

The Coaching vs. Correcting Script

Maintaining Standards While Building People

The Foundation: Relationship is Your Coaching Currency

Coaching is no different than our work with children or parents: **You cannot influence someone you haven't connected with.** If the relationship is new, a "fix" feels like a "fail."

"If you fix it for them, you own the result. If you coach them through it, they own the excellence."

Build your balance through:

- **Time:** Be present when things are going well, not just when there is a critique.
- **Support:** Step in to help with a mess or a transition before you "polish" the decor.
- **Role Modeling:** Never ask for a standard you aren't willing to demonstrate yourself.

The Three Things That Change Everything

Before you address a staff member's work, run it through this filter:

1. **Ask vs. Adjust:** Am I about to fix this in silence, or am I going to invite them into a conversation?
2. **Standard vs. Style:** Is this a center "Brand Standard" (Safety, Licensing, Professionalism) or just my personal "Style" (Aesthetic preference)?
3. **Relational Currency:** Do I have enough "credit" in our relational bank account for this person to hear this as help rather than a grade?

The 24-Hour Rule

If you see an aesthetic or non-emergency issue that bothers you: **Do not fix it immediately.** Wait 24 hours. Use that time to regulate your own response and schedule a "Walk-and-Talk" to turn the moment into a coaching lesson.

Scenarios & Script

Scenario A: The Brand Standard (Aesthetic/Professional Alignment)

- **The Issue:** A bulletin board is cluttered and the borders are crooked, violating the center's "Clean & Professional" brand image.
- **The Strategy:** Use the "Ask vs. Adjust" rule.
- **The Script:** "I love the theme you've started here. I have just a couple suggestions that will give it a bit more 'pop.' ...Let's tweak that together so you can see the trick I use to keep it level."

Scenario B: The Personal Style (Theme/Color Choice)

- **The Issue:** The teacher chose a "Neon Jungle" theme. It's not your favorite—you prefer "Neutral Boho"—but it is clean, safe, and professional.
- **The Strategy:** Use the "Standard vs. Style" filter.
- **The Action:** Do nothing.
- **The Internal Script:** "This isn't my personal style, but the teacher is proud of it, and it meets our quality standards. I will leave it alone to protect her ownership and creative voice in this space."

Scenario C: The Safety/Functional Standard (Classroom Flow)

- **The Issue:** A cubby is placed in a way that creates a "blind spot" where a teacher cannot see all children, which is a safety/licensing risk.
- **The Strategy:** Use "Relational Currency" to problem-solve.
- **The Script:** "You've worked so hard on this layout. However, I noticed that from the changing table, this cubby creates a blind spot in the block area. Since active supervision is our #1 safety standard, how can we shift this together to make sure you have a clear line of sight at all times?"

Step 3: The 3-Step "Connection Before Correction" Formula

1. **The Affirmation:** "I can see how much heart you put into..."
2. **The Inquiry:** "What was your thought process/goal behind..."
3. **The Alignment:** "How can we align that goal with our center's Brand Standard of..."