

Early Learning Mentor Coach Study (ELMC), 2011 – 2013

Project Overview

The Early Learning Mentor Coach Study (ELMC) was a descriptive study of professional development grants awarded competitively to Head Start programs. The Head Start Early Learning Mentor and Coach grants were funded in September of 2010 to 131 grantees in 43 states, each with a project period of 17 months. According to the grant announcement the ELMC funds were to pay mentor coaches to provide on-the-job guidance, technical assistance and training to classroom teaching staff, home visitors and family child care providers who work in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The overall goal of the coaches was to improve staff qualifications and training; assist grantees to promote positive, sustained outcomes for children; and promote career development in Head Start grantees. The model of mentor coaching was not prescribed, and grantees proposed approaches to fit their particular circumstances.

This Mentor Coach Study described the implementation of the Head Start coaching initiative and identified variations in approaches. Research questions included:

1. How are grantees implementing the mentor coach initiative?
2. What are grantee administrators, coaches and staff perceptions of coaching?
3. What are implementation challenges and perceived areas of satisfaction?

The project team also developed a conceptual model to support program decision-making when establishing or refining a coaching model.

The contract was awarded to American Institutes for Research (AIR) in June of 2011. MEF Associates was subcontracted on the contract.

The point of contact is Wendy DeCoursey.