

# Talking to Parents about the PICCOLO™

## INTRODUCTION

The State of NM ECECD Home Visiting Program is using the PICCOLO™ to gather data as one way to evaluate the effectiveness of home visiting. The PICCOLO™ was selected, in part, because the 29 items on the PICCOLO™ predict positive outcomes for children in areas related to school readiness skills.

The PICCOLO™, especially when accompanied by video, is also a wonderful tool to look at some of the things parents are already doing that support their child's development, and their social/emotional well-being (infant mental health) in particular.

## SCORING

Home visitors will administer the PICCOLO™ for all children according to the ECECD Periodicity and Guidance Documents.

Only those who have completed the PICCOLO™ Training DVD and read the PICCOLO User's Guide, are trained to fidelity and qualified to score it. Unlike other tools or measures currently used by the NM ECECD Home Visiting Programs, the PICCOLO™ is not a parent-report tool and there is no "cut-off score." While home visitors can share the list of 29 Things Parents Do that Support Learning, it may be less helpful to focus on the actual scoring sheet for a couple of reasons: 1) the scores that are used for the database must be done by someone trained in the PICCOLO™ (i.e., not the parent), and 2) it makes more sense for home visitors to start by noticing what parents are already doing with their child that supports their development instead of what they are not doing. In addition, when parents see a score sheet, they are more likely to pay more attention to items that were not observed, and may even feel that the scores are inaccurate. In contrast, an initial focus on what is working can later be used to support areas that might be more challenging in the parent-child relationship.

## TALKING TO PARENTS

Families have a right to know that the State is using the PICCOLO to gather data on the effectiveness of home visiting (in aggregate form, not by looking at individual families). More importantly, the PICCOLO™ is a wonderful way to let parents know what they are doing that is already supporting their child's growth through their interactions with their child. Other uses of the PICCOLO™ include: a way for parents to identify areas they would like to learn more about; to highlight how children learn; and to explore with parents the many different ways each domain, such as affection, can be expressed.

Here is one example of language a home visitor might use when talking to parents about the PICCOLO™ (in addition to informing them about the data gathering mentioned above):

*One of the things we like to highlight is what parents are doing that, through their relationship with their child, support their child's growth and development. For example, one thing I've noticed that you do is [offer an example specific to that parent]. Our program has a measure that looks at what you are doing that supports your child in ways that will ultimately help them be ready for school. The 29 items [give them a copy of 29 Things Parents Do that Support Learning] on this list is what we'll look at together. One way we'd like to do this is to video you and [child's name] playing together. You and I will look at the video on our next visit together to see what you're already doing that supports your child's development.*

Here are some additional examples of how some home visitors have introduced the PICCOLO™ or the use of video:

*The PICCOLO is a tool to capture all the interactions that you are already doing to help prepare your child for learning and school.*

*The PICCOLO is similar to other measures you have participated in such as the ASQ- 3 and ASQ:SE2, but this one highlights your interactions with your child that help prepare him for school.*

*I'm wondering how you would feel about making a video of you playing with your baby? As part of using the PICCOLO we can view the video together to look at what you're already doing to support your child's development.*

*Videotaping can help us capture all the positive interactions that we might otherwise miss. How would you feel about videotaping you and your baby as you play together?*

Items from Roggman, L. A., Cook, G. A., Innocenti, M. S., Jump Norman, V. K., & Christiansen, K. (forthcoming). PICCOLO™ (Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.