

## Examples of Powerful Questions



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## What's the Difference? Reflective Supervision and Coaching in Early Childhood Programs

Reflective supervision and early childhood coaching are relationship-based approaches to supporting the early childhood workforce (NAEYC & NACCRRA, 2011). As relationship-based approaches they purposefully draw upon the power of effective workplace relationships to influence program quality and outcomes. They are guided by the seven principles of relationship-based practice:

**Collaboration:** Sharing information, power and control. Jointly developing and reviewing mission, goals, policies and practices.

**Open communication:** Encouragement for sharing ideas, suggestions, questions and concerns

**Understanding the impact of context:** The social, cultural, physical and emotional environment influences the individuals within it and affects their work performance and quality.

**Respect for individuals' perspective and contributions:** Diverse experiences, backgrounds and

professional roles contribute to a range of perspectives and approaches that enhance the quality of the work.

**Continuous growth and learning:** A commitment to continued deepening of expertise and staying current with research and practice enhances program quality.

**Reflective practice:** Opportunities to reflect and learn are integrated into organizational meetings, supervision, and professional development and program evaluation.

**High professional standards:** Leaders and staff members are encouraged to exhibit professionalism and hold themselves and one another to high professional and ethical standards.

(Bertacchi, 1996.)

Reflective supervisors and early childhood coaches share a core set of relationship-building competencies. Given these similarities, there are also distinct definitions, goals, purposes, roles, expected outcomes and durations for these supportive professional relationships. These are summarized in the following table.

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### References

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Early Childhood Coaching and Reflective Supervision		
	Reflective Supervision	Early Childhood Coaching
<b>Definition</b>	A collaborative, mutually trusting relationship for professional growth that improves quality and strengthens practice by building upon strengths and providing support for addressing vulnerabilities.	Adult learning strategy in which the coach promotes the learner's ability to reflect on an action as a means to determine its effectiveness, or practice and develop a plan for refinement and use of the action in immediate and future situations.
<b>Purpose</b>	Build capacity for high quality, effective, ethical, culturally responsive services to very young children and their families.	Recognize and strengthen existing knowledge and practices, develop new knowledge and skills, promote continuous self-assessment and learning, improve quality of services.
<b>Ultimate Goal</b>	Enhanced organizational capacity to use the principles of relationship-based practice to provide the highest quality services to young children and their families. Enhanced individual capacity to be self-aware, self-regulating and reflective in providing the highest quality services to very young children and their families.	Sustained performance; competence and competence to engage in self-reflection, self-correction and the generalization of new knowledge, skills and strategies to other situations as appropriate.
<b>Key Elements</b>	Reflection, collaboration, regularity	Joint planning, observation, action, reflection, feedback
<b>Provider Role/Contributions</b>	Supervisors' roles include administrative, clinical and reflective aspects. They are responsible for assuring the work gets done and that it is of high quality. The reflective aspect of their role involves a range of actions. As examples: Establish safety, routines, regularity. Be fully present and available. Enter the relationship in an open, nonjudgmental and collaborative way. Learn from the supervisee about their experiences and perspectives. Listen carefully and provide opportunities to recognize and reflect on feelings and strong reactions to the work. Recognize vulnerabilities as well as strength. Wonder with	Establish a supportive, encouraging environment that allows joint examination of and reflection on current practices, feedback on application of new skills and competencies, and problem solving. Helps participant identify achievable, measurable goals and action steps that will lead to goal attainment.

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[www.keystochangelifecoaching.com](http://www.keystochangelifecoaching.com)

Ph: 240-997-0288 Email [nlseibel@me.com](mailto:nlseibel@me.com)

Early Childhood Coaching and Reflective Supervision		
	Reflective Supervision	Early Childhood Coaching
	the supervisee to support mutual learning, accept “not knowing.”	
<b>Participant Role/Contributions</b>	Enter the relationship with an open mind, accept support, prepare for supervision with observations, questions, experiences, and concerns. Pay close attention to the experiences and feelings shared and what you learn from these as you discuss and reflect on them. Remain curious and accepting of “not knowing.”	Open to new information, skills and professional growth. Willing and motivated participant in the coaching relationship. Implements agreed-upon action steps.
<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	Increased capacity for reflection in, on and for action, increased self-awareness, increased work satisfaction and staff retention, improved child and family outcomes.	Attainment of participants’ identified goals. Life-long learning orientation. Application of new strategies, skills and competencies in working with young children and their families.
<b>Duration</b>	Continues for the duration of the supervisee’s tenure with the organization. While more experienced supervisee’s may need less administrative or clinical support from their supervisor, the reflective supervision supports supervisees’ growth, development and advancement throughout their tenure.	Ranges from one-time to a series of sessions. Concludes when goals have been attained.
	Sources: Scott Heller, S. & Gilkerson, L. (Eds). (2009). <i>A practical guide to reflective supervision</i> . Washington DC: ZERO TO THREE. Heffron, M.C. & Murch, T.(2010). <i>Reflective supervision and leadership in infant and early childhood programs</i> . Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE	Sources: Rush, D. D. & Sheldon, M.L. (2011). <i>The early childhood coaching handbook</i> . Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company. Chu, M.(2014). <i>Developing mentoring and coaching relationships in early care and education</i> . Boston MA: Pearson.

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