



Tips for ECE & EI Collaboration

Why Does Collaboration Matter?

Nurturing and responsive relationships are key to how young children of all abilities learn, grow, and develop. In order to support young children receiving EI in Early Care and Education programs, it is vital for the adults in the lives of the child to have collaborative relationships.

"No one person, field, or resource is sufficient to address the array of needs presented by infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children and their families."

- Bricker, et. al. (2022)¹

We asked ECE and EI professionals across Allegheny County to share tips that support collaboration. Below are some tools you can try implementing to promote collaboration and connection:



Scheduling

... because everyone is busy!

- The EI provider, family, and child care provider should discuss scheduling and compromise on a day/time that works best for all involved—most importantly, the child. It is important to consider which classroom routines and activities best align with the child's EI goals.
- ECE programs can have a calendar hanging in their classroom and ask EI providers to write their name and the initials of the child that they're seeing on the calendar. Note: Initials will help protect the confidentiality of children.



Communicating

... because it is HARD to have a conversation with another adult while teaching a full classroom of young children!

- Consider using a communication notebook or group text with the child's family and EI team to share updates or ask questions. This can be helpful for children who are receiving multiple therapies. *Note: Ask the parent for permission before doing this.*
- Work with program leadership to prioritize opportunities for you to touch base with EI providers.
- Work with the parent and EI provider to ask for a copy of the session note for the classroom's record.



Collaborating

... because working together is in the best interest of the children!

- Ask the family and EI provider for a copy of the full IFSP or IEP, or the individual goals/outcomes.
- Have realistic expectations. EI providers are not a 1:1 aide for the child. Parents, early childhood educators, and EI providers must all put in collective effort.
- Welcome EI into your classroom—you are now a team.
- Understand your own beliefs, values, experiences, ethics, and biases.
- Recognize and respect each team member's skills, knowledge, and strengths.
- Provide reciprocal feedback to one another and be willing to problem-solve together.
- Read the [Division for Early Childhood \(DEC\) Council for Exceptional Children's recommended practices for inclusion](#).

1 [A Proposed Framework for Enhancing Collaboration in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education](#) (2022)

