



## COMPONENT 1: SHARED GOALS AND ACTION PLANNING

# THE THREE COMPONENTS OF PRACTICE-BASED COACHING

There are different types of professional development (PD) experiences: some are focused on *increasing awareness* or knowledge and some are focused on *supporting implementation* of practices in the classroom and home-based settings. Coaching is one PD strategy that can be used to support teachers' implementation of practices. This model focuses on improving teachers' use of evidence-based practices to support children's progress toward school readiness goals. The components of Practice-Based Coaching can be applied when supporting anyone who works directly with children, such as teachers, teaching assistants, other classroom staff, home visitors, and family child care providers. For the purposes of this document, "teacher" is used to refer to anyone who directly works with children.

PBC is a cyclical process for supporting teachers' use of effective teaching practices that lead to positive outcomes for children. The coaching cycle components are:

1. Planning goals and action steps
2. Engaging in focused observation
3. Reflecting on and sharing feedback about teaching practices

Each component is necessary for implementing PBC, and each component builds from the previous component. For example, reflection and feedback between a coach and teacher cannot occur without conducting a focused observation, and an observation cannot be focused without setting goals and developing an action plan for supporting teachers' implementation of practices.

Typically, PBC involves a coach and teacher or a coach and group of teachers (i.e., expert coaching). But teachers might coach each other (peer coaching), or a teacher might act as his or her own coach (self-coaching). Depending on program needs, PBC partnerships may occur on-site or at a distance. The key components of PBC are used for each of these coaching formats. To implement a PBC program that produces positive outcomes for teachers and children, all three components must be applied in the context of collaborative coaching partnerships. Let's review Component 1: Shared Goals and Action Planning.

## COMPONENT 1: SHARED GOALS AND ACTION PLANNING

### What is Shared Goals and Action Planning?

Shared Goals and Action Planning is the initial component of the PBC cycle. As part of this component, the coach and teacher collaborate to set goals and develop action plans.

### Why is Shared Goals and Action Planning Important?

Having shared goals and an action plan to use as a PBC roadmap helps focus energy and actions on a specified set of teaching practices. Shared goals and action plans provide purpose and direction for coaching. This is particularly important in PBC because it is focused on supporting teachers' implementation of effective teaching practices. Specifying desired teaching practices helps build a shared vision about quality teaching and learning practices that support child learning and achievement of school readiness outcomes.

Goal setting is an action-oriented process that helps identify discrepancies between current and desired teaching practices. Making these discrepancies "transparent" can influence motivation, teacher beliefs about learning capacity or performance, and self-evaluation of performance. Shared goals are important in PBC because they give the teacher and coach an explicit and common place to start the coaching cycle, create shared expectations for teaching practice outcomes, and identify the teaching practices that are the focus of coaching. Action planning adds intentionality to PBC. It specifies the actions and steps that will be taken to support goal attainment and provides accountability for those involved in the coaching relationship.



**How do we do it?**

To set goals, teachers and coaches first **specify a teaching practice or set of teaching practices** that support child learning. Specifying teaching practices helps the teacher and coach focus their coaching interactions. Teaching practices that will be the focus for coaching might be specified by the coach, by the teacher, by the coach and teacher together, or by a program leader or leadership team based on program-wide improvement or professional development (PD) plans.

After teaching practices are specified, the teacher and coach **gather information** about implementation of teaching practices through a needs assessment. This might include information about how often the teaching practices are used, how well the teaching practices are being implemented, or how confident a teacher is about using the practices. Information might also be collected related to a teacher’s beliefs about the practices.

Information about implementation of teaching practices can be collected in a variety of ways. One way is to use a needs assessment form. Figure 1 shows needs assessment forms for a set of teaching practices. In addition to a needs assessment form, information might be collected by conducting direct observation of teaching practices, by reviewing videotapes of classroom teaching, by using other data available about the teacher’s implementation of a specified teaching practice (e.g., use of information about instructional support practices from the Classroom Assessment Scoring System; Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008), or by asking the teacher to self-reflect about implementation of the teaching practices. If possible, it is preferable to collect information in more than one way.

**Table 1: Examples of Needs Assessment Forms**

	I am doing this now...		I want to do this...		Difference between current use and desired use
	Not at all	All the time	Not at all	All the time	
<b>Behavior Management</b>					
1. I clearly teach, explain, and review the classroom rules and behavior expectations with children.	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5		
2. I use clear, descriptive, positive feedback, more than statements that provide general praise, so children know exactly what is expected and what they are doing well.	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5		
3. I identify potential problem situations and redirect behavior or help children problem solve before problem behaviors occur.	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5		
<b>Productivity</b>					
4. I structure activities so that children are actively engaged, ensuring that children always have something productive to do (e.g., such as by providing an alternative activity for children who complete a task early).	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5		

Practice	How often?					Change needed?	Priority (Top 5)	Notes
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Always			
<b>Behavior Management</b>								
1. Do you clearly teach, explain, and review the classroom rules and behavior expectations with children?	1 2 3 4 5					Yes No		
2. Are you using clear, descriptive, positive feedback, more than statements that provide general praise, so children know exactly what is expected and what they are doing well.	1 2 3 4 5							
3. Are you identifying potential problem situations and redirecting behavior or helping children problem solve before problem behaviors occur.	1 2 3 4 5							
<b>Productivity</b>								
4. Do you structure activities so that children are actively engaged, ensuring that children always have something productive to do (e.g., such as by providing an alternative activity for children who complete a task early).	1 2 3 4 5							

Once information is gathered about the teacher’s implementation of practices or her/his beliefs about the practices, the next step is to determine which practices are priorities for coaching and to develop shared goals based on the identified priorities.

The **goal setting** process includes selecting teaching practices for improvement and writing a goal for each practice. A teaching practice goal might be taken directly from a needs assessment or might address certain parts of the practice. For example, the needs assessment might state the teaching practice as follows: “The teacher engages in classroom interactions that support children’s understanding and deepen children’s knowledge of their surroundings by asking follow-up questions, making comments that extend children’s thinking, or making connections to children’s daily experiences.” Rather than write this practice as the goal, the teacher and coach could choose to write a goal that focuses on asking follow-up questions (e.g., “I want to ask more follow-up questions during my conversational interactions with children.”).

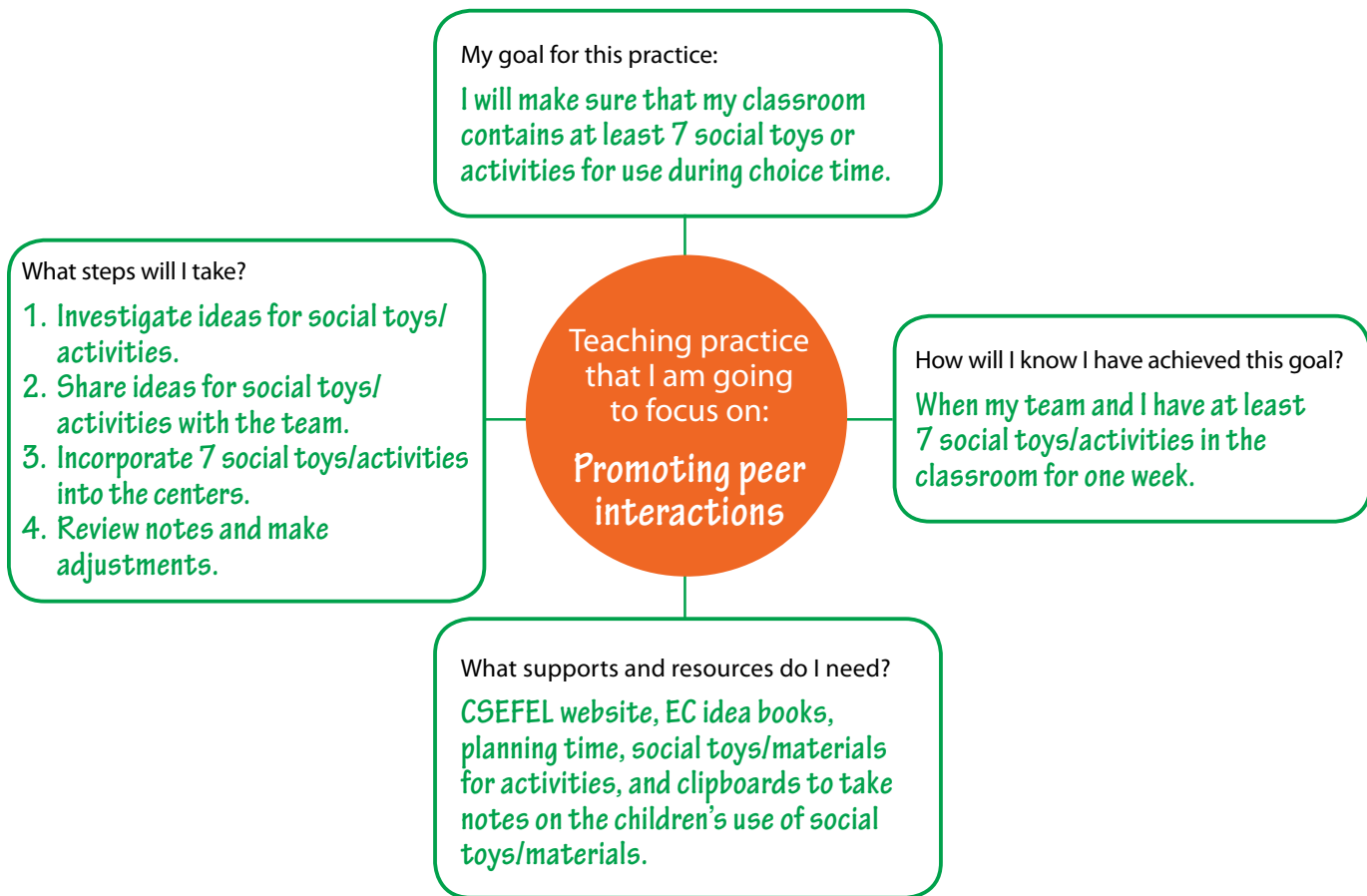
After shared goals are determined, an **action plan** is developed to guide the coaching process. The action plan is the coaching “road map.” It is a working document that describes:

- a) Goals that are the focus of coaching.
- b) Planned actions or steps to support goal achievement.
- c) How a teacher and coach will know when a goal has been achieved. The plan might also include supports or resources needed and a time frame for completion.

Two different action plan forms are shown in Figure 2. Like needs assessments, different formats can be used for action plans based on teacher, coach, or program preference, although it is important to confirm that elements a–c, described in the previous paragraph, are included.

**Figure 2: Examples of Action Plan Forms**

TEACHING PRACTICE ACTION PLAN		
The goal I will work on in my classroom: <i>I will change the way I structure my centers so that children interact with more team members during activities.</i>		
Steps to achieve this goal:	Resources needed:	By when:
1. <i>Learn about another way to structure my centers.</i>	<i>1 to 2 hours after school, websites, training materials</i>	<i>Monday, 9/10</i>
2. <i>Meet with team members to discuss new center structure.</i>	<i>Use regular planning time on Wednesday.</i>	<i>Wednesday, 9/12</i>
3. <i>Try it out for a week while videotaping or take notes about interactions; review video.</i>	<i>Video camera, coach to set it up, clipboard for each member to take notes</i>	<i>Wednesday, 9/19</i>
4. <i>Decide if the new way encouraged more interactions, and make changes as needed.</i>	<i>Discuss with coach and team.</i>	<i>Friday, 9/21</i>
Review Date: 9/24		
<input type="checkbox"/> I know I <b>achieved this goal</b> because: <i>My team and I have implemented a structure for centers that allow each of us to interact with all of the children during center time.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> I am <b>making progress</b> toward this goal and will keep implementing my action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> I need to <b>make changes to my plan</b> to achieve this goal by revising the goal or changing the steps.



In summary, for the Shared Goals and Action Planning component of PBC:

1. Specify a teaching practice or a set of teaching practices.
2. Gather information about implementation of teaching practices through a needs assessment.
3. Use the information gathered about implementation, and identify priorities for coaching.
4. Set specific, observable, and achievable goals based on priorities.
5. Develop an action plan for use as the coaching roadmap.

**What do Shared Goals and Action Planning look like in different coaching formats?**

Different strategies might be used to engage in Shared Goals and Action Planning across coaching formats. The following table shows who typically is involved in the sequence of Shared Goals and Action Planning activities based on the coaching format being used. For example:

- In expert coaching, the coach and teacher might work together to specify a set of teaching practices, or these practices might be provided to the coach and teacher by a program administrator, a curriculum specialist, or by a learning community in the program.
- In reciprocal peer coaching, the two partners might work together to specify a set of practices, one teacher might offer a set of practices that he/she has specified to the other teacher, or the set of practices might be provided to the two partners by a program administrator, a curriculum specialist, or by a learning community in the program.
- For self-coaching, the teacher might specify a set of practices, or the practices might be provided by a program administrator, a curriculum specialist, or by a learning community. As shown in the table, to set goals and develop an action plan as part of self-coaching, the teacher might receive support from a learning facilitator, administrator, or curriculum specialist about self-coaching processes. But the teacher sets her/his goals and develops the plan without direct support from a coach.

**Table 2: Participants in Shared Goals and Action Planning**

Shared Goals and Action Planning	Expert Coaching	Reciprocal Peer Coaching	Self-Coaching
Specify teaching practices	Coach, teacher, program leader	Coach, teacher, program leader	Teacher, others
Gather information about implementation	Coach, teacher, program leader	Coach, teacher, program leader	Teacher, others
Identify priorities for coaching	Coach, teacher	Coach, teacher	Teacher
Set goals based on priorities	Coach, teacher	Coach, teacher	Teacher*
Develop an action plan	Coach, teacher	Coach, teacher	Teacher*

\* In self-coaching, the teacher might receive support from a learning facilitator, administrator, or curriculum specialist about self-coaching processes, but the teacher sets her/his goals and develops her/his action plan without direct support from a coach.

## SHARED GOALS AND ACTION PLANNING SUPPORTING MATERIALS

1. O'Neill, J. (2000). Smart goals, smart schools. *Educational Leadership*, 57, 46–50.
2. Rush, D., & Shelden, M. (2011). *The early childhood coaching handbook*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.
3. Snyder, P., & Wolfe, B. (2008). The big three process components in early childhood professional development: Needs assessment, follow-up, and evaluation. In P. Winton, J. McCollum, & C. Catlett (Eds.), *Practical approaches to early childhood professional development: Evidence, strategies, and resources* (pp. 13–51). Washington, DC: Zero to Three.
4. Steps to Success. (2005). *Professional development plan*. Resource for Steps to Success: An Instructional Design for Early Literacy Mentor-Coaches in Head Start and Early Head Start. Available from HHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/resources/video/STS>
5. Zemke, R., & Kramlinger, T. (1982). *Figuring things out: A trainer's guide to needs and task analysis*. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley.

## PRACTICE-BASED COACHING SUPPORTING MATERIALS

### Practice-Based Coaching

This document describes Practice-Based Coaching and formats for implementing Practice-Based Coaching. It also explains the components of Practice-Based Coaching. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/docs/practice-based-coaching.pdf>

Buyse, V., & Wesley, P. (2005). *Consultation in early childhood settings*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

### What Do We Know About Coaching?

This short article describes what research says about coaching for practitioners who work with young children, and what research says about key components for the Practice-Based Coaching model. In addition, the article discusses why Head Start programs might consider Practice-Based Coaching as an essential part of professional development.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/center/development>.



For more information, contact us at: [NCQTL@UW.EDU](mailto:NCQTL@UW.EDU) or 877-731-0764

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