



Sources of Information about Coaching Practices

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Abstract

Coaching has become a widely used practice in the field of early childhood intervention to build the capacity of caregivers to promote child learning within the context of natural learning opportunities in the home, community, and classroom. Coaching is an adult learning strategy and interaction style that helps an individual reflect on existing knowledge, develop new skills, and create a plan of action for current and future situations. This CASEmaker bibliography includes references documenting the conceptualization, operationalization, and the outcomes and benefits of coaching for caregivers and children when used as part of an early childhood intervention program.

Introduction

Coaching has become a widely used practice in the field of early childhood intervention as an adult learning strategy for building the capacity of caregivers to promote child learning and access needed resources as well as a tool for effective professional development. The focus of this CASEmaker is on caregiver coaching. This bibliography provides selected references regarding the conceptualization of coaching and the practice characteristics, operationalization of coaching practices as a caregiver capacity-building approach used in early childhood intervention, and the outcomes and benefits of coaching for caregivers and children.

A commonality of the references in this CASEmaker is the use of a coaching approach based on the following operational definition:

An adult learning strategy in which the coach promotes the learner's (coachee's) ability to reflect on his or her actions as a means to determine the effectiveness of an action or practice and develop a plan for refinement and use of the action in immediate and future situations. (Rush & Shelden, 2005, p. 3)

The primary role of the coach in this approach is to build the capacity of the coachee to identify and use existing as well as develop new skills, make important decisions, and problem-solve difficult situations. This coaching process includes five research-based practice characteristics that when used together result in the intended outcomes: observation, action/practice, reflection, feedback, and joint planning (Rush & Shelden, 2005, 2011, 2020).

Conceptualization

Conceptualization provides a research foundation and differentiation of coaching from other adult learning strategies. Unique to coaching is providing the person being coached with an opportunity to reflect on what they already know and are doing rather than the coach providing feedback immediately following an observation or moving directly to modeling what to do. Coaching does not follow a step-by-step process, however, use of all the characteristics is necessary to practice with fidelity, and the sequence in which the characteristics are used is important. The references in this section include a similar operational definition and/or practice characteristics of coaching as the basis or to contribute to the conceptualization of new coaching components or further analysis of existing ones.

Inbar-Furst, H., Douglas, S. N., & Meadan, H. (2020). Promoting caregiver coaching practices within early intervention: Reflection and feedback. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 48(1), 21-27. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-019-00980-2>

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- Kemp, P., & Turnbull, A. P. (2014). Coaching with parents in early intervention: An interdisciplinary research synthesis. *Infants & Young Children, 27*(4), 305-324. <http://doi.org/10.1097/IYC.000000000000018>
- Tomeny, K. R., McWilliam, R. A., & Tomeny, T. S. (2020). Caregiver-implemented intervention for young children with autism spectrum disorder: A systematic review of coaching components. *Review Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 7*, 168-181. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40489-01900186-7>
- Ward, R., Reynolds, J. E., Pieterse, B., Elliott, C., Boyd, R., & Miller, L. (2019). Utilisation of coaching practices in early interventions in children at risk of developmental disability/delay: A systematic review. *Disability and Rehabilitation, 42*(20), 2846-2867. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2019.1581846>

Operationalization

Coaching has become a widely accepted and used practice with caregivers in the field of early childhood intervention and is currently implemented as part of tele-intervention and in-person visits. It is also applied across disciplines (i.e., early childhood special education, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology), areas of development (i.e., adaptive, cognitive, communication, motor, social-emotional), and specific diagnoses or conditions (i.e., autism, challenging behavior, etc.). The selected works in this section provide examples of how the evidence-based practice characteristics of coaching are being operationalized to build the capacity of caregivers in early childhood intervention.

- Akamoglu, Y., & Dinnebeil, L. (2017). Coaching parents to use naturalistic language and communication strategies. *Young Exceptional Children, 20*(1), 41-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096250615598815>
- An, Z. G., Horn, E., & Cheatham, G. A. (2019). Coaching to build parent competency in addressing early challenging behaviors. *Young Exceptional Children, 22*(4), 198-213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096250618759941>
- Childress, D. (2021). Pause and Reflect. Paul H. Brookes.
- Douglas, S. N., Meadan-Kaplansky, H., & Kammes, R. (2019). Early interventionists' caregiver coaching: A mixed methods approach exploring experiences and practices. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 40*(2), 84-96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0271121419829899>
- Meadan, H., Douglas, S. N., Kammes, R., & Schraml-Block, K. (2018). I'm a different coach with every family: Early interventionists' beliefs and practices.

Infant and Young Children, 31(3), 200-214. <https://doi.org/10.1097/IYC.0000000000000118>

- Rogers, S. J., Vismara, L. A., & Dawson, G. (2021). *Coaching Parents of Young Children with Autism*. Guilford Press.
- Snodgrass, M. R., Chung, M. Y., Biller, M. F., Appel, K. E., Meadan, H., & Halle, J. W. (2017). Telepractice in speech-language therapy: The use of online technologies for parent training and coaching. *Communication Disorders Quarterly, 38*(4), 242-254. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525740116680424>

Outcomes and Benefits

A number of research studies have documented the positive impact of coaching on young children and their parents. The outcomes and benefits found in these studies when using the coaching practice characteristics with parents included: increased parent competence, improved parent mindfulness and self-efficacy, and decreased parent stress. The resulting impacts on the children were improved child participation, social-communication skills, joint attention, social interest, and positive affect. The selected references provide examples of studies across disciplines and types of research.

- Dunn, W., Cox, J., Foster, L., Mische-Lawson, L., & Tanquary, J. (2012). Impact of a contextual intervention on child participation and parent competence among children with autism spectrum disorders: A pretest-posttest repeated measures design. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 66*(5), 520-528. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2012.004119>
- Foster, L., Dunn, W., & Lawson, L. M. (2013). Coaching mothers of children with autism: A qualitative study for occupational therapy practice. *Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics, 33*(2), 253-263. <https://doi.org/10.3109/01942638.2012.747581>
- Little, L. M., Pope, E., Wallisch, A., & Dunn, W. (2018). Occupation-based coaching by means of telehealth for families of young children with autism spectrum disorder. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 72*(2), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2018.024786>
- Turner-Brown, L., Hume, K., Boyd, B. A., & Kainz, K. (2019). Preliminary efficacy of family implemented TEACCH for toddlers: Effects on parents and their toddlers with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 49*, 2685-2698. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-016-2812-7>
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training to parents. *Autism Research and Treatment*, 2012, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2012/121878>

Conclusion

This CASEmakers bibliography provides sources of information about the conceptualization, operationalization, and outcomes and benefits of using a coaching interaction style with caregivers as part of early childhood intervention. Research supports coaching as an effective adult learning strategy for promoting the use of existing skills and the development of new abilities, thus coaching has become a common practice for building the capacity of caregivers in early childhood intervention. This method of interacting with caregivers has been used across disciplines, child diagnoses, types and severity of delay, areas of development, and in both tele-intervention and in-person formats. The use of a coaching interaction style by practitioners has demonstrated positive outcomes for both caregivers and children participating in early childhood intervention services.

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- An, Z. G., Horn, E., & Cheatham, G. A. (2019). Coaching to build parent competency in addressing early challenging behaviors. *Young Exceptional Children*, 22(4), 198-213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096250618759941>
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