

## **MODULE 1**

### **GETTING READY FOR EARLY LITERACY MENTOR-COACHING**

This module contains three sections:

- Facilitated Introduction to *Steps to Success*
- Facilitated Forum on Mentor-Coaching
- Mentor-Coach Self-Assessment.

#### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By completing this module, you will:

- Identify the overall *Steps to Success* Instructional Design
- Differentiate the roles and responsibilities of Mentor-Coaches and protégés
- Describe and comprehend mentor-coaching skills and processes
- Apply mentor-coaching skills with protégés
- Assess your own areas of knowledge about early literacy and language development for children from birth to age five.





## I. FACILITATED INTRODUCTION TO *STEPS TO SUCCESS*

### CONTEXT

*Steps to Success* is a dynamic multimedia Instructional Design for Mentor-Coaches in Head Start and Early Head Start. Early literacy mentor-coaching offers support for teachers and teaching teams. It emphasizes ongoing guided reflection and the use of research-based, age-appropriate caregiving and educational practices. The Instructional Design and its resources (1) promote positive early literacy and language outcomes for children from birth to age five and (2) prepare Mentor-Coaches to refine their mentor-coaching skills and increase their knowledge about effective interactions with other adults. This facilitated introduction begins with introductions and proceeds through four facilitator-led discussions about the Instructional Design. You will view a promotional video and complete the self-assessment for this unit.





**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Welcome to the first unit of *Steps to Success*! Some of you have already received preliminary training as Early Literacy Mentor-Coaches, and for others, this is new terrain. Each one of you brings strengths, experiences, professional goals, and expectations. By participating in *Steps to Success*, you have made a commitment to your own growth, and to the growth of others, in a professional context. Thank you for your dedication. One of the benefits of mentor-coaching that focuses on the content of a curriculum area is that it can improve the outcome of children’s learning. Mentor-coaching can also improve teaching and caregiving skills and practices.

In this module, led by a facilitator, you will learn about the *Steps to Success* Instructional Design. Your facilitator will welcome you. You will share introductions with the other participants, either in person or via computerized connections, and will learn about the colleagues with whom you will be studying.

**Questions**

1. What is your name and where do you live?

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2. What is your job, job title, or role in Head Start or Early Head Start?

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3. Please describe a child you have worked with on early language development and early literacy skills. In two or three sentences, describe a specific instance during your work with this child.

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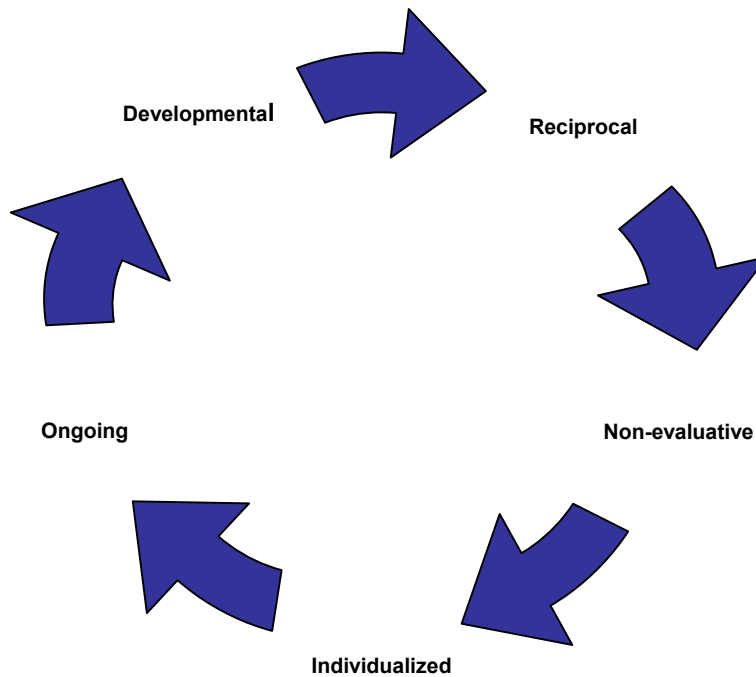
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**THE STEPS TO SUCCESS VISION FOR MENTOR-COACHING**

***Protégé:* A person who has a Mentor-Coach in Head Start or Early Head Start**

The overarching vision of *Steps to Success* is that each Head Start and Early Head Start team has access to a Mentor-Coach. Mentor-Coaches build trusting, supportive relationships with protégés. You and your team join together to achieve positive and age-appropriate child outcomes in early literacy and language development.

In *Steps to Success* the nature of the mentor-coaching relationship mirrors the following characteristics from *Putting the PRO in Protégé: A Guide to Mentoring in Head Start and Early Head Start* (2001, p. 2):



- **Ongoing:** The mentoring relationship occurs over a period of time, and it changes as the protégé emerges as a more competent, self-confident, and self-reflective practitioner. The ongoing nature of the relationship reinforces good practices.
- **Individualized:** The content areas and strategies on which mentoring is based are tailored to the needs of the individual and the program.
- **Developmental:** Mentoring builds on the strengths of individual teachers and home visitors, enhancing areas that need improvement. The focus of the mentoring evolves as new skills and knowledge are gained.
- **Reciprocal:** The mentor-protégé relationship is reciprocal; mentors learn as they gain insight from their protégé's practices.
- **Non-evaluative:** Mentoring provides constructive feedback and support for learning and growth. Mentors assess and evaluate protégés, but the feedback is not used to influence employment decisions.



**VIEWING AND DISCUSSION ON *STEPS TO SUCCESS*  
PROMOTIONAL VIDEO**

The *Steps to Success* promotional video is a vivid way to learn about the framework and purposes of the Instructional Design. Write down any notes or questions that come up for you while viewing it.

After you view the video, you will answer the following questions as you participate in the group discussion.

**1.** Is the video content relevant to your work? How?

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**2.** What parts are particularly meaningful to you? Please describe.

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## THE *STEPS TO SUCCESS* INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND RESOURCES

*Steps to Success: An Instructional Design* guides you in mentoring and coaching your protégés. You and others in your program can choose from a range of multimedia resources that will help you make the most of mentor-coaching. A four-unit Mentor-Coach Manual is the cornerstone of *Steps to Success*. Other resources include STEP-Line, STEP-Net, and the *STEP-Notes* newsletter. Overviews of the Instructional Design are included at the end of this module in **STEP-Doc 1.1a: Overview of Steps to Success**. Your facilitator will instruct you on how to identify **STEP-Docs**, which are resource documents that expand on module topics and provide you with handy references as you need them. **STEP-Docs** are included at the end of each module in the *Steps to Success* Mentor-Coach Manual.

**STEP-Doc 1.1a** shows that there are four modules in each of the four *Steps to Success* units. In Unit 1, a facilitator leads Modules 1, 2, and 3. In Units 2, 3, and 4, a facilitator leads Modules 2 and 3.

Each of the four Module 2s is a Tutored Video Instruction (TVI). In the video instruction are presenters who are practitioners and supervisors from the field, some of whom are included in the video clips contained in the TVI. The video clips in the TVI feature footage of interactions among teachers and caregivers with children in age-appropriate early literacy and language development activities. The video clips also depict effective mentor-coaching practices.

The *Steps to Success* Mentor-Coach Manual is yours. Use it to explore your experiences, issues, strengths, needs, resources, and questions. As you read and work through the manual, you will find questions for reflection, quotes, definitions, vignettes, narratives, and more. There are spaces for you to write notes right in the manual. Add quotes and readings that inspire you. Write down your thoughts before, during, and after training sessions. We hope that you refer to and use this manual as a resource throughout your career.

## UNIT CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION

Before moving on, take time to review the units' contents and organization detailed in **STEP-Doc 1.1b: The Training Package At-a-Glance**, at the end of this module. It will help you to understand the overall design and format of *Steps to Success*. If you have any questions about the Instructional Design, ask your facilitator or note them to be answered later.

Be a can-do, will-try person.

— Marian Wright Edelman (1992)

## II. FACILITATED FORUM ON MENTOR-COACHING

### CONTEXT

Mentor-coaching involves Mentor-Coaches and their protégés in a range of activities and interactions. Effective Mentor-Coaches understand and know how to use appropriate mentor-coaching skills. Successful mentor-coaching relationships are built on Mentor-Coaches and protégés being clear about their roles and responsibilities.



## INTRODUCTION TO *STEPS TO SUCCESS* MENTOR-COACHING

Mentor-coaching is a strategy to build strong and effective relationships among colleagues who work with diverse groups of children and their families in early childhood settings. Mentor-coaching can transform professional practices, programs, and lives to achieve and maintain good quality early education and care in Head Start and Early Head Start.

### Who is a Mentor-Coach?

A Mentor-Coach is generally a more-experienced person who serves as a guide, supporter, role model, and resource to another, less-experienced person.

Mentors are leaders, skilled in their craft, creative in problem-solving, able to reflect on their practices, flexible in relating to other adults, ready to learn new information, and willing to take risks in order to grow. Coaching is always a part of mentoring. Coaching involves the skill of helping an individual fill a particular knowledge gap by learning how to do things more effectively. Mentor-Coaches adopt a multitude of roles in their relationships with protégés.

### What is content-focused mentor-coaching?

Mentor-coaching in Head Start and Early Head Start is a key strategy in helping children from birth to age five make progress toward achieving optimal early literacy and language development outcomes. Mentor-Coaches in *Steps to Success* join together with protégés to plan, implement, assess, and evaluate their skills, practices, and outcomes with children. There are several resources for early literacy and language development available to Mentor-Coaches and protégés. Notably, *The Head Start Leader's Guide to Positive Child Outcomes* (2003) contains a wealth of strategies to support positive child outcomes. It is especially important for you to read and understand the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework in the *Leader's Guide*.

**Who is a protégé in *Steps to Success*?**

A protégé is a teacher or staff person who is committed to her or his professional growth and development and to the Mentor-Coach relationship. A protégé is willing to learn new skills and reflect on practices with others. Protégés are ready to examine their roles in the early childhood setting and to develop their teaching and caregiving practices to enhance children’s learning and growth.

**Self-Reflection Questions on Being a Mentor-Coach**

1. What does being a Mentor-Coach mean to you?

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2. What are some Mentor-Coach traits that you already possess?

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As you consider what it means to be a Mentor-Coach, you probably have been reminded of people in your own life who have been mentors to you. It may have been a beloved family member from a different generation, an extraordinary teacher who helped you to discover learning, or a colleague in your profession who inspired your work. There are probably mentors in your life right now helping to light the path that you have chosen.

**WARM-UP EXERCISE: WHO HAS BEEN A MENTOR TO YOU?**

Record your answers to the following questions:

**1.** Has anyone ever been a mentor to you?

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**2.** What was it like?

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**3.** What did you most appreciate about that person?

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**4.** What did you learn?

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## MENTOR-COACHING SKILLS

Developing and refining mentor-coaching skills are ongoing and essential tasks for Mentor-Coaches in *Steps to Success*. Some of you already demonstrate highly effective mentor-coaching skills, while many seek to strengthen these skills.

**The mentor-coaching skills featured in *Steps to Success* are:**

- Self-Assessment
- Professional Development Planning
- Relationship Building
- Sharing Values
- Taking Culturally Sensitive Approaches
- Self-Reflection
- Communication, Listening, and Reflective Inquiry
- Setting Achievable Goals
- Problem Solving
- Observation and Use of Observational Tools
- Professional and Reflective Conferencing
- Journaling
- Providing and Receiving Feedback

Each of the skills is defined in **STEP-Doc 1.1c: Mentor-Coaching Skills**, at the end of this module. One of the purposes of the Instructional Design of *Steps to Success* is to help you learn more about and use effective mentor-coaching skills.



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN MENTOR-COACHING RELATIONSHIPS

Mentor-Coaches adopt a variety of roles and responsibilities in their work with protégés. Early on, Mentor-Coaches should be clear about what protégés can expect. This will facilitate interactions, plans, and accomplishments. The list below represents some of the expectations for Mentor-Coaches:

### **Mentor-Coaches should:**

- Schedule and conduct conferences on a regular basis with protégés
- Share information about age and culturally appropriate practices
- Share knowledge about planning, assessment, and teaching strategies
- Help protégés strengthen communication and build positive relationships with children, families, and other colleagues
- Demonstrate respect for and knowledge of diverse adult learning styles
- Support protégés in setting and achieving goals
- Listen carefully and help protégés reach their own conclusions
- Give guidance about needs and issues that protégés identify
- Assist protégés in organizing and analyzing their learning environments
- Advise and help protégés solve problems as they arise
- Visit protégés' classrooms or homes; observe and discuss observations
- Promote protégés' self-assessment and growth
- Encourage protégés to reflect on their career development and goals
- Provide protégés with information about opportunities and relevant professional development events in the field of early education and care.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROTÉGÉS

Protégés, as participants in mentor-coaching relationships, also have roles and responsibilities to fulfill. As learners, protégés need encouragement and support to identify and try new tasks. They can rely on their Mentor-Coaches for assistance. As with Mentor-Coaches, protégés need to be clear about what is expected of them and what it means to be a protégé. The list below represents some of the expectations of protégés in *Steps to Success*.

### Protégés should:

- Assess learning needs and strengths
- Engage in reflective dialogues and conferences with Mentor-Coaches
- Gain new knowledge and professional expertise through relationships with Mentor-Coaches
- Listen, ask questions, and learn to identify goals and set out to achieve them
- Be open to being observed at work and receiving feedback about teaching practices
- Observe Mentor-Coaches in their early education environments and discuss the observations
- Apply and analyze new teaching and early literacy practices with the support of Mentor-Coaches
- Identify issues and problems and work together to resolve them
- Build positive and respectful communication skills and interactions with all children and families
- Participate in professional development opportunities, trainings, and events (when possible) in the field of early education and care.

### III. MENTOR-COACH SELF-ASSESSMENT

#### CONTEXT

Mentor-Coach Self-Assessment provides you with an opportunity to assess your knowledge about effective and age-appropriate practices to promote early language and literacy for children from birth to age five. Self-assessment is an ongoing activity for Mentor-Coaches.

The Self-Assessment helps you to identify your strengths and the areas in which you would like to gain more knowledge and expertise. There is one early literacy and language development Mentor-Coach self-assessment exercise in each of the units of *Steps to Success*. In all Units the Self-Assessment is in Module 1.



**DISCUSSION ON MENTOR-COACH SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Your facilitator will open the discussion on self-assessment with these points:

- Mentor-Coaches must know how to teach early literacy skills well in order to support protégés in their practice.
- *Steps to Success* self-assessment acts as a barometer that Mentor-Coaches can use to gauge their current knowledge and skill levels. Since Head Start Mentor-Coaches have had diverse backgrounds and different experiences, their knowledge and skill levels also will vary. Completing the self-assessment helps to determine an individual’s need to build expertise in certain areas.
- It is important to remember that *Steps to Success* focuses on building mentor-coaching skills. Although the Instructional Design touches on early literacy content, it does not provide in-depth information for building content knowledge.

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**EXERCISE 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT**

It is important for early childhood professionals to continuously strive to strengthen their knowledge and skills to promote early language and literacy. This self-assessment focuses on skills that represent effective and age-appropriate practices for working with infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children.

Your facilitator will guide you through your first Self-Assessment at the end of this module. Once you have completed the Self-Assessment, reflect on what you learned about yourself by answering the questions in Exercise 2, Self-Assessment Results, and the questions for reflection on the results.

**Self-Assessment**

Through self-assessment, practitioners use their experience and knowledge to examine their skills and discover areas where they feel they could be stronger.

Self-assessment helps Mentor-Coaches establish goals and plan strategies to achieve them.

**EXERCISE 2: SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

1. Have you discovered new strengths, set new goals, or formulated previously unasked questions? What are they?

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2. Do you need additional resources or assistance? Please describe.

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If you feel that you need to learn more, additional resources are available through the Head Start Publication and Information Center (HSPIC) at <http://headstartinfo.org>.

**Questions for Reflection on Self-Assessment Results**

1. What did you learn from your assessment about your understanding of Book Knowledge and Appreciation and Print Awareness and Concepts?

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2. Are there additional skills or practices that you already use to promote early literacy and language development? If so, please note them on your Mentor-Coach Self-Assessment for further exploration.

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**3.** Are you ready to share your knowledge about these topics with protégés?

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**4.** If not, what additional kinds of support do you need?

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Reminder: *The Head Start Leader’s Guide to Positive Child Outcomes* is a valuable resource for more content knowledge.

**EXERCISE 3: VIGNETTE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION—  
MENTORING SYLVIA**

Read and reflect on the following vignette. Write a few notes in response to the questions. You will then be asked to discuss your responses in small groups.

**Vignette—Mentoring Sylvia**

My protégé, Sylvia, has been a Head Start teacher for 25 years—15 years in this program and 10 in a program in a neighboring town. She has completed many professional development workshops and courses but has never finished a degree program. Between her job at Head Start and her family needs (she cares for her three young grandchildren) she says that she has no time for “extras.” Although she is very knowledgeable about the needs of children and families in Head Start, she is resistant to all new reporting requirements and the mentor-coaching initiative. We are the same age. I have an MA in early childhood education, and most of my experience has been as a program director, supervisor, and education manager. I have some classroom experience, but it was 20 years ago. My friend, the program director, hired me to mentor Sylvia and three other teachers on a consulting basis.

Our first experience did not work. I brought snacks; she said she was on a diet. I brought books and activities; she said that she already knew about them. I tried to schedule a follow-up meeting; she put me off.

I’m not sure what to do next.

**Questions for Reflection on Vignette—Mentoring Sylvia**

1. What is familiar about this situation?

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2. What may have caused the first meeting with Sylvia not to work?

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3. What might the Mentor-Coach do at the next meeting to get the relationship on track?

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**Questions or Thoughts I Wish to Share:**

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**Note:** You will have an opportunity to discuss similar vignettes in the first module of each *Steps to Success* unit. In future units, however, the discussions will be online with Mentor-Coaches across the country. Instructions for participating in online discussions will be presented in Unit 2, Module 1.

**WRAP-UP**

The *Steps to Success* Instructional Design is progressive. You will learn more about mentor-coaching and strategies for developing early language and literacy with children as you move through the units.

As you come to the end of this facilitated module, think back on the contents:

- Overview of *Steps to Success: An Instructional Design*
- Introduction to *Steps to Success* Mentor-Coaching
- Mentor-Coaching Skills
- Roles and Responsibilities in Mentor-Coaching Relationships
- Mentor-Coach Self-Assessment

Take a few moments to reflect on these questions:

**1.** What am I excited about learning?

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**2.** What are some challenges that I am likely to face?

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**3.** What kinds of support will I need to become a Mentor-Coach?

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4. How will I go about addressing these needs?

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Continue on to the next module of this unit (Unit 1, Module 2: Tutored Video Instruction). At the conclusion of Module 2, you will create your *Steps to Success* Professional Development Plan.

**Self Assessment: Book Knowledge and Appreciation  
And Print Awareness And Concepts**

Below is a set of skills that are important for helping your protégés develop Book Knowledge and Appreciation and Print Awareness and Concepts. On a scale of 1–5, rate your current skills in addressing situations where you need to do the following:

SKILLS	I AM NOT SKILLED IN THIS AREA		I AM SOMEWHAT SKILLED IN THIS AREA		I AM HIGHLY SKILLED IN THIS AREA
1. Help protégés to understand how reading with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers connects to knowledge about books later	1	2	3	4	5
2. Demonstrate ways for protégés to use books effectively with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers	1	2	3	4	5
3. Support protégés' selection of books that are age-appropriate for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers	1	2	3	4	5
4. Assist protégés in arranging the early learning environment to establish responsive relationships around sharing books and reading	1	2	3	4	5
5. Create ways to encourage parents to understand the importance of reading to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers and to help them to choose and use books effectively	1	2	3	4	5
6. Help protégés understand age-appropriate activities that encourage later development of print awareness and that lay the foundation for writing skills	1	2	3	4	5

**Self-Assessment for Those Who Work With 3- To 5-Year-Olds**

SKILLS	I AM NOT SKILLED IN THIS AREA		I AM SOMEWHAT SKILLED IN THIS AREA		I AM HIGHLY SKILLED IN THIS AREA
7. Know the specific indicators for Head Start Child Outcomes Framework for Book Knowledge and Appreciation and for Print Awareness and Concepts	1	2	3	4	5
8. Understand what to expect preschool children to know and be able to do in the classroom to demonstrate achievement of these outcomes	1	2	3	4	5
9. Explain the outcome indicators, teaching strategies, and materials to protégés, teachers, and families	1	2	3	4	5
10. Help protégés develop good teaching practices and engage preschool children in independent, developmentally appropriate reading and writing activities	1	2	3	4	5
11. Know about and have available multiple resources to support children’s progress in positive literacy outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5

**STEP-Doc 1.1a:  
OVERVIEW OF STEPS TO SUCCESS****The Mentor-Coach Manual**

The *Steps to Success* Mentor-Coach Manual is divided into four units. Each unit focuses on effective and age-appropriate caregiving and early educational practices to promote early language and literacy for children from birth to age five. Each unit explores important and useful mentor-coaching skills and practices. Each unit also focuses on at least one Literacy Domain Element from The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework\* for preschool.

**Unit 1:** Building Relationships to Promote Child Literacy Outcomes  
*Literacy Focus:* Book Knowledge and Appreciation;  
Print Awareness and Concepts

**Unit 2:** Observation of Staff and Analysis  
*Literacy Focus:* Early Writing and Alphabet Knowledge

**Unit 3:** Reflective Practice  
*Literacy Focus:* Listening and Understanding;  
Speaking and Communicating

**Unit 4:** Using Child Assessment Information to Guide Instruction  
*Literacy Focus:* Phonological Awareness

Each unit has four modules. Each module begins with by outlining the context and learning outcomes. Modules contain:

- Presentations
- Tutored Video Instruction and video clips (module 2s)
- Group discussions and activities
- Online discussions
- Exercises.

Supplemental documents, referred to as **STEP-Docs**, are located at the end of each module.

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\* The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, see Head Start Bulletin, Issue No. 76, 2003, online at [http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/hsbulletin76/hsb76\\_09.htm](http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/hsbulletin76/hsb76_09.htm).



## Mentor-Coach Self-Assessment

Also included in each unit is a **Mentor-Coach Self-Assessment** exercise to be completed by Mentor-Coaches. The Mentor-Coach self-assessments focus on your knowledge and skills about the early literacy and language development concepts contained in each unit. You will receive support and directions about how and when to complete the self-assessments. At various points in the manual, you will review your self-assessment results and access additional resources. In addition, you will engage in online discussions with other Mentor-Coaches to share what you are learning and to gain new information.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### ***Steps to Success* Professional Development Plan**

The *Steps to Success* Professional Development Plan is designed to support your growth throughout the Instructional Design and beyond. It focuses on the strengthening, acquisition, and refinement of mentor-coaching skills.

The plan is a progressive tool, to be used in ongoing ways by Mentor-Coaches to chart professional growth and aspirations. At the end of Modules 2, 3, and 4 of each unit in the *Steps to Success* manual, questions for reflection on mentor-coaching skills will be posed. You will turn to your Professional Development Plan and enter your responses. At the conclusion of the manual, Mentor-Coaches will look ahead in the *Steps to Success* Professional Development Plan to record next steps.

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## ***STEP-Notes* Newsletter**

*STEP-Notes* is a newsletter about timely mentor-coaching issues and topics in Head Start and Early Head Start. To read current and back issues, go to STEP-Net (<http://www.step-net.org>) and click on the *STEP-Notes* button. Each issue has the following features:

- A welcome letter that introduces the issue's mentor-coaching focus
- A profile of a Head Start program's mentor-coaching effort
- Promising practices
- Mentor-coaching "tips" from programs
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
- Recommended books, articles, web sites, and other resources.

## **Decision Maker Guide**

This "how to" guide is designed to help decision makers (Head Start leaders, managers and Policy Councils) create strong mentor-coaching systems that meet their programs' needs. Packed with sample forms and tools, the guide covers the following topics:

- Selecting a Model for Early Literacy Mentor-Coaching
- Finding Financial Resources for Mentoring
- Selecting and Matching Mentor-Coaches
- Orienting and Training Mentor-Coaches
- Linking Mentor-Coaching to Your Program's Management Systems.

## Protégé Journal

Every protégé participating in *Steps to Success* with a Mentor-Coach will receive a *Protégé Journal*. The Journal is to be used by protégés to:

- Stimulate reflective practices
- Record ideas, thoughts, feelings, and questions
- Keep track of meetings with Mentor-Coaches
- Provide space for notes from Mentor-Coach and protégé conferences.

In addition, the *Protégé Journal* contains instructional practices for early literacy and language development for infants and toddlers, as well as child outcome sections for each of the seven Child Outcome Domain Elements. Protégés are not required to share their journals with Mentor-Coaches. However, it is hoped that protégés will use their journals interactively with Mentor-Coaches.

## STEP-Line

If you have questions about early literacy or mentor-coaching, you may call the STEP-Line, **1-877-262-2404**. A trained mentor-coaching expert will provide you with assistance. No question is too large or too small. Mentor-Coaches are urged to call the STEP-Line with questions, comments, and suggestions.

## STEP-Net

If you are looking for materials or a place to discuss mentor-coaching, go to <http://www.step-net.org>. Here you will find helpful online resources and opportunities to “talk” to Mentor-Coaches from across the country. Among the resources are:

- Mentor-coaching fact sheets and conference materials related to early literacy mentor-coaching
- The STEP-Net Forum, a place for Mentor-Coaches, staff, and others to exchange information and ideas.

**STEP-Doc 1.1b:  
OVERVIEW OF *STEPS TO SUCCESS***

**THE TRAINING PACKAGE AT-A-GLANCE • Unit Overview**

<b>UNIT 1: Building Relationships to Promote Child Literacy Outcomes</b>	<b>UNIT 2: Observation of Staff and Analysis</b>	<b>UNIT 3: Reflective Practice</b>	<b>UNIT 4: Using Child Assessment Information to Guide Instruction</b>
1.1 Getting Ready for Early Literacy Mentor-Coaching	2.1 Getting Ready for Observation and Analysis	3.1 Getting Ready for Reflection	4.1 Getting Ready for Assessment
1.2 Effective Mentor-Coach and Protégé Relationships	2.2 Observation and Analysis	3.2 Using Reflection	4.2 Helping Staff Use Child and Classroom Information for Planning
1.3 Supporting Protégés in Changing Practice	2.3 Making Sense of Observation Data: Post-Observation Analysis	3.3 Reflective Writing Strategies	4.3 Individualizing Instruction for Children
1.4 Early Literacy Mentor-Coaching and Supervision	2.4 Achieving Reliability in Observation	3.4 Building Communities of Learners	4.4 Using Video to Document Children’s Learning

**STEP-Doc 1.1b:  
OVERVIEW OF STEPS TO SUCCESS**

**THE TRAINING PACKAGE AT-A-GLANCE • Module Overview**

	<b>MODULE 1</b>	<b>MODULE 2</b>	<b>MODULE 3</b>	<b>MODULE 4</b>
<b>Description</b>	Module 1 introduces the topics and Head Start Child Literacy Outcomes for that unit.	Module 2 contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor-Coach Facilitated Forum</li> <li>• Tutored Video Instruction (TVI) that establishes a foundation for the central ideas in the Unit.</li> </ul> A facilitator guides you through the activities.	During Module 3, your facilitator introduces a topic that complements Module 2.	Module 4 is a self-directed session.
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss and analyze a vignette.</li> <li>• Complete a self-assessment.</li> <li>• Participate in an online discussion through STEP-Net.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss your self-assessment.</li> <li>• View a TVI presentation of examples of Head Start classroom teaching and home visiting.</li> <li>• Participate in discussions with peers.</li> <li>• Create a Mentor-Coach Professional Development Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in activities and discussions.</li> <li>• Learn more mentor-coaching strategies.</li> <li>• Review your Mentor-Coach Professional Development Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners or alone to complete exercises.</li> <li>• Review and modify your Mentor-Coach Professional Development Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Time frame</b>	1 to 4 hours	1 to 3.5 hours	1.5 to 2 hours	2 to 3 hours

## STEP-Doc 1.1c: MENTOR-COACHING SKILLS

### Mentor-Coaching Skills

Mentor-Coaches have a wide set of skills to call upon and employ in their work with protégés and other colleagues. Sometimes multiple skills are used at once (e.g., using culturally sensitive approaches in building relationships). Knowing which skill or skills to use at any given time is a skill in itself! The list below contains mentor-coaching skills featured in *Steps to Success*. Enjoy implementing them.

**Self-Assessment** — The ability to look inside and examine oneself in a professional context is inherent to the mentoring process. Self-assessment begins with the willingness to acknowledge strengths, to address areas in need of improvement, and to desire to grow. Most adults are naturally inclined to grow. Self-assessment is a logical step along the journey. Self-assessment is an ongoing activity for Mentor-Coaches and protégés across a range of topics. Many people use a journal to record their ideas related to self-assessment.

**Professional Development Planning** — Mentor-Coaches and protégés, through reflection and dialogue, document their progress and identify professional pursuits. As milestones are achieved, new ones often emerge. One of the roles of a Mentor-Coach is to guide protégés in charting a course for further development. At the same time, Mentor-Coaches can and do select new professional pathways for themselves. The *Steps to Success Professional Development Plan*, included with this training manual, is designed for Mentor-Coaches.

**Relationship Building**—Readiness to form and maintain a trusting, supportive relationship with another person is essential to mentor-coaching. Processes of building and maintaining relationships require careful attention, patience, and persistence. Mentor-Coaches need to be able to build and maintain cooperative working relationships.

**Sharing Values** —The ability and openness to share values is both a skill and a way of being. It means that a person is willing to share who he or she is with another. It is also about sharing beliefs, principles, or ideals about what it means to be human. In the ongoing processes of sharing values, Mentor-Coaches and protégés come to know one another better. In so doing, they are more fully prepared to meet the diverse needs of the children and families with whom they work.

**Taking Culturally Sensitive Approaches** — Demonstrating cultural sensitivity is a skill that can be used everyday. Culture is the fundamental building block of identity. Working together with parents, Mentor-Coaches and protégés help to foster positive self-identity in all children. Mentor-Coaches can support protégés in learning more about a family’s culture, honoring home language and respect for practices and priorities that parents have for their children. When they apply what they have learned from parents in daily practices with children, teachers and caregivers demonstrate cultural sensitivity.

**Self-Reflection** — Self-reflection, like self-assessment, is a solitary activity, done by one person. Reflecting on one’s own practices, knowledge, and beliefs enables a person to be more self-aware. Self-awareness can lead to making changes in one’s behavior or viewpoint. Mentor-Coaches in Unit 1, Module 2, of *Steps to Success* discuss how they have used self-reflection to overcome biases.

**Communication, Listening, and Reflective Inquiry** — Mentor-coaching relationships are based on effective communication. They involve building trust and confidentiality, listening carefully, and asking questions to achieve clarity. In two-way conferences with protégés, Mentor-Coaches often engage in reflective inquiry (asking thoughtful questions) to generate thoughtful answers. Reflective inquiry is fueled by the protégé’s ideas and comments.

**Setting Achievable Goals** — Completing plans and goals is a primary purpose of the mentor-coaching process. Mentor-Coaches assist protégés in identifying, refining, and setting realistic goals. In content-focused mentor-coaching, the goals relate to the child outcomes being sought.

**Problem Solving** — When a problem arises, Mentor-Coaches actively assist the protégé in finding the solution. Rather than stepping in and providing a solution, Mentor-Coaches help protégés to define the problem and select strategies to remedy the situation. They re-examine the strategies used and try new ones, if needed.

**Observation and Use of Observational Tools** — Observation is a central activity in mentor-coaching relationships. Most commonly, the Mentor-Coach schedules a visit and observes protégés at work. Ideally, there is a pre-observation conference, and then the observation takes place, followed by a post-observation conference. Observation tools are usually discussed beforehand and then used during the observation. Results of observations are shared with protégés. Examples of observation tools and practices are highlighted in Unit 2.

**Professional and Reflective Conferencing** — Both protégés and Mentor-Coaches are active participants in reflective conferences. Reflective conferencing is an interactive process through which Mentor-Coaches support protégés to examine and enhance their own teaching practices. In reflective conferences, Mentor-Coaches help lead protégés in analyses of observed events, address any challenges, and discuss next steps. Unit 3 of *Steps to Success* presents a Professional Conferencing Guide.

**Journaling** — Mentor-Coaches and protégés frequently use journals to write their thoughts about professional practices, new ideas, plans, and observations. In some cases, journals are private and seen by the writer only. A *dialogue journal* is a written, reflective conversation between two people. Journals help staff members to think about and track their own growth and development. Referring back to journal entries is also a way to prepare for meetings between Mentor-Coaches and protégés. Unit 3 features journaling and reflective writing strategies.



**Providing and Receiving Feedback** — Honesty, encouragement, and respect are guiding principles to demonstrate when providing feedback to a protégé. When planning to give feedback, consider what it means to the person receiving it. Protégés can be helped to understand that receiving feedback is about moving forward or being “proactive,” not about making mistakes and going backward. By asking protégés what they want to learn or what feedback they want to receive, Mentor-Coaches follow the lead of the protégé.