

Coaching in Home-Based Early Intervention

Pre/Post-Test Answers

1. Coaching is a “hands off” approach. The early intervention provider talks with the caregivers and shares strategies to help their children grow and learn in everyday routines.

False

This is one of the myths of coaching in early intervention. Coaching caregivers does change the role of the EI provider from working directly with the child to supporting the caregiver’s and child’s interactions. However, the EI provider will use many different strategies in addition to talking that are designed to help the caregiver learn to engage the child in routines and activities to learn new skills. Coaching includes demonstrations and explanations of various strategies, guiding the caregiver’s by joining in and working together and jointly problem solving how it is going and what might need to be added or revised. Which coaching strategies the EI uses will vary based on the caregiver and child’s interactions and interests, their learning styles and the outcomes being coached.

2. In the coaching approach, the early intervention provider is primarily focused on developing and monitoring a plan for the caregiver– not the child.

False

Early intervention providers should plan, assess and document both the child and caregiver’s goals and progress in a coaching approach. Planning is important for both the caregiver and the child. A shift to a coaching approach does not lessen the EI’s responsibility to the child’s IFSP; it increases the importance of the caregiver’s participation and systematic development of the caregiver’s capacity. Research shows that adults learn best when they are active participants in the process. We also know that family centered practice emphasize the importance of the family’s priorities and their role in decision-making. The most effective coaching plans integrate and support the individual learning needs for both the child and the caregiver and are developed by the caregiver and EI working together.

3. Early intervention providers keep caregivers engaged in learning by coaching on new intervention strategies or routines in each visit.

False

Just like children, adults learn at different rates and also just like children, adults need time to practice and process the information. Adults are engaged when they are participating in activities that are relevant, reflect their priorities and build on their strengths. More isn’t better for adults or for children. Sometimes the child needs time and practice to learn while other times the caregiver needs to keep practicing and gain

Coaching in Home-Based Early Intervention

Pre/Post-Test Answers

consistency before adding additional strategies. Keeping a balance of enough but not too much for BOTH the caregiver and the child is important.

4. Coaching should be used primarily with caregivers who have time, interest and resources to embed intervention in their daily routines and activities. Research has shown it isn't for every family.

False

To date, there is no research to support this myth either. We do have research that shows caregivers who have the time, interest and resources are generally early adopters of the approach and are satisfied with the results. However, we have other research that also highlights the importance of coaching for families with multiple risk factors to build their confidence that will increase their competence.

5. The most effective feedback is family centered and performance based.

True

Performance based feedback is much more than percentage of responses correct for either the child or the caregiver and can be definitely be integrated into family centered practices for early intervention. Behavioral and relationship based approaches are not contradictory. Performance based feedback is family centered when it is specific, honest, describes rather than judges the behaviors, and encourages a discussion about what worked well in addition to what could be changed. Family centered practices determine how the feedback is delivered while performance is about the information to be shared.

6. Overall, research has shown that early intervention providers use direct teaching and practice with feedback as their preferred coaching strategies.

False

Actually, research to date shows that most early intervention providers rely on modeling and use very little direct teaching, demonstration with explanation or specific performance feedback. Shifting to a coaching approach, rather than "hands on" child focused interventions will necessitate the use of a variety of coaching strategies that are appropriate to the child and caregiver.

7. Research has shown that adults learn efficiently through observation of others with opportunities to ask questions.

False

The National Research Council's synthesis of research, "*How People Learn*," suggests that adult learners are not likely to become experts without actively participating in the

Coaching in Home-Based Early Intervention

Pre/Post-Test Answers

learning process by contributing input, engaging in the process, and in evaluating their experiences in the context or situation. While there are a variety of instructional strategies that support adult learners to engage in the learning process, self-discovery without guidance and feedback has not been shown to be as effective. Learners usually need more support than hearing about the ideas or watching someone else engaged in the practice.

8. According to adult learning theory, thinking and talking about what you are doing increases understanding and ability to use the information meaningfully.

True

Several of the most effective adult learning frameworks that were examined in the National Research Council's research synthesis "*How People Learn*" included opportunities for the learner's to reflect on their learning, what they believed was important, how it matched their previous experiences or their values, and what made sense to them about the learning. Thinking and talking about the learning helps adults deepen their understanding, make the learning their own and also encourages them to generate new ideas. Reflection is one component of adult learning and is most effective when paired with other more active instructional strategies.

9. Conversation and information sharing are coaching strategies used throughout the home visit to develop and sustain the partnership.

True

EI's utilize effective communication skills, active listening, commenting, clarifying and validating, as they partner with caregivers. Conversation and information sharing are very important general coaching strategies to build the relationship, gather updates, exchange ideas, and provide resources, but they are not sufficient for caregivers to learn to interact with their children in ways that promote their development, participation and independence. Information sharing is a useful feedback tool and can be integrated throughout the home visit when opportunities arise.

10. Research to date has identified problem solving as a coaching strategy with benefits for both the early intervention provider and the caregiver.

True

Dunst and Trivette (2009) identify problem solving and practice within context as effective adult learning strategies to increase the learner's application of the concepts. Problem solving with a caregiver offers opportunities to provide feedback such as offering suggestions and or demonstrating a strategy, not as the EI with the "correct" solution, but as a partner working together. Problem-solving increases the caregivers' participation and promotes the use of their strengths in the intervention while also

Coaching in Home-Based Early Intervention Pre/Post-Test Answers

providing important information for the EI about their experiences and preferences. Kashinath, Woods & Goldstein (2006) also found that problem solving was the caregiver's preferred learning strategy.

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Coaching in Home-Based Early Intervention
Pre/Post-Test Answers
