



KWL

What do you already **KNOW**?

What do you **WANT** to know?

What did you **LEARN**?



Idea Catcher

Ideas to ponder:

Ideas to try:

Ideas to share with others:



Stages of coaching/mentoring



Stage 1: Emerging

- Knows strengths, leadership style, and passions
- Recognizes skills to support staff
- Inspires others
- Open-minded and respectful
- Understands differences in adult learning
- Uses technology to communicate

Stage 2: Developing

- Builds trust and credibility
- Responds positively to adversity
- Spurs positive change
- Respectfully navigates difficult situations
- Participates and advances professional learning
- Uses technology to manage professional responsibilities



Stage 3: Performing

- Encourages reflection that leads to growth
- Plans learning opportunities connected to goals
- Supports others to use data and tools to impact their teaching
- Utilizes staff diverse expertise
- Broadens capacity for use of technology

Stage 4: Transforming

- Supports questioning of practices, approaches, and philosophies
- Defines and inspires new learning
- Supports staff to use research to impact teaching
- Create new forms and uses for technology





Professional Development Assessment

What strengths do you bring to your work?

What are your interests (personal and work-related)?

What are your work-related challenges?

What qualities do you admire in others?



The coaching cycle

Begin with observation and assessment:

Coaches use specific examples from observation to frame discussions around the educator's strengths or challenges, and to start discussion with educators about reflecting on their own practice. For example, what happened during the observation, what went well, and what might be done differently. Observations can be made using informal and formal assessment. The type of assessment used may vary depending on program goals and individual educator goals, but coaches should use some type of assessment to provide clear and specific feedback to educators. With informal assessment, a specific assessment tool is not used. Formal assessments include using a specific evaluation or recording system to collect information.

Provide a feedback session:

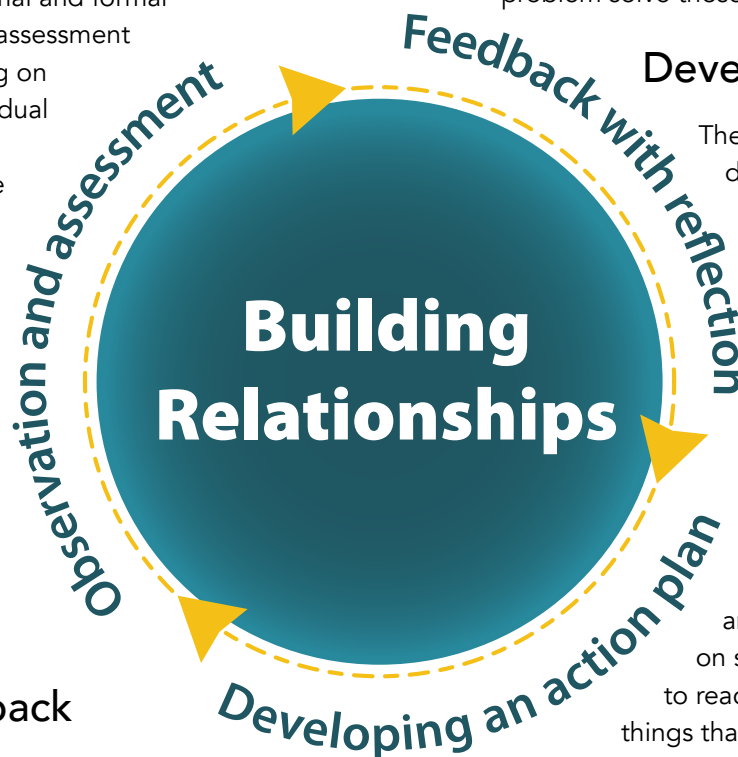
During a feedback session, the coach provides supportive feedback first, before offering corrective feedback. Encouraging educator reflection during a feedback session helps educators think about their classroom practices and interactions with children, and helps educators to become more engaged in the collaborative process.

When teachers are able to use their own reflections to "drive" a better understanding of practice and teaching strategies, they often feel more empowered to make positive change. Specific examples from observation are used to highlight positives, or as a springboard for discussion of challenges and how to problem solve those challenges.

Develop an action plan:

The educator and coach jointly develop an action plan based on specific information from observations and assessment. In this example, the coach and educator work together to develop a plan to intentionally incorporate more conversation into all mealtimes and outside times. The plan includes 1-2 clear, attainable goals (e.g., talk more with children during mealtimes and outside times), and has a focus on specific strategies or practices to reach those goals (e.g., talk about things that interest children, ask open ended questions, respond and expand on what children say to promote language development).

Continue the coaching cycle revisiting observation and assessment, feedback with reflection and development of an action plan as educators move forward and meet goals.





Building relationships with staff

Building and maintaining strong relationships is a key component to effective coaching and mentoring, whether you are a co-worker or a supervisor. Educators who are supported in their work with young children are better able to focus their energy on improving and developing their skills.

- Building relationships begins with listening and asking open-ended questions.
- When educators feel that they are heard and supported, they are more likely to accept feedback and more likely to move toward positive change.
- Approaching relationships in a collaborative way builds trust and sets the tone for open discussion.
- When educators view the coaching relationship as a partnership, they are more likely to engage in the learning process and to seek an active role in improving their skills.
- Identifying and supporting the educator's existing strengths provides a platform for improving practice.
- When educators view their skills as an asset, they are more empowered to make positive changes.



Coaching and mentoring – Building bridges to best practice

Effective coaching helps educators become more intentional in their practice, helps facilitate use of best practices, moves educators toward a better understanding of children's overall development and needs, helps educators develop a better understanding of ways to have rich interactions with children, and provides a platform for supporting children's positive outcomes in all developmental areas.

Providing quality professional development through coaching is a key factor in improving the knowledge and practice of those caring for children, and in improving outcomes for children. The ultimate goal of supporting educators in their work with young children is to strengthen their skills and practices so that they become better educators.

Research shows that the rich interactions teachers have with children are critical in helping children develop. Educators, who provide high quality interactions from a strong, consistent base of social and emotional support, are better equipped to help children develop and succeed. For example, educators who consistently interact with and respond to children in a sensitive way by talking about and modeling feelings, by supporting children's discussion of feelings, and by supporting the process of problem solving, significantly contribute to children's overall social and emotional development. So, how do we help equip educators with the skills they need to succeed in their roles with children? One of those ways is by providing effective coaching and mentoring.

What are coaching and mentoring?

Coaching and mentoring have been defined in a variety of ways. Coaching has been referred to as "an adult learning strategy that is used to build the capacity of a colleague to improve existing abilities, develop new skills, and gain a deeper understanding of his or her practices for use in current and future situations." (Rush and Shelden 2005) Mentoring is defined by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) as "a relationship-based process between colleagues in similar professional roles, with a more-experienced individual with adult learning knowledge and skills, the mentor, providing guidance and example to the less-experienced protege or mentee." Mentoring refers to a general practice, while coaching implies the use of a more specific set of skills and processes that are used to help teachers move from understanding to practice.

It all starts with building relationships

Building and maintaining strong relationships is a key component to effective coaching and mentoring, whether you are a co-worker or a supervisor. Educators who are supported in their work with young children are better able to focus their energy on improving and developing their skills.

Building relationships begins with listening and asking open-ended questions. When educators feel that they are heard and supported, they are more likely to accept feedback and more likely to move toward positive change.

Approaching relationships in a collaborative way builds trust and sets the tone for open discussion. When educators view the coaching relationship as a partnership, they are more likely to engage in the learning process and to seek an active role in improving their skills.

Identifying and supporting the educator's existing strengths provides a platform for improving practice. When educators view their skills as an asset, they are more empowered to make positive changes.

Why is coaching important?

Effective coaching helps educators become more intentional in their practice, helps facilitate use of best practices, moves educators toward a better understanding of children's overall development and needs, helps educators develop a better understanding of ways to have rich interactions with children, and provides a platform for supporting children's positive outcomes in all developmental areas.

When thinking about effective coaching, consider the goals for coaching. For example: Is coaching intended to

move educators toward general best practice, such as supporting children's development of emergent literacy skills? Is coaching intended to teach practices and strategies related to a specific developmental domain like social-emotional development; for example, how an educator supports children's development of self-regulation and problem solving? Is coaching intended to support a specific curriculum or instructional content like Creative Curriculum or HighScope? When coaches understand the reasons for their coaching, they can provide clear and specific information about what is expected in practice.



What's involved in coaching?

Helping educators to improve their practice involves intentionally thinking about the processes that are in place to support effective coaching. Observation and assessment, reflection, feedback, and development of an action plan are all part of a supportive coaching process. The coaching process is cyclical, with educators receiving support and feedback on a regular basis. Support may come in a variety of forms including: feedback and discussion with a specific focus, such as how to improve transitions in order to avoid behavior challenges; coach modeling such as leading an engaging, short transition; problem solving around challenges such as discussing the specific details of a child who has difficulty transitioning; or written information about specific topics or strategies such as sharing a tip page on ways to help minimize transitions and improve existing transitions.

1. Begin with observation and assessment:

Coaches use specific examples from observation to frame discussions around the educator's strengths or challenges, and to start discussion with educators about reflecting on their own practice. For example, what happened during the observation, what went well, and what might be done differently. Observations can be made using informal and formal assessment. The type of assessment used may vary depending on program goals and individual educator goals, but coaches should use some type of assessment to provide clear and specific feedback to educators.

2. Feedback sessions with reflection:

During a feedback session, the coach provides supportive feedback first, before reflecting with the educator on challenges. Encouraging educator reflection during a feedback session helps educators think about their classroom practices and interactions with children, and helps educators to become more engaged in the collaborative process. Specific examples from observation are used to highlight positives, or as a springboard for discussion of challenges and how to problem solve those challenges. For example, a coach observes an educator reading interactively with children and involving the children in book discussion to support language development. The coach also observes the educator during lunchtime, and notes that she is not talking much with the children. During the

feedback session, the coach praises the educator for her interactive book reading. She points out the specific strategies the educator used during book reading to support language development. She then asks the educator if she has noticed other times of the day when she might be able to use those same strategies to support language development. The educator shares that she could use more of the strategies during center time, but does not mention mealtimes. The coach praises and supports the educator's reflection. The coach also points out that mealtimes provide another opportunity for conversation and building children's language skills.

3. Develop an action plan:

The educator and coach jointly develop an action plan based on specific information from observations and assessment. The plan includes clear, attainable goals, and has a focus on specific strategies or practices to reach those goals.

Effective coaching helps educators develop as professionals so that they can support children. Coaching takes time and commitment, but reaps rewards with benefits for both educators and children. And it all starts with building relationships.



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Caregiver sensitivity

Discuss with a group or write your responses to the following.

Before the Vodcast:

- Think back to when you were a young child. Any sensitive caregivers in your life? Describe what they did to make you feel they were a sensitive caregiver.

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- If you were asked to define sensitive caregiving to a group of professionals, what would you say?

After the Vodcast:

After watching the vodcast on Caregiver Sensitivity, what hit home or made a special connection with you?

Share what the following actions mean to you and brainstorm what you would do to support them:

Think kinship

Replace negative affect with positive effect

Help children tell their inner stories

Use non-verbal gestures

Learn more

In your opinion, what is the most important way to build caregiver sensitivity? Why?

Now that you have watched and reflected on the Caregiver Sensitivity vodcast, what do you plan to try differently in your work with children and families?

Notes:



Caregiver sensitivity: The capacity to recognize and respond to children's needs

Which of the following fits you? *Life is hard!* Or *Life is good!* If you are like most, it is a little of both. As adults, we are responsible for our own happiness and success. However, for children, the choice is not always up to them.

Children have far less control over what happens to them. Parents and other caregivers are far more responsible for what actually happens to children than children are themselves. — Alison Gopnik, 2009

Caregiver sensitivity helps children journey toward the “Life is good” path. Caregiver sensitivity is important to all children, but particularly for those who may be struggling to find stability or experiencing difficult transitions. For example, a military connected child may be facing a family member’s deployment or a child may have a parent who is ill, injured, or absent.

Defining caregiver sensitivity

Early attachment theorists define caregiver sensitivity as the caregiver’s ability to “be aware of the child’s signals and to evaluate and respond to them in a meaningful, accurate, and appropriate way” (Ainsworth, Bell & Stayton, 1974; Journal of European Psychology Students, 2010). Much of the research on caregiver sensitivity focuses on the maternal (mother/child) caregiving. The truth is, caregiver sensitivity benefits all who are vital caregivers; fathers, grandparents, teachers, family child care providers, preschool teachers, relatives, foster parents, etc.



Think About It:

- What does caregiver sensitivity mean to you?
- How would you describe this to a co-worker?
- What actions and intentions show caregiver sensitivity?

From birth, children send signals to their primary caregiver, such as the infant who stretches and arches his back or cries when hungry. It is how these signals are received and responded to that shape pathways for how the child will in turn react, think, and behave. Caregivers who are sensitive and consistently respond to children set a good foundation.

Concurrent studies of child-caregiver attachment in child care find that caregivers who are rated as more sensitive and observed in more positive interaction with children are associated with children with greater attachment security. (Howes, Galinsky, and Kontos 1998)

Caregiver sensitivity refers to the responsive, sensitive manner of caring; how you react to children’s

cues and respond. A sensitive caregiver recognizes children’s unique temperaments, as well as their likes and dislikes, and reflects on these traits while thinking of how to respond to children. For example, when four-year old Tatia enters preschool, she does not like a lot of attention drawn to her; she is cautious to enter and unsure of leaving her grandmother. Her teacher has planned to greet her by offering a warm smile, and a wave, but decides not to overwhelm her with attention that she is not ready for. She has encouraged Tatia’s grandmother to build a goodbye routine and gives the two their goodbye time before personally greeting Tatia. She also made sure there were materials to choose from that Tatia likes, such as books and play dough. This teacher is attuned to Tatia’s needs and temperament.

Developing caregiver sensitivity

Being a sensitive caregiver covers a vast range of skills, behaviors, and intellectual understandings. Build caregiver sensitivity - try the following:

- **Think kinship** – The heart of sensitive caregiving is in the emotional bond between caregiver and child. Kindness, tenderness, and connectedness go a long way in developing kinship. The more time people spend together in happy, interactive experiences, the more affinity they will have for each other.
- **Replace negative affect with positive affect** – When children are responded to with affection and support, particularly in times of stress, they are better able to tolerate negative emotions – the negative affect is replaced with positive affect.
- **Help children tell their inner stories** – Help children identify and express feelings by reading stories, singing songs, and using reflection. Carefully read children's displays of emotion (and behavior) and reflect it back in warm, sensitive conversations.
- **Use non-verbal gestures** – Offer a warm smile, a loving look, a reassuring touch, and eye contact. Using gestures in combination with speech allow people to communicate more than with words alone and help convey abstract ideas. Gestures, along with verbal support, help in regulating emotion and regulating one's self.
- **Learn More** – Preview and order the lesson [Giving your Best: Making Secure Attachments](#) from Penn State Better Kid Care.



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Claudia C. Mincemoyer, Ph.D.,
Better Kid Care Program Director
2182 Sandy Drive – Suite 204
State College, PA 16803

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HO_MIL_GI_Sensitivity



Action Plan

List goal(s) for supporting staff development:

1.

2.

3.

What specific coaching or mentoring strategies will you use to reach your goals?



BKC tools for supporting staff development

Available at: www.extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare



Vodcasts

Features:

- Discussion starters
- Great Ideas
- Coded by topic and CDA subject areas



Lessons

Features:

- Review lesson content for free!
- Review completed lessons
- Lesson resources available for free download
- Coded by topics and CDA subject areas



Resource pages

Features:

- Resources available for free
- Support professional tdevelopment
- Share with families
- Coded by topics and CDA subject areas

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