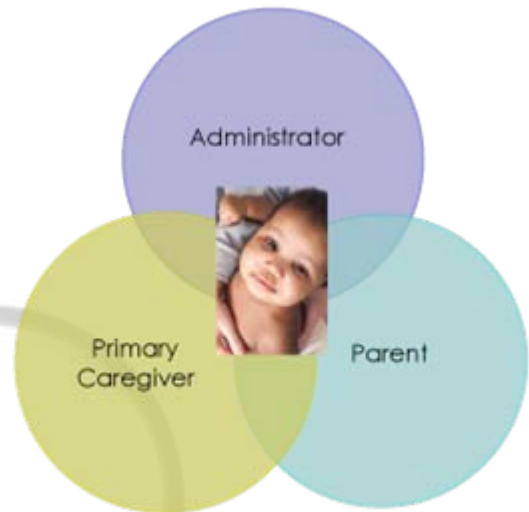




## What is the Circle of Support?

In EHS programs, reflective supervision and reflective parenting practice can also be thought of as the circle of support or the continuous relationships that allow caring for and supporting infants and toddlers to be the main focus. The circle of support means that the important adults in the infant's or toddler's life have developed and nurtured their own relationships with each other so that the child can be supported in all environments. For instance, through reflective supervision the administrator and director have a partnership that helps the director support her staff in their work with infants, toddlers and families. As a result of the director's support, the staff develops partnerships with parents in support of the children in care. The diagram below shows overlapping circles which illustrate the interconnectedness of relationships among administrators, parents and staff, with the young child at the center.

The concept of the circle of support sounds wonderful in theory, however, one of the greatest challenges for EHS programs is keeping the support alive as infants, toddlers and families actively move through the program. Another challenge is to balance the many other tasks of EHS program staff with reflective supervision for staff. Providing consistent everyday routines and transitions for very young children is a lot of work, and, many are challenged by figuring out where to fit reflective supervision into their already "packed" schedules.



Others may be struggling with how to model reflective supervision in their programs (e.g. How reflective practice looks?, and Where to start?). However, finding consistent and regular times for reflective supervision-- both formally (i.e. during prescheduled meetings with supervisees and/or peers) and informally (i.e. unplanned consultations with co-teachers or an EHS coordinator) – will go a long way in building program capacity and staff skill and self-awareness. In other words, EHS program staff that consistently use reflective strategies in their work are likely to encourage and support reflective practice in parents.



## What is the Circle of Support? (cont.)



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