

### Systems Thinking in Early Childhood: *Why Systems Thinking?*

Use these ideas and questions to build on what you have 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

- Who do I turn to for help when I'm faced with difficult situations at work? What do I find helpful when I'm feeling stuck?
- What is my experience with reflective practice? How can I make time to reflect on—and learn from—daily situations and events? Who might be a helpful reflective partner as I think about this work?
- What have I learned about systems thinking? How can it help me make better decisions in my work?
- What steps can I take to start writing or journaling about my practice so I can see the patterns and trends in my work?

#### TRY IT OUT!

Think of a child in your program. Draw a series of concentric circles to represent the different parts of this child's life system. Who would you include in the first circle surrounding the child? Who would you include in the second circle? Are there any important organizations or services that are involved in this child's life?

Now think about how the parts of the system influence—and are influenced by—this child. What do these connections tell you about this child and his relationships with the world around him? This is a great activity to include in your journal for all of your children.

#### How Did It Go?

What did you learn about this child? Are there any other perspectives you need to consider when working with him?

#### What Next?

Think about your relationship with this child. What factors influence your interactions with each other? Use the next pack in this bundle, *Thinking Below the Surface*, to learn about specific systems thinking tools that can help you improve your teaching practices with all children.