

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Get to know the coachee.

Showing interest in the coachee and the learning environment is an important way to build the collaborative partnership. Think about:

- What is the coachee's schedule? Coaching should fit into the coachee's schedule, not be an inconvenience. For example, one coachee said she preferred to meet at lunchtime because she needed to leave immediately after school to be home when her children got out of school.
- What is the coachee's style in their learning environment? It's good to observe prior to beginning coaching to become familiar with how the coachee interacts with the children, how their learning environment is organized, etc. Be sure to let the coachee know if and when you plan to visit/ Be clear that this visit is not to evaluate. Rather, it is for you to become acclimated to her environment.
- What is the coachee's coaching history? Has this coachee had a coach before? If so, how was that experience? What worked well? What would have made it better? As we've discussed, there are many types of coaches and many methods for coaching, so be sure to clearly explain what your role as coach will be and how Practice-Based Coaching differs from past coaching experiences the coachee may have had.
- What is going on in the coachee's life outside of work? Learn about personal "stories" (new babies, family events, etc.). Tell the coachee about yourself and ask about her. This develops connections and helps you better understand one another. Finding common ground is the basis for all relationships. Trust starts with knowing the other person and caring about who they are as a person—not just their work.

Connect to other Professional Development experiences.

Coaching is one type of professional development. It should fit within and support other less intensive professional development experiences. For example, coaching often follows an in-service or workshop event. This helps the coachee understand the principles from the workshop and apply them in her environment. For example, if the coachee attends a workshop or views the 15-Minute In-Service on the scientific method for preschoolers, the coach can reflect on that content with the coachee and point out ways he/she has observed the coachee implementing some of the practices.

Establish yourself as a resource.

Your expertise and experience is a valuable resource to coachees. Some ways to do this are modeling (with permission in advance), brainstorming solutions to problems, and sharing experiences and ideas.

Jump in and help.

Washing paint cups or tying shoes can go a long way with a coachee. Remember, though, you are a guest in a coachee's learning environment. Acknowledge that by offering your help before jumping in. Taking charge and modeling appropriate practice without discussing it in advance may not be welcome and could make the coachee feel undermined. Tying a shoe, setting out materials or playing with children during center time is a great way to help out.

Let coachees know they are appreciated.

Teaching can be a tough job. A simple “thank you” can make a coachee feel good. Recognize their effort and their strengths. Look for opportunities to acknowledge the important work coachees do for children and families. Do what you say you will. Come prepared and on time.

For more information, contact us at: ecdfl@ecetta.info or 844-261-3752
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