

Coaching Corner

Ready, Set, Go: Writing Action Plans to Facilitate the PBC Process

Kathleen Meeker: Okay, welcome, everyone, to this month's Coaching Corner webinar Ready, Set, Go: Writing Action Plans to Facilitate the PBC Practice-Based Coaching Process. My name is Kathleen Meeker, and I'm an assistant professor at the University of Washington and a member of the NCQTL coaching team. I'll be your host for today's webinar, and as always, I am joined behind the scenes — Liz Wimmer and Susan Stewart. So thank you to them for their help. Before I introduce our presenter for today, I'd like to share a bit about this series and our time together. This has been an ongoing webinar series that's been offered monthly, and this is actually the last month of the Coaching Corner webinars this year. So we've appreciated many of the familiar names that I see in the participant list, and for all of you who have joined us in our learning and teaching us about coaching as well, we've enjoyed getting to know you and spending this time with you. Each month this year, we've presented a specific topic and explored practice-based coaching as a form of professional development, as a way to build a bridge toward best practice, toward improving the knowledge and practice for those caring for and educating young children, and ultimately improving outcomes for young children. We'll be asking some questions throughout, and that's another way for you to let us know your thoughts. You can participate in polls, like you already did, and in different chats, and we're going to try a slightly new variation today as well. So we want you to engage and interact with us as we go.

So today's topic that we're very excited about is action planning. And our presenters are going to walk us through the essential elements of action planning as well as identify approaches and strategies that coaches can use with teachers. Our session today is intended to help recognize that effective coaching helps educators become more intentional in their practice and provides a platform for supporting children's positive outcomes in all areas. I am so pleased to be joined today by two members of the NCQTL coaching team from the University of Florida, who I'll let introduce themselves in just a minute. Crystal Bishop is a researcher at the University of Florida and Darbi Shannon is a graduate student at the University of Florida, and they both bring a wealth of experience and expertise related to coaching and have been traveling the country, leading trainings and other events related to practice-based coaching. So we are very excited for them to join us, and I'm excited to introduce them to you if you haven't met them already. So, every month one of our goals is to help build and continue building a community of coaches during these monthly webinars, and one way we feel like we do that is by putting a face with the names that you hear. We want to get to know you, and we thought we'd start by sharing more about ourselves. For those of you who join this webinar monthly or regularly, you know that I usually try and find a picture that connects to the topic, something kind of silly that connects, but action planning was a little bit harder. So I couldn't think of anything. No funny stories this month about action planning. So I thought I'd share a family picture instead. So here is my family at an egg hunt a little while ago, about a month ago. So this is me that you see with my kiddos and family, and I'd like to take this time now to introduce Crystal and Darbi.

Crystal Bishop: Hi, everyone. My name is Crystal Bishop, and, as Kathleen mentioned, I'm a researcher at the University of Florida. I've been a part of the NCQTL coaching team for three years now. And I've had several years of experience coaching, and I love to talk about coaching. I have had the pleasure of coaching teachers around a variety of practices in Head Start settings and in public preschools, and I've

even been able to do some coaching of parents. So this is one of my passions, and I'm really excited to spend the next hour talking with you all about it.

Darbi Shannon: And hi, my name is Darbi Shannon. And I'm a graduate student at the University of Florida. I've been working with NCQTL on the coaching team for about two years now, and I'm really excited to talk about coaching because I've been both a teacher who's been coached and also worked as a coach, and I just know how important it can be to support teachers in the classrooms to really implement high-quality practices. And this is me in the picture. I'm on the far right-hand side. And this is out to lunch with some friends when we were meeting my friend Chelsea's new baby, Mason. So I'm really excited to be here with you guys and to learn alongside with you.

Crystal: I probably should've provided some context for which person is me, although I think you can probably figure out I'm the one on the right in the left-hand picture. And my 3-year-old daughter Kate is in the middle, and her daddy, and my husband, are on — in the left. And we actually are doing some action planning of our own because we're expecting a baby in July, so we have a lot going on.

Kathleen: Very exciting. Well, thank you both. So as you can tell by the title of today's presentation, we're going to be talking about shared goal-setting and action planning. And before we got started, we asked you about the three aspects of shared goal-setting and action planning. Crystal and Darbi, it looked like nearly everyone indicated that they'd like support with linking action steps to goals. About a fifth, 20 percent, indicated that they'd like support with deciding when to move to a new action or a new goal. And 30 percent said that they'd like more information about using the action plan to focus your observations. So what do you guys think? Does that mesh up with what you're thinking and what you've experienced?

Crystal: Absolutely. So one of the reasons that we chose those questions for today's poll is because, as we've been going around talking to people about coaching and helping folks generate action plans and write goals, we've found that these are the three things that people tend to ask for the most help with along the way. So you all are not alone. And hopefully our conversations today will help you feel more confident about writing action plans that both support your implementation of practice-based coaching but also, of course, support teachers' implementation of effective teaching practices. So just to give you kind of an overview of where we plan to go today and what we hope to talk with you about, first we are going to review the key components of high quality action plans that support our implementation of practice-based coaching. And so this will be sort of a review from the coach training. And then we are going to spend a lot of time today really having some practice with writing action plans, and we'll kind of hone in on specific parts of action planning that people have struggled with in the past or that, from our experiences, just might need a little bit more digging deeper into. And then later in the — we'll kind of wrap up with talking about how the action plan can support implementation of other practice-based coaching components. And we'll talk specifically more about focused observation. And then we will throughout also talk about how your action plan really helps you be thoughtful about reflection and feedback as well. So that's sort of our plan for the day. And let's go ahead and get started.

Kathleen: Great. All right, well, you all who are joining us today are likely familiar with the practicebased coaching model. Every month we think it's important to reorient ourselves to this model so that we stay true, and today we're going to focus primarily on one component of the practice-based

coaching model or cycle, shared goals and action planning. So, Crystal, what drew you to spending your time today talking about action planning? Why is it so important?

Crystal: Well, we wanted to spend some focused time talking about this component of PBC because we know it includes a lot of steps, actually. So in comparison to focused observation and reflection and feedback, we really felt like shared goals and action planning has several things that you have to do as part of this one key component. And so we'll do just kind of a quick overview of that. So the first thing that we know is that the first thing we do as part of shared goals and action planning is really to collect needs assessment data. And this is something that both the coach and the teacher do. And then we use our needs assessment data to work together to write a goal that is specific, observable, and achievable. And that's really a focused practice that we want to work with with a teacher, and it's really guided by and informed by the needs assessment. And then once we have our goal, we can work on action planning. So this is a lot to be wrapped up into one component. And so what we wanted to spend most of our time today on is really talking about that action plan. So when I think of an action plan, I really usually — the place that my mind goes or the picture that comes to my mind is of a road map, and so I think one of the things I'm sure we've all had the experience of trying to get somewhere new or unfamiliar and having really terrible directions to get there. It's not a pleasant experience. It's really frustrating, it's nerve-racking, and in the worst case scenario, we don't actually get to our destination. So one of the reasons I always think of the action plan as being like a road map is because for a teacher who's working on a new practice, they need some support, they need a map to help them know where they're going to get or how to get where they're going. So I always just think of this as similar to a road map, and that's what we're going to work on today. We want our map to be explicit, we want it to be clear, and we want it to be — we want it to have directions that are going to help us get where we want to go, which is our goal.

Kathleen: And as someone who frequently gets lost, I love that analogy to a road map. Helps us stay on track, helps us be focused on our destination and the steps to get there, so that's a great analogy and really relatable.

Crystal: So just to kind of continue with that analogy for just a minute longer, we have an example, action planning a la Google. So when I think of my action plan, I always think of this as like my GPS. I know that — so this is an example of an action plan or what happens when we tell Google Maps that we want to get from one destination to another. So most of us are probably familiar with, you put in where you started, so here we're starting in Rohnert Park, California. And the place that I want to go is to Twin Hills Middle School, which is in Sebastopol, California. So if I just type the cities, that I want to get from Rohnert Park, California, to Sebastopol, California, this is what Google Maps gives me. And we can see that there are directions there, but they're not very specific. And so when I look at this map, I can already tell I might not get to my destination. But if I'm more specific and I put a beginning address and I say I want to get to Twin Hills Middle School, I can see that I have more specific action plans — or directions to get there. So to me the action plan is really kind of equivalent to these directions. And the more specific we can be with our action plan, the more likely we're going to achieve our goal or get to our destination. So we wanted to give you all just a minute to think about if you're making your road map, you're getting ready to make an action plan with a teacher, what information do you think is essential to make sure that you can achieve your goal?

Kathleen: Right, and so now take a second to type into the chat box that you see at the bottom of your screen, and we'll play some music. [music plays]

Kathleen: But what I see, Crystal and Darbi, as we — as all of you have shared your ideas, some major themes that popped out to me were issues with time and timelines, the resources that might be needed, specific goals and what it looks like when those goals are complete, information about who's involved and who's responsible for steps, and then what I also noticed was several comments about teachers' priorities and their strengths and what kind of support might be needed. So does that ring true with what you guys have experienced, Crystal and Darbi?

Crystal: Absolutely. I was just looking through everybody's responses and marveling at how awesome y'all already are at writing action plans.

Kathleen: I know!

Crystal: You've been paying attention in those coach trainings and in all of the Coaching Corner webinars that have been coming up. Yeah, so actually y'all were right on. So when we — when we do the coach training, we talk about five key components of action plans. And so those are listed here. So the first thing that, of course, we want to know, is what's our goal? And if we go back to our road map example, the goal is the destination, right? And then our action steps are really the direction. So that's how are we going to get there? Now that we know where we want to go, what's it going to take to get us there? So that's really breaking that goal down into manageable steps. And I think some of the things that y'all talked about or included in your chat about things like who's going to do what, who's involved, what supports are needed, that kind of wraps into action steps, because when we — for each action step that we include on an action plan, we also list what resources are needed, and so that might link in to what are the teacher's needs and priorities. Then the other thing that many of you had in your chat was timelines. So again, for every action step we write down on an action plan, we're going to include our hopeful — I'm saying "hopeful" because action plans are not permanent documents; they are flexible. But you're writing down when do you think you're going to have each of your steps completed, so you're keeping yourself on a timeline. And then of course the other thing that we need to have in an action plan is how am I going to know when I've reached my destination? So if you think about your GPS, Siri tells you you've arrived. So we need something that's going to tell us we've arrived. And we don't get to have automated action plans, so we have to actually come up with some criteria for how we'll know, and this is a part of helping us to decide is it time to move on to a new action plan?

Kathleen: I'm so excited about this, Crystal, because this is really hard. This is something I've struggled with, that goal achievement statement and how to write those, so I think this is really important.

Crystal: All right. So we're going to start and just briefly touch on the goals. So we know that the goal is the destination, and we also know that we — we remember that we want to have goals that are specific, achievable, and observable. So we're going to spend the rest of today really focusing on one of two goals. So this is our first goal, and it's related to a transition practice. So this goal, we are going to use to give y'all practice. And we'll use this as an example, and then we are going to keep building onto it. So this goal, we want to develop and implement strategies to teach children the expectations of

morning arrival. And we're going to keep circling back to this, so we'll have more examples of how we're going to build an action plan around it in a moment. And the next goal that we're going to do — so the structure for today is really going to be we'll use that first goal to kind of show you what we mean by some of these things related to action planning, and then you'll have a chance to write your own action plan and action steps around this goal. So this goal is focused around a STEAM practice, which is I will use all five steps — observing, questioning, predicting, experimenting, and discussion — of the scientific method during science experiments. So the first thing that we want to think about, now we know where we're going, so we have a goal. We have our destination. And we want to think about how can we make sure that those directions, those action steps, are really going to lead us to our goal? One of the things that y'all indicated in your poll at the beginning of the webinar was that most of you said that you'd like some support with linking action steps to goals. And this is kind of tricky, because we know that some practices, teaching practices, are related to each other.

So oftentimes what we find is we have a goal, and we get into an action step, and then we realize— or we get into writing our action steps and trying to implement the action steps on an action plan, and we realize that maybe they aren't as linked to the goal as we originally thought. And so you want them to be logical to the goal. For example, if I — this practice is related to transition practices. So I don't want my action steps to be focused on teaching rules. That's a really blatant example of not linking. So let's look at some possible action steps for this goal. And you guys will get to weigh in. So the first step that we have is that we're going to work with the team to brainstorm steps that need to occur during the morning arrival. Then we're going to work with the team to identify strategies to ensure children are actively engaged in the morning arrival transition. We're going to work with the team to assign roles so the classroom is zoned to support children's engagement in this transition. And then we want the coach to observe how many children are actively engaged in the morning arrival transition and share her observation. So what do you all think? Are these action steps linked to our goal, which is, "I'm going to develop and implement strategies to teach children the expectations of morning arrival"?

Kathleen: Great, so take a second to vote in the poll that you see at the bottom of your screen. Okay, so it looks like about 93 percent say yes and about 6 percent say no. So this was hard for me to kind of decide and know what to look at, Crystal, so what should we be noticing here?

Crystal: All right, so I want to give some props first of all to our two brave souls who said no, because actually, when I look at this action plan, I would say that these action steps are not linked to the goal. They definitely are action steps that are linked to a transition practice, but if we take a deeper look at what the goal and each of the action steps is focused on, we can see that the goal is focused on teaching the expectations of the morning arrival. But then if we look at the action steps, most of them are focused on strategies for making sure that children are engaged in the morning arrival. So these action steps are perfectly valid action steps for a goal that's focused on promoting engagement in transitions, and in particular the morning arrival, but if what we want is to teach children what they have to do during morning arrival time, then we probably want to have some action steps that are slightly different than these ones.

Kathleen: So this is tricky, because each of these action steps are great on their own, right? I mean, they're really well written action steps. They just aren't actually aligned to the goal. So if I'm working collaboratively with a teacher who selected this goal and then he proposes these action steps, what do I do? How do I help kind of lead that conversation towards making a link or, like things are dawning on

me right now, what if I've been working on an action plan and I realize that the goals and steps that we've set up together aren't actually aligned? What should I do? What do you suggest, Crystal?

Crystal: Well, so I think for the first case, if you're realizing — because what you've described is a really great collaborative process for building an action plan, and so, you know, if you've asked the teacher and you've worked with the teacher to come up with a goal and then the teacher's starting to name off action steps, I think it's part of coaching to be able to point out and say, "You know, I'm noticing that a lot of your action steps are really around how you can keep kids engaged in this morning arrival time. So I just want to clarify whether you want to have a goal that's focused on that or whether you're really interested in kids learning what they need to do during the morning arrival transition." And so, you know, I think it's perfectly fine to just follow up with clarifying questions with teachers, and that's part of that collaborative process. The other situation that you've described is also one that I have encountered, and so I think that's why it's really important to remember, that your action plan is not a document written in stone. So we use the action plan during every coaching visit. It really guides our implementation of all of the steps of PBC, and so as you're reflecting with the teacher about progress toward the goal, you might realize, you know, I don't think these action steps are really the ones that are best for this goal. So you just revise your action plan. You might be — you might decide, well, no, the action steps, I think, are what I need to be doing; I just need to align the goal better with them. Or you might say, well, these are great practices, but it's not — it's not helping me teach kids what they need to do at morning arrival. So, again, it's just a conversation, and you can just revise your action plan. That's what I would do.

Kathleen: Sounds good.

Crystal: These — let's try one more. So we're still working with the same goal of teaching children the expectations of morning arrival. We've got the same first steps, and now we want to have the coach take photos of morning arrival activities. I'm going to use the photos the coach creates to make a visual task list that shows what the steps are. I'm going to teach the steps for morning arrival using the checklist, modeling appropriate behaviors during morning arrival, and I also have added that I want to provide specific praise to children who are engaging appropriately in the morning arrival steps. So what do you think, Kathleen? Do you think these are linked or not?

Kathleen: Well, let's see here. So if I look at the first one, I can see that it's about defining the expectations for kids, so what morning arrival looks like. So it seems to be linked. And as I look — if I look at it with that lens, about what's expected of the children, it seems like that's true of the others, too, that they're linked. Am I on the right track here? I'm a little anxious.

[laughter]

Crystal: Yeah, so, you know, again, the first step is the same as the one from the previous action plan, but it is linked, because it's about defining what has to happen during that morning arrival time. And if we look at all of the other steps, we can see that they really are centered around teaching children what happens during morning arrival. So I believe that these steps are more linked to this goal than the ones that we were looking at previously. And again, they're all great action steps. It's really just that connection between the action step and the goal.

Kathleen: Great. So let's think about what key words let you know that they're linked. So as you look at these steps, brainstorm kind of together here and chat in what key words did you pull out to let you know that these steps were linked to the goal? All right, well, it looks like you guys nailed it. So good! So I noticed, Crystal, that people were pulling out ideas like teach the steps, use the task list, provide feedback and praise for following expectations, model the appropriate behaviors. So some consistency there in some of the key words that our network of folks chimed in on.

Crystal: Absolutely. So just as you're talking, I'm highlighting some of the things that we thought really kind of highlighted the linkage between the goal and the action steps. So I'm just going to second that you all nailed it! You got this. And that's good, because now it's your turn. So this — if you remember, I said we have two goals. So we're going to use goal A as sort of our illustration goal, and goal B is going to be more for you all to work on action steps yourselves. So what we want to know is, if you look at this goal, what are some action steps that might be linked to the goal? And you don't have to do a full action plan. You can just put one step, you can put a couple. Whatever makes sense for you.

Kathleen: All right, so this is a new format we haven't tried before. We like to model this parallel process of trying new things and problem-solving and being flexible. So what — how this is going to work is you should see a small box called "action steps" to the right of the PowerPoint slide. And what you're going to do is you're going to type your action step or steps into the little chat box, the dialogue box that you see within that action step window. What we want you to know about this is that you're only going to see your own response pop up, but those are all going to come to us as presenters without your names on them, and we are going to — Crystal and Darbi are going to choose a few representative action steps to share back on the whiteboard and talk through together. So your names won't be used, this is anonymous. You're contributing your ideas into the action steps, and then Crystal and Darbi will pull a few when the music stops and talk through them with you, okay? So we're going to try this out.

Crystal: All right, so we've had a minute to look at all of your responses. Let me just say that we've chosen three, and there were way more than that. So kudos to y'all for really great responses to this. So we have three action steps that we've pulled to talk about. So the first one is to brainstorm words that can be used during one of the five steps. So it could be observing, questioning, predicting, experimenting, or discussion. So, Darbi, what do you think? Do you think this is linked to the goal?

Darbi: I do, and the reason I think that this particular action step is so important is that often when I'm in the classroom, I see a lead teacher and an assistant teacher or two co-teachers, and when you brainstorm those words together, you can make sure your whole team is kind of on the same page and that they're all supporting children using common language. And that's really important in an action plan.

Crystal: Absolutely. And I'll also say that we've put these up on the whiteboard in no particular order. But I do think that this would be probably an early step in action — in the action plan would be to kind of begin to think about the language that you might use.

Darbi: And so the second one that we have up there, the coach will observe and watch for five elements in an initial experiment. I thought that that step was also kind of an important early step. And the reason I think it's important is because whenever I build a goal with a teacher or I think about our action steps, I want to be thoughtful about what's the current practice in this classroom? What are they doing right now? And what's a really achievable goal for us? And so that's why I like that second one. What do you think about the third one?

Crystal: I think the third one is also really linked, but I also — I just wanted to go back and say one thing about the coach observing. So this, to me, is an action step that might be helpful to happen more than once as a teacher is trying to implement this practice. So the coach might observe and watch for those five elements in an initial experiment, and there might be some feedback and some reflection about that, and then you might also have the coach observe and watch for that and have sort of a follow-up in another experiment later. So this is an action step that I would say could maybe happen throughout the action plan.

Darbi: And so on your timeline, what do you think you would put next to that step?

Crystal: I might — you could maybe do check-in points, so you could have specific dates. Or sometimes I just write "ongoing." So, and again, you're going to talk with the teacher about what do you want me to watch for when I come next time? So it doesn't have to have a firm timeline, but it just seems like that's an action step that you might repeat. So then going back to creating a lesson plan, I think doing the observation early might help to create a lesson plan, because then we know where we need to provide more guidance for ourselves and be more explicit in our lesson plan. So again, I think this is a really nice action step that's linked and is a really logical action step to be able to achieve this goal. So y'all are doing great! And this is just, in follow-up, sort of an example action plan that we gave to show the linkage between some potential action steps and a goal. Again, there might be more than one route to get to the same destination, so some of these are similar to the ones that we just talked about, but others of them are not. And so, again, this one is really focused on outdoor play. So it's more specific to a particular time of day, whereas the ones we were just looking at were about experiments during any time of day. But again, you might have different action steps to arrive at the same destination. And if we look at our key words there, we can see the scientific method, it kind of threaded throughout all of the action steps and in the goal.

Kathleen: Great. Well, thank you, Crystal, for providing us with that great introduction to goal-setting and action planning. It certainly gave me and hopefully all of the participants with us today a lot to think about. I'm going to reflect on my own coaching. So once we've gotten those action steps, what's our next step?

Darbi: Right, so similar to the action steps, it's also really important to think about linking the goal achievement statement to the teaching practice and the goal that you and your teacher have selected. And so we're going to focus today on what will the teacher be doing differently in his or her classroom? And to guide this conversation with the teacher, I usually want to ask him or her to think about what is it that they're going to be doing differently in their classroom, because that helps us to determine if our goal achievement statement is going to be trying a new practice or doing the practice more often, or it might even be doing a teaching practice that's familiar, but doing it differently than they've done it before. And so as we all know, goal achievement statements are generated collaboratively, and so this

occurs in the context of a collaborative partnership. And the goal achievement statement should be written both with the coach's expertise but also with the teacher's input so that it's really a bidirectional conversation between those two partners. And this is really important, because the teacher has to be committed to that goal. They also have to feel comfortable with whatever criteria you set forward, and you both need to be confident that that goal can be achieved within that, you know, two-to-four week window.

Kathleen: And, Darbi, what kinds of resources do you typically use to decide what an achievable goal might be?

Darbi: Well, I have a list here of some of the things that I use to inform that achievable goal. And really it's going to be different for every action plan, but it's important to work with the teacher to really review and think about what is their current practice in their classroom, what does it look like? And so some data that I use to think about their current implementation are the needs assessment data that both the teacher has completed as well as the needs assessment data that I as the coach have completed. We also want to look at our specific, observable, and achievable goal that the coach and the teacher have worked on together. Remember, it's that one that, you know, it's really a collaborative process to achieve. And then finally we want to look at our action steps that we've selected to see if those can be incorporated into our goal achievement statement. And so as Crystal was talking about earlier, we can really think about our goal achievement statement as like Siri saying, "You have arrived." And so it can help us to decide when a goal is met or when a new action plan is needed.

Kathleen: Great, so now that we know what resources to gather, let's take a look at a few examples.

Darbi: Perfect. And so I'm going to revisit here a goal achievement statement for that first morning arrival goal that we looked at. So, "I will develop and implement strategies to teach children the expectations of morning arrival." And before I pop this up, I want to say that all goal achievement statements are going to look different, because they're informed by the data you and the teacher have collected and looked at together. But here's an example of a goal achievement statement. So, "I know I've achieved this goal when my team uses the visual task list and explicit teaching strategies — for example, modeling and descriptive praise — to teach the steps of morning arrival every morning for two weeks." So after I write the goal achievement statement, I always want to work with the teacher that I'm coaching to kind of double-check that it's a specific goal, that it's an observable goal, and also that it's an achievable goal that's linked. And so specific, because it's focused on the teacher's actions and behaviors in the classroom. And observable because these are things that I want to see and hear the teacher doing, and I really see those in this statement. And then finally achievable within that two-to-four week window.

Kathleen: I think you also mentioned linked, and Crystal showed us how to link each step to the goal earlier. Do you have any tricks for checking the goal achievement statement to make sure it's linked to the goal?

Darbi: Yeah, actually, that's a good reminder. So when I'm thinking about linking that goal, I actually use a checklist for myself that I share with the teachers that I'm going to work with. And so we kind of

go through these questions together, and it's a great collaborative check. It's not just me telling the teachers, you know, this is what your goal is, but we're really having a conversation. So, for example, we just walk through this and say, "Okay, who's going to implement the goal? What practices have we agreed that I'll be looking for when I do my focused observation?" And then I might ask, you know, "Where would you be implementing those practices?" Or, "When can I observe these practices?"

Kathleen: Okay, so, Darbi, let me try this out on our morning arrival goal. So it seems to me that the "who" includes the teacher and his or her team. The "what" is using the visual task list and explicit teaching strategies. The "why" is to teach children the steps of morning arrival. And finally the "where" and "when" is during morning arrival in the classroom every day. So does that —

Darbi: Yeah, that's perfect. And it's so clear that if you were the teacher that I was working with, that we'd both know what that destination is going to be.

Kathleen: Great. So I also noticed that this goal achievement statement is really focused on what the teacher's doing. Is it ever okay to have a goal achievement statement that's based on child outcomes, so what the children have learned or can do?

Darbi: Yeah, absolutely. You definitely can have that. And so if we were looking at the same goal achievement statement of morning arrival, it's possible that we would have a goal achievement statement for the child outcomes. And so I just want to say that it's important to remember that the coaching is really focused on supporting teachers to implement high quality teaching or interactional practices in the classroom, which means that you're always going to have a goal achievement statement related to, again, what is the teacher going to be doing differently after you've completed those action steps? However, in some cases, it might make sense to have a goal achievement statement related to what the children are going to know and be able to do differently after the action plan is completed.

Kathleen: So would you need to write two goals, or are you saying that two goal achievement statements can be linked to this same goal?

Darbi: Right, so I'm saying that two goal achievement statements can actually be linked to the single goal of, for example, morning arrival. And often it's easier for teachers to think about what it is that they want their children to know and be able to do, because they have a really clear picture in their mind of, you know, this is what I want to see my kids doing differently in the classroom. And so in this example, we see that when the teacher or team are using the visual schedule and explicit teaching strategies to teach those steps for morning arrival, that based on their data, they said that they want about 90 percent of their children to be able to complete those morning arrival steps with one or fewer prompts, which means that in this particular example we had a couple of children who we knew were going to need some extra support.

Kathleen: So I know when I have been coaching and I ask teachers about what it looks like to achieve a goal like this, I sometimes hear things like kids will behave in the morning or kids will know what to do when they get off the bus, or I won't have to give a million directions all morning long and feel like

popcorn. How do you help go from those initial ideas to an observable goal statement like what you show up here?

Darbi: Of course. And I think that's so true, that we don't really want to get stuck in kind of that really formula-based language, and so when I think of writing action plans and goal achievement statements, it's kind of a skill that's learned between the coach and the teacher throughout the coaching process. And so what I never want to do is to have the format of the goal achievement statement prevent the teacher from being a collaborative partner in that process. And so usually what I ask is for the teacher to think about, you know, what are your children going to be doing differently when you've achieved this goal? And so then I as the coach can really listen for those key words about the behaviors that the teacher wants to see. So then I might say what I heard you saying was you want the children to be more independent in the morning routine or to be able to sign in and to put their backpack away, and then using those behaviors the teacher's identified in addition to the data that we've both collected, then we can really have a collaborative conversation about, you know, what's a goal that we feel comfortable with, what's a reasonable destination for us to be trying to get to?

Kathleen: That's great. I think that's really important, to remember not to get caught up in the format and to keep the teacher involved all the way through the process. So do you think we have time to give folks a quick try at this?

Darbi: Yeah, I think we could probably try it real quick. So here's goal B. It's the same one that Crystal was talking about earlier. So it's related to those five steps of scientific process, and what we would like for you guys to do is to provide for us some examples of goal achievement statements that you might write.

Kathleen: And we might make this chat a little bit shorter than typical because we're closing in on the end of our hour here, but we want to make sure you have a chance to try and get some feedback. So go ahead and let us know your ideas. Okay, so I see some of you are still typing. That always happens when multiple people are typing at the same time, that it takes a little while for the system to catch up. So we're just starting to see some of your ideas percolate on up here. But it looks like we have some common ideas about when we've reflected, when we've observed children trying new things out, when I use all the steps of the scientific method. So what themes would you like to show — or an example you'd like to show us before we close out, Darbi? We'll give you just a second. So I'm going to go ahead and —

Darbi: I'm sorry, I was just saying that I think that it's really important that each one of the goal achievement statements that are popping up are linked to the goal and also to those action steps. And so just like we talked about earlier with linking those action steps, the same thing is true of your goal achievement statement. And so up here on the screen we have just that example goal achievement statement that Crystal and I worked on together, and so, "I will know I have achieved this goal when I use verbal prompts and materials to engage children in all five steps of the scientific process at least twice per week for two weeks during outdoor play." And so one thing I want to be sure to say would be to ask yourself those questions: Do I know who is going to be doing the practices? Do I know what practices will be observed when my coach comes in? Do I know why I'm doing it? And so, for example, in this achievement statement, we know that it's to engage the children. And then do I know when and

where I as a teacher am going to use those practices or I as a coach am going to observe those practices? And now Crystal's going to just wrap it up for us.

Crystal: All right, so thank you both for kind of talking us through the goal achievement statements. That one can be really tricky to kind of master. And, again, it is really important, because although when we're driving we have Siri to tell us we got there — hopefully she knows for sure that we got there — we don't have that privilege when we are working on an action plan, so we have to come up with something that allows us both, allows the coach and the teacher, to be able to be really transparent about what — whether they've arrived at the destination. So just to recap, we're going to go back to our GPS example for just a minute. So we know that the key components of a high quality action plan are the goals. We know that we need to have action steps that include resources for achieving those action steps. We know we need to have a time frame and timelines. And we need a way to say that we've arrived at our destination. So hopefully today as we've kind of walked through some of these things, you've gotten a little bit more practice around some of the components of action planning that you have hoped to get some more support around in the past and we've added a little bit more experience to your action planning. Before we leave, we just wanted to remind you of some resources that you have. So one of them is the Practice-Based Coaching Guide to Goal Setting. This is a handout that you would've received in the coach training. You also have several examples of different action plan formats. So we didn't use a format today, and we did that on purpose, because we know that the common things, no matter how they look on the paper, are those five things that we've been talking about today. And then of course, kind of one of the goals of Coaching Corner and continued opportunities to interact with one another is that you have each other. So hopefully you will use these resources as you go forth and conquer and work with your teachers to build really great action plans.

Kathleen: Oh my gosh, thank you, guys, so much, Crystal and Darbi, for joining us today and sharing this information about action planning and goal setting. This was really incredibly helpful and made me really think differently about how I write action plans. So I hope it was beneficial for our participants as well. So as we wrap up our time together today, I want to remind everyone and thank everyone again that this is our last Coaching Corner of the year. So we hope that you have a wonderful summer, and we hope that we see you at other events and that we hear about your coaching successes. We do invite you for one more event this year, the PBC, practice-based coaching live chat on May 26th at noon Eastern, 9:00 a.m. Central — or Pacific, excuse me. You should get an email invitation or reminder about that if you haven't already. And PBC Live Chat will run through the summer, so you will have continued conversations with us. And if you're not familiar with that format, it is very openended, directed by you as you type in and ask questions to PBC experts and each other. So please join us if you haven't so far. Thank you again, and thank you to September, Liz, Susan, Crystal, and Darbi for this great session and for all the sessions we've had this year. So take care and thank you very much.

[End video]