

# Orientation to Coaching and Natural Learning Environment Practices



This process is designed to facilitate the orientation of new staff and contractors to the use of coaching and natural learning environment practices in early intervention (EI). This process can be used with any early intervention (EI) practitioner, including service providers and service coordinators, during regular staff supervision. Because professional development is typically more effective when provided across time, mentors and supervisors are encouraged to conduct this orientation process across at least four meetings within the first six months after hire. During these meetings, the mentor/supervisor and new practitioner can discuss the information below and the use of these practices during visits with families. Use the *Mentoring Activities & Notes* section to document the support provided to the new practitioner.

Visit the [VA Early Intervention Professional Development Center](#) for links to handouts, articles, videos, archived webinars, and other resources. The following pages are most relevant:

- [Coaching in Early Intervention](#)
- [Adult Learning & Early Intervention](#)
- [Implementing Supports and Services](#)

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## 1<sup>st</sup> Orientation Meeting

### BEFORE MEETING

New practitioner will:

Watch and prepare to discuss with mentor/supervisor:

- [Coaching Families](#) (Online Module, Texas Early Childhood Intervention)  
*To document completion of the module, document the time spent and date completed and keep the Coaching in Action checklists (one for Henley and one for Lennox) filled in during the Practice Activities section of the module.*

### DURING MEETING

New practitioner and mentor/supervisor will:

- Discuss evidence-based EI practices and how they are implemented during EI visits, including those observed in the *Coaching Families* module.
- Review the natural learning environment practices that underlie effective service delivery. These practices were covered in the initial EI certification modules (e.g., family-centered practices, routines-based intervention, natural learning opportunities, interest-based learning for the child and family).
- Review the [Division for Early Childhood \(DEC\) Performance Checklists](#) (ECTA Center) to help the practitioner identify natural learning environment practices when observing or conducting visits with families. Highlight the following performance checklists:
  - Natural Environment Learning Opportunities Checklist
  - Family Capacity-Building Practices Checklist
- Schedule the new practitioner to observe an EI visit with a master coach (or other practitioner who implements coaching and natural learning environment practices) using at least one of the DEC checklists.

Name of Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

DEC checklist that will be used: \_\_\_\_\_



[veipd.org/main/](http://veipd.org/main/)



# Orientation to Coaching and Natural Learning Environment Practices



## MENTORING ACTIVITIES

Date Completed	Activity	Notes/Summary

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Orientation Meeting

### BEFORE MEETING

New practitioner will read:

- [Evidence-based Definition of Coaching Practices](#) (Rush & Shelden, 2005)
- [Tips and Techniques for Effective Coaching Interactions](#) (Rush & Shelden, 2008)
- [Coaching Quick Reference Guide](#) (Rush & Shelden, 2008)

### DURING MEETING

New practitioner and mentor/supervisor will:

- Discuss impressions from observing the EI visit.
- Compare the observations of the visit with what was learned in the readings.  
*Use the Coaching Quick Reference Guide article to structure the discussion.*
- Review the *Coaching in Action Checklist* fidelity tool (which was used when completing the *Coaching Families* module) and complete it together during the meeting to reflect on how coaching was used during the observed service provider visit.
- Discuss how the family’s natural environment (i.e., location, activities, materials, interactions) was used to encourage the child’s development and support the caregiver’s learning during the visit. Note any suggestions for improvement.
- Reflect on how these observations compare with the new practitioner’s own style of interacting with children and families during visits.
- Schedule mentor/supervisor observation of an EI visit conducted by the new practitioner.

Date and Time of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

## MENTORING ACTIVITIES

Date Completed	Activity	Notes/Summary

# Orientation to Coaching and Natural Learning Environment Practices



## 3rd Orientation Meeting

### BEFORE MEETING

New practitioner will read and watch:

- [Promoting Responsive Parent/Caregiver-Child Interactions During Natural Learning Activities](#) (Davis, 2014)
- [Coaching in Action](#) (Video, run time 11:29)

### DURING MEETING

New practitioner and mentor/supervisor will:

- Discuss article and how parent-child interactions were supported during the video. Discuss the importance of supporting these interactions in natural environments using coaching practices.
- Discuss impressions from the observed visit.
- Compare the observations of the visit with what was learned in the readings.  
*Use the Coaching Quick Reference Guide article to structure the discussion.*
- Complete the *Coaching in Action Checklist* together during the meeting to reflect on how coaching was used during the observation.
- Discuss how the family's natural environment (i.e., location, activities, materials, interactions) was used to encourage the child's development and support the caregiver's learning during the visit. Note any suggestions for improvement.
- Develop a joint plan that focuses on at least one coaching practice the new practitioner plans to work on between this meeting and the next meeting.
- Schedule mentor/supervisor observation of another visit conducted by the new practitioner.  
Date and Time of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

### MENTORING ACTIVITIES

Date Completed	Activity	Notes/Summary

# Orientation to Coaching and Natural Learning Environment Practices



## 4th Orientation Meeting

### DURING MEETING

New practitioner and mentor/supervisor will:

- Begin by revisiting the joint plan from the last meeting, then discuss impressions from the observed visit.
- Complete the *Coaching in Action Checklist* together during the meeting to reflect on how coaching was used during the observed visit.
- Discuss how the family's natural environment (i.e., location, activities, materials, interactions) was used to encourage the child's development and support the caregiver's learning during the visit. Note any suggestions for improvement.
- Discuss how the *Coaching in Action Checklist* will be used to monitor the practitioner's ongoing coaching practices.
- Develop a joint plan to support the further development of the new practitioner's practices.
- Schedule additional meetings with the mentor/supervisor or observations as needed.

Date and Time of Meeting or Observation: \_\_\_\_\_

### MENTORING ACTIVITIES

Date Completed	Activity	Notes/Summary

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## Resource Urls

Virginia Early Intervention Professional Development Center  
[www.veipd.org/main/](http://www.veipd.org/main/)

### 1<sup>st</sup> ORIENTATION MEETING

#### **Coaching Families (online module)**

Texas Early Childhood Intervention

<https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/assistive-services-providers/early-childhood-intervention-eci-programs/eci-training-technical-assistance/coaching-families>

#### **Performance Checklists**

Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center and Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

<http://ectacenter.org/decrp/type-checklists.asp>

### 2<sup>ND</sup> ORIENTATION MEETING

**Evidence-based definition of coaching practices** (Rush & Shelden, 2005)

[http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/caseinpoint/caseinpoint\\_vol1\\_no6.pdf](http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/caseinpoint/caseinpoint_vol1_no6.pdf)

**Tips and Techniques for Effective Coaching Interactions** (Rush & Shelden, 2008)

[http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/briefcase/briefcase\\_vol1\\_no2.pdf](http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/briefcase/briefcase_vol1_no2.pdf)

**Coaching Quick Reference Guide** (Rush & Shelden, 2008)

[http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/briefcase/briefcase\\_vol1\\_no1.pdf](http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/briefcase/briefcase_vol1_no1.pdf)

### 3<sup>RD</sup> ORIENTATION MEETING

**Promoting Responsive Parent/Caregiver-Child Interactions During Natural Learning Activities**

(Davis, 2014)

[http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/caseinpoint/caseinpoint\\_6-1.pdf](http://fipp.org/static/media/uploads/caseinpoint/caseinpoint_6-1.pdf)

#### **Coaching in Action**

Video, run time 11:29

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziColpqqLlo&feature=youtu.be>