



Transitioning Back to In-Person Early Intervention Services: Session Guidance

This document is intended to support the [Guidance for First Steps Home Visits and In-Person Services](#). For more information, visit the [First Steps website](#) and the [IIDC website](#).

AIM: To consistently communicate your desire and intention to partner with families, prioritizing their safety and progress toward their goals.

Before your first in-person visit:

- Speak with families on the phone to discuss options for how to continue services. Use state and agency guidance to support this conversation:
 - How comfortable does the family feel about returning to in-person visits?
 - Talk through some of the new requirements for in-person visits. How would these requirements work for the family? Discuss risk factors of people living in the home.
 - Discuss the option to provide a mixed model (a combination of in-person and virtual sessions).
- If you and the family decide to try in-person sessions, discuss how in-person visits will work and emphasize that they may not be the same as they were before.
- If possible, during a tele-intervention session prior to your first in-person visit, show children, including siblings, what you will look like wearing a mask.
- Talk with caregivers about the importance of continuing to use coaching practices during in-person visits. Coaching will be a critical practice because it allows providers to maintain social distancing and research shows that it leads to improved child and family outcomes (be sure to give examples of ways you've seen your families take the lead during tele-intervention) .

At the beginning of your first in-person visit:

- Review state and agency guidelines with families. Assure them that these guidelines will be followed with all families and that the extra precautions are to ensure their safety as well as your own and the safety of other families with whom you work. Provide an extra mask for the child to play with and explore during your first session, if possible.
- Remind families that although you are returning to in-person visits, sessions may not be the same as before.
 - You will be relying more on coaching as you did during tele-intervention. If a family didn't participate in tele-intervention, talk them through what a [coaching session might look like](#).



- Let families know that social distancing isn't the only reason you'll be using coaching practices: share with them that coaching is best practice for early intervention. Tell them you have learned a lot from the experience of using coaching during tele-intervention and there are real advantages to continuing with this practice. Research shows that hands-on parent/caregiver practice coupled with early intervention provider feedback is the best way to learn.
- Finally, remind caregivers that they know their child better than anyone. You want them to feel confident about working with their child, even when you aren't there.



The good news is that coaching, and in particular the [Family Guided Routines Based Intervention Model](#) (FGRBI), works in-person and virtually. Follow the **SS-OO-PP-RR** for a great session:

SS-Setting the Stage

OO-Observation and Opportunities to Embed

PP-Problem-Solving and Planning

RR-Reflection and Review

1. Setting the Stage:

Check-ins are still important! Use this time to reconnect with the family. Provide comfort and support, as needed. Use the information from this conversation to decide what to focus on during the current session. Sample check-in questions might include: Tell me how it's going, tell me more, what went well last week, what was hard, and have your priorities as a family changed at all this week.

2. Observation and Opportunities to Embed

This part of the session you may find yourself being quieter. Rather than working hard to engage the child in a novel activity, try joining the family in whatever they would normally be doing during the time you are there. You may ask questions or provide feedback during this time. You may want to know "What happens when...?" or "How did you teach her to do that?" This is the time that you'll build on what the caregiver is already doing and support the caregiver to try new things in the context of typical family routines.

3. Problem-Solving and Planning

Keep this conversation "right size" for the family. Some families may have the capacity to think big here and others may have a lot on their plate and need small steps. What might get in the way of this working? What do you want to try next? I wonder what would happen if...?

4. Reflection and Review

Talk about what worked during the visit. Talk about what you and the family may want to target next time. Get specific about what the family wants to practice between this session and the next one (what will they do, what routines will they use).