



LAUP’s Coaching Model is the cornerstone of its program. In theory, coaches work with preschool providers to increase the quality of their program and business practices. In 2012-2013, the LAUP Research and Evaluation Department conducted a qualitative study of what Program, Fiscal, and Quality Support Coaching looks like and how it is experienced by providers. The following are the evaluation’s main findings:

- Coaches used their specialized training to deliver customized support to preschool staff.
- Building and maintaining positive relationships was fundamental to all three types of coaching at LAUP.
- Recipients of Program, Fiscal, and Quality Support Coaching perceived establishing and following up on goals as highly collaborative.
- Providers used the tools provided by their coaches and considered them beneficial.
- Coaches in the field demonstrated fidelity to the LAUP Coaching Model despite some barriers.

Theories Underlying the LAUP Coaching Model

The LAUP Coaching Model follows a peer coaching approach, as is evident in the three underlying theories on which the model is built: Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005), Process Consultation (Schein, 1998), and Servant Leadership (Autry, 2001).

The LAUP Coaching Model		
<p>Appreciative Inquiry</p> <p>Increase what an organization does well rather than eliminate what it does badly.</p>	<p>Process Consultation</p> <p>Instead of giving people fish, teach them how to fish.</p>	<p>Servant Leadership</p> <p>Be authentic, be vulnerable, be accepting, be present, be useful.</p>

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an organizational development method which focuses on increasing what an organization does well, rather than on eliminating what it does badly. AI involves the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them.

Process Consultation (PC) is about building a helping relationship. PC does not bring standard answers or ‘canned solutions,’ but attempts to involve the client in deciding what will work best to move things forward. The ultimate goal of PC is to pass along skills so that clients are more able to continue on their own towards improvement. The saying, “instead of giving people fish, teach them how to fish,” fits this model well.

Servant Leadership (SL) is the idea that managing with respect, honesty and spirituality empowers employees to be the best they can be. SL recognizes that at the heart of every business the psychological, emotional and financial well-being of employees is dependent on leaders and on how well leaders create the circumstances and the environment in which they can do their jobs.

Autry (2001) identifies five ways to be a Servant Leader:

1. be authentic
2. be vulnerable
3. be accepting
4. be present
5. be useful

At the time of the study, LAUP defined three different coaching roles.

Every provider in LAUP was assigned three coaches: 1) a Program Support Coach, 2) a Fiscal Support Coach and 3) a Quality Support Coach. Although each type of coach served a different purpose, the ultimate goal of all three coaches was to help providers improve their preschool's quality.

Typical coaching activities differed based on the type of coaching offered.

Program Support

A typical Program Support Coaching session was 2 hours and 42 minutes, during which coaches spent the majority of their time observing the classroom, modeling for the classroom teacher, and engaging in a practice that coaches refer to as "walk-and-talk." This was an activity in which the teacher continued her normal work—interacting with and offering hands-on assistance to children, who were typically engaged in individual or group work/play -- while the coach followed the teacher, staying close enough to have a meaningful verbal exchange.

Fiscal Support

Whereas Program Support Coaches work with classroom teachers, Fiscal Support Coaches tend to work with different point persons (accountants, financial analysts, FCC owners, etc.), depending on the type of provider. Our shadows with two Fiscal Support Coaches showed that they typically visited with providers for one hour. While on site, they spent the bulk of their time outside of the classroom teaching, providing hands-on assistance, and debriefing with the providers on their caseload. Every Fiscal Support Coaching visit was different, based on the need of the provider.

Quality Support

Mathematica Policy Research (Winston et al., 2012) found that Quality Support Coaches typically visited with providers for 3 hours and 18 minutes. Visits consisted of three components: observations, discussions, and sit-down meetings, although how these components were used and combined varied by program.

Common Coaching Activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrative tasks• Debriefing• Goals - establishing/revisiting• Hands-on assistance• Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observing• Relationship building/maintenance• Teaching• Training• Walk-and-talk

Building and maintaining relationships was an essential aspect of coaching.

Program Support

All Program Support Coaches agreed that establishing rapport and a good and friendly relationship with providers led to trust, which they saw as necessary for providers in taking risks, trying new strategies, and implementing change in their program. Some coaches saw it as necessary, not only for the recipient of the coaching (provider) but for themselves, in terms of customizing their approach with each provider.

Fiscal Support

Fiscal Support Coaches found it was important to establish a relationship with providers in order to demystify misconceptions about their role as 'Big Brother' and to more accurately define their role as a helper.

Quality Support

Further, Winston et al. (2012) found that some Quality Support Coaches identified and worked towards goals in tandem with relationship building. In other words, some Quality Support Coaches started to work with providers on goals from the beginning of the relationship; in those cases, the coaches appeared to view the process of working toward goals as potentially strengthening the relationship. Quality Support Coaches stressed the importance of maintaining relationships as a means of improving classroom quality.

Coaching tools differed based on the type of coaching offered.

Program Support

Program Support Coaches offered books, articles, strategies, lists, manuals, personal experiences, and trainings to providers during their coaching sessions. Providers found these tools to be very useful and, when asked, described ways in which they utilized the tools in their classrooms.

Fiscal Support

The Fiscal Support Coaching toolbox was small but perceived as extremely beneficial by providers. Moreover, providers perceived the process of setting and working towards goals as highly cooperative even though, by design, Fiscal Support Coaching was to be a hybrid between Process Consultation and monitoring.

Quality Support

Quality Support Coaches used an array of coaching tools, mostly tangible as well as some intangible ones. Tangible tools included: articles, books, pictures, and videos. Intangible tools included: discussions, the coach's experience, and trips. Coaches selected which tools to use with providers using the following three criteria: 1) tools that must be used based on contractual agreements with the LAUP network (namely, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS)); 2) perceived need; and 3) providers' requests.

Coaching Tools		
Program Support	Fiscal Support	Quality Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books • Articles • Lists • Manuals • Personal experiences • Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget vs. actual tool • Encouragement • Funding calculator • Quarterly trainings • Spreadsheets (break-even analysis) • Websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles • Books • Cards • Checklists • Coach's experience • Discussions • Field trips (to other classrooms/providers) • Handouts • Manuals • Modeling • Pictures • Posters • Videos • Referrals to specialists • Trainings

Coaches' approaches to establishing goals with providers differed according to coaching type.

Program Support

In theory, Program Support Coaching was designed to be collaborative in the establishment of and work towards goals; coaches expressed reservations about their ability to enact this part of the model with fidelity. However, the providers they coached perceived the establishment of and work towards goals as highly collaborative—more so than the coaches themselves.

Fiscal Support

Similarly, providers receiving Fiscal Support Coaching perceived the establishment of and work towards goals as more collaborative than coaches did.

Quality Support

Winston et al. (2012) found that some Quality Support Coaches appeared to take a highly analytical approach

to working with providers on selecting and pursuing goals—eliciting and understanding the provider’s priorities and needs, defining longer-term formal goals to address them, breaking these goals into manageable steps, and working with the provider over the program year to make concrete, measurable progress on these steps and goals.

Examples of goals established between Quality Support Coaches and preschool providers during the 2011-12 program year (Winston et al., 2012) included:

- to provide high quality concept development
- the teachers will provide students [with] feedback that expands their learning and understanding
- to ask five open-ended questions during circle time every day
- to use the learning bridge to help children turn and talk and encourage communication

Despite facing barriers specific to their coaching role, coaches were observed maintaining fidelity to the theoretical underpinnings of the LAUP coaching model.

All coaches faced barriers in their work with providers. Barriers were slightly different for each type of coach. For Program and Quality Support Coaching, lack of child-free time appeared to be the biggest barrier to effective coaching. Barriers for Fiscal Support Coaching included cancellation of coaching visits (by providers) and providers not following through with goals. However, despite these barriers, we observed evidence of Process Consultation, Appreciative Inquiry, and Servant Leadership enacted in coaches’ work with providers (see Appendix for examples from the field).

References

- Autry, J. A. (2001). *The Servant Leader*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Cooperrider, D., & Whitney, D. (2005). *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Rush, D. D., & Shelden, M. (2011). *The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Schein, E. H. (1990). *Process Consultation Revisited: Building the Helping Relationship*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Winston, P., Atkins-Burnett, S., Akers, L., Xue, Y., Moiduddin, E., Smith, E., Aikens, N., Lyskawa, J., Mason, R., & Sparchman, S. (2012). *Quality Support Coaching in LAUP: Findings from the 2011-2012 Program Year*. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research.

Appendix

LAUP Coaching Model and Examples from the Field

In Theory	Program Support Coaching In Action
<p>Appreciative Inquiry Increase what an organization does well rather than eliminate what it does badly.</p>	<p>“Do you have any questions about CLASS? You guys already do a very good job with transitions and telling them ‘This is what we’re going to do.’”</p> <p>“You are already doing connections to the real world. What can you work more on?”</p> <p>“Let’s talk about what you are already doing to get us to how you can get up to 70 minutes.”</p>
<p>Process Consultation Instead of giving people fish, teach them how to fish.</p>	<p>“Logical relation is tricky. Pose a question a little differently. For example, when you shared a picture of a caterpillar, you said, ‘What does the caterpillar look like?’ You know that they know the caterpillar looks like a worm. What you could ask is, ‘How do you know?’ Ask them to explain their reasoning.”</p> <p>“And again, my role is to offer suggestions but it’s ultimately your goal.”</p> <p>“I was looking at your transitions and using them for learning opportunities. I noticed you just called names. Think of quick ways to do, for example, ‘If you’re wearing blue...’ So you use transitions for learning opportunities.”</p>
<p>Servant Leadership Be: vulnerable, accepting, present, and useful.</p>	<p>“How are you? Are you stressed?”</p> <p>“I may be wrong. I’ll go back and check and keep you posted.”</p> <p>“And if you need resources for any of the goals, I can look in our database for them. I’m going to bring examples of ideas for instructional opportunities during transitions for you.”</p>
In Theory	Fiscal Support Coaching In Action
<p>Hybrid (Between Process Consultation and monitoring)</p>	<p>“I’ll send you an activity log for today. We have one budget goal already open and I won’t open another budget goal for you. I’ll wait and see how that is going.”</p> <p>“So what are you going to do? Are you going to cut expenses?”</p> <p>“The rules are in our [LAUP] operating guidelines and we send a schedule to show how it works. It’s a little confusing but if you have your attendance data we can go over it together.”</p> <p>“The QuickBooks application. It says you have 21 days to register or it will kick you out but you have to be connected to the internet to register. You have Wi-Fi? You want me to register you?”</p>

For more information about this evaluation please contact researchmail@laup.net.