



COACHING AS A KEY COMPONENT IN TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A national research demonstration project exploring ways to improve pre-kindergartners' social and emotional school readiness offers practical insights about coaching as part of professional development. A recently published report on the project* summarizes key findings for early childhood administrators and practitioners. They emphasize coaches' appropriate knowledge and skills, focused communication, and supported integration of coaching into day-to-day practice.

KEY FINDINGS

- When selecting a coaching model, administrators need to carefully consider the variety of models that are available and choose the model that best suits their particular context.
- Communication about the coaching model and the coaching goals and objectives should include everyone who is involved in the coaching process.
- Successful coaches exhibited a combination of skills in three important areas: knowledge of the program, general coaching and consultation skills, and knowledge of and experience in early childhood development and/or teaching.
- Successful implementation of the coaching model necessitates taking sufficient time to locate skilled coaches, providing support in multiple areas, and training coaches in advance of their work with teachers.
- Teachers need time and privacy in order to reflect on implementation processes with coaches.
- Incorporating coaching into day-to-day practices requires flexibility and is necessary for implementation success.
- Site-level administrators must be actively engaged in supporting and supervising coaching as well as general implementation processes.
- Building an infrastructure that allows for continuous quality assurance and monitoring of the coaching model is essential for high-quality program management.

* Chrishana M. Lloyd and Emily L. Modlin (2012). *Coaching as a Key Component in Teachers' Professional Development: Improving Classroom Practices in Head Start Settings*. OPRE Report 2012-4, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/cares/reports/coaching_key.pdf