



# Early Math Coaching Stances

Coachees come to coaching conversations with a variety of questions or concerns, comfort levels with math, and teaching experiences. Coaches use different roles, or coaching stances, to provide effective support during coaching conversations. The four coaching stances are based on work by Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman, Co-Directors, MiraVia, LLC. This document was adapted with permission from the AIMS Center for Math and Science Education.

| Coaching Stance     | Description                                                                                                                            |
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| <b>Coach</b>        | Provides mental and emotional resources to best meet the coachee's needs                                                               |
| <b>Calibrator</b>   | Matches the coachee's strengths and opportunities for growth with their professional learning goals, plans, and content                |
| <b>Consultant</b>   | Identifies information, ideas, and technical resources that are most useful to the coachee                                             |
| <b>Collaborator</b> | Works with the coachee to create math learning experiences for children by using both the coach's and the coachee's areas of expertise |

Let's explore some examples of each coaching stance in an early math coaching conversation. As you review each example, consider the following questions:

- How does the stance support the coachee?
- How might you respond in a similar situation?



| Coaching Stance                                                                                              | Example                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| <p><b>Coach</b></p>         | <p>During a coaching session, a kindergarten educator shares that they would like to try counting collections with their students for the first time. So, they would like help planning and implementing the activity.</p> <p>As a <b>coach</b>, you might start by acknowledging how the educator feels (for example, they might express nervousness or anxiety). Use the coaching cycle to address the educator's needs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the educator's goals and the support they are hoping for. Collaborate with the educator to plan a classroom visit.</li> <li>2. Model a counting collections activity while the educator observes.</li> <li>3. Debrief the lesson with the educator. Focus the conversation on co-creating realistic goals for using counting collections with their students.</li> <li>4. Identify any additional resources the educator might need to apply their learning in future counting collections activities.</li> </ol> |
| <p><b>Calibrator</b></p>  | <p>A coach is working with a first-grade team. During a group coaching session, they discovered that children need support with classifying and sorting three-dimensional shapes. Some classes are experiencing great success, and others are struggling. The educators wonder if the differences relate to how they introduced three-dimensional shapes to the children.</p> <p>As a <b>calibrator</b>, you might start with a coaching conversation to understand how educators introduced three-dimensional shapes to children and learn about educators' observations. As a team, identify the types of data you might collect from educators or children to better understand their needs. Then, you might observe each class and collect data. Review the data with educators and discuss the next steps.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                |



| Coaching Stance                                                                                               | Example                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <p><b>Consultant</b></p>     | <p>A preschool educator is unsure how to introduce the concept of “combining sets” (or counting groups of objects) to the children they work with. The educator is wondering if the concept is appropriate for four-year-olds.</p> <p>As a <b>consultant</b>, you might meet with the educator and share a variety of activities and resources on how to introduce combining sets to preschool-aged children. Next, you might initiate a coaching cycle. For example, you might plan to model or observe a lesson. Then, you might debrief with the educator and work together to identify the next steps for the educator to apply new skills.</p>                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Collaborator</b></p>  | <p>A family child care provider recently attended a webinar on children’s development and learning of geometry. The provider is excited to try out some activities from the webinar, such as inviting children to build complex shapes using other shapes. The provider brings the activity handouts to the coaching meeting.</p> <p>As a <b>collaborator</b>, you might start the coaching conversation by learning about the provider’s webinar experience. You might ask them to share what they liked about the activities and how they might use them with children. Together, create a plan for using one or more of the activities. If the provider wants extra support, offer to co-facilitate a learning experience for children.</p> |



Now try it yourself. Review the following examples. Identify the coaching stance you would use to support the educator.

**A veteran kindergarten educator is excited about what they learned at a professional learning session on young children’s understanding of measurement and data. This topic is new for them. The educator is unsure which activities to use first.**

What coaching stance would you use to support this educator? Why?

**An educator notices that the children they work with can easily count small collections. However, they struggle with larger collections. The educator asks you how to support the children.**

What coaching stance would you use to support this educator? Why?

