- Coordinators model the same reflective stance in supervision and team meetings. Before moving into problem-solving, they support ELSs in naming emotions, noticing patterns, and making meaning of their experiences.

Site insights 😊

- Practitioners consistently say they want reflective questions modeled clearly and without judgment. They prefer prompts that link feelings to action, rather than abstract discussion. For example:
 - "What emotion did you notice in yourself during that visit?"
 - "What might that feeling be telling you about the family's experience?"
- Coordinators also note the importance of normalizing emotions as part of professional learning. Frustration, sadness, and uncertainty are common in home visits and do not signal failure. When emotions are acknowledged and explored, ELSs are better able to stay present with families and respond intentionally.

Team Activities to Explore

Feelings to behavior: Watch a short clip or review a visit note. Name the child's behavior, identify possible emotions, and discuss how a caregiver might respond supportively.

Pause and reflect: Role-play a challenging visit moment. Pause mid-scenario and practice asking reflective questions instead of offering solutions.

Routine reflection: Choose a daily routine such as mealtime or bedtime. Discuss how predictability and emotional safety support learning and regulation.

Supervision mirror: One ELS shares a strong reaction from a recent visit. A partner practices asking open-ended questions to surface feelings and assumptions.

Language practice: Use simple emotion words and phrases to practice naming feelings and linking them to behavior in caregiver-friendly language.

Relevant Elevate Content

A menu category to explore is “Mental Health, Wellness, Trauma.” Or search for courses with the “**reflection**” tag, such as

- Best Practice Principle #4: Observing, Reflecting, and Responding to Parent-Child Emotions
- Immigration, Trauma, and Promoting Wellbeing in Refugee and Immigrant Communities
- Intergenerational Whole-Family Health for Diverse Families
- Reflection Record (replaces Home Session Record)
- Tools for Resilience & Self-Compassion
- Empowering Caregivers: Creating Supportive Environments for Trauma-Affected Children
- Mindfulness as a Resource for Self-Care and Caregiving

Core Value: Commitment to Quality improvement + Lifelong Learning

Why this matters

Quality improvement replaces assumptions with evidence and creates a continuous cycle (collect, analyze, act, and re-check) that drives fidelity and results. Simple, program implementation metrics reveal where to adjust and verify what works. Quality improvement at ParentChild+ is intended to strengthen relational practice over time by helping staff notice patterns, test small changes, and learn from families’ responses.

Lifelong learning means continually growing in knowledge, reflection, and practice. For Early Learning Specialists, professional growth does not end with initial training; it is sustained through professional development and coaching. Coaching provides ongoing,

practice-based support that helps ELSs strengthen skills, reflect on challenges, and build confidence over time.

In practice

- ELSs document observable practice and family progress towards goals.
- Coordinators review data with staff to identify strengths and growth areas, offering targeted coaching aligned to needs.
- Trainers refine content and methods based on outcomes, while leaders use trends to set priorities and allocate resources.
- Coaching conversations center on real visits, using reflection and feedback to build skills tied to program values such as parent-child relationships, child-led practice, and cultural responsiveness.
- Learning is individualized to each ELS, building strengths while addressing areas for development.
- Peer learning is fostered through team meetings, Communities of Practice, group reflection, and shared problem-solving.
- The parallel process is emphasized: coordinators model reflective learning with ELSs, who then use the same approach to support parents in noticing, reflecting, and responding to their children.

Team Activities to Explore

Mini change cycles: ELS selects one small practice goal (e.g., “use 3 open-ended questions per visit”). After two weeks, review whether the change helped, adjust, and re-test.

Case note analysis: Review de-identified visit notes to distinguish observable evidence from interpretation, and practice reframing assumptions into open-ended driven questions driven by curiosity.

Coaching fishbowl: Coordinator models a reflective coaching session with one ELS while others observe. Observers name specific moves that support reflection and growth.

Growth journals: ELS keeps a simple weekly log of one challenge and one success. In supervision, review entries to track progress, surface themes, and plan coaching.

Assumption check: Coordinator presents a scenario (e.g., “Family declines referral”). ELSs list assumptions, then reframe each into a data question or observable behavior to verify.

Relevant Elevate Content

Search for “**quality improvement**” tag for courses like,

- Learning from Practice: Research Highlights from the Newark Trust for Education & ParentChild+ Collaboration
- What's in Your Toolbox? A Quality Improvement Approach to Screening Families

Search for the “**coaching**” tag for courses like,

- Practice Based Coaching – Introduction, Session 1, Session 2, Session 3
- Strategies to Help Incorporate Developmental Parenting in ParentChild+ Visits
- Summary of Practice-based Coaching for Supervisors

Weekly Team Meetings, Coaching, and Reflective Supervision

Why this matters

Reflective supervision and weekly team meetings are a core mechanism through which ParentChild+ translates its Theory of Change into day-to-day practice. Just as ELSs support caregivers through relationships grounded in trust, reflection, and shared meaning-making, Coordinators are expected to support ELSs in the same way. This parallel process ensures that the relational, strength-based approach central to home visits is consistently modeled, practiced, and sustained across all levels of implementation.

When used consistently, reflective supervision and team meetings strengthen staff confidence, support retention, and reinforce the relational conditions that allow families and practitioners alike to engage, reflect, and grow over time. Adults learn best when new skills connect directly to daily work, build on lived experience and existing strengths, and allow for reflection and practice.

The FAN Framework (Feelings, Awareness, Next Steps)

The FAN framework mirrors the way Early Learning Specialists are expected to engage families during home visits: attending first to emotion and meaning, staying curious about context, and moving toward action only after understanding is established. Using FAN as a structure for reflective supervision and team learning helps Coordinators model attuned, strength-based reflection with ELSs.

In practice

1. Set the context: Remind the group that reflective supervision is a structured space for sense-making and professional learning. The goal is to slow down together to notice feelings, meaning, and growth in practice (not to fix, correct, or evaluate performance).
2. Share stories: Each ELS takes a turn sharing a brief story from a recent home visit, such as a moment that felt rewarding, challenging, or confusing.
3. Practice reflection: The Coordinator (or a peer, if role-playing) listens and responds using the F–A–N flow:

F – Feelings First:

Notice emotions as meaningful information. Before moving into problem-solving, pause to understand how the ELS is experiencing the visit and what those feelings may signal about the work, the relationship, or the system context.

Prompts: “How are you feeling about that visit?” or “What was most stressful or rewarding in that moment?

A – Awareness:

Stay curious and listen to the meaning. Ask open-ended questions that invite reflection, understanding, and empathy. This means staying connected and curious about the other person’s experience.

Prompts: “What do you think was happening to the caregiver or child at that moment?” Or “What helped the visit go well?”

N – Next Steps and New Thinking:

Move toward action once reflection has occurred, supporting the ELS in identifying their own learning and determining small, testable next steps they want to carry into practice.

Prompts: “What might you try next time?” or “What will you carry forward from this experience?”

The RIOS Framework (Reflective Interaction Observation Scale)

The RIOS framework provides a shared structure for reflective conversations that support emotional safety, professional accountability, and learning over time, which are key conditions for sustaining relational practice in complex systems.

The RIOS Model was developed by the University of Minnesota's CEED, and it describes what effective reflective supervision looks and sounds like. It helps Coordinators guide conversations with ELSs that are safe, curious, and focused on learning from experience: by slowing down, noticing emotions, and linking experiences to meaning and next steps.

In practice

Try choosing one recent visit story. Use RIOS prompts to explore it together—what stood out, what it felt like, what it means, and what might come next. Use these guiding steps throughout supervision:

Describe: Invite the ELS to tell the story of the visit or experience.

Prompts: "How did that feel for you in the moment?" or "What do you imagine the caregiver or child might have felt?"

Respond: Listen for feelings; reflect on what you hear with empathy.

Prompts: "How did that feel for you in the moment?" or "What do you imagine the caregiver or child might have felt?"

Explore: Ask open-ended questions to deepen understanding of the situation.

Prompts: "What do you think was happening for the caregiver?" or "What surprised or challenged you about this visit?"

Link: Connect the experience of family goals, theory, or previous discussions.

Prompts: "How does this relate to the family's goals?" or "Does this remind you of another visit or situation?"

Integrate: Summarize insights and identify small, doable next steps for the ELS

Prompts: "What might you try next time?" or "What will you carry forward from this experience?"

Coaching for Model Fidelity

Why this matters

Traditional training builds knowledge. Coaching supports learning in action. Coaching for ELSs is ongoing, individualized, and grounded in real home visits, with a primary focus on strengthening facilitation of parent-child interaction as designed in the ParentChild+

model. Through reflective, practice-based feedback, coaching helps ELSs translate knowledge into facilitative practice, refine core skills, and sustain high-quality implementation over time.

Coaching also supports the continued development of child development expertise. It helps Early Learning Specialists sharpen how they observe and interpret children's behavior and apply developmental knowledge in moment-to-moment facilitation with caregivers.

For Coordinators, strengthening coaching practice happens through participation in Communities of Practice and engagement in the Certification process. Both emphasize reflective coaching, shared learning, and practice-based feedback, and provide structured opportunities to practice coaching skills, exchange strategies with peers, and build confidence in supporting ELS facilitation and fidelity to the model.

In practice

Coaching cycles are designed to support learning and reflection, not evaluation, and center strengths, curiosity, and shared problem-solving.

1. **Goal setting:** Identify a specific, observable facilitation skill aligned with core values (e.g., spending more time observing the parent-child interaction, commenting more on family strengths, using open-ended questions that return leadership to the caregiver). For the Family Model, we suggest you start with the goal of facilitating the parent-child relationship.
2. **Observation + practice:** Observe an ELS's live home visit or video recording to notice facilitation strategies and family responses.
3. **Feedback + reflection:** Hold a debrief session using strength-based, reflective questions that help the ELS make meaning of what they observed and tried.
4. **Action planning:** Set the next steps together and agree on support or resources needed.
5. **Follow-up:** Revisit the goal at the next cycle to track progress and refine as needed.

Team Activities to Explore

Tools:

ParentChild+ National Center offers sample forms and tools (below) to help coordinators set site goals and take part in coaching cycles with ELSs. These tools support shared

learning and reflection and are not used for compliance or punitive evaluation. These tools support learning and consistency:

- Observation forms aligned with program values and practice domains – e.g., Best Practice Principles for Coaching
- Goal-tracking sheets to set, revisit, and measure progress together
- Coaching logs to record the Coordinator's sessions, themes, and outcomes
- Practice-based resources like video clips, role-play scenarios, milestone checklists)

Tracking SMART Goals

- Specific: "Increase open-ended questions with caregivers from 2 to 4 per visit" or "Comment on parent strengths at least 5 times a visit."
- Visible: Logged into a coaching tracker or shared dashboard
- Tied to outcomes: Linked back to parent-child interaction, caregiver engagement, and program values.
- Revisit regularly: Discuss progress on goals at each coaching session and agree on the next steps.

Example Coordinator Coaching Prompts

- Goal setting: "What skill do you most want to strengthen in your visits right now?" How can you improve your facilitation of the parent-child relationship?
- Observation: "What did you notice about how the parent responded when you stepped back and observed more?"
- Feedback: "What felt most successful in that interaction? Where did you feel stuck?"
- Reflection: "How did your approach supporting positive parent-child relationship?"
- Action Planning: "What's one small change you'd like to try in your next visit?"

Relevant Elevate Content

A menu category to explore is "**supervision + coaching**." Or search for courses with the "**coaching**" tag, such as:

- Expanding Reflection in My Supervision Practice (Alliance for Early Childhood Mental Health)
- Practice-Based Coaching at ParentChild+
- Summary of Practice-based Coaching for Supervisors
- Supporting and Recognizing the ParentChild+ Team Members through Reflective Supervision and Weekly Meetings

Your organization: Common Protocols, Boundaries, Ethics, and Safety in Home Visiting

Why this matters

Clear boundaries support trust, consistency, and emotional safety, which are essential conditions for the sustained relationships that drive ParentChild+ outcomes.

The following table highlights common boundaries, ethics, and safety topics that may arise in home visiting, along with why they matter, and sample discussion prompts. Coordinators can use this resource to guide training discussions and practice activities.

While these examples provide a foundation, the specific expectations may vary depending on your agency's context, policies, and codes of conduct depending on your protocols. Coordinators should adapt the content to align with local protocols, community norms, and organizational requirements.

Team Activities to Explore

Boundary, Ethics, or Safety Topic	Why It Matters	Training Discussion Prompts
Entering and exiting the home	Sets the tone for trust, safety, and partnership by treating the ELS as a respectful guest in the home.	What are the respectful ways to enter and leave a home? How do you adapt if family norms differ from yours?
Accepting Gifts or Food	Maintains professionalism while respecting cultural norms of hospitality.	What would you do if a parent insists on offering you food or a gift?
Dual Relationships	Protects both parties from blurred roles that can undermine trust and accountability.	How would you respond if invited to a birthday party or family gathering?
Privacy and Confidentiality	Ensures privacy, builds trust, and aligns with ethical and legal standards.	How do you handle it if a parent shares sensitive information and asks you not to tell anyone?
Mandated Reporting	Balances supporting families with protecting child safety.	How would you explain your role as a mandated reporter to a parent before beginning services?
Use of Personal Information	Protects professional boundaries and prevents overfamiliarity (e.g., sharing phone numbers, social media).	What is the best way to respond if a parent asks to connect on social media?

Transportation Requests	Maintains safety and consistency with program policies.	What would you say if a parent asked you for a ride after a visit?
Cultural Respect and Responsiveness	Shows respect for family identity while modeling professional consistency.	How do you acknowledge and support family practices traditions you are unfamiliar with?
Emotional Boundaries	Helps ELS avoid burnout and maintain supportive, professional relationships.	How do you respond if a family texts during the weekend? What are signs that you may be over-identifying with a family? How do you reset boundaries?
Ending Relationships	Provides closure and models of healthy transitions for families.	What are respectful ways to close out services at the end of the program? What are ways to close out services when the relationship with a family has been challenging?
Safety and health	Ensures ELS can work effectively while protecting their well-being, including fears of animals, illness precautions, and mask-wearing.	How do you set expectations around sickness, illness, handwashing, or masks?
Safety in the home	Addresses household safety helps create a predictable, secure environment that allows ELS and families to engage in visits.	How and at what point should safety conversations be introduced and addressed in the home (e.g., pet safety)?
Family safety plans	Ensures that families have clear, proactive plans in place to protect children's continuity of care during unexpected events or crises.	Family Safety Planning: How do you assess whether this is a relevant concern for the family, and when and how should conversations be introduced about immigration-related safety planning?

Team Activities to Explore

Entering and exiting: Practice entering and leaving a home respectfully, discussing what it means to be a “guest” (e.g., taking off shoes if the family does, mirroring greetings or language) and following the family’s lead.

Boundary scenarios: Read short case examples (e.g., parent offers gifts, asks for babysitting). ELS discusses the boundary issue and possible response.

Stop and reflect: Role-play a boundary-blurring request, pause mid-scenario, and ask the ELS to name the ethical response.

Values vs. boundaries: ELS reflects on how personal values (e.g., generosity) can conflict with professional limits and discuss balance

Red Light, green light: Read quick situations (coffee, ride, family text chain). ELS call out red, yellow, or green and explain why.

Parallel process: Coordinator models clear boundaries in supervision and debriefs with ELS on how that felt.