PennState

exceptional families

Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.

Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Manual

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

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Overview

Web-Based Thrive Universal Parenting Programs

The Thrive Initiative, which is a collaboration between the Department of Defense's Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (DoD MC&FP) and the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State (Clearinghouse), is a portfolio of evidence-informed parenting programs that are designed to empower parents (and caregivers) as they nurture children from the prenatal period through 18 years of age.

There are four developmentally age-appropriate core, universal parenting programs within the Thrive Initiative—Take Root, Sprout, Grow, and Branch Out—that are available in a web-based format at no cost to military and civilian parents. Each of the Thrive Initiative parenting programs convey knowledge, skills, and strategies within three overarching learning domains: positive parenting practices, stress management, and child physical-health promotion.

Parents and caregivers can register and complete a Thrive program by visiting the Thrive website at https://thrive.psu.edu. Anyone who requires assistance can contact the Clearinghouse Thrive Team at thrive@psu.edu or call the Clearinghouse Technical Assistance Team at 1-877-382-9185.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Thrive Initiative Program Areas</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Universal Parenting Programs</th></tr>
<tr><th>Take Root</th><th>Sprout</th><th>Grow</th><th>Branch Out</th></tr>
<tr><td>Infants
(0 to 6 months)</td><td rowspan="3">Preschool
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(10 to 18 years)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Infants
(6 to 12 months)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Infants & Toddlers
(1 to 3 years)</td></tr>
</table>

Overview

Thrive Initiative Universal Supplemental Parent-Education Modules

The Thrive Initiative's supplemental parent-education modules explore a variety of topics and offer families opportunities to build on information and strategies they have learned in any of the Thrive Initiative's four core, universal parenting programs. The supplemental modules are available in a web-based format at no cost to military and civilian parents, and each module takes approximately 2 hours to complete. Participating in an age-appropriate universal parenting program before engaging with any of the supplemental modules may help parents attain the most benefits as they work to reach the goals they set for their families.

As a professional, you can incorporate supplemental modules into your educational outreach for military or civilian families by using this manual. The manual should be used as a guide as you engage with families in the hybrid implementation of a supplemental module. This implementation can involve group-based, synchronous facilitation (i.e., face-to-face or virtual) while parents complete a supplemental module online. A description follows that explains how a supplemental module can be offered to participants in a hybrid implementation format.

Regardless of the type of delivery selected, facilitators must receive training, as outlined in this facilitation manual, prior to hybrid implementation.

Delivery Type 1: Supplemental Extension

If you are offering group-based, hybrid implementation of one of the Thrive Initiative's core, universal parenting programs, a supplemental module can be added as an extension to the existing virtual or face-to-face sessions. Just add two additional meeting times.

Delivery Type 2: Supplemental Stand Alone

You may have previously offered one or more of the Thrive Initiative's core, universal parenting programs to various groups. If so, you can recruit participants who have completed any of the four core, universal parenting programs to become part of a new group. These participants may have completed one or more universal parenting programs as a member of a hybrid implementation group(s), or they may have completed programming online independently. As a result of your recruitment efforts, a new group will be formed to complete the supplemental module online. This group will meet three times, face-to-face or virtually, to discuss the supplemental module's content.

Purpose of the *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Manual

This facilitation manual offers professionals guidance regarding how to coordinate and deliver the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module in a hybrid implementation format. Specifically, this manual will provide the facilitator with implementation instruction for group-based—face-to-face or virtual—synchronous interactions while parents complete the supplemental module online asynchronously.

The ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module includes an introduction, three sessions, and a wrap-up. The supplemental module can be accessed by parents on the Thrive Initiative's website: https://thrive.psu.edu/modules/supplemental/.

Objectives of the *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Manual

- Outline the components of the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module.
- Provide guidance to professionals as they implement face-to-face or virtual group meetings with parents as the parents complete the supplemental module.
- Offer templates that can be used as or part of recruitment tools, parent workbooks, scheduling examples, and preprinted resources.

Training

Hybrid Facilitation Training

The Thrive Initiative provides general facilitation training to prepare you, the facilitator, for hybrid implementation of a supplemental module.

☐ If you have previously delivered a Thrive Initiative universal program or supplemental module in a hybrid implementation format, you likely completed the recommended *Hybrid Facilitation Training*. Please proceed to the next section in this facilitation manual titled ***Supplemental Module Training***.

☐ If you are a new facilitator who has not facilitated a core, universal Thrive Initiative parenting program, you will need to complete the *Hybrid Facilitation Training* in order to offer a supplemental parent-education module in a hybrid format to parents and caregivers who have previously participated in a core, universal Thrive Initiative parenting program.

If you have not already done so, please complete the online *Hybrid Facilitation Training* to learn about the following aspects of quality facilitation:

- Fidelity;
- Program reach;
- Participant responsiveness;
- Logistics, dosage, and content adherence;
- Delivery quality; and
- Facilitation skills to assist during challenging situations encountered with parents.

To register for the *Hybrid Facilitation Training*, visit the Thrive Initiative's Facilitator Portal at https://thrivefacilitator.lms.militaryfamilies.psu.edu

Enter (or create) a user name and password to log in. Under "Thrive Facilitator Training," you will see a row titled "Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Training." Click on it, and select "Hybrid Facilitation Training" to access the course.

The *Hybrid Facilitation Training* takes approximately 2 hours to complete. You can complete this course at your own pace. It does not need to be completed all at once. You can take breaks as the online management system will recognize where you are in the completion process upon your return to the course.

Supplemental-Module Training

The next step in this training is to complete each web-based supplemental module that you wish to facilitate in a hybrid implementation format. This manual will guide you as you complete the web-based ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module and will help prepare you to implement the supplemental module to a group of program participants using a hybrid approach.

When you are logged in to the Thrive Facilitator Portal, you are automatically enrolled in and have access to the Thrive Initiative's web-based universal parenting programs and supplemental parent-education modules. Click on the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module, and select "Go to course" to begin. As you complete the supplemental module, download the tools and resources provided. You can use these resources to learn more about a topic and to support your discussions during your face-to-face or virtual meetings with the group of participants you enroll in hybrid implementation of the supplemental module.

Use of the Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Manual

After you complete the online *Hybrid Facilitation Training* and the online supplemental module, continue to use this facilitation manual as your guide to prepare for hybrid implementation of the supplemental module to a group of program participants.

Do not move forward until you have completed the Hybrid Facilitation Training and the Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together. supplemental module.

Planning

Roles of Facilitator(s)

In the *Hybrid Facilitation Training*, you learned about two roles that a facilitator may fulfill—the coordinating facilitator and the delivery facilitator. These roles may be fulfilled by two separate individuals, or you may perform both roles.

If an individual is the designated ***coordinating facilitator***, this individual will likely support the following aspects of coordination for hybrid implementation of the supplemental module:

- Participant recruitment;
- Participant registration;
- Participant attendance tracking; and,
- General preparation for delivery of the face-to-face or virtual group meetings that will discuss the supplemental module, such as scheduling meeting times, conducting marketing efforts, setting up a meeting space (e.g., reserving a location, scheduling a teleconferencing platform like Zoom), preparing or purchasing supplies, providing technical assistance on the day of meetings, and offering general support for the delivery facilitator.

If an individual is the designated ***delivery facilitator***, this individual will likely do the following:

- Prepare for each meeting according to this facilitation manual, which is specific to the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module.
- Facilitate the discussion at each hybrid implementation meeting.

Initial Preparation

Format

Determine if you will be offering face-to-face meetings, virtual meetings, or a combination of the two. When group-based hybrid programming is offered for supplemental modules in any format, the participant groups are intended to include 10 – 12 families. Depending on your organization's specifics and limitations, unique factors may influence your planning (e.g., limits on a face-to-face group size due to space restrictions). This facilitation manual provides a framework for small, multi-family group meetings. Remain flexible so you can focus on serving your families in the best way possible.

Location

- If you are offering face-to-face meetings in a group format, you will need to find a meeting space that can accommodate a group comfortably (e.g., ample tables and chairs; a safe, accessible location).

- If you are offering virtual meetings, choose a virtual or video conferencing platform (e.g., Microsoft Teams) that does not require paid access for your families and offers adequate privacy protection. Ensure that the individuals(s) who assume the role(s) of coordinating facilitator and delivery facilitator have ample training on utilizing the platform and/or they understand how to access technical support.

Recruitment and Advertising for Hybrid Implementation

Recruitment and Advertising Strategies

For hybrid implementation of the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module, recruit parents who have children between the ages of birth to 18 years. Recruitment will vary depending on the way you plan to offer hybrid programming. Consider the following delivery types:

Delivery Type 1: Supplemental Extension

If group-based, hybrid implementation of the supplemental module is being added as an extension of existing virtual or face-to-face sessions of one of the Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting programs, you will form your group at the time you recruit participants for that identified universal parenting program. Follow the recruitment guidance in the *Hybrid Implementation Facilitation Manual* for the selected core, universal parenting program, and proceed to page 27 of this facilitation manual to learn how to add two additional meeting sessions for this supplemental parent-education module.

Delivery Type 2: Supplemental Stand Alone

If you previously offered one, or more, of the Thrive Initiative's core, universal parenting programs to various groups, your recruitment efforts for facilitating this supplemental parent- education module will result in a new group being formed. Participants of this group will complete the web-based supplemental module independently and engage with you, the facilitator, as a group in three face-to-face or virtual meetings. The meetings will involve interactive discussions of the supplemental module's content. To recruit participants, use the contact information you have collected from previous program participants to market the parent-education module and create the new group. Consider creating a flyer and disseminating it and other invitational messaging via email, paper mail, or social media. You may also extend your marketing to families who have independently completed one or more of the Thrive Initiative's universal parenting programs.

In addition, you could consider mass marketing strategies like advertising in child care centers, local schools, youth centers, gyms, shopping centers, grocery stores, family centers, community centers, websites, social media pages, local newspapers, and organizational newsletters.

Before you start recruiting and advertising, confirm how the group will meet (i.e., virtually or face-to-face), and secure the dates and the times you will be meeting. When recruiting and advertising, share how the group will meet and the location (if meeting in person); explain some basic information about the dates, times, structure, and time commitment; and list a Point of Contact (POC) for questions. Other information that you may want to consider adding could include whether child care will be provided, whether snacks or refreshments will be available, or whether there is a registration requirement (e.g., must have previously participated/completed a Thrive core, universal parenting program).

Registration

A participating parent should have completed one (or more) of the Thrive Initiative age-graded core, universal parenting programs (i.e., Take Root, Sprout, Grow, or Branch Out) prior to engaging in any of the Thrive Initiative supplemental modules. Therefore, the participants you recruit will have already created a Thrive account prior to your first hybrid implementation meeting for the supplemental module, and they will understand the expectations of hybrid implementation. Upon registration, ensure parents have already participated in a Thrive core, universal program.

Note: Participants who participate in a Thrive Initiative core, universal program receive a Certificate of Completion upon finishing the program.

To help with any organizational paperwork that may need to be completed as you recruit and register participants, the Thrive Initiative has created a template for tracking participant recruitment. *See Appendix B.*

Attendance

During hybrid implementation meetings for the supplemental module, you are encouraged to take attendance in accordance with your organization's policies.

Program Preparation

Prepare and Disseminate Meeting Information

Whether your hybrid implementation is face-to-face or virtual, you will need to provide your participants with the following:

- The Parent Welcome Letter for the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module.

Note: There is a Parent Workbook and Syllabus for each delivery type (i.e., Supplemental Extension or Supplemental Stand Alone). Please be sure to access, download, and share the appropriate Parent Workbook and Syllabus with your participants.

Planning

This workbook provides detailed information on how to access the supplemental module on the Thrive Initiative website and specific information about the dates, times, location, topics, and homework for each meeting.

Prior to hosting the first session of your hybrid implementation meetings, prepare and disseminate a welcome letter to the registered participants. Include information such as the name and contact information of the facilitator(s), the dates and times of the meetings, and the meeting location (i.e., physical address or web link). *See Appendix C: Parent Welcome Letter template.*

In addition, list the specifics of your implementation, such as the dates and times of each meeting and homework due dates, in the *Parent Workbook and Syllabus*. After the file has been personalized with your delivery information, decide whether you will print and mail copies or share the file electronically with participants. Ensure all participants receive a copy of the *Parent Workbook and Syllabus* upon registration or before the first meeting.

Check Your Supplies

Hybrid implementation of the supplemental module in a **face-to-face format** will require the following:

- Computers for participants to sign in to the Thrive Initiative website and to use to complete the supplemental module,
- Internet access for participants and the facilitator(s),
- A physical meeting space with tables and chairs,
- A flip chart or whiteboard/blackboard with markers or chalk, and
- Pencils/pens for participants.

Hybrid implementation of the supplemental module in a **virtual format** will require the following:

- Computers for participants to sign in to the Thrive Initiative website and to use to complete the supplemental module;
- Internet access for participants and the facilitator(s) for the online meetings; and
- Access for participants and the facilitator(s) to a virtual or video-conferencing platform that includes shared workspaces such as screen sharing or a whiteboard feature.

Note: For virtual hybrid implementation, the facilitator or designated support person should have a telephone available and should have provided the telephone number to participants prior to the meetings in case they encounter technical difficulties in joining the virtual platform.

Implementation

Overview of Hybrid Implementation of the Supplemental Module

During the hybrid implementation of a supplemental module, parents independently complete portions of a supplemental module online, and, then, they meet with you (or the delivery facilitator) either virtually or face-to-face to discuss the content and further their knowledge gains and skill acquisition.

Online Supplemental Module – *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*

The ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module includes an introduction, three sessions, and a wrap-up. The supplemental module can be accessed on the Thrive Initiative website at https://thrive.psu.edu/modules/supplemental/.

- **Below is a brief summary of the supplemental module content:**
  - **Overview**
    This is a parenting program that is designed to offer support to parents and caregivers of children who have a disability.
  - **Session 1: Disability and You**
    This session includes topics such as understanding disability, how to effectively care for a child who has a disability, and the importance of self-care.
  - **Session 2: Disability and Your Child**
    This session includes topics such as understanding what accommodations are important for your child to have, what supports are available or do you need to acquire in order to care for your child, and how can you give your child a voice.
  - **Session 3: Disability Services and Your Child**
    This session includes topics such as early intervention services, therapy services, transition planning, and employment.
  - **Wrap-Up**
    This session includes information on how to move forward in planning the future for you and your child.

Supplemental Module Meetings

Interactions with parents related to the supplemental module can be completed in two or three group-based meetings, depending on the delivery type (i.e., in person, virtually, or a combination of the two).

In this facilitation manual, the schedule of events, potential discussion questions, and activity prompts are provided for the two types of groups that can be formed for hybrid implementation meetings.

Overview of the Types of Hybrid Implementation for Supplemental Module Meetings

An outline follows that discusses the two hybrid supplemental module implementation delivery types covered in this facilitation manual.

Please note, the agenda and delivery instructions for each type of implementation are color-coded in this facilitation manual. Delivery Type 1 is color-coded as ***green.***

Delivery Type 1: Supplemental Extension

After the hybrid implementation of one of the Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting programs has occurred, a supplemental module can be added as an extension of the existing virtual or face-to-face sessions of that universal parenting program by adding two additional meeting times.

- In this delivery type, the facilitator introduces the supplemental module meeting content during the final session of hybrid implementation of the offered core, universal parenting program. Allow approximately 20 additional minutes to explain the supplemental module and provide instructions on how to access the module. At this time, assign participants homework that includes the *Overview* and *Session 1* of the Exceptional Families supplemental module.
- Supplemental Module Meeting 1: Discuss the *Overview* and *Session 1* (45- to 60-minute meeting). Assign *Sessions 2 and 3* and the *Wrap-Up* as homework.
- Supplemental Module Meeting 2: Discuss *Sessions 2 and 3* and the *Wrap-Up* and Resource Sharing (60-minute meeting).

Please note, the agenda and delivery instructions for each type of implementation are color-coded in this facilitation manual. Delivery Type 2 is color-coded as ***purple.***

Delivery Type 2: Supplemental Stand Alone

This delivery type encompasses the formation of a new group of families that consists of individuals who previously participated in a Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting program. These participants may have completed one or more universal parenting programs as a member of a hybrid implementation group(s), or they may have completed programming online independently. As a result of your recruitment efforts, a new group will be formed to complete the supplemental module online. This group will meet three times, face-to-face or virtually, to discuss the supplemental module's content.

- Participants are recruited based on their completion of any of the Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting programs (i.e., group-based or independent completion). *Note: Participants who participate in a Thrive Initiative core, universal program receive a Certificate of Completion upon finishing the program.*
- Intake Meeting: Overview of the Supplemental Module (45- to 60-minute meeting). Assign participants the *Overview* and *Session 1* as homework.
- Supplemental Module Meeting 1: Discuss the *Overview* and *Session 1* (45- to 60-minute meeting). Assign *Sessions 2 and 3* and the *Wrap-Up* as homework.
- Supplemental Module Meeting 2: Discuss *Sessions 2 and 3* and the *Wrap-Up* and Resource Sharing (60-minute meeting).

Meeting Agenda

Facilitator's Meeting Guide

The next section of the facilitation manual will guide you through the meeting agendas, so you can engage participants in processing and practicing skills from each of the sessions of the online supplemental module. Before each meeting, read the appropriate meeting agenda thoroughly, and prepare to use the prompts to lead discussions.

There are two parts for this section. You only need to review the part that reflects the hybrid implementation delivery type you have selected.

Delivery Type 1: Supplemental Extension

Content begins on page 27

This is an extension of a hybrid implementation of one of the Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting programs that should be delivered to an existing group.

Delivery Type 2: Supplemental Stand Alone

Content begins on page 55

This encompasses the formation of a new group of families that consists of individuals who have participated in a Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting program.

Delivery Type 1: Supplemental Extension

This is an extension of a hybrid implementation of one of the Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting programs that should be delivered to an existing group.

Introduction

Delivery Type 1: Supplemental Extension

The following instructions are only relevant to *the Supplemental Extension* of hybrid implementation of the supplemental module. Because your group is currently formed and already participating in active sessions, you will need less time to explain the meeting process or engage in participant introductions. Include the following steps in your final session of the hybrid implementation of the universal parenting program you are offering. Allow 20 additional minutes for these steps to be covered.

Introduction *(20 minutes)*
Homework

Overview: Introduction Meeting

(20 minutes added to last universal program session)

Step 1: Provide Overview of the Supplemental Module

Step 2: Review Syllabus

Step 3: Share Expectations

Step 4: Registration and Check for Online Content Access

Step 5: Assign Homework

Step 1: Provide an Overview of the Supplemental Module
(10 minutes)

Discuss the following topics with your participants:

____ ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** is an online supplemental module for parents (and caregivers) of children who have a disability. This supplemental module addresses concerns caregivers may have about parenting children with disabilities and offers support and guidance.

____ Parenting a child who has a disability can be difficult sometimes. You may feel lonely. Throughout this program, we will provide information and offer tools and resources that you can use to help you maximize the rewarding times while facing challenges head-on. Remember, we want you to know that you are not alone. We will also provide parenting strategies that you can add to your "toolkit." You may already be using some of these strategies, or some of them may be new to you. Whatever your circumstances, we hope you will use the information we offer in these modules as an opportunity to learn, grow, and become a more confident and informed parent or caregiver.

____ During the online supplemental module sessions and throughout the hybrid implementation meetings, information and parenting strategies that parents can use and adapt, as necessary, to fit their individual circumstances and family needs will be disseminated. The supplemental module content is designed to help parents build on their existing skills and strategies, so they can effectively parent a child with a disability.

____ Some of the content that is read and practiced in the supplemental module and discussed in the hybrid implementation meetings might be familiar to the parents, and they may already know about and use the disseminated information. Therefore, they may use the meeting time as an opportunity to realize, appreciate, and share what already works for them, their child, and their family.

____ ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** is an online supplemental module for parents and caregivers of children with disabilities. It includes an overview, three sessions, and a wrap-up.

After participating in the online supplemental module sessions and the hybrid implementation meetings, parents and caregivers should be able to do the following:

- Connect with your feelings.
- Understand that taking time for yourself is necessary and appropriate.
- Build social-support systems.
- Find ways to give your child a voice.
- Understand your child's behaviors, and use positive strategies to meet your child's needs.
- Work on building your child's gross and fine motor skills.
- Discover resources and technologies that are available for you and your child.
- Support your child's sexual learning and development.
- Plan for transitions and the future.

Step 2: Review the Syllabus *(5 minutes)*

Provide copies or screen share a copy of the Parent Workbook and Syllabus for the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module. Review the Summary of Training, and highlight the section where the participants can find pertinent information.

Step 3: Set Expectations *(2 minutes)*

Set realistic expectations with your participants. Let them know they will be asked to independently complete the online supplemental module and come to meetings ready for discussion. Because the participants will be independently completing the module sessions, you must ensure your participants complete the supplemental module in its entirety. By completing the module, participants will gain valuable knowledge from the content and interaction activities.

In the two following meetings, you will use content, covered in the supplemental module, to facilitate interaction that provides participants opportunities for community building, reflection, and discussion with you and other participants who are trying to successfully navigate parenting a child with a disability.

Step 4: [If needed] Registration and Check for Online Content Access *(2 minutes)*

Explain how participants can access the supplemental module online. Offer support to help with any technological questions. All participants will have previously set up a Thrive account, but you need to ensure they can log in and find the information they need to get started or progress in the supplemental module.

Step 5: Assign Homework *(1 minute)*

Ask participants to complete the following module sessions from the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module in advance of the second meeting:

- Overview
- Session 1: Disability and You

If possible, show the pages in the Parent Workbook and Syllabus for the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module. Encourage your participants to complete all of the exercises and discussion questions for the assignments **prior to each of the meetings.**

Supplemental Module Meeting 1 should be scheduled **at least 1 week** after the *Wrap-Up* and *Resource Sharing* meeting from the Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting program hybrid implementation has been completed. Using this timing allows your participants 1 week to complete the supplemental module content for the *Overview* and *Session 1 (Disability and You)* and gives them time to practice some of the strategies they have learned.

Meeting 1

Discuss the Module's Overview and Session 1

Meeting *(60 minutes)*
Homework

Overview of Meeting 1

Step 1: Provide Reintroduction

Step 2: Restate the Ground Rules

Step 3: Start Discussion

Step 4: Assign Homework

Step 5: Adjourn

Meeting 1 | Discuss the Module's Overview and Session 1

Step 1: Allow Families an Opportunity to Reintroduce Themselves *(3 minutes)*

Lead a quick, fun, or positive icebreaker for additional community building. Revisit the list from the Intake Meeting section of the Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting program Hybrid Implementation Manual (i.e., Take Root, Sprout, Grow, Branch Out) that was implemented, and incorporate a new icebreaker that was not used during those meetings.

Step 2: Restate the Ground Rules *(2 minutes)*

Review the ground rules previously brainstormed, and ask if any new rules need to be added.

Step 3: Start Discussion *(50 minutes)*

During Supplemental Module Meeting 1, discuss the following questions as a group.

Overview
Welcome and Introduction *(10 minutes)*

Provide an overview of the supplemental module using the following points that are taught in the supplemental module:

- Parenting a child with a disability can be difficult sometimes. You may feel lonely. Always remember that you are not alone.
- Whatever your circumstances, we hope the information that is offered in these modules can provide you with an opportunity to learn, grow, and become a more confident and informed parent or caregiver.

Ask the following questions and solicit answers from a few participants to generate discussion:

____ In the module, you were asked to consider what dreams you have for your child and what you hope to gain from this course. Who would like to share their thoughts?

Session 1: Disability and You

Understanding *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- **As outlined in the module, let's think about what disability IS and IS NOT.**
  - o Disability IS NOT a label, a box to fit into, or a reflection of your parenting.
  - o Disability IS natural and diverse and can be a pathway that allows for connection to resources.
- If you have a child with a disability, your child will still go through many of the typical developmental stages. However, your child may not go through these phases in the same way or in the same timeframe as other children who do not have disabilities experience them. In the end, your child will reach his o rher own milestones throughout the course of life.
- The distinctiveness of this parenting journey may cause you to reflect on your own parenting skills, whether you are a new parent or have older children. That reflection may cause you to have a variety of feelings. All of those feelings are valid.

Ask some or all of the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

Session 1 asked you to consider your feelings about your child's delays or diagnoses. Would anyone like to share any or all of the following:

____ What were your initial feelings when you received your child's diagnosis? What were your first concerns as you considered what your child's delays may be and what they may mean for your family?

____ What are some unique pathways that your child has taken to reach developmental milestones and how have you assisted your child in accomplishing those goals (e.g., learned sign language for better communication, received physical therapy services to enhance gross motor skill or occupational therapy for fine motor skill development)?

____ What are some feelings that you associate with raising your child. Why do you think you feel that way?

The Importance of Self-Care *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

Taking care of a child with disability can be difficult. However, to be the best parent you can be, you must also allow yourself to be cared for and engage in self-care. You are filling roles in addition to just caring for your child; you are acting as a teacher, therapist, and nurse—just to name a few. Taking time to care for yourself can involve watching a sporting event, getting a manicure, reading a book, having someone bring you a meal, or enjoying a night out.

- Let's review the 6 R's from the module.
    1. Remember: Parenting can be difficult.
    2. Recognize: You are not perfect, and that is okay.
    3. Relax: Take a minute and take a breath!
    4. Recharge: Enjoy guilt-free time away from parenting responsibilities.
    5. Reconnect: Establish and maintain support systems.
    6. Relish: Be sure to celebrate!

Ask the following question, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Who here tends to put themselves last? Why do you think you do that?

Remember: Parenting can be challenging *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Parenting is challenging, and challenges may reach new heights when you are parenting a child with a disability.
- You may experience moments when you need to make decisions that leave you questioning everything you thought you knew about parenting.
- Trust yourself to have made the best decision, be confident in that decision, and take comfort in moving on. Doing this may be easier said than done, but taking these steps is worth trying!

Ask the following question, and solicit answers from a few participants to generate discussion:

- ____ What is a difficult decision that you have made regarding your child's care? What did you learn from making that decision?

Recognize: You're not perfect, and that's okay *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Nobody is perfect, and all parents make mistakes. Be sure you acknowledge the strengths you possess as a parent and recognize your willingness to learn new skills and strategies. Appreciate the uniqueness of your child, and know your child's strengths and challenges.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

- ____ Would anyone like to discuss a time, or times, when you made a parenting mistake? How did that experience feel?
- ____ Did anyone write the Letter of Forgiveness to yourself? How did that activity go?
- ____ What would someone else say is one of your greatest strengths as a parent?

Relax: Take a breath! *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- The module provided two techniques for taking time to relax and focus and a resource that contains information on additional techniques and strategies for taking a breath.

Ask the following question, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Did anyone try a new technique? What did you try? How did it feel?

Recharge: Enjoy guilt-free time away from parenting responsibilities

(5 minutes)

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- As a parent, sometimes you need to take a break from childrearing responsibilities. Leaving your child with a trusted caregiver is okay; so, go ahead and enjoy life outside of your home and away from your child. This might include a spa day, a date night, or a weekend getaway.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ In what ways have you been able to practice self-care? What activities do you enjoy doing and that recharge you?

____ Do you have any tips that you've used for taking time and recharging yourself that you can discuss with the group?

____ What challenges prevent you from engaging in activities that refresh or rejuvenate you? How can you overcome those barriers?

Reconnect: Support systems are essential to healthy parenting

(5 minutes)

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Having a Circle of Support network for you and your family that includes in-person and virtual support systems is essential to healthy parenting. While every journey is unique, surrounding ourselves with others reminds us that we are not alone.

Ask the following question, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

- [ ] Who completed the Circle of Support activity? Who is part of your Circle of Support?

Facilitator Tip

- If participants mention they have no Circle of Support, encourage them to think about how they can make connections with others in their community [e.g., parents, spiritual leaders] and whom those "others" could be.

Relish: Celebrate everything—big achievements and small milestones

(5 minutes)

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Remember, take the time to celebrate all of the accomplishments you and your child make as you navigate steps in your journey!

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

- [ ] What do you, your child, and your family like to celebrate? How do you celebrate?
- [ ] If you don't currently celebrate achievements and milestones, how might you consider building these accomplishments into your family routines?

Step 4: Assign Homework *(3 minutes)*

Ask your participants to complete the following supplemental module sessions before your next meeting:

- Session 2 (Disability and Your Child)
- Session 3 (Disability Services and Your Child)
- Wrap-Up

Step 5: Adjourn *(2 minutes)*

Supplemental Module Meeting 2 should be scheduled **at least 1 week after *Supplemental Module Meeting 1* has occurred.** This timing allows your participants 1 week to complete the supplemental module content for *Session 2 (Disability and Your Child)*, *Session 3 (Disability Services and Your Child)*, and the *Wrap-Up* section.

The *Wrap-Up* section provides time for participants to practice some of the strategies they have learned and reflect on their progress in achieving their parenting goals. In addition, during this meeting, the supplemental module content is wrapped up, and additional resources are provided.

Meeting 2

Discussion of Sessions 2 and 3 and the Wrap-Up and Resource Sharing

Meeting *(60 minutes)*
Homework *(none)*

Overview of Meeting 2

Step 1: Provide an Icebreaker

Step 2: Restate the Ground Rules

Step 3: Start Discussion

Step 4: Direct to Additional Resources/Register for Additional Thrive Initiative Programming

Step 5: Thank and Adjourn

Meeting 2 | Discussion of Sessions 2 and 3 and the Wrap-Up and Resource Sharing

Step 1: Engage Families in an Icebreaker Activity *(4 minutes)*

Lead a quick, fun, or positive icebreaker for additional community building. Revisit the list from the Intake Meeting section, and incorporate an icebreaker that was not used during the earlier meetings.

Step 2: Restate the Ground Rules *(1 minute)*

Review the ground rules previously brainstormed, and ask if any new rules need to be added.

Step 3: Start Discussion *(55 minutes)*

During Supplemental Module Meeting 2, discuss the following questions as a group.

Session 2: Disability and Your Child
Giving your Child a Voice *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- As your child's caregiver, you help guide the direction of your child's development. During all stages of your child's life, you will be your child's best advocate and, in turn, will teach your child to advocate successfully for him or herself. As you learned in the module, you can help your child be a champion for him or herself by teaching your child how to have a voice and how to use that voice. In order to do this, you and your child need to understand what is important TO and FOR your child.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Has anyone used the TO and FOR template to outline what goals, accommodations, or activities are important to your child versus what goals, accommodations, or activities are important for your child? If so, would you like to discuss how using the template worked and what you learned from the experience?

____ Has anyone created a One-Pager with their child? If so, would you like to talk about how that experience went and with whom you shared the One-Pager?

Behavioral Supports *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Identifying supports for and with your child can be useful as you determine what supports are currently available and what supports will address specific needs, goals, and desires.
- You may find that you are often frustrated when others continually focus on perceived behavior issues that your child demonstrates. Remember, behavior is a way for your child to communicate. Typically, when a perceived behavior issue arises, your child is communicating that his or her needs are not being met at that time. Step back, and evaluate the entire situation.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ In Session 2, you completed an activity that was based on a family scenario that took place at the grocery store. What did you learn from completing this scenario?

____ What tools (e.g., Communication Chart: Listen to Behavior, Learning Log, Working and Not Working Sorter, 4+1 Questions) might you use to better understand what your child may be telling you when behavior challenges arise?

Social Supports *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Your child will experience many relationships throughout the course of his or her life. Finding a supportive community is as important as connecting with medical professionals and therapists. In Session 2, you reviewed the Relationship Circle and completed an activity related to your child.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ What did you discover from completing the activity and using the Relationship Circle tool? Who are the people with whom your child interacts?

____ Were you able to identify any casual relationships that you feel are worth exploring or any relationships that could be strengthened?

Educational Supports *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Your child's education is one of the most important areas of your child's life where you can advocate for your child. According to current laws, you are entitled to the following:
    - **A quality education for your child –** you and your child's school should collaborate to ensure your child receives an education that is suited to your child's needs and is offered in an environment that supports and encourages your child's development and well-being. This may mean that your child will learn in general education classrooms as much as possible.
    - **A role in decision-making –** you have a right to be informed and make comments or appeals regarding any major change that affects your child's educational programming.
    - **Access to records –** you have a right to examine your child's school records, including test results and explanations at any time.
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a document that describes the special services your child will receive to help your child meet his or her educational needs. The IEP acts as a contract that explicitly states the support(s) your child will receive to increase his or her school-related success.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Has anyone created an IEP for your child?

____ Would anyone like to discuss any of the obstacles or successes you have encountered during the processes of developing and carrying out your child's IEP?

Assistive Technologies *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- One support service that your child may need to utilize is assistive technology (AT). Examples of AT include the following: communication boards, special-purpose computers, prosthetics, wheelchairs, educational software, and screen readers.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Does anyone use any type of AT for your child?

____ What does your child use, and when does your child use it?

____ How is that AT working for your child?

Session 3: Disability Services and Your Child

Early Intervention Services *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- The search for support services can be challenging for parents, and it may seem like a daunting task. Remember, services are available at the local level or state level or both. Services you can access right after your child is born are the Early Intervention Services (EIS). These EIS are support services that are specifically designed to meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities. The goal of EIS is to help your child develop basic skills (i.e., physical, cognitive, social, and emotional) that typically evolve within the first 3 years of life.

Facilitator Tip

- Reference the ***EIS Fact Sheet.***

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Would anyone like to talk about any successes or challenges you have experienced when accessing EIS for your child?

____ Did anyone find and use any helpful tips regarding how to access benefits? Were there any tips that were specific for a military family?

____ Were there any available resources you found useful as you navigated specific services or benefits?

Home Practice with Therapeutic Activities Services *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- When transitioning to a new location, parents may find that wait times to receive services can be long. Therefore, parents can practice a variety of therapies with their children while they are searching for service options in their new location. In fact, many physical, occupational, and speech/language therapists encourage at-home practice with therapeutic activities in order to realize gains.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Does anyone engage in any physical, occupational, or speech/language therapies at home? If so, what therapies do you work on with your child, and how does participating in those therapies work within the constructs of your family?

____ Did anyone review the resources that are available in the module for the different types of therapies? Do you think you might try to use any of the resources and which ones?

Planning for the Future *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- As your child gets older, you will start to think about and wonder what steps are next for your child. From learning how to choose and then engage in activities to determining transition planning to postsecondary education or employment, parents need to remember that decisions should be planned WITH your child and not FOR your child.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ What are some of the hopes and goals you have for your child? What are some of the hopes and goals your child has for him or herself?

____ Has anyone begun the transition planning process in your family? If so, could you share tips on how to make this process move forward smoothly? Is anyone worried about transitions for your child?

____ What challenges have you encountered in planning for your child's future?

Wrap-Up *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- We hope you will continue to build on what you have learned in this module by developing goals and creating a plan with your child for his or her life. Include aspirations, ideas, and goals that are important to your child now. Incorporate lessons your child has learned from the past and dreams your child has for his or her future. Remember, this is a process. These tools are meant to act as visual aids for you and your child as your child discovers what it means to live his or her best life. Many of these activities are meant to be living documents, which means they will grow and change as your child grows and changes. We hope you will continue to use these tools, activities, and resources to support your child's development.

Wrap-Up Module Discussion: Summary Questions *(5 minutes)*

Tell participants you are wrapping up, and generate discussion among participants using all, or some, of the following questions:

- ____ Which topic discussed in the supplemental module was the most beneficial to you as a parent? Why?
- ____ What strategies or skills did you learn in the supplemental module that will help you achieve the goals you have for your child or your family?
- ____ What has changed in your interactions with your child since before completing the supplemental module?
- ____ Have you noticed a difference in the way your child is responding to your parenting?

Step 4: Direct to Additional Resources and/or Register for Additional Thrive Initiative Programming *(4 minutes)*

Provide support and encouragement to your participants to explore other Thrive Initiative programming. Share and/or register participants for any additional hybrid implementation options that you plan to offer. Thrive Initiative programming may include any of the following:

Universal Programs

- **Take Root** is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between 0 and 3 years old.
- **Sprout** is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between 3 and 5 years old.
- **Grow** is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between 5 and 10 years old.
- **Branch Out** is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between the ages of 10 and 18 years old.

Supplemental Modules

Additional supplemental modules are available on a variety of topics and can be accessed online at https://thrive.psu.edu/modules/supplemental/.

Encourage participants to continue to visit the Thrive website, https://thrive.psu.edu, as their child develops and grows. They can access additional resources and materials like mini-booster modules, blog postings, parenting handouts and guides, an inclusivity toolkit, and newsletters.

Step 5: Thank and Adjourn *(1 minute)*

Thank the participants for their involvement in the hybrid implementation group program.

Delivery Type 2: Supplemental Stand Alone

This encompasses the formation of a new group of families that consists of individuals who have participated in a Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting program

Intake and Introduction

Delivery Type 2: Supplemental Stand Alone

The following instructions are only relevant to the Supplemental Stand Alone hybrid implementation of the supplemental module. Because you are forming a new group, the participants will meet for three sessions, which begin with an Intake and Introduction Meeting. This meeting time will allow for rapport-building activities at the beginning of implementation, such as engaging in participant introductions and setting ground rules. Two overarching goals of implementing Thrive programming in a hybrid format are setting a positive tone and warmly engaging participants in the process.

Intake and Introduction *(60 minutes)*
Homework

Overview: Introduction Meeting *(60 minute session)*

Step 1: Welcome

Step 2: Provide Overview of the Supplemental Module

Step 3: Complete Introductions and /or Ice Breaker(s)

Step 4: Set or Remind Participants of the Ground Rules

Step 5: Review Syllabus

Step 6: Share Expectations

Step 7: Offer registration and Check for Online Content Access

Step 8: Assign Homework

Step 1: Welcome your Families *(10 minutes)*

Face-to-Face Meetings

- Welcome family members or families as they walk in the door. Smile, be friendly, and take a genuine interest in the participants and their comfort level.
- Consider preparing reusable name tags so you can call each person by name. You can collect the name tags at the end of the meeting for use at the second meeting or ask the participants to bring them back to the second meeting.
- Help each person get settled and comfortable in the space. Be certain to prepare in advance. For example, have ample tables/desks and chairs, and set them up in an arrangement that will promote eye contact and ease of conversation.
- Track attendance if needed.

Virtual Meetings

If you (acting as a delivery facilitator) choose to complete group meetings virtually, you should partner with a coordinating facilitator or a co-host. Your partner can help you with technological issues and serve as an additional point-of-contact for your families in case they have any technological issues when joining or participating in the virtual meeting. This assistance will allow you to fully focus on interacting with your families during the meetings, and it will ensure adequate support is available for those families who may need extra help with technology.

Open the virtual meeting space early so participants can test their computer technology (i.e., video and audio) before the start of the meeting. Consider using music and a simple message via screen share as a digital waiting room so families can troubleshoot their audio as they enter the virtual space. A screen share example can be found in *Appendix D*.

Welcome your families as they join the virtual platform. Encourage participants to have their camera on and to enter their preferred name in the platform so you can call each individual by name. You might also have a Chat box prompt available to encourage friendly interaction (e.g., ask participants to share the name and age of their child).

If you are tracking attendance, let your coordinating facilitator help you with this task.

Step 2: Provide an Overview of the Supplemental Module
(10 minutes)

Take time to discuss the following topics with your participants:

____ ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** is an online supplemental module for parents (and caregivers) of children who have a disability. This supplemental module addresses concerns caregivers may have about parenting children with disabilities and offers support and guidance.

____ Parenting a child who has a disability can be difficult sometimes. You may feel lonely. Throughout this program, we will provide information and offer tools and resources that you can use to help you maximize the rewarding times while facing challenges head-on. Remember, we want you to know that you are not alone. We will also provide parenting strategies that you can add to your "toolkit." You may already be using some of these strategies, or some of them may be new to you. Whatever your circumstances, we hope you will use the information we offer in these modules as an opportunity to learn, grow, and become a more confident and informed parent or caregiver.

____ During the online supplemental module sessions and throughout the hybrid implementation meetings, information and parenting strategies that parents can use and adapt, as necessary, to fit their individual circumstances and family needs will be disseminated. The supplemental module content is designed to help parents build on their existing skills and strategies, so they can effectively parent a child with a disability.

____ Some of the content that is read and practiced in the supplemental module and discussed in the hybrid implementation meetings might be familiar to the parents, and they may already know about and use the disseminated information. Therefore, they may use the meeting time as an opportunity to realize, appreciate, and share what already works for them, their child, and their family.

____ ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** is an online supplemental module for parents and caregivers of children with disabilities. It includes an overview, three sessions, and a wrap-up.

After participating in the online supplemental module sessions and the hybrid implementation meetings, parents and caregivers should be able to do the following:

- Connect with your feelings.
- Understand that taking time for yourself is necessary and appropriate.
- Build social-support systems.
- Find ways to give your child a voice.
- Understand your child's behaviors and use positive strategies to meet your child's needs.
- Work on building your child's gross and fine motor skills.
- Discover resources and technologies that are available for you and your child.
- Support your child's sexual learning and development.
- Plan for transitions and the future.

Step 3: Complete Introductions and Icebreakers *(10 minutes)*

Start with a brief and modest introduction of yourself. Share any expertise you have regarding child development and include any other relevant characteristics about yourself that can help you relate to your participants (e.g., community member, organization, military affiliation). Then, engage the group in a strengths-based icebreaker to build relationships. Have the participants introduce themselves and answer an icebreaker question.

Examples of introduction and icebreaker questions follow:

- ____ Tell me your name, your coparent's name(s), your child's name, your child's age, and (pick one of the following):
  - ____ what you enjoy most about parenting,
  - ____ a word you could use to describe one of your child's strengths,
  - ____ one aspect of your parent-child relationship that is working well,
  - ____ a skill you use effectively in your parenting, or
  - ____ an activity you enjoy doing with your child.

Facilitator Tip

- You can also start future meetings with an icebreaker if you find the families you are working with are reserved or quiet or would benefit from rapport building. Use your judgment, and avoid controversial topics. Note, for future meetings, consider using new or unused icebreakers from the list above.

Step 4: Set Ground Rules *(5 minutes)*

Stating some ground rules and, then, brainstorming a few together as a group may help families feel safe and supported as they share their parenting journey. You can start the brainstorming by offering a few sample ground rules, such as the following:

- **You will always start on time.**
- **You will always end on time.**
- **You will turn your cell phone on vibrate and would like everyone else to do the same.**
- **If group members must take a call, let them know they may quietly excuse themselves from the room (mute themselves if in a virtual meeting).**

Other rules you may come up with, as a group, include the following:

- Adopt an open and supportive stance. Avoid judgment about other participants' parenting. We are all learning new parenting strategies and gaining new knowledge!
- One person speaks at a time.
- Assume positive intent.
- Use a respectful tone.
- Celebrate small wins when practicing new parenting skills!

This is also a good time to discuss with your participants your organization's confidentiality clauses. Briefly explain how mandated reporting requirements apply to statements made by participants related to child abuse or neglect.

Things to Cover:

Enter your notes here

Ground Rules Set at Meeting:

Enter your notes here

Step 5: Review Syllabus *(5 minutes)*

Provide copies or screen share a copy of the *Parent Workbook and Syllabus* for the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module. Review the Summary of Training, and highlight the section where the participants can find pertinent information.

Supplemental Module Meeting 1 should be scheduled ***at least 1 week after the Intake/ Introduction Meeting has occurred.*** This timing allows your participants 1 week to complete the supplemental module content for the *Overview* and *Session 1: Disability and You* and gives them time to practice some of the strategies they have learned.

Step 6: Set Expectations *(5 minutes)*

Set realistic expectations with your participants. Let them know they will be asked to independently complete the online supplemental module and come to meetings ready for discussion. Because the participants will be independently completing the module sessions, you must ensure your participants complete the supplemental module in its entirety. By completing the module, participants will gain valuable knowledge from the content and interaction activities.

In the two following meetings, you will use content, covered in the supplemental module, to facilitate interaction that provides participants with opportunities for community building, reflection, and discussion with you and other participants who are trying to successfully navigate parenting a child with a disability.

Step 7: [If needed] Registration and Check for Online Content Access *(5 minutes)*

Complete any registration requirements for your organization. Then, explain how participants can access the supplemental module online. Offer support to help with any technological questions. All participants will have previously set up a Thrive Initiative account, but you need to ensure they can log in and find the information they need to get started or progress in the supplemental module.

Step 8: Assign Homework *(5 minutes)*

Ask participants to complete the following module sessions from the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module content in advance of the second meeting:

- Introduction
- Session 1: Disability and You

If possible, show the pages in the of the Parent Workbook and Syllabus for the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module. Encourage your participants to complete all of the exercises and discussion questions for the assignments prior to each of the meetings.

Meeting 1

Discuss the Module's Overview and Session 1

Meeting *(60 minutes)*
Homework

Overview of Meeting 1

Step 1: Provide Reintroduction

Step 2: Restate the Ground Rules

Step 3: Start Discussion

Step 4: Assign Homework

Step 5: Adjourn

Meeting 1 | Discuss the Module's Overview and Session 1

Step 1: Allow Families an Opportunity to Reintroduce Themselves *(3 minutes)*

Lead a quick, fun, or positive icebreaker for additional community building. Revisit the list from the Intake/Introduction Meeting section, and incorporate an icebreaker that was not used during that meeting.

Step 2: Restate the Ground Rules *(2 minutes)*

Review the ground rules previously brainstormed, and ask if any new rules need to be added.

Step 3: Start Discussion *(50 minutes)*

During Supplemental Module Meeting 1, discuss the following questions as a group.

Overview
Welcome and Introduction *(10 minutes)*

Provide an overview of the supplemental module using the following points that are taught in the supplemental module:

- Parenting a child with a disability can be difficult sometimes. You may feel lonely. Always remember that you are not alone.
- Whatever your circumstances, we hope the information that is offered in these modules can provide you with an opportunity to learn, grow, and become a more confident and informed parent or caregiver.

Ask the following question, and solicit answers from a few participants to generate discussion:

____ In the module, you were asked to consider what dreams you have for your child and what you hope to gain from this course. Who would like to share their thoughts?

Session 1: Disability and You

Understanding Disability *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- **As outlined in the module, let's think about what disability IS and IS NOT.**
  - o Disability IS NOT a label, a box to fit into or a reflection of your parenting.
  - o Disability IS natural and diverse and can be a pathway that allows for connection to resources.
- If you have a child with a disability, your child will still go through many of the typical developmental stages. However, your child may not go through these phases in the same way or in the same timeframe as other children who do not have disabilities experience them. In the end, your child will reach his or her own milestones throughout the course of life.
- The distinctiveness of this parenting journey may cause you to reflect on your own parenting skills, whether you are a new parent or have older children. That reflection may cause you to have a variety of feelings. All of those feelings are valid.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from a few participants to generate discussion:

Session 1 asked you to consider your feelings about your child's delays or diagnoses. Would anyone like to share any or all of the following:

____ What were your initial feelings when you received your child's diagnosis? What were your first concerns as you considered what your child's delays may be and what they may mean for your family?

____ What are some unique pathways that your child has taken to reach developmental milestones and how have you assisted your child in accomplishing those goals? (e.g., learned sign language for better communication, received physical therapy services to enhance gross motor skill or occupational therapy for fine motor skill development).

____ What are some feelings that you associate with raising your child? Why do you think you feel that way?

The Importance of Self-Care *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Taking care of a child with disability can be difficult. However, to be the best parent you can be, you must also allow yourself to be cared for and engage in self-care. You are filling roles in addition to just caring for your child, you are acting as a teacher, therapist, and nurse—just to name a few. Taking time to care for yourself can involve watching a sporting event, getting a manicure, reading a book, having someone bring you a meal, or enjoying a night out.
- Let's review the 6 R's from the module.
  1. Remember: Parenting can be difficult.
  2. Recognize: You are not perfect, and that is okay.
  3. Relax: Take a minute and take a breath!
  4. Recharge: Enjoy guilt-free time away from parenting responsibilities.
  5. Reconnect: Establish and maintain support systems.
  6. Relish: Be sure to celebrate!

Ask the following question, and solicit answers from a few participants to generate discussion:

____ Who here tends to put themselves last? Why do you think you do that?

Remember: Parenting can be challenging *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Parenting is always challenging, and challenges may reach new heights when you are parenting a child with a disability.
- You may experience moments when you need to make decisions that leave you questioning everything you thought you knew about parenting.
- Trust yourself to have made the best decision, be confident in that decision, and take comfort in moving on. Doing this may be easier said than done, but taking these steps is worth trying!

Ask the following question, and solicit answers from a few participants to generate discussion:

- ____ What is a difficult decision that you have made regarding your child's care? What did you learn from making that decision?

Recognize: You're not perfect, and that's okay *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Nobody is perfect and all parents make mistakes. Be sure you acknowledge the strengths you possess as a parent and recognize your willingness to learn new skills and strategies. Appreciate the uniqueness of your child, and know your child's strengths and challenges.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

- ____ Would anyone like to discuss a time, or times, when you made a parenting mistake? How did that experience feel?
- ____ Did anyone write the Letter of Forgiveness to yourself? How did that activity go?
- ____ What would someone else say is one of your greatest strengths as a parent?

Relax: Take a breath! *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- The module provided two techniques for taking time to relax and focus and a resource that contains information on additional techniques and strategies for taking a breath.

Ask the following question, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Did anyone try a new technique? What did you try? How did it feel?

Recharge: Enjoy guilt-free time away from parenting responsibilities

(5 minutes)

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- As a parent, sometimes you need to take a break from childrearing responsibilities. Leaving your child with a trusted caregiver is okay; so, go ahead and enjoy life outside of your home and away from your child. This might include a spa day, a date night, or a weekend getaway.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ In what ways have you been able to practice self-care? What activities do you enjoy doing and that recharge you?

____ Do you have any tips that you've used for taking time and recharging yourself that you can discuss with the group?

____ What challenges prevent you from engaging in activities that refresh or rejuvenate you? How can you overcome those barriers?

Reconnect: Support systems are essential to healthy parenting

(5 minutes)

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Having a Circle of Support network for you and your family that includes in-person and virtual support systems is essential to healthy parenting. While every journey is unique, surrounding ourselves with others reminds us that we are not alone.

Ask the following question, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Who completed the Circle of Support activity? Who is part of your Circle of Support?

Facilitator Tip

- If participants mention they have no Circle of Support, encourage them to think about how they can make connections with others in their community [e.g., parents, spiritual leaders] and whom those "others" could be.

Relish: Celebrate everything—big achievements and small milestones

(5 minutes)

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Remember, take the time to celebrate all of the accomplishments you and your child make as you navigate steps in your journey!

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ What do you, your child, and your family like to celebrate? How do you celebrate?

____ If you don't currently celebrate achievements and milestones, how might you consider building these accomplishments into your family routines?

Step 4: Assign Homework *(3 minutes)*

Ask your participants to complete the following supplemental module sessions before your next meeting:

- Session 2 (Disability and Your Child)
- Session 3 (Disability Services and Your Child)
- Wrap-Up

Step 5: Adjourn *(2 minutes)*

Thank the participants for their involvement in Meeting 1 and reiterate the date and time of Meeting 2.

Supplemental Module Meeting 2 should be scheduled **at least 1 week after *Supplemental Module Meeting 1* has occurred.** This timing allows your participants 1 week to complete the supplemental module content for *Session 2 (Disability and Your Child)*, *Session 3 (Disability Services and Your Child)*, and the *Wrap-Up* section.

The *Wrap-Up* section provides time for the participants to practice some of the strategies they have learned and reflect on their progress in achieving their parenting goals. In addition, during this meeting, the supplemental module content is wrapped up, and additional resources are provided.

Meeting 2

Discussion of Sessions 2 and 3 and the Wrap-Up and Resource Sharing

Meeting *(60 minutes)*
Homework *(none)*

Overview of Meeting 2

Step 1: Provide an Icebreaker

Step 2: Restate the Ground Rules

Step 3: Start Discussion

Step 4: Direct to Additional Resources/Register for Additional Thrive Initiative Programming

Step 5: Thank and Adjourn

Meeting 2 | Discussion of Sessions 2 and 3 and the Wrap-Up and Resource Sharing

Step 1: Engage Families in an Icebreaker Activity *(4 minutes)*

Lead a quick, fun, or positive icebreaker for additional community building. Revisit the list from the Intake Meeting section, and incorporate an icebreaker that was not used during the earlier meetings.

Step 2: Restate the Ground Rules *(15 minutes)*

Review the ground rules previously brainstormed, and ask if any new rules need to be added.

Step 3: Start Discussion *(50 minutes)*

During Supplemental Module Meeting 2, discuss the following questions as a group.

Session 2: Disability and Your Child
Giving your Child a Voice *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- As your child's caregiver, you help guide the direction of your child's development. During all stages of your child's life, you will be your child's best advocate and, in turn, will teach your child to advocate successfully for him or herself. As you learned in the module, you can help your child be a champion for him or herself by teaching your child how to have a voice and how to use that voice. In order to do this, you and your child need to understand what is important TO and FOR your child.

Ask the following questions and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

_____ Has anyone used the TO and FOR template to outline what goals, accommodations, or activities are important to your child versus what goals, accommodations, or activities are important for your child? If so, would you like to discuss how using the template worked and what you learned from the experience?

Has anyone created a One-Pager with your child? If so, would you like to talk about how that experience went and with whom you shared the One-Pager?

Behavioral Supports *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Identifying supports for and with your child can be useful as you determine what supports are currently available and what supports will address specific needs, goals, and desires.
- You may find that you are often frustrated when others continually focus on perceived behavior issues that your child demonstrates. Remember, behavior is a way for your child to communicate. Typically, when a perceived behavior issue arises, your child is communicating that his or her needs are not being met at that time. Step back, and evaluate the entire situation.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

In Session 2, you completed an activity that was based on a family scenario that took place at the grocery store. What did you learn from completing this scenario?

What tools (e.g., Communication Chart: Listen to Behavior, Learning Log, Working and Not Working Sorter, 4+1 Questions) might you use to better understand what your child may be telling you when behavior challenges arise?

Social Supports *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Your child will experience many relationships throughout the course of his or her life. Finding a supportive community is as important as connecting with medical professionals and therapists. In Session 2, you reviewed the Relationship Circle and completed an activity related to your child.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ What did you discover from completing the activity and using the Relationship Circle tool? Who are the people with whom your child interacts?

____ Were you able to identify any casual relationships that you feel are worth exploring or any relationships that could be strengthened?

Educational Supports *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- Your child's education is one of the most important areas of your child's life where you can advocate for your child. According to current laws, you are entitled to the following:
    - **A quality education for your child –** you and your child's school should collaborate to ensure your child receives an education that is suited to your child's needs and is offered in an environment that supports and encourages your child's development and well-being. This may mean that your child will learn in general education classrooms as much as possible.
    - **A role in decision-making –** you have a right to be informed and make comments or appeals regarding any major change that affects your child's educational programming.
    - **Access to records –** you have a right to examine your child's school records, including test results and explanations at any time.
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a document that describes the special services your child will receive to help your child meet his or her educational needs. The IEP acts as a contract that explicitly states the support(s) your child will receive to increase his or her school-related success.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Has anyone created an IEP for your child?

____ Would anyone like to discuss any of the obstacles or successes you encountered during the processes of developing and carrying out your child's IEP?

Assistive Technologies *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- One support service that your child may need to utilize is assistive technology (AT). Examples of AT include the following: communication boards, special-purpose computers, prosthetics, wheelchairs, educational software, and screen readers.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

- ____ Does anyone use any type of AT for your child?
- ____ What does your child use, and when does your child use it?
- ____ How is that AT working for your child?

Session 3: Disability Services and Your Child

Early Intervention Services *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- The search for support services can be challenging for parents, and it may seem like a daunting task. Remember, services are available at the local level or state level or both. Services you can access right after your child is born are the Early Intervention Services (EIS). These EIS are support services that are specifically designed to meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities. The goal of EIS is to help your child develop basic skills (i.e., physical, cognitive, social, and emotional) that typically evolve within the first 3 years of life.

Facilitator Tip

- Reference the ***EIS Fact Sheet.***

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Would anyone like to talk about any successes or challenges you have experienced when accessing EIS for your child?

____ Did anyone find and use any helpful tips regarding how to access benefits? Were there any tips that were specific for a military family?

____ Were there any available resources you found useful as you navigated specific services or benefits?

Home Practice with Therapeutic Activities Services *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- When transitioning to a new location, parents may find that wait times to receive services can be long. Therefore, parents can practice a variety of therapies with their children while they are searching for service options in their new location. In fact, many physical, occupational, and speech/language therapists encourage at-home practice with therapeutic activities in order to realize gains.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ Does anyone engage in any physical, occupational, or speech/language therapies at home? If so, what therapies do you work on with your child, and how does participating in those therapies work within the constructs of your family?

____ Did anyone review the resources that are available in the module for the different types of therapies? Do you think you might try to use any of the resources and which ones?

Planning for the Future *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- As your child gets older, you will start to think about and wonder what steps are next for your child. From learning how to choose and then engage in activities to determining transition planning to postsecondary education or employment, parents need to remember that decisions should be planned WITH your child and not FOR your child.

Ask the following questions, and solicit answers from participants to generate discussion:

____ What are some of the hopes and goals you have for your child? What are some of the hopes and goals your child has for him or herself?

____ Has anyone begun the transition planning process in their family? If so, could you share tips on how to make this process move forward smoothly? Is anyone worried about transitions for your child?

____ What challenges have you encountered in planning for your child's future?

Wrap-Up *(5 minutes)*

Review this section of the module with the participants by offering the following information:

- We hope you will continue to build on what you have learned in this module by developing goals and creating a plan with your child for his or her life. Include aspirations, ideas, and goals that are important to your child now. Incorporate lessons your child has learned from the past and dreams your child has for his or her future. Remember, this is a process. These tools are meant to act as visual aids for you and your child as your child discovers what it means to live his or her best life. Many of these activities are meant to be living documents, which means they will grow and change as your child grows and changes. We hope you will continue to use these tools, activities, and resources to support your child's development.

Wrap-Up Module Discussion: Summary Questions *(5 minutes)*

Tell participants you are wrapping up, and generate discussion among participants using all, or some, of the following questions:

- ____ Which topic discussed in the supplemental module was the most beneficial to you as a parent? Why?
- ____ What strategies or skills did you learn in the supplemental module that will help you achieve the goals you have for your child or your family?
- ____ What has changed in your interactions with your child since before completing the supplemental module?
- ____ Have you noticed a difference in the way your child is responding to your parenting?

Step 4: Direct to Additional Resources and/or Register for Additional Thrive Initiative Programming *(4 minutes)*

Provide support and encouragement to your participants to explore other Thrive Initiative programming. Offer information about and/or register participants for any additional hybrid implementation options that you plan to provide. Thrive Initiative programming may include any of the following:

Universal Programs

- **Take Root** is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between 0 and 3 years old.
- **Sprout** is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between 3 and 5 years old.
- **Grow** is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between 5 and 10 years old.
- **Branch Out** is available for parents and caregivers of children who are between the ages of 10 and 18 years old.

Supplemental Modules

Additional supplemental modules are available on a variety of topics and can be accessed online at https://thrive.psu.edu/modules/supplemental/.

Encourage participants to continue to visit the Thrive website, https://thrive.psu.edu, as their child develops and grows. They can access additional resources and materials like mini-booster modules, blog postings, parenting handouts and guides, an inclusivity toolkit, and newsletters.

Step 5: Thank and Adjourn *(1 minute)*

Thank the participants for their involvement in the hybrid implementation group program.

Appendices

Appendix A

Exceptional Families Recruitment Poster

thrive

exceptional families

Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.

A supplemental parent-education module that is designed to offer support to parents and caregivers of children with a disability.

Gain knowledge, skills, and strategies in the following areas:

- **positive parenting practices,**
- **stress management, and**
- **child physical-health promotion.**

Learn more about *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* and other Thrive programs at: https://thrive.psu.edu/

Meet with us!

Date: Tuesday, August 3rd

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: (Link if virtual)

Point of Contact: Name and Contact Information

Appendix B

Exceptional Families Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet

Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.

Hybrid Implementation Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Participant Name	**Email Address**	**Child's Date of Birth**	**Today's Date**	**Child's Calculated Age (Years)**	**Exceptional Families Parent Welcome Letter - Date Sent**	**Thrive Account Registration Confirmed (Y/N)**	**Registration in Hybrid Implementation Confirmed (Y/N)**	**Parent Workbook and Syllabus Sent**
Example, Participant	*email@address.com*	*3/11/19*	*5/30/25*	*6 Years*	*4/14/25*	*Yes*	*Yes*	☑

Instructions for Completing the *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet

The goal of this tracking sheet is to track individuals who would like more information about the hybrid implementation of *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* and to provide information about the dates and times for meetings.

Download the Participant Recruitment and Tracking Sheet

Ensure you are following your organization's privacy protocols with all of the information that is collected and stored. You can complete this form on a computer or print it to handwrite your responses. You may also choose to move the data to a spreadsheet.

Complete Columns 1-4

- Enter the potential participant's name, email address, child's date of birth, and today's date.
- If the potential participant has multiple children, enter the date of birth for the focal child (i.e., the child who the participant is focusing on with *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*).

Complete Columns 5 [Optional]

- To calculate the age, you can use an online age calculator.
- If the age is close to a cut-off, you may need to check in with the participant after they have registered for a Thrive account and have reviewed the introduction video to confirm that *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* is the correct program for their family.

Complete Columns 6-8

- Send the *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together. Parent Welcome Letter* to the email address provided, and enter the date the *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together. Parent Welcome Letter* is sent.
    - By sending the *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together. Parent Welcome Letter*, you are providing potential participants the information they need to make a decision about attending the hybrid implementation, such as the date, time, and location of meetings. It also provides information about how to create an account on the Thrive website.
- Encourage participants to create a Thrive account and enroll in *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* supplemental module.
- Follow up with potential participants to see if they would like to register and attend the hybrid implementation of *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*

Complete Column 9

Send the *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together. Parent Workbook and Syllabus*.

Appendix C

Exceptional Families Parent Welcome Letter

exceptional families

Welcome to Exceptional Families.

Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.

Overview of Thrive Initiative

Thrive is a group of parenting programs that are designed to help you, a parent or caregiver, as you care for your child—from pregnancy until your child reaches 18 years of age. There are four online parenting programs that are part of the Thrive Initiative. The intent of the supplemental modules is to build on information and strategies discussed in the four universal Thrive parenting programs — Take Root, Sprout, Grow, Branch Out. Therefore, by participating in the age-appropriate Thrive parenting program before engaging with any of the supplemental modules, you will reap the most benefits.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Thrive Initiative Program Areas</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Universal Parenting Programs</th></tr>
<tr><th>Take Root</th><th>Sprout</th><th>Grow</th><th>Branch Out</th></tr>
<tr><td>Infants
(0 to 6 months)</td><td rowspan="3">Preschool
(3 to 5 years)</td><td rowspan="3">Grades K–5
(5 to 10 years)</td><td rowspan="3">Grades 6–12
(10 to 18 years)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Infants
(6 to 12 months)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Infants & Toddlers
(1 to 3 years)</td></tr>
</table>

All Thrive programs share knowledge, skills, and strategies within three areas:

- positive parenting practices,
- stress management, and
- child physical-health promotion.

Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together. Online

Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together. is an online supplemental parent-education for parents and caregivers of a child who has a disability. Parents and caregivers will learn strategies, gather insights, and develop tools they can use to help maximize the rewarding times they enjoy with their child while facing challenges head-on. When you sign up for an online Thrive account, there are tools that can help you choose the best track for you and your child. Since *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* is online, you can complete it at your own pace.

Hybrid Implementation of *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*

The hybrid implementation of *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* means you will complete the program based on a schedule. After you complete the assigned sessions, you will meet with a facilitator and, possibly, other families to discuss the information from the sessions.

There are 2 – 3 meetings with a facilitator. Each meeting will range from 45 – 60 minutes.

Exceptional Families - Date/Time/Location
Hybrid Implementation

ENTER OVERVIEW HERE (Example Shown)
Exceptional Families
June 1, 2025 through July 7, 2025
Every Monday from 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. EST
Building 800 Room 15

Expectations

You will be asked to independently participate in online sessions of ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** and come to meetings ready for discussion. By completing the sessions and activities and answering provided questions, you will be prepared to engage in discussion regarding the content, ask additional questions, and learn from other parents and caregivers and their experiences.

How to Create a Thrive Account

- **Visit** https://thrive.psu.edu/ **➔ Navigate to "For Parents"➔ Go to "Register for THRIVE online" ➔ Click "Sign Up."**
- **Enter your name, create a username and password, and share your military affiliation (Yes/No).**
- **Log In ➔ Choose *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* by selecting *Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.* Overview and then selecting "Start Course."**

Still have Questions? Contact your Facilitator!

Exceptional Families Facilitator's Name

ENTER NAME HERE

Phone Number/Email

ENTER CONTACT INFO HERE

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (DoD MC&FP) and the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State (Clearinghouse).
All programs are available free of charge.

Appendix D

Exceptional Families Screen Share Text Example

Thank you for joining our meeting for

exceptional families
Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.

The meeting will start at **12:00 p.m. EST**

You should hear soft music playing.

Take this opportunity to test your microphone, video, and other settings.

If you need technical assistance:

Email **TA@email.com** *or*

Call **TA Person** at **X-XXX-XXXX**

Appendix E

Best Practices for Online Learning

Best Practices for Online Learning

You can enhance your experience during this training by doing the following:

Joining the meeting early to test settings.

Testing your technology with a friend or family member prior to your meeting.

Finding a quiet place to complete the meetings.

Using a headset or headphones for voice clarity.

Knowing who to contact, and how, if you cannot connect or are having technical difficulties.

Having a backup plan if your computer won't connect to the meeting. Perhaps there is a call-in number you could use so you can hear the meeting.