

The Coaching Process

If you are new to coaching, you may be thinking, “I now understand all the issues I have to think about, but what does a coach actually *do*?” If you are an experienced coach, you may have a protocol that has worked well for you. The process of coaching varies from program to program depending on the number of teachers each coach supports, the time available for coaching, and whether or not the coach also has an administrative or supervisory role in the program. The essential elements of the coaching process include preparation, observation, feedback, and planning next steps.

To assist you in thinking about the coaching process, this chapter explores

- elements of the coaching process
- scheduling
- coaching tasks at the beginning of the year

Elements of the Coaching Process

Preparation

There are many questions to consider as you prepare to coach. Is the school year just beginning? Are you just starting to work with the teacher or have you already established a relationship? Is the teacher new to teaching or to *The Creative Curriculum*? Preparation depends upon your circumstances, but it includes at least these four actions:

Think about your relationship with each teacher.

- At the beginning of the year, get to know each teacher. Help in the classroom, observe informally, and interact with children. A new teacher may want assistance immediately. When you are working with a teacher you already know, you may be able to establish goals for the year after one or two visits. When a teacher is somewhat resistant to change, making several open-ended visits before trying to establish goals may help to build a more trusting relationship.
- Have preliminary conversations about how coaching relationships work and invite the teacher to talk about the type of support he or she would find beneficial.
- Discuss how you will communicate with each other (e.g., in person, by phone, or by e-mail) before you observe a classroom. Throughout the *Guide*, messages are included that can inspire teachers to think about particular aspects of curriculum implementation.
- As the year progresses, reflect on how your relationships with teachers are developing.