

# Interest & Activity Plan

Invite • Engage • Teach

## INTRODUCTION

The *Child Interest and Activity Plan (CIAP)* is a step-by-step observation planning guide for early childhood intervention practitioners and families to use to promote child learning as a part of everyday activities during and between visits. The *CIAP* includes the three characteristics of natural learning environment practices: child interest, everyday activity settings, and caregiver responsiveness as well as the five characteristics of a coaching interaction style: joint planning, action/practice, observation, reflection, and feedback. The *CIAP* supports the implementation of the characteristics of natural learning environment practices through the use of a coaching interaction style that builds caregivers' capabilities. The *CIAP* helps practitioners operationalize natural learning environment practices and coaching through the use of *Roadmaps for Reflection* that walk practitioners through the three parts of an effective visit: (1) follow-up on the previous between-visit caregiver plan; (2) prepare for and engage in the focus activity planned for the visit, and (3) develop a new two-part plan with the caregiver including a new between-visit plan and a plan for the next visit.

The *CIAP* also includes inserts to facilitate documentation of the activities and strategies caregivers use to promote child participation throughout their daily routines and activities. The **CIAP** inserts are provided to support caregiver and practitioner documentation of planning, implementing, and reflection on a child interest-based activity.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE TOOL

1. Familiarize yourself with the overview of the evidence-based early intervention approach (page 4), the three parts of an effective early intervention visit (page 5), and how to introduce the tool to the family (page 7).
2. Prepare for the visit by reviewing each of the *Roadmaps* that correspond to the parts of the visit. Use the *Roadmaps* as a guide, not a script. The visit should flow like a conversation. Use the instructions below to guide each part of the visit:

### **PART I—Follow-up for Between-Visit-Plan**

At the beginning of the visit, the practitioner and parent review the effectiveness of the *Between-Visit Plan*. The *Roadmap for Promoting Child Interest-Based Learning: Follow-Up on the Previous Plan* (page 8) provides specific awareness, analysis, alternatives, and action questions the practitioner can use to support the caregiver's reflection on the previous between-visit plan and opportunities for sharing feedback.

### **PART II—Child Interest Activity Plan:**

**Planning:** During this component, the practitioner and caregiver focus on planning to support child interest-based learning during an everyday activity previously chosen as the focus activity for the current visit. An alternative everyday activity can be chosen, if needed, before beginning the planning process using the *Selecting Everyday Activities* worksheet. The planning process focuses on three caregiver choices: (1) identifying what the child can learn during the activity, (2) identifying what the child is interested in doing during the activity, and (3) the responsive and/or skilled intervention strategies the caregiver will use to support child learning during the activity (Refer to enclosed *Caregiver Responsive Strategies to Promote Child Learning* booklet). The *Roadmap* (page 9) identifies opportunities and provides a framework for the practitioner's use of reflective questions and feedback when helping the caregiver prepare for the focus activity or routine.

**Focus Activity:** During the focused activity component, the practitioner, caregiver, and child begin the everyday activity and implement the plan they created. The practitioner's objectives during the focus activity are to support the caregiver's knowledge and practice implementing child interest-based learning and to promote the caregiver's analysis of how successfully they support child learning. The *Roadmap* (page 10) provides probes for practitioners to use while supporting caregiver participation and reflection-in-action. The *Roadmap* also identifies appropriate opportunities for practitioners to provide informative feedback regarding child interest-based learning or intentional modeling of skilled interventions or *Invite, Engage, and Teach* strategies, if needed. The practitioner can refer to the *Five Ways to Scaffold Caregiver Learning* (page 6) to provide the appropriate level of support to build the caregiver's capacity. During and immediately after the activity, the *Roadmap* serves to support the practitioner with promoting the caregiver's reflection on what the caregiver and child learned, the effectiveness of the strategies the caregiver chose for the focus activity, and how the activity matched the caregiver's expectations.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE TOOL

### **PART III—Between Visit and Next Visit Plan**

During Part III of the CIAP, the practitioner supports the caregiver's planning to promote child interest-based learning during an everyday activity between visits. The practitioner can help the parent identify responsive strategies from the *Caregiver Responsive Strategies to Promote Child Learning* booklet. The practitioner and caregiver also select an everyday activity as the focus activity for the next visit and schedule the visit at a time that provides the best opportunity to practice the chosen activity. The *Roadmap* (page 11) provides a framework for practitioners to follow while using a coaching interaction style and creating a new two-part joint plan with the caregiver. The practitioner and caregiver may choose to review and use the *Selecting Everyday Activities* insert when creating their next visit plan. The between-visit plan and the next-visit plan can be documented on the *Caregiver Plan* insert, and the practitioner can invite the family to document their reflections on the helpfulness of the plan between visits on the *Reflection* side of the *Caregiver Plan*.

3. Use the practitioner inserts to document the visit. The inserts below are for practitioner use and are designed to track planning and observation information based on working with caregivers. These inserts are optional based on your program's existing methods of documentation and tracking, but are particularly helpful to novice practitioners.

The ***Practitioner Plan*** and ***Reflection*** insert can be used by the practitioner to prepare for the visit with a family. The *Practitioner Plan* provides prompts for the practitioner to think about how to use the visit to promote the caregiver's capacity to engage the child in interest-based learning. The reverse side of the plan provides space for the practitioner to reflect on the outcomes of the visit and the practitioner's role in building the caregiver's capacity and continuing to build their own use of evidence-based practices.

The ***Selecting Everyday Activities*** insert can be used to document activities chosen as the focus for a visit or between-visit plans. The practitioner tracks activity settings used during visits and between visits as contexts for child participation and learning. Since it is intended to be a cumulative list, the insert should be replaced when it is full or has become too challenging to read. Some practitioners may keep the same *Selecting Everyday Activities* insert for the entire duration of the child's enrollment in early intervention, while others may need to replace it at each IFSP update. It is not necessary for caregivers to focus on each activity setting listed on the insert, but should focus on the activities and routines that occur frequently and are of high interest to the caregiver and child.

The ***Responsive Teaching Record*** is designed for use by practitioners to track the responsive strategies that were introduced to and mastered by the caregiver. Practitioners should enter the date the strategy was first introduced to the caregiver in the first column and the date the strategy was used by the caregiver in the second column. The strategies on the *Responsive Teaching Record* align with the *Caregiver Responsive Strategies to Promote Child Learning* booklet.

4. Offer the caregiver(s) the inserts listed below provide guidance for how to use them. Practitioners should be flexible with the use of the inserts based on the family's level of comfort with using written resources. All are optional.

The ***Caregiver Responsive Strategies to Promote Child Learning*** booklet is a reference guide that lists the *Invite*, *Engage*, and *Teach* strategies that are effective in promoting child learning and participation. Practitioners can encourage caregivers to use the booklet during visits and between visits to remind them of the evidence-based responsive techniques to use during child interactions that contribute to child learning.

The ***Caregiver Plan and Reflection*** can be used by the caregiver at the end of the visit to document their between visit plan for promoting child participation and learning during focused routines. One side of the form has a place for the caregiver to document what they plan to do between visits and at the next visit with their practitioner. The reverse side provides space for the caregiver to reflect on the usefulness of their strategies and the outcomes for the child as a result of implementing the plan. If a caregiver chooses to use the *Caregiver Plan*, a new insert should be provided to the caregiver at each visit so that the caregiver can document their progress and their plan with the targeted activity or routine.

## OVERVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE-BASED EARLY INTERVENTION APPROACH

Natural learning environment practices (NLEP) are an operationalization of family-centered practices, a cornerstone of evidence-based early intervention. The CIAP guides practitioners to use NLEP along with a coaching interaction style to build the capacity of caregivers to support child participation and learning during typical family activities and routines. Using the CIAP will help practitioners align with evidence-based early intervention practices.

This approach meets the requirements of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and uses family-centered helpgiving practices as the foundation for the supports. The CIAP is best paired with an evidence-based approach to teaming (i.e, primary service provider approach to teaming). While it is possible to use natural learning environment practices, a coaching interaction style, and a primary coach approach to teaming separately, the blending of all three components maximizes effectiveness and efficiency while also ensuring accountability for high-quality supports and services (Rush & Shelden, 2008).

### Natural Learning Environment Practices

Natural learning environment practices include use of everyday activity settings, child interests, and parent/adult responsiveness to the child.

- Everyday activity settings (typical routines) are used as the sources of early learning because they provide frequent opportunities for child use of existing abilities and development of new skills (in all areas of development, including positive social-emotional interactions). They also provide caregivers with opportunities to practice implementation of responsive strategies within their day-to-day life.
- Child interests are used because children are more likely to focus on a person or activity longer if they are motivated and engaged, which in turn, provides more practice and learning opportunities.
- Caregiver responsiveness involves ensuring that caregivers know and understand what they do that supports the child's learning within and across activity settings.
- The CIAP outlines a variety of responsive caregiving strategies referred to in the tool as the *Invite*, *Engage*, and *Teach* strategies. These evidence-based strategies provide specific ways caregivers can choose to interact with young children while encouraging their participation and learning.

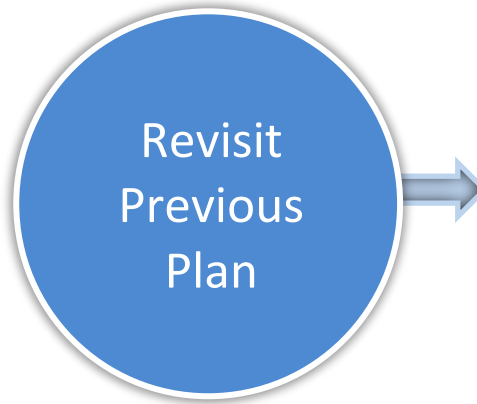
### Coaching Interaction Style

Coaching is an evidence-based adult learning strategy used for interacting with caregivers to help them recognize what they are already doing and build on existing or develop new ideas.

- Coaching is not an intervention, but an interaction style associated with positive capacity-building outcomes for the adult who is coached.
- Coaching involves jointly observing, thinking about what works, sharing new ideas, trying new strategies with the child, and planning an intervention to use in everyday activities.
- Practitioners using coaching are as hands-on as needed in helping caregivers support the child's participation in meaningful and functional everyday activities (Rush & Shelden, 2020).

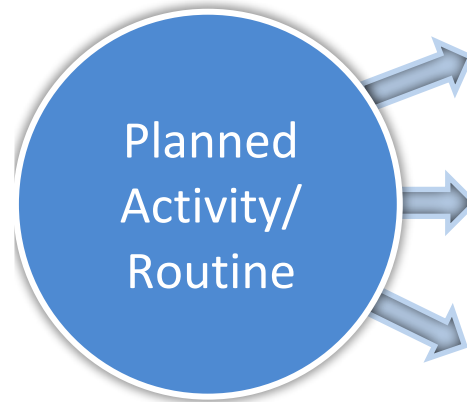
## THREE PARTS OF EFFECTIVE EI VISIT

1



Reflect on the planned activity  
between the visits.  
(previous between-visit-plan)

2



Plan the focus activity.

Engage the parent and child in  
the focus activity

Reflect on the focus activity

3





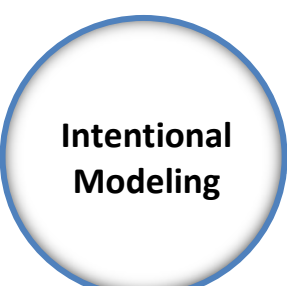


Plan together what the caregiver  
will do between visits to  
continue child learning.  
(new between-visit plan)

Plan together the focus  
activity/routine for the next visit,  
including what the caregiver  
wants the child to learn.  
(new next-visit-plan)

## FIVE WAYS TO SCAFFOLD CAREGIVER LEARNING

When supporting adult learning, the practitioner should provide the least intrusive type of support needed to enable the caregiver to successfully employ a responsive strategy on their own. Knowing how the caregiver learns best, and observing the caregiver's knowledge and skill can help the provider determine the type of scaffolding best suited to the situation. Below are five ways to scaffold learning from least intrusive to most intrusive. Providers may find that multiple strategies are helpful within the same interaction.

Strategy	What it Looks Like	Helpful Hints
 <p><b>Reflection for Action</b></p>	<p>Use reflective questions before the focus activity to encourage the caregiver to develop a plan to reach the intended outcomes.</p> <p>The caregiver develops ideas and the provider offers feedback and additional ideas as needed.</p>	<p>Use before beginning the focus activity or while planning the new between-visit plan.</p> <p>Ask permission to provide informative feedback in needed.</p>
 <p><b>Reflection on Action</b></p>	<p>Use reflective questions after the caregiver has engaged with the child in the focus activity to encourage the caregiver to think about how the strategies worked.</p> <p>Ask the caregiver to think about new or alternative ways to invite, engage, or teach the child next time.</p>	<p>Use after the focus activity has happened or while debriefing the previous between-visit plan.</p>
 <p><b>Reflection in Action</b></p>	<p>Use reflective questions while the caregiver is engaging with the child to encourage the caregiver to think about how the strategies are working, what the child is learning, or how the child is participating, and what invite, engage, and teach strategies, the caregiver is engaged with the child while the provider is observing.</p>	<p>Use during the focus activity.</p> <p>This strategy is often paired with reflection-for-action (prior to) and reflection on-action (following).</p>
 <p><b>Verbally Prompt</b></p>	<p>During the focus activity provide the caregiver with in-the-moment prompts about how to use strategies you have already discussed.</p> <p>The caregiver is engaged with the child while the provider is observing and prompting.</p>	<p>Use during the focus activity.</p> <p>This strategy is used with reflection-in-action.</p>
 <p><b>Intentional Modeling</b></p>	<p>Explain the responsive strategy or target technique.</p> <p>Ask the caregiver if you can demonstrate it and let the caregiver know what to watch.</p> <p>Conduct the demonstration.</p> <p>Ask the caregiver to reflect on the use of the strategy.</p> <p>Invite the caregiver to try.</p> <p>Prompt the caregiver to reflect on how it worked and plan for continued use of the strategy or target technique.</p>	<p>Use in situations when modeling is requested by the caregiver or it would be helpful for the caregiver to see how to implement the strategy.</p> <p>Turn the model back over to the caregiver as soon as possible.</p>

## INTRODUCING THE CIAP TO FAMILIES

Introduce the CIAP to the caregiver when using the tool for the first time. Use the following information as a guide:

Children learn best from doing things with you during your everyday activities. Children especially learn when they get to do things they like and enjoy. You help your child learn by being positive, sharing what they like to do, and showing them new things to do (Davis, 2014). We will use the *Child Interest and Activity Plan* to help us choose everyday activities that let you and your child do things together.

At every visit we will take some time to review what you did while I wasn't here. We will review what worked well and what didn't. We will then spend some time supporting you and your child during a typical activity that you would be doing at the time of my visit. At the end of our time together, we will always create a plan for what you want to practice between our visits and what you would like to focus on during our next visit.

We're going to focus on your child's interests because children learn faster when they are interested in what they are doing. When children are highly interested, they stay with the activity for a longer period of time. The more children interact with objects and people, the more they practice. More practice means more learning.

We encourage parents to participate in the following ways:

- Pick your everyday activities, for our visits that will be good learning opportunities for your child.
- Show me and/or tell me what typically happens in the activity or routine that is the focus of the visit.
- Try new ideas that we come up with to see how well they work.
- Think about new ways you want your child to be part of your daily activities and routines.
- Decide what works or what needs to be done differently.

Note:

Be sure to give caregivers a copy of the insert, *Caregiver Responsive Strategies to Promote Child Learning* to reference when you discuss responsive teaching strategies.

Adapted from:

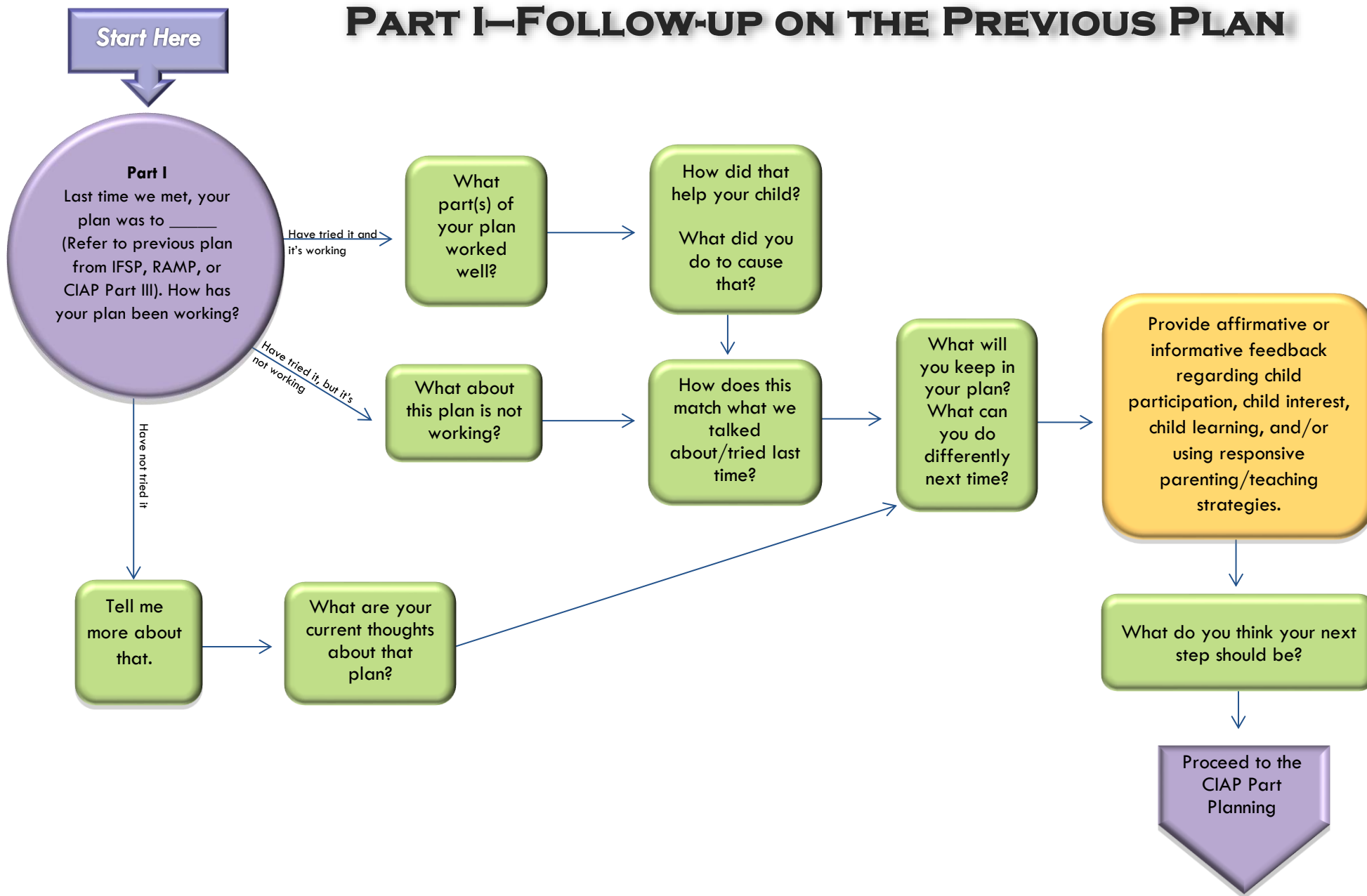
Rush, D. D. & Shelden, M. L. (2008). Script for explaining an evidence-based early intervention model. *BriefCASE* 1(3). 1-5.

Raab, M. (2005). Interest-based child participation in everyday learning activities. *CASEinPoint*. 1(2), 2-3.



# ROADMAP FOR PROMOTING CHILD INTEREST-BASED LEARNING

## PART I—FOLLOW-UP ON THE PREVIOUS PLAN

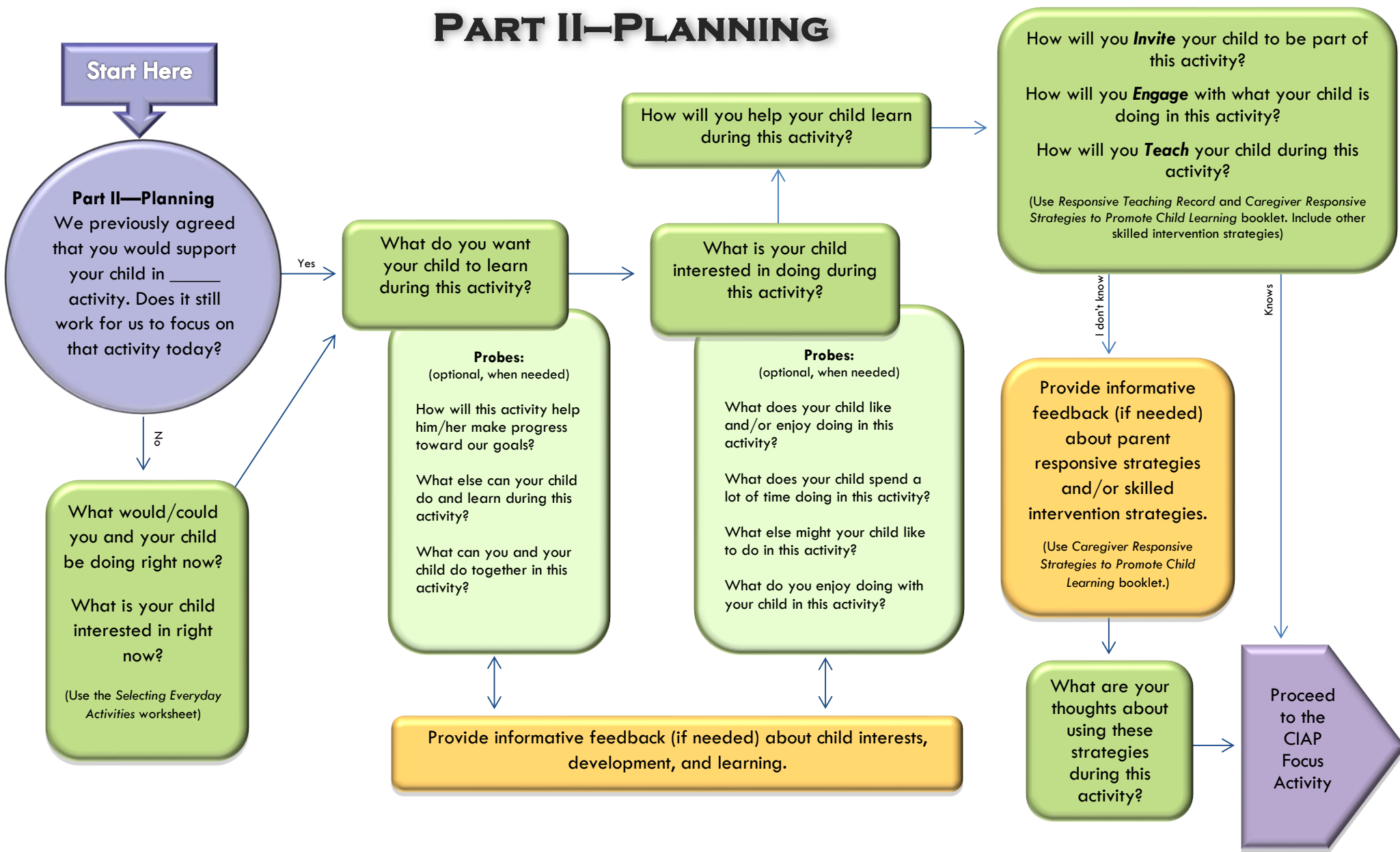


Review previous plan



# ROADMAP FOR PROMOTING CHILD INTEREST & ACTIVITY PLAN

## PART II—PLANNING

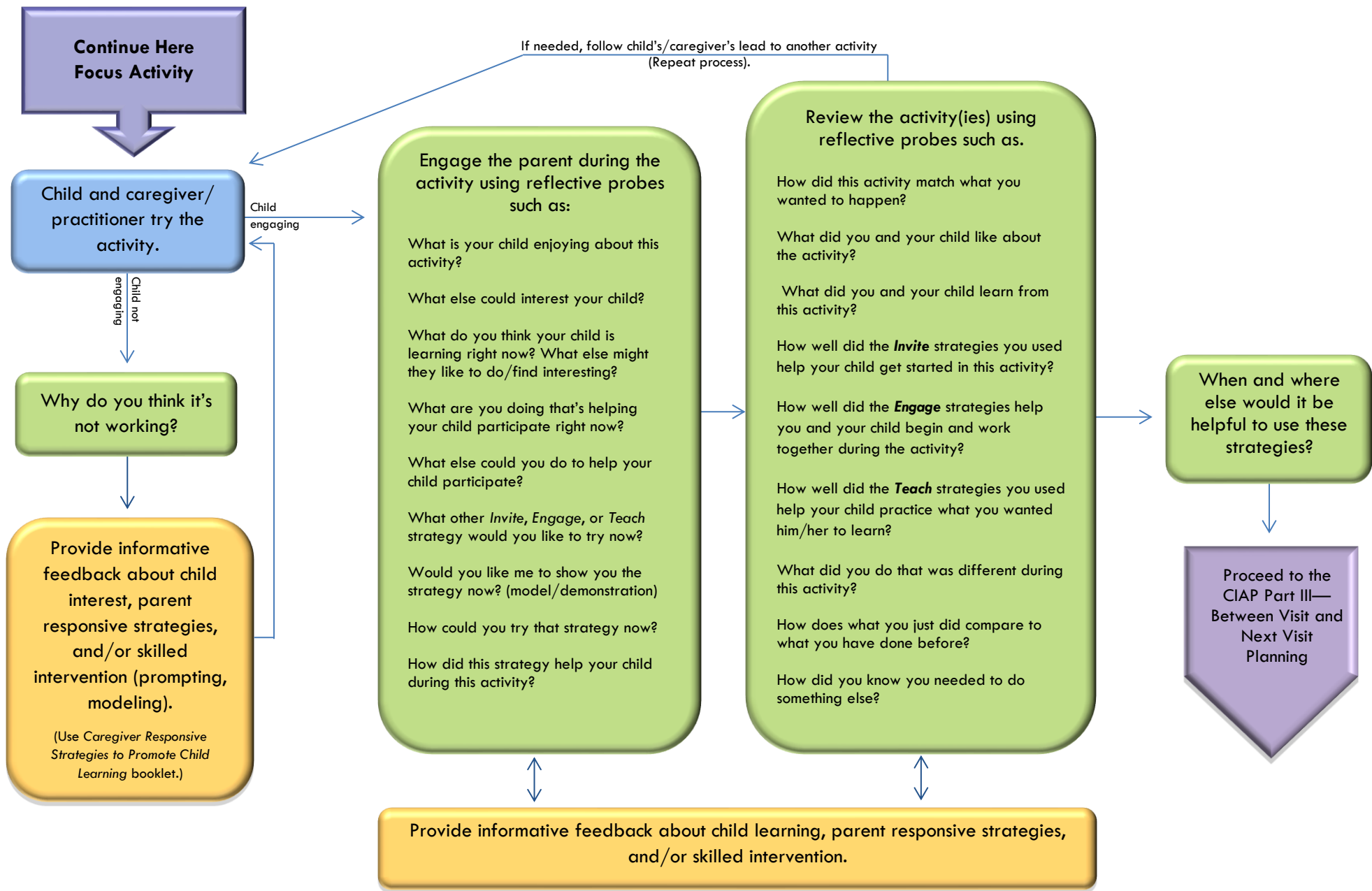


Planning the focus activity

Reflect on the Focus Activity

# ROADMAP FOR PROMOTING CHILD INTEREST & ACTIVITY PLAN

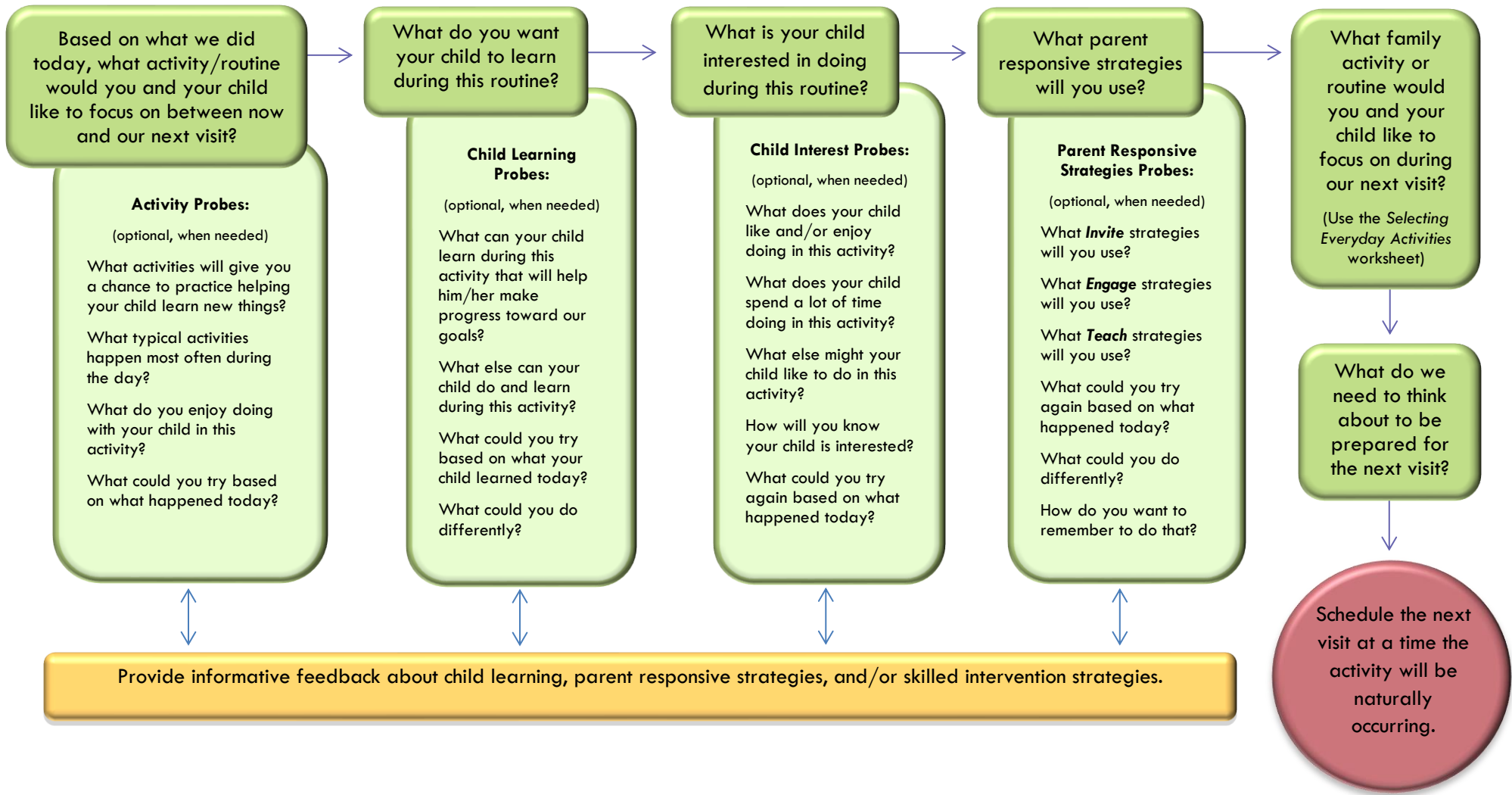
## PART II—FOCUS ACTIVITY



# ROADMAP FOR PROMOTING CHILD INTEREST & ACTIVITY PLAN

## PART III: BETWEEN VISIT AND NEXT VISIT PLAN

Continue Here  
Part III



Planning for the next activities

# REFERENCES

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- Shelden, M. L. & Rush, D. D. (2013). *The early intervention teaming handbook: The primary service provider approach*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Company.



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