

P is for Practice-Based Coaching

Supporting Practitioners and Families in Using Effective Practices

Practice-based coaching (PBC) is an evidence-based coaching framework designed to support practitioners and families (coachees) to learn about and use effective practices in classroom, home, and community environments. Effective practices are actions or behaviors you can see or hear coachees use to support young children's development and learning. Examples of effective practices include providing a transition cue before changing activities, giving directions that are short, and responding to children when they initiate communication. PBC can take place using many formats, including in person, live streaming, virtual, in groups, or individually. Research shows when PBC is used as intended, practitioners and families learn practices that support the development and learning of young children.

Essential Parts of Practice-Based Coaching

Here are four essential parts of practice-based coaching. Use of these parts will help coachees to know about and use effective practices with young children.

1. Build a collaborative coaching partnership.

- Talk about the purpose of coaching and how the coach and the coachee will equally contribute to the collaborative coaching partnership.
- Share each others' prior knowledge and experiences related to using the practice(s) with young children.
- Agree on which practice(s) will be the focus for coaching to support children's learning and development.

2. Write a shared goal and action plan.

- Identify the coachees' knowledge and use of practices through observation and discussion.
- Make shared decisions about when and how the coachee will use practices to facilitate children's learning and development.
- Write a practice-focused goal and action plan, including steps to achieve the goal, how progress will be measured, resources needed, and a timeline.

3. Do a focused observation.

- Observe and take notes or record video about when and how the coachee is using the practice related to the shared goal.
- Use coaching strategies that support the coachee as they use the practice in a home, community, or classroom (e.g., showing the coachee what the practice looks like, providing a cue to let the coachee know when they are doing or should do the practice).

4. Engage in reflection and provide feedback.

- Using the information from the focused observation, reflect on use of the practice.
- Share feedback with examples of when the practice was used and when it might be used more often or in different ways.
- Identify materials or resources that will help the coachee learn more about effective use of the practices.

What We Are Doing

The Anita Zucker Center and our collaborators have and are supporting a number of projects that use practice-based coaching. We also work with our collaborators on practice-based coaching research projects to continually evaluate its use and effects.