

Implementing Practice-Based Coaching

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Narrator: Community Partnership for Child Development, or CPCD, has both Head Start and Early Head Start center-based programs and partners with six local school districts to provide the Colorado Preschool Program. CPCD builds a culture of coaching by beginning the year with coaching as a part of the ongoing activities.

Julissa: Practice-based coaching is going to give me a lot of different skills that I can use throughout my career in early childhood education.

Stephanie: If we don't continue to grow our teachers to be better and more effective in the classroom, then we're really not being effective for the children.

Shana: And what we realized this year in going through a lot of training is that coaching is a part of professional development. [Music] [Indistinct conversations]

Narrator: CPCD chose to focus their coaching efforts on supporting teachers' use of effective social-emotional teaching strategies and classroom organization.

Shana: So, we spent a lot of time this year restructuring what our professional development policy should look like. We actually didn't have one. We had a coaching policy, we had a class policy, and we realized that those are embedded very nicely into what we want to see happen for our staff.

Stephanie: We're really trying to shift that whole focus to ... Professional development is a huge continuum that includes everything from when you get an e-mail about something to this intensive coaching cycle, and it's all just to make things even better. We're not coaching to a deficit; we're coaching for growth.

Leslie: Well, excellent job today. I loved being in your classroom.

Shana: We're working towards improvement and increasing knowledge in the classroom is really the message that we're hoping that our structure is going to put for our teachers and staff.

Narrator: CPCD engage staff in the decision-making process for determining individual practices and structure of coaching.

Leslie: I think my role as a coach is really to help teachers understand that the things that they're doing in classrooms are successful, and then build upon those successes to help move them forward in their teaching practices.

Narrator: As part of their coaching agreement, coachees identify learning preferences as they continue to focus on goals and increase effective teaching practices.

Julissa: Having that one-on-one conversation with them, and having that relationship to build on, and making sure that she is there for my support, and for myself to grow as an educator instead of trying to judge someone is definitely an important piece.

Narrator: CPCD planned for expert individual coaching of classroom teachers. Their plan included weekly visits during the first eight weeks of the year and then bi-weekly visits for the remainder of the year for those receiving intensive coaching.

Shana: Our plan moving forward is that we want our staff to identify themselves as somebody who wants coaching. So, those who are saying, "I want coaching, I want to work on this," are the best coachees because when you have that desire to learn and grow, you're going to want to do it.

Stephanie: Tell me how things went.

Jessie: Focusing on one specific goal helped me target my weakness in the classroom. You do have the ability to do it. You just need to work on it a little bit more. So, it was refreshing to hear.

Narrator: CPCD realized that intensive coaching could not be provided to all teachers. So, they looked at other options to provide support for those who were not receiving intensive coaching.

Shana: We now run professional learning communities four times a year in small groups, with groups of between 7 to 10. And those are areas where we can have that peer mentoring.

Stephanie: And so, once we actually sit down and have those conversations, the light bulb can go off, that, "Oh, you're just talking about professional development."

Narrator: CPCD considered what coaches needed to be successful and revised their job descriptions and support for coaches to ensure their success.

Shana: What we realized is there's a different set of skill sets that are involved in providing coaching than there is teaching. So, over time, we've changed the job description, and we've held those people already in that group accountable to those expectations.

Narrator: CPCD supports fidelity to the coaching model by having a coach supervisor on staff. The coach supervisor implements reflective supervision with coaches to support their implementation of PBC.

Stephanie: When I'm having those professional coaching relationships with the coaches, they're then going and having the professional coaching relationship with the teachers, who then work

with their education assistants. And, you know, we really do some coaching with our families as well. Everything trickles down and grows exponentially.

Narrator: CPCD reviewed the time that coaches and coachees spent in coaching activities to determine if they were correctly identifying caseloads and ensuring that coaching was happening as planned.

Stephanie: So, we really tried to embrace this concept that we want to be implementing things to fidelity. In order to do that, we do have to balance. Everyone has room to grow, and we don't want to take away time from the classroom and the children.

Shana: We did change even just the way our calendar looks for the school year to provide more time for groups to be off, to be able to even bridge Early Head Start and Head Start classroom schedules, to kind of just play around and see what's going to work best for the coachees. Because if they're not receiving any benefits, if we're not seeing changes in the classroom, then we have to look at it differently again.

Narrator: CPCD recognized that implementing coaching is a process.

Shana: We're very much in the experimental stages.

Stephanie: It does take a lot of patience, and it takes time. Growth doesn't happen overnight.

Julissa: I see you lifting your leg. Do you want to sit in your chair?

Jessie: I think other teachers would benefit from this coaching. We always look at ourselves like we're doing all we can or we're not doing enough, but when someone else notices it and not just pinpoints it, but wants to help you grow in that area, I think it'll strengthen you for the later years of teaching as they come.

Julissa: Teachers should be always learning and, you know, taking on that role of lifelong learners.

Jessie: We're not perfect, classrooms are not perfect, but strengthening those abilities will get you there.

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