



# Using Primary Service Providers & Coaching in Early Intervention Programs

## Activity

Please read the following story and answer the questions. You are encouraged to take the blank handouts from the section "Implementing a Primary Service Provider/Coaching Model" and complete them individually or with your team. We have included a completed copy of these handouts as an example.

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## Rethinking Therapy

Asia was eager to meet Jackie and Lawrence and their son, Marcus, who had just turned 13 months old. Although Jackie and Lawrence were musicians who worked at night, Jackie had stayed up very late after work straightening the house in preparation for Asia's visit. Jackie's mom, Wanda, had stopped by for coffee and was also present when Asia arrived.

Upon her arrival, Asia noticed a pallet on the floor (activity setting) and Jackie preparing to go to the basement to do the laundry. Jackie and Wanda warmly greeted Asia, and Wanda indicated that she would slip out so Asia and Marcus could do their work without any distractions.

"I'll just be downstairs if you need me" Jackie called to Asia as she bounded down the stairs. "Have fun with your new teacher, Marcus! Mama will be back up in about an hour after you finish your exercises, then Gramma and Grandpa will come back, and we'll go to the store!"

Asia thought to herself, "Okay, what do I do now? Obviously, this family is used to something that I don't provide. Now, how am I going to handle this?" Although Jan had been identified as the primary coach from the early intervention program, it appeared that she had been using hands-on therapy in the family's home to remediate Marcus's identified needs. Jackie thought Jan's services were solely for Marcus, rather than a way to support the whole family in promoting Marcus's participation in life activities.

Asia took a deep breath as she focused on how she was going to engage Jackie in a conversation about considering a different approach. This approach would be based on Marcus's interests and assets to support Jackie's capacity to promote Marcus's involvement in activities that are important to the family.

At that moment, Jackie stuck her head around the corner, "Oh, Asia, I'm sorry. You must think I'm terribly rude. I'll stay with Marcus while you run out to your car to get your bolster, therapy ball, and toy bag. You're really going to have to match the great toys that Jan always brought. Can't say much for the therapy ball, but Marcus always loved playing with Jan's toys!"

"Jackie, can we talk for a few minutes while Marcus plays with some of his toys?" asked Asia. (initiation-identifying coaching opportunity)

"Sure," Jackie responded. "I have a few minutes before that load of laundry is dry."

"I need some time to get to know you and your family. Sounds like your mom and dad, Wanda and Cecil, are a big support for you.

Would you mind telling me more about your family and the types of activities you like to do?"

"Well," Jackie proceeded, "we like to go to church, (community context) and since we have a large extended family, we participate in a lot of different activities. My daughter leads the children's choir at church, (activity setting) and Marcus loves to be around the other children (child interest). He especially loves to play outside, and he loves music, too. Sometimes, we take him to work with us for a little while, and one of my sisters or brothers picks him up and takes him home. We also look forward to family gatherings for birthdays and holidays. (contexts for multiple activity settings) They always give Marcus an opportunity to play ball with his cousins. (activity setting, child interest) Oh, and Marcus loves my parents' dog. I can't keep him away from Fuzzy!"



*"You've given me a wealth of information," Asia said. "How has the therapy that Marcus has been receiving helped him be involved in the types of activities you have mentioned and enjoy the things he likes to do?" (Reflection-probing learner to reflect)*

<p><b>Purpose of coaching:</b> To support Marcus's participation and learning during family life activities</p> <p><b>Outcomes of coaching:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marcus's family will recognize and use everyday activities as learning opportunities.</li> <li>Marcus's family will use his interests to promote his participation during church activities.</li> </ol>		
<b>Key partners</b>	<b>Child and family interests</b>	<b>Activity settings</b>
<p>Marcus—child Jackie—mother Lawrence—father Wanda—grandmother Cecil—grandfather Fuzzy—dog Asia—early childhood special educator</p>	<p>Family—listening to music, going to church, participating in family activities</p> <p>Child—listening to music, dancing, playing with other children and grandparents' dog, being outside, playing ball</p>	<p>Children's choir practice at church</p> <p>Birthday parties</p> <p>Family gatherings</p> <p>Going to the store</p>

*"Well, therapy is separate from what we do as a family. It's what Jan did when she came. I guess you could say it's getting him to a point where he can learn to walk and not develop bad habits that would prevent him from moving more normally." (Reflection-sharing expectations)*

*"Do you feel like you have the supports and information you need to help Marcus participate right now?" Asia asked, (Reflection-probing learner about usefulness)*

*"The therapy is a support. He's made great progress in therapy, and we loved Jan. He can sit up now, and he couldn't until Jan came to work with him. Have you talked to her about everything he's accomplished? He needs you to stretch his legs by rolling him over the ball, even though he may not like it," Jackie quickly added.*

*Asia responded, "Have you thought about ways that you and other family members could encourage Marcus's learning and participation all the time based on the activities he likes to do and with the people that are most important to him, instead of doing things he doesn't like or he only did when Jan was here?" (Reflection-determining reception of new ideas)*

Jackie raised her eyebrows and looked away from Asia, "We may not have specific ideas about what to do, but we have wondered if we couldn't be doing something ourselves."

"Could you be more specific?" (Reflection-clarifying learner's expectations)

"Well, for instance, he loves to dance to music, (learning opportunity, child interest) so wouldn't that help his legs get stronger? He loves eating marshmallows. (learning opportunity, child interest) Wouldn't feeding himself marshmallows give him practice using his fingers to pick things up? He'd do just about anything to play with the dog. I'd sure like to figure out some way for Marcus to help take him for a walk." (activity setting, child interest) (Reflection-self-discovering ideas)

"These are some of the same thoughts and questions that came to my mind." Asia agreed.

"I'm really excited about your ideas. (Reflection-providing feedback, affirming ideas) Together, we can come up with some strategies for helping Marcus walk the dog."



## Rethinking therapy

- What type of approach was previously being used with Marcus and his family?
- How is the coaching approach different from the traditional approach?
- How did Asia begin to explore activity settings and learning opportunities with Jackie?
- What are Marcus's interests? What does he like to do? What interests Jackie and Lawrence?
- What are some of this family's activity settings?
- Within these activity settings, list Marcus's learning opportunities.
- Formulate three questions that you could use to stimulate Jackie's reflection regarding how Marcus can take Fuzzy for a walk.

Hanft, B. E., Rush, D. D., & Shelden, M. L. (2004). *Coaching families and colleagues in early childhood* (p. 106-109). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. Reprinted with permission.

# Coaching Worksheet: Rethinking Therapy

Learner: Jackie Coach: Asia Date: November 29

## INITIATION

<p><b>Coaching opportunity observed or presented</b> Asia's conversation with Jackie about providing services in the context of their daily activities</p>	
<p><b>The purpose of the coaching relationship is</b> To support Marcus's participation and learning in family identified activities</p>	
<p><b>Intended learner outcomes resulting from the coaching relationship</b> Marcus's family will recognize and use everyday activities as learning opportunities. Marcus's family will use his interests to promote his participation. Jackie, Wanda (grandmother) and Cecil (grandfather) will identify three strategies to assist Marcus in walking when they are outside. They will use his interest in walking the dog as a starting point for his participation.</p>	
<p><b>Barriers to the coaching process</b> Both parents work nights</p>	<p><b>Strategies to address barriers</b> Asia will call before visiting to ensure it is a good time. Some visits will be made with grandparents and aunt, who are also caregivers.</p>
<p><b>Ground rules</b> Visits will last about an hour. Asia will call before making a visit. Because Wanda and Cecil play an active role in Marcus's life, they are encouraged to participate in visits, and visits will occasionally be scheduled at times and locations so they may attend.</p>	

## OBSERVATION

	What/where	When
Coach observes learner's actions and interactions	Jackie tries her walking the dog strategy with Marcus in their backyard.	April 26 home visit
Learner observes coach model actions	Asia shows Jackie a strategy during snack time to get Marcus to use his hands more.	April 26 home visit
Learner observes self	Jackie will practice the new strategy.	During week between home visits
Coach/learner observe environment	Jackie will demonstrate at least 3 new strategies to Asia.	May 3 home visit

<b>ACTION</b>	What/where	When
Coach models for learner (coach present)	<b>Asia will show Jackie 2 strategies to support Marcus using his big muscles more in the pool (weather permitting).</b>	<b>May 3 home visit</b>
Learner practices an action (coach present/absent)	<b>Jackie shows Asia and practices without Asia.</b>	<b>By May 10 home visit</b>
Learner describes experience (coach absent)	<b>Jackie tells Asia how it went.</b>	<b>May 10 home visit</b>
Coach/learner observe environment	<b>Jackie and Asia will decide next steps.</b>	<b>May 10 home visit</b>

<b>REFLECTION</b>	Description
Learner reflects on action or observation	<b>Jackie reflects on how she, Wanda &amp; Cecil can support Marcus's learning and participation as part of family activities. Jackie has identified snack time and outside time as starting points.</b>
Coach gives feedback about observation or action following reflection	<b>Asia will give Jackie written feedback.</b>
Learner uses resources (e.g., print, video, peer)	<b>Jackie will have Wanda videotape her interactions with Marcus.</b>
Coach confirms learner's understanding and summarizes	<b>Asia affirms Jackie's ideas about learning opportunities and ways to support Marcus's involvement in the family.</b>
Coach/learner plan next steps	Who                  What                  When
Observations	
Practice	
Resources	<b>Jackie will continue to brainstorm more ideas to support Marcus in his family and provide him with opportunities to practice his skills May 17 - June 24.</b>

## EVALUATION

### Coach Self-Reflection

1. Is the learner accomplishing his or her goals?  
**Yes, Jackie has come up with three strategies to help Marcus practice walking when they are outside.**
2. What changes, if any, do I need to make in the coaching process?  
**Jackie wants Asia's feedback on how her strategies are working for Marcus.**
3. Should I continue as this learner's coach? (If not, who would be more effective?)  
**Yes**

### Coach Asks Learner

1. Shall we continue coaching or have your goals been accomplished (continuation)?  
**Yes, continue coaching.**

If continuing coaching:

- What changes need to be made in the coaching plan?  
**Jackie wants to identify additional strategies she can work on for Marcus to use his hands and fingers more.**
- What observations and/or actions should take place between coaching sessions?  
**Asia observes Jackie using strategies they have both discussed.**
- How will we communicate in between sessions?  
**Asia will call Jackie two times a week.**
- Do we have a plan for the next session?  
**Asia will also give Jackie some strategies and she will try at least one of those.**

2. If goals have been reached (resolution):

- Is the learner committed to and capable of self-assessment, self-correction, and self-generation?  
**Yes, Jackie is able to self-assess and self-correct, but wants more practice.**
- Has a plan for reinstating coaching been discussed?  
**N/A. Coaching is ongoing right now.**

Adapted from Hanft, B. E., Rush, D. D., & Shelden, M. L. (2004). *Coaching families and colleagues in early childhood* (p. 121-123). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. Reprinted with permission.