

## Consultation/Coaching



### Goals

The goals of consultation/coaching are to engage in a process where the experience of an expert is used to help a child care professional to address a specific topic or issue and/or to develop a liaison with a child care professional to enhance the teacher's classroom skills and behaviors.

### Practice Features

Coaches are experienced professionals, often with specific training in a coaching model or approach, who work with other professionals in the field to improve professional knowledge and practice.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC<sup>1</sup>), coaching is relationship-based. Coaches strive to develop a relationship with a more novice professional and use that relationship as a basis for facilitating professional improvements. For instances, coaches commonly observe the coachee in the practice of an activity and then give feedback. This occurs repeatedly over time. Coaching may also incorporate the steps and benchmarks necessary to achieve specific professional goals.

Coaching can be typified more by the nature of the learning relationship between coach and coachee rather than by any particular approach. As shown in the research below, there are a wide range of activities that coaches may draw upon in promoting a desired change in professional behavior. What appears to be consistent, however, is the nature of the coach—coachee relationship in which a coach is an experienced, or “master”, professional with the ability to observe practices and provide specific guidance and advice in support of goals or improvements. The coach—coachee may have regular interactions over a period of time spanning months, if not years.

### Consultation/Coaching Snapshot

- **EC Profile Indicators:**
  - PLA40 - Average Star Rating for Children in 1-5 Star Care and Percent of Children in 4 and 5 star care or
  - PLA50 - Average Star Rating for Subsidized Children in 1-5 Star Care and Percent of Subsidized Children in 4 and 5 star care
- **Clearinghouse rating:** None
- **Research supports** use within the early childhood professional community for a range of outcomes of interest including improved teaching practices and teacher-child interactions
- **Related Smart Start outcomes:**
  - Improved ECE program environment
  - Improved teacher-child interaction
- **Staff qualifications:** North Carolina TA Level 11 and TA Endorsement
- **Suggested Measures:** Program Star Levels, CLASS

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<sup>1</sup>Both coaching and mentoring are relationship-based as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. However, in mentoring the relationship is peer-to-peer versus the more hierarchical relationship that typifies coaching. Further, mentoring often incorporates the development of concrete professional skills as well as social and emotional support and outlets. In contrast, coaching tends to incorporate the steps and benchmarks necessary to achieve specific professional goals. However, it is important to note that mentoring and coaching often are used interchangeably and may encompass a broad suite of activities and support. (Early Childhood Education Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary. 2011. National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies)

## Target Audience

Early care and education professionals

## Documented Outcomes

	Type of Study	Outcomes	
		Improved teacher practices*	Improved teacher-child interaction**
Zan & Donegan-Ritter (2014) <sup>i</sup>	Experimental		✓
Kretlow & Bartholomew (2010) <sup>ii</sup>	Meta-analyses	✓	
Hemmeter et.al. (2015) <sup>iii</sup>	Non-experimental	✓	✓
Onchwari & Keengwe (2008) <sup>iv</sup>	Non-experimental	✓	

*This table contains outcomes found to be associated with the program or approach. Individual studies may contain additional outcomes that were tested and not found to be associated with the program or approach.*

\*Aligned with the Smart Start outcome *Improved ECE program environment*

\*\*Aligned with the Smart Start outcome *Improved teacher-child interaction*

## Research Evidence for Coaching

- Coaching has been linked to the improvement of teacher-child interactions as well as a wider range of teacher behaviors such as literacy practices and implementation to fidelity of the Pyramid Model.

## Review of Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Studies

<b>Citation</b>	Zan, B., & Donegan-Ritter, M. (2014). Reflecting, coaching and mentoring to enhance teacher–child interactions in Head Start classrooms. <i>Early Childhood Education Journal</i> , 42, pp. 93–104.
<b>Population and Sample</b>	<p>The study involved the directors of four Head Start programs (Iowa), who selected 4-6 supervisors for mentor training (n=19). Sixty teachers (60) from 30 classrooms received the intervention.</p> <p>Directors of four Head Start grantees in Iowa were contacted by project staff to discuss the opportunity for their staff to participate in an intensive eight month long program of CLASS-based PD. Each agreed to participate. Two of the grantees were located in urban areas and two were located in primarily rural areas. Participants in the project included mentors (the education supervisors) and teachers (both lead and assistant).</p>
<b>Methodology</b>	Experimental with random assignment to intervention
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The study's goal was to assess the impact of the professional development series on the quality of teacher-child interactions.</p> <p>The goals of the CAMP Quality project were: (a) to increase the effectiveness of Head Start teachers in promoting the language, academic, social, and emotional development of children; (b) to increase the effectiveness of Head Start supervisors in mentoring Head Start teachers, and (c) to improve the educational and social-emotional outcomes of Head Start children.</p> <p>The research questions were: (a) do preschool teachers who participate in an eight month long program of intensive PD improve their interactions with children? and, (b) do teachers who possess a bachelor's degree or higher make the same gains as teachers who have lower educational attainment?</p>
<b>Measures &amp; Assessments</b>	Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
<b>Study</b>	The intervention was Coaching and Mentoring for Preschool Quality (CAMP Quality). CAMP

<b>Implementation</b>	<p>incorporated an eight-month cycle of (a) monthly video-based self-reflection, (b) monthly peer coaching, (c) monthly mentoring sessions, and (d) bimonthly workshops. The focus of all professional development activities was classroom interactions, as defined in the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).</p> <p>The first month's focus was broad and served to introduce participants to the self-reflection, peer coaching, and mentoring process. The second month's coaching and mentoring focused on emotional supports, given that this was typically an area of strength for teachers. Two months of coaching and mentoring focused on classroom organization. Four of the eight months of coaching and mentoring focused on the instructional support domain of CLASS.</p>
<b>Staff Qualifications</b>	<p>The project made a deliberate decision to use Head Start supervisors as coaches or mentors, rather than outside experts. The project provided training in coaching skills and ongoing support on a monthly or as-needed basis. The supervisors who assumed the role of mentor each worked with one classroom team that was a part of their assigned caseload. Each classroom team was comprised of a lead teacher and an assistant teacher or two co-teachers.</p> <p>Before the start of the project, mentors participated in a two-day training, conducted by project staff, to use CLASS with reliability. The mentors from each grantee met monthly with their assigned project staff in a small group setting to develop mentoring skills (e.g., effective communication, descriptive praise). During these mentor development meetings they often viewed DVDs of classroom observations in order to closely observe specific interactions, discuss ways to coach teachers in the change process, and address issues that mentors raised (such as overcoming resistance). The meetings allowed project staff to model collaboration by sharing resources and engaging in open communication with the mentors. The project staff, certified as CLASS trainers, also conducted regular CLASS reliability drift checks during these meetings.</p>
<b>Key Findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers in the intervention (n=38) scored significantly higher than comparison teachers (n=22) at the close of the professional development series.</li> <li>• Significant improvements were observed in four dimensions: (a) behavior management, (b) productivity, (c) language modeling, and (d) quality of feedback.</li> <li>• Improvements were identified in intervention teachers who did and did not have college degrees.</li> <li>• Head Start education supervisors, when trained and provided with ongoing support, provided effective mentoring and coaching for the improvement of teacher practices.</li> </ul>

## Review of Meta-Analyses

<b>Citation</b>	<b>Kretlow, C. C., &amp; Bartholomew, A. G. (2010). Using coaching to improve the fidelity of evidence-based practices: A review of studies. <i>Teacher Education and Special Education, 33(4)</i>, pp. 279–299.</b>
<b>Population and Sample</b>	13 studies met inclusion criteria and were included. Inclusion criteria included: (a) studies that used a research design that allowed for causal inference; (b) it was published in a peer-reviewed journal; (c) participants were preservice or in-service teachers in general or special education working with students from preK to Grade 12; (d) the independent variable was coaching (i.e., supervisory or side-by-side); (e) the dependent variable was a direct, observable measure of specific instructional characteristics; and (f) coaching was related to an evidence-based practice with support for improving academic performance or appropriate classroom behavior.
<b>Methodology</b>	Literature review and synthesis
<b>Purpose</b>	The study's goal was to determine whether or not coaching had an impact on preservice and in-service teachers' implementation of evidence-based practices.
<b>Measures &amp; Assessments</b>	Varied across study
<b>Study Implementation</b>	Varied across study
<b>Staff Qualifications</b>	Varied across study
<b>Key Findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching was associated with implementation of practices such as Class-Wide Peer Tutoring, Direct Instruction, Learning Strategies, and Positive Behavior Support</li> <li>• Critical coaching components include highly engaged, small-group initial training followed by observations, feedback, and modeling</li> <li>• Studies associate coaching with improvements in teaching accuracy</li> <li>• Some studies associate coaching with improvements in student achievement</li> </ul>

## Review of Descriptive and Non-Experimental Studies

<b>Citation</b>	Hemmeter, M. L., Hardy, J. K., Schnitz, A. G., Adams, J. M., & Kinder, K. A. (2015). Effects of Training and Coaching With Performance Feedback on Teachers' Use of Pyramid Model Practices. <i>Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 35</i> (3), pp. 144–156.
<b>Population and Sample</b>	<p>The study incorporated three teachers from an urban school district. The teachers had been control group members in a prior study.</p> <p>The study took place in blended preschool classrooms in three elementary schools. All classrooms had between 14 and 16 children, about half who had disabilities, and all classrooms had a lead teacher and an assistant teacher. Each teacher had 2 to 4 children with persistent, ongoing challenging behavior and a high percentage of children receiving free or reduced price lunch (87.5%–93.8%).</p>
<b>Methodology</b>	<p>Non-experimental, gains within treatment group</p> <p>Multiple probe design across sets of practices, replicated across teachers</p>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The study's goal was to assess the impact of coaching and performance feedback on implementation of the Pyramid Model practices. The study also sought to assess how well the targeted professional practices were generalized and maintained.</p> <p>The following research questions were addressed:</p> <p>Research Question 1: Is training and coaching effective for increasing teachers' use of practices related to the <i>Pyramid Model</i>?</p> <p>Research Question 2: Do teachers generalize the use of coached practices to activities other than those in which they were coached?</p> <p>Research Question 3: Do teachers maintain practices after coaching on those practices end?</p> <p>Research Question 4: Does implementing the <i>Pyramid Model</i> practices with fidelity decrease classroom-wide instances of challenging behavior?</p> <p>Research Question 5: Does implementation of the <i>Pyramid Model</i> overall improve when teachers receive training and coaching on specific <i>Pyramid Model</i> practices?</p> <p>Research Question 6: What are teachers' perspectives of the coaching process, coaching relationship, and sustainability of the <i>Pyramid Model</i> practices?</p>
<b>Measures &amp; Assessments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pyramid Model checklists</li> <li>• Class-Wide Challenging Behavior Observation Tool</li> <li>• Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)</li> </ul>
<b>Study Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching in the Pyramid Model wherein there was a baseline phase (the coach did not provide any feedback) and an intervention phase (the coach provided coaching and performance feedback focused on a specific practice). The intervention required the teachers to become proficient; coaching was provided until the teacher could demonstrate the desired professional practice to specifications. The coaching strategies included: (a) providing materials, (b) modeling, (c) helping in the classroom, (d) problem-solving, (e) reflective conversation, (f) environmental arrangement, (g) side-by-side verbal or gestural support, (h) goal setting and planning, and (i) graphing.</li> <li>• Observations took place in the classrooms during the regular school day. Coaching sessions took place in the classroom, during naptime or after school.</li> <li>• The primary behaviors of interest were the teacher's use of specific practices associated with the <i>Pyramid Model</i>. These behaviors were measured through the use of researcher-designed checklists that were based on an earlier version of the TPOT. Nine checklists were developed, and each checklist contained 7 to 10 indicators related to the practice, with precise criteria for receiving credit for each indicator. These data were collected approximately 1 to 2 times per week. During each observation, the coach collected data on the teacher's current set of targeted practices. In addition, the coach collected intermittent probe data on the other sets of targeted practices during at least 30% of data collection observations.</li> <li>• A different data collector observed and collected data periodically throughout the intervention phase for each targeted practice. The teacher was unaware of the purpose of these observations, and the coach was not present during these observations. These data will hereafter be referred to as alternate observer checks. In addition, inter-observer agreement (IOA) data were collected on at least 33% of the observation sessions to ensure that the coach's data were reliable.</li> <li>• During the study, IOA data were collected for all teacher, classroom, and child measures. At least 30% of observations using each measure were conducted with a primary and reliability data collector. The percentage agreement between the two data collectors was calculated using a point-by-point formula:</li> <li>• The number of agreements divided by the number of agreements plus disagreements was multiplied by 100.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedural fidelity data were collected on at least 20% of each type of coaching session for each coach (i.e., goal setting, training and action planning, debriefing, email, closing). All coaching sessions were audio recorded, and all coaching emails were saved. Coaching sessions and emails were randomly selected to be reviewed by a procedural fidelity data collector. The data collector used a checklist when listening to the audio recordings and viewing the emails to determine if the coach followed the protocol for each type of session. Procedural fidelity percentages were calculated by dividing the number of items present by the number of items possible and multiplying by 100.</li> <li>• In addition, to ensure procedural fidelity was completed reliably, another data collector independently completed the procedural fidelity checklists for at least 20% of all sessions that were reviewed for procedural fidelity. IOA between the two procedural fidelity data collectors was calculated using point-by-point agreement.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Qualifications</b>	Before the study began, data collectors were trained on each tool and practiced using each tool in non-participating classrooms. They were required to be reliable on each tool prior to collecting data for the study. For teacher checklists, each data collector was required to complete two observations (paired with two different observers) at 80% reliability for each checklist to be considered reliable. To be considered reliable on classroom and child measures (i.e., TPOT and CCBOT), each data collector had to complete three observations with an already trained data collector, with at least 80% agreement on the measure being used.
<b>Key Findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An intensive and individualized coaching model (coaching provided at least 2-3 times per week in person or by email) is effective at improving teacher use of targeted Pyramid Model practices.</li> <li>• Teachers did not uniformly translate targeted practices into areas in which they had not received specific support.</li> <li>• Teachers can maintain targeted practices after receiving coaching; check-ins and reminders may facilitate maintenance of desired practices.</li> <li>• Group coaching also may be a viable model for improving teacher practices.</li> </ul>

<b>Citation</b>	<b>Onchwari, G., &amp; Keengwe, J. (2008). The impact of a mentor-coaching model on teacher professional development. <i>Early Childhood Education Journal</i>, 36, pp. 19–24.</b>
<b>Population and Sample</b>	The study involved 44 Head Start teachers from two mid-western states; participating teachers had participated in the Early Literacy Mentor-Coaches program.
<b>Methodology</b>	Non-experimental, gains within treatment group
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The study's goal was to assess the success of a mentor-coach program on improving teacher literacy practices among Head Start teachers. Six open ended questions were used.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is the mentor-coach initiative continuing in your program?</li> <li>2. What forms of training and materials did you receive or have you received in the process of the mentor-coach initiative?</li> <li>3. How often did you receive this support during the mentor coach process?</li> <li>4. How helpful was the mentor-coach initiative in supporting and enhancing your literacy practices?</li> <li>5. What are some of the aspects of the mentor-coach initiative training that you have implemented in your teaching and classrooms?</li> <li>6. What challenges did you face in implementing the strategies learned in the mentor-initiative; what other concerns do you have about the initiative?</li> </ol>
<b>Measures &amp; Assessments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher interview</li> <li>• Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation toolkit (ELLCO)</li> </ul>
<b>Study Implementation</b>	<p>The intervention was the Strategic Teacher Education Program (STEP) Early Literacy Mentor-Coach initiative model. Mentor teachers received training in appropriate ways to mentor and support other teachers in literacy practices, including <i>“providing appropriate literacy environments and routines, phonological awareness, written expression, language development, print and book awareness, motivation to read, read aloud, letter knowledge, and literacy mentoring areas strategies.”</i> Mentor teachers then provided support to two or more teachers. Mentor teachers received training from Mentor-Coach Specialists from regional Quality Improvement Centers, twice a month, for four-hours a session, over a five-month period.</p> <p>Teachers that received mentoring from the Early Literacy Mentor-Coaches were targeted. Participating programs were visited and one-on-one interviews with each participating teacher were held. The interviews focused on obtaining the teachers' views about the success of the mentor coach initiative in their programs. Classroom observations were also carried out after interviews to ascertain aspects of the training teachers had implemented in their classrooms.</p>
<b>Staff Qualifications</b>	Not addressed

### Key Findings

- Head Start programs experienced a positive impact mentor–coach initiative within the 6 months that it was implemented.
- Following observations that were made, it was evident that classrooms had the materials required as outlined in the ELLCO toolkit. Nearly half of the classrooms observed had the same supplies of the STEP literacy materials stocked in their shelves. A difference was noted, however, in the use of materials. While most of the classrooms had the same materials, most of the materials were stocked up in shelves. It is important that teachers are given training and support to effectively adopt materials into their daily teaching.
- Just over 50% of teachers reported that the initiative was very helpful for improving literacy practices, followed by 34% of teachers who reported the initiative was somewhat helpful for improving literacy practices.
- Some teachers believed the program provided instruction and support in domains in which they already had received training (i.e., in college courses).
- Some teachers questioned whether the initiative used practices that were developmentally-appropriate for preschoolers.

### End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Zan, B., & Donegan-Ritter, M. (2014). Reflecting, coaching and mentoring to enhance teacher–child interactions in Head Start classrooms. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 42, pp. 93–104.

<sup>ii</sup> Kretlow, C. C., & Bartholomew, A. G. (2010). Using coaching to improve the fidelity of evidence-based practices: A review of studies. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 33(4), pp. 279–299.

<sup>iii</sup> Hemmeter, M. L., Hardy, J. K., Schnitz, A. G., Adams, J. M., & Kinder, K. A. (2015). Effects of Training and Coaching With Performance Feedback on Teachers’ Use of Pyramid Model Practices. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 35(3), pp. 144–156.

<sup>iv</sup> Onchwari, G., & Keengwe, J. (2008). The impact of a mentor-coaching model on teacher professional development. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36, pp. 19–24.

### Additional Resources

Artman-Meeker, K., Fettig, A., Barton, E. E., Penney, A., & Zeng, S. (2015). Applying an evidence-based framework to the early childhood coaching literature. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 35(3), pp. 183–196.

Lloyd, C. M., & Modlin, E. L. (2012). Coaching as a key component in teachers’ professional development improving classroom practices in Head Start settings. OPRE Report 2012-4, Washington D.C.: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

National Association for the Education of Young Children, & National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. (2011). Early childhood education professional development: Training and technical assistance glossary. Washington, DC: Authors. Retrieved from <http://www.naeyc.org>.

Note: Research summaries could include verbiage directly reproduced from the research literature. Quotes and italics may be used to show a direct quote but not always.

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