

DIGGING DEEPER

SYSTEMS THINKING



Using Resources to Deepen Your Understanding Systems Thinking in Early Childhood

DIGGING IN



Resource: The Waters Foundation

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<http://watersfoundation.org/systems-thinking/habits-of-a-systems-thinker/>

Follow the link above to access an interactive set of *Habits of a Systems Thinker* cards. You can read descriptions and respond to questions by clicking on each card.

ACTIVITY

Choose one of the following habits that were identified and discussed in this bundle:

- Seeks to understand the big picture
- Changes perspectives to increase understanding
- Considers how mental models affect current reality and the future
- Fully considers an issue and resists the urge to come to a quick conclusion

On the card, read the questions associated with that habit. Then choose one question to think through on your own or with a group. For example, if you choose "Considers an issue fully," you might think about this question from the card: "How can we manage the tension that exists when issues are not resolved immediately?"

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- What is one small change you can make in your practice to consciously use this habit?
- How can you and your coworkers support each other in using this habit?

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Resource: The Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Program Guidelines

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/itguidelines.pdf>

Systems thinking habits expand your capacity to effectively use the information gathered in program assessments. Considering the big picture, seeking out multiple perspectives, surfacing your assumptions, and paying attention to how behavior changes over time can enrich your continuous quality improvement efforts on behalf of children and families.

ACTIVITY

Read “5.3: Programs engage in systematic self-assessment” on pp. 80–81.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What suggestions did you find for conducting program self-assessments?
- What are some of the benefits of systematic self-assessments? How can this information be used to promote program quality?

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- What systems do you have in place to help you consider multiple perspectives (family members, program assistants, allied professionals, and others) and think below the surface of your work?
- How can you gather information about family satisfaction in your program? What would you include in a behavior-over-time graph if you were going to track this information?