

Practice-Based Coaching: A Guide to Goal Setting

In practice-based coaching, goal setting is a reflective process. Goal setting refers to a process in which a teacher and coach select a teaching practice(s) and identify which aspect of the practice(s) will be the focus for coaching. Starting with a clearly stated goal can help teachers and coaches understand the specific behaviors to focus on and guide the coaching process. These goals are specific, observable, and achievable. Time frames are included in the Action Plan.

Different Types of Goals Based on Teachers’ Knowledge and Skill with Teaching Practice(s)

Learn more and try it out	Do it more often	Do it better	Do it differently
You want to learn more about the practice or different ways to use the practice and then try using it in the classroom.	You use this practice sometimes but would like to do more within or across classroom activities	You know about this practice but you think you could do it better or use it more efficiently	You use this practice but want to try out a different way of using it

Let’s look at a few example goals for the teaching practice about visual schedules:

Teacher(s) provides a visual schedule and use it to help children understand what is currently happening in class and what will happen throughout the day.

Example Goals:

<i>I will identify two sources and read about how to make a visual schedule for specific classroom activities and routines and will help children use these schedules to complete center activities and tasks.</i>	<i>Learn more and try it out</i>
<i>I will use the visual schedule to remind children of daily activities during morning circle, before centers, after lunch, and before we go outside.</i>	<i>Do it more often</i>
<i>I will go over the daily schedule at the beginning of the day and briefly review the schedule to show the children what we are about to do and what we will do next so children will know what to expect.</i>	<i>Do it better</i>
<i>My visual schedule has pictures and words but it is fixed. I will make a visual schedule that can be changed as needed so that activities can be removed or turned over when they are finished.</i>	<i>Do it differently</i>

Let's look at a few example goals for the teaching practice about scaffolding:

Teacher(s) varies the level of support children receive during classroom activities and tasks based on their individual abilities (i.e., scaffolds learning):

Example Goals:

<i>I will identify and read three sources to learn about strategies for individualizing instruction and support for children during whole class activities and try out these strategies during storybook reading.</i>	<i>Learn more and try it out</i>
<i>I will use post-it note reminders to vary the types of questions I ask when we are reading a storybook as a class.</i>	<i>Do it more often</i>
<i>I will plan activities and prepare materials so that children have tasks that they can complete with less adult physical assistance during small group activities.</i>	<i>Do it better</i>
<i>I will try to use more natural supports and peer supports to help children participate in activities instead of scheduling adult support during more difficult activities.</i>	<i>Do it differently</i>

Let's look at a few example goals for the teaching practice about children's active engagement:

Teacher(s) structures activities so that children are actively engaged, ensuring that children always have something productive to do (e.g., providing an alternative activity for children who complete a task early).

Example Goals:

<i>I will identify three sources and read about ways to keep children engaged throughout the day and try four strategies during small group time and circle time.</i>	<i>Learn more and try it out</i>
<i>I will plan extension activities for small group time so that children are engaged for the entire time for each day for two weeks.</i>	<i>Do it more often</i>
<i>I will plan and implement choice time activities so that there are multiple choices that meet children's interests and ability levels every day for two weeks.</i>	<i>Do it better</i>
<i>I will divide the group into two small groups for story time and have both adults in the classroom lead a group using my lesson plan that includes questions and ideas for engagement.</i>	<i>Do it differently</i>

Let's look at a few example goals for the teaching practice about interacting with children in play and learning activities:
 Teacher(s) uses zoning practices or moves around the classroom to interact and engage with children in play and learning activities, including daily routines to support active engagement of all children in activities.

Example Goals:

I will read about zoning practices and try them out during choice time and transitions.	<i>Learn more and try it out</i>
I will monitor to make sure that all adults are engaging with the children for each activity by checking at 15-minute intervals.	<i>Do it more often</i>
I will use a planning board to make sure all adults are assigned to an area of the classroom during choice time and transitions and we will discuss ways to engage children during those times.	<i>Do it better</i>
I will discuss with Nathan's aide how she can extend her activities beyond support for Nathan to engage other children.	<i>Do it differently</i>

Let's look at a few example goals for the teaching practice about planning activities:
 Teacher(s) plans activities where children can predict (e.g., what will happen next), observe (e.g., compare similarities and differences), and experiment (e.g., try out different ideas).

Example Goals:

I will identify and read three sources that tell me about activities that help children predict, observe, and experiment and I will plan and implement one activity for each process.	<i>Learn more and try it out</i>
For a two-week period, I will plan and implement small group activities in which children predict, observe, or experiment – two of each type of activity.	<i>Do it more often</i>
I will plan and implement five science and/or construction activities that allow children to experiment.	<i>Do it better</i>
During story time, I will select appropriate books that lend themselves to the processes of predicting, observing, and experimenting and then ask children questions that invite them to predict or observe using details from the story every day for two weeks.	<i>Do it differently</i>

Let's look at a few example goals for the teacher practice about peer interactions:

Teacher(s) uses strategies that promote peer interactions.

Example Goals:

I will identify and read three sources to learn about activities to promote peer interactions and I will plan and implement two strategies in the classroom.	<i>Learn more and try it out</i>
I will make sure that my classroom contains at least 7 social toys or activities for use during choice time.	<i>Do it more often</i>
I will create 8 buddy bins that each contain a social play activity and will divide the children into small groups of two or three to play with the bins for 15 minutes twice a week.	<i>Do it better</i>
I will use a buddy system in which children are paired with a partner for the first 15 minutes of choice time for a week.	<i>Do it differently</i>