

Reflective Supervision: Setting a Foundation for Reflective Practice in Your Program

We are so glad that you will join us for *Reflective Supervision: Setting a Foundation for Reflective Practice in Your Program*.

To make the most of this training experience:

- **Review the Objectives and Faculty Biographies before the conference begins.** These handouts are designed to help you prepare for the audioconference.
- **Schedule some time for reflection and/or discussion after the audioconference.** Use the *Applying the Information* handout individually or with your team. In most cases, discussing information, strategies and ideas as a team is the best way to think about what is already in place in your program and how to use or enhance RS.
- **Use the handouts** to discuss new information and to plan for the future.

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Objectives

During this call, panelists will:

1. Define reflective supervision (RS);
2. Highlight the value of RS in Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs;
3. Identify challenges in implementing RS; and
4. Offer strategies for programs looking to address those challenges and implement the practice.

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Faculty Biographies

Amanda Perez. Moderator



Senior Writer/Training Specialist
Early Head Start National Resource Center

Amanda Perez has worked with the Early Head Start National Resource Center since 2000. In her tenure there, she has coordinated over 30 audioconferences. A frequent writer and trainer, Amanda also moderates the parent panel at the Birth To Three Institute.

Angie Godfrey



Infant/Toddler Program Specialist
Office of Head Start

Angie Godfrey brings tremendous experience and expertise to her role as Infant/Toddler Program Specialist at the Office of Head Start (OHS). Prior to joining OHS in December, 2008, Angie was the Director of the American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Technical Assistance Project where she worked for 5 years. Immediately before that, she served as the Senior Early Childhood Associate for AIAN, providing support to 44 Early Head Start grantees. Angie also taught infant and toddler courses for Early Head Start and child care providers as adjunct faculty at Northern Virginia Community College. She is the former Director of Alexandria Head Start in Alexandria, VA.

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Faculty (cont'd.)

Jennifer Cahill



Program Manager, Early Head Start Home Base/PAT program, Mt. Hood Community College, Gresham, OR

Jennifer Cahill has over 20 years of experience working in Head Start programs. She assisted in planning, designing, and implementing the EHS program for Mt Hood Community College. She currently oversees all component areas in their Early Head Start home-based program option, the Parents as Teachers program, and assists with training and planning in the child care and student model. Ms. Cahill is also an EHS Start Up Planner and consultant. She is a part-time instructor of Early Childhood Education at Mt. Hood Community College and a co-instructor at Portland State University in the Infant Toddler Mental Health Program. She is a recent graduate of the Infant Toddler Mental Health Graduate Certificate Program.

Mary Ann Cornish



Director, Higher Horizons Head Start, Falls Church, VA

Mary Ann Cornish has served as the Director of Higher Horizons Head Start since 1977. She manages a multi-funded, state-of-the-art Head Start/Early Head Start program serving 300 children. Her work in the highly diverse community of Bailey's Crossroads/Falls Church, VA has resulted in a strong reputation at both local and national levels for understanding the role of culture and family in early childhood education, meeting the needs of dual language learners, preserving native languages, and collaboration with community organizations. Throughout her career, she has stressed the importance of "staying rooted in our communities and responsive to the families we serve." In 2001, she was awarded the Helen Taylor Award for Management Excellence by the Head Start Johnson and Johnson Fellows Program at the Anderson School of Business at UCLA.

Sherry Heller



Associate Professor, Tulane University School of Medicine and the Tulane Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, New Orleans, LA

In 2000, Sherry Heller built on her experiences in infant mental health (IMH) to serve as one of 19 infant mental health consultants selected nationally to participate in the Office of Head Start's IMH Initiative. She served as a consultant to a Baton Rouge Early Head Start program looking for ways to support staff in serving adolescent mothers. Sherry worked with the program to develop a RS model. Sherry continued consultation with this program as it expanded to serve families displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. An author, trainer, professor and consultant, Sherry continues to provide RS and research and write about RS in Early Head Start and other programs promoting IMH. Sherry has a Master's and doctoral degree in applied developmental psychology from the University of New Orleans.

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Head Start Program Performance Standards

§ 1304.52 (a)(1):

Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain an organizational structure that supports the accomplishment of program objectives. **This structure must address the major functions and responsibilities assigned to each staff position and must provide evidence of adequate mechanisms for staff supervision and support.**



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Defining Reflective Supervision (RS) in the Context of Your Work

“Reflective supervision is the practice of meeting regularly with staff members to discuss their experiences, thoughts, and feelings about their work.”

- Rebecca Parlakian, *Reflective Supervision in Practice: Stories from the Field*, p.1

Reflective supervision (RS) is:

Reflective. RS allows staff to take a step back from the work and examine it differently.

Collaborative. RS is a time for supervisors and supervisees to consider the work together, share ideas, and think about possible next steps.

Regular. RS is a predictable time when staff and supervisors can meet to consider the work.

Relationship-based. RS offers a secure, consistent relationship in which staff can experience the trust, support, and respect they offer the families they serve.

Focused on professional growth. RS supports staff – and supervisors! – in building skills important to their individual work.

Strengths-based. RS helps staff identify their unique strengths and supports staff in applying their skills to the challenges of the work.

Safe. RS provides a secure environment where staff can discuss the real challenges of their work and their own vulnerabilities in a way that supports growth.

Individualized. RS is based in learning about each unique staff member and what is most helpful to them in their work.

Characterized by active listening. Reflective supervisors listen intently to staff, paying attention to spoken language and unspoken cues.

... because in work with expectant families and infants and toddlers and their families, you:

Work at a fast pace.

Might feel isolated.

Never know what to expect.

Develop relationships with children and families that form the basis of your work with them.

Support children and families in building new skills.

Identify and build on the strengths of children and families.

Build an atmosphere of confidentiality, mutual trust, and respect.

Individualize your services to each child and family.

Give children and families your undivided attention, “listening” to what they tell you with their words, their voices, and their body language.

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Applying the Information

The questions below are meant as a guide for either personal reflection or group discussion. Ideally, teams will work together to consider their program's approach to supervision. We know that some programs are already using RS, and are trying to enhance that practice. Others have not used anything like this before.

1. How does your program currently provide supervision? Who gets supervision and when? Who supervises who? What is it like for supervisors? What is it like for supervisees?
2. Consider the *Head Start Program Performance Standard* § 1304.52 (a)(1) on page 4. How does your program provide “adequate mechanisms for staff supervision and support?” How do you document those practices?
3. Look at the definition and the elements of RS on page 5 of these handouts. Do you use RS in your program? Are you using elements? Which ones?
4. As you look at your current supervision system, what is working well? How do you know? And what do you think needs change? How do you know?
5. *For direct service and administrative staff:* How does your program offer you support in your work? As you listened today and looked at the definition on page 5, what sounded interesting? What did you hear that you thought would help you in what you do?
6. *For administrators:* How do you get support for your work? How do you think the current supervision system supports the services offered to children and families? What did you hear today that sounded interesting to you?
7. *For programs newly considering RS:* In Chapter 2 of her book, Sherry Heller lists program conditions that are helpful to implementing RS: relative balance in the organization; open communication among staff and supervisors, and administrators who see staff as invested in and committed to the program (p.25). Consider your organization. Are you ready to implement RS? We know that many programs have just expanded services or are new to serving families. What did you hear today that you can implement as a part of your current program? Make a plan! What are your next steps?
8. *For programs who already using RS:* What did you hear today that was interesting to you or new? Make a plan! How will you implement new ideas into your program?

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For More Information

On behalf of the Office of Head Start, your program will soon receive a copy of:

Fenichel, Emily, ed. 1992. *Learning through Supervision and Mentorship to Support the Development of Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families: A Source Book*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.

Heller, Sherryl Scott, and Linda Gilkerson, eds. 2009. *A Practical Guide to Reflective Supervision*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.

For More Information on:	Look here:
The definition of RS	Fenichel: pp.12-17 Heller and Gilkerson: pp. 8-9; p. 50
Importance of RS in infant-toddler practice	Fenichel: pp. 9-12; pp. 120-124 Heller and Gilkerson: pp. 9-11
Building a program culture that supports reflective practice and RS	Fenichel: pp.21-22, pp. 76-83 Heller and Gilkerson: pp. 41-59; pp. 149-169.
Getting support from program leadership	Fenichel: pp. 113-119 Heller and Gilkerson: p. 26
Planning for RS in our program	Fenichel: pp. 18-26 Heller and Gilkerson: pp. 25-39
Serving families at very high risk	Fenichel: pp.125-131
Developing trust in RS	Fenichel: pp. 37-41 Heller and Gilkerson: pp.63-81
Ground rules for group RS	Heller and Gilkerson: p. 153
What does RS look like?	Fenichel: pp. 53-55 Heller and Gilkerson: pp. 83-98
Active listening	Heller and Gilkerson: pp.41-46
Identifying reflective supervisors	Heller and Gilkerson: pp. 30-31
Managing both administrative and RS	Heller and Gilkerson: pp. 121-134

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Additional Resource List

For more information, see the following resources:

- Gilkerson, Linda, & Rebecca Shahmoon-Shanok. 2000. "Relationships for Growth: Cultivating Reflective Practice in Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Programs," in *WAIMH Handbook of Infant Mental Health: Early Intervention, Evaluation, and Assessment (Vol. 2)*, edited by Joy D. Osofsky and Hiram E. Fitzgerald, 33-79. New York: Wiley.
- Gilkerson, Linda. 2004. "Reflective Supervision in Infant-Family Programs: Adding Clinical Process to Non-Clinical Settings," *Infant Mental Health* 25 (2004): 424-439.
- Heffron, Mary Claire. 2005. "Reflective Supervision in Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Work," in *The Handbook of Training and Practice in Infant and Preschool Mental Health*, edited by Karen Finello, 114-136. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Heffron, Mary Claire, and Trudi Murch. 2010. *Reflective Supervision and Leadership in Infant and Early Childhood Programs*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.
- Parlakian, Rebecca. 2001. *Look, Listen, and Learn: Reflective Supervision and Relationship-Based Work*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.
- Parlakian, Rebecca, ed 2002. *Reflective Supervision in Practice: Stories from the Field*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.
- Perez, Amanda, and Jennifer Boss. 2008. Leadership in relationship-based programs. *The National Head Start Association Resource Guide, 3rd ed*: 6-9.
- Pfleiger, Jackie. "Reflective Supervision," *Head Start Bulletin* 73 (2002). Available on-line at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Professional%20Development/Staff%20Development/Managers/health_art_00525a1_081705.html
- Powers, Stefanie, ed. "Putting Reflective Supervision in Practice," *Zero To Three* 31(2010).
- Siegel, Daniel, and Rebecca Shamoan-Shanok. "Reflective Communication: Cultivating Mind-Sight through Nurturing Relationships," *Zero To Three* 31 (2010): 6-14.
- Virmani, Elita, and Lenna Ontai. "Supervision and Training in Child Care: Does Reflective Supervision Foster Caregiver Insightfulness?" *Infant Mental Health Journal* 31: 16-32.
- Weigand, Robert. "Reflective Supervision in Child Care: The Discoveries of an Accidental Tourist," *Zero To Three* 28 (2007): 17-22.

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