

Coaching to Support Social-Emotional Practices

Joyce Escorcía: Hello, and welcome to the “Coaching Corner” webinar. Thank you for joining us today as we focus on “Coaching to Support Social-Emotional Practices.” I am Joyce Escorcía, and I’m joined today by my amazing colleague Sarah Basler. We are both from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, and we are so excited to share some information and resources with you to support your work and to support you as you’re supporting social and emotional development as coaches. Let’s get started.

During our time together today, we’re going to dig in and explore resources in the Social-Emotional Toolkit, and we’re also going to discuss how to support coachees’ use of those effective social-emotional practices as a coach and how you can use some of these resources to do that. We’ve got a lot to talk about and a lot to dig into, and with that being said, I’m going to turn it over to Sarah.

Sarah Basler: Hi. Social-emotional development, as we all know, is so important. Now more than ever, during this uncertain time, children and adults may need a little extra support in navigating and maybe adapting to new schedules or routines. Sometimes, they’re adapting to a different type of learning format, maybe virtual instead of in person, and different environments. The National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, in collaboration with the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness, have developed a Social-Emotional Toolkit. The resources can be used for education staff, children, and families. The physical toolkit, which you’ll see a picture right there of, was sent out to grantees in November or December of 2020, but today, we’re really going to highlight and focus on the digital SE Toolkit. The digital toolkit, you can download, located in the Resource widget of this webinar. Go ahead and download that, because we’re going to be focusing on that for our time together today. It will also be located on MyPeers after this webinar. So, let’s dig into what’s inside.

I’m going to do a mini unboxing for you. This is the physical toolkit, and I wanted to kind of show you a few of the resources that are located on your digital toolkit as well. If you got the physical toolkit, there are some wonderful, scripted stories. They were printed out and found. There’s a “Tucker the Turtle” scripted story. There’s a problem-solving scripted story. There are wonderful visuals that have directions on how you might teach these skills. There’s wonderful handouts and print resources to share with family. All the resources that were sent in the mailer were in color. That’s kind of fun. I’m really loving this material that the posters were printed on. It’s kind of like laminated, but really thick and very durable. Many of these resources come in Spanish and English, so they’re really accessible. As I mentioned, if you didn’t receive that physical toolkit, not to worry. All those resources I just showed you are located in the digital toolkit, so they’re only a click away.

Before we really dig into what these resources look like in coaching, I wanted to kind of get some information from you. How often do you find yourself really needing to access those

social-emotional resources for work with your coachees? Are you finding yourself trying to access them weekly? Monthly? Maybe just a couple times a year? Or do you never need those resources? Take a few minutes. Going to give you just a minute to select your responses here. I see that we have quite a few people responding that they need them weekly and monthly. Hardly any nevers. Needing to access these social-emotional resources is definitely something that we see that you are needing. I'm glad that we're able to share this resource with you today.

We asked our friends on MyPeers the same question, and how often they're needing to access the social-emotional resources. They were saying weekly and monthly. It was tied, neck and neck. There is a huge need for these resources, and I can't wait for you guys to just get to dig in and follow along with this.

We're referencing what we're calling the digital toolkit. If you haven't downloaded that yet, go ahead. We'll be talking about the links and the resources located on this handout throughout the whole webinar. I wanted to give just a quick introduction to how it's laid out so that you know how to interact with this resource. It's six pages of wonderful resources, as you were able to see in my unboxing here. These resources can be used with teachers, family child care providers, home visitors, anyone to support social-emotional learning for children and families, and even other education staff, as well. It's organized by these icons that you see on the screen. It'll let you know if it's available in English or Spanish. You'll see that it'll have the little speech bubble. If it's a family resource, it'll have the little house. If it's one of those visual resources – you know, the smell the flower, blow the pinwheel resource, those posters I was showing you – that will be denoted by the eye icon. Then if it's a classroom or a program resource, it will be denoted by the apple and the books. It's been organized this way to really help you find what you need easily. But it has embedded links, so all you need to do when you find a resource that you're interested in is just click right on to that link.

Now that we've had a chance to see a few of those resources with my very quick unboxing there, what are some of the resources that you're excited to explore more fully? I've given you kind of, like, an idea of what might be in there, how it's organized. What are some of the things that you're excited about finding in this toolkit? I'm seeing lots of people responding that they're excited about those visual resources. I'm also seeing some people that are excited to see some of those resources available in English and Spanish.

Joyce: Hey, Sarah?

Sarah: Yeah?

Joyce: While we're kind of seeing some of the responses come in, I was just thinking, if I were a new coach, and I'm sure we have some new coaches that are watching with us, whether I'm a week on a job or maybe it's my first year, are there some resources that you wanted to highlight or that you would recommend? If I'm a new coach and my program that we're really focusing in on supporting social and emotional development, and I know there are specific

resources, you're looking at specific goals, but are there some recommendations for, like, a new coach just to kind of have in their back pocket to use that maybe they're not as familiar with?

Sarah: Yeah. I really like the resources that are on the very front page of the digital toolkit. Those are all some really timely resources for things. You know, if you're doing some social distancing or maybe some virtual learning, there's a visual in there that's really nice. It's a greeting board for social distancing, which is really cool. If you are doing in-person learning and children are unable maybe to be really close, they can do a greeting. I mean, it's always a nice way to start out, you know, greeting children or families into your environment with a special greeting. That's one of my favorites. I also really like the rebuilding and reconnecting resource. There's one for infants and toddlers and for preschool, and that's really great because it gives you some of those foundational social-emotional skills that would be really great for building in after starting back, or just if you need a refresher on those foundational skills.

Joyce: Definitely, or even if we're transitioning back and forth. But it feels like we're kind of going back and forth a bit, I know, sometimes. Well, thank you for that. While you were talking, I was also thinking about maybe other members of our community that are watching today, and there were more veteran coaches, so they've been a Head Start teacher or a Head Start coach and been supporting social-emotional development for a long time. And they said, "You know, I've seen a lot of resources and I use most of them often, and I kind of feel like maybe I've seen it all." Are there some kind of hidden gems in here that made you think, "Hey, this could be something new for you to kind of look at and remember that's here?"

Sarah: Yeah. One thing that I think we often forget about is self-care for ourselves. There are resources here for self-care providers and families. There's mindfulness resources that you could use for yourself, and I think sometimes, those veteran coaches, veteran providers are the ones that tend to take on a lot of things. Those are some of my favorite things because we want to make sure that you're taking care of yourself as well because we know this job is very – you know, it can be very time consuming, but you want to make sure that you are taking time to care for yourself, reduce your stress. There's some mindfulness activities in here. There's some podcasts that are really great, with some breathing exercises that are kind of fun. So, yeah.

Joyce: Wonderful, thank you. That was helpful for people in our community, and there's just a couple of things that were going through my head when I saw this question pop up.

Sarah: Yeah. All right. Now that we've kind of ... We're going to shift into focusing how a coach might use these resources. So, now you've got the digital toolkit. What are you going to do with them?

We're going to meet Coach Imani. She's been coaching for three years, and this past year, Imani has had to learn to coach virtually. This is something new to her. She has 10 coachees on her case load, and she utilizes the "Head Start Coaching Companion" for all of her coachees and for everyone on her case load. We want to see how Imani could use some of these resources from the digital toolkit. We're going to follow her with two different coachees – one that's receiving individual coaching on site and then doing in-person learning and one coachee that's doing

virtual learning as well as virtual coaching. Then we're also going to talk about her TLC group – her Together Learning and Collaborating group – that she runs with eight coachees, and she does that virtually. What you see here is Rayven's goal in the "Head Start Coaching Companion," and Imani is coaching Rayven, and as I mentioned, Rayven is doing some in-person learning. She is receiving coaching on site so that means Imani is going there to do the observation, and then after the observation, they're meeting for their feedback meeting, and they usually try to plan for that to happen in the same day so that the information is fresh. Of course, they do this masked and socially distanced, and Imani uses "Coaching Companion" to keep track of Rayven's action plans. When they're working on a goal, Rayven and Imani can just go right into "Coaching Companion," see what the goal is, the action steps are. Imani also uses the "Coaching Companion" to upload resources that are related to the action steps that Rayven is working on. Her current action plan, Rayven really wants to focus on providing positive feedback to children, and really, specifically, when they're appropriate and engaged or they're following the class rules during center time. Imani knows just what she's going to upload to "Coaching Companion" for her.

Right here, Imani decides that she wants to give Rayven these two resources that are found on the digital toolkit. We see "21 Ways to Foster Connections with a Child" and then "50 Ways to Encourage a Child." Because she's meeting in person, she can just print these off, hand them to Rayven, but she's also decided to upload these to her action steps so that she can have them in case they get lost. Also, it helps Imani know, like, "Oh, I've already given this resource," if she works on this goal for a little while. Then if they get damaged or if she needs another copy, they'll be right there, secure in "Coaching Companion." These resources should really help Rayven complete her action step, which is to brainstorm some positive feedback statements that she wants to use during center time. She can use these resources to really think about what it is that she wants to say to children.

Now, if you could take a look at your digital toolkit and flip through and see, are there other resources that maybe you would have selected to support Rayven with her goal? It could also be, you know, if you know of other resources that maybe aren't included here. Use the Q&A to kind of type those responses out. Carol says that she would use the emotional piggy bank, fill up a child's piggy bank every day, and that's really important to do, and that would be a great resource to use here. Richard says he would use the positive behavior stickers. That would be a great way to reinforce those feedback statements, you know, giving a sticker after the feedback statement. I have time for one more. Tamara says she would send the article "Building Positive Relationships with Children." Maybe sending an article would help Rayven learn a little bit more about building these relationships with children. All right. Thank you. Those were great suggestions.

Now we're going to see how Imani's going to use the resources in the toolkit to work with her other coachee, Chazz. This is Chazz's goal. His class is doing virtual learning, which means he's doing a circle time via Zoom and sending resources and activities to families to do with their children at home. Since Imani is coaching Chazz from a distance, she's utilizing the "Coaching Companion" in a different way. Not only are the resources and action plans available to Chazz,

Chazz is also uploading his videos of his circle times to “Coaching Companion” to serve as the focused observation. They meet via Zoom for reflection and feedback. He uploads the video. Imani reviews the video. She even adds in feedback within the video so that when they meet for their Zoom reflection and feedback meeting, she can go directly to the clips that she wants to point out for him, and then she can also upload those resources that are going to help him reach his goals. Chazz reported that many of his families were asking for resources to help their children calm down or manage big emotions at home, so Chazz decides that he wants to work on self-regulation, a goal around self-regulation and breathing. He’s going to teach the children the turtle technique, which is a self-regulation strategy where children learn to stop their body, identify their emotion, tuck in their shell, take some deep breaths, and then once they’re calm, they can think of a solution. You can see that his next action step is to teach the children the turtle technique, and Imani has just the perfect resources to share with him. She sends Chazz the “Tucker the Turtle” scripted story. She can upload that right into “Coaching Companion.”

And if you remember, Chazz mentioned that families were wanting some resources as well, so she sends him the Calm Down calming strategies. It’s other ways, because maybe deep breathing isn’t working for children. Maybe they want to do other things to calm down, so he’s sending that. He also wanted to send a resource to families for managing stress and mindful moments so that these can be used for parents to calm down as well, because we know that having to do that in-home learning with kids is different for many families. Chazz wants to add that in there to make sure that they’re thinking about their own self-care practices.

Joyce: Sarah, I love how you mentioned that about sending the resources for the parents, as well, because, you know, when we’re thinking about virtual learning, it’s just about as much about kind of finding supports and things that staff can share with parents as much as it is kind of with supporting the children in that way. I love how the resources can be used that way, as well.

Sarah: Yeah. It’s so important, because for many families it’s very different for them to be thinking about, “Well, what am I going to do with my child?” Of course, they might know, but having extra activities and things like that can be helpful, and there’s lots of resources for families in here.

All right. Looking at your digital toolkit again, think about some resources that might be different. His goal is around self-regulation, and he decided to hone in on teaching the turtle technique. We know that we can teach self-regulation in a variety of ways. It doesn’t just have to be the turtle technique. Are there different resources that you might suggest to your coachee? What might you suggest? Tara says that she would use the Discovering Feelings activity, which is so important and is a very important step for self-regulation, right? Children have to be able to recognize emotions in themselves and others before they’re able to actually regulate, so that’s a great suggestion. Demetria says she would recommend people use disciplined breathing techniques [Inaudible], pretzel, and STAR. Yeah. You can self-regulate in a lot of different ways, and this list is not an exhaustive list. There’s other resources out there, but it’s a great place to start, and I love that. And Reneesha, she says – oh. She says that she

would send the “Tucker the Turtle” scripted story for home because, if they’re doing it during their circle time, then that might be a good way to connect it with home. Those are great suggestions. Joyce, do you have any other self-regulation resources that are your favorites?

Joyce: Well, you know, I am a big fan of Tucker and blowing out the candle. Those are kind of my go-tos, definitely. And just when I was kind of hearing some of the questions and just still thinking about sending those resources to the parents, I was just thinking of another kind of question or just see what you saw or heard, looking at home visitors, at also doing, like, virtual home visits, and they’re supporting the parents working with your children. So, do you think these resources could be just as useful for home visitors as well?

Sarah: Absolutely. All these resources can be used in a variety of settings. I mean, even – we’ve got the little icons to denote if it’s a family resource, a visual, or a classroom resource, that really, all of them could be used interchangeably. You know, if it’s a classroom-specific resource, some of the language is tied to, like, a classroom setting, but it could definitely be used in a home visiting setting. And for sure, the family resources could be easily used in a home visiting setting. Self-regulation, you can’t go wrong with teaching that to everyone. So...

Joyce: And then do you think, also, that with these resources – looking at teachers that are using these resources virtually – do you think that as a coach, part of it could be even with supporting the teachers, the education staff, to kind of almost unbox it as they would kind of have that same experience with the parents, as well, so they get comfortable with the resource that they’re going to support their children with as well?

Sarah: Yeah. I think that’s a great way to do it. I think that the great thing about social-emotional resources, and the thing to think about, is that different things work for different people, especially when you’re talking about self-regulation and things like that. There’s a variety of different resources that could be available here.

Joyce: OK. Great. A lot of good things and a lot of great goodies in the toolkit, definitely.

Sarah: Yeah. I’m about to turn it back over so you can talk us through how you might utilize this toolkit with a TLC group. But when you said “unboxing,” it just kind of made me think that, in a TLC group, it might be really cool, like, if you had the digital toolkit to, like, really print some things off and, like, say, “This is how we would use them and these are what’s available,” maybe making packets for them, that would be really cool. All right.

Joyce: Great. No, I think that’s a great idea, so I’m going to that next slide, kind of keeping up with that, because when we’re thinking about coaching oftentimes we go directly to, like, “What’s our goal? Let’s get going.” But I loved what you said about taking the time to maybe unpack, so maybe one of our kind of coaching sessions is about just having fun and digging into the toolkit together. Don’t you think, Sarah?

Sarah: Yeah. I think that would be a wonderful idea, and it gets everyone excited to use them.

Joyce: Yeah. Definitely. And even – say, if you’re virtual, like Sarah said, you could put some things off, or you could kind of make it a game. You know, maybe you have, like, a scavenger hunt through the toolkit, or maybe you’re looking for specific things, and the first one in could kind of say, “Hey, I found it,” and they could share their screen, or maybe you could do it in group or individual coaching. Or if you’re doing individual coaching, Sarah, do you think this would work? Say, if I have, say, there’s a coach today that has 10 coachees. What if they had a group meeting where they unboxed the toolkit together? You know, kind of had this group event?

Sarah: That would be great, and honestly, I have found with working with other groups, people come with different ideas. How you might use a resource, they might have a different idea for how they might use that resource or who they would give it to or how they would use it. That’s the beauty of coming together as a group, is that everyone has different ideas and you learn from each other, so I think it would be a wonderful thing to build excitement and get new ideas of how to use them.

Joyce: Oh, I love that idea. And what about even along the way? Because the toolkit is definitely not like a one-stop – like, we’re only going to use it once and then we’re going to check it off and leave, right? It’s going to be somewhere where we can kind of keep going back and digging in for more ideas and more resources and I might even use the same resource with different coaches differently. What do you think about, say, bringing that same group of coachees together and coaches – you know, you can get together with other coaches – say, “How are you using it?” But get them together and say, “All right, so how’s it going? How have you been using it so far?” Almost have check-ins, if this is our focus. What do you think about that?

Sarah: I think that sounds like a great idea. There’s really no wrong way to use this resource. I think you could certainly just kind of give them the resources and teach them how to use them and send them on their way to use them. Or you could find a group of teachers that are working on similar goals and really highlight a resource, really take the time to format it so that they’re getting what they need and they’re working on things that their children need and yeah. So, that might be a really great way to do that.

Joyce: Wow. What you just said kind of – one that excites me was – you were talking about coaches coming together. What if you had, say, a group of coachees who, you know, would feel comfortable in sharing maybe what they’re experiences have been with trying out some of these tools as the one being coached. What about getting that group together to have some of these conversations about, like, “Oh, my goodness. This is how it felt to use it. You know, I did this and it didn’t really work for me,” and kind of have some feedback that way?

Sarah: Yeah. That is a great way. Like for Imani’s group, she’s running this TLC group with her teachers, and they’ve decided that they want to focus on a specific in-service suite. Imani’s going to pull out these ideas and resources in that way. So you could certainly do that with a group of coachees, highlighting those resources in that way.

Joyce: Yeah. Great. I just that ... we've just kind of having some brainstorming here on the fly, but it makes me even more excited of, like, different ways that you could use this, and also different ways that it could inform, like, resources that you use moving forward within coaching. I think that's pretty amazing.

Sarah kind of gave us a little preview of what we're going to talk about now, which is the Together Learning and Collaborating group, so, we're checking back in with Imani. Imani, she runs a Together Learning and Collaborating group, or a TLC. She's the coachee here, and Imani has eight teachers that have – she's kind of the TLC facilitator here – and she has eight teachers that have similar needs, and they've kind of been identified by their program, taking a look at their teacher-level data and equipment-level data, and they are really wanting to focus in on classrooms transitions. That's what this TLC is really kind of focusing in on right now. For those of you that are like, "Well, what's a TLC? That sounds interesting." When we say "TLC," it's a group delivery format of Practice-Based Coaching, so it is Practice-Based Coaching. It's just delivered via a group, and TLCs are amazing because they have a little bit of everything. They provide that group coaching element. They also have a time where it's one-on-one with the TLC facilitator and then the participants kind of coming together and focusing on their kind of specific goal, as well. There's time built in within the TLC group, whether it's to learn new content. There's supportive discussion within kind of that peer atmosphere with those other TLC participants, and there's also time for kind of reflection. You get to watch a video that's one from the group. Every time they get together, they get to show a little clip of a specific goal that they're working on.

Again, they come together. Participants kind of record in their own group settings, whether that's in a classroom, family child care, during a home visit, or a group socialization, and then they bring that clip. The person who's going to share the video gets with the facilitator and they kind of hone down to, you know, just a clip that's a few minutes long to be able to watch together, and then they get to talk about it as a group to kind of provide some supportive feedback, constructive feedback about how's it going with that goal, those kind of things. A TLC is a great group delivery format of Practice-Based Coaching. If you're curious and want to know more about that, we have included a TLC overview handout in with the resources for this webinar, so just take a look at that, and hopefully you'll get the answers that you need, and there's also more information available on the ECLKC.

There we have kind of the introduction of this TLC group with Imani. Imani, she shared the 15-minute in-service suite, the "Managing Classrooms – Classroom Transitions," with the group. Again, we know the in-service suites are like these awesome kind of set of materials that comes with a PowerPoint, it comes with tip sheets, it comes with video, and she shared that with a group. They watched a video out of that in-service suite, and they had discussions around these classrooms transitions. Then from there, each teacher made a plan for kind of a transition strategy that they wanted to try in their own classroom.

Marisol, one of the members of the TLC group, it was her turn to share a video at the next group meeting, so she decided to work on using visuals to help out during transitions. She said,

“OK, this is what I’m going to do and this is the video – this is what I want in the video for the next group.” Imani, as the facilitator of the group, she’s already thinking of some of those resources from the toolkit that she’s going to share with her to help her accomplish her goal. From there you’re going to see that here, that Imani shared a few resources from that 15-minute in-service suite. She shared that planning for transitions and some visual cards from that digital toolkit, some things that she can take and use. With the TLC, there’s an opportunity for that one-on-one support, so Imani and Marisol got back together, and Imani was able to help her kind of zone in on kind of those transitions using the activity matrix. That’s what you see there as well. And they decide on what transitions would run more smoothly with using those visual cards, and Marisol decided to try it out during toothbrushing. She decided that would be kind of an opportunity to help that time kind of run smoother. Marisol decided to video herself when she was doing toothbrushing and kind of that transition into that activity, and that that’s what she was going to share with the TLC group the next time they met to kind of get some feedback from. Again, they just talked out a couple of resources from that in-service suite and from the toolkit. There’s so many more in there, so there’s a whole lot of other conversations that can happen around future goals as well. That’s just a couple of things that they use and just one way that they can use that.

There’s a lot to dig into in that toolkit, so we encourage you just to, you know, keep using it, get creative, share on MyPeers how it’s going, what you’re using there. Speaking of MyPeers, we wanted to wrap our time up today just by sharing a couple of tools or reminders. We talk about these all the time, about tools for coaches that you could use, and one is MyPeers. We love our MyPeers community here. Just know that if you’re not connected with MyPeers, we have a link that’s available there with the Resource widget. MyPeers is a great place to connect with other coaches and other colleagues to get resources, ask questions, kind of see what other people are focusing in on. We encourage you to get connected with our MyPeers PBC community. There are also other communities that you can be a part of as well. Definitely take advantage of MyPeers.

Then we have the “Head Start Coaching Companion.” That’s a video-sharing and kind of coaching feedback application that lives on the web. It can really help early childhood professionals to kind of move forward with use of those effective teaching practices. It’s a great tool to use within coaching and to help facilitate virtual coaching. If you’re doing virtual and in person, you can use it to kind of connect either of those ways or both as well. It can really help coaches and coachees, or even peer coaching teams, to connect and move along that PBC cycle, as well. If you have more questions about the “Coaching Companion,” we have information about that as well on ECLKC and also included with the resources for this webinar. We say again, dive in and try it out and let us know how it’s going.

Thank you so much for joining us today, kind of exploring the toolkit, and we’re going to invite you to please fill out the evaluation for this webinar. We really do look for your opinions and your guidance to help us in better supporting you. We invite you to keep this conversation going in MyPeers. If you have any questions or follow-ups on this, please connect us via

MyPeers. And we will see you again in July, and if not, we will see you before then at the Managers' Institute. So, thank you, and we will see you on MyPeers.