

Systems Thinking in Early Childhood: *Shifting Perspectives*

Use these ideas and questions to build on what you've learned and extend your practice.

THINK ABOUT IT!

- **Self-Reflection**

Use these questions to think about your own practice.

- **Reflect with Others**

Supervisors, directors, coaches, and teachers/providers can be reflective partners.

- **The Power of Practice**

Invite a colleague to join you; observe or record each other and share ideas.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- What are some of the beliefs and assumptions I have about the children and families I work with? How do these mental models influence my interactions with them?
- What are some of the possible mental models that families have about their children? How do those mental models influence their interactions?
- How can I pause at the bottom of the ladder of inference and consider the facts? How can I avoid jumping to conclusions?

TRY IT OUT!

Identify a behavior of a child or group of children that concerns you. What are your beliefs about its cause?

Examples:

- What is the experience about which you are reflecting?
- What are you choosing to pay attention to?
- What does that lead you to believe?
- What actions are you likely to take as a result?

Now take time to observe the behavior when it occurs again.

How Did It Go?

- What did you notice this time? Anything new or different? If so, how does this information influence your mental models?
- What are your thoughts now about the cause(s) of the behavior?

What Next?

Share your experience with your colleagues. Ask them to share their own mental models about working with children and families. Discuss how you can incorporate reflective practice into your work together.