THE EARLY CHILDHOOD Coaching HANDBOOK

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The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook

Second Edition

by

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All case studies and dialogue in this book are derived from composites or real people whose situations are masked and are based on the authors' experiences. In all instances, names and identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Coaching

Once upon a time, long ago, a speech-language pathologist (SLP) and a physical therapist (PT) were happily working in their chosen professions. He, the SLP, was a speech-language services supervisor working in a state-funded child guidance clinic along with child development specialists, psychologists, and social workers. She, the PT, worked as a faculty member on the health sciences center campus of a highly respected state-funded university. He, the SLP, worked primarily with children ages 2–8 years to conduct comprehensive speech-language evaluations and then remediate identified articulation and language disorders within a clinic-based setting. Parents usually waited in the reception area while he worked directly with the children. Following each session, he discussed with the parents the progress he had made with the child during the visit and provided worksheets for practice as part of the home program that he had carefully designed.

Little did he know that only a few years earlier, Congress passed the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986 (PL 99-457) and created the Part H early intervention program, now referred to as Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments (IDEA) of 1997 (PL 105-17). Since that time, the state had been working to create its own legislation to ensure that all eligible children from birth to 3 years of age with a developmental delay or a diagnosed syndrome or condition would receive comprehensive supports that were based on Part C of IDEA. State staff were working quickly but thoughtfully to create a system that would provide these federally and state-mandated services and supports as envisioned by those who testified to Congress and who wished to see these supports in place nationwide.

In Fall 1989, the SLP became the first SLP in the state to start providing services under these new federal and state laws. He was not enthusiastic when he was informed that his services were to be provided in the children's "natural environments," meaning that he would be going to their homes to provide services and would be working with a team of other professionals that would now include PTs and occupational therapists (OTs).

The PT's responsibilities included teaching undergraduate physical therapy and occupational therapy students. One of her job duties was to give a portion of her time to the state agencies that were responsible for developing the Part C early intervention program across the state. She was to work on one of the newly formed teams and to train other therapists and educators to provide the services and supports in a manner that was consistent with state and federal regulations.

He, the SLP, first encountered her, the PT, as she dashed into the new team's meeting—late—wearing overalls that were short enough in the legs to show her creatively colorful stockings, over which she wore combat-style boots. In her ears she wore mismatched earrings, one of which was a peace sign. All of the seats in the meeting room had already been taken, so she plopped on the

floor and began rummaging through a canvas tote bag that had a conference name and the year 1985 emblazoned on the side, looking for an evaluation that she had recently written of a child who she claimed was eligible for services. Dressed in a freshly starched shirt, sharply creased dress slacks, patterned socks, silk club tie, and wingtip shoes, he watched as she ran back out to her car to retrieve the report, which was actually in a similar tote bag that had a different color and conference name. She proceeded to try to smooth the wrinkles out of the report and declared the child's eligibility.

As the meeting progressed, the PT and SLP presented the work they had done with different families in the families' homes. Each felt somewhat frustrated by the compounding factors that were present in the homes and that appeared to impede their therapy sessions. These factors had probably existed when the therapy had been done in the clinic, but they had not kept the SLP and PT from successfully completing their clinic-based sessions. They found it equally disconcerting, although it was not completely different from their previous experience, that parents rarely found the time to practice the activities and exercises that they were supposed to do between therapy sessions. So, in that moment across a somewhat crowded room, this unlikely and clearly mismatched twosome identified a common and compelling mission: to figure out how to make home visitation in early intervention work. It was, after all, the law—and, perhaps even more important, neither of them could stand the thought of failure. They shared a driving need to get interventions right for the children and families who they were being paid to serve.

They began by searching the research and other literature from their own disciplines' perspectives. Next, they delved into the fields of early childhood and early childhood special education to ascertain how to provide early intervention services in home and community environments. They also wanted to come up with a plan to work closely with the adults in the children's lives to ensure that they understood how to support child learning when the PT or SLP was not present. This book summarizes the part of their collective journey that was related to interaction with the adults in young children's lives for optimum success.

In their initial literature search, both the PT and the SLP found several references that recommended that therapists or educators in early intervention serve as coaches to important adults in young children's lives. The references and previous research inspired them to develop an operational definition of coaching, characteristics of the practice, and the steps or process one would use to coach a parent or other important person in a child's life. Their initial purpose in using coaching was to build the adult's capacity to support child participation and learning beyond that in everyday life.

Coaching emerged as an accepted practice in the development and supervision of educators in the 1980s (Ackland, 1991; Brandt, 1987; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Since that time, coaching has been used successfully in the fields of early childhood (Artman-Meeker, Fettig, Barton, Penney, & Zeng, 2015; Chronis-Tuscano, Lewis-Morrarty, Woods, O'Brian, Mazursky-Horowitz, & Thomas, 2014; Dunn, Cox, Foster, Mische-Lawson, & Tanquary, 2012; Fox, Hemmeter, Snyder, Binder, & Clarke, 2011; Friedman & Woods, 2015; Gettinger & Stoiber, 2016; Kemp & Turnbull, 2014; Snyder, Hemmeter, & Fox, 2015); elementary, middle school, and high school education and school administration (Adams, 2012; Campbell & Griffin, 2017; Glover, 2017; Huguet, Marsh, & Farrell, 2014); and special education (Akamoglu & Dinnebeil, 2017; Barton & Cohen, 2015; Branson, 2015; Coogle, Ottley, Storie, Rahn, & Burt, 2017; Graham, Rodger, & Ziviani, 2014). Coaching has been used extensively in preservice preparation programs for special and general educators (Barton, Chen, Pribble, Pomes, & Kim, 2013; Barton, Fuller, & Shnitz, 2016; Scheeler, McKinnon, & Stout, 2012) and in medicine (Alcorn & Broome, 2014; Cappella et al., 2012; Hadders-Algra, 2011; Hayes & Kalmakis, 2007; Kahjoogh, Rassafiani, Dunn, Hosseini, & Akbarfahimi, 2016; Nadeem, Gleacher, & Beidas, 2013). Within these contexts, coaching is a relationship-based process that is used to improve existing skills, develop new skills, and build the competence and confidence of the coachee (the individual who is being coached) to achieve desired or intended outcomes (Rush & Shelden, 2011).

No commonly agreed upon definition of *coaching* exists for purposes other than athletics (Artman-Meeker et al., 2015; Bachkirova, Spence, & Drake, 2017; Friedman, Woods, & Salisbury, 2012; Grant, 2013). The International Coach Federation (ICF) is a professional organization that was formed to establish and maintain standards for coaches across all types of coaching (e.g., executive coaching, leadership coaching, life coaching) and to advance the practice of coaching. The ICF defines *coaching* as

> an ongoing relationship which focuses on coaches taking action toward the realization of their visions, goals or desires. Coaching uses a process of inquiry and personal discovery to build the coachee's level of awareness and responsibility and provides the coachee with structure, support, and feedback. (ICF, n.d.)

Throughout history, the use of coaching in early childhood has been described by special educators, OTs, PTs, and SLPs as a practice to support families of children with disabilities as well as to support practitioners in early childhood programs. Campbell (1997), a pediatric PT, suggested that the early intervention practitioner should be a *coach* rather than a direct therapy provider. Hanft and Pilkington, OTs, encouraged early childhood practitioners to reconsider their role and "to move to a different position alongside a parent as a *coach* rather than lead player" (Hanft & Pilkington, 2000, p. 2). Such a move allows more opportunities to promote child development and learning than does direct intervention by the therapist or educator. Rush (2000), an SLP, noted that a practitioner-as-coach approach provides the parent with the necessary supports to improve the child's skills and abilities. Dinnebeil, McInerney, Roth, and Ramasway (2001) examined the role of itinerant early childhood special education teachers and concluded that they "should be prepared to act not simply as consultants to early childhood teachers but as *coaches*" (p. 42). By acting as coaches, early childhood special education teachers can offer a more structured system for jointly planning new learning, modeling effective practices, and engaging in feedback.

PURPOSE OF COACHING

Coaching is used to acknowledge and perhaps improve existing knowledge and practices, develop new skills, and promote continuous self-assessment and learning on the part of the coachee. The coach's role is to provide a supportive and encouraging environment in which the coach and coachee jointly examine and reflect on current practices, apply new skills and competencies with feedback, and problem solve challenging situations. The coach's ultimate goal is sustained performance in which the coachee has the competence and confidence to engage in self-reflection, self-correction, and

Current Definitions of Coaching *in the Literature*

Coaching can be defined as a collaborative helping relationship, where coach and client ("coachee") engage in a systematic process of setting goals and developing solutions with the aim of facilitating goal attainment, self-directed learning, and personal growth of the coachee. (Grant, 2013)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (2012) define *coaching* as

> a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialization and adult learning knowledge and skills . . . designed to build capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors and is focused on goal setting and achievement for an individual or group. (p. 11)

A coach must clearly communicate the difference between coaching and other forms of interventions, set clear agreements, clarify respective responsibilities, co-create a supportive working relationship, and also elicit a thought-provoking and creative process through active listening and challenging questions (Grant, 2013; Losch, Traut-Mattausch, Muhlberger, & Jonas, 2016).

> Coaches show individualized consideration by acknowledging the needs and goals of the coachees and supporting his or her personal strengths. Coaches provide intellectual stimulation by encouraging the coachees to consider issues from new perspectives and by doing so, they challenge the coachee's assumptions and ideas. (Losch et al., 2016, p. 3)

Coaching is a relationship-based process led by an expert to build a practitioner's capacity for specific professional disposition, skills, and behaviors (NAEYC, 2012). A cyclical process for supporting preschool practitioners' use of effective teaching practices leads to positive outcomes for children (Snyder et al., 2015).

the generalization of new skills and strategies to other situations as appropriate (Coe, Zehnder, & Kinlaw, 2008; Friedman et al., 2012; Grant, 2013; Rush & Shelden, 2011; Snyder et al., 2015). Effective coaching can set the stage for lifelong learning on the part of the coachee.

Some individuals believe that coaching parents, teachers, colleagues, and others is similar to the type of coaching used in sports, in which the athletic coach trains the athletes, calls the plays, motivates the athletes, and helps the athletes evaluate their performance so that they can improve. The type of coaching described in this book, however, is used to support the coachee in specific ways that are related to his or her goals—not to make the person do what the coach wants or believes that the coachee should do. Support includes 1) helping the coachee become aware of and analyze current knowledge and performance, 2) developing alternatives and a plan for improved knowledge and performance with assistance as needed from the coach, and 3) helping the coachee conduct a self-evaluation of his or her own knowledge and performance—with feedback from the coach, as needed—until the coachee is competent and confident that he or she can achieve personal goals. If the coachee's knowledge or performance is contrary to the research on a particular topic, then the coach must assist the coachee in accessing the research-based information and in analyzing his or her knowledge and performance in light of the information in order to make an informed decision about any intended future actions.

RECIPIENTS OF COACHING

In early childhood intervention programs, parents and other primary care providers are often considered the only possible recipients of coaching. Child care providers, early childhood teachers, or early intervention team members may also benefit from coaching relationships. In early literacy programs, the classroom teachers are typically considered to be the primary beneficiaries of coaching, but parents, teacher assistants, principals, program directors, and other administrators may be interested in a coaching relationship in order to better support the classroom teacher. Supervisors may find that supervisees respond more positively and productively to a coaching relationship than to feedback given in the hierarchical format of most supervisor–supervisee interactions. Preservice students who are engaged in practicum or internship experiences may find coaching particularly helpful as they begin to apply their recently learned knowledge and skills.

Parents and Caregivers

Coaching of parents can promote their confidence and competence in supporting child learning and development. When coaching is used with parents, the coach's role is to identify the parents' priorities for their child's development, determine what they already know and are doing in relation to their child's development, share new information and ideas, and then work together to support the child's participation and expression of interest within everyday activity settings to provide opportunities for learning. Coaching is also useful to support parents in identifying, accessing, and evaluating needed resources for their child and family.

Teachers

Coaching can be used with teachers in child care settings, preschools, early childhood intervention programs, Early Head Start, Head Start, early literacy programs, schools, and other settings. Within these environments, coaching may be used as follow-up to professional development activities to help teachers incorporate new skills into their current teaching practices. It may also be used to support teachers whose classes include students who have individualized family service plans or individualized education programs. Teachers may also serve as coaches to other teachers and adults rather than focusing only on teacher–child interactions. Chapter 8 provides detailed information about coaching teachers to incorporate new skills, such as the use of an early literacy curriculum, into their teaching practices and to foster the learning of children with disabilities.

Chapter 10 describes how coaching can be used as part of professional development activities to help teachers and other learners immediately apply newly learned information within the context of their classroom activities and teaching practices.

Colleagues

For the purposes of this book, *colleagues* are defined as other professionals in the work setting or on early intervention teams who provide related services in educational settings. Colleagues may include, but may not necessarily be limited to, OTs, PTs, SLPs, psychologists, service coordinators, social workers, teachers, nurses, nutritionists, vision and hearing specialists, behavior consultants, and audiologists. Coaching can help colleagues develop and use new knowledge and skills that are related to a specific practice or as a follow-up to a professional development opportunity. Coaching may also be the preferred interaction style for assisting a colleague who is working with a particular child or family situation. Coaching is a viable option any time a colleague wants to build his or her knowledge and skills regarding a particular issue.

Supervisees and Mentees

Chapter 4 will define the differences between coaching and other forms of adult interaction, including supervision and mentoring. Although the overall purposes of supervision and mentoring differ from the purpose of coaching, supervisors and mentors may use a coaching interaction style with supervisees and mentees to promote their learning and problem solving so that they may build their capacity and decrease dependence on the supervisor or mentor.

Students

Coaching may be used with university students who are completing their practicum or internship requirements in a school, an early intervention program, or some other educational setting. When coaching is used with students, the students must compare what they have learned in their university coursework with what they now see or do in practice. Coaching provides the opportunity for the students to identify gaps in their knowledge and skills, develop plans to obtain the necessary knowledge and skills, begin to apply their new skills to real-life contexts, reflect on how the skills worked, and plan for continuous improvement of those abilities.

COACHING APPROACHES

Various approaches to coaching have conflicting paradigms, depending on the intent of the coach and coachee (Garvey, Stokes, & Megginson, 2018; Grant, 2013; Passmore, 2016; Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2013). Some of the approaches described in the literature are behavioral (Eldridge & Dembkowski, 2012; Theeboom et al., 2013); humanistic (Attan, Whitelaw, & Ferguson, 2017; Nelson & Hogan, 2009); cognitive (Costa & Garmston, 2016); goal focused (Megginson, 2014); and adult learning focused (Cox, 2015; Desimone & Pak, 2016). *Behavioral coaching* focuses on creating change and promoting learning within the context of real-life activities. Such an approach promotes the coachee's ability to determine what to do differently in order to achieve the intended outcomes (Eldridge & Dembkowski, 2012; Garvey et al., 2018; Theeboom et al., 2013). Based on a review of the literature related to behavioral coaching, Berg and Karlsen (2007) indicated that the techniques used include modeling, feedback, reinforcement, and self-management. They noted that *humanistic coaching* relies on the coachee's desire to reach the intended goals. The coach is a facilitator and expert on the process of coaching rather than on the subject matter being coached. The coaching relationship is central to this approach in order to assist the coachee in achieving self-actualization (Eldridge & Dembkowski, 2012; Garvey et al., 2018; Ives, 2017). *Cognitive coaching* centers on the thoughts that are related to the coachee's perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs and

assists him or her in overcoming challenges that may limit success (Costa & Garmston, 2016; Ives, 2017). *Goal-oriented coaching* involves helping the coachee develop goals and action plans that are necessary to improve overall performance (Grant, 2013; Megginson, 2014). It is intended for use with goal-focused, self-directed learners to help them reflect on previous knowledge and experiences and to address what is happening in current real-life situations (Cox, 2015; Garvey et al., 2018).

In a highly referenced analysis of the various types of coaching, Ackland (1991) divided coaching into two basic forms: coaching by experts and reciprocal peer coaching. As defined by Ackland (1991), *experts* are individuals with particular areas of knowledge and skills who have been trained specifically to provide feedback and support to others. In contrast, *reciprocal peer coaching* involves two individuals observing and coaching each other on targeted skills. The most common type of coaching used in the fields of early intervention, early childhood, and early literacy is expert coaching. In this approach to coaching, an individual with knowledge and skills in a particular area applies a coaching interaction style to support the coachee in recognizing what he or she already knows and then builds on the previous knowledge or skills by sharing new information and developing new skills that are based on the coach's knowledge and experience.

Expert Coaching

As an example of expert coaching, suppose that a PT in an early intervention program has expertise in motor development, motor learning, and assistive technology that can support the motor development of young children. Suppose also that this therapist has specialized knowledge in typical child development and parenting supports. Finally, suppose that the PT serves as a coach to the mother of a 10-month-old boy with Down syndrome, and the mother wants him to sit in his highchair and join the family for meals. When using a coaching interaction style, the PT must not only find out what strategies the mother has tried to support the child's ability to sit in the highchair but also learn how those efforts have worked. Using this information as a starting point, the PT asks the mother to show how she puts the child in the highchair. The therapist and parent then analyze the child's positioning in the highchair and jointly brainstorm options for improvement. In this way, the PT is using and sharing her expertise (e.g., knowledge of muscle tone, positioning, movement, coordination necessary for self-feeding at meals) and, at the same time, is acknowledging and building on what the parent knows, is doing, and sees when the child is in the highchair. Together, they develop a joint plan to support the child's use of the highchair when the PT is not present at meals.

Another example of expert coaching is an *early literacy coach*—an experienced professional who has knowledge of classroom environmental arrangements, materials, teaching practices, and curricula that promote the early literacy development of children in the classroom. The early literacy coach shares his or her knowledge and skills by using a coaching interaction style with the classroom teacher. For example, the early literacy coach and teacher may analyze the learning centers in the classroom to determine opportunities for children's print awareness, starting with what the teacher knows about print awareness and strategies for promoting this understanding among the children. The early literacy coach and teacher then jointly generate alternatives to identify the most effective options and research-based strategies for promoting print awareness in the classroom, after which they develop a joint plan for implementing those strategies.

Reciprocal Peer Coaching

In a reciprocal peer coaching situation, both individuals have similar knowledge and skills; therefore, they work together to determine and use what they know or are learning. For example, reciprocal peer coaching may be implemented following two teachers' participation in an

introductory early literacy workshop provided as a staff development opportunity at their school. It is presumed that both teachers had general knowledge of the importance of early literacy learning opportunities for young children from their university training and from a few workshops at conferences that they attended after graduation. The teachers were energized by the early literacy workshop and immediately wanted to implement some of what they had learned. They mutually decided to focus on print awareness, so they started by analyzing how their classroom learning centers promoted that skill. They shared their assessment of each other's classrooms. They used a coaching interaction style to generate ideas for improvement on the basis of what they had learned from the workshop and to develop action plans for implementation. In order to extend their learning beyond the content presented in the workshop, both had to explore other resources related to early literacy, share the new information with each other, and work together to apply the information to their classrooms.

The Coaching Approach Used in This Book

As described in this book, coaching uses an expert-based approach (Ackland, 1991) rather than a peer-to-peer approach. It also uses a contextual model (Akamoglu & Dinnebeil, 2017; Desimone & Pak, 2016; Friedman et al., 2012) to guide the coaching process with elements of both goal-oriented (Ives, 2017; Megginson, 2014) and adult learning (Cox, 2015) coaching approaches. In this expert approach—whether coaching parents, other care providers, or colleagues—the coach is considered to be an expert because he or she has professional experience and specific knowledge and skills related to the discipline. In this approach, the recipient of coaching becomes involved in the coaching relationship because of a recognized need for the coach's knowledge, skills, and experience. As part of the adult learning approach to coaching, the coach presumes that the person who receives coaching support has confidence and acts in the role of an equal partner to prioritize self-determined learning (Cox, 2015).

As defined by Stober and Grant (2006), the contextual model of coaching has seven thematic factors: 1) a specific outcome or goal toward which both the coach and coachee are working, 2) a rationale for how coaching fits the coachee's needs and particular situation, 3) a procedure that is based on the rationale and that requires the active participation of both the coach and coachee, 4) a meaningful relationship between the coach and coachee, 5) a collaborative working alliance that focuses specifically on the coachee's development, 6) the coachee's ability and readiness to change, and 7) the coach's ability and readiness to help the coachee make the desired changes. Seven key principles facilitate the process of change and development within the contextual model: 1) collaboration, 2) accountability, 3) awareness, 4) responsibility, 5) commitment, 6) action, and 7) results. In the contextual model of coaching that is described in this book, the interaction is based on a collaborative coach–coachee relationship in which the coachee maintains a certain degree of accountability to the coach. This accountability should be seen not in a negative way but, rather, as a means for the coach to support the coachee in fulfilling the joint action plans necessary to help the coachee achieve his or her desired outcome. As described in Chapter 5, a role of the coach is to help the coachee become aware of the current situation through reflective questioning, observation, and feedback and then to develop alternatives for change (i.e., a plan). The responsibility for fully implementing the alternatives and actions that will result in the desired changes lies with the coachee and with the level of support needed from the coach. The process requires the coachee to make an ongoing commitment to move forward. The entire process is focused on the results—that is, the coachee's intended outcomes.

> ### Coaching as Defined in This Book
>
> Approach: Expert based
>
> Model: Contextual, with elements of goal-oriented and adult learning

Evidence-Based Definition of Coaching

The definition of *coaching* used in this book differs from previous descriptions found in the business and education literature. It focuses on the operationalization of the relationship between coaching practices and the intended consequences as well as on the processes used to produce the observed changes. Based on a synthesis of research on coaching practices (see Chapter 2)—and drawing from the theories and practices of the adult learning, behavioral, and goal-focused approaches to coaching—the practice of coaching may be defined as follows:

> An adult learning strategy in which the coach promotes the learner's (coachee's) ability to 1) reflect on his or her actions as a means to determine the effectiveness of an action or practice and 2) develop a plan for refinement and use of the action in immediate and future situations.

In addition to simply knowing the definition of *coaching*, professionals in the field must understand the characteristics of a coaching practice in order to know what to do to achieve the desired effect. The coaching research synthesis in Chapter 2 was guided by a process that focused on the extent to which the specific characteristics of the practice are related to differences in their outcomes or consequences. More specifically, the research synthesis examined the characteristics of coaching that were related to variations in the use of newly learned practices or the improvement of existing skills. Although the steps in the coaching process vary (Bachkirova et al., 2017; Coe et al., 2008; Grant, 2013; Losch et al., 2016), the coaching research literature suggests that coaching has five practice characteristics that lead to intended outcomes: 1) joint planning, 2) observation, 3) action/practice, 4) reflection, and 5) feedback. The definitions in the "Five Key Characteristics of Coaching" box are based on descriptions in the coaching research literature and highlight the characteristics that are used to improve the coachee's existing abilities, develop new skills, and deepen his or her understanding of evidence-based practices.

Five Key Characteristics of Coaching

The five key characteristics of coaching can be defined as follows:

Joint planning—Agreement by the coach and coachee on the actions they will take or the opportunities they will have to practice between coaching visits

Observation—Examination of another person's actions or practices that a coachee can use to develop new skills, strategies, or ideas

Action/practice—Spontaneous or planned events that occur within the context of a real-life situation and that provide the coachee with opportunities to practice, refine, or analyze new or existing skills

Reflection—Analysis of existing strategies that a coachee can use to determine whether the strategies are consistent with evidence-based practices and whether these strategies may need to be implemented without change or modified to obtain the intended outcome(s)

Feedback—Information provided by the coach that is based on his or her direct observations of the coachee, actions reported by the coachee, or information shared by the coachee and that is designed to expand the coachee's current level of understanding about a specific evidence-based practice or to affirm the coachee's thoughts or actions related to the intended outcomes

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TEN KEY ELEMENTS OF COACHING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

The key elements of coaching further elaborate on the theoretical and conceptual principles that serve as the foundation for the practice and for the approaches to coaching that are used. As defined, explained, and illustrated through the examples in this text, coaching is based on 10 key elements of the practice as used in early childhood education. An effective coaching practice should embody all of the elements listed below.

1. *Consistent with the principles of adult learning.* The National Research Council (NRC; Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999) published a research synthesis on human learning and its implications for teaching. The research included in the NRC report indicated that if a learner aims to gain deep knowledge of a particular content area, then he or she must develop an understanding of how to use the knowledge in a specific context and how to generalize it to other situations (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000).

2. *Capacity building.* Coaching builds the knowledge, skills, and abilities (i.e., capacity) of the coachee to be able to function without the coach's ongoing support. Rather than creating dependency, the coach helps the coachee discover what he or she already knows and thus can do, shares new information and ideas, assists the coachee with developing the tools that they need to achieve the desired outcomes, and helps the coachee generalize the reflections and resulting actions to new and different situations. Capacity building of the coachee by the coach also ensures that the coach can replicate the process used to identify the actions to be taken and the means for evaluating their effectiveness. The benefits of a capacity-building process are acquisition and use of new knowledge and skills as well as self-attribution related to the coachee's role in realizing the intended effects (Dunst, Bruder, & Espe-Sherwindt, 2014; Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby, 2010; Mangin, 2014; Rush & Shelden, 2011; Stormont & Reinke, 2012).

3. *Nondirective.* Flaherty noted that coaching is "not telling people what to do, [but] giving them a chance to examine what they are doing in light of their intentions" (1999, p. xii). This notion of nondirectiveness can be quite controversial in the coaching literature (Stober & Grant, 2006) and sometimes is considered to be synonymous with self-discovery (Trivette, Dunst, Hamby, & O'Herin, 2009). In fact, the coaching literature includes a range of nondirectiveness, from total self-discovery by the coachee to the provision of direct feedback to the coachee without asking him or her to reflect and consider possible reasons or options (Grant, 2013; Losch et al., 2016). The approach to coaching described in this text puts the element of nondirectiveness on a continuum, with instruction on one end, self-discovery on the opposite end, and nondirective interaction in the middle. Effective coaching consists of asking the right questions at the right time (Berg & Karlsen, 2012) to promote thinking (i.e., reflection) so that the coachee will become aware of and analyze what he or she wants to have happen, what he or she is currently doing that is supporting or inhibiting that goal, and what possible alternatives will result in achieving the goal. As a nondirective approach (Bachkirova et al., 2017), coaching does not mean that the coach can never share information with the coachee and must wait for the coachee's self-discovery; rather, the key to effective coaching is knowing when, how, and why questions are asked, information or feedback is shared, and a form of more directive instruction is used.

   An effective coach knows how and when to ask questions, when to allow for self-discovery on the part of the coachee, and when to share information and expertise without coming across as tendentious or controlling (Grant, 2013). Clearly, if the coachee does not have the most basic knowledge of the content area as a foundation on which to coach, then the coach may need to share information or provide more direct supports. If, however, the coachee has even the slightest amount of knowledge or skill, then the coach will use this knowledge as a basis for building self-awareness and confidence. The coach may then scaffold additional information and use the amount of feedback and instruction that is required to build the level of competence necessary for the coachee to reach the desired outcomes and continue to develop. As the coachee becomes more competent and confident in using the tools and strategies that will aid in acquiring knowledge, building analytical skills, generating alternatives, planning actions, and evaluating the effectiveness of a plan, the coach can reduce his or her involvement. Individuals who have previous experience as teachers or instructors tend to rely on or fall back into a directive mode when they are challenged by a particular situation, when their coaching skills are not yet fully developed, when they feel the need to prove what they know, or when they are trying to reassure themselves that they are being helpful to the coachee (Grant, 2013).

4. *Goal oriented.* Coaching is an interaction style used to achieve individual goals or outcomes that are identified by the coachee and that are related to desired knowledge or skills (Ives, 2017; Theeboom et al., 2013). The outcomes of the coaching interaction are not arbitrary; they are clearly stated from the beginning of the coaching relationship. Although goals may change over time, their achievement by the coachee is the purpose of the coaching relationship. The

relationship between the coach and coachee is defined by the coachee's goals, which may be the factor that determines who serves as the coach. If, for example, the coachee needs certain information or intends to develop specific skills in a given area, then he or she may identify a person who possesses the requisite knowledge and skills to serve as his or her coach.

5. *Solution focused.* Coaching is focused on determining the present and creating the future rather than on analyzing the past (Cavanagh & Grant, 2014; Ives, 2017). If coaching is related to a specific problem or problem area, the purpose of using a coaching approach is to identify possible solutions that can be implemented immediately, instead of concentrating on the problem itself as in traditional counseling or psychotherapy (Cavanagh & Grant, 2014; Ives, 2017; Theeboom et al., 2013). Within the context of coaching, the coach and coachee work together to identify strategies and options to reach the intended goals. As a result, coaching tends to be more short term than counseling or psychotherapy.

6. *Performance based.* The focus of coaching is the coachee's performance, application of knowledge gained, and demonstration of skills resulting from the coaching process (Coe et al., 2008; McCollumb, Hemmeter, & Hsieh, 2011; Nyman & Thach, 2013; Theeboom et al., 2013). Performance is measured in terms of growth, development, and learning over time, relative to the coachee's desired outcomes. Coaching that focuses on performance is action oriented rather than driven by emotions or feelings (Ives, 2017; Nyman & Thach, 2013). Coaching requires the coachee to actively participate and be engaged in order for learning and behavioral change to occur.

7. *Reflective.* Coaching is a reflective process (Berg & Karlsen, 2012; De Haan, 2014; Theeboom et al., 2013). Reflection is looking back in order to look forward (Clara, 2015). It is a means of reaching a deeper understanding of what a person already knows and is doing. Reflection can also help the coachee discover what modifications or new knowledge and skills he or she might need in current and future situations to obtain a desired outcome. Reflection, active participation, and engagement on the part of the coachee are used both to strengthen that person's competence with regard to what he or she can do and to build on current knowledge or skills in order to acquire new ideas and actions. As a result, the person's confidence is enhanced, causing him or her to continue to do what works, to try new possibilities, and to evaluate the effectiveness of all these actions. Reflection is a valuable tool for adult learners and can easily be taught (Castellan, 2012; Clara, 2015; Mann, 2014).

8. *Collaborative.* Coaching is a partnership and a reciprocal process in which both the coach and coachee bring knowledge and abilities to the relationship (Berg & Karlsen, 2012; Theeboom et al., 2013). The coach must learn what the coachee knows, understands, and is doing, including his or her preconceived knowledge about coaching and ideas for change, and how potential changes might be applied and might affect the coachee's current situation. The coachee may learn the coach's processes for reflecting upon and generating ideas, developing resources, solving problems, and planning actions, in addition to gaining any specialized knowledge that the coach provides in the form of feedback. Coaching cannot be based on the coach's power over the coachee; in other words, it cannot be a hierarchical relationship in which the coachee implements actions due to directives, intimidation, or a need to satisfy or please the coach.

9. *Context driven.* Coaching is a relationship that is built on the achievement of goals related to functional activities, beginning with the coachee's current situation. The *content* of coaching is never separated from the *context* in which the coach and coachee use targeted performance and/or jointly identified solutions. The act of coaching includes observations and actions by the coach and the coachee in current situations related to the coaching goals, where the identified solutions may be tried and joint plans carried out. Coaching relates to immediate actions and adaptations within and across contexts rather than conversations about "what-ifs" or the future.

10. *As hands-on as it needs to be.* Some authors (Parsloe, Leedham, & Newell, 2017) suggest that coaching be "hands-off" and advise relying totally on a self-instruction approach. Especially in early coaching interactions, however, the coach's role may need to be more hands-on. The coach may assist the coachee in identifying possible options or external resources, share information to build deep factual knowledge on the topic, model an action for the coachee, and provide feedback on the coachee's actions following the coachee's self-reflections (Berg & Karlsen, 2012). As the coachee becomes more confident and competent in his or her performance, the coach's role becomes more focused on process than on content (Cavanagh & Grant, 2014; Cox, 2015)—that is, the coach continues to prompt the coachee to reflect on and analyze ideas, consider alternatives, and plan actions. Over time, feedback by the coach becomes more affirmative and less informational.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

This book is intended to be a working guide for how to operationalize the practice of coaching in early childhood settings. Chapters 1 through 5 provide background and foundational information for coaching. Chapter 6 focuses on the use of coaching for individuals providing service coordination or case management. This chapter is not intended to show the reader how to be a service coordinator but, rather, focuses on the use of coaching in this role. Chapters 7 and 8 highlight the role of practitioners who coach families and early childhood teachers, including child care providers. Chapters 9 and 10 contain content specific to coaching coaches and the use of coaching as part of professional development. Chapter 11 concludes this text with thoughts about the future of coaching in early childhood.

Each chapter is designed to assist the reader in applying the chapter's content to real-life contexts. Coaching scenarios are woven into the chapters to illustrate and exemplify how individual characteristics or elements of the practices described might look when implemented. Some scenarios are annotated and specify the application of the coaching characteristics, types of reflective questions, and types of feedback delineated within the script. Other scenarios contain the coach's reflections embedded within the script to demonstrate his or her thinking as the situation unfolds. The Coaching Scenario Matrix (depicted at the very end of this book, directly after the References) provides a comprehensive list of all scenarios in the text (see p. 277). This matrix details the location of the scenario within the book, the topic of the coaching interaction, specific child characteristics, the discipline of the coach, and the role of the coachee. The purpose of this matrix is to assist the reader in being able to easily find specific scenarios of interest.

Mirroring both the coaching characteristics explained in the text and the characteristics of adult learning provides opportunities throughout the book for readers to reflect, observe, and practice. Opportunities for reflection include thinking about current or future practices and applying relevant information within a chapter to build on one's current knowledge and skills. Observation opportunities provide a time to observe one's own practices or the practices of others regarding a specific characteristic or element of coaching. The practice opportunities provided throughout each chapter include ideas for how to put information into action by applying what is being learned to a real-life context. The *Remember* notations in each chapter contain important elements of coaching practices that are necessary for adding to or building one's own conceptual and operational frameworks for coaching.

Terminology Used in This Book

The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook, *Second Edition* contains terminology that may not be familiar to the reader or that may be defined by different readers in different ways. To ensure a common understanding of the terminology used, the authors have provided definitions of some of the terms used throughout the text.

Caregiver—Any individual who cares for and is important in the life of a child, including, but not limited to, a grandparent, aunt, uncle, family friend, baby sitter, and nanny.

Child care provider—An individual who works in a child care center or family child care home.

Coach—The person using the coaching characteristics described in this book to support the learning and development of another individual to achieve a desired or intended outcome.

Coachee—The individual who has a desired outcome and who receives the support of someone serving in a coaching role.

Early intervention practitioner—An individual who works in an early intervention program and who supports a coachee by using the coaching practices. Early intervention practitioners may include, but are not limited to, early childhood educators, early childhood special educators, hearing specialists, nurses, nutritionists, OTs, PTs, positive behavior support specialists, psychologists, service coordinators, social workers, SLPs, and vision specialists.

Literacy coach—An individual who usually has a background in education, has specialized knowledge and experience in the area of literacy, and is responsible for providing support to teachers related to the classroom environment and teaching strategies that promote the literacy development of the students in the teachers' classrooms.

Parent—An individual who is directly responsible for the care of his or her biological, adopted, or foster children.

Service coordinator—An individual who serves as a case manager, assisting with the coordination of care, services, and resources for families of young children.

Teacher—An individual who teaches in an infant–toddler, preschool, kindergarten, or elementary school classroom.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this book is to define coaching and assist the reader in applying the research-based characteristics of coaching practices in early childhood contexts. The text describes an expert-based, rather than a peer-to-peer, approach to coaching and a contextual coaching model that includes elements of both goal-oriented and adult learning models. Ten key elements of coaching further describe how it may be implemented in early childhood contexts: Coaching should be consistent with adult learning and capacity-building research, and it should be nondirective, goal oriented, solution focused, performance based, reflective, collaborative, context driven, and as hands-on as it needs to be. Coaching may be used across early childhood settings and with all the important people who support children's learning and development within those settings.

"Rush and Shelden have done it again! *The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook, Second Edition* takes the best from the first edition and provides an expanded collection of 'real life scenarios and concrete strategies.' This is a valuable go-to-guide for anyone learning about or doing coaching."
—Linda Labas, M.Ed., Early Childhood Coordinator,
Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (UCEDD), The University of Maine

"[A] must-read for preservice university students and related service providers considering a career in early intervention as well as all current early intervention providers."
—Mary Hendicks, M.S., Program Quality Specialist, Center for Technology, Johns Hopkins University

How can you support both colleagues and families as they **enhance their knowledge, develop new skills,** and **promote healthy development of young children?** Coaching is the key—and the new edition of this best-selling guide is packed with even more practical tools to help early childhood professionals conduct skillful coaching in homes, schools, and communities.

Like the popular first edition, this book walks you step-by-step through the **five characteristics of successful coaching practices:** observation, action, reflection, feedback, and joint planning. You'll learn about the essential qualities of effective coaches and discover how to adjust your coaching techniques to meet the specific needs of early childhood educators, parents, and caregivers. And you'll get **cutting-edge new content inspired by user feedback,** including

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- More details on coaching throughout the IFSP process
- New examples that address common coaching challenges
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- Coaching Log

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