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**			
• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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			
• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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

Appendix: **Specialists' Stepping Stones for Success**

Expert	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic
BUILDS TRUST: Actively listens to identify family's needs			
• Approaches interactions with a positive attitude and an open mind • Consistently 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	• 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	• 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	• 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			
• 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	• Often quickly follows through on commitments • Provides information quickly, but not immediately • Notifies the family of scheduling changes in advance	• Sometimes follows through, but not always quickly • Provides information after researching the answer(s) • Changes scheduled visits/contacts often or without much notice	• 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, healing-centered approach when serving families			
• Consistently demonstrates an understanding of ACEs and uses a trauma informed approach with families • Supports family members in a strength-based and non-judgmental way • Focuses on future possibilities instead of the past • Actively listens without judgment when family members talk about trauma or other experiences	• 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	• 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	• 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

Appendix: **Specialists' Stepping Stones for Success**

Expert	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic
Relationship skills **NONJUDGMENTAL: Aware of biases and how they might influence their work with families**			
• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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
Family Engagement **FAMILY CENTERED: Facilitates a process to help families identify their needs and potential solutions**			
• 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)	• 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	• 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	• 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

Appendix: **Specialists' Stepping Stones for Success**

Expert	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic
Family Engagement			
FAMILY CENTERED: Consistently engages families in home visiting activities that improve their economic and life circumstances			
• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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.)
GOAL-DIRECTED: Specialists support families in identifying meaningful work, education and parenting goals			
• 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")	• 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")	• 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")	• 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")

Appendix: **Specialists' Stepping Stones for Success**

Expert	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic
Family Engagement			
GOAL-DIRECTED: Helps families develop plans by breaking goals into small, achievable steps			
• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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			
• 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)	• 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)	• 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	• 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

Appendix: **Specialists' Stepping Stones for Success**

Expert	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic
Family Engagement			
SELF-EMPOWERING: Coaches families on how to advocate for themselves			
• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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			
• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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

Appendix: **Specialists' Stepping Stones for Success**

Expert	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic
Managing the Job			
ORGANIZATION: Maintains thorough, accurate, and timely documentation in family case files			
• Consistently completes administrative tasks on time • Regularly submits high-quality case notes and family records on time	• Usually completes administrative tasks on time • Submits standard case notes and family records on time	• Inconsistently completes administrative tasks on time • Inconsistently submits standard case notes and family records	• 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			
• 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	• Typically reviews past home visit/ contact narratives and gathers necessary resources before visiting • Comes prepared; has flexibility to address new or pressing issues	• Rarely reviews past home visit/ contact narratives; gathers necessary resources before visiting • Comes unprepared, but has flexibility to address new or pressing issues	• 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			
• Consistently understands and applies program rules and policies • Commands deep knowledge of program processes • Effectively helps the family understand program policies and processes	• Generally understands and applies program rules and policies • Commands some knowledge of program processes • Helps the family understand program policies and processes	• Rarely understands or applies program rules and policies • Has little knowledge of program processes • Rarely helps the family understand program policies and processes	• 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

Appendix: **Specialists' Stepping Stones for Success**

Expert	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic
Managing the Job			
RESOURCEFULNESS: Partners with providers to connect families to the resources they need			
• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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			
• 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	• 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	• Workspace and home visiting materials are poorly organized • Inconsistently follows up on tasks and client-related issues • Often works an excessive amount of hours	• 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

Appendix: **Specialists' Stepping Stones for Success**

Expert	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic
Self-Development			
SELF-CARE: Sets clear and consistent boundaries with colleagues and families			
• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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			
• 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)	• 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)	• 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)	• 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

Appendix: **Specialists' Stepping Stones for Success**

Expert	Advanced	Intermediate	Basic
Self-Development			
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: Develops and maintains positive working relationships with co-workers, supervisors, families, and community partners			
• Avoids unnecessary, harmful conflicts in the workplace to ensure focus on professional goals • Works well independently and with others	• Avoids harmful conflicts in the workplace to ensure focus on professional goals • Works well independently and with others	• Participates in unnecessary conflicts in the workplace • Works well only independently or only with others	• Participates in unnecessary and harmful conflicts in the workplace • Works poorly independently and with others
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: Embraces a respectful, compassionate mindset and practices when working with colleagues and families			
• Consistently uses inclusive language and is sensitive to differences amongst families • Consistently seeks to understand and embrace varying circumstances and characteristics of families • Consistently listens to families while reflecting on personal values and beliefs • Treats each family fairly (with time, access to resources, openness, etc.) • Connects authentically with each family based on their strengths rather than limitations • Practices empathy	• Typically uses inclusive language and is sensitive to 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 fairly (with time, access to resources, openness, etc.) • Connects with each family based on their strengths rather than limitations • Practices some empathy	• Rarely uses inclusive language and is sensitive to 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	• Does not use inclusive language and is sensitive to few 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