

Coaching That Sticks

What To Say When Teachers Resist Feedback

Presented by
Jaime Rechkemmer

AUGUST 27, 2026







PRESENTER INTRODUCTION

Jaime Rechkemmer

Jaime has spent her career helping early childhood leaders have the conversations that make people — and programs — better. She's a Gallup-Certified Strengths Coach who believes feedback should help teachers see what's possible, not just what's wrong.

Through her work with the University of Chicago's Center for the Economics of Human Development, she's also exploring how technology, evidence, and classroom data can help leaders coach from what is actually happening instead of making assumptions. For Jaime, technology should always be used to support teachers, never to sunnail them.

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LET'S START WITH THE TRUTH

"Coaching isn't difficult because leaders don't care. It's difficult because they care deeply."

Coaching feels emotionally exhausting because it must honor many priorities at once. Avoiding coaching usually does not protect the teacher. It protects our discomfort – while children continue experiencing whatever isn't working.

Children

Teachers

Families

Licensing

Ratio

Budgets

Poll

Which part of coaching is hardest for you right now?

A. Starting the conversation
B. Knowing what to say
C. Handling defensiveness or resistance
D. Following up consistently

COACHING THAT STICKS

03

ONE BIG IDEA

Four coaching lenses. Held at the same time.

01

The Director's Experience

Your discipline, your care, your authority, and your responsibility all shape how coaching looks.

02

The Teacher's Experience

Feedback rarely lands the way it's intended without understanding. We have first.

03

The Children's Experience

This lens keeps coaching grounded in its ultimate purpose.

04

The Coaching Decision

This lens keeps coaching grounded in its ultimate purpose.

Which lens do you naturally prioritize? Which do you tend to miss?

03

COACHING THAT STICKS

DIRECTOR TENSION #1

"I don't want to hurt their feelings."

Most directors delay coaching because they care.

COMPASSION + ACCOUNTABILITY

"I believe you're capable of even more."

What conversation have you delayed because you were trying not to hurt someone's feelings?

TRY THIS

Immediately Applicable Strategy

Instead of beginning with correction... begin with belief.

Instead of:

"You need to..."

SHIFT FROM CORRECTION -- BELIEF

Try:

"I'd like to share an observation because I believe you're capable of even more."

Small difference. Huge impact.

COACHING THAT STICKS

04

2

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Resistance is information.

Be curious before being corrective.

**Behavior is visible.
Motivation is invisible.**

When a teacher resists feedback, what is your first instinct?

Poll

- A. Explain my point more clearly
- B. Ask questions to understand what may be behind the response
- C. Give the teacher time and revisit it later
- D. Restate the expectation more directly



COACHING THAT STICKS 08

WHY DO TEACHERS RESIST FEEDBACK?

Same behavior. Different reasons.

CAN'T

A skill, strategy, or resource is gone

DON'T KNOW YET

Start here. Gather evidence.

WON'T

Understands, can do it, and chooses not to.

Don't decide "won't" too early.

FEAR

"I'm going to lose my job."

IDENTITY

"I'm a bad teacher."

BURNOUT

"I have nothing left."

LOW CONFIDENCE

"I don't know how."

CONFUSION

"I didn't know that mattered."

CHOICE

"I understand. I'm choosing differently."

Each reason requires a different coaching response.

COACHING THAT STICKS 09

... A teacher says "Fine. Whatever you want." What could be simmering underneath that response? Why?

A ROADMAP – NOT MORE PAPERWORK

The IMPACT Coaching Framework

FROM OBSERVATION TO ACTION

A simple, practical roadmap to guide powerful coaching conversations that build trust, open reflection, and drive successful improvement for children.

I	M	P	A	C	T
IDENTIFY	MAP	PROMOTE SELF-DISCOVERY	ASSESS	EVALUATE ACCOUNTABILITY	TAILORED SUPPORT
Understand what is actually happening and what may be driving it.	Choose the most meaningful area for improvement rather than trying to fix everything at once.	Use questions, reflection, and observation to help teachers develop their thinking.	Look for progress, celebrate what is working, and adjust support when needed.	Create clarity, consistency, and follow-through.	Recognize that teachers may be heading in the same direction but need different levels of support.

COACH WITH INTENT. LEAD WITH IMPACT.

After we move through IMPACT, we help teachers plan, strengthen our teams, and create better experiences for children.

Better Coaching. Stronger Teachers. Brighter Futures.

- Build trust
- Create clarity
- Support growth
- Drive accountability
- Improve outcomes



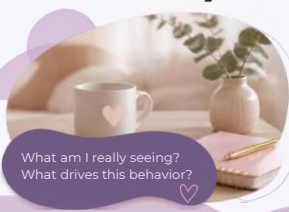
Get the IMPACT Framework.

Slow down before reacting.

COACHING THAT STICKS 09

IMPACT / STEPS 01-02

See clearly. Choose deliberately.



What am I really seeing?
What drives this behavior?

IDENTIFY
Focus on what sits behind the behavior: fear, skill, burnout or choice.

MAP
Choose one meaningful improvement to focus on.

OBSERVE
Pay attention to what you see and hear. Don't assume. Observe carefully.

CHECK THE STORY
Identify the problem. The story is often wrong. Listen carefully.

CHOOSE ONE TARGET
When using a strategy, start with a small, specific target.

Specify a measurable growth goal.

COACHING THAT'S TICKS 08

IMPACT / STEPS 03-06

Four moves. One aim: growth

P PROMOTE SELF DISCOVERY
Questions, not lectures, invite teacher thinking.

A ASSESS
Celebrate progress. Adjust plans. Growth isn't linear.

C CULTIVATE ACCOUNTABILITY
Clarity, consistency and follow-through—not punishment.

T TAILOR SUPPORT
Same goals. Different routes for each teacher.

Think of one teacher you have coached recently. Which step did you skip? Name them and claim them, so you can coach them differently.

COACHING THAT'S TICKS 09

DIRECTOR TENSION #2

"They're trying really hard."

18 MINUTES

The teacher worked non-stop. The children still waited for lunch.

Celebrate effort. Coach impact.

Which statement is more coach-like: A) you need to manage transitions better, or B) Children waited for 18 minutes with no activity for lunch.

TRY THIS!

Immediately Applicable Strategy
Remember, there is a teacher's perception and your observed reality in play.

Reflection Question
"What do you think the children experienced during that transition?"

Feedback Reframe
When giving feedback, describe what you saw the children experience. Avoid overstating what the adult did wrong.

Small difference. Huge impact.

COACHING THAT'S TICKS 10

DIRECTOR TENSION #3

"We're already short staffed."

Not coaching one person is coaching everyone else.

INCREASE SUPPORT — WITHOUT LOWERING STANDARDS

Check out this article: Your Best Teacher Might Be Making Your Worst Teacher Look Good




DIRECTOR TENSION #4

How long do I keep coaching?

IMMEDIATE

- Safety • Supervision
- Respect • Licensing • Professional Conduct • Confidentiality

DEVELOPMENTAL

- Language • Instruction
- Relationships • Organization • Questioning • Interactions

TRY THIS

Before choosing a coaching strategy, decide whether the situation is immediate or developmental. If it affects safety, supervision, licensing, conduct, or confidentiality, treat it as immediate. If not, coach developmentally.

Are these examples immediate or developmental coaching scenarios?



DIRECTOR TENSION #5

What if coaching doesn't work?

Coaching succeeds when it produces safety, stronger teaching, or honesty — not just retention.

TEARS

Pause. Stay kind. Stay clear. Don't rescue.

DISAGREEMENT

Listen. Restate the standard. "You don't have to agree with me today, but you do need to understand the expectation."

"I'M DOING MY BEST"

Honor effort. Name impact. "I believe you. Let's talk about what the children need."

NO CHANGE

Support should continue. Employment may not. Those are different decisions.

Poll Which coaching tension feels most familiar in your program?

A. "I don't want to hurt their feelings."
 B. "They're trying really hard."
 C. "We're already short staffed."
 D. "How long do I keep coaching?"



BEFORE EVERY COACHING CONVERSATION

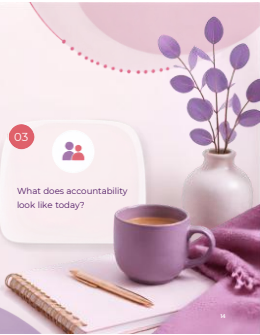
Three questions.

01 
What do the children need right now?

02 
What does this teacher need to successfully provide it?

03 
What does accountability look like today?

Not someday. Today.



KEEP THE MOMENTUM

Three ways to keep learning in motion

Choose a next step that fits your team, your practice, and your pace.


The IMPACT Framework
A practical coaching roadmap for seeing clearly, choosing deliberately, and creating change that sticks.

[EXPLORE THE FRAMEWORK](#)


Newsletter article
"Your Best Teacher Might Be Making Your Worst Teacher Look Good": A short read on the hidden patterns that shape how support is received.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)


Follow-up coursework
Keep building your coaching practice with flexible learning at ignitelearninglab.com. Look for a special offer coming soon.

[VISIT IGNITELEARNINGLAB.COM](https://ignitelearninglab.com)

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