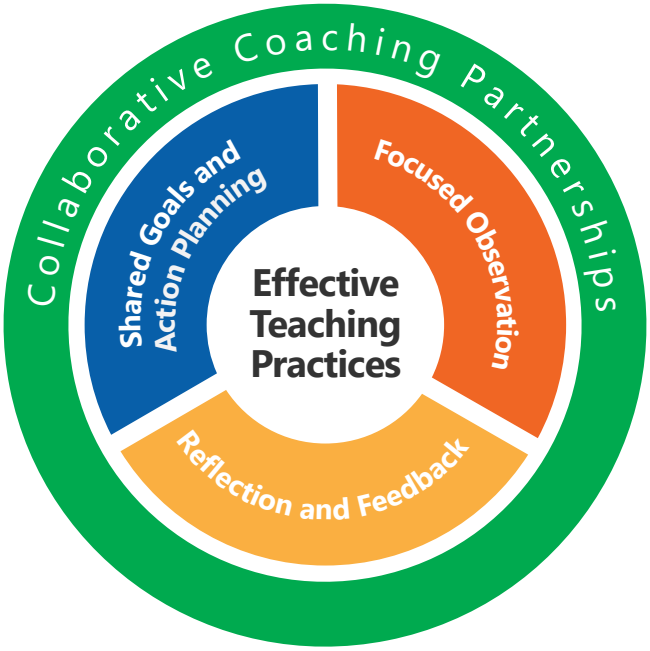
AN INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICE-BASED COACHING FOR EARLY MATH



WHAT IS PRACTICE-BASED COACHING (PBC)?

PBC is an approach to support education staff as they use effective teaching and home visiting practices. PBC is based on research and documented practices in the field. PBC occurs in the context of a collaborative partnership between the coach and the education staff.

PBC uses a coaching cycle, which includes the following components:

1. Planning goals and action steps.

   The teacher, family child care provider, or home visitor (coachee) and coach work together to set a goal and map out the steps, resources, supports, and timeline for accomplishing the goal.

2. Engaging in focused observation.

   The coach and coachee develop a focused observation plan. In the plan, the coach observes and collects specific information related to the identified goal. During observations, the coach may also provide supports (e.g., modeling).

3. Reflecting on and sharing feedback about practices.

   The coach and coachee debrief and reflect on the support strategies provided and information gathered during the focused observation. They share their feedback, including both supportive and corrective feedback. Again, coaches and coaches may use support strategies (e.g., role play). The reflective conversation leads to setting a new goal and action planning.

If you want to learn more about the PBC model, the Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center has more information at *https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/practice-based-coaching-pbc*.

This document was developed with funds from Grant #90HC0012 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, and the Office of Child Care by the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning.

WHAT ARE EDUCATION STAFF'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

PBC occurs in the context of a collaborative partnership, which means you plan together with your coach and work together to reach your goals. This means you will need to actively decide on the goals and focus of coaching, what supports you want and need, and when and how you will be observed. It's important you develop shared trust in your relationship with your coach by communicating in respectful and transparent ways, maintaining openness to feedback and new ideas, and following through in communications and actions.

Predictable and transparent interactions build shared trust. You may want to develop a coaching contract that lays out the expectations for each of you.

WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED AT THE FIRST EARLY MATH COACHING MEETING?

During your first meeting with your coach, they get to know and understand you and begin establishing the foundation for a strong, collaborative partnership. Expect to share professional experiences and backgrounds and develop shared expectations. Try to reach a mutual understanding of the coaching process and purpose. For early math coaching, your coach will want to understand your thoughts, feelings, and previous experiences with math. During one of your first meetings, you will also set your goal for your first PBC cycle. Your coach will likely have you complete a needs assessment about your early math teaching practices to help you choose a focus and goal.

To prepare for your first meeting it may be helpful to think about the following questions:

- What is the earliest math experience that you can remember?
  - How did you feel during this experience?
  - How has that influenced how you feel about math now?
  - How do you think your feelings and previous experiences might be expressed in your program?
- How can you support children's math learning or support parents as they help their child learn math?
  - How do children best learn math?
  - How do you support the math-related domains and goals within the Cognition domain of the ELOF?
  - What curriculum do you use?
  - What kinds of lessons or activities do you use in your classroom or home visit?
  - How do you support children's math learning during play, children's spontaneous activity, and daily routines? How do you incorporate math learning during group socializations?
- What are your strengths in supporting children's math learning?
- What are your challenges in supporting children's math learning?
- What early math teaching or home visiting practices do you want to work on during coaching?

If you need more effective, evidence-based teaching practices that support children's math learning, see the *What Works Clearinghouse's Teaching Math to Young Children practice guide.*

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