BLUEPRINT

This manual is organized for use in either of two ways:

- as a front-to-back guide for administrators who are setting up or improving Early Childhood Coaching Initiatives; or
- as a piece-by-piece reference for administrators who need ideas only for a specific component of a coaching initiative.

There are seven sections to the manual:

1. Introduction
2. Blueprint (you are here)
3. Key Principles of Effective Coaching
4. Foundations
5. Building Blocks
6. Samples
7. Bibliography

Section 3 outlines the key principles that form the fundamental practical structure of a coaching initiative across a variety of coaching topics and domains.

Section 4 provides guidance in setting the foundation of your coaching initiative using the principles described in Section 3. This section includes the essential components that must be in place before you offer services to any program.

These are the components in Section 4:

- A. Quality Outcomes, Target Population, and Assessment Tools
- B. Budget
- C. Policies and Procedures
- D. Effective Coaches and Administrators
- E. Coaching Initiative Evaluation
Section 5 offers concrete guidance on each of the building blocks needed for implementing your coaching initiative with each ECE program. While we feel that each of these building blocks is necessary regardless of coaching domain, the manner in which they are implemented will likely vary across coaching initiatives. For example, a six-week literacy coaching initiative may have a relatively short needs assessment, change implementation, and client evaluation process. A 10-month general quality coaching initiative, on the other hand, would spend more time and go into more depth on each building block.

These are the topics in section 5:

A. Outreach to and Screening of ECE Programs
B. Entry Process—ECE Program Orientation
C. ECE Program Assessment
D. Action Plan Development
E. Supporting Implementation of the Action Plan
F. Conclusion of Coaching Services—ECE Program Evaluation and Transition from Coaching

Each component in Section 4 and Section 5 is organized with the following elements:

- A Scenario to give a real-life perspective on the topic
- A Purpose Statement to provide an overall perspective on how this component contributes to the overall effectiveness of coaching
- Key Points that outline the main ideas make up this component
- A Rationale that explains why these elements are important
- Steps that illustrate how to implement the component being discussed
DEFINITIONS

This manual focuses on professional coaching within ECE programs. Multiple terms are applied to the process of one professional supporting another to learn new information, reflect on current practices, and intentionally engage in new practices. There is currently no widely accepted standard definition for any of these terms; while some in the business and social service fields assign distinct meanings to each term, others use these terms interchangeably.¹

For the purposes of this manual, we are using the following definitions:

- **Coaching**—relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills, who often serves in a different professional role than the recipient(s). Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors, and is focused on goal-setting and achievement for an individual or group.

- **Coaching Initiative**—the combination of services that an organization provides to a variety of ECE programs.

- **ECE Professional Development**—a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing professional experiences to enhance this work. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early education professionals.

- **Early Childhood Education Program** (ECE site)—any group care facility that is responsible for the care and education of children from birth through age 5.

- **Principle**—a fundamental tenet necessary for effective coaching.

- **Approach**—the method used or steps taken in your coaching work.

- **Client**—the ECE program that is receiving services.

- **Participants**—the individuals who are receiving coaching services within an ECE program.

- **Strengths-Based**—the strengths-based approach operates on the assumption that people have strengths and resources necessary for their own empowerment.

- **Cultural Humility**—the active engagement with, and respectful ongoing effort to learn about, all clients, colleagues, and communities with diverse, multidimensional identities and backgrounds.

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¹ Tabitha Isner, Kathryn Tout, Martha Zaslow, Meg Soli, Katie Quinn, Laura Rothenberg, and Mary Burkhauser, Coaching in Early Care and Education Programs and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS): Identifying Promising Features (Washington, D.C., 2011).
