

Support for ECS Head Start Participants

Episcopal Children's Services (ECS) has a long history of partnership with the Lastinger Center for Learning and has a strong group of early learning coaches who initially completed the coaching certification in 2013-14. The newest iteration of this partnership offers those veteran coaches an opportunity to deepen and fine tune their coaching practice through targeted online professional development around identifying a focus for coaching, as well as expanding the scope of their work to include Advanced Communities of Practice Facilitator training, which will build their capacity and allow them to impact more early learning professionals through the design and facilitation of group experiences.

The inclusion of Head Start coaches, managers, and home visitors in this partnership will strengthen the alignment of coaching supports that ECS is able to provide for all the programs in their extensive 11-county network. The availability of the full coaching certification program via online modules will ensure that participants will be able to enjoy a rigorous, job-embedded experience that is accessible during the currently-shifting pandemic landscape. Those Head Start professionals will also be able to experience the foundational Community of Practice Facilitator Institute.

The Flamingo Early Learning Coaching Certification Program has been a crucial continuous quality improvement strategy across the programs that ECS serves via Coach JAX and School Readiness. ECS is now ready to offer this powerful professional development opportunity to 50 Head Start professionals across the roles of coach, manager, and home visitor. The coaching certification program is available completely online, with a series of ten modules that are competency-based, job-embedded, and flexibly accessible to participants.

Additionally, ECS would like to offer the three-day Community of Practice facilitator institute to three cohorts of individuals across multiple roles. The most pressing educational issues of the day are socially and structurally complex, difficult to define and almost always require systemic responses. Successfully addressing and managing complex challenges depends on a group's capacity to inspire and mobilize individuals to work in ways that enable them to grow and apply their individual assets to maximize collective impact. Understanding the importance of collaboration, reflective dialogue, and authentic engagement to results-driven action in early childhood education, this institute provides a professional development experience focused on the facilitation of explicit tools specifically designed to help groups work better together.