



Colorado Competencies for Early Childhood Coaches

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Originally developed in 2007, the [Colorado Competencies for Early Childhood Coaches](#) describe the skills and dispositions required for effective professional development coaching with early childhood educators seeking to provide high quality services to children and families. The [Colorado Coaching Credential](#) is a three level credential recognizing the development of these skills and dispositions.

Aligned to the competences, the Colorado Coaching Credential supports the initial preparation and ongoing professional development necessary for all early childhood coaches. This document is a framework of the individual competencies relevant for each level of the credential. However, this framework does not outline a precise progression of mastery for each competency. Not all of competencies specifically build on each other. By organizing the competencies by 3 levels, from those most relevant for new coaches to those most relevant for very experienced coaches, this framework provides a guide for application requirements for each credential level, to inform

individual coaching professional development plans and the development of ongoing professional development opportunities for coaches.

COMPETENCY DOMAIN: Setting the Foundation

Rationale: A code of ethics is one of the criteria that set professionals apart from other workers (Katz and Ward, 1991). Coaches may have to make difficult decisions that have moral and ethical implications during their work coaching early childhood providers. The importance of a code of ethics is to provide guidance when there are ethical problems in areas of “power and status, multiplicity of coachees; ambiguity of data base; role ambiguity” (Katz, 1978).

Categories	Level I	Level II	Level III
<i>Philosophy, Ethics & Codes of Conduct</i>	Has a working knowledge of and uses the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment, and the Supplement for Early Childhood Adult Educators to guide decision-making when one important value is in conflict with another.		
	Has a working knowledge of and uses the relevant ICF Standards of Ethical Conduct to guide professional conduct in coaching interactions		
<i>Establishing the Coaching Agreement</i>	Effectively explains the goals and parameters of the coaching initiative in which the coach and coachee are partnering. These may include time commitment, logistics, expected outcomes and measures of success, reporting requirements, resources available, confidentiality, roles of other parties, etc. (e.g. funders, project coordinators, evaluator.	If the coachee is participating in more than 1 coaching initiative, assists in coordinating coaching efforts.	Determines whether there is an effective match between his/her coaching methods/skills and the needs of the prospective coachee

Sets mutually defined goals and coaching agendas that align those of the coachee, the early childhood program in which the coachee works, the coaching initiative, and the coach.		
Reaches agreement about roles and responsibilities of the coach and the coachee, and expectations for coaching interactions (e.g. norms related to missed appointments, giving and receiving feedback, follow-through on tasks, etc.)		

COMPETENCY DOMAIN: Co-Creating the Relationship

Rationale: The ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust; to be present and in relationship with the coachee in the moment, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident.

Categories	Level I	Level II	Level III
<i>Establishing Trust with the Coachee</i>	Shows genuine concern for the coachee's welfare and future	Continuously demonstrates personal integrity, honesty and sincerity	Provides ongoing support for and champions new behaviors and actions, including those involving risk taking and fear of failure. Asks permission to coach coachee in sensitive, new areas
<i>Coaching Presence</i>	Recognizes coachee's individual strengths, learning style, goals, and cultural context	Demonstrates respect for and interest in the coachee's individual strengths, learning style, goals, and cultural context. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses language that is non-sexist, non-racist, non-technical, non-jargon • Uses teaching tools that match the coachee's learning style (e.g. 	Models openness to learning and taking risks

		metaphor, concrete examples, charts and other visuals, etc.)	
Establishes and maintains clear agreements	Demonstrates appreciation for the coachee's perspective, even when it is different from one's own.	Is fully attentive, shifting perspectives and coaching approaches as needed in the moment	
Maintains professionalism by being on time, organized, and prepared for each coaching session	Maintains professional boundaries	Remains focused on the coachee's needs when disagreements or conflicts surface	
Celebrates learner successes and capabilities for future growth	Recognizes the importance of coachee 'self-discovery'	Uses strategies effectively to create lightness and energy	
	Provides ongoing support for new behaviors and actions	Focuses on learning opportunities even when outcomes are disappointing	

COMPETENCY DOMAIN: Communicating Effectively

Rationale: The ability to focus completely on what the coachee is communicating to understand the coachee's intent in the context of their values and goals, and to support coachee self-expression; to ask questions that provide information and stimulate thinking in support of the coachee's learning and goals; to communicate effectively during coaching sessions, and to use language that has the greatest positive impact on the coachee.

Categories	Level I	Level II	Level III
<i>Active Listening</i>	Encourages, explores, and accepts without judgment the coachee's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs, suggestions, etc.	Summarizes, paraphrases, and restates to reflect back what the coachee has said for clarity and understanding	Distinguishes between the coachee's words, tone of voice, and body language to hear with the '3 rd ear' what is actually being said.
		Makes the coachee's communication the focal point of the interaction by integrating and building on their perspective.	

Powerful Questioning	Asks questions that elicit the coachee's perspective	Asks questions that create greater clarity	Asks questions that facilitate vision and create challenge
Direct Communication	Is clear, articulate, and direct in communicating coaching objectives, providing feedback, and making recommendations.	Develops communication pathways that specify how information will be share with administrators, teachers, families and funders	Uses re-framing to give the coachee another perspective on their wants or concerns

COMPETENCY DOMAIN: Facilitating Learning and Results

Rationale: The ability to integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of information and to make interpretations that help the coachee to gain awareness in support of their goals; to develop and maintain a strength-based, effective coaching plan with the coachee; to create with the coachee opportunities for ongoing learning and actions that will most effectively accomplish agreed-upon goals; to maintain focus on the coachee's stated priorities while recognizing the coachee's responsibility for action and progress.

Categories	Level I	Level II	Level III
<i>Creating Awareness</i>	Helps the coachee to evaluate alignment of values, goals, and actions	Helps the coachee to discover for themselves alternative view points and find new possibilities for action	Identifies the thinking behind the coachee's underlying concerns
	Assists the coachee to identify major strengths and major areas for learning and growth		Communicates insights and broader perspectives to help the coachee see different, interrelated factors that affect them and their program.
<i>Planning and Goal Setting</i>	Consolidates collected information to establish a coaching plan with the coachee that addresses concerns and major areas for learning and program improvement	Supports ongoing reflection with the coachee to determine progress on goals and whether adjustments to the plan are necessary.	
	Supports the coachee in prioritizing goals and actions and creates an implementation plan	Helps coachee identify and access different resources needed to achieve their goals	

	with goals that are attainable, measurable, specific and have target dates		
	Targets early successes that are important to the coachee		
<i>Designing Actions for Implementation</i>	Brainstorms and assists the coachee to define actions that will enable the coachee to demonstrate, practice, and deepen new learning.	Demonstrates and models processes and actions that can help the coachee achieve their goals	Promotes active experimentation and self-discovery, assisting the coachee to identify and act on opportunities that will enable them to demonstrate, practice and deepen new learning and practices
			Chooses coaching mode most appropriate for the specific objectives and learning needs of the coachee. IE, uses consulting, technical assistance, collaborating, or cognitive coaching methods depending on the coachee's level of information and skill in addressing a goal.
			Harmonizes seemingly conflicting perspectives to evolve creative solutions aligned with coachee's goals
	Engages the coachee to explore alternative ideas and solutions, to evaluate options, and to make related decisions	Helps the coachee to focus on and systematically explore specific concerns and opportunities that are central to agreed-upon coaching goals	Supports the coachee in acting strategically to take advantage of activities, partnerships, and/or environmental conditions that will contribute to achieving their goals
<i>Managing Progress and Accountability</i>	As needed, explores possible actions that will lead to agreed-upon goals	Supports the coachee in self-reflection on progress: what has been learned and/or accomplished since previous coaching session(s).	Encourage coachee self-development in making decisions, addressing key concerns, determining priorities, and in other competencies needed for continuous program improvement.
	Follows through on own commitments	When barriers to progress are identified, engages the coachee to explore alternative ideas and solutions, evaluate options, and make decisions	

	Checks in with the coachee to see how things are going (e.g. coaching plan and outcomes, agreed-upon course of action)	Continuously works to align the coachee's goals with current activities and direction	
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COMPETENCY DOMAIN: Assessing Success of the Coaching Partnership

Rationale: Success of the coaching partnership can be assessed on two levels: the best practices of the coach and the improved practices of the coachee. An effective coach engages in continual self-reflection on their professional practices and how their practices influence the coachee's performance and outcomes. Additionally, competent coaches foster a conversation that facilitates the coachee's determination of measurable criteria for success and the coachee's ability to clarify and determine gains in their thinking, skills, knowledge and practices. In the initial meetings, it is important to foster discussion about specific criteria for success of stated individual and programmatic goals and outcomes.

Categories	Level I	Level II	Level III
<i>Assessing Coach Practice</i>	Uses both self-reflection and feedback tools such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Coaching Competencies for Colorado Early Childhood Education: A Self-Evaluation Checklist 	Uses both self-reflection and feedback tools such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A method of getting feedback from coachee regarding the coachee's experience of and satisfaction with the coaching partnership 	

<i>Assessing Coachee Outcomes</i>		<p>Develops measureable criteria for success, in partnership with the coachee, in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of the coachee's ability to self-reflect • Increase in the coachee's skills and knowledge as demonstrated in their practice. 	<p>Develops measureable criteria for success, in partnership with the coachee, in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of the coachee's ability to self-analyze and self-modify • Shift in coachee's dispositions (beliefs, attitudes and/or thinking) in relation to their practices and/or program framework
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