

RBI AT REVIEW AND ANNUAL UPDATE

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The initial Routines-Based Interview (RBI) is an in-depth exploration of the child's functioning in everyday routines, with caregivers providing information about the child's engagement, independence, and social relationships (Hughes-Scholes, Gavidia-Payne, Davis, & Mahar, 2017). It lasts 2 hours, producing 10-12 outcomes/goals, a strong relationship between the interviewer and the caregivers, and a rich and thick description of child and family functioning. In the U.S., for children under three years of age in Part C services, the team must review the individualized family service plan where these outcomes/goals are listed. The review is supposed to revisit outcomes/goals as well as the services on the plan to address those outcomes/goals. Regardless of the country or program (i.e., this applies also to preschoolers), it is a good idea to revisit the plan half-way through the year, if not more often. So do we redo the RBI?

What's Needed

Although the Routines-Based Model includes both (a) home- and community-based early intervention and (b) classroom-based early intervention, which is the running of inclusive classrooms, here we address only home- and community-based early intervention (0-5). This type of service involves an early interventionist's visiting the family in a home—the family's, a relative's, or a babysitter's--or the child in a "classroom" program such as a child care program, a Head Start Classroom, or a preschool (McWilliam, 2011).

An important difference between an initial RBI for developing the first plan and a review after 6 months is that, at the review or annual, an early interventionist¹ has been working with the family (McWilliam, 2014b) or teacher, whereas, at an initial RBI, the interviewer has no existing knowledge of child or family functioning. If that professional has been functioning as a primary or comprehensive service provider, addressing all needs of the child and family, according to the Routines-Based Model, the professional has been discussing functioning in routines at every visit. During home visits, the professional discusses child and family functioning during home and community routines. During visits to classrooms—what we call Collaborative Consultation to Children's Classroom (CC2CC)—the professional discusses child functioning during classroom routines, with the teaching staff. Because of these frequent discussions about functioning in routines, the review doesn't need to have all the detailed questions the initial RBI needs. The professional and caregivers don't need a whole RBI, they need a briefer RBI—one that lasts only an hour!

¹ I use the term to refer to any qualified professional working with the family or teacher, until the child turns 6 years of age or goes to kindergarten (in the U.S.—i.e., big school).

How and Who to Do It

The framework for the Review RBI is reviewing how things are going in the child's and family's routines—especially as related to the goals addressed during the previous 6 months. We recommend this discussion occur within the 30 days leading up to the official review or annual-renewal date or during the actual IFSP review or annual. Three pieces of information can guide the discussion: Progress monitoring data, the MEISR/ClaMEISR, and the Review RBI with the matrix.

MEISR/ClaMEISR

The Measure of Engagement, Independence, and Social Relationships (McWilliam & Younggren, 2020) and the classroom version, called the Classroom MEISR (ClaMEISR) (McWilliam, 2014a) are ideally completed every 6 months. This information can also help the family decide on what outcomes/goals to put on the plan. The professional should, therefore, review the MEISR and ClaMEISR with the family in the 30 days leading up to the plan review.

Who?

The ideal person to help the family is the one who has been working in an ongoing way (e.g., weekly) with the child and family. This could be a home- and community-based early interventionist or an itinerant early childhood special educator. Sometimes, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, or psychologists function as primary service providers or comprehensive service providers. In the U.S., for infants and toddlers, the service coordinator has a role that needs to be worked out with the comprehensive/primary service provider because the service coordinator is responsible for the development of the new or revised plan. Regardless of who runs the meeting to review or update the IFSP, the provider should be involved.

Ecomap

The professional reminds the family about the value of the ecomap in helping them identify people who might be able to help with different needs the family might have. The professional shows the family a copy of their ecomap and asks whether anything has changed in the informal supports, the intermediate supports, or the formal supports. Usually, the professional will make changes to the existing ecomap. When necessary, a new map can be drawn. See the Review RBI Checklist.

Progress-Monitoring Data

Progress-monitoring data such as the TGIF and the Next-Steps Form (NSF) should be reviewed before the review. On NSFs, the professional should look for documentation about goals accomplished and other information about progress, in preparation for the discussion with the caregiver.

The professional should examine TGIFs, in preparation for the review, summarizing the information for the caregiver, when deciding on progress on goals, including whether to continue them.

Matrix

The Outcomes x Routines matrix lists the child and family outcomes/goals down the left-hand column, in the order of importance to the family as they stated it at the end of the RBI (McWilliam, 2010). Across

the top of the matrix are the family routines. For children in classroom programs but also receiving home visits, sometimes a matrix is created for each setting. The team does not develop separate outcomes/goals for each setting: It's one child, and the RBI process results in one set of outcomes/goals, even if the professional conducted one RBI with the family and another RBI with the teacher. The family still chooses outcomes/goals.

Outcome/Goal Decision Making

Similar to the full RBI, in the Review RBI, the early interventionist takes typical RBI notes during the conversation using the matrix, about other routines, and the TWC questions, as well as the MEISR/ClAMEISR conversation, and reviews ideas the caregivers or teacher had about things to address in the next six months. He or she asks the family what they would like to work on; see the Protocol for the RBI (McWilliam, 2009) or the RBI With Ecomap Checklist (McWilliam, 2016) for these procedures. Once the family has chosen 10-12 outcomes/goals, the early interventionist asks the family to put them in order of importance. As with the full RBI, the professional needs to write down exactly what the family wants and, if it's a child skill, the routines in which they say the child needs or could benefit from the skill. In some systems, the professional will write the outcomes/goals. In other systems, the service coordinator will.

Results

The results of this process are, again, a list of functional child outcomes/goals and of family goals, some of which are related to the child and some might not be. This list will be 10-12 outcomes/goals long and organized by the family's order of importance. The matrix-based conversation should take 30-60 minutes (one visit). The MEISR discussion might also take a whole visit. The more important one is the matrix-based one, because it's more interactive with the family, it gives the family more opportunity to evaluate how things are going, and it's more focused on what the team has been working on for the previous 6 months.

The important principles to follow in the Review RBI, like most components of the model are

- Professionals function as collaborative consultants with the family, helping them make decisions;
- We concentrate on children's meaningful participation in everyday routines—their engagement, independence, and social relationships;
- The two-bucket principle: A parent can fill the child's bucket only to the extent that the parent's bucket is full.

References

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