

The Coach's Role

You will inspire, motivate, listen, guide, and model in your role as a coach who supports teachers as they implement *The Creative Curriculum*. If your position is like that of most coaches in preschool settings, your job description is complex. Perhaps you work primarily with individual teachers but also with small groups from time to time. Your responsibilities may include working with the administrator (e.g., to order materials, make schedules, and plan and conduct professional development sessions) and being an organizer and facilitator (e.g., of workshops, learning teams, and study groups). Three aspects of the coach's role are examined in this chapter:

- coaching responsibilities
- practices of effective coaches
- coaching relationships

Coaching Responsibilities

Your job description as a coach is complex. In the course of a day or week, *The Creative Curriculum* coach is likely to function in many different capacities:

Relationship builder—First and foremost, coaches must build positive relationships with teachers, administrators, children, and families. Your ability to build trusting relationships with teachers is vital to the success of professional development efforts. Just as meaningful friendships take time to develop and require an open mind, positive professional relationships require some effort as well. Unlike friendships that are often mutual from the start, coaching relationships may require extra effort on the coach's part to build connections and find ways to make the partnership work. Just as good teachers make the effort to know all of their children well, effective coaches make the effort to know the teachers with whom they are working.

It is easier to offer suggestions and feedback when relationships are positive. Before you leap into making recommendations, watch, listen, and learn from and about the teachers you will be coaching. Converse with them to build connections and form positive relationships. Talk with teachers to learn about their educational beliefs and values, what they feel most proud of, their strengths, and their individual professional goals. Informal conversations give you insights about teachers' interests, families, and what they do outside of school.