

Early On Vision and Mission Statement Alignment with Caregiver Coaching and Routines-Based Practices in Early Intervention

New *Early On* Vision and Mission statements were approved by the Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council (MICC) on September 11, 2025. The purpose of this document is to identify alignment between the statements and two specific evidence-based practices in early intervention: caregiver coaching and a routines-based approach.

Early On Vision: Empowering and partnering with Michigan’s families to support the development of infants and toddlers as they reach their full potential.

Early On Mission: To promote the development of infants and toddlers by providing comprehensive, individualized, and family-centered services through everyday activities.

Early On empowers and partners with Michigan’s families to support the development of infants and toddlers as they reach their full potential. *Early On* provides comprehensive, individualized and family-centered services through everyday activities when providers:

- work closely with families to learn about their child and their life;
- focus on building strong relationships with families and *Early On* team members;
- collaboratively identify priorities and outcomes for intervention;
- **coach caregivers** to integrate intervention strategies into **daily routines**; and
- support progress on child and family outcomes.

Caregiver Coaching is an evidence-based approach to service delivery used by early intervention professionals to build the capacity of caregivers to confidently embed intervention strategies into everyday routines in natural environments. By doing so, caregivers are better able to support their child’s learning and development throughout the day—not just during scheduled visits with an early interventionist (Hanft, Rush & Shelden, 2004; Rush, Shelden & Hanft, 2003).

Coaching families to embed intervention strategies into routines is foundational to the success of early intervention for infants, toddlers, and their families. A **routines-based approach** recognizes that all steps in the early intervention process—including evaluation, assessment, development of IFSP outcomes, and home visiting—are most effective when grounded in the family’s daily routines. Routines are defined as predictable periods of the day associated with consistent activities (e.g., waking up, mealtime, bath time, play), rather than isolated skills or behaviors such as walking or talking (McWilliam, 2018). These naturally occurring moments provide meaningful and repeated opportunities for learning and development (Friedman, Woods & Salisbury, 2012).

When early interventionists coach caregivers within their routines, they ensure that strategies are practiced more frequently and consistently than would ever be possible during a professional visit alone. This increases the child’s access to intervention throughout the day and fosters the caregiver’s confidence and competence in supporting their child’s development and making progress on IFSP outcomes.

The Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children's Early Intervention Early Childhood Professional Development Community of Practice identified six key components of caregiver coaching that are present across early intervention coaching frameworks (Bapat et al., 2023). The six caregiver coaching components included:

1. **Observation:** *The Early On* provider observes the caregiver by watching caregiver-child interactions during everyday activities and routines during the early intervention visit. The provider watches the caregiver demonstrate existing and new knowledge and skills.
2. **Demonstration with Explanation:** The caregiver observes the *Early On* provider as the provider: (a) demonstrates knowledge and skills during everyday activities and routines, (b) interacts and works with the child directly, and (c) explains what, why, and how.
3. **Caregiver Practice:** The *Early On* provider seeks out opportunities for the caregiver to try out and practice using previously learned intervention strategies across contexts and newly learned skills with their child during the early intervention visit. Caregiver practice can consist of planned or spontaneous opportunities in context or through role plays with the provider to strengthen the caregiver's knowledge and skills.
4. **Reflection:** Reflection is an opportunity for the caregiver to think about their knowledge and use of skills as well as problem-solve with the *Early On* provider. Throughout the visit, the provider shows a sense of curiosity in exploring the caregiver's experiences and priorities by asking open-ended, non-leading, reflective questions.
5. **Feedback:** The *Early On* provider provides affirming statements, constructive suggestions, and guidance to the caregiver. Feedback about the caregiver's knowledge and skills can be given during or after the caregiver-child interaction and caregiver reflection.
6. **Partnering and Planning:** Partnering and planning involves the *Early On* provider and caregiver working together to support the caregiver priorities. The provider helps guide the caregiver to identify skills they want to learn, develop a timeline for the coaching process, and develop a plan for caregiver practice during and beyond the early intervention visit to achieve the targeted skill(s) and/or desired outcomes.

Early On services are not isolated therapy sessions; they are part of a comprehensive, research-supported system in which early interventionists partner with families and team members to support child outcomes through individualized strategies. These services are grounded in evidence-based practices that aim to enhance the functional development of infants and toddlers by promoting learning opportunities within the context of daily life.

By grounding *Early On* in the daily lives of families and using coaching as the primary method of support, *Early On* providers help ensure that children receive frequent, functional, and individualized opportunities to learn and grow in the environments where they live, play, and thrive.

[Click here to view the 2025 *Early On* Vision and Mission Statements](#)

The following professional organizations have resources on their websites which support the use of coaching as a service delivery model in early intervention:

- [AOTA \(American Occupational Therapy Association\) website](https://aota.org) (aota.org)
- [APPT \(Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy\) of the APTA \(American Physical Therapy Association\) website](https://pediatricapta.org) (pediatricapta.org)
- [ASHA \(American Speech-Language-Hearing Association\) website](https://asha.org) (asha.org)
- [DEC \(Division for Early Childhood\) of the CEC \(Council for Exceptional Children\) Recommended Practices](https://divisionearlychildhood.egnyte.com/dl/7urLPWCt5U) (https://divisionearlychildhood.egnyte.com/dl/7urLPWCt5U)
- NECTAC (National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center) formed the Workgroup on Principles and Practices in Natural Environments and identified caregiver coaching and a routines based approach as key practices for providing early intervention services. [Early Intervention Services: Key Principles and Practices section of the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center website](https://ectacenter.org/topics/eiservices/keyprinkeyprac.asp). (https://ectacenter.org/topics/eiservices/keyprinkeyprac.asp)

References

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