



Caregiver Coaching in Early Childhood Intervention

All young children learn new skills and practice existing ones by participating in everyday activities with the important people in their lives. Coaching is an adult learning strategy used by early childhood intervention providers to build the capacity of caregivers to support children's development as part of their daily activities. Caregiver coaching includes five research-based characteristics to ensure success.

Joint Planning

Each coaching conversation begins by revisiting the previous between visit plan to determine what worked and if the caregiver might need some additional support to promote the child's learning in that activity. Each coaching conversation ends with a jointly developed plan for (1) how the caregiver(s) will continue to support the child's learning through participation in family activities (mealtime, dressing, diaper changes) and (2) the routine or activity the caregiver and coach will use as the context for the next visit based on what they want the child to learn.

Observation

The coach observes the caregiver and child involved in a real-life activity in which the caregiver wants the child to participate successfully (walk to the kitchen table for breakfast, tell the caregiver what she wants to eat, reach for the spoon to eat the cereal). The activity may be going well or could be problematic. If needed, the caregiver might observe the coach model a technique as an option to use to help the child learn a new skill or behavior.

Action/Practice

As part of the visit, the caregiver practices new ideas for promoting the child's learning during the real-life activities occurring at that time. The caregiver takes action between visits by using what was learned during the visit.

Feedback

The coach shares new information or ideas, if needed, based on direct observations as well as actions shared or information given by the caregiver. Feedback occurs after the caregiver has the opportunity to reflect. Throughout the conversation, the coach acknowledges what the caregiver is doing and sharing without judgement.