



Appendix: Specialists' Stepping Stones for Success

Expert	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic
Relationship skills BUILDS TRUST: Helps families feel welcome by consistently showing them unconditional positive regard			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains an observable rapport • Consistently initiates meaningful two-way conversation • Shows humility and respect for the family's identity and cultural values • Regularly validates the family's feelings and shows empathy • Consistently uses inclusive language, positive body language, and inviting expressions • Puts the family at ease with home visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often maintains an observable rapport • Generally initiates two-way conversation • Usually shows respect for the family's identity and cultural values • Generally validates the family's feelings and shows empathy • Sometimes uses inclusive language and positive body language • Typically puts family members at ease with home visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistently maintains an observable rapport • Uses scripted questions for interactions; maintains dialogue from there • Occasionally shows understanding toward the family's identity and cultural values • Sometimes validates the family's feelings; struggles to show empathy • Occasionally uses inclusive language • Makes the family somewhat uncomfortable with home visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little to no observable rapport • Relies on scripted questions for interactions; conversations are often one-sided • Shows impatience or disregard for the family's identity and cultural values • Does not validate the family's feelings; lacks empathy • Does not use inclusive language, positive body language, and/or inviting expressions • Makes the family uncomfortable with home visitation
BUILDS TRUST: Creates a safe, supportive, environment and relationships built on trust			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently takes direction from the family (where to meet or sit in the home, etc.) • Respects the family's values • Consistently initiates clear, transparent communication • Clearly states what the family can expect from the specialist and the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally takes direction from the family (where to meet or sit in the home, etc.) • Respects the family's values • Engages in clear communication • Responds to the family's questions, but does not always state expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows own direction • Rarely considers the family's values • Engages in vague communication • Vaguely states what the family can expect from the specialist and the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows own direction • Dismisses the family's values • Engages in vague communication • Does not ensure the family knows what to expect from the specialist and the program



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BUILDS TRUST: Actively listens to identify family's needs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approaches interactions with a positive attitude and an open mind Always uses open-ended questions and reflective statements to guide the family toward solutions Asks permission before giving non-directive advice or suggestions Defers judgment regardless of how the family engages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approaches interactions with a positive mindset Often uses open-ended questions and reflective statements to guide the family toward solutions Sometimes gives directive advice or suggestions Defers judgment regardless of how the family engages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approaches interactions without a positive attitude and mindset Asks closed-ended questions; rarely uses reflective statements Some instances of directive advice and/or dismissing Is, at times, judgmental of the family's choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitude is negative or ambivalent at times Asks closed-ended questions; rarely uses reflective statements Gives direct advice without asking permission Judgmental when the family's choices do not align with the specialist's views
BUILDS TRUST: Responds promptly to family's requests and follows through on commitments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows through on commitments in a timely, consistent manner Provides information immediately Always keeps scheduled visits/contacts or notifies the family of changes in advance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often quickly follows through on commitments Provides information quickly, but not immediately Notifies the family of scheduling changes in advance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes follows through, but not always quickly Provides information after researching the answer(s) Changes scheduled visits/contacts often or without much notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows through in an inconsistent, untimely manner Inconsistently provides information Changes scheduled visits/contacts frequently and does not always notify the family
BUILDS TRUST: Uses a trauma-informed approach when serving families			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows through on commitments in a timely, consistent manner Provides information immediately Always keeps scheduled visits/contacts or notifies the family of changes in advance Focuses on future possibilities instead of the past Actively listens without judgment when family members talk about trauma or other experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally understands trauma and ACEs Sometimes supports family members who have experienced trauma by being non-judgmental and respectful Usually focuses on family strengths rather than deficits or traumas Generally focuses on future possibilities instead of the past Sometimes listens without judgment when family members talk about trauma or other experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates little understanding of trauma and ACEs Rarely considers family members who have experienced trauma Often focuses on family deficits or traumas rather than strengths Often focuses on the past instead of future possibilities Demonstrates indifference when family members talk about trauma or other experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates no understanding of trauma and ACEs Never considers family members who have experienced trauma Consistently focuses on family deficits or traumas instead of strengths Consistently focuses on the past rather than future possibilities Demonstrates indifference when family members talk about trauma or other experiences



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Relationship skills NONJUDGMENTAL: Aware of biases and how they might influence their work with families			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believes in a person's ability to succeed • Consistently respects family members' decisions, regardless of the choice or outcome • Regularly examines beliefs and assumptions; seeks to understand different beliefs and values • Strives to embrace differences • Empathizes with family members, even if unable to relate • Embraces and celebrates diversity through words and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often believes in a person's ability to succeed • Generally respects family members' choices • Usually examines beliefs and assumptions; ignores beliefs if different than their own • Generally embraces differences • Usually empathizes with family members, even if unable to relate • Often celebrates diversity through words and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubts a person's ability to succeed • Criticizes family members' choices • Often neglects beliefs and assumptions; ignores beliefs if different than their own • Rarely embraces differences • Typically demonstrates indifference when family members share their experiences • Often criticizes diversity through words and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubts a person's ability to succeed • Criticizes family members' choices • Neglects beliefs and assumptions; ignores different beliefs • Never embraces differences • Demonstrates indifference and impatience when family members share their experiences • Consistently excludes and criticizes diversity through words and actions
Family Engagement FAMILY CENTERED: Facilitates a process to help families identify their needs and potential solutions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds authentic relationships with family members • Uses screening and assessment tools to help the family self-reflect • Consistently asks open-ended questions to help the family identify needs, interests, and priorities • Regularly aligns the family's needs with their goals • Teaches routine processes for identifying personal and family challenges (and developing solutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds relationships with family members • Uses screening and assessment tools • Generally asks open-ended questions to help the family identify needs, interests, and priorities • Typically aligns the family's needs with their goals • Often teaches routine processes for identifying personal and family challenges, but lacks solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seldom builds strong relationships with family members • Forgets to use screening tools or uses them at inappropriate times • Rarely asks open-ended questions to help the family identify needs, interests, and priorities • Seldom aligns the family's needs with their goals • Rarely teaches routine processes for aligning the family's needs with their goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not build strong relationships with family members • Neglects screening and assessment tools and/or does not use them to help the family self-reflect • Never asks open-ended questions to help the family identify needs, interests, and priorities • Never aligns the family's needs with their goals • Does not teach routine processes for identifying personal and family challenges



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<p>Family Engagement</p> <p>FAMILY CENTERED: Consistently engages families in home visiting activities that improve their economic and life circumstances</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains positive communication by conducting home visits and other forms of communication (emails, texts, phone/video calls) • Consistently develops a strong connection with each family member • Regularly facilitates goal-setting that strengthens the family unit • Consistently sees the family's potential and engages them in activities that benefit every member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains communication by conducting home visits and other forms of communication (emails, texts, phone/video calls) • Develops a strong connection with most family members • Sometimes promotes goal-setting that strengthens the family unit • Often sees the family's potential and engages them in activities that benefit every member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rarely maintains consistent communication • Rarely develops connections with some family members • Seldom facilitates goal-setting that strengthens the family unit • Sees the family's potential, but does not always engage them in activities that benefit every member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not maintain consistent communication • Does not develop a connection with every family member • Does not engage in goal-setting that strengthens the family unit • Does not see family's potential; often discourages them from specific activities (deems them unrealistic, etc.)
<p>GOAL-DIRECTED: Specialists support families in identifying meaningful work, education and parenting goals</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently supports the family in identifying and prioritizing various self-sufficiency goals • Regularly facilitates a process to help the family tap into what motivates them in work, education, basic skills, and parenting • Consistently helps the family identify goals that are challenging, yet achievable and meaningful • Regularly helps family members understand the importance of their goals (their "why") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally supports the family in identifying and prioritizing some self-sufficiency goals • Usually promotes a process to help the family tap into what motivates them in work, education, basic skills, and parenting • Often helps the family identify goals that are challenging, yet achievable and meaningful • Typically helps family members understand the importance of their goals (their "why") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rarely supports the family in identifying and prioritizing self-sufficiency goals • Rarely helps the family tap into what motivates them in work, education, basic skills, and parenting • Seldom helps the family identify goals that are challenging, yet achievable and meaningful • Rarely helps family members understand the importance of their goals (their "why") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not support the family in identifying and prioritizing self-sufficiency goals • Does not help the family tap into what motivates them in work, education, basic skills, and parenting • Does not help the family identify goals that are challenging, yet achievable and meaningful • Does not help family members understand the importance of their goals (their "why")



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Family Engagement			
GOAL-DIRECTED: Helps families develop plans by breaking goals into small, achievable steps			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently asks reflective, open-ended questions to help the family articulate a concrete, manageable plan Consistently considers the necessary skills and resources needed to achieve goals Prompts the family to define a time frame for starting and achieving goals Consistently distinguishes between internal and external obstacles; encourages focus on internal obstacles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often asks open-ended questions to help the family articulate a concrete, manageable plan Typically considers the necessary skills and resources needed to achieve goals Often encourages the family to define a time frame for starting and achieving goals Typically distinguishes between internal and external obstacles; focuses on internal obstacles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely asked open-ended questions to help the family articulate a concrete, manageable plan Overlooks the necessary skills and resources needed to achieve goals Seldom encourages the family to define a time frame for starting and achieving goals Rarely distinguishes between internal and external obstacles; focuses on external obstacles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not ask open-ended questions to help the family articulate a concrete, manageable plan Ignores the necessary skills and resources needed to achieve goals Does not encourage the family to define a time frame for starting and achieving goals Does not distinguish between internal and external obstacles
GOAL-DIRECTED: Asks families to reflect on goal progress, modifies goals when needed			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly holds review/revise discussions with the family to reflect on goal progress Encourages self-reflection and learning, regardless of goal outcomes Consistently troubleshoots with family members when they do not achieve a goal by revising the goal, plan, and/or pothole and detour Regularly celebrates progress and accomplishments Consistently encourages family members to self-reflect and embrace growth (learn from setbacks and successes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holds review/revise discussions with the family to reflect on goal progress Encourages learning, regardless of goal outcomes Typically troubleshoots with family members when they do not achieve a goal by revising the goal, plan, and/or pothole and detour Generally celebrates progress and accomplishments Encourages family members to self-reflect and embrace growth (learn from setbacks and successes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seldom holds discussions to check in on goal progress Encourages self-reflection based on goal outcomes Sometimes troubleshoots with family members when they do not achieve a goal by focusing on what went wrong Rarely celebrates progress and accomplishments Encourages family members to focus on what they are doing wrong and where they are lacking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not hold regular review/revise discussions to revisit goals Encourages learning based on goal outcomes Does not troubleshoot with family members about what went wrong Does not celebrate progress and accomplishments Encourages family members to focus on what they are doing wrong and where they are lacking



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Family Engagement SELF-EMPOWERING: Coaches families on how to advocate for themselves			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently coaches and role plays with the family to help them navigate systems to get what they need Regularly encourages the family to engage in community/agency activities Consistently provides constructive feedback to the family Regularly shares appreciation with parents when they advocate for their family's needs Consistently helps increase the family's self-awareness to improve their self-advocacy skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often coaches the family to help them navigate systems to get what they need Typically encourages the family to engage in community/agency activities Sometimes provides constructive feedback to the family Often shares appreciation with parents when they advocate for their family's needs Sometimes helps increase the family's self-awareness to improve their self-advocacy skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tells the family how to navigate systems to get what they need Rarely encourages the family to engage in community/agency activities Provides feedback to the family Seldom shares appreciation with parents when they advocate for their family's needs Rarely helps increase the family's self-awareness to improve their self-advocacy skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tells the family how to navigate systems to get what they need Does not encourage the family to engage in community/agency activities Provides harsh feedback to the family Does not share appreciation with parents when they advocate for their family's needs Does not increase the family's self-awareness to improve their self-advocacy skills
SELF-EMPOWERING: Detects and addresses ambivalence about change			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quickly detects the family's ambivalence about making a particular change Consistently uses open-ended questions and reflective statements that draw out the root of the family's ambivalence Consistently recognizes and understands the family's readiness to change Knows when to push the family outside of their comfort zone and when to allow space in the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detects the family's ambivalence about making a particular change Generally uses open-ended questions and reflective statements that draw out the root of the family's ambivalence Usually recognizes and understands the family's readiness to change Typically knows when to push the family outside of their comfort zone and when to allow space in the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slowly detects the family's ambivalence about making a particular change Rarely uses open-ended questions and reflective statements that draw out the root of the family's ambivalence Somewhat able to recognize and understand the family's readiness to change Somewhat aware of when to push the family outside of their comfort zone and when to allow space in the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to detect the family's ambivalence about making a particular change Does not use open-ended questions or reflective statements that draw out the root of the family's ambivalence Does not recognize and understand the family's readiness to change Unaware of when to push the family outside of their comfort zone and when to allow space in the process



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Managing the Job			
ORGANIZATION: Maintains thorough, accurate, and timely documentation in family case files			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently completes administrative tasks on time Regularly submits high-quality case notes and family records on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually completes administrative tasks on time Submits standard case notes and family records on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistently completes administrative tasks on time Inconsistently submits standard case notes and family records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistently completes administrative tasks; often late Inconsistently submits low-quality, incomplete case notes and family records
ORGANIZATION: Prepares for family visits to ensure they are responsive to families' needs and impactful			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently reviews past home visit/contact narratives and gathers necessary resources before visiting Comes prepared with an agenda; has flexibility to address new or pressing issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically reviews past home visit/contact narratives and gathers necessary resources before visiting Comes prepared; has flexibility to address new or pressing issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely reviews past home visit/contact narratives; gathers necessary resources before visiting Comes unprepared, but has flexibility to address new or pressing issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not review past home visit/contact narratives or gather necessary resources Comes unprepared with little flexibility to address new or pressing issues
PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE: Understands and appropriately applies program processes, rules and policies			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently understands and applies program rules and policies Commands deep knowledge of program processes Effectively helps the family understand program policies and processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally understands and applies program rules and policies Commands some knowledge of program processes Helps the family understand program policies and processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely understands or applies program rules and policies Has little knowledge of program processes Rarely helps the family understand program policies and processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not understand and/or inappropriately applies program rules and policies Has very little to no knowledge of program processes Does not help the family understand program policies and processes



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Managing the Job RESOURCEFULNESS: Partners with providers to connect families to the resources they need			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently provides the family with details and information about resources Consistently completes referrals using required paperwork, including releases of information (when needed) Consistently makes a warm hand-off (personal connection) between the family and the provider Consistently demonstrates a strong knowledge of community resources beyond agency connections Consistently explains to the family what to expect from resources and how to access them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally provides the family with details and information about resources Generally completes referrals using required paperwork, including releases of information (when needed) Generally makes a warm hand-off between the family and the provider Generally demonstrates a strong knowledge of community resources beyond agency connections Generally explains to the family what to expect from resources, but is unclear on how to access them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the family with inconsistent details and information about resources Often makes mistakes when completing referrals and paperwork Rarely makes a hand-off between the family and the provider Demonstrates little knowledge of community resources beyond agency connections Confuses the family about what to expect from resources and how to access them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the family with unclear information about resources Is unclear about how to complete referrals or necessary paperwork Never makes a hand-off between the family and the provider Does not know about community resources beyond agency connections Does not explain to the family what to expect from resources or how to access them
Self-Development SELF-CARE: Effectively manages time and workload while maintaining a healthy work-life balance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workspace and home visiting materials are organized Proactively manages cases by regularly following up on tasks and client-related issues Works during the week, allowing for flexibility to accommodate families' needs; avoids working on weekends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workspace and home visiting materials are somewhat organized Manages cases by regularly following up on tasks and client-related issues Often works after hours to "catch up" on tasks not completed during the workday 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workspace and home visiting materials are poorly organized Inconsistently follows up on tasks and client-related issues Often works an excessive amount of hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workspace and home visiting materials are not organized Does not follow up on tasks and client-related issues Consistently works an excessive number of hours



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Self-Development			
SELF-CARE: Sets clear and consistent boundaries with colleagues and families			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress level is consistently well-managed and rarely interferes with effectiveness at work • Consistently avoids personally investing in family crises and upholds professional boundaries • Manages secondary trauma by seeking appropriate support from others • Rarely takes responsibility for the family's tasks; family members take primary responsibility for their action steps • Structure and length of visits are consistent and manageable across all families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress level is consistently well-managed, but sometimes interferes with effectiveness at work • Avoids personally investing in family crises but maintains weak professional boundaries • Manages secondary trauma by seeking appropriate support from others • Takes some responsibility for the family's tasks; family members take most responsibility for their action steps • Structure and length of visits are somewhat consistent and manageable across families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress level is inconsistently managed and oftentimes interferes with effectiveness at work • Often personally invests in family crises and upholds poor professional boundaries • Mishandles secondary trauma by rarely seeking appropriate support from others • Takes responsibility for the family's tasks; family members take some responsibility for their action steps • Structure and length of visits are inconsistent and unmanageable across families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress level is inconsistently managed and interferes with effectiveness at work • Regularly personally invests in family crises and fails to maintain professional boundaries • Mishandles secondary trauma by avoiding appropriate support from others • Always takes responsibility for the family's tasks; family members take little to no responsibility for their action steps • Structure and length of visits are highly inconsistent and unmanageable across families
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: Consistently improves knowledge, skills, or abilities relevant to their career path			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively articulates concrete, measurable goals for professional growth • Proactively seeks constructive feedback about knowledge, skills, or abilities • Responsively adjusts practices and styles in response to constructive feedback • "Early adopter" of new approaches and practices • Proactively pursues professional development (training, mentoring, stretch opportunities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates concrete, measurable goals for professional growth • Seeks constructive feedback about knowledge, skills, or abilities • Adjusts practices and styles in response to constructive feedback • Pursues professional development (training, mentoring, stretch opportunities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates abstract, difficult-to-measure goals for professional growth • Avoids constructive feedback about knowledge, skills, or abilities • Rarely adjusts practices and styles in response to constructive feedback • Sometimes engages in professional development (training, mentoring, stretch opportunities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates abstract, immeasurable goals for professional growth • Ignores constructive feedback about knowledge, skills, or abilities • Keeps the same practices and styles despite constructive feedback • Does not engage in professional development unless required



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<p>Self-Development</p> <p>PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: Develops and maintains positive working relationships with co-workers, supervisors, families, and community partners</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids unnecessary, harmful conflicts in the workplace to ensure focus on professional goals • Works well independently and with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids harmful conflicts in the workplace to ensure focus on professional goals • Works well independently and with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in unnecessary conflicts in the workplace • Works well only independently or only with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in unnecessary and harmful conflicts in the workplace • Works poorly independently and with others
<p>PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: Embraces a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) mindset and practices when working with colleagues and families</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently uses inclusive language and is sensitive to cultural/lifestyle differences amongst families • Consistently seeks to understand and embrace varying circumstances and characteristics of families • Consistently listens to families while raising awareness of inherent biases • Treats each family equally (with time, access to resources, openness, etc.) • Connects authentically with each family based on their strengths rather than limitations • Practices empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically uses inclusive language and is sensitive to cultural/lifestyle differences amongst families • Typically seeks to understand and embrace varying circumstances and characteristics of families • Typically listens to families with some regard toward raising awareness of inherent biases • Makes an effort to treat each family equally (with time, access to resources, openness, etc.) • Connects with each family based on their strengths rather than limitations • Practices some empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rarely uses inclusive language and is sensitive to cultural/lifestyle differences amongst families • Avoids understanding and embracing varying circumstances and characteristics of families • Listens to families with little regard toward raising awareness of inherent biases • Treats each family differently (with time, access to resources, openness, etc.) • Connects with each family based on their strengths rather than limitations • Practices little empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not use inclusive language and is sensitive to few cultural/lifestyle differences amongst families • Neglects understanding and embracing varying circumstances and characteristics of families • Listens to families with no regard toward raising awareness of inherent biases • Treats each family differently (with time, access to resources, openness, etc.) • Makes a forced connection with families based on their strengths rather than limitations • Does not show empathy