

# Creating a Positive Parent-Professional Relationship in an Early-Intervention Setting

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## ABSTRACT

The use of a coaching model, grounded in the adult learning theory, can create a positive parent-professional relationship in an early intervention setting. The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook (Rush and Sheldon, 2019) states “coaching is an adult learning strategy in which the coach promotes the learner’s ability to reflect on his or her actions as a means to determine the effectiveness of an action or practice and develop a plan for refinement and use of the action in immediate and future situations” (p.8). Literature reviews and parent/caregiver and professional perspectives who engage in coaching relationships were pulled from the extant literature to inform this poster. Early career professionals and seasoned professionals are reminded of the importance and process of creating a solid parent-professional partnership to reach families desired outcomes through early intervention.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Outcome 1:** Gain a deeper understanding of how to coach caregivers to develop a positive parent-professional relationship.

**Outcome 2:** Reflect on the strategies/techniques currently used to develop solid parent-professional partnerships and determine if they are working effectively or if adjustments need to be made.

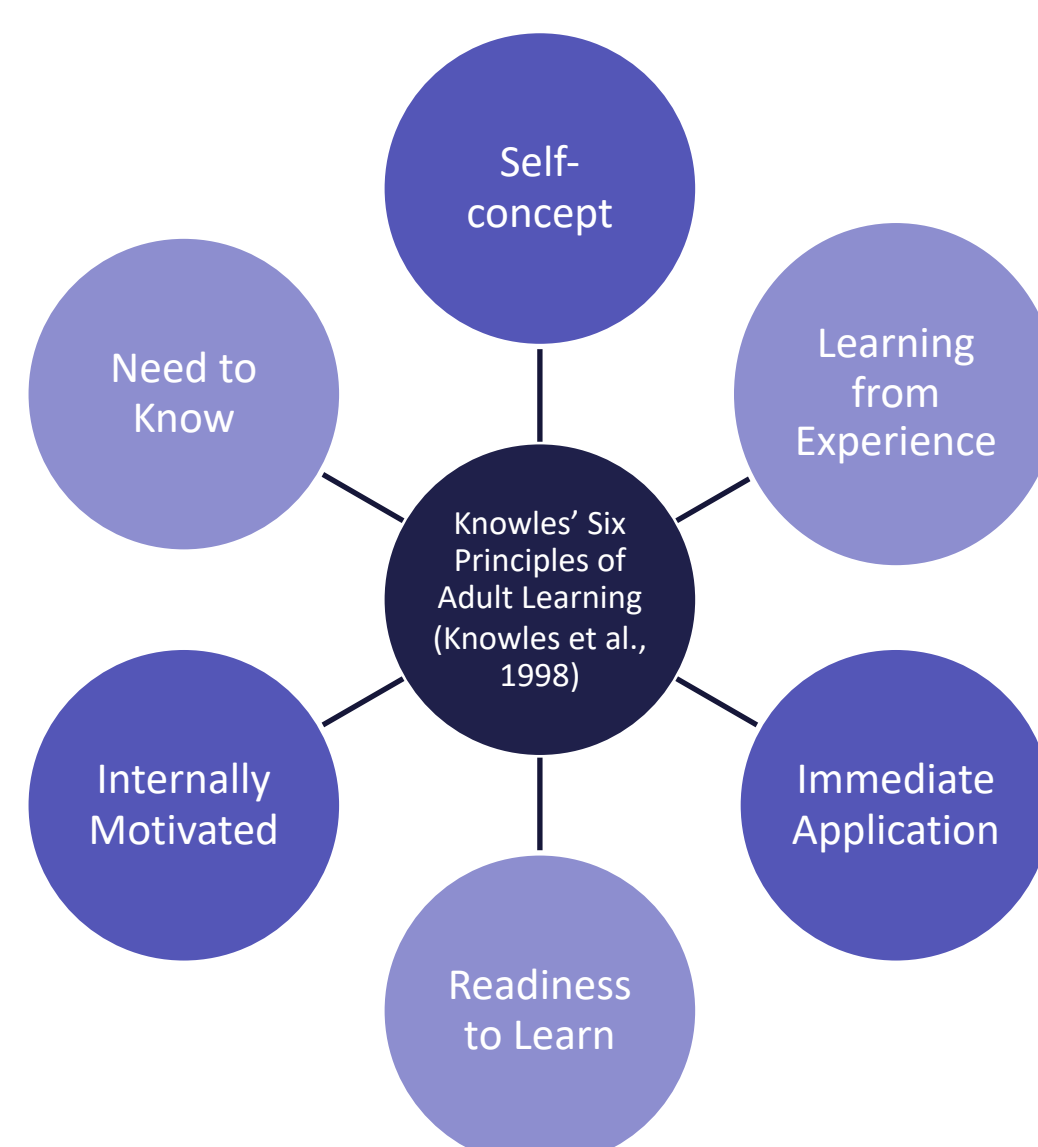
**Outcome 3:** Prioritize opportunities to incorporate coaching practices into intervention

## THE ADULT LEARNING THEORY

“The process by which adults gain knowledge, competence, and skills, whether formally or informally” (*Adult learning theory, 2023*).

*Parents are highly motivated to learn by a need to understand, to do, and to belong* (Hurtubise & Carpenter, 2017).

“Adults benefit from training (i.e., overview, description, and demonstration of the skill) that is followed by embedded coaching (i.e., observation and feedback of their application of the skill in its intended context” (Meadan et al., 2017, p. 114).

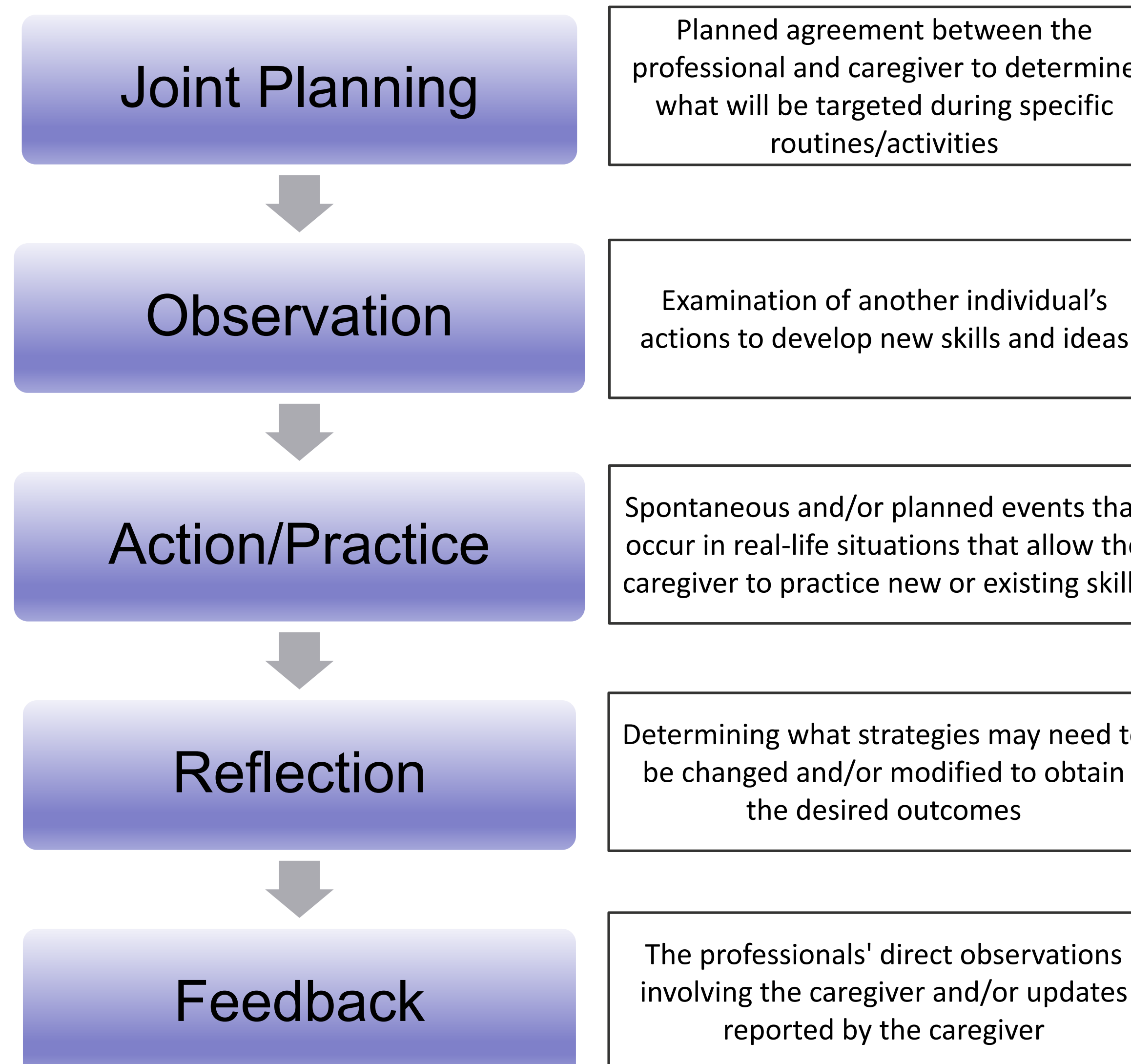


## COACHING MODEL

“Caregiver coaching is defined as strategies used by EI professionals to enlist the caregiver as partner in facilitating the child’s development, and to build the caregiver’s capacity to implement language-enhancing strategies within the natural environment” (Roberts & Kaiser, 2011, as cited in King et al., 2021, p. 2099).

## THE COACHING MODEL CHARACTERISTICS

(Rush and Sheldon, 2019)



## CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RESPONSIVE SERVICES

(Paul & Roth, 2011)

**Values about Learning:** Some cultures may prefer independent learning while others prefer collaboration with others

**Beliefs and perception about adult-child roles in the family:** Some cultures assume a direct child rearing style with others view the adult’s relationship with their child as interactive

**Expectations for child behavior at different developmental levels:** The age that children are expected to hit certain developmental milestones varies between cultures

**Family perceptions and attitudes toward a “disability”:** The degree of acceptance may impact whether EI services are even considered, how much the family participates in the services, and/or family’s expectations for the child

## STRATEGIES FOR FACILITATING COLLABORATION

(Beckman & Stepanek, 1996)

**Before Meetings:** holding meetings at a convenient place and time for the family and professional team and providing as much information as possible in advance, and

**During Meetings:** setting the stage, sharing information, discussing assessment results, making recommendation, limited professional jargon, and avoiding communication barriers

**Concluding Meetings:** review points covered in the meeting and ask if all the families concerns have been addressed.

**Following Meetings:** following up to provide further information and to initiate services is an important way to establish trust when building a parent-professional relationship

“I need to come away with a list of things that we need to work on or to focus on or pay attention to” – Mother of young child with developmental disabilities (Hurtubise & Carpenter, 2017, p.478).

“I’m very much a hands-on learner, so showing me what to do, is great” – Mother of young child with developmental disabilities (Hurtubise & Carpenter, 2017, p. 478).

“It’s all about parents taking the lead because ultimately, they’re with their child all the time and I’m just there to provide other ways for them work with their own child. I’m not the expert, they are” – Early Intervention service provider (Meadan et al., 2017, p. 121).

## FINAL REMINDERS

- EI services should be individualized based on the specific and changing needs of each family and child.
- “honesty, trust, and commitment are among the critical components in building effective parent-professional partnerships (Dunst and Paget, 1991, as cited in Minke & Scott, 1995, p. 351).

## POSTER REFERENCES

