Coaching Strategies for Parent Engagement

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Let’s get to know each other first....

A little about me.....

• Lead Parent Educator at Berrien RESA Parents as Teachers program
• Provide reflective supervision for 10 Parent Educators & carry a caseload of families
• Worked in Home Visiting field for over 13 years
• Started journey with coaching 4 years ago
Where are you in your coaching journey?

1. I have heard the terms but I have little knowledge beyond that

2. I think I understand the idea, but I have doubts how it could work in my position

3. I think it’s a good idea, but I don’t know where to start

4. I am implementing some coaching strategies in my home visiting

5. I have implemented coaching strategies fully in my home visiting
Today’s Agenda

- What is coaching
- Why coaching works
- Exploring coaching strategies & roadblocks
- Next steps in your coaching Journey
- Signs it's working
What is Coaching?
Coaching Is....

- Building on strengths of the family-
  - find out what they know and build off that
- Asking lots of questions-
  - not assuming anything
- It's a partnership between the home visitor and the parent working together to benefit the child.
- Mutual respect of one another and genuinely value one another
Coaching Analogy
Why Coaching Works
Coaching works because...

• It’s more impactful with families
• It doesn’t require home visitor to be the “keeper of the knowledge”
• It doesn’t put home visitor in the “fix it” role
• It empowers parents to have more input and take the lead
• The research is clear that this is what works- it increases the likelihood that the “interventions” are happening with you are not there
It’s all based on adult learning..

How would you like to receive information- being told how to do something OR having someone partner with you & help you figure it out?

The concept of coaching is based on adult learning strategies...we all learn best this way!
Coaching

Coaching is not a script where you have to ask the questions we talk about today- these are examples and ideas.

Take them and make them your own.

It won’t sound genuine if you try to ask the way a book says or even how someone else says it.
Exploring Coaching Strategies & Roadblocks
Let’s look at a home visit in sections..

- The Opening - the beginning & setting the stage
- Parent Child Interaction - what the child/parent will do together
- Parenting Topics - Potty Training, sleep, nutrition, etc.
- Family Well-Being - housing, bills, medical visits, etc.
- The Closing - ending visits and plan for next time

No matter your discipline most visits have these basic components.

We will discuss coaching strategies to use in each of these sections, PLUS......
Look at possible roadblocks and detours...

Roadblocks

Detours
The Opening

Strategies for coaching

Follow up from last visit

Review today’s agenda

Ask if parent has anything to add to agenda
Roadblock!

Possible roadblocks

• Parent is distracted (dishes/laundry/phone)

• Parent is not responding to you

Strategies to get past roadblocks

• Being honest- “is everything ok today?”

• Be clear- “ok mom, when you are ready, Annie is ready to play...come join us”
Parent Child Interactions

Strategies for coaching

• Introduce activity to parent/why do it
• Hand activity to parent
• Ask if there are any questions
• Ask how they’d like to use the activity
• Strengthen interaction by saying what you see
• Ask how they could work on this concept in their routines
Roadblock!

Possible roadblocks

• Thinks you are the teacher
• Struggles to stay engaged (distractions)
• Low confidence as parent/gives up easily
• Thinks child won’t do it for them but will for you

Strategies to get past roadblocks

• Giving them the activity puts parent in the driver seat
• Be positive- but not the “Good Job Police”- When you...he...
• Help parent reflect if things aren't going well- “why do you think he wants to only dump the chips from the can?” “what do you think he is trying to tell you by...”
• Use I wonder questions- “I wonder what would happen if you....”
Parenting Topics

Strategies for Coaching

• Set the stage for the topic
• Find out what the parent already knows/ or tried
• Ask open-ended questions
• Genuine empathy for situation
• Frame the issue “so what I hear you saying is...”
Possible roadblocks

Parent states things like “he’s just bad. he bites” or “he knows better he just wants to be mean to me”

Parent states that you don’t understand what it's like

Parent who won’t share much information

Strategies to get past roadblocks

Normalize if there is an issue- “typically at 2 yrs children…”

Ask lots of questions- “tell me more about when that is happening…” “why do you think he is doing that…” “when that happens what do you do typically…”

Validate what they are struggling with - “that sounds frustrating”

Use I wonder questions

Find out if it is a topic they want to explore more or not
Family Well-Being

Strategies for Coaching

- Has parent noticed it affecting the child
- Has family had this struggle before
- What ideas does family have
- Find out what family has tried/explored
- Genuine empathy
- Frame the issue “what I hear you say is..”
- Brainstorm & make a plan together
Roadblock!

Possible roadblocks

Parent doesn’t want to share

Parent wants you to fix the problem

Parent is overwhelmed with situation

Strategies to get past roadblocks

Bring it back to the child

If family has been down this road before what did they do last time

Genuine empathy is key (families can tell when you don’t!)

If needed ask if you can share something that has worked for other families

Be clear of plan moving forward—“so I am going to.....and you will....”
The Closing

Strategies for Coaching

Recap the visit

Ask parent how they felt it went

Make strength based observation (when/then)

Make plans for next time together (get their input)
Possible roadblocks

- Parent wants you to plan visit
- Parent has lost interest or focus
- Parent is rushing you out of the house

Strategies to get past roadblocks

- Help them with planning next visit
- Be very clear on what parent will do till next time & what you will do
It’s a lot of information...do you have any questions before moving on to some basic coaching strategies?
Some Basic strategies....

• Being consistent (giving toy to parent..)

• Be honest (“I have a hard time focusing with the TV on..could we turn it off?”)

• Remind parents “I am an expert in child development..but you are the expert of your child” and/or the analogy

• Have coaching questions in your “back pocket”- go to questions (see handout)

• Include everyone there in the visit- parenting doesn’t happen in a bubble attitude

• If modeling would help- model with the parent or a doll

• Remember are you empowering the parent..or are you empowering yourself as the fixer or keeper of the knowledge
Next steps in your coaching journey
Next Steps..

- Start fresh with new families
- Start using open-ended questions in each visit
- Promote development/parenting in daily routine context (connect the skill to what they are already doing- diapering/bathing)
- Pick a strategy or part of the visit to focus on
- Journal or reflect with a peer on how it’s working
- Join with other staff- books study...videotaping visits & use to reflect on
- Read more about coaching (see next slide)
- Be kind to yourself. HV is hard work. Take it one step at a time
Resources

“The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook”
by Dathan Rush & M’lisa Shelden

by Lori Roggman, Lisa Boyce, & Mark Innocenti

Parents as Teachers Curriculum, www.patnc.org
Signs it’s working!
Signs it’s working!

• PCI happens during most of the visit
• Child turns to parent when you arrive- expecting to have fun with them
• You are making positive comments throughout the PCI
• Child is physically closer to parent than PE during visit
• Parent says things like “We love it when you come!” or “We have so much fun doing these things together.”
• Parent will come with ideas or topics for the agenda
• You will feel less like the keeper of the knowledge & like a partner (because the parent is in the driver’s seat now!)
Wrapping things up! Today we looked at:

- What is coaching
- Why coaching works
- Explore coaching strategies & roadblocks
- Next steps in your coaching Journey
- Signs it's working
Questions? Comments?
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