

# On the Uptake

## childhood disability LINK



## COACHING in Childhood Disability

### Authors:

Tatiana Ogourtsova, OT, PhD

Annette Majnemer, OT, PhD, FCAHS

School of Physical and Occupational Therapy, McGill University



### What is COACHING?

A coaching intervention is a structured program that is aimed at providing education and guidance to individuals.

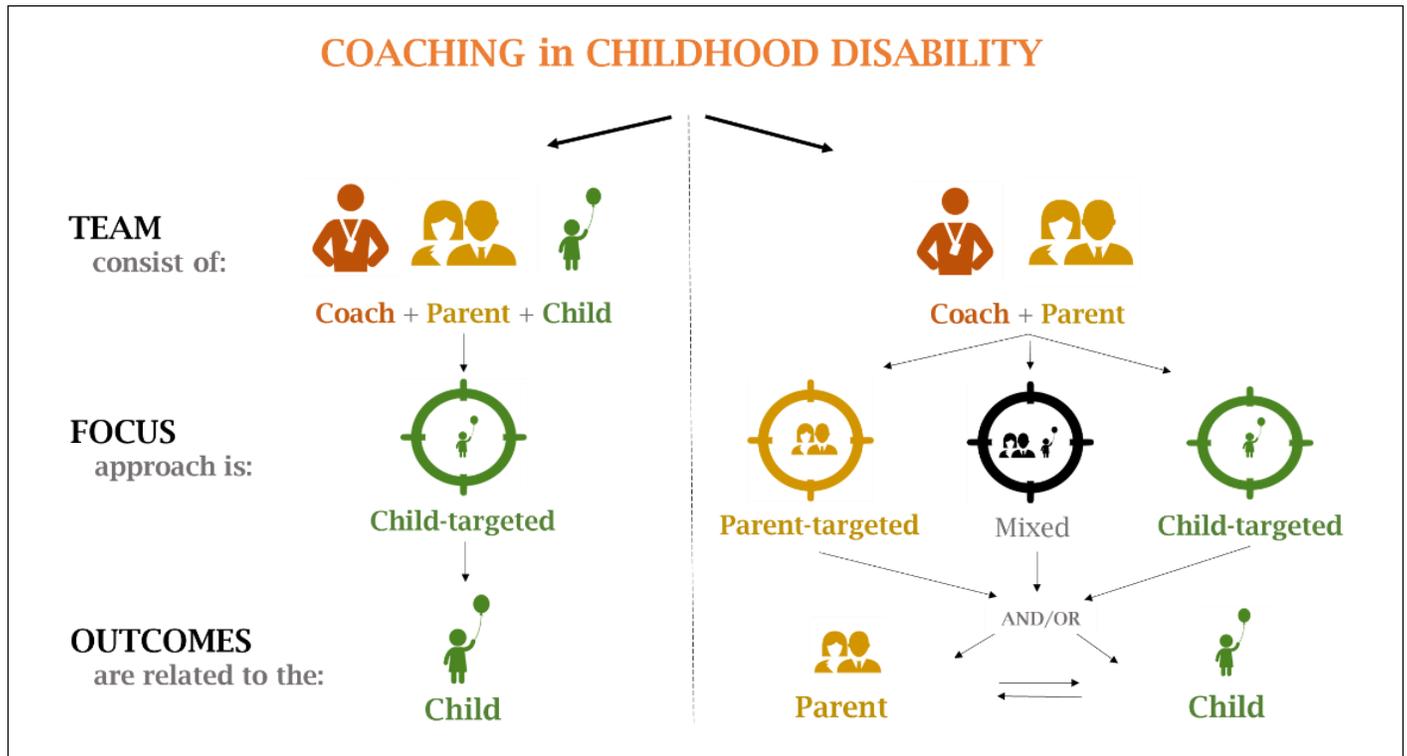
Coaching can be delivered using different means. For example, it can be performed face-to-face and/or online (e.g., by telephone or using an online platform such as zoom). It can

be delivered in an individual and/or in a group format.

What is particular to coaching is that the coach uses targeted methods that elicit reflection and solutions-finding. Also, the coach guides the participant by setting meaningful and realistic goals. In other words, the coach does not provide direct

solutions, but rather supports the participant to problem-solve challenges that they encounter in areas that are of most importance to them. In this way, coaching contributes to the process of self-enlightenment and empowerment and is a client-centered approach.

## COACHING in CHILDHOOD DISABILITY



### What are the different types of COACHING?

As an intervention for children with various developmental challenges and their families, coaching is increasingly being researched.

Using a robust literature review method (systematic review), a group of researchers [1] proposed that there are different types of coaching. The type of coaching can depend on the following three elements: the TEAM, the FOCUS, and the OUTCOMES.

As shown in the figure above, coaching can be described in terms of the TEAM, the FOCUS, and the OUTCOMES.

1) The **TEAM** refers to all the people involved in the coaching. The TEAM can consist of a **coach + parent +**

**child** or of a **coach + parent** (without the child present).

2) The **FOCUS** of the intervention can also vary to include a **child-targeted** vs. **parent-targeted** vs. a **mixed** approach.

a. A **child-targeted** coaching program supports families in learning and applying strategies linked directly to the child and his/her development (e.g., adapted pencil grasp strategies and equipment that can enhance a child's functioning).

b. A **parent-targeted** coaching program guides parents and caregivers in improving parental outcomes more directly (e.g., examples of parental

outcomes - stress, resilience, sense of empowerment, awareness & knowledge, self-efficacy).

c. A **mixed** approach is one that combines both child- and parent-targeted models. For example, interventions that aim to improve the child's development and parental well-being.

3) The **OUTCOMES** can be related to the child (e.g., developmental milestones, performance in daily activities, behavior) or the parent (e.g., parent's mental health, physical health, resilience ability and skills).



Childhood disability LINK is a bilingual website linking Information and New Knowledge on childhood disability to service providers and families. The website also focuses on enhancing the awareness and understanding of research on a variety of issues in childhood disability.

Please visit us at:  
[www.childhooddisability.ca](http://www.childhooddisability.ca)

#### Reference:

[1] Ogourtsova, T., O'Donnell, M., De Souza Silva, W., & Majnemer, A. (2019). Health coaching for parents of children with developmental disabilities: a systematic review. *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology*, 61(11), 1259-1265  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/dmcn.14206>

## Who can benefit from COACHING?

A robust literature review method (systematic review) [1] found that parents and their children with the following conditions could benefit from coaching:

- Autism spectrum disorder
- Cerebral palsy
- Other developmental disabilities (e.g., language delay, sensory processing disorder, genetic disorder)
- Intellectual disabilities

## What COACHING approach is most commonly used?

A robust literature review method (systematic review) [1] found that mostly, the **child-targeted** coaching approach is applied (i.e., coaching aimed at improving the child's development), followed by the **parent-targeted** and **mixed** approaches.

## What is the level of evidence for COACHING?

The quality of studies is used to determine the level of evidence. In other words, the higher is the research quality, the higher level of evidence it provides.

Our systematic review [1] found that:

- 63% of studies provide *insufficient to limited* evidence. In other words, those studies have important methodological limitations, so it is difficult to draw strong conclusions from these studies.
- 29% of studies provide *moderate* evidence by using moderate quality research methods.
- Only 4% of studies provide *strong* evidence by using high quality research methods.

Overall, more high-quality research is recommended in the field of coaching.