



EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System

1718 CLEVELAND AVENUE NORTHWEST
CANTON, OHIO 44703

ecresourcecenter.org

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Early Childhood Resource Center is to promote the healthy development of young children by strengthening families, improving the quality of early learning experiences, increasing school and community readiness, and informing public policy.

CENTER HOURS (NEW!)

Monday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Center is closed on weekends.

877.691.8521

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The Power of Coaching

The Early Childhood Resource Center teaches many different subjects to many different audiences. We teach the adults who have the deepest impacts on children's development and learning. Our teaching methods include modeling read-aloud techniques for parents, lecturing educators in a traditional classroom environment, and advising program directors on licensing rules and regulations.

Individual coaching is another way we help adults strengthen their interactions with the children in their lives. Coaching is "a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized... knowledge and skills."¹ The coaching process combines questioning, listening, observation, reflection, feedback, prompting, modeling, and practice" to achieve a performance-based outcome.¹ As a trust-based learning structure, coaching is dependent on the relationship for its effectiveness.

Coaching can seem pretty informal, but it's a powerful tool. Case in point: when doctors and nurses coached impoverished Jamaican mothers weekly on ways to increase stimulation and play with their babies and young children, the children had higher reading, math, and general knowledge scores, stayed in school longer, were less violent, and had better social skills,

even twenty-two years after the coaching took place. They even earned 25% more on average than a control group of peers whose mothers had not received coaching.²

As trust is built within the coaching relationship, engagement deepens outside the coaching relationship— between educators and children, between educators and parents, and between parents and children. And that deepened engagement amplifies the effect of the lessons learned.

At the outset, the coach typically helps the learner assess strengths and challenges, define desired outcomes, and set goals to achieve those outcomes. As the relationship progresses, the coach helps the learner take concrete steps to meet those goals. The result is seen every day in our communities, in all the young children who are receiving the developmentally appropriate adult guidance they need to succeed.

Early Childhood Resource Center staff members use a variety of coaching techniques to help adult learners achieve their goals. We discuss some of those techniques in this newsletter, in order to highlight some of the services we provide throughout our region. +

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The ECRC Board of Directors plays an important role in providing fiscal and legal oversight, making policy decisions, conducting strategic planning, and more. Chosen for their professional expertise and understanding of early childhood issues, each board member can serve a maximum of three three-year terms.

NOTES: ¹ Early Childhood Education Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies. Accessed at https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/glossarytraining_ta.pdf; ² A groundbreaking study offers undeniable proof that the fight against inequality starts with moms. Accessed at <https://qz.com/1207158/the-key-to-fighting-inequality-starts-with-moms-according-to-a-landmark-study>



EDUCATION IN ACTION

Teaching Adult Learners

All Early Childhood Resource Center professional development is designed to be consistent with the principles of adult learning.

Because adults bring experience and context with them into the classroom, they need to know why the material being taught is relevant and important. They also tend to be task-oriented, and they want concrete details. Clarifying the learning objectives and goals at the beginning helps set the stage. Relating the lesson to specific life situations—in the home or the classroom—helps to highlight the relevance of the lesson and maintain interest.

The three primary learning styles are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Everyone is able to learn through all three styles, but we usually learn best through one of the three.

Visual learners learn by seeing.

They often think in pictures. Visual aids are very helpful.

Auditory learners learn by hearing.

They're very active listeners, and they absorb more from speech than from text.

Kinesthetic learners learn by doing.

They need motion, exploration, and hands-on experience.

Incorporating all three methods into a class ensures the most effective lesson for the largest number of adult learners.

- VISUAL
 - Videos
 - Transparencies
 - Diagrams
- AUDITORY
 - Group Discussion
 - Brainstorming
 - Lectures
- KINESTHETIC
 - Hands-On Experiments
 - Simulations
 - Role Playing



Coaching for Educators: Hands-On Guidance

Tina Lemon and Sara Davis are two of 14 Early Childhood Specialists across our six-county region who are coaching child care programs on meeting Step Up to Quality requirements.

Regardless of whether a program is looking to enter the rating system, maintain a current rating, or increase the rating, the process can be complicated. So Tina and Sara offer guidance and resources during monthly coaching visits.

They first meet with the program director to assess needs, set goals, and set an implementation plan and timeline. The program director signs a memorandum of understanding, so that both parties are clear on roles and expectations.

Then Tina and Sara work with educators and care providers, suggesting alternate ways of doing things and helping to gather documentation the program will need for an application to the state. They teach them how to administer assessments that gauge a child's development and how to address developmental needs in lessons. They also model developmentally appropriate interactions with children so that educators and care providers can emulate them.

Tina and Sara often encounter concerns common to many programs. For instance, a lack of sufficient detail in lesson planning can lead to a lack of needed structure in lessons. When they see that many programs need guidance on a common issue, they make sure the Early Childhood Resource Center schedules classes on the subject and they encourage program directors to send staff members for training.

Right now, Sara is coaching 25 programs and Tina is coaching 35. While every program is unique, many require around six months' worth of coaching in order to meet their goal.

HELP US BUILD A STRONGER COMMUNITY

We're so pleased to be able to serve so many families and educators, but we'd love to serve even more. And that's where you come in. We encourage you to stand with us as we equip parents to cultivate a long-term love of learning in their children, strengthen family bonds, and help teachers become more effective.

Because we are a nonprofit organization, most of our support comes from foundations, businesses, community organizations, and individuals. We encourage you to consider—or continue—making a contribution.

Your generosity today will have a direct impact on children and families in our community for generations. Rarely does an investment leave a legacy that significant. You can give securely online at ecresourcecenter.org.

Visit ecresourcecenter.org to learn more about our programs, services, and volunteer opportunities, and to donate.



Paint nights were created as an opportunity for parents and children to connect in the classroom setting.

Child Care Programs: Cultivating Relationships with Families

When parents are engaged with what's going on at their child care program, it enhances the child's learning and development and strengthens family bonds. What's more, it makes the child care program an integral part of the family's community of support. Parent engagement is so crucial that the state of Ohio requires each publicly funded program to devise and implement a parent engagement plan in order to earn and maintain a Step Up To Quality rating.

Because many programs have never devised such a plan, they're in need of guidance. Thanks to funding from the Ohio Children's Trust Fund, Early Childhood Resource Center staff members are working with 60 programs in nine counties. Each program has designated one staff member as a parent liaison. That parent liaison receives family engagement coaching.

Brittany Kinstler, who works out of our Akron office, is coaching parent liaisons at 17 Summit County programs. Many parents weren't initially so eager to engage, so Brittany helped the programs start small, by conducting engagement activities during pick-up and drop-off times. One program set up a *Parent's Pride* bulletin board and encouraged parents to add a sticky note to the board with details on something about their child that makes them proud.

Families have gradually warmed up. The programs have been inviting parents into the classroom to conduct read-aloud sessions and hosting holiday events like cookie decorating sessions and Valentine's Day dances. At one program, a family arranged to have the program hold a birthday celebration for their child, but then had no gas that day to attend. Program staff members saved the day by transporting the child to and from the party.

Stacey Kelly, who is based in our Canton office, is coaching parent liaisons at eight Stark County programs. She helped parent liaisons plan and publicize paint nights as an opportunity for parents and children to create colorful keepsakes. The parents helped the children tape up blank canvases to create relief designs, and then the kids went wild with the paint. Even the infants became miniature artists. Once the paint dried, the tape was removed and families were left with bright, colorful artwork to take home. Around 135 Stark County families participated. Feedback was enthusiastic, to say the least. The families loved paint night, and many have asked for it to become a regularly scheduled event.

DRAWING FAMILIES IN AND MEETING BASIC NEEDS



Preschool Teacher Kaitlain Jones is the designated parent liaison at All Around Children in Canton. Stacey has been coaching her for several months. So far, Kaitlain's program has hosted classroom parties, holiday parties, paint night, and Parent Café sessions. In addition to her training on how to be an effective parent liaison, Kaitlain has had training on how to facilitate Parent Café sessions and First Five Years parenting classes.

Stacey walks Kaitlin through best practices in cultivating parent engagement, teaches her the most effective ways to reach out to parents, and informs her about community resources such as food banks and churches that provide assistance. She taught Kaitlain how to use the 211 hotline's online chat feature, which helped Kaitlain obtain winter clothing and maternity clothes for families in need.

Kaitlain has seen a significant increase in parent engagement since she started working with Stacey. The parents now seem more open. They're initiating many more conversations with the teachers, they're eager to attend family events, and they're seeing the child care program as a partner and a resource.

While the coaching relationship is slated to continue for many months, Kaitlain feels Stacey is positioning her and the program for success in independently cultivating parent engagement. After all, she's more informed now, she has the tools and training she needs, and engagement is now consistently made a priority. ♦



SPARK: Parent Engagement Through Home Visiting

The parent is the primary audience for all SPARK activities, because the program's primary goal is cultivating parent engagement.

The parent's engagement in the child's learning processes is the mechanism that truly sets the child up for long-term success.

That's why, even though SPARK works with families only while their children are three and four years old, participating in SPARK yields tangible benefits at least through the fifth grade.

The SPARK parent partner acts as a parent engagement coach from the moment she enters the family home for the monthly visit. She models read-aloud techniques that the parent can emulate between SPARK visits, she prompts the parent to involve the child in the SPARK lesson, and she coaches the parent who is the child's most consistent and influential teacher.



REACHING OUT

And if a SPARK family is experiencing life challenges that may prevent parent engagement, the parent partner acts as a sounding board and advisor, connecting the parent with community resources that can help.

For instance, Canton Parent Partner Emily Baughman worked with a grandmother who adopted two young boys after their mom died. The SPARK child was autistic. His behavior challenges left his grandmother unsure whether kindergarten would be the right next step. Together, Emily, the grandmother, and the local school decided to keep the child in preschool for another year and then reassess the situation. When Emily began with the family, the child was nonverbal and rarely still. He now speaks and stays still when his grandmother reads to him. With therapy and help from the Department of Developmental Disabilities, the family is working to plan the appropriate educational path. ♦



Coaching Parents as They Make Changes

Thanks to a grant from the Ohio Children's Trust Fund, Parent Engagement Coordinator Raymont Johnson is helping southeast Canton parents strengthen their parenting skills. He's also helping some very motivated parents make big life changes.

Parent Café participants who express an interest in continuing to learn will enroll in parenting education classes. A highly engaged subgroup of those participants will then receive individual coaching to help them meet life goals. Over the course of a year, Johnson will serve 120 parents in Café sessions, 84 in parenting education classes, and 48 in coaching.

The coaching will help participants work toward goals related to education, career, finances, specific parenting issues, or other life concerns.

Coach and client typically meet monthly, though the timeline depends on the client's goals. For instance, if a client wants to begin taking college classes next semester, Raymont may wait to schedule the next session until closer to the beginning of the semester.

He helps clients assess their personality type and define their needs, strengthen decision making skills, set goals and break them down into manageable steps, and connect with the community resources that can make the plan a reality.

Afterward, Raymont continues following up to stay in touch, gauge progress, and make sure clients have access to the resources they'll need to achieve their goals. ♦

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

