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Coaching as a Framework for Early Intervention Service Delivery

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Abstract

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) has set forth a list of high leverage practices that have significant impact on children with special needs from birth through early childhood. One of these impactful strategies is building family capacity, which can be effectively addressed using a coaching framework for service delivery. Research in the field has not yet clearly defined coaching terms, definitions or characteristics, which impacts the fidelity of the practice and requires research and consensus moving forward. This body of work seeks to look at current research around the topic of coaching and it's effectiveness in meeting student and family outcomes. In addition it includes a personal experience using the components of the coaching framework and its coordinating fidelity tool with a family in early intervention.

Keywords: early childhood, early intervention, family capacity, service delivery, coaching, caregivers, triads

Coaching as a Framework for Early Intervention Service Delivery

Using a coaching framework for service delivery in early intervention is important because it impacts learning outcomes for children and families. There are several coaching models (Friedman et al., 2012) and matching fidelity tools in the field right now but this work utilizes and refers to work by Rush & Sheldon (2020).

When families participate in coaching, they get familiar with a fairly predictable routine (Salisbury, 2017), they view themselves as a catalyst for change in their child's education (Kemp, 2014), their capacity for teaching and learning new things is increased and their confidence as caregivers expands (Rush & Sheldon, 2020). These things happen because the models take into account adult learning styles and behaviors and the key characteristics support the learning (Salisbury, 2017).

This work will examine the history of research that has applied to the use of coaching in early intervention, the definitions, characteristic and benefits of coaching. Also documented is a personal journey into use of coaching and it's effects in my practice thus far including plans for future use of the practice.

Literature Review

History

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was established in 1986, and revised in 2004, to address important needs in regard to children ages' birth to three, who are shown to be eligible for Early Intervention (EI). The critical pieces congress set forth include, enhancing the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, reducing educational costs by providing EI so the number of students receiving special education services decreases, to minimize institutionalization and maximize independence, and *increasing family's capacity to meet their child's needs* (ECTA, 2012).

In response to this, the Division for Early Childhood (DEC, 2014), identified family practices that have a positive impact on student outcomes. One of those family practices is, family capacity-building. Family capacity-building practice encompasses, participatory opportunities and experiences that build on parent knowledge and skills and enhance parental capacity (ECTA, 2012; DEC, 2014).

Increasing families' capacity to meet their child's identified needs, can effectively be done with coaching (Rush & Sheldon, 2020). This premise started appearing in research literature between 2000 and 2010 (Kemp, 2014; Rush & Sheldon, 2011; Woods et al., 2004). The research centered on promoting collaboration between providers and families in a natural setting. Most of intervention was, at that time, spent in direct student interaction and remediation of skills (Kemp & Turnbull, 2014).

As research was expanding and coaching practices started making their way into EI programs we started seeing the foundation of coaching being reflected in parent education and was often referred to as 'parent training' (Kemp & Turnbull, 2014). This stirred controversy as there was no agreed upon terms set forth (Friedman et al., 2012.) Some people felt that redefining parent education/training was not necessary, the working definition conveyed the implied sentiment. Others argued that the term parent education/training implies that knowledge is passed from and expert to a learner and that was not the intent behind the movement (Snyder et al., 2015). The direction that research was pointing was towards shared decision-making between the dyads (caregiver and interventionist) and the use of natural learning environments to embed goals with the help of caregivers (Salisbury et al., 2017). Although it was not making it's way into regular usage yet. It was cited as being too difficult by interventionists and researchers (Kemp & Turnbull, 2014; Salisbury, 2017).

Although the past research has led to a major shift in service delivery in EI there remained a few holes. The largest challenge sited was a lack of definition of terms around the practices (Salisbury, 2017). There was no corresponding research defining the terms or practices that was meant by those terms. In addition, there were gaps involving the impacts of coaching on families and outcomes. Research around these gaps started to be seen around 2014 and is still evolving today (Friedman at al., 2012; Kemp & Turnbull, 2014; Salisbury, 2017).

What is Coaching in the Context of Early Intervention?

Although there are different ideas of what the definition of coaching is, as it pertains to EI, most professionals have adopted the definition from Rush and Sheldon, who have put out a body of work based around coaching for families and also between professionals. Rush and Sheldon (2020) define it as, "An adult learning strategy in which the coach promotes the learner (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" (p.8). Other definitions include, an intensive, differentiated structured support system used by on-site professionals who partner with parents or teachers to improve the use of research based instructional practices (Snyder et al., 2015). Another is, practice-based coaching is a cyclical process where practitioners receive support in the use of instructional practices that improve outcomes for children and families (Snyder et al., 2015).

Coaching has been described as, a relationship-directed process (Kemp & Turnbull, 2014), engagement in conversations with parents to learn how to use items in the home and routines that already exist for the family to jointly plan the intervention (Lorio et al., 2020), and an ongoing equal partnership where the family decides the direction of the interventions (Friedman et al., 2012). This process can be applied to self-coaching, peer coaching and expert coaching. In this literature review we will be focusing on expert coaching, specifically interventionists coaching caregivers.

The history of coaching in EI doesn't start that far back in history, however, there has been much research around family centered practices and the gap still

exists that we don't have a field wide, accepted, set of definitions to guide our

coaching practices (Friedman et al., 2012; Kemp & Turnbull, 2014). Rush and

Sheldon are making gains in this area as states like Minnesota start to implement

statewide innovations such as EQIP, Evidenced-based Quality Intervention Practices

based on the works of Rush and Sheldon using a coaching framework (EQIP, 2021).

With that said, future research should include coaching definitions and descriptions

to unify the works moving forward.

What are the Main Characteristics that Embody Coaching Practices?

Many articles site-defining characteristics that surround coaching practices.

They are varied, but many site these; shared information/conversation, shared

goals/action planning also called joint planning, focused observations,

demonstrating/direct teaching, action/practice, reflection and feedback including

guided practice with feedback and problem solving (Hamren & Quigley, 2012;

Snyder et al., 2015; Rush & Sheldon, 2020).

Information sharing suggests that information be discussed between the

provider (EI/coach) and caregiver (coachee) revolving around questions,

comments, outcomes, concerns and priorities. This often happens at the beginning

of a visit to find out what is currently happening. An example could be discussed

how the recent visit to the neurologist went, what was discovered or planned (Lorio

et al., 2020).

Joint Planning is an agreement between the coach and coachee on the actions

that will be taken, often but not limited to what will be practiced between visits. It is

also used to discuss how the learned strategies can be embedded into activities or

routines when the interventionist isn't present (Lorio et al., 2020; Rush & Sheldon, 2020). An example could be, 'Thinking about what you practiced today, what would you like to work on during this week? What would you like to work on the next time we get together?"

Focused observations involve examining another person's actions or practices with the intent to develop new skills, strategies or ideas. The coach can observe the coachee which provides an opportunity for a reflection or direct teaching moment or a coachee can observe a coach model a particular strategy. This time is meant for observation only and suggestions or feedback are saved for reflection. An example would be, a parent is having a hard time getting their child to sit for a few pages of a story and would like some strategies to extend reading time. "Can you show me what it looks like during reading time now?" The coach observes and then a feedback/reflection/direct teaching moment could happen following (Rush & Sheldon, 2020).

Demonstrating and or direct teaching is when the coach models an intervention strategy, often with narration to support the coachee's understanding and then provides new information. The new information could be on intervention strategy, child development or effective ways to embed the learning into daily activities and can be done verbally, through print or video (Lorio et al., 2020). An example is demonstrating the model-wait technique for encouraging verbal imitation. The coach would first discuss what the coachee is watching for, demonstrate, then discuss and provide an opportunity for the coachee to practice with feedback.

Action/Practice refers to events that happen in the context of a visit during an everyday routine or activity that gives the coachee an opportunity to practice, hone or analyze new skills or existing skills. This is a time to try out strategies that were discussed or demonstrated (Rush & Sheldon, 2020). An example is, a coachee has just watched the coach model the wait technique for verbal imitation and practices using it after discussing the practice while the coach observes.

Reflection is an opportunity for both the coach and coachee to discuss what they observed, how they felt, what they took away or how they connected something to their existing knowledge related to an intervention, strategy or the child's progress/outcomes. This is a time when the coachee gets to analyze, refine their knowledge and/or skills. This area utilizes reflective questioning to help facilitate the conversation and extend the thought process. A coach may ask something like, "What do you feel like worked about that, what didn't work as well?" (Lorio et al., 2020; Rush & Sheldon, 2020). Reflective questioning is a wide topic in and of itself and warrants exploration on types of questions, timing of questions, intent behind questions and flow of conversation (Rush & Sheldon, 2020). These questions are what create learning opportunities for individuals and is worthy of a deeper look into which types of questions yield the most benefit.

Feedback is based on the coach's observation, actions or information shared by the coachee and is used to expand the coachee's understanding. Feedback should always take place after the coachee has practiced a new skill and has reflected on it. Feedback can be affirmative, such as, "Yes, I agree," or informative, such as sharing

information after they have reflected on the model-wait time imitation strategy or also evaluative, such as, 'I like how you_____' (Rush & Sheldon, 2020).

Problem solving takes place when a coach and coachee discuss how to improve interactions, use strategies, or identify changes for upcoming sessions. Problem solving conversations often happen during reflection and are practiced in the action/practice opportunities (Lorio et al., 2020).

In relation to the common characteristics there are also key elements that allow those characteristics to be successful. Without these elements the foundation of coaching would not be beneficial. These elements are, coaching should be capacity building, goal orientated, solution focused, performance based, reflective, collaborative, context driven and as hands on as is needed (Rush & Sheldon, 2020).

In order to effectively talk about what coaching is in EI, we, as interventionists and coaches need to have a concrete definition of what we are doing and the characteristics it embodies. Common language is a cornerstone of understanding and implementation of practice (Friedman et al., 2012). This premise highlights a gap in research in the area of coaching in EI. There are common characteristics among coaching practices, but we aren't looking at which practices are crucial. Which ones improve outcomes significantly, are all equally important, how do we measure the effectiveness of the characteristics, how do families and practioners feel about the practices, and what are the hurdles to using them with fidelity?

Why Should We Consider Using Coaching as a Context for Service Delivery in Early Intervention?

The purpose of family capacity-building practices such as coaching is to build family capacity, confidence and competence in achieving children's goals or outcomes (Rush & Sheldon, 2020). How we provide that support has a big impact. Research shows when coaching is used, family capacity increases (Salisbury et al., 2017). This is shown using qualitative studies, which include parent surveys before and after using a coaching framework for implementation of EI (Salisbury et al., 2017; Brown, 2015).

Coaching families while using, teaching and helping families to implement well known intervention strategies/programs has been shown to be beneficial (Graham & Ziviani, 2013). In a study of occupational therapy and coaching (Graham & Ziviani, 2013), significant improvements were made in occupational performance after intervention occurred for children and mothers. The improvements were maintained 6 weeks after intervention. Mother's competence was also improved. Improvements were noted at each phase during intervention and at the main data collection points post intervention. Mothers' performance and satisfaction of performance also improved significantly over intervention phases (Graham & Ziviani, 2013).

Another example of the effectiveness of combining coaching with well-known strategies to improve outcomes is shown in the research article, Effects of a Triadic Parent-Implemented Home-based Communication Intervention for Toddlers, published in the Journal of Early Intervention (Brown & Woods, 2015). Families were studied utilizing a control group and intervention group with the use of KidTalk-TaCTIC and coaching. Children in the intervention group all made progress

on identified outcomes and maintained through maintenance phases and coachee's

showed increases in responsive and modeling strategies after demonstrating

relativity low baseline scores (Brown & Woods, 2015; Woods et al., 2004).

Using Kid-Talk-TaCTIC as a language intervention program in combination

with coaching is not the only strategy that has been shown to increase outcomes for

children and families. A study out of the Netherlands in 2019 by Kruythoff et al.,

looked at low dosage parent coaching in combination with Target Word program

can increase expressive language in late talkers. The study pointed out that although

most children in the study, both receiving and not receiving the intervention were at

a similar level of development at age 4, the group receiving the combined

intervention met typical development levels sooner thus alleviating child and family

frustration (Kruythoff et al., 2019).

Coaching in families has been shown to increase feelings of parental

competency (Salisbury et al., 2017). Coaching helps caregivers/coachee's feel

supported in knowing how to increase or decrease supports as the child grows and

learns, how to adapt strategies to new contexts and as challenges arise then address

those problems. Coaching helps families to take the process of how and what they

are learning and generalize it to other situations with their child and feel competent

that they can try different strategies (Salisbury et al., 2017).

Future research should look at a few different things. First, the EI field is

missing quantitative data showing outcomes for children whose families are

coached and those who receive direct teaching services only. There is evidence to

support the effectiveness of coaching, but it has not been concretely compared to

direct service modeling in a generic sense. Another area to focus on is the effectiveness of web-based or virtual expert coaching as an alternative to face-to-face expert coaching. Especially, in this time of COVID as it is a platform that is being used regularly out of necessity. This could open up the possibility of more flexibility for coaches and coachee's even when not in a pandemic. Careful attention should be paid to outcomes when looking at the two models. The coaching process could be equally effective in both formats but the outcomes for the children could differ as it can be difficult to read child and parent nuances virtually (Snyder et al., 2015; Hamren et al., 2012; Fettig et al,. 2016). The EI field is also missing qualitative data showing outcomes for children whose families are coached and those who receive direct teaching services only. A compilation and comparison of the different frameworks within coaching and the accompanying fidelity tools should also be explored, both in relation to outcomes but in ease of use.

Coaching is an effective way to meet the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) standard of family practices, which is also a High Leverage Practice (HLP). It improves family capacity, confidence, and competence in achieving children's goals and can improve outcomes for children and families (Rush & Sheldon, 2011). There are critical components to coaching that make it effective and future research should explore the most critical components for inclusion in developing coaching frameworks. More research is also needed to define and refine the terms related to coaching in EI, create an agreed upon standard of what should be included in effective frameworks and compare effectiveness between frameworks.

Learning to Use Coaching a Coaching Framework

        I started my journey of using a coaching framework for service delivery in Early Intervention (EI) by doing a book study of, The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook, by Dathan D. Rush and M'Lisa Shelden published in 2011 and revised in 2020. At the time we were in involved with the Minnesota Centers of Excellence for Young Children with Disabilities (MNCoE) innovation using Family Guided Routines Based Intervention (FGRBI) and were working on embedding goals into family routines. This practice aligns with the DEC's High Leverage Practice INS5, Practioners Embed Instruction Within and Across Routines, Activities, and Environments to Promote Engagement and Learning (DEC, 2014). As we worked through this book we found many similarities in practices including interest based learning and the use of routines for intervention. Some of the differences for our team were found in the coaching aspects for families. We found the structure of the coaching process with Rush and Sheldon easy to use and relatable for the families we were working with. This is important because literature sites ease of use as a barrier to the implementation of the coaching practice (Kemp & Turnbull, 2014; Salisbury, 2017).

        We broke down the book by digesting a few chapters each month and then coming together as a group to discuss and talk about what that would look like with our families. It was a time for reflection as a region of professionals also as a school district team. Our team continued with FGRBI practices and fidelity tools but began to dig deeper in Rush and Sheldon's (2011) framework after the regional study was concluded. We felt the coaching cycle, interaction practices and the benefits to building caregiver capacity and competence (High Leverage Practice, F6) (DEC,

2014), would lend itself to our work with FGRBI and chose to continue the book

study in a more in depth way as an individual team. We agreed to re-read the book

with intentionality and used monthly goal setting and action plans for ourselves to

incorporate one piece of a practice each month that we would establish for

ourselves as practioners and then come back to the group and share progress/data

and discuss the next chapter and goals.

My first goals were to use a joint plan to help establish a coaching routine

and focus the sessions, then take data on the types of questions I was using and

expand by one question type (I leaned heavily on awareness questions and started

by adding at least one analysis question each session). Before setting these starting

action goals, I wanted to implement all the exciting and beneficial aspects of

coaching but became overwhelmed. The team was experiencing this as a whole and

we decided to break it down and take it slow so that changes would become part of

our permanent practice which is a method backed by research (Kemp & Turnbull,

2014).

As we were beginning this process at the team level, FGRBI was shifting at

the state level and became Evidence-Based Quality Intervention Practices (EQIP) the

new MNCoE innovation. It is based on the work and research of Rush and Shelden

(2011), Julianne Woods (2004) and others who played a substantial part in the

creation of FGRBI. EQIP is described as, "is an approach to early intervention which

incorporates evidence-based practices to build family capacity using coaching

interaction practices and to embed intervention into daily routines in the child's

natural environment," by the Minnesota Centers of Excellence, 2021 as sited on their

website (EQIP tab, p.1). At this time we took a 2-day in person training with Rush

and Sheldon to dive deeper into coaching practices, characteristics and changing our

mindsets.

In addition to taking this training, because we were part of the FGRBI

innovation we were able to take the training modules for EQIP and dive deeper into

the practice of coaching with the help of our regional coach and instructor though

MNCoE. This allowed us to learn the practices, be coached by a top instructor and

get familiar with the fidelity tool, Fidelity in Practice-Early Intervention or FIP-IE. I

chose to take the 12-hour training to be able to administer the fidelity tool with our

team and coach one another to increase our competence in using the coaching

strategies.

Application in Practice

Fidelity is defined by Webster Dictionary as, the quality or state of being

faithful and/or accuracy in details. In this application that can be taken to mean, are

the practioners practices faithful to the characteristics and components to the

coaching framework and/or are they accurate in their practice. Fidelity is a widely

discussed topic in education right now and education research with good reason.

High quality implementation or fidelity in programs has been shown to improve

student outcomes in 213 studies as reviewed in a meta analysis by Durlak et al.,

2011.

The evidence-based practice that we are talking about is coaching with

primary caregivers (INS12) (DEC, 2014) and must be carried out with fidelity to

directly impact the success of the desired outcomes. Within EQIP the fidelity tool is

called, the FIP-IE, which stands for Fidelity In Practice-Early Intervention. It was

created using a multi-layered framework for evidence-based EI practices (Dunst,

2014). It contains 4 checklists that have been streamlined to cover all of the

important practices without overlapping. The checklists were created be used all

together and not individually. The checklists are; Coaching Practices, Natural

Learning Environment Practices, Resource-Based Intervention Practices and

Family-Centered: Relational Help-Giving Practices.

In our practice the FIP-IE is used between coaches and coachee's who are

both practitioners. We have 2 coaches who are trained in administering the FIP-IE

and 4 other team members who are coachee's. Our coaches also coach each other.

The tool serves as a way for practioners to examine their practice and master the

key characteristics of the evidence based early intervention practices within. We use

the tool in-person, video recorded or observed via tele-intervention depending on

the situation and family. We complete the coaching cycle monthly and complete a

full FIP-IE twice per year. If a coachee is working on a specific practice we will

observe to collect data if they choose and use the coordinating checklist for training

purposes but do not submit any data on an incomplete FIP-IE.

I was trained to use the FIP-IE in the fall of 2020 and my first recorded data

using the checklists was in October 2020. I scored an overall percentage of 68%

with using the practices as I had been doing for the previous year using a family

centered model but not specific coaching practices. During the school year of 2020

while digging deeper into EQIP and using peer coaching I was focused on increasing

my variety of questions and that work was reflected in my spring FIP-IE scores. My

overall spring score was 80% which is the minimum for fidelity. In the checklist of Coaching Practices under reflective questioning I went from 50% to 75%. There is still more room for improvement in this area and I will continue to strive towards fidelity in this specific practice.

Due to the peer coaching cycle and creating action plans based around my goals identified during the fall FIP-IE and subsequent coaching conversations, I created a question cheat sheet to help create consistency in my practice. I laid out several possible questions for each category (awareness, analysis, alternatives and action) to have near my computer screen during virtual visits (COVID restrictions on in-home intervention) to help practice and solidify the use of a wider variety of questions. Because prompting parent reflection for various purposes is a part of all the checklists in one form or another, increasing this practice alone helped to improve my scores from fall to spring (Minnesota Centers of Excellence for Young Children with Disabilities, 2021).

Effects of Coaching in My Practice

During the 2020/2021 school years while working on building my EQIP practices I tried to use the action plan I was working on that month with all my families, however in reality it did not always happen. Some barriers to its use were resistant families and short visits due to environmental circumstances. With that said, there was a family that consistently and enthusiastically participated in all aspects of EQIP, and I chose to use them as my model family to try each new practice out with first. We will call this family, the W.'s, mom is L. and the child is Z.

In reference to the barriers encountered on my first year using a coaching model, we have implemented some practices to help eliminate those barriers. We are now talking about the coaching service delivery model with families at intake and have created a program brochure that we are sharing with new and existing families. This will also help with visits cut short as we will be in the habit of the parts of a coaching visit and can condense easily to meet the family's needs. In addition, we are now using video recording for observation and feedback when skills or family priority situations happen when we aren't there to work through with families. For example, a child may not try to walk down the stairs during the visit and that is the goal, but it happens the next day, families can feel free to send the video and we can discuss at the next visit. Barriers to implementation in any program are common and need to be worked through with intentionality to achieve fidelity.

I worked with the W.'s for one year prior to implementing EQIP practices and one year while implementing. She was in a unique position to experience with our team, two models of family centered practice, one that leaned more heavily on parent guided but more medical model based to the family centered practices of coaching. Z.'s team consisted of an Early Childhood Special Education teacher (me), and an Occupational Therapist and he has a diagnosis of Down syndrome. He had various goals over the 2 years but one was often a functional play goal and a motor goal. The family is bilingual and very proud of their Ojibwa heritage.

I conducted an interview L. asking open ended questions surrounding her experience with early intervention, what the shift in delivery models was like for her family, and her impressions of coaching.

She shared that her experience with early intervention has been a positive one. "I love that I get to bounce my ideas off of you and A. We are helping Z. to work though his delays and I feel so empowered to boost him up. It's a big change from my last child (in intervention 8 years ago and no longer living with the family). I don't feel alone and the strategies I am learning are so great (L.W., personal communication, June 17, 2021)."

When we talked about the shift in delivery models L. shared that, "It wasn't a big crazy change or anything. I liked how you explained it to me and at first it was a little uncomfortable because I didn't think I had the answers. I would think, 'I'm just the mom, you know what to do'. I was always willing to do what you suggested and looked forward to the ideas but now you make me feel like I have ideas that will work too (L.W., personal communication, June 17, 2021)."

I asked her about her impression of coaching, and she shared that she hopes all families feel as in control of their child's development as she does now. "When we come up with ideas together and you ask me about what I have tried or what I want to try and then we do it together, it makes me feel like I am smart and my ideas matter. You showed me that I know how to follow his lead and find what he likes and then work on the skills that will help him using what he likes. It makes me feel good. There wasn't anything wrong with what we did last year at all, but this way makes me feel good (L.W., personal communication, June 17, 2021)." This sentiment

aligns with research done by Rodger & Ziviani (2013) about parental competence and confidence increasing with a coaching framework.

Knowing that coaching has improved this family's confidence is wonderful and worthy of the use of the practice, but competence is also important. I wanted to look at Z.'s goal attainment in the fall before the practices of EQIP were being used with regularity verses the spring. This is a slight challenge because at the time I didn't realize I would be using the data in this way. What I am sharing here is an impression of the data collected with the knowledge that when data was collected it was not set up to used this way.

In the 6 months leading up to the periodic review conducted in the fall, Z. met objectives one through three of 6 under goal one and one of four under goal two. In the spring Z. met objectives three through 6 under goal one and two through four of goal two. He met those goals in three months and three weeks. This suggests to me that embedding his goals in his daily routines using interests with L.'s increased involvement sped up the process of goal attainment.

Reflection

Learning about the EQIP program, coaching practices and characteristics to increase family confidence and competence and increase student outcomes, has been a journey. This has not been a situation where you take a three-hour professional development training and then do one or two pieces of it for a week or two. This has been a career shift, a mental change of how I, and our team provides services.

I believe this permanent shift has occurred for many reasons. First, there was adequate buy in on my part as to the benefits of using a coaching model. Reading the Coaching Handbook, by Rush & Sheldon (2011) helped to lay the groundwork and serve as in introduction. Seeing them in person and attending a lengthy and involved training was the next piece. They are enigmatic and watching them in action and then being able to practice those skills with them and others who are excited about the vision was very impactful. Next, when our school took the EQIP training models *over a period of time* and was able to work with a coach who modeled with us the coaching cycle, we were able to make the practices permanent. Lastly, by breaking down the learning and implementing small manageable changes each month and tracking the data associated with each action plan kept the learning moving along and inspired continued action within the practices.

My excitement for this model should not be construed to mean this was not challenging. It has been, especially as I have watched the team struggle and resist sometimes the new ways. Change can be hard. But watching families like the W.'s blossom and literally see their confidence grow from one visit to the next pushes me to do better. Some families are harder to use coaching practices with, but I am finding in my practice that is about MY approach with that family and not something with their make-up in general. Sharing at the front end about expectations and about the evidence-based practice itself has helped in this area and am now using conversation starters and a program brochure with each new family I work with.

Moving Forward

Knowing, based on research and application in the field, that the High Leverage, Evidenced Based Practices of 'family centered practices' and 'family capacity building practices', more specifically *coaching*, is not only possible but successful, I will continue to focus my energy on growth in this area (DEC, 2014). I will be utilizing peer coaching and observation of my practices to grow within the EQIP coaching framework (Rush, 2011). My goal is to be at 80% in each of the checklists on the FIP-IE by the end of the next year (80% is considered fidelity for this tool, as you will not meet each area at every single visit.).

Future research I will be looking for includes, studies using the fidelity tool the FIP-IE. I am interested in its relation to not only parent competency but also quantitative data about outcomes using the coaching framework against a control group who receives a family centered model that doesn't include a coaching component. I will also be looking for studies comparing the effectiveness and ease of use for different coaching frameworks within early intervention. Using a coaching framework with tele-intervention is also worthy of investigation. COVID-19 has spurred the use of alternate interaction platforms verses simply being in person and studies related to increased or decreased outcomes using this would be worth research.

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