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What words come to mind when you think about Neurodiversity?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Autism and Neurodiversity

Supporting Children and Families Through a Neurodiversity-Affirming Approach

Part II



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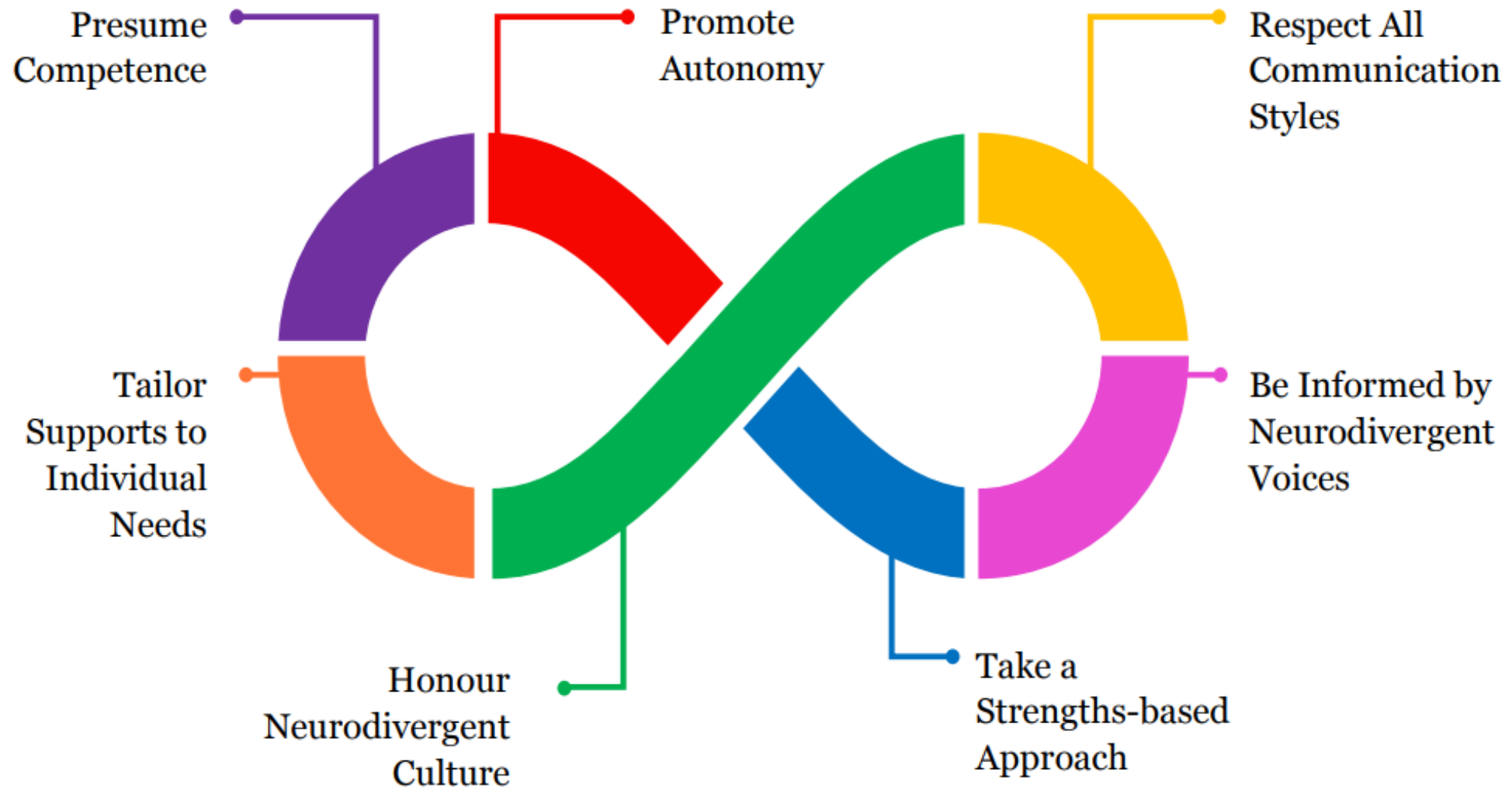
DEC RPs

- **Family 4:** Practitioners and the family work together to create outcomes or goals, develop individualized plans, and implement practices that address the family's priorities and concerns and the child's strengths and needs.
- **Family 5:** Practitioners support family functioning, promote family confidence and competence, and strengthen family-child relationships by acting in ways that recognize and build on family strengths and capacities.

**We Go
WAY Back**



Neurodiversity Affirming Practice



The Autistic

Advocate

It is our **responsibility** to learn about Autism in a way that **supports** and **values** Autistic people.

We get the **privilege** of being about to do this for Autistic children and their families while they are very young.

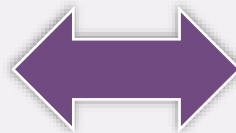


How often do you talk about Autism with families in your position?

**Service
Coordinators**

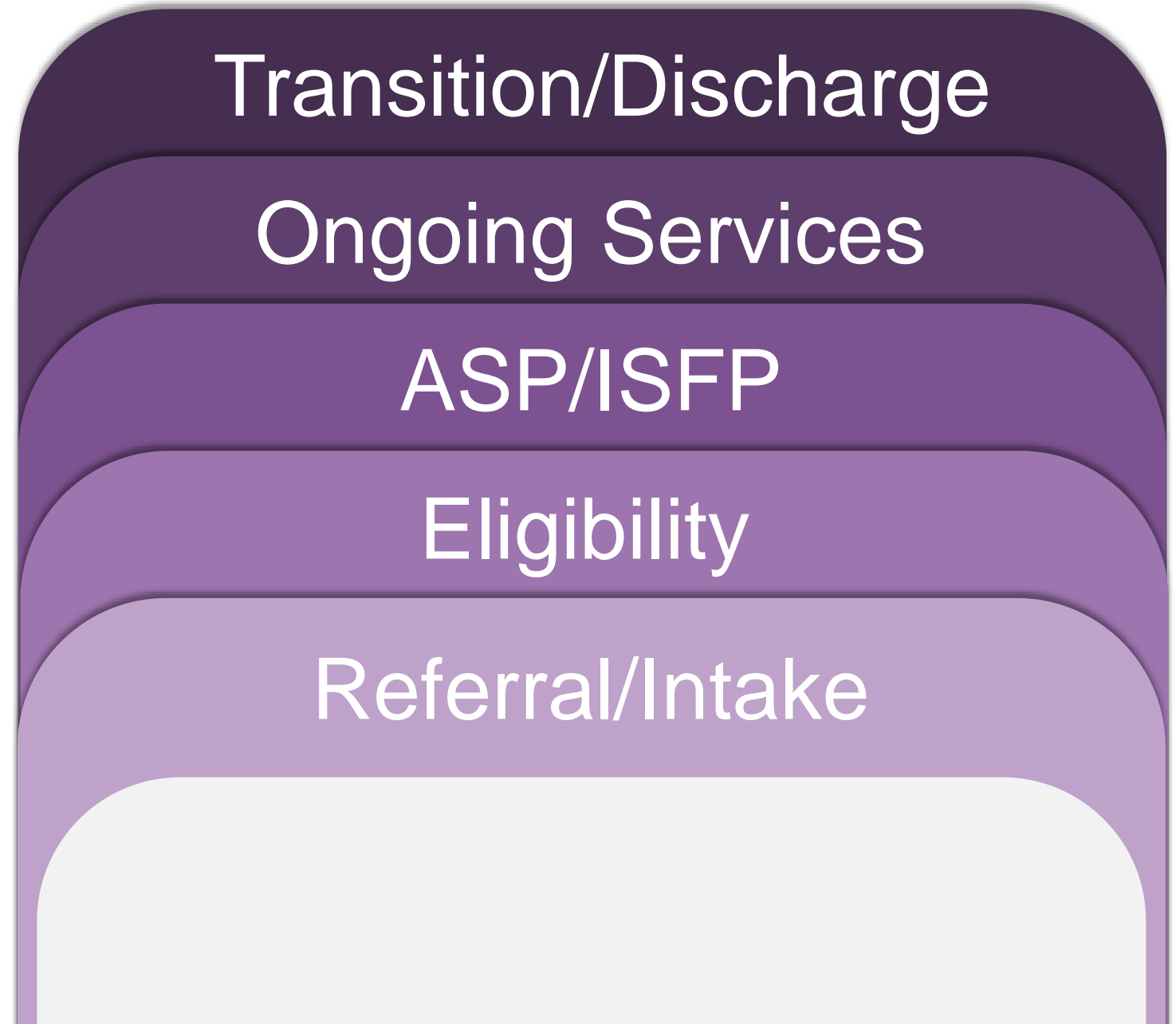


**Early
Interventionists**



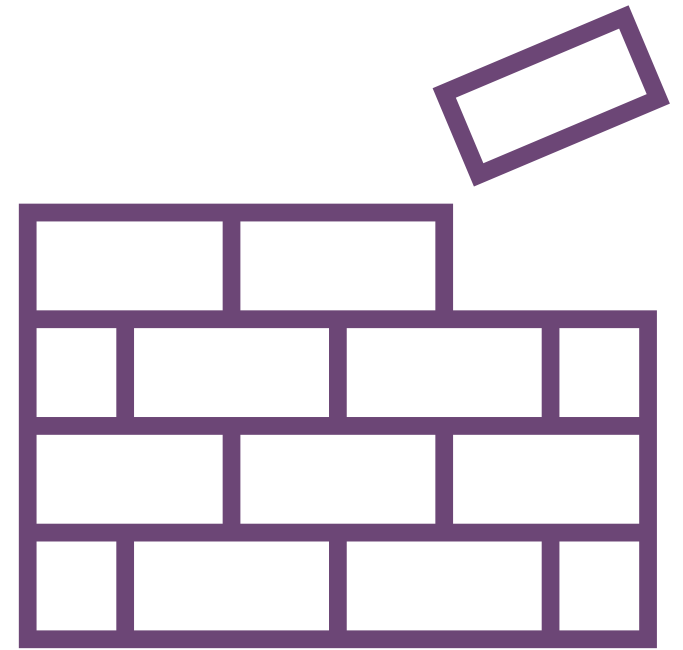
**Leadership, Intake
Coordinators, etc...**

The EI Process



Referral/Intake

**You lay the
foundation!**



Words Choice Matters



Red flags

Characteristics / Signs

Restricted interests

**Preference for ...
Enjoys...**

“Concerns” about Autism

**Parent brought up Autism...
Parent observes several signs...
Pediatrician spoke about Autism with the family**

“Head banging”

Describe the exact behavior in neutral terms

Observations

vs

Opinions

looked back towards Mom as he ran
down the hallway

pretended to feed Dad play food

approached the SC and touched
their badge

great eye contact

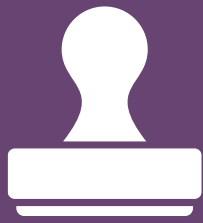
good play skills

very social

Also consider:

- Tone
- Facial expression
- Body language





Help! A parent brought up Autism at Intake.
Stamp a statement that you would be likely to use.

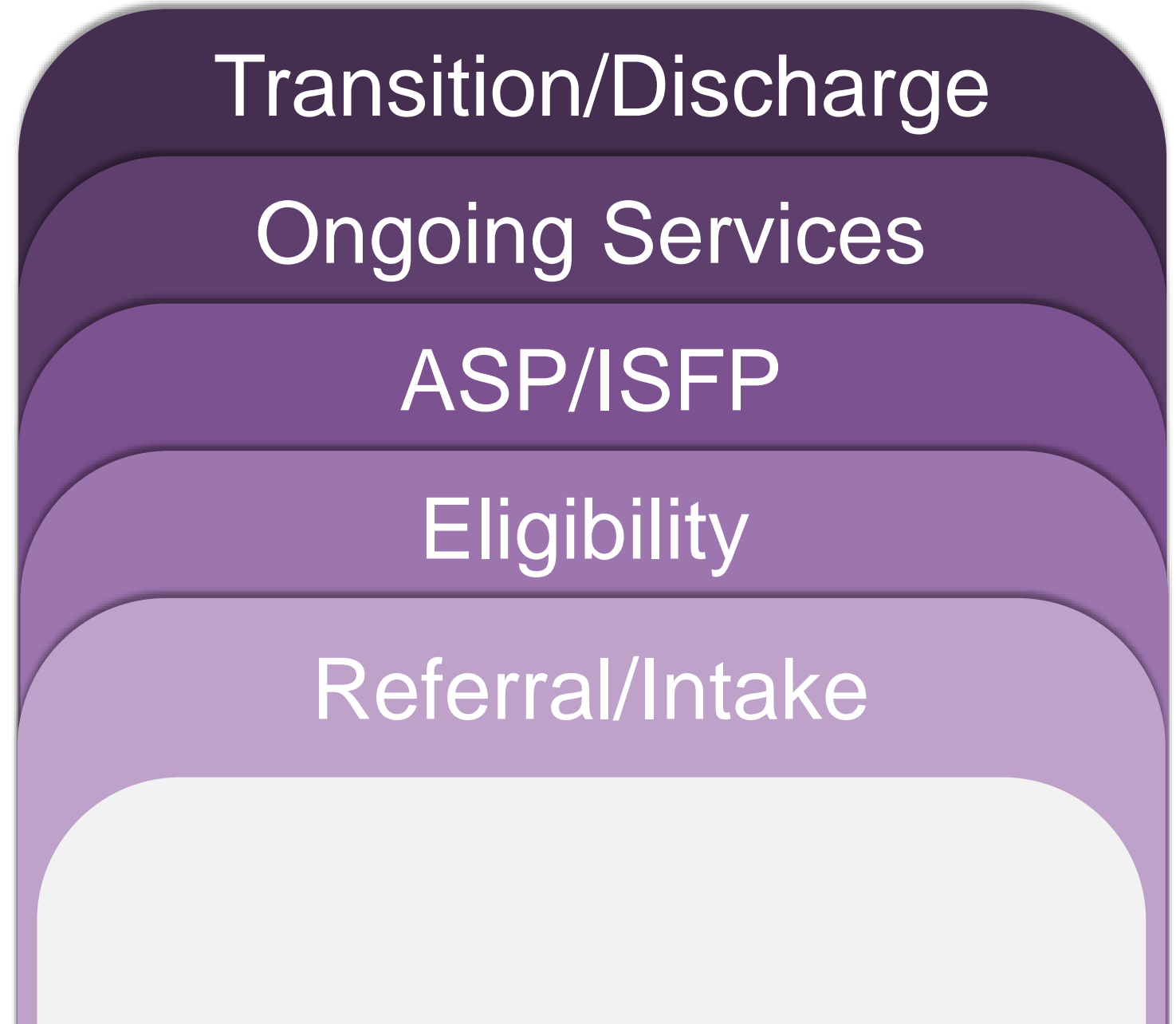
“Thank you for sharing, we have a tool that lists some of the most common characteristics of Autism that we can complete together.”

“How are you feeling after the pediatrician shared information about Autism with you?”

“You shared that you have Googled Autism, what have you learned? “

“I will document what you have shared with me and bring it back to our team of early interventionists.”

The EI Process



Eligibility



Administering Screening Tools

Atypical Eligibility

Child is determined NOT eligible for the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia

Referral(s) were made to

Child is determined eligible for the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia based on the following criteria (check all that apply)

Developmental Delay - Children who are functioning at least 25% below their chronological or adjusted age in at least one area of development

Atypical development

A diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay

Area(s) of atypical*

Select values

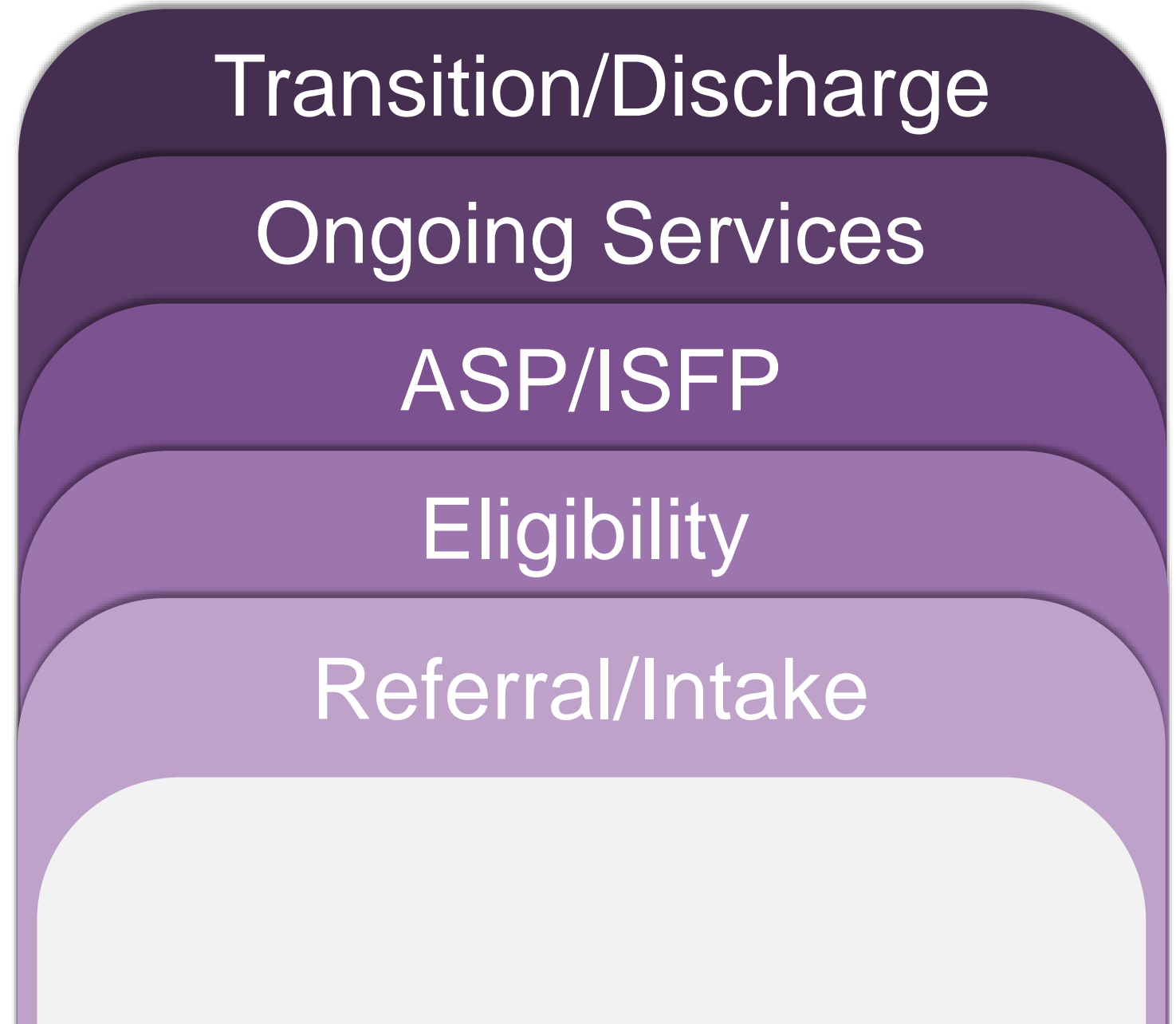
Atypical or questionable sensory-motor responses

Atypical behaviors that interfere with acquisition of developmental skills

Atypical or questionable social-emotional development

Impairment in communication skills with restricted/repetitive behaviors

The EI Process



ASP/IFSP



What characteristics of Autism do you first notice when you meet a child?

How to Shift the Focus to Successes



Joint Attention



Eye Contact



Response to
Name



Communication



A Pattern of Characteristics

Gathering Information

Think of neutral ways to ask about the characteristics you might notice.

Gathering Information

You shared that Kate loves Paw Patrol, what body language, sounds, or facial expressions does she use to let you know?

Gathering Information

How does Bobby know to transition to the table at dinner time?

Gathering Information

Tell me about your favorite way to spend time together? What does Miles do to show you his interest/enjoyment?

Gathering Information

How does Ryan prefer to spend his time when outside/at the playground?

Gathering Information

What do you notice Mollie engaging in the most during independent play?

Gathering Information

How do you know Jayla is interested in something you say/do when hanging out as a family?

Reframing narrative statements:



Juan engages in repetitive movements when watching TV.



Juan expresses his joy while watching Mecha Builders by jumping up and down.



Reframe these narrative statements in the chat:

- Cierra does not point or use words to communicate what she wants to eat or drink at mealtimes.
- Liam ignores Mom when she calls his name when it is time to leave the playground.



Spiky Developmental Profiles

12 months	7. Finger-feeds self for part of meal	+
	8. Takes off hat, shoes	+
	9. Cooperates in dressing	-
	10. Inhibits drooling	+
14 months	11. Chews most foods well	+
	12. Pulls off socks	+
15 months	13. Climbs stairs on hands and knees	+
	14. Shows wet or soiled pants	
	15. Overcomes simple obstacles	+
	16. Vocalizes and gestures to indicate wants	+/-
16 months	17. Holds cup and drinks with some spilling	+
	18. Imitates housework	-
17 months	19. Fetches or carries familiar objects	-
18 months	20. Uses spoon with little spilling	-
	21. Walks up stairs, one hand held	+
	22. Places only edibles in mouth	-
	23. Moves about house without adults	+
	24. Hands empty dish when finished eating	-
	25. Unzips zippers	+
	26. Gets onto adult chair unaided	+
27. Uses toilet when taken by adult		
21 months	28. Creeps backward down stairs	+
	29. Steps upstairs with hand on rail	+
	30. Replaces some objects where they belong	-
22 months	31. Puts shoes on part-way	-
	32. Unwraps candy	+
24 months	33. Squats, holds self, or verbalizes toilet needs	-
	34. Takes off clothes, with help on buttons	+
	35. Pulls pants or shorts off and on	+/-
	36. Spoon-feeds without excessive spilling	-
30 months	37. Dries own hands	+
	38. Helps carry and put things away	-
33 months	39. Dresses with supervision	-
	40. Puts on coat unassisted	-

Spiky Developmental Profiles



Cognitive

1-1 Development of Symbolic Play

+	1.13	2.5-4
+	1.15	3-6
+	4.39	5.5-7
+	1.35	6-9
+	1.23	7-9
+	1.36	6-11
+	5.35	9-12
Emerging+/-	1.59	10-15
-	5.52	
-	5.52a	15-18
-	5.52b	18-24
-	5.77	24-30
-	1.13	24-30

1-2 Gestural Information

-	1.42a	7-8
-	1.42b	9-11
-	1.66	11-14
-	1.84	14-17
-	1.96	17-20

1-5 Spatial Relationships

+	1.58	10-11
+	4.60	12-13
+	1.76	12-13
+	4.61	12-16
+	1.79	13-15
+	1.64	13-15
+	1.75	12-18
+	4.66	13.5-19
-	1.88	15-18
-	1.105	18-24
-	1.128	24-27
+	1.147	30-36

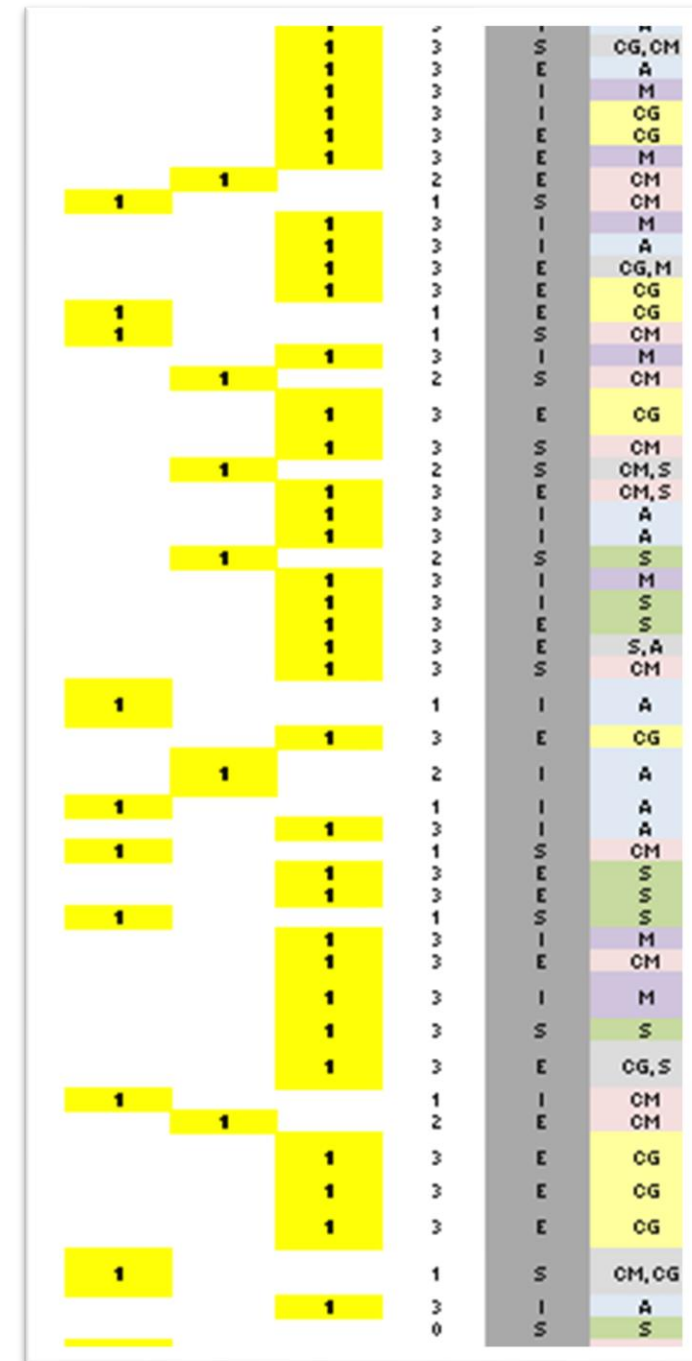
1.4 Problem Solving

+	1.25	5-6.5
+	1.26	5-9
+	1.49	6.5-7.5
+	1.45	8-10
+	1.47	8-10
+	1.46	8-11
+	1.53	9-12
+	1.74	9-12
+	1.79	13-15
+	4.64	12.5-18
+	4.66	13.5-19
+	1.95	17-24
+	6.55	21-23

1.6 Concepts: Pictures

-	1.44	8-9
+	1.6	10-14
Emerging+/-	1.82	14-15
Emerging+/-	1.107	19-27
-	1.117	21-30
-	1.129	24-28

Spiky Developmental Profiles



Age Levels

Age:	25 months	Adjusted Age	N/A	Cognitive	13-19 mos.
Receptive Language	18-20 months	Adaptive/ Self-Help	24 months; atypical sleep	Gross Motor	24-28 mos.
Expressive Language	15-18 months, some skills at 30 months; atypical	Social- Emotional	Scattered upwards to 25 months; atypical	Fine Motor	15-24 mos.

"Language is changing from "deficits and delays" to things like "**differences and strength-based descriptions**". Our tools and process that we are required to use are still of the "medical model" and we still need to convince people like insurance companies to pay for our services, so you may hear some outdated terms.

We **value** your child, and we will always presume competence. This means that we (the experts in child development) will work with you (the expert in your child and your family) to find the best ways we **together** can help your child learn."

- Fairfax ITC Therapist

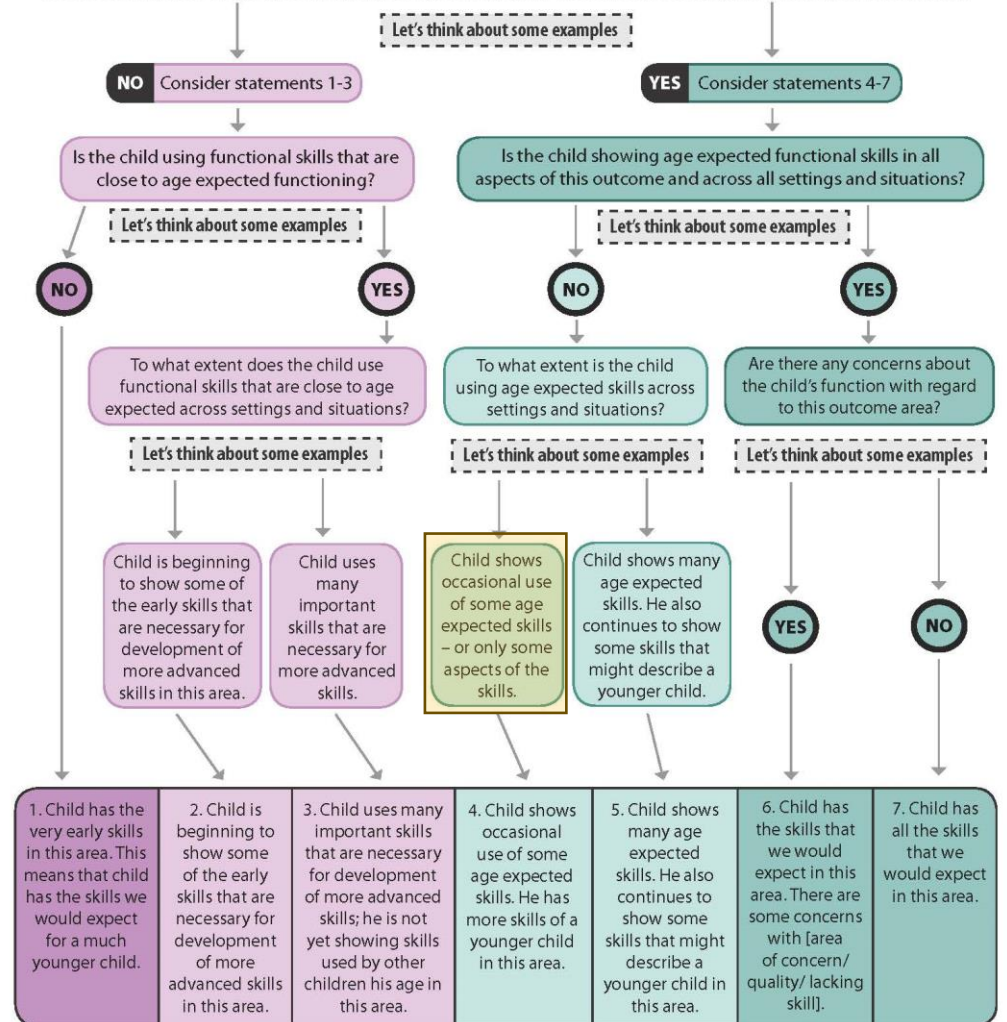
Decision Tree

Descriptions often reflect a delay better than atypical development.

Decision Tree for Child Outcomes Summary Process Based on All Assessment Information

Does the child ever function in ways that would be considered age expected with regard to this outcome?

NOTE: Performance of an age expected skill that emerges at a younger age is not sufficient by itself to answer yes to this question.



Neurodiversity-affirming goals should...

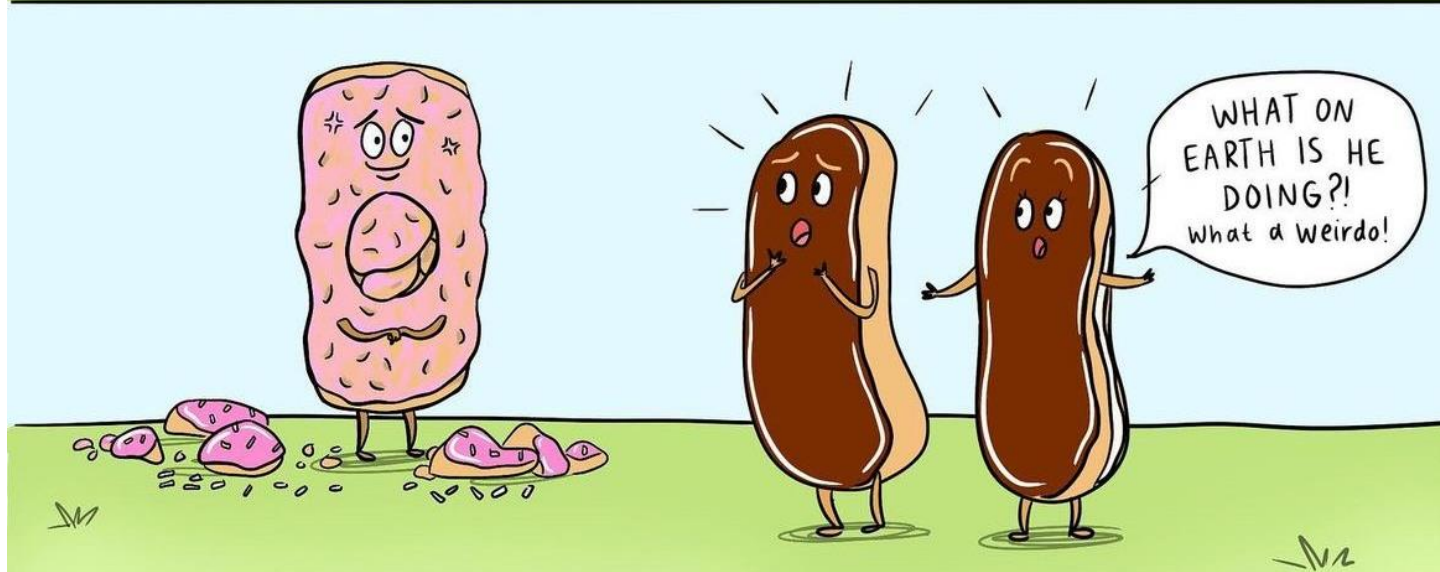
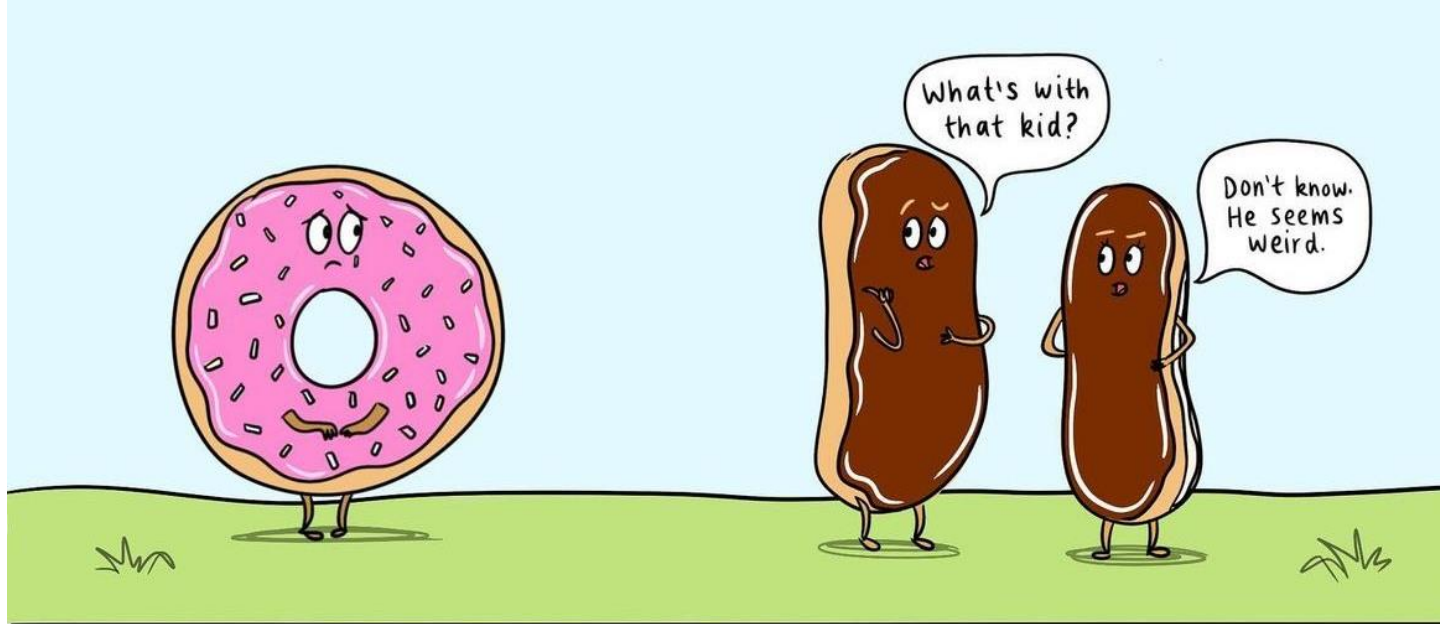
expand on areas of strength.

Neurodiversity-affirming goals should...

**include and accept multiple
forms of communication.**

Neurodiversity-affirming goals should...

support family/community participation with accommodations and sensory supports.



Autistic Masking-
the cost is often higher
than people realise.

Examples of Goals

When playing outside, **Jai** will engage in an activity of interest (ball, collecting sticks, jumping, etc.) alongside his brother each day for 2 weeks.





What makes this goal
neurodiversity-affirming?

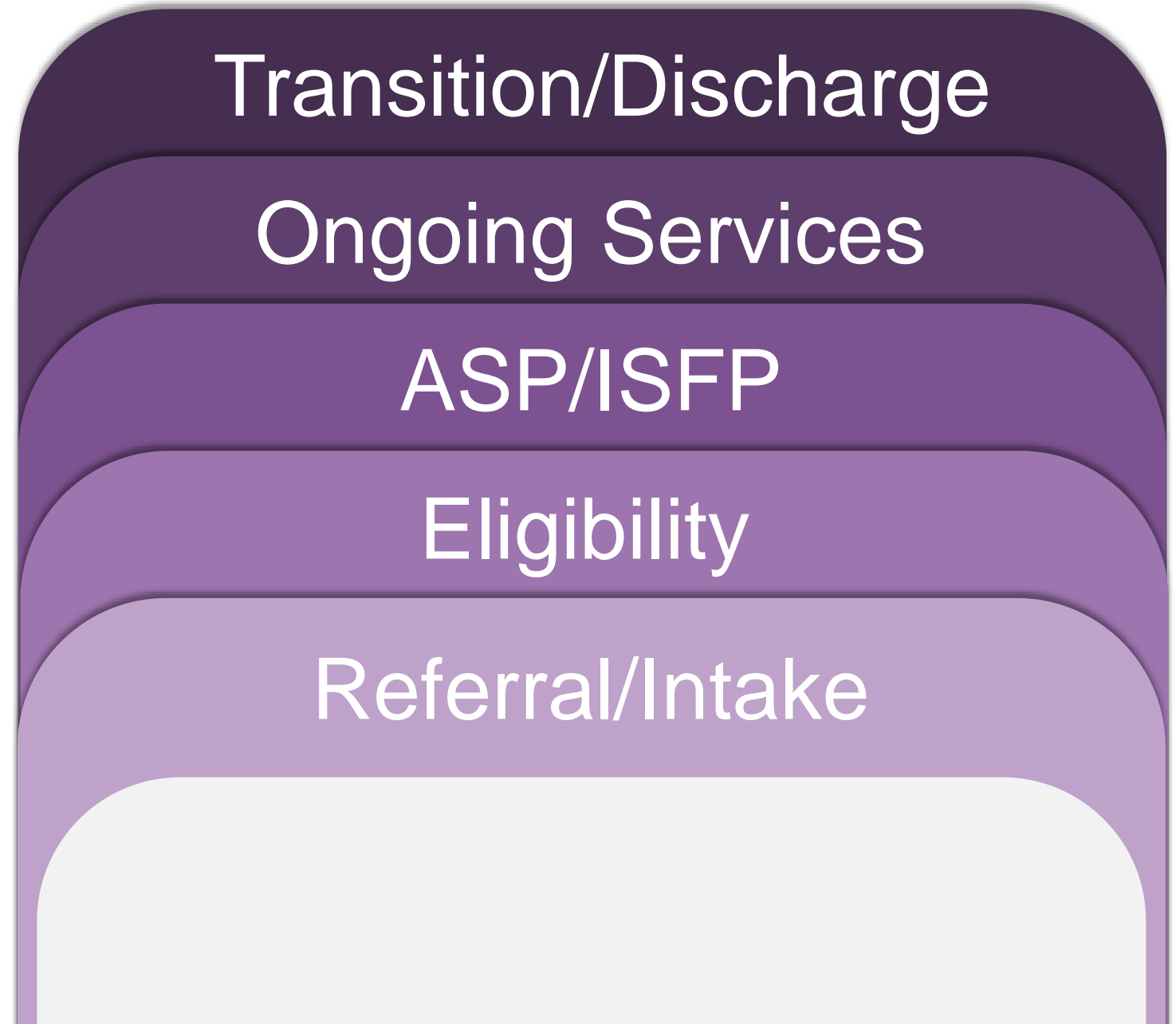
When on Facetime with Grandparents, **Michaela** will show her interest by saying their names, labeling items, or bringing items near the phone 4x a week for 2 weeks.



Nevaeh will request (words, gestures, or pictures) a specific support (hug, bouncy ball, blanket swing, etc...) when she needs it during the evening routine at each opportunity for 2 weeks.



The EI Process



Ongoing Services

“Play Skills”

What is the purpose of the goal or activity?

Facilitating development v.
empowering engagement in
activities that facilitate joy



Use Child Interests







Put in the chat fun interests of the children you have worked with?

Challenging Traditional Views of Shared Attention

- Peripheral vision
- Proximity
- Participation
- An item of interest
- Hand leading
- Continued conversation



Helping Families Understand Communication

Building relationships/positive interactions

Identifying & accepting all forms of communication

A child's response indicates the effectiveness of the strategy

Learning a child's boundaries and limits





How comfortable are you supporting a family with behaviors that harm the child or others?

Behaviors

- Regulation v. emotional manipulation
- What purpose does the behavior serve?
- What other ways can the child work to communicate those feelings/needs?



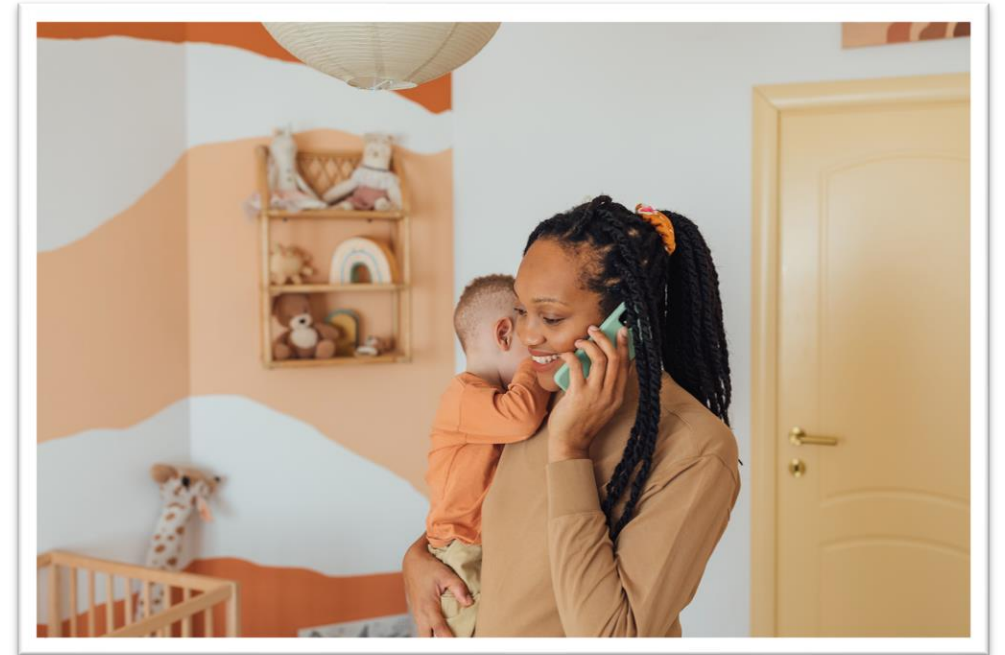
Behaviors

- What do we do to keep the child safe in the meantime?
- Validate experiences and emotions
- Work to identify sensory/regulatory supports & environmental changes



Service Coordination: Check-ins, Reviews, and Annuals

- Share information with therapist
- Follow up with therapist and family





Uncomfortable Conversations



Uncomfortable Conversations



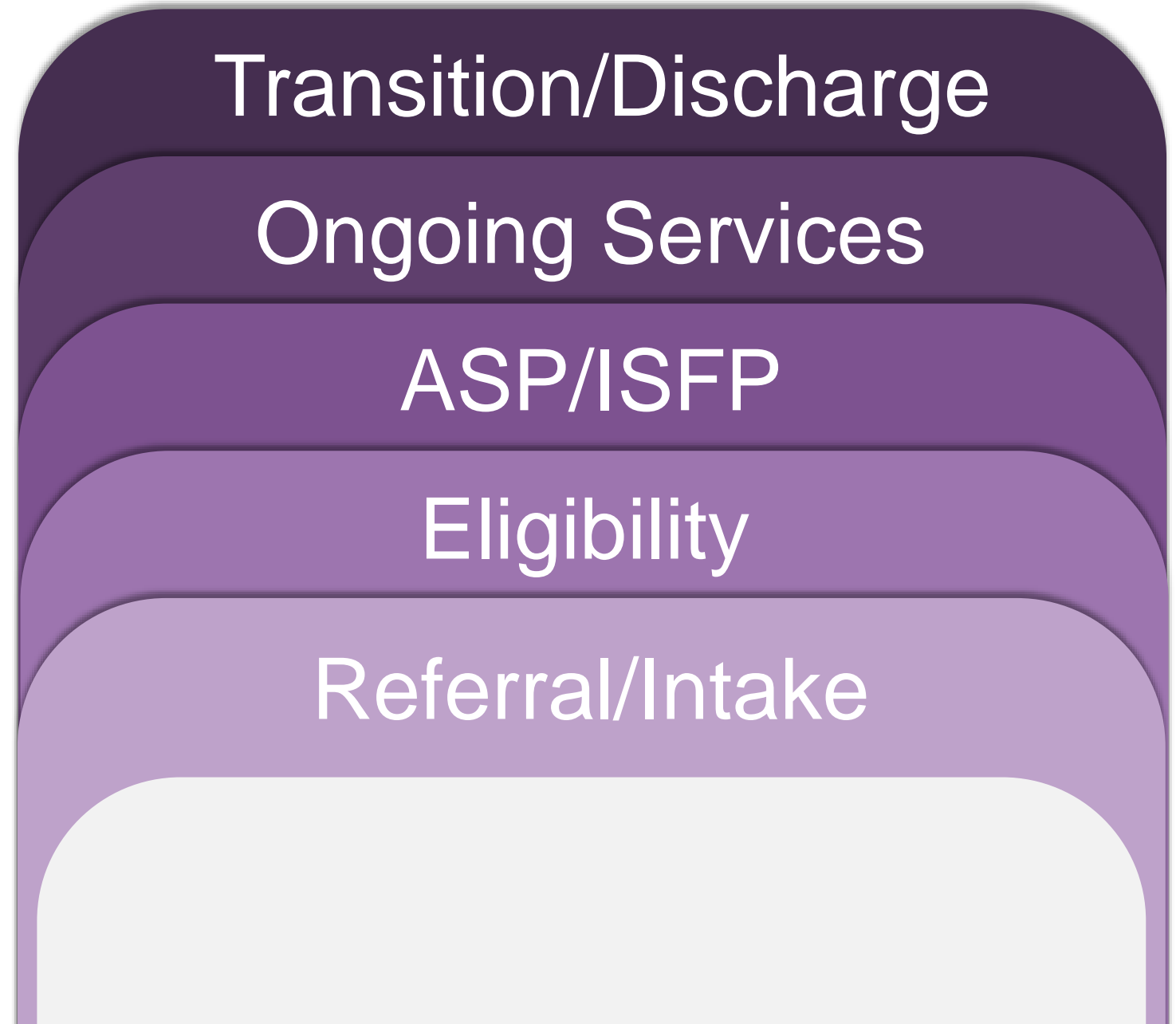
What if you notice signs of Autism but
therapist hasn't brought it up?

Not sure of your next steps?

Ask your team!



The EI Process



Transition/Discharge

Transition/Discharge



- Child Find process
- Next steps for family support (respite, ongoing therapy, community activities)
- Discussions about what school services look like
- Advocating for their child



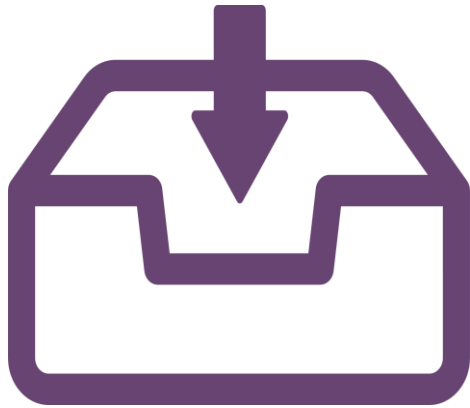
What is one thing you want to do
moving forward?

Questions?



Stay tuned for next month!

1



Check Your Inbox

2



Take the Survey

3



Download the Certificate!