

Professionalism and Ethical Practice

Initial Practice Based Professional Standards
for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood
Special Educators (EI/ECSE)

7.2

Standard 7

Candidates identify and engage with the profession of early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) by exhibiting skills in reflective practice, advocacy, and leadership while adhering to ethical and legal guidelines. Evidence-based and recommended practices are promoted and used by candidates.

Component 7.2

- Candidates engage in ongoing reflective practice and access evidence-based information to improve their own practices.



Objectives

- Describe the role of reflective practice to promote professional growth and improvement of EI/ECSE knowledge and skills.
- Describe how to access evidenced based information to improve EI/ECSE practice.



What Is Reflective Practice?

- The process by which EI/ECSE professionals examine their own assumptions, values, beliefs, and professional practices and consider actions to be taken to continuously improve their own practice and/or reconstruct their assumptions, values, and/or beliefs

DEC EI/ECSE Glossary, 2020

Why Do I Need to Use Reflective Practice?

- To promote collaboration across EI/ECSE disciplines and family members
- To become intentionally aware of and disrupt unconscious assumptions and beliefs that create barriers to high-quality EI/ECSE service provision
- To engage in effective problem solving with families and cross-disciplinary professionals

(Kucharczyk et al., 2019)

Reflective Practice

- A process of ongoing self-awareness
- Supports a flexible understanding and use of professional role within the larger unit of the team
- Requires constant examination of closely-held assumptions and beliefs
- Includes ongoing use of professional standards and research-based tools



Practitioner Assumptions

- **Self-efficacy** – Am I confident about the use of EI/ECSE-guided evidence-based practices? Do I use them with fidelity?
- **Child ability** – What assumptions am I making about a child based on disability labels? Culture? Previous experiences?
- **Family capacity** – What assumptions am I making about this family? What do I feel they “should” be doing based on my own values?

(Kucharczyk et al., 2019)

Self-Efficacy

- Practitioner belief that they are effective in the use of their intervention strategies, that children can learn, and that there are resources and knowledge available when they need assistance
- Mediates family engagement, intervention efficacy, and child outcomes

(Kucharczyk et al., 2019)

Reflection: Where Are You Now?

- Are you just starting out? Or a seasoned practitioner?
- If new, how have your recent educational experiences supported your sense of self-efficacy? How does it feel to collaborate across disciplines? What resources will you need to increase your sense of self-efficacy over time?
- If seasoned, how has your experience informed the way you practice? The way you collaborate across disciplines? Can you sometimes get stuck in the way you always do things?



Child Ability

- Beyond educational training, practitioners gain knowledge about children with disabilities through previous experiences, ongoing professional development
- Assumptions about children with a given disability can become automatic based on previous experiences
- Assumptions are always based on our own cultural context and professional experiences
- Can result in expectations that do not match the child and hinder effective service provision



Reflection: Child Ability Example

- Can you reflect on an example where a given strategy worked well for some children with ASD, but not for all?
- How will the unique characteristics of each child with ASD inform the strategies you introduce?



Family Capacity

- Creating space for families to identify their own priorities – which may be different than yours
- Examining assumptions about why a family may not be engaging in services the way we want them to
- Remaining curious and flexible about how family members use the strategies and information we share with them



Reflection: Family Capacity Example

- A family you are working with is from a different culture than your own. This family member often forgets appointments and does not seem to follow through with your recommended strategies.
- What assumptions might you find yourself making about the family member?
- What assumptions might you make about family members who do not easily connect with EI/ECSE services?



Reflective Capacity

- The ability to view experiences and interactions through another's perspective
- Stepping back to consider a given experience, and construct an alternate hypothesis for why a practice or professional relationship is not working
- Slowing down to reflect on a problem before we move to “fix” something.
- Recognizing that “how we are is more important than what we do” (Heffron & Murch, 2012)



Reflective Supervision: A “Relationship for Learning”

- Marked by collaboration, reflection, and consistency
- Creates an environment of continuous learning, improvement and professionalism
- Built upon a parallel process that allows EI/ECSE practitioners to develop problem solving skills while also experiencing support similar to how they in turn provide support for families

(Shamoon-Shanok, 2006, pp. 343)

Reflective Supervision Video



https://youtu.be/JER_EAu-Vg



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Reflective Supervision Video

- How did this supervisor support this practitioner's ability to be reflective about her work?
- How might this reflective process, in turn support this family member's ability to positively impact her child's outcomes?



Reflective Discourse: Using Tools to Support Evidence-Based Practice

Using research-based tools in collaboration with other professionals to engage in reflective problem-solving

- Professional Standards, including [EI/ECSE Standards](#) and the [ECPC Cross-Disciplinary Competencies](#)
- [DEC Recommended Practice guide with examples](#)
- Implementation fidelity tools and checklists e.g., [ECTA Practice Guides](#)
- Video review

Using Reflective Practices in Cross-Disciplinary Teams

Create conversations with team members about using professional standards/cross-disciplinary competencies and fidelity implementation tools to ensure:

- Effective collaboration and teaming
- Family-centered practices
- Evidence-based practices
- Professionalism



Activity

- [Maria's Story: ECPC Cross-Disciplinary Competencies Case Studies](#)
- The key indicators of Professionalism are listed as nine bulleted items in the Maria case study. Highlight in the story where each of these indicators is demonstrated/operationalized.
- What opportunities for reflective practice can you identify within this case study?

Other Resources to Support Implementation of EBP in EI/ECSE

- [CSEFEL: Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning \(vanderbilt.edu\)](http://www.csefel.vanderbilt.edu)
- [CONNECT | Connect Modules \(dec-sped.org\)](http://dec-sped.org)



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Other Resources to Support Implementation of EBP in EI/ECSE

- [IRIS | Evidence-Based Practice Summaries](#)
[\(vanderbilt.edu\)](#)
- [Home - Child Trends](#)
- [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)
[NCPMI \(usf.edu\)](#)



References and Resources

- Heffron, M. C., & Murch, T. (2013). *Finding the words, finding the ways: Exploring reflective supervision and facilitation* (DVD and Manual). Michigan Association of Infant Mental Health.
- Frosch, C.A., Varwani, Z., Mitchell, J., Caraccioli, C. and Willoughby, M. (2018), *IMPACT OF REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION ON EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTIONISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-EFFICACY, JOB SATISFACTION, AND JOB STRESS*. *Infant Ment. Health J.*, 39: 385-395. <https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.21718>

References and Resources

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- Lamorey, S., & Wilcox, M.J. (2005). Early Intervention Practitioners self-efficacy; a measure and its application. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 20(69-84).

References and Resources

- McFarland, L., Saunders, R., & Allen, S. (2009). Reflective practice and self-evaluation in learning positive guidance: Experiences of early childhood practicum students. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36(6), 505-511
- Shahmoon-Shanok, R., & Geller, E. (2009). Embracing complexity across disciplines: Reflective supervision and post degree training integrate mental health concepts with speech-language therapy and graduate education. *Infant Mental Health Journal: Official Publication of the World Association for Infant Mental Health*, 30(6), 591-620.



References and Resources

- Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council: [Using Video as a Foundation for Reflective Supervision](#)
- Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children: <https://www.dec-sped.org/ppc-home>
- [Early Childhood Personnel Center \(ECPC\): Cross-Disciplinary Competencies](#)

Disclaimer

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