



# Building an Evidence-Based Coaching Model

The world of early intervention (EI) uses the term coaching in many ways to refer to interaction styles used with caregivers to ensure quality practice between EI visits. For many, this term has been poorly defined and has been a catch-all for any service that promotes caregiver education. This confusion led Lorio et al. (2019) to write a review of the literature in *Infants and Young Children* identifying what practitioners actually do when they say they are coaching. They determined that a significant knowledge to practice gap exists, and a clear coaching model is important to quality practice. At the Family Infant and Preschool Program (FIPP), we have been using and perfecting a coaching interaction style based on adult learning literature since 2005. Our approach is designed to be easy to remember and implement in a variety of contexts. Here is how our approach matches the characteristics identified as essential by Lorio et al.

What EI providers do?

- Direct Teaching
- Practice
- Feedback
- Demonstration
- Information Sharing

The characteristics to the left are those most often reported by the EI providers in the study as essential to their coaching. These characteristics are important, but if they are the only characteristics present in coaching interactions, conversations will be heavy on discussion and lack important analysis and planning characteristics.

What's missing?

- Reflection
- Problem Solving

This article specifically highlights reflection and problem solving as components of adult learning that do not appear in most descriptions of coaching use by EI providers. These two components are essential in helping caregivers to think critically and take ownership of identifying and implementing strategies and solutions they can apply long after EI ends.

#### The FIPP Model

- Joint Planning
- Observation
- Action/Practice
- Reflection
- Feedback

The coaching interaction style used by FIPP (Rush & Shelden, 2020) combines the characteristics elements above with other crucial elements in five straightforward characteristics. Direct teaching is encompassed in feedback and action/practice, demonstration is part of action/practice, information sharing is a part of feedback, and problem solving is incorporated in both reflection and action/practice. In addition, we emphasize joint planning to help coachees immediately apply learning until the coach returns and so coaches can check for understanding and know what real life activity the caregiver wants to focus on at the next visit.