"Conscious Parent Academy –
Replacement parents urgently needed!"
(Program Erasmus+ 2020-1-PL01-KA204–
082283)

Working with children with special/different needs:

Managing the child relationship with other / Managing personal feelings and competencies.

1st March 2023

Managing the child well-being and needs:
Building competencies to support children's development

Early Intervention
(Intervenção Precoce)

○ When we talk about children with special needs, we need to talk about **early intervention (in Portuguese, *Intervenção Precoce*).**

  ○ This is an intervention aiming at providing support and resources to families of children under the age of 6, which may have a developmental delay or incapacity, or are at great risk for one of these situations due to biological or environmental conditions.

  ○ It utilizes a family-centered approach to the intervention, providing families with the necessary competencies and abilities to promote the children development and deal/overcome their disability and developmental delays.

(ANIP & FCG, 2015)

Why a family-centered approach?

"After all the suffering that is inherent in the situation of a child being born with special needs, with surgeries in between, and the permanent physical illness of our son, we saw for the first time a light at the end of the tunnel of what our son's future looked like. We first heard the expression, "family-centered intervention". Because a family that participates and is held accountable equals not one or two hours a week of intervention but endless hours of intervention. Finally hope for the future grew in us, and we became aware that we were in mourning since the day of our son's birth. Mourning for the frustration of our dreams and of the dreams we had built for our son."

Testimony of a family that benefits from Early Intervention *(IP)*.

○ **Parents, families and caregivers are active partners** in the development and implementation of the intervention process.

○ It is **provided in the natural contexts of the child** and it is **tailored to each child,** family and community.

○ The early intervention professional helps the family, through support and resources, **increasing the level of security, emotional/psychological well-being, self-efficacy perception, empowerment and family capacitation.**

This is a way to increase the efficacy of the evaluation and intervention process.

(ANIP & FCG, 2015)

Tools for Early Intervention with families: "Ecomap"

The Ecomap is a graphic representation of a family's connections to the people and social structures of the environment in which it lives, drawing out its "ecological system".

○ It **identifies a family's organizational patterns and the nature of its relationships** with the environment, illustrating the balance between the family's needs and the family's resources.

○ Illustrates different dimensions for each connection:

Strength of the connection (weak; tenuous/uncertain; strong).

Quality of the bond (stressful or not).

○ It allows for:

Better understanding of the **situations that generate stress** and the resources available.

Consistent information to **plan intervention decisions, with the involvement of the family.**

Observation of the **progress of intervention measures**, both on the family and the environment.
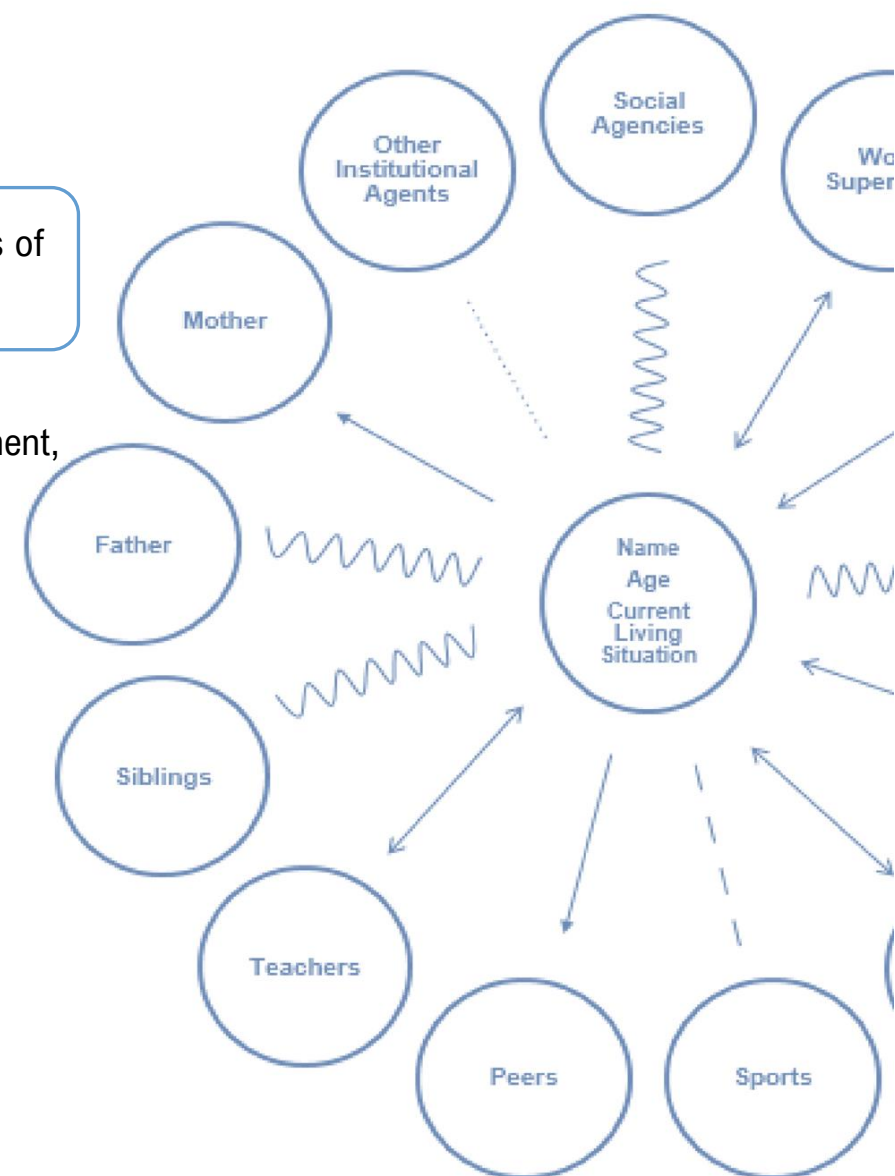
Tools for Early Intervention with families: Building an "Ecomap"

What should be included:

○ **The neighborhood** (the physical area where the house is located).

○ **Services in the community** (medical, mental health, drug addiction, domestic violence protection…).

○ **Social groups** (church; civic groups - parents' committee, social groups - card games, walks...).

○ **Education.**

○ **Significant personal relationships** (friends, neighbors, extended family…).

○ **Work.**

○ **Others** (specific to the family and the area in which you live).
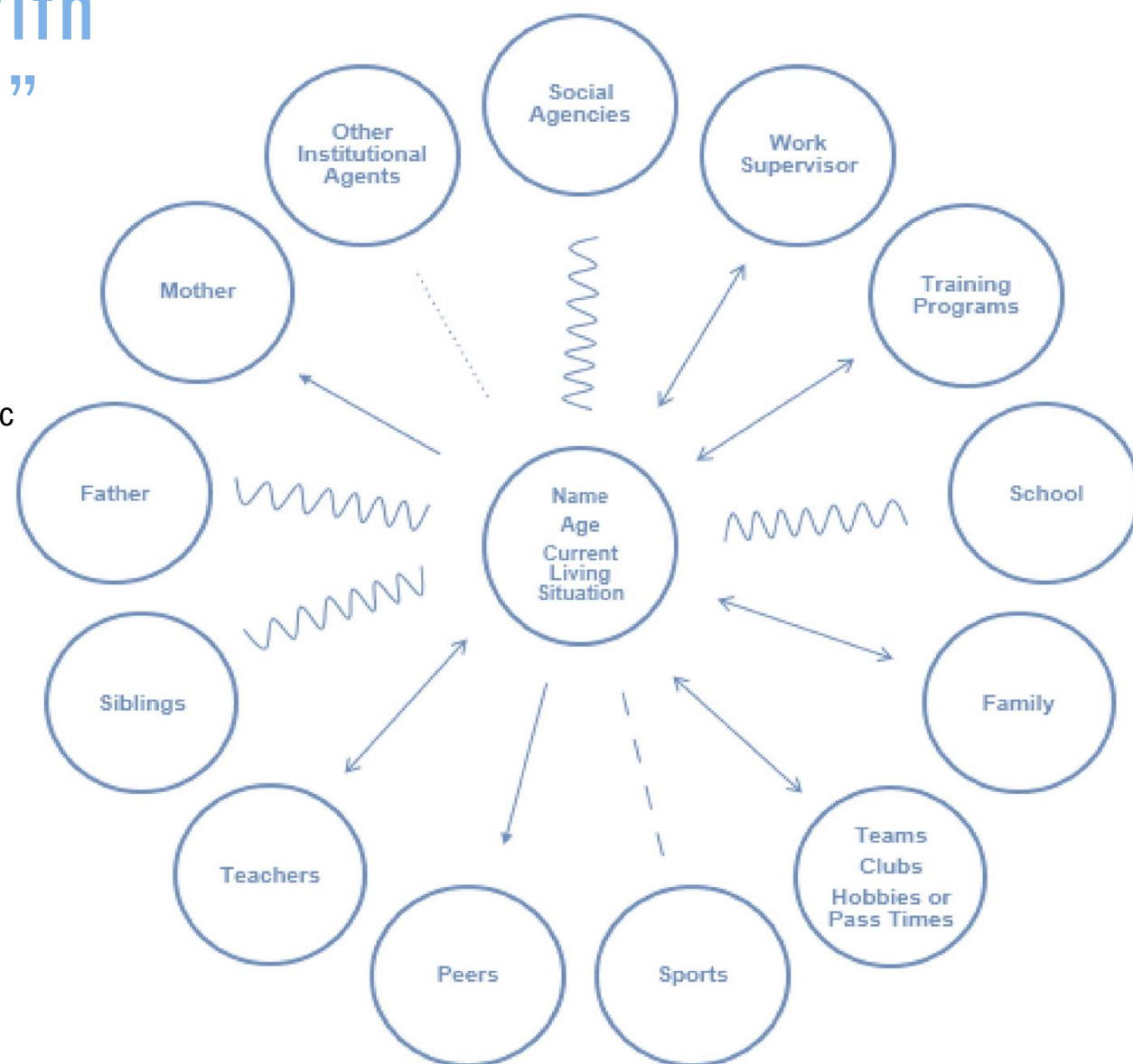
Tools for Early Intervention with families: Building an "Ecomap"

○ **The family is represented in the center with a circle larger than the others** around it, which represent the other systems (e.g., extended family, work, neighborhood, religion, friends, school, hobbies ...).

○ The **number of these circles can be different from family to family**.

○ **The central circle**, which contains the family, **must connect to all the other circles**.

○ This **connection is represented according to the type of relationship**:

     Thick trace - strong, important and positive connection

     Normal trace – Neutral connections/relationships
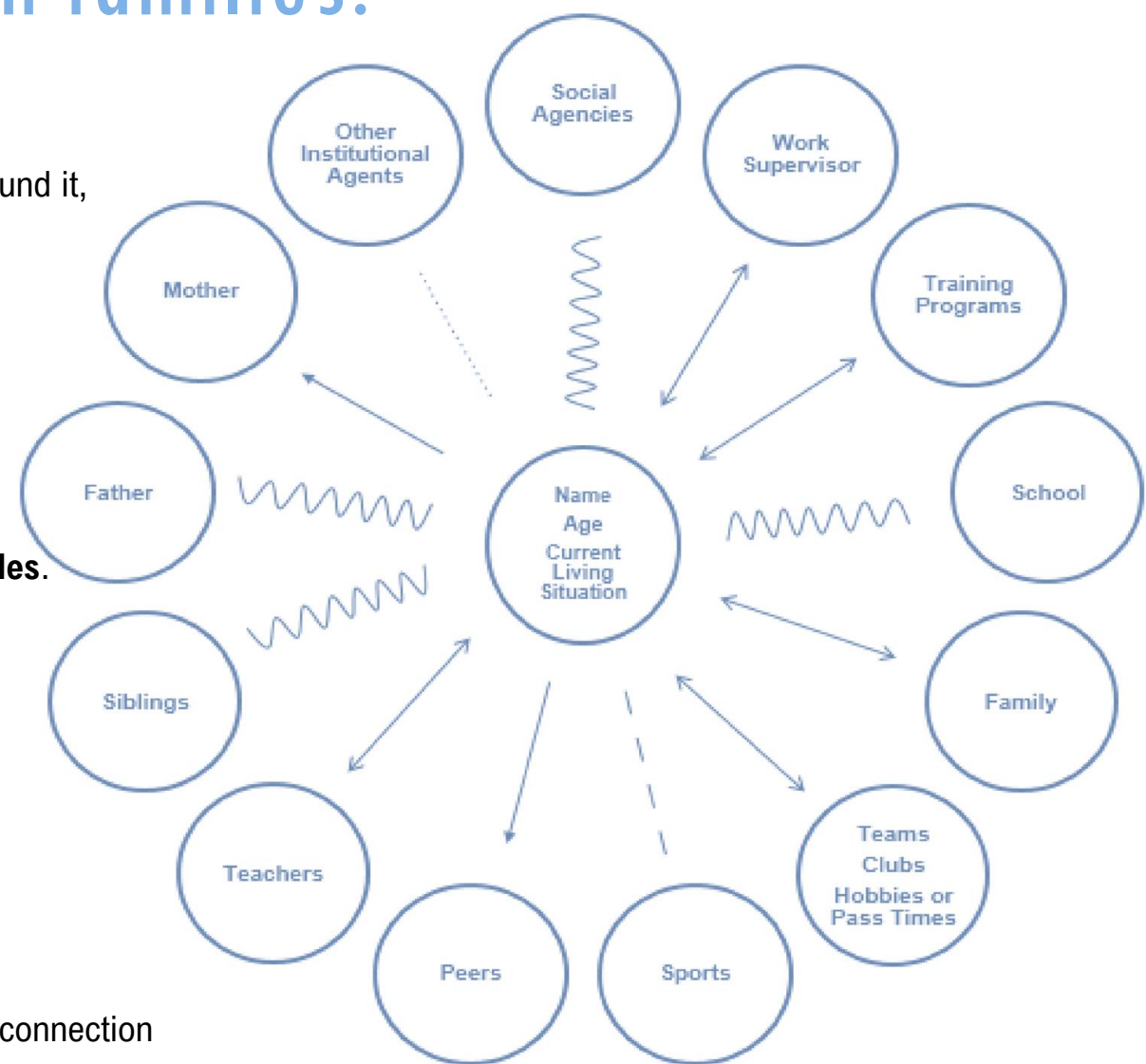
     Discontinuous line - weak connection/relationships

     Continuous line cut by successive oblique lines - tense and conflictual connection

     Reciprocal relationships, with energy and resources trade

Exercise: Build your own Ecomap

○ **The family is represented in the center with a circle larger than the others** around it, which represent the other systems (e.g., extended family, work, neighborhood, religion, friends, school, hobbies ...).

○ The **number of these circles can be different from family to family**.

○ **The central circle**, which contains the family, **must connect to all the other circles**.

○ This **connection is represented according to the type of relationship**:

    Thick trace - strong, important and positive connection

    Normal trace – Neutral connections/relationships

    Discontinuous line - weak connection/relationships

    Continuous line cut by successive oblique lines - tense and conflictual connection

    Reciprocal relationships, with energy and resources trade.

Exercise:
Case Study – Gordon Family

In the story of this child and this family there are no absolute rights or wrongs. There is, however, a journey made by an Early Intervention Technician (E.I.P.) who tries to help a family follow a certain path, certainly different from the one they would have followed without her help.

There are difficulties and concerns that lead to the development of different strategies, flexible and adequate to the family's needs and preferences.

Underlying E.I.P.'s action are certain practices aiming to give strength and empower this family.

This story is intended as an opportunity to reflect on the problem-solving capacity.

After reading and carefully analysing the different aspects of this story, you are invited to share your thoughts and views, and answer the questions as a group.

# Exercise: Instructions for the exercise

Before you begin:

o Read individually the story of the Gordon Family (10');

o Form two groups of Travellers who rotate around the tables (10' per table).

o Choose two Table Hosts - one person who stays at each table.

What should the Table Hosts do?

o Stay at the same table while the Travellers rotate.

o Stimulate dialogue, encourage, and help the Travellers to write and draw on the cardboard the main connections, ideas, discoveries and deeper questions as they arise.

o In each round, share with new members the summary of key ideas and the previous conversation so that they can make connections and build on previous ideas from that table.

o At the end of the rounds, together with the traveller group collect the key ideas, findings, relevant issues, and conclusions from both groups.

o Use another card to synthesize and make visible (through writing, drawings, or diagrams) the key ideas and connections.

o Share with the large group the ideas and the process for arriving at them (from each group).

What should the Travellers do?

o Identify what is important

o Contribute with thoughts and reflections.

o Listen to learn.

o Make associations and link ideas.

o Practice mutual and active listening and discover ideas, themes, and deeper questions.

o Make notes, scribbles, and drawings on the card.

o Move on to the next table.
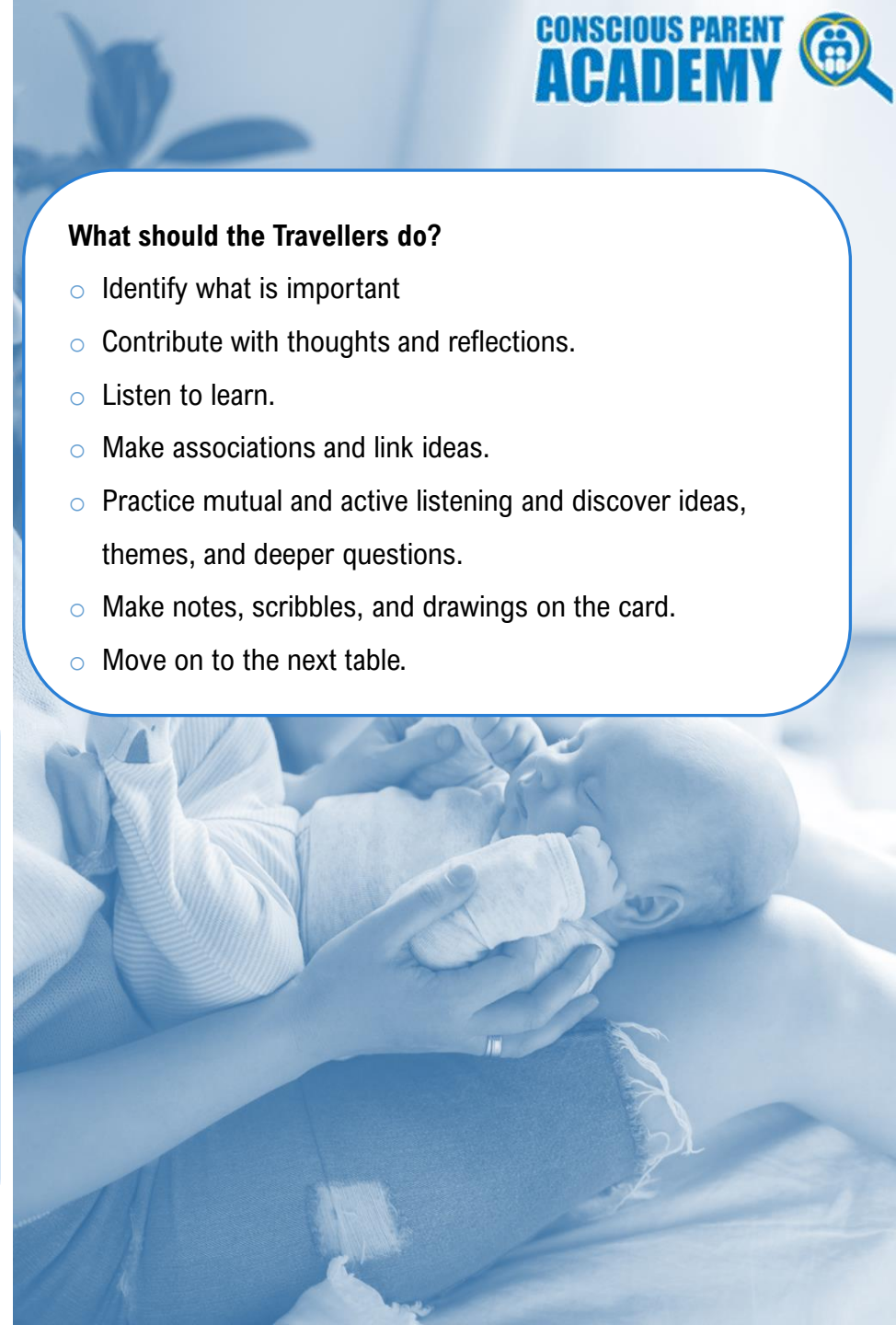
Exercise: Case Study – Gordon Family

The Gordon family consists of:

○ George (39 years old) – father; finished the 2nd grade; works in a small furniture factory, in unstable conditions.

○ Louise (21 years old) – mother; finished the 6th grade, completed in a special education establishment; unemployed.

○ Bruno (3 years old) – George and Louise's son; in foster care for one year.

○ Silvia (7 months-old) – George and Louise's daughter.

Table 1

1. What are the main needs and concerns that the parents highlight regarding baby Silvia? And in relation to the family as a whole?

2. What are the family strengths and resources (formal and informal) that have been identified throughout the story? And what are the strengths of the child?

Table 2

3. What changes must the family still make to respond to Silvia's needs?

4. According to your experience, what strategies can the family explore/adopt to improve the relationship between the members?

To summarize, we have a small video to watch and discuss after…

A Theory of Change (Video).

What were the 3/4 key ideas

that this video presented,

in you opinion?

A Theory of Change (Video).

○ **What were the key ideas that this video presented in you opinion?**

The need to give resources to people in contact with children to improve their development overall

To educate the comunity to help children avoid and overcome adverse experiencies.

The pathway to a healthy and sucessfull development starts in early ages of children.

However, there is always na oportunity to help chidren develop to deal with adverse experiences and develop competencies.

Given that the plasticity of the brain, up until 25/30 years old.

Thank you for your attention!

Obrigada pela vossa atenção!

Dėkojame už jūsų dėmesį

Dziękuję za uwagę

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