

# NEWBORN Interest, Activity & Assessment Plan

Invite • Engage • Teach

## INTRODUCTION

Beginning at birth, newborns are interested in the people and objects around them and in making things happen. Some things are familiar, like the sound of their family's voices, while others are brand new, like the feel of a soft blanket on their hands and cheek. Newborns learn during everyday activities such as feeding and diapering. Parents play a very important role in supporting newborn learning and development. For example, from birth, how and when a parent responds to an infant during face-to-face exchanges with caregivers helps infants learn what their favorite people look, smell, and sound like. By the age of two months, an infant may be encouraged to reach for a rattle when the parent shakes it or moves it closer after the parent notices the infant looking at the rattle. The *Newborn Interest, Activity & Assessment Plan* (NIAAP) is the best way for practitioners to help parents and caregivers support and promote the newborn's natural learning opportunities.

The NIAAP is for use with infants up to 6 months of age and has two purposes. The first purpose is to support parents identifying infant cues regarding interests and needs during daily activities. The second purpose is to support parents identifying how different responses affect infants during daily activities. During a home visit, parents and practitioners may choose to participate in just Section II-*Read and Respond Observation* or just Section III-*Read and Respond Activity* or both Sections II and III.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**Section I--Between Visit Plan Follow-Up:** At the beginning of the home visit, the practitioner and parent review the outcomes of the Between Visit Plan. The Roadmap for NIAAP Section IV-Between Visit Plan Follow-Up provides opportunities for feedback and specific awareness, analysis, and action questions for the practitioner to use to support the parent's reflection.

**Section II--Read and Respond Observation:** A Read and Respond Observation involves the parent and practitioner observing and identifying the baby's cues and parent's responses that are unique to the parent and baby. During the home visit, the parent and practitioner observe ongoing baby-parent interactions and activities to identify the baby's behaviors and/or cues that indicate the baby's need for comfort and support, interests or enjoyment, and/or how the baby is participating in the activity. The parent and practitioner also observe, identify, and practice how the parent responds to the baby's behaviors, cues, and/or interests, and how the parent response changes outcomes for the baby. The Roadmap for NIAAP Section II-Read and Respond Observations provides the practitioner with specific reflective question probes and opportunities for supporting parents' reading of their baby's cues, and practice exploring the outcomes of current and alternative parent responses. The Roadmap provides opportunities for practitioners to introduce and use intentional modeling of *Invite*, *Engage*, and *Teach* responsive strategies for parents. Parents can date and record their observations and reflections for baby cues and their responses questions on the Read and Respond Observations worksheet when it is used during a visit. A new Read and Respond Observation worksheet should be used every two visits.

**Section III--Read and Respond Activity:** During a Read and Respond Activity, the practitioner and family plan on reading the baby's cues and using a variety of responsive strategies during an everyday activity selected the previous visit. Because everyday activities with infants are often brief in duration, planning occurs as the activity begins. Parents can choose what baby cues they want to watch for to know more about the baby's experience during different parts of the activity. Planning regarding how the parent responds also occurs during the activity focused again on what responses the parent chooses or what alternative responses the parent would like to try. Review of baby cues and parent responses occurs as they occur during the activity. Parents can be encouraged to recognize which responses *Invite*, *Engage*, and/or *Teach* the baby during daily activities. Expert support for specific developmental outcomes and parent concerns can be provided during Read and Respond Activity by the practitioner or as a part of a joint visit. The Roadmap for Read and Respond activities provides probes and opportunities for practitioners to support parent's reflection-in-action and active participation during the activity and opportunities to immediately review and reflect on what the parent and baby learned and/or experienced. Parents can date and record their observations and reflections for baby cues and their responses questions on the Read and Respond Observation worksheet when it is used during a visit. A new Read and Respond Observation worksheet should be used every two visits.

**Section IV--Between Visit and Next Visit Plan:** Using the Between Visit Plan and Next Visit Plan, the parent and practitioner create a plan for the parent to observe and learn more about how his/her baby demonstrates interests or needs and how the baby responds to the parent's actions to support learning during daily activities. Parents will also select an everyday activity for the next home visit focus activity.

## OVERVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE-BASED EARLY INTERVENTION APPROACH

Evidence-based early intervention includes a three component model: (1) natural learning environment practices; (2) coaching as an adult learning strategy and an interaction style when working with adults in the child's life; and (3) a primary service provider approach to teaming. This approach meets the requirements of Part C of the IDEA and uses family-centered helping practices as the foundation for the supports. While it is possible to use natural learning environment practices, a coaching interaction style, and a primary service provider 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, p. 1).

### 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 (family 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).
- 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.
- Parent responsiveness involves ensuring that parents know and understand what they do that supports their child's learning within and across activity settings (Dunst, 2006; Rush & Shelden, 2008).

### Coaching Interaction Style

Coaching is an evidence-based adult learning strategy used for interacting with parents and other care providers to recognize what they are already doing and build on existing or new ideas.

- Coaching is not an intervention, but a method of supporting the priorities of the parents and other care providers using a capacity-building style of interaction.
- Coaching involves jointly observing and modeling, thinking about what works, 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 parents and other care providers support the child's participation in meaningful and functional everyday activities (Rush & Shelden, 2011).

### Using a Primary Service Provider Approach to Teaming

When using a primary service provider (PSP) approach to teaming, all team members are potentially available to serve as a primary service provider, and the PSP is selected by the team, including the family, based on the long-term view of the child, family, environment, and practitioner factors (Shelden & Rush, 2013).

- Visit frequency is determined by the needs of the child/family, is activity-based, and may include bursts of support if needed to promote the child's participation in the activity.
- All team members attend regular team meetings to gain support from each other.
- Joint visits with secondary providers occur when the primary provider needs support to address a family priority. The secondary provider supports the primary provider.
- When joint visits occur, both team members and the family are present and the visit occurs during the activity where the PSP/family need support in promoting the child's participation.

(Modified from Shelden & Rush, 2013)

## GETTING STARTED

### Introduce the Tool to the Family

When using the NIAAP for the first time, introduce the tool to the family. Use the following information as a guide:

Your baby begins to learn about people and everyday life at birth. You help your baby by responding to his/her cries, smiles, and movements in ways that help him/her be comfortable and explore.

We will use the NIAAP to help us know what and how your baby learns during everyday activities. Everyday activities include, but are not limited to, bathing, feeding, dressing, and playing with your baby. We will use the first section of the NIAAP to review what you and your baby did since our last visit. We will use the second section of the NIAAP to write down all the ways your baby tells you what he or she likes and needs and the different ways you respond or can respond to your baby. This includes how your baby tells you he/she wants to touch a new toy or he/she needs help getting to sleep and what things you do that help your baby. We will use the third section of the NIAAP to practice reading and responding to your baby's cues during an everyday activity. We will use the fourth section of the NIAAP to write down ideas about what you and your baby will do together between our visits. At the end of every visit, we will choose an everyday activity to use on our next visit to practice helping your baby learn new things. You can have a copy of Section II and III to write down what you observe and do with your baby.

Because your baby changes so quickly, we will begin a new Section II or Section III every two weeks until your baby is 6 months old.

### Introduce Responsive Invite, Engage, and Teach Strategies

Refer to the Practitioner and Parent Guide to Responsive Strategies for Infants on page 10 and 11 of the NIAAP Toolkit for parents to reference when you discuss responsive teaching strategies. To respond to your baby and help him/her to learn, you can use three ways of responding.

The first way you help your baby learn is to invite him or her to do things with you. **Invite** responses are positive ways to ask your baby to be a part of an activity. **Invite** responses use a calm, happy, interesting, or playful tone of voice. For example you might use a calm voice to say, "Casey, are you ready to eat?" This would **Invite** Casey to begin a feeding activity. Even if your baby is upset, your calm voice encourages your baby to be calmer during feeding.

The second way to help your baby learn is for the two of you to be interested in and doing the same thing. **Engage** responses help you to join your baby in what he/she likes to do and start teaching him/her new things. For example, you can smile at your baby when he/she looks at you during feeding. This would **Engage** you and your baby in a joint social activity.

Once you and your baby are doing the same thing you will be able to teach him/her something new. This is the third way to respond to your baby. **Teach** responses help you support your baby to do something different and to practice new skills. For example, after smiling at your baby during feeding you could say "more" to teach your baby a word that goes with feeding. When you say "more" you are using a **Teach** response to help your baby learn a word that will help get his/her needs met in the future.

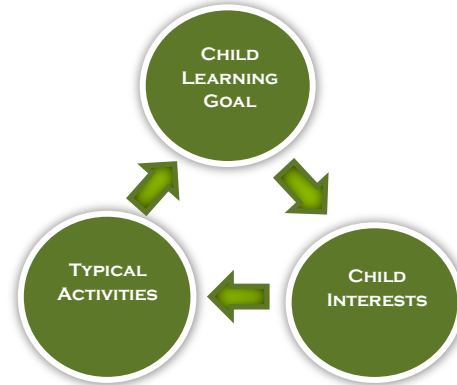
We encourage parents to participate in the following ways:

- Identify your everyday activities, learning opportunities, and strategies that will be the focus of the intervention.
- Demonstrate and/or describe what is currently happening in the activity or routine that is the focus of the visit.
- Try new techniques within the context of the activity or the routine.
- Reflect on changes in the child's participation in activities and routines.
- Decide which practices work or what needs to be done differently.

(Modified from Rush & Shelden, 2008, p. 3)

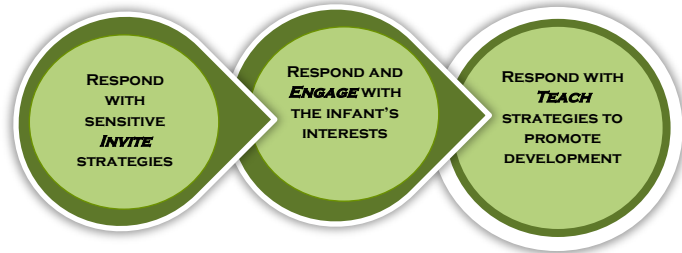
# QUICK START GUIDE

## 1. REVISIT (USING ROADMAP PART I)

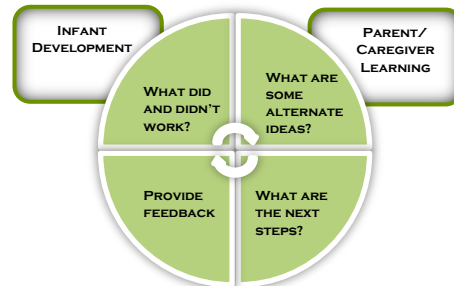


## 2. DO AND REVIEW (USING ROADMAPS PART II A, B, AND C)

CONFIRM THE PARENT'S PLAN TO PRACTICE READ AND RESPOND OBSERVATIONS OR PRACTICE A READ AND RESPOND ACTIVITIES. SUPPORT THE PARENT READING THE INFANT'S CUES OF INTEREST OR NEEDS FOR SUPPORT AND FOR USING DIFFERENT RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT THE INFANT.



USE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS TO REFLECT WITH THE PARENT ON EFFECTIVENESS OF HIS/HER READING OF INFANT CUES AND USE OF STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT THE INFANT AND HIS/HER OWN LEARNING.



## 3. PLAN THE ACTIVITY FOR BETWEEN VISITS AND FOR THE NEXT VISIT

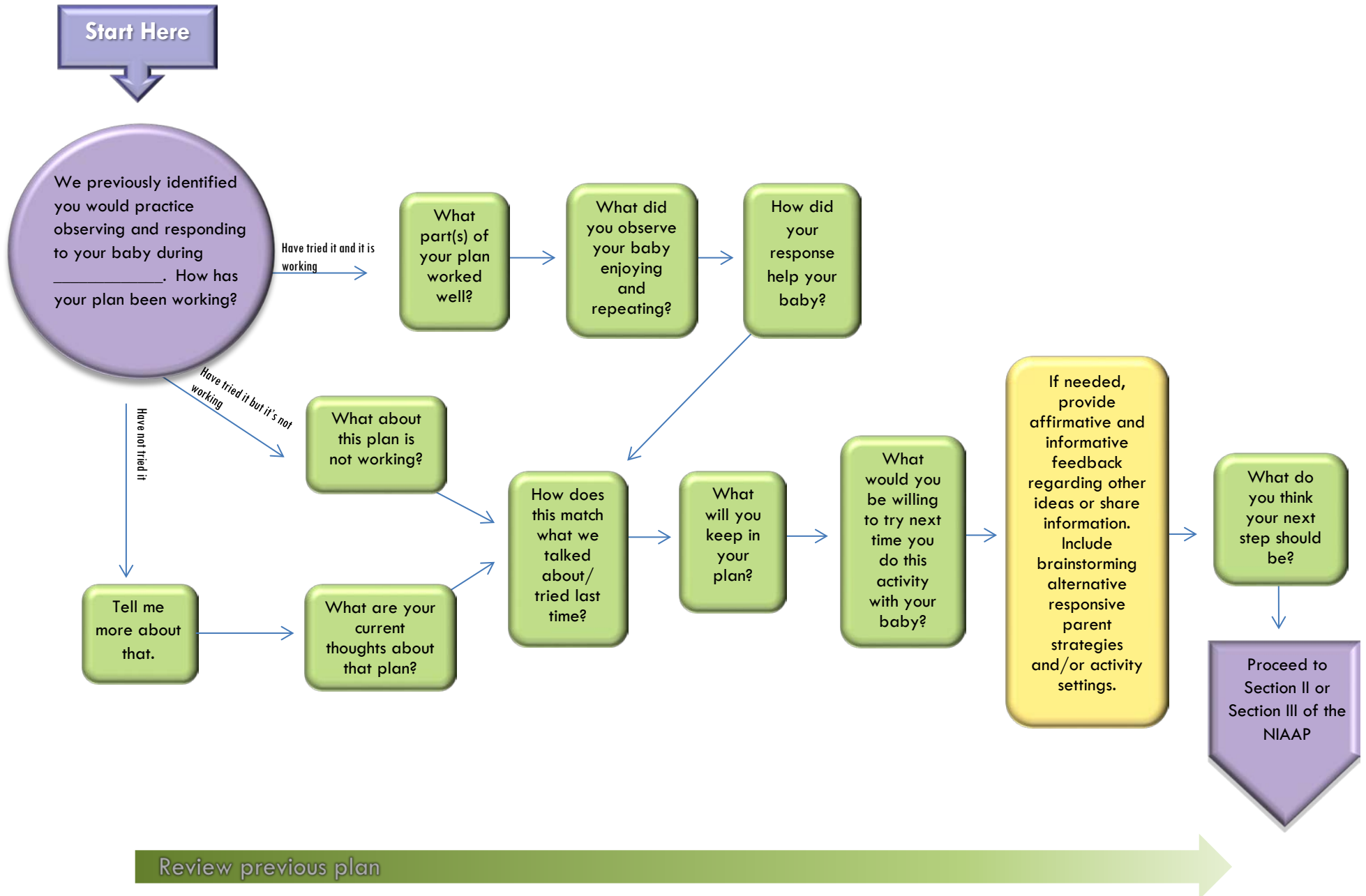
USE TODAY'S INFORMATION TO HELP THE PARENT PLAN TO PRACTICE READING THE INFANT'S CUES AND PRACTICE USING RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT THE INFANT'S DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION DURING REAL-LIFE ACTIVITIES.

MAKE A PLAN FOR USING A REAL-LIFE ACTIVITY FOR A READ AND RESPOND OBSERVATION OR ACTIVITY AS THE CONTEXT FOR THE NEXT VISIT.



# ROADMAP FOR NEWBORN INTEREST, ACTIVITY & ASSESSMENT PLAN

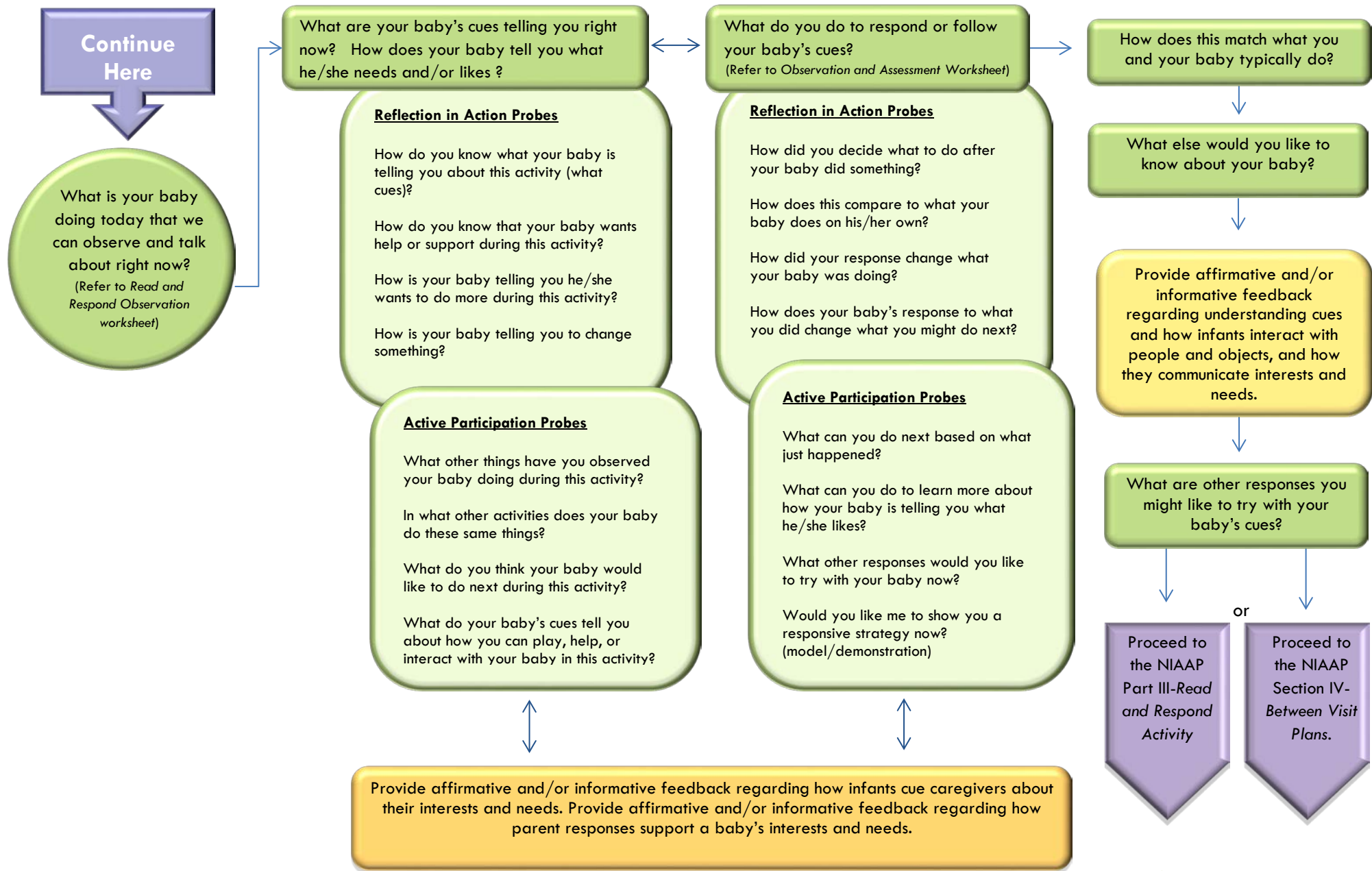
## SECTION I-BETWEEN VISIT PLAN FOLLOW-UP





# ROADMAP FOR NEWBORN INTEREST, ACTIVITY & ASSESSMENT PLAN

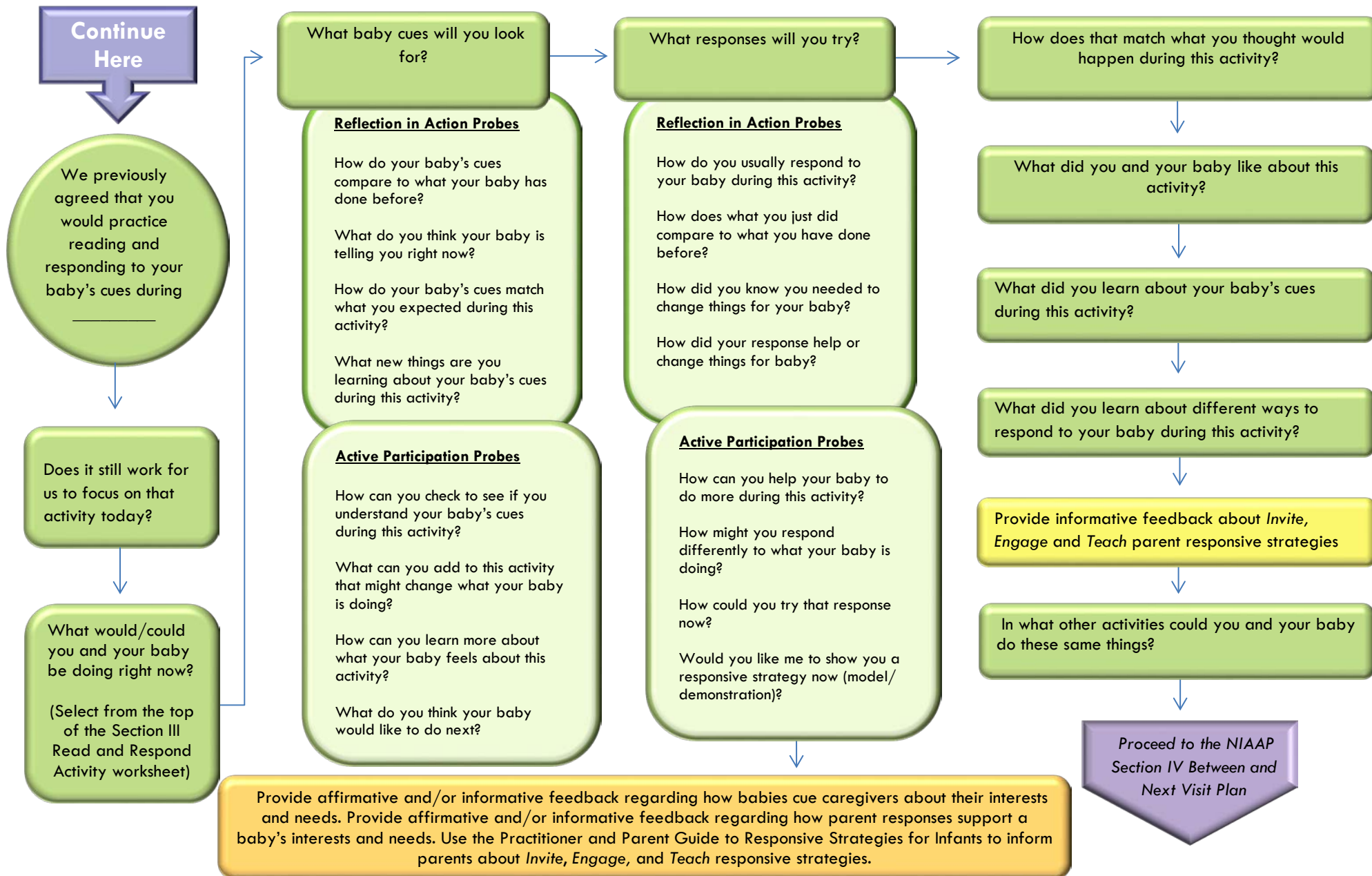
## SECTION II READ AND RESPOND OBSERVATION



Practicing a Read and Respond Observation assessment

# ROADMAP FOR NEWBORN INTEREST, ACTIVITY & ASSESSMENT PLAN

## SECTION III- READ AND RESPOND ACTIVITY

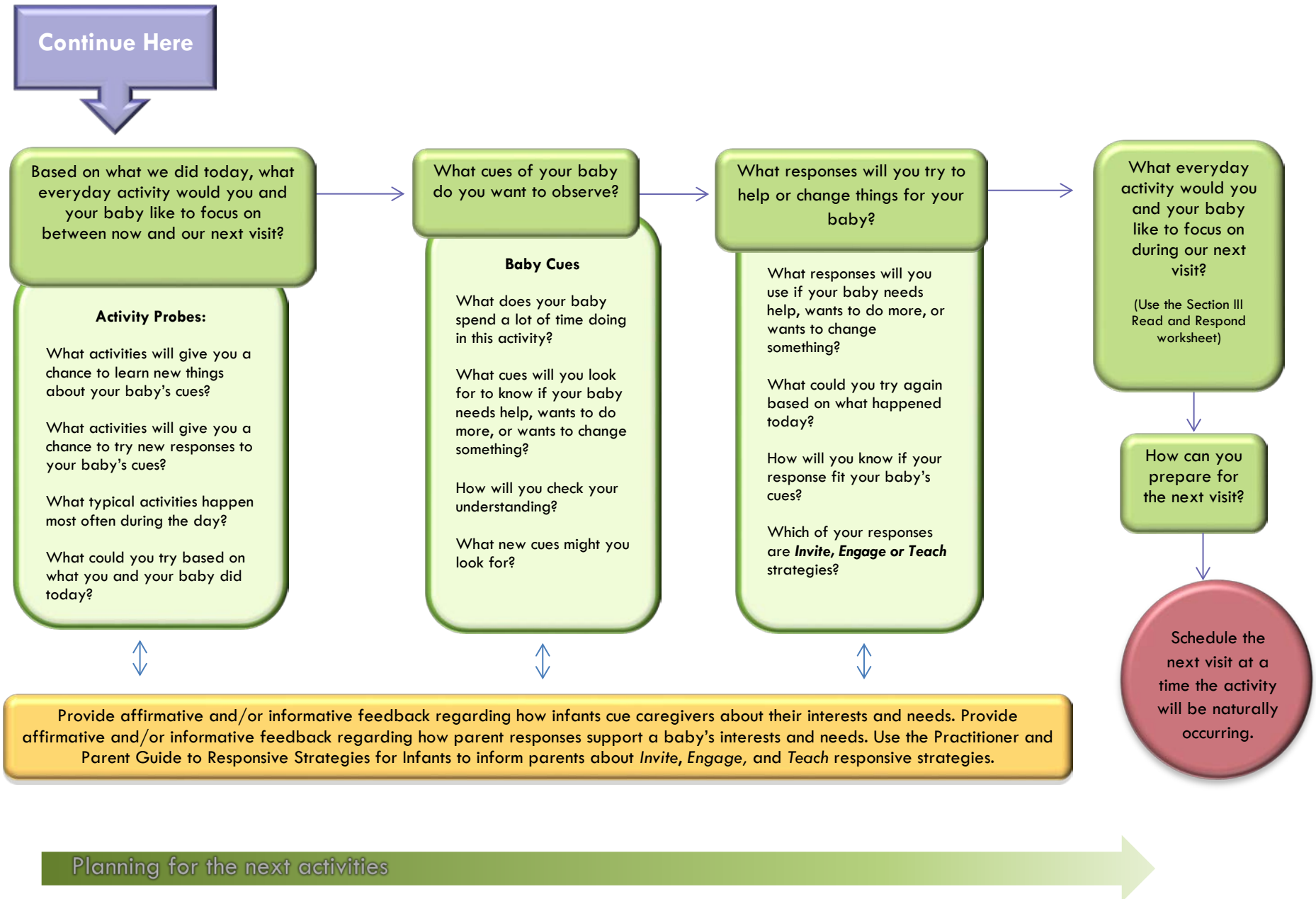


Practicing a Read and Respond activity



# ROADMAP FOR NEWBORN INTEREST, ACTIVITY & ASSESSMENT PLAN

## SECTION IV- BETWEEN VISIT AND NEXT VISIT PLAN



# PRACTITIONER AND PARENT GUIDE TO RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES FOR INFANTS

Practitioners should use this guide with the Newborn Interest, Assessment and Activity Plan (NIAAP) to help parents identify the responsive strategies they currently use and/or want to use to **invite**, **engage**, and **teach** their baby during everyday activities. Practitioners and parents should plan how parents will practice and evaluate what strategies work best during everyday activities for their baby and family. Provide parents with a copy of the Practitioner and Parent Guide to Responsive Strategies for Infants provided in this manual to help them practice using responsive strategies to support their infant's development and learning.

During the first six months of a baby's life, parents learn all about how he/she likes to interact with people and objects, what times of day he/she likes to play, eat, and sleep, and what calms and comforts him/her. Parents also know the daily activities and routines of their family and baby's life and when are the best times to introduce new people, go new places, and practice new skills.

Successful responsive communications and interactions between you and your baby help him/her participate in daily routines and learning. Successful communication between you and your baby includes four steps:

1. The parent identifies what the baby wants or does not want to do in any given activity.
2. The parent lets the baby know that the parent understood his/her intentions or needs.
3. The parent responds to the baby regarding his/her interests or needs in an activity.
4. The baby lets the parent know if the parent's response was successful or helpful for him/her.

Responding right after your baby does something lets him/her know you are available to help him/her. Parents who use responsive strategies that **invite**, **engage**, and **teach** help their babies learn successful ways to participate in family activities, interact and play with others, and learn new things.

## Invite Strategies—Ways to recognize your infant's cues

Invite strategies include emotional cues from parents that can be used during all interactions between parents and babies. When parents use **invite** strategies with their baby they recognize his/her cues for different awake and sleep states and recognize what responses they can use to invite and support the baby's ability to participate in play, meals, calm down, and sleep. Review these emotional responses and communication actions babies make across daily activities to identify how your baby is communicating his/her interests states and emotions. Positive, emotionally responsive **Invite** strategies are used by parents before they can engage with and teach babies.

## "My baby wants to Play" calm, alert, and/or focused states

- Facial Movements:
- Eyes open or widen and/or eyebrows raised looking towards people and objects
  - Maintaining eye contact, mouth opening and closing, smiling and/or grinning
- Physical Movements:
- Arms waving, hands opening and closing, legs kicking, lifting and/or turning my head towards people or objects
  - Relaxed posture and steady breathing rates
- Vocalizations:
- Pleasant coos, laughter, and /or grunting not indicating distress
  - Humming or pleasant sighing

## What keeps my baby awake and playful?

- Talking in a calm or playful voice
- Gentle touching
- Helping me to sit up
- Holding my parent's finger or a toy
- Help me to suck on my hand or pacifier
- Gentle bouncing

## "My baby wants to eat or rest or sleep" fussy, agitated, dazed, or tuned out

- Facial Movements:
- Eyes shut and eyebrows together
  - Frowns, grimaces, and/or mouth closed tightly
- Physical Movements:
- Agitated or restless movement of hands, legs, and turning head or body away from people or objects
  - Startles, sneezes, yawns, or rapid breathing
- Vocalizations:
- Crying or whining
  - Unpleasant cooing, sighing, or grunting indicating distress

## What helps my baby to calm down or sleep?

- Talking in a calm or quiet voice
- Swaddling
- Quiet humming
- Holding or cuddling on parent's chest
- Help me to sucking on my hand or pacifier
- Rocking

# PRACTITIONER AND PARENT GUIDE TO RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES FOR INFANTS

## Engage Strategies—Ways to do things together with children

**Engage** strategies are all the positive ways parents respond immediately to their baby and join him/her in an activity. **Engage** strategies let your baby know that you are close by, paying attention to him/her, and available to help or play with him/her. **Engage** strategies also include learning about your baby's interests and developing skills and supporting his/her ability to successfully interact with you and others in play, exploration, and learning during everyday activities. Review these strategies with your practitioner and identify what you are currently doing or new strategies you wish to try in your daily activities with your baby.

- Start playing with the baby by doing the same thing he/she is doing.
- Look right at the baby's face when he/she looks at you.
- Talk back to the baby when he/she makes noises.
- Look at and name what the baby is looking at.
- Recognize, accept, and name the baby's emotions.
- Using a positive baby talk\* voice when you talk to the baby.
- Hold the baby so he/she can watch your face.
- Smile and talk face-to-face with the baby when he/she looks at you.
- Notice how the baby tells you he/she likes something or wants to play more.
- Keep the baby close when new people are introduced.
- Know how the baby tells you he/she needs to eat, sleep, or to have a diaper change.
- Comfort the baby when he/she is upset.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

\* A baby talk voice uses quiet, sing-song, exaggerated storytelling sounds and has a melody to it but the actual words spoken are typical adult words.

## Teach Strategies—Ways to help children learn

**Teach** strategies include all the positive ways parents respond that support their baby's current development and skills or help him/her learn and use new skills. **Teach** strategies are used after the parent has used **invite** strategies to support the baby being in a calm, awake state followed by using **engage** strategies to recognize the baby's interests and join the baby in an activity. Review these strategies with your practitioner and choose a daily activity to identify what you are currently using or identify new ideas you wish to try with your baby.

- Move objects the baby is looking at or reaching for closer to his/her hands.
- Take turns making noises or faces or touching a toy with the baby.
- Make new noises or faces when you talk to the baby.
- Help the baby try new things with objects.
- Use your voice to help the baby follow you and/or find you.
- Wait for the baby to smile or talk back to you after you smile or talk to him/her.
- Find ways to make play activities the baby likes to last longer.
- Use the baby's interests to help him/her be a part of family activities.
- Introduce new play objects when the baby is in an alert, calm state.
- Increase how often the baby plays and/or interacts with others.
- Add new activities that let the baby practice what he/she is learning.
- Consistently follow the baby's eating, sleeping, and care routines.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### References

- Dunst, C. J. (2006). Parent-Mediated everyday child learning opportunities: I. Foundations and operationalization. *CASEinPoint*, 2(2), 1-10. Retrieved at [http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/caseinpoint/caseinpoint\\_vol2\\_no2.pdf](http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/caseinpoint/caseinpoint_vol2_no2.pdf)
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