

Coaching Strategies

Early interventionists use a variety of general and specific coaching strategies in order to support caregiver-implemented intervention in families' everyday routines and activities.

General Coaching Strategies

- Conversation and Information Sharing
- Observation
- Joint Interaction

Specific Coaching Strategies

- Direct Teaching
- Demonstration with Narration
- Guided Practice with Feedback
- Caregiver Practice with Feedback
- Problem Solving
- Reflection

General Coaching Strategies

Conversation and Information Sharing

Caregiver and interventionist ask and respond to each other's questions. Topics may include early intervention issues, child development, service coordination, behavior management, updates on progress related to IFSP outcomes, family activities/routines, documentation, or child health since the last visit.

- *E.g., Caregiver and interventionist discuss the child's progress at childcare, what they did at their recent visit to grandpa's farm, new routines/interests, etc.*

Observation

Primary role of the caregiver is to work with the child; the role of the interventionist is to observe or gather data. Interventionist does not give specific feedback or suggestions. Interventionist is not a part of the activity though s/he may be in close proximity; s/he does not offer comments.

- *E.g., Interventionist observes mom and Sarah's hand washing routine and collects data on Sarah's behaviors and responses to mom's prompts.*

Joint Interaction

Interventionist and caregiver work as partners with the child practicing strategies to improve child outcomes. Interventionist does not offer any suggestions or explicit feedback to the caregiver.

- *E.g., Interventionist joins dad in taking turns pushing the child on a swing at the park. Feedback isn't provided because it isn't necessary or because it simply isn't offered.*

Specific Coaching Strategies

Direct Teaching

Interventionist shares information about specific intervention strategies or child development in order to increase caregiver knowledge and to learn how to use them and/or understand the value. Interventionist may teach verbally or with handouts, visuals, or with a video example.

- E.g., *“Tummy time helps to strengthen the muscles in the neck and upper back. When Aiden is on his tummy and lifts his head to play he is strengthening those important muscles for better head and neck control. He may initially resist tummy time because he doesn’t have good control and it is hard for him to lift his head, but he’ll get stronger with practice.”*

Demonstration with Narration

Interventionist takes the lead in demonstrating a strategy with the child or in some other way while the caregiver observes. Interventionist sets up the demonstration by telling the caregiver what she is going to do and narrating her actions in order to teach the caregiver how to use the strategy.

- E.g., *Interventionist uses hand-over-hand assistance to help Sy use a fork to pick up his food while describing the strategies she is using to support his hand movements as mom observes.*

Guided Practice with Feedback

Interventionist and caregiver work as partners with the child and exchange roles in practicing intervention strategies to improve child outcomes. Interventionist guides the interaction with specific suggestions about caregiver behavior within the context of a routine. Caregiver has a turn (or multiple turns) to practice using the strategy with the child as the interventionist makes suggestions during the interaction and offers feedback during/following the routine.

- E.g., *During snack the interventionist says “Let’s see what happens if you wait a little longer before offering Morgan more goldfish after she finishes these.” Morgan eats and looks at mom, and mom reaches out with another goldfish. Interventionist models the word ‘more’ and suggests that mom say ‘more’ before giving the goldfish. As mom practices with another goldfish the interventionist comments on mom’s use of the strategies, “When you waited just a few more seconds and modeled the word, she made eye contact with you and vocalized.”*

Caregiver Practice with Feedback

Caregiver leads the interaction with the child as the interventionist observes and supports the interaction by offering feedback specific to the caregiver’s behavior without interrupting the routine, or right after the sequence.

- E.g., *Mom is working on pausing to give Sadie time to take a turn while reading rather than asking “What’s this?” As mom and Sadie look at a book, the interventionist shares specific feedback, “Wow I heard her say doggie and bone... I think that extra time encourages her to comment! Sadie led the story instead of just responding to questions.”*

Problem Solving

Caregiver and interventionist consider and discuss strategies to improve routines/outcomes. Both parties contribute to come up with solutions to a challenge or to define when or how a strategy will be used.

- E.g., *Dad: “This ball is Connor’s new favorite toy but he only throws it at the wall- not to me.”
Interventionist: “Why do you think he likes throwing it at the wall?”
Dad: He might like the sound- or he might not have the coordination to throw it to me.
Interventionist: “He’s great at throwing his socks in the laundry basket.”
Dad: “If I hold the laundry basket he could throw the ball into the basket.”*

Reflection

Interventionist facilitates caregiver reflection on a routine, intervention or on the home visit.

- E.g., *“Kelly participated in getting herself dressed much more today as compared to last week. What do think is making a difference?”*