
Top 10 Mistakes in Early Intervention in Natural Environments—and the Solutions

Robin McWilliam
Siskin Children's Institute
Chattanooga, TN



Contact

- Robin.McWilliam@Siskin.org
 - Write for copy of PowerPoint
- www.siskinresearch.org



Center mission:

Improving the quality of life for children and families

The Siskin Center for Child and Family Research improves the quality of life for children of all abilities by conducting high-quality and important applied research, discovering effective and innovative methods of intervention with children and families, and discovering significant information about their development and functioning.

Strategies

- Conduct research within the Institute, in the community, and internationally
- Present and disseminate locally, across the United States, and overseas
- Conduct Routines-Based Certification Institutes
- Establish international partnerships
- Participate in statewide advocacy and initiatives in Tennessee
- Strengthen university collaborations
- Participate in citywide or countywide early-childhood initiatives
- Use the Siskin Centers for Early Learning as applied-research settings
- Establish local services based on supporting research

View the Research Center's other web pages:

[Center Overview](#)

[Sharing Knowledge](#)

Available Resources

Within 6 weeks, a list of available PDFs related to the topics in the left column will be posted. Also available are two books:

- Challenging behaviors
- Classroom interventions
- Early intervention in natural environments
- Engagement
- Feedback to teachers
- Home visiting
- IFSP quality
- Integrated classroom services
- Measurement of EISR in routines
- Parenting support
- Quality of life
- Routines-Based Interview
- Teaching practices
- Video self-modeling

Child and Family Research

Dr. Robin McWilliam leads new initiative

View the Research Center's other web pages:

[Center Mission](#)

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[Video Self-Modeling](#)

Robin McWilliam, Ph.D.

*Director of the Siskin
Center for Child and
Family Research and the
Siskin Endowed Chair of
Research
in Early
Childhood Education,
Development and
Intervention*



Top 10 Mistakes (in order of when they happen in practice)

1. Doing all the talking at intake visits
2. Asking families about daily routines at every meeting leading up to the IFSP
3. Basing goals just on what parents say they want
4. Ignoring the *participation* purpose of child-level goals and skimping on measurability of goals
5. Matching services to deficits
6. Working directly with the child on home visits
7. Modeling/demonstrating blindly
8. Using the same home visiting approach for all families
9. Focusing exclusively on the child's well-being and quality of life
10. Working just with children in classrooms

Intake

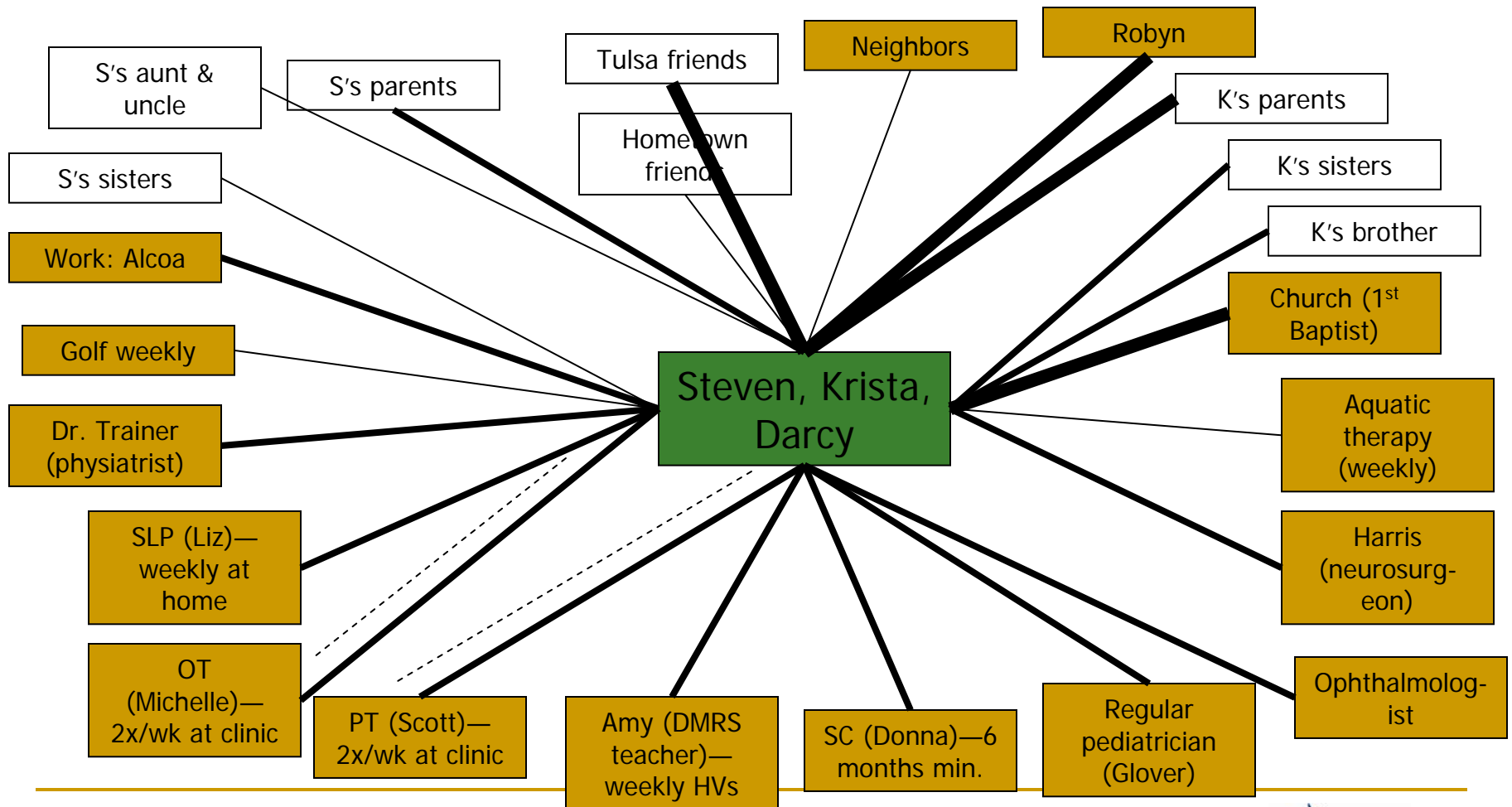
■ Mistakes

1. Doing all the talking at intake visits
 - Conditions parents to think they are passive recipients of service
2. Asking families about daily routines at every meeting leading up to the IFSP
 - Tedious!

■ Solution

- Ecomap

Krista has little time for friends, but doesn't know what to do with her afternoons (the worst time of day)



Assessment

- Mistake

3. Basing goals just on what parents say they want

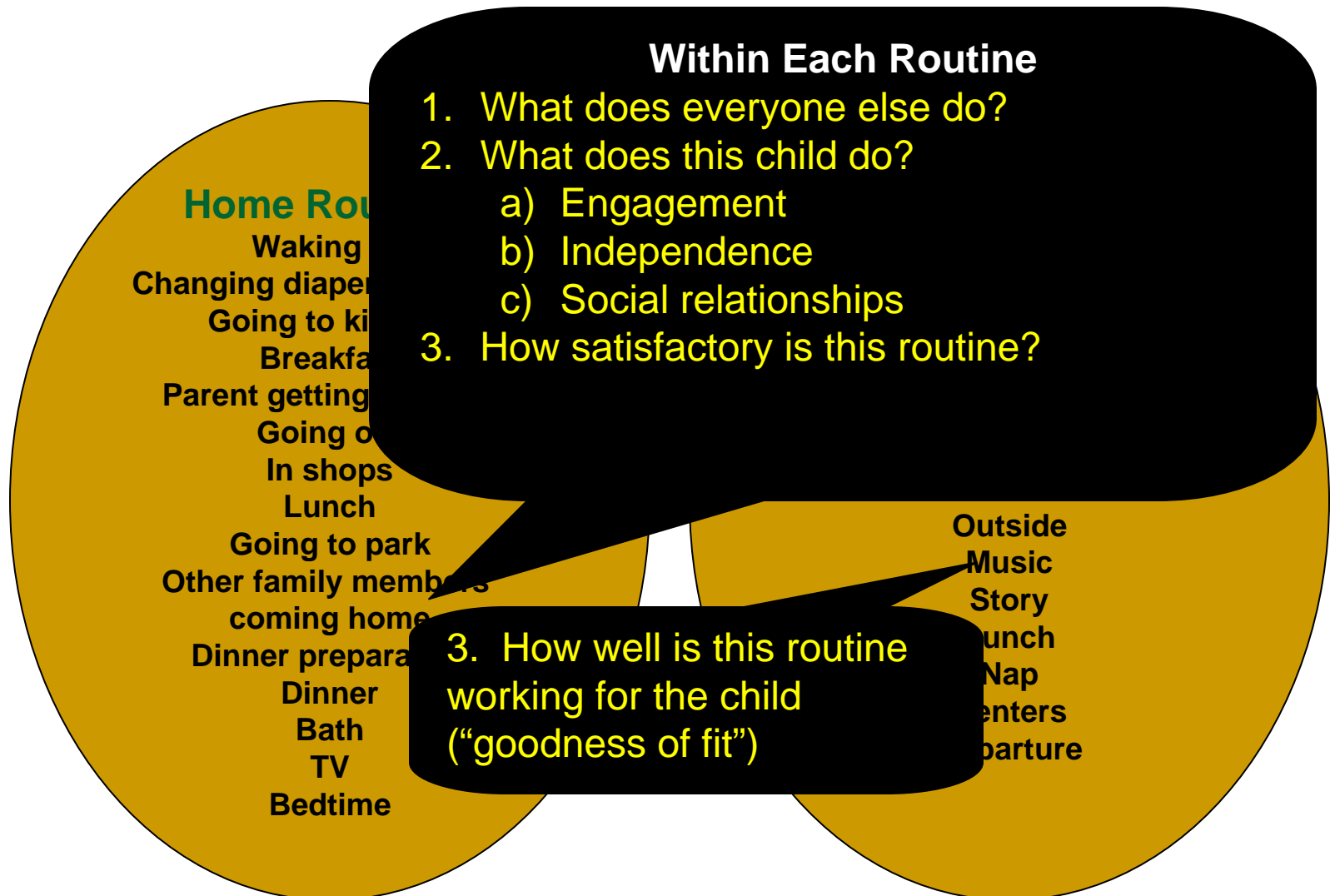
- Solution

- Routines-Based Interview

The Routines-Based Interview

- Go through each “routine” (i.e., time of day or activity)
- Get a sense of family’s and child’s functioning
- Write down significant information
- Star concerns
- Recap concerns with the family, showing them the starred items
- Ask what the family would like to concentrate on
- Write down these outcomes
- Ask them for the priority order

Structure



The 3 Foundations of Learning



Outcome Writing

■ Mistakes

3. Ignoring the *participation* purpose of child-level goals

■ Purpose for everyday life needs to be clear

4. Skimping on measurability of goals

■ Measurement of progress and attainment

■ Sports psych finding!

■ Solution

□ 7 steps of functional outcome writing

7 Steps of Functional Outcome Writing

1. Read the short-hand version of the outcome from a family-centered, functional needs assessment (e.g., RBI)
2. Find out what routines this affects
3. Write “Child will participate in [the routine(s) in question]”
4. Write “by _____ing,” addressing the specific behaviors
5. Add a criterion for demonstration the child has acquired the skill
6. Add another criterion for generalization, maintenance, or fluency, if appropriate
7. Over what amount of time?

Play with toys during hanging-out times

- Tyrell will participate in hanging-out times at home by playing with toys.
- We will know he can do this when he plays with a toy for 5 minutes, independently, 3 times in 1 week.

Service Decisions

- Mistake

- 5. Matching services to deficits

- Pile-on of services, especially dangerous in vendor (non)systems

- Solutions

- Incremental service decision making
 - Integrated services
 - Primary service provider

Incremental Decision Making

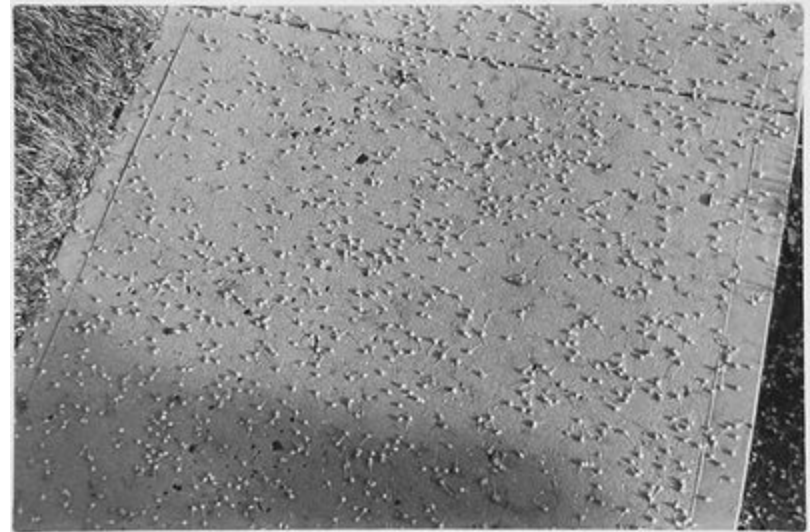
1. Start with a primary provider (primary service provider, generalist home visitor or consultant to child care)
2. Remember the child is getting intervention from regular caregivers (parents, teachers)
3. Only add services needed to address outcomes the primary provider and the regular caregivers need help with
 - Example: Child is delayed in talking, but primary provider and parent know how to teach him to talk, there is no need to add an ongoing service
4. When you do add a service, you plan for the intensity needed to ensure the regular caregivers and the primary provider have information necessary
 - It's not about working directly with the child

Integrated Services



- Focused support to families
- Teamwork ensured by having one professional through whom team members work
 - Regular home visitor
 - Classroom teacher
 - Classroom consultant

The Other Approach



Silos

Scattershot

Definition of Primary-Service-Provider Model

- One professional provides weekly support to the family, backed up by a team of other professionals who provide services to the child and family through joint home visits with the primary service provider. The intensity of joint home visits depends on child, family, and primary-service-provider needs.

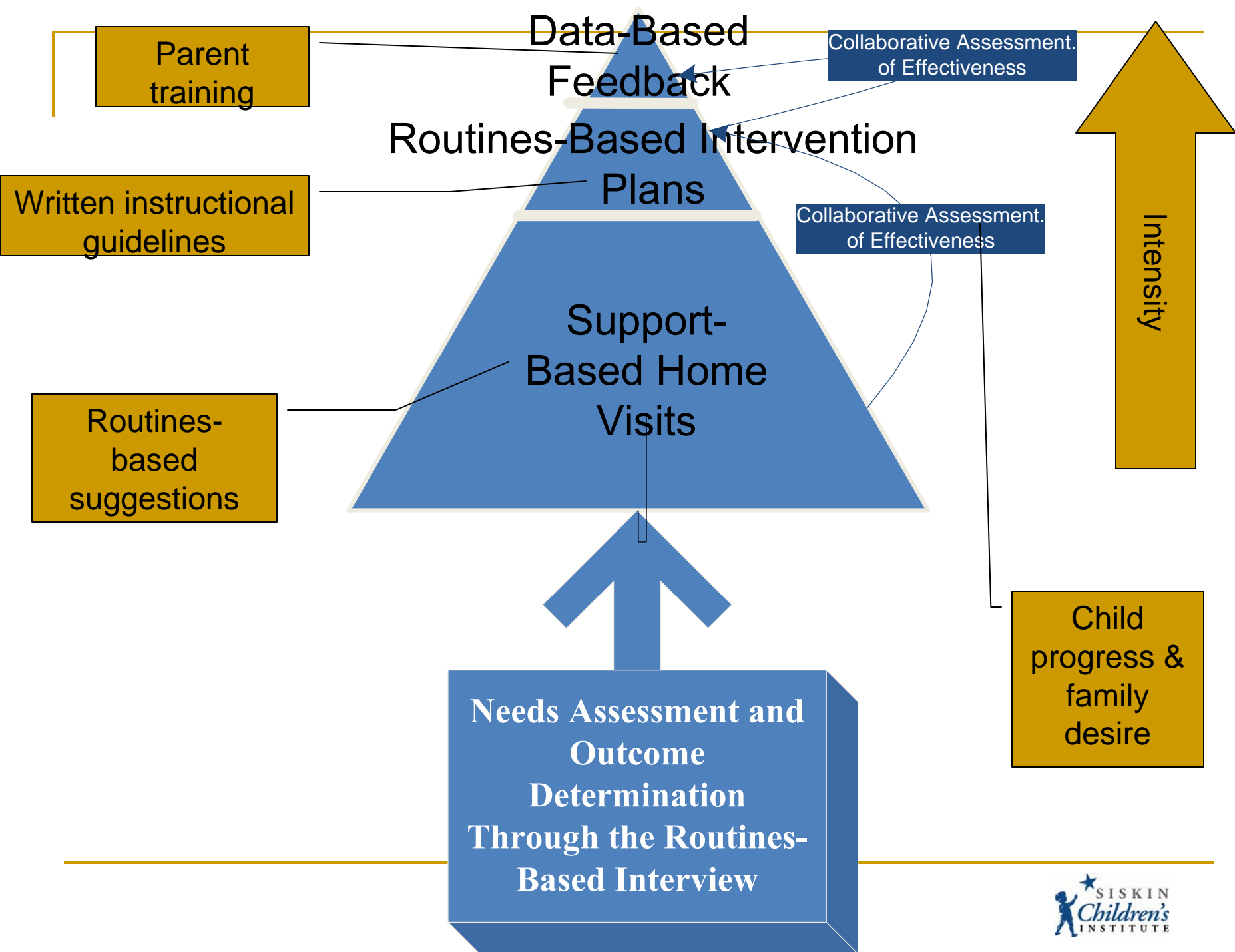
Home Visits

■ Mistakes

6. Working directly with the child on home visits
 - Child deserves more intervention
7. Modeling/demonstrating blindly
 - This is the model-and-pray approach
8. Using the same home visiting approach for all families
 - Different child responsiveness
 - Different family preferences
9. Focusing exclusively on the child's well-being and quality of life
 - Family-centered, especially primary caregiver

■ Solutions

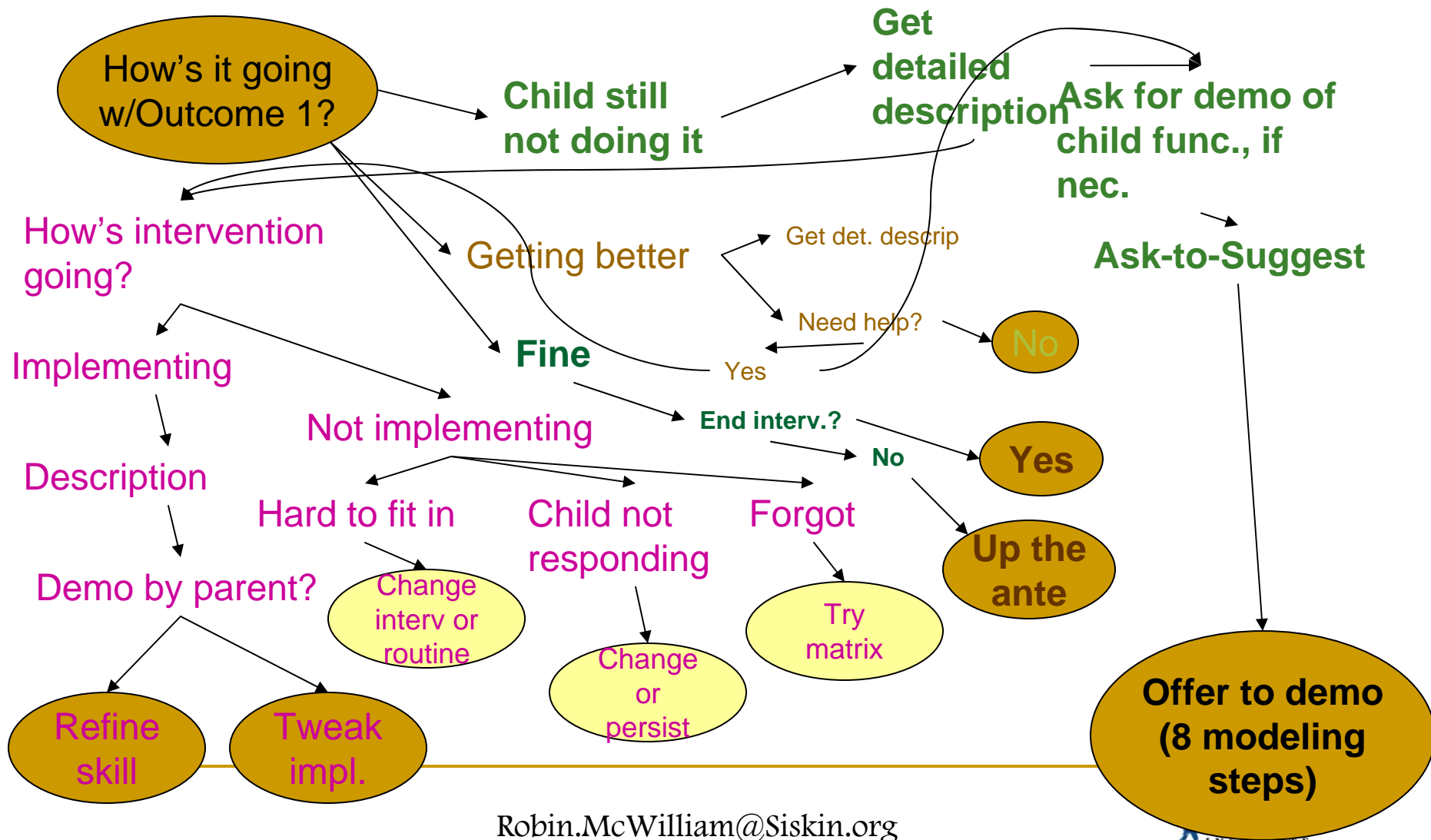
- Support-based home visits
- 3-tiered, response-to-support approach



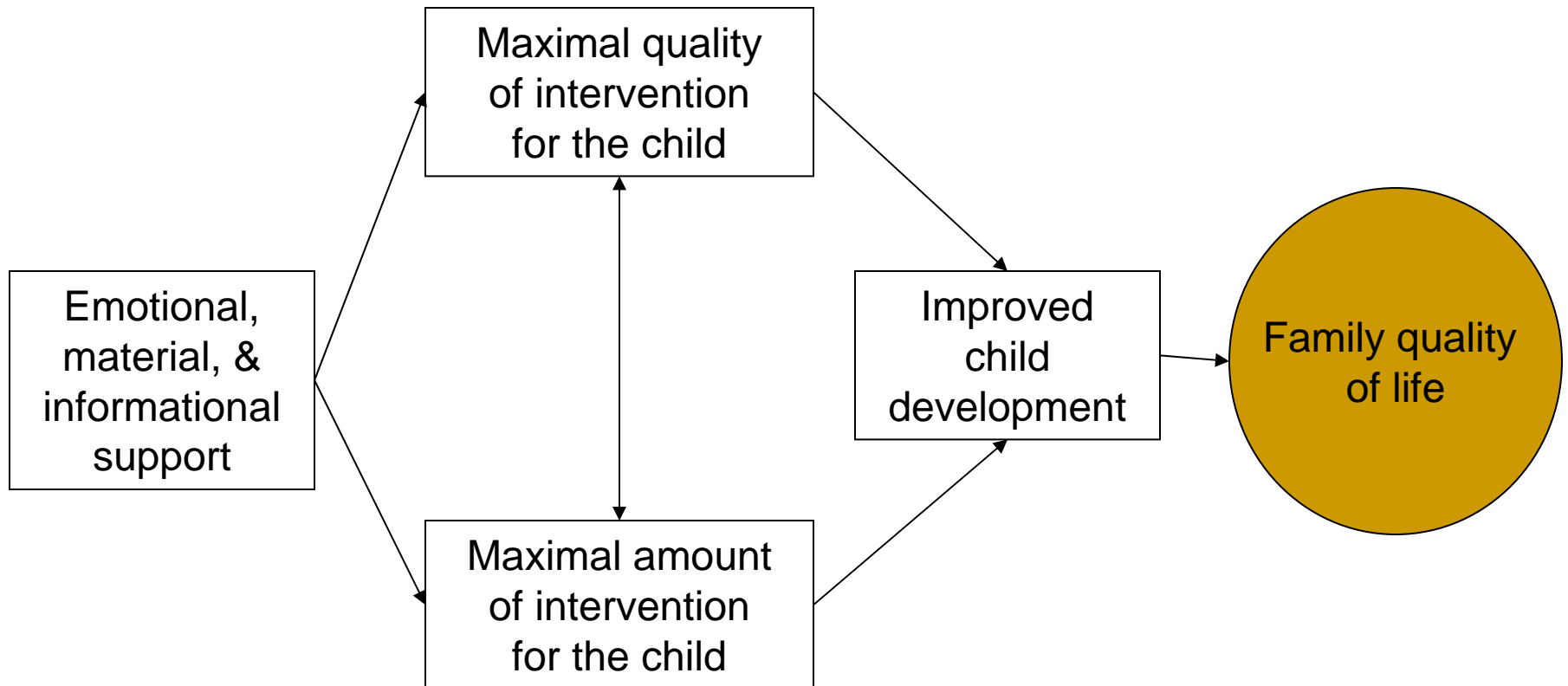
VHVS: The Questions

1. How have things been going?
2. Do you have anything new you want to ask me about?
3. Outcomes in priority order
4. Is there a time of day that's not going well for you?
5. How is [family member] doing?
6. Have you had any appointments in the past week?
Any coming up?
7. Do you have enough or too much to do with [your child]?

Behavioral Consultation in the Context of Support-Based Home Visits



Logic Model for Support-Based Home Visits



Home-Based Programs

■ Do

- Use accessible materials
- Engage in “kitchen talk”
- Find out what families want to be shown
- Talk about everyday routines

■ Don't

- Take a toy bag
- Work just with the child
- Model unnecessarily
- Imply that “lessons” are important

Wanna Be in a Study of the Response-to-Support Approach?

- Recruit 3 families
- Participate in an information conference call with me
- Receive a manual on how to implement the approach
- Data:
 - Family-completed questionnaires
 - Home-visitor-completed questionnaires
 - Child assessment (MEISR + a norm-referenced child development tool)
- Benefit to you: Efficient training in cutting-edge home-based service delivery
- Benefit to families: Excellent home-based service delivery

Classroom Visits

- Mistake

- 10. Working just with children in classrooms

- Children deserve more intervention

- Solutions

- Individualized within routines
 - Group activities

Integrated Specialized Services

DEFINITION

- When therapy and specialized instruction occur in the classroom with other children usually present, and in the context of ongoing routines and activities—when the teaching staff can learn from the consultant and vice versa
- Specific approaches: *individualized within routines* and *group activity*
- Purpose: To ensure the teaching team has the knowledge and skills to be able to maximize the child's meaningful participation in everyday routines

The 5-Component Model for Early Intervention in Natural Environments

