



Pediatric and Family Coaching Competency Framework

Released 2026





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Acknowledgment of Subject Matter Expert Contributors

The Academy for Behavior Change gratefully acknowledges the subject matter experts who contributed their time, expertise, and professional perspective to the development of this specialization competency framework in pediatrics and family coaching.

Their contributions helped inform the competencies, applied practice expectations, and field relevance of this framework. The Academy recognizes the value of their insight in supporting a competency guide that reflects current practice, evidence-informed standards, and the needs of coaches working within this specialization area.

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Acknowledgment as a subject matter expert contributor reflects participation in the development or review process and does not imply individual endorsement of every provision, interpretation, or future application of this guide. Final responsibility for the content, interpretation, publication, and ongoing maintenance of this specialization competency guide rests with the Academy for Behavior Change.



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Introduction to the Pediatric and Family Coaching Competency Framework

The Pediatric and Family Coaching Competency Framework defines the advanced knowledge, skills, and applied abilities expected of health and well-being coaches practicing within the context of pediatrics. Developed by the Academy for Behavior Change in collaboration with highly qualified subject matter experts, this framework establishes a shared set of standards for specialized coaching practice in Pediatric and Family Coaching.

This framework is intended to support the development of specialization education and training that extends beyond foundational health and well-being coaching preparation. The competencies reflect the unique considerations, practice demands, interdisciplinary dynamics, ethical responsibilities, and client needs associated with coaching in Pediatric and Family Coaching.

The Pediatric and Family Coaching Competency Framework functions as an advanced overlay to foundational coaching competencies, including those established through the Institute for Behavior Change Clinical Health & Well-Being Coach (CHWC) credential. Specialization competencies are not intended to replace foundational coaching competencies, ethical standards, or core coaching skills; rather, they identify the additional competencies required for effective, safe, and contextually appropriate practice within Pediatric and Family Coaching.

Within this framework, specialized coaching competence is understood as the integration of:

- Core coaching processes and communication skills
- Ethical and professional practice
- Behavior change principles and evidence-informed approaches
- Client-centered and culturally responsive care
- Scope of practice awareness and appropriate referral
- Contextual knowledge specific to Pediatric and Family Coaching
- Interdisciplinary collaboration and professional judgment

The framework is intended to guide:

- Curriculum and specialization program development
- Learner assessment and demonstration of competence
- Faculty preparation and instructional design
- Professional development planning
- Credentialing and quality assurance
- Consistency across specialization training programs

While this competency framework defines what coaches should be able to know and do, curriculum represents the structured learning pathway through which those competencies are developed. Programs using this framework should clearly describe how foundational coaching competencies are ensured and how specialization-specific competencies are taught, practiced, and assessed, as outlined in the specialization handbook.

The competencies should be interpreted holistically rather than as isolated tasks or checklists. Effective practice in Pediatric and Family Coaching requires the integrated application of coaching skill, ethical practice, professional judgment, contextual awareness, interdisciplinary collaboration, and responsiveness to the unique needs of the individuals, populations, and settings served.

As the evidence base, practice landscape, and needs of the field continue to evolve, the Academy for Behavior Change will periodically review and update this competency framework to reflect advances in coaching practice, emerging evidence, evolving standards, and developments within Pediatric and Family Coaching. Through this ongoing stewardship, the Academy serves as a convener for specialization competency development, creating a structured pathway through which subject matter experts define the advanced standards needed to support safe, effective, and field-aligned specialized coaching practice.

How to Use This Document

This competency framework is intended to serve as a guide for developing, delivering, and evaluating specialization education and training in Pediatric and Family Coaching. It identifies the advanced competencies coaches should be able to demonstrate when practicing within this specialization and provides a common reference point for programs, faculty, assessors, and learners.

Programs should use this framework to inform curriculum design, learning objectives, instructional activities, practice opportunities, and assessment methods. The competencies are intended to help programs ensure that learners are not only introduced to specialization-specific knowledge, but also have opportunities to apply and demonstrate that knowledge in ways that reflect real-world coaching practice within Pediatric and Family Coaching.

The competencies should be used alongside foundational health and well-being coaching competencies, ethical standards, and scope of practice expectations. They are not intended to replace foundational coaching preparation, but rather to clarify the additional knowledge, skills, and applied abilities required for safe, effective, and contextually appropriate specialized practice.

This document may be used to support:

- Specialization curriculum and program development
- Alignment of learning objectives and instructional content
- Design of applied practice and skills-based learning activities
- Learner assessment and demonstration of competence
- Faculty preparation and program quality assurance
- Ongoing professional development for coaches practicing in Pediatric and Family Coaching

The competencies should be interpreted as an integrated framework rather than as a checklist of isolated tasks. Effective specialized coaching requires coaches to bring together foundational coaching skills, ethical judgment, evidence-informed practice, cultural responsiveness, interdisciplinary awareness, and specialization-specific knowledge in service of the individuals, populations, and settings they support.

Programs using this framework should also consult the specialization handbook for additional guidance on program requirements, foundational competency expectations, assessment considerations, and implementation standards.

What is a Clinical Health & Well-Being Coach?

A **Clinical Health and Well-Being Coach (CHWC)** is a highly trained professional who partners with clients in clinical environments to foster meaningful behavior change and support whole-person health. Working with individuals managing chronic conditions, adjusting to complex diagnoses, or striving for improved lifestyle patterns, CHWCs help clients strengthen motivation, build self-efficacy, and translate medical recommendations into sustainable daily practices. Grounded in evidence-based practice, behavior science, and relational skills, CHWCs bring a human-centered approach that honors each client's lived experience while empowering them to take an active role in their care. As integrated members of healthcare teams, CHWCs complement clinical treatment by providing the time, continuity, and partnership necessary for clients to implement care plans and make changes that endure, ultimately strengthening the bridge between medical guidance and real-life transformation.

Key Elements of the Definition:

- Trained professional with expertise in behavior change, motivational interviewing, and coaching frameworks.
- Trained specifically to work in clinical or healthcare settings, alongside or within interprofessional care teams.
- Partners with clients in a human-centered way, emphasizing collaboration rather than direction.
- Focuses on client-determined goals, behavior change, lifestyle improvement, and overall well-being.
- Supports implementation of medical guidance, but does not diagnose, treat, or prescribe.
- Bridges the gap between clinical guidance and behavioral implementation to enhance patient activation and improve health outcomes.



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Competency Domains

Domain 1

Contextual Factors Impacting Pediatric Well-Being

This section focuses on what coaches need to understand about the broader contextual factors that shape pediatric well-being. Coaches should recognize that a child's health, development, behavior, emotional regulation, motivation, and engagement are not shaped by individual choices alone, but by the environments and systems around them. This includes developmental stage, family systems, cultural and community context, school climate, peer relationships, physical environment, trauma, chronic stress, structural inequities, socioeconomic conditions, healthcare access, and experiences of stigma, discrimination, exclusion, or marginalization.

For coaches, the emphasis is on learning to notice and respond to context without making assumptions or placing responsibility solely on the child or family. Coaches should be able to identify both risk factors and protective factors, including family strengths, supportive relationships, stable routines, belonging, resilience, cultural assets, school or community supports, and access to resources. This knowledge helps coaches better understand what may be influencing a child's behavior, readiness, stress level, emotional capacity, health choices, and ability to follow through on goals.

Overall, this section prepares coaches to see the child within their full lived environment and adapt coaching accordingly. Coaches should bring a developmentally appropriate, culturally humble, family-centered, trauma-informed, and strengths-based approach to their work. They should also attend to parent beliefs, stress, routines, communication patterns, values, and practical realities, while maintaining trust, confidentiality, boundaries, role clarity, and respectful engagement with both children and caregivers.

1. Contextual Factors Impacting Pediatric Well-Being

1.1. External Influences on Health & Well-Being

- 1.1.1. Explain how developmental stages influence pediatric health and well-being.
- 1.1.2. Describe how cultural and community environments shape safety, stress, routines, sleep, nutrition, physical activity, and well-being.
 - 1.1.2.1. Explain how peer relationships, belonging, and norms influence behavior, emotional well-being, identity, and health choices.
 - 1.1.2.2. Describe how school systems, climate, and experiences influence stress, behavior, belonging, and well-being.
 - 1.1.2.3. Recognize protective and resilience-promoting factors across family, school, peer, and community environments.

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- 1.1.3. Explain how environmental exposures and epigenetics shape pediatric health, development, behavior, and risk.
 - 1.1.4. Describe how life transitions and disruptions affect pediatric well-being.
 - 1.1.4.1. Describe how trauma and adverse experiences affect health, development, behavior, and emotional regulation.
 - 1.1.4.2. Describe how chronic stress affects health, development, behavior, and emotional regulation.
 - 1.1.5. Explain how structural and systemic inequities contribute to pediatric health disparities.
 - 1.1.5.1. Explain how socioeconomic conditions and social determinants affect access, stability, opportunity, and outcomes.
 - 1.1.5.2. Describe how stigma, discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion affect mental, emotional, and physical well-being.
 - 1.1.5.3. Explain how healthcare access, health literacy, and parent understanding influence pediatric outcomes.

1.2. Family Systems

- 1.2.1. Explain family systems principles related to pediatric health, development, behavior, and well-being.
 - 1.2.1.1. Describe how family routines, communication, dynamics, and expectations shape child well-being and family functioning.
 - 1.2.1.1.1. Explain how parenting styles, parent beliefs, capacity, and stress influence child behavior and outcomes.
 - 1.2.1.1.2. Explain how parent-child relationships influence motivation, self-efficacy, trust, and engagement.
 - 1.2.1.1.3. Describe how siblings, extended family, guardians, blended family members, and parents influence pediatric well-being.
 - 1.2.1.2. Describe how family traditions, values, and beliefs influence health decisions and responses to support.

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- 1.2.1.2.1. Explain how family values and realities influence decision-making, goal setting, and behavior change.
 - 1.2.2. Explain how youth development, limited autonomy, and dependency shape family interactions.
 - 1.2.3. Describe how the home environment influences safety, stress, routines, sleep, nutrition, movement, and well-being.
 - 1.2.3.1. Describe how the physical environment shapes sleep, nutrition, movement, stress, screen use, and emotional well-being.
 - 1.2.3.2. Explain how parent beliefs, values, behaviors, and health practices shape child attitudes and routines.
 - 1.2.3.3. Describe how parent mental and emotional well-being affects care, consistency, communication, and family functioning.
 - 1.2.3.4. Recognize family strengths, resilience, protective patterns, and support networks that promote coping and well-being.
 - 1.2.4. Describe how parent beliefs about authority, autonomy, discipline, and child voice influence coaching and participation.

1.3. Coaching Strategies

- 1.3.1. Assess and integrate contextual, developmental, and family influences into coaching.
- 1.3.2. Adapt coaching to the child's developmental level, emotional capacity, readiness, autonomy, and context.
- 1.3.3. Tailor communication to build trust with child and parent using developmentally appropriate language, pacing, and engagement.
- 1.3.4. Navigate differing child and parent priorities respectfully and productively.
- 1.3.5. Apply culturally humble and reflective practices that account for bias, family worldview, and cultural context.
- 1.3.6. Maintain role clarity, confidentiality, boundaries, and scope in pediatric coaching.



Domain 2

Pediatric Health, Wellness, & Well-Being

This section focuses on what coaches need to know and be able to apply when supporting pediatric health, wellness, and well-being. Coaches should be able to recognize that a child's wellness is multidimensional and interconnected, including sleep, play, movement, nutrition, relationships, social engagement, mental and emotional health, behavior, and technology use. They should also have enough foundational knowledge of common pediatric conditions, co-morbidities, assessments, diagnoses, and medication effects to understand how these factors may influence a child's mood, appetite, attention, behavior, functioning, and readiness to engage in coaching.

For coaches, the emphasis in this section is not on diagnosing or treating pediatric conditions, but on understanding how health-related factors show up in coaching conversations, goal-setting, motivation, family engagement, and behavior change. Coaches need to view the child within the broader family system, recognizing how parental health, health literacy, family history, generational trauma, family beliefs, and developmental stage may shape health choices, expectations, communication, and outcomes. This means coaches should be prepared to adapt their communication to the child, parent, or family unit; clearly explain the purpose, scope, and limits of coaching; respond sensitively to family reactions to assessments or diagnoses; use assessment information appropriately; and help families navigate services, referrals, and follow-up needs without stepping outside their role.

Overall, this section prepares coaches to bring pediatric health knowledge into practice in a way that is supportive, developmentally appropriate, family-centered, and grounded in role clarity. Coaches should leave with the ability to create trust, support realistic goals, advocate for the child within family conversations, and help families make sense of health and wellness information in ways that promote engagement and well-being.

2. Pediatric Health, Wellness, & Well-Being

2.1. Pediatric Wellness Needs

2.1.1. Explain pediatric wellness needs, including sleep, play, movement, nutrition, relationships, social engagement, mental and emotional health, and technology.

2.1.2. Describe common pediatric conditions, including complications and co-morbidities.

2.1.2.1. Recognize potential pharmaceutical influence as a factor in pediatric coaching and behavior change.

2.1.3. Explain the interdependence of physical, emotional, social, and behavioral well-being.

2.2. Family Systems

2.2.1. Recognize the role of family systems in health choices, behaviors, and outcomes.

2.2.1.1. Identify how parental health, family history, health literacy, and generational trauma influence the child and coaching process.

2.2.1.2. Facilitate degree of parental involvement in the coaching relationship at child's developmental stages.

2.3. Coaching Strategies

2.3.1. Maintain a supportive, developmentally appropriate, and responsive coaching stance.

2.3.1.1. Coach common personality types and behaviors in pediatric settings.

2.3.1.2. Adapt communication for the child, parent, or family unit.

2.3.2. Explain the purpose, scope, and relevance of coaching to children and families.

2.3.3. Integrate knowledge of medication effects on behavior, mood, appetite, attention, and functioning.

2.3.4. Describe common pediatric assessments.

2.3.4.1. Respond sensitively to family reactions to assessment findings and diagnoses.

2.3.4.2. Use assessment information appropriately to inform coaching.

2.3.5. Apply pediatric health knowledge to support clarity, context, and goal-setting.

2.3.6. Apply family systems knowledge to advocate for the child when communicating with parents.

2.3.7. Support families in navigating healthcare systems, services, referrals, and follow-up needs.

Domain 3

Behavior Change in the Pediatric Population

This section focuses on what coaches need to understand and apply when supporting behavior change with children and families. Coaches should recognize that behavior change in pediatric settings is shaped by a child's developmental stage, family environment, motivation, confidence, autonomy, and relationships. Foundational knowledge of behavior change theories and frameworks, such as growth mindset, Social Cognitive Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, helps coaches understand how children build skills, develop self-efficacy, respond to support, and engage in new behaviors within the context of their family system.

For coaches, the emphasis is on adapting behavior change strategies to the child's developmental needs and capabilities rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach. Coaches should be able to adjust expectations, communication, goal-setting, and engagement strategies based on the child's age, readiness, emotional capacity, cognitive development, and level of autonomy. They should also be prepared to support parents in understanding their child's developmental needs and in creating environments, routines, and responses that reinforce healthy behavior change.

Overall, this section prepares coaches to use behavior change knowledge in a way that is practical, developmentally appropriate, and family-centered. Coaches should be able to create clear coaching agreements with both children and parents, adapt coaching skills across developmental stages, apply behavior change and family systems principles, maintain a coaching presence that supports safety and connection, facilitate communication between children and caregivers, and help children build self-efficacy, confidence, and self-advocacy.

3. Behavior Change in the Pediatric Population

3.1. Behavior Change Theories as Applicable to Families and Children

3.1.1. Explain core behavior change theories and frameworks as applied to children and families (e.g., growth mindset, SCT, SDT).

3.2. Child Growth and Development

3.2.1. Identify a child's developmental needs and capabilities to inform engagement strategies and expectations.

3.2.2. Explain how growth and development affect coaching approach and effectiveness.

3.2.3. Support parents in understanding and meeting children's developmental needs.

3.3. Adapting Coaching Skills for Children and Families

- 3.3.1. Create clear, developmentally appropriate coaching agreements for children and parents.
- 3.3.2. Adapt coaching skills and strategies across developmental stages.
- 3.3.3. Apply behavior change and family systems theories in pediatric coaching.
- 3.3.4. Maintain a coaching presence that supports engagement, safety, and connection.
- 3.3.5. Facilitate communication between children and parents.
- 3.3.6. Support children in building self-efficacy and self-advocacy.



Domain 4

Parent Coaching

This section focuses on what coaches need to understand and apply when working directly with parents in pediatric coaching. Coaches should recognize that parents play a central role in shaping the child's home environment, routines, communication, health behaviors, emotional safety, and follow-through with coaching goals. Parent coaching requires coaches to understand common parent patterns or archetypes, such as highly involved or expert parents, anxious or outcome-focused parents, controlling or permissive parents, belief-driven parents, and parents navigating complex family structures such as split households, extended family involvement, neglect, or inconsistent caregiving.

For coaches, the emphasis is not on labeling or judging parents, but on using archetype awareness to better understand parent behavior, reduce resistance, strengthen engagement, and protect the child's well-being. Coaches should be able to adapt their communication style, boundaries, pacing, and coaching strategies based on the parent's readiness, capacity, stress level, beliefs, self-efficacy, and family context. This includes building a trusting coach-parent relationship, establishing clear communication expectations, navigating logistics, and helping parents understand their role in supporting the child's progress without over-controlling or undermining the child's autonomy.

Overall, this section prepares coaches to coach parents as key agents of change within the family system. Coaches should support parents in applying behavior change strategies at home, creating environments that promote child well-being, having effective parent-child conversations about health and habits, navigating conflict and power struggles, and examining how their own mindset, routines, and health behaviors influence the household. Coaches should also help parents align their own goals and expectations with the child's developmental needs, emotional capacity, autonomy, and overall well-being.

4. Parent Coaching

4.1. Parent Archetypes

4.1.1. Identify common parent archetypes and issues in pediatric coaching.

4.1.1.1. Recognize expert parent patterns, including diet-focused parents and self-identified health experts.

4.1.1.2. Recognize controlling parenting patterns, including helicopter, bulldozer, and permissive styles.

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- 4.1.1.3. Recognize worried or anxious parent patterns related to progress, weight, or outcomes.
 - 4.1.1.4. Recognize family structure impacts, including split households, neglect, and extended family living patterns.
 - 4.1.1.5. Recognize belief-driven patterns, including martyr, saboteur, and denial patterns.
 - 4.1.2. Adapt communication style, boundaries, engagement, and coaching strategies based on parent archetype without judgment.
 - 4.1.3. Use archetype awareness as a tool to improve engagement, reduce resistance, and support child well-being.

4.2. Engaging Parents in the Pediatric Coaching Process

- 4.2.1. Build and maintain effective coach-parent relationships.
 - 4.2.1.1. Establish coach-parent communication that supports child well-being and coaching progress.
 - 4.2.1.2. Navigate logistical aspects of parent engagement.
- 4.2.2. Use intentional, supportive, and non-judgmental communication with parents.
- 4.2.3. Explore parent readiness and parenting capacity for change in the coaching process.
 - 4.2.3.1. Explore parent self-efficacy in supporting the child through the coaching process.
- 4.2.4. Adapt coach approach based on parent readiness and family context.

4.3. Parent Coaching Strategies

- 4.3.1. Coach parents as agents of change within the home and family system.
 - 4.3.1.1. Support parents in applying coaching and behavior change strategies at home.
 - 4.3.1.2. Support parents in creating environments that promote child well-being.
 - 4.3.1.3. Support effective parent-child conversations about health, habits, and well-being.
 - 4.3.1.4. Support families in navigating conflict and power struggles.
- 4.3.2. Support parents in examining how their mindset and habits surrounding health influence the household dynamic.
- 4.3.3. Align parent health and wellness goals with child needs, development, and well-being.

Domain 5

Safety and Ethics in Pediatrics

This section focuses on what coaches need to understand and apply to practice safely, ethically, and responsibly with children and families. Coaches should be able to recognize pediatric red flags across medical, psychological, emotional, and environmental safety concerns, and understand when a situation requires escalation, referral, or support beyond the coaching role. This includes knowing how to follow escalation protocols in a timely and effective way, access appropriate resources, and help families connect with referrals or services when needed.

For coaches, the emphasis is on maintaining safety while staying within scope. Coaches should understand how trauma may show up in both children and parents, including through behavior, emotional responses, avoidance, resistance, dysregulation, or heightened sensitivity. They should be prepared to adjust their coaching approach using trauma-sensitive communication, support parent regulation, model co-regulation strategies, and create an emotionally safe coaching environment without attempting to treat trauma or provide clinical care.

Overall, this section prepares coaches to approach pediatric coaching with strong ethical awareness, role clarity, and child-centered responsibility. Coaches should be able to balance child autonomy with parent involvement, navigate confidentiality while advocating for the child, recognize the power and influence they hold in the coaching relationship, and identify their own biases that may affect judgment or communication. Coaches should also help families evaluate health and wellness information in ways that are credible, developmentally appropriate, and aligned with the child's safety, needs, and well-being.

5. Safety and Ethics

5.1. Safety and Escalation Protocols

- 5.1.1. Recognize pediatric red flags across medical, psychological, and environmental safety concerns.
- 5.1.2. Follow pediatric escalation protocols in a timely and effective manner.
- 5.1.3. Access available resources to make appropriate referrals.

5.2. Trauma-Informed Competence

- 5.2.1. Recognize trauma responses in children and parents and adjust coaching accordingly.
- 5.2.2. Support parent regulation and model co-regulation strategies.

5.2.3. Use trauma-sensitive communication that promotes emotional safety, avoids retraumatization, and remains within scope.

5.3. Ethical Considerations

5.3.1. Reflect on the ethical responsibilities and influence of the coaching role with children.

5.3.2. Balance child autonomy and parent involvement to maintain trust and safety.

5.3.3. Navigate confidentiality while advocating for the child.

5.3.4. Identify and manage personal and internal biases in coaching practice.

5.3.5. Guide families in identifying credible and developmentally appropriate health and wellness information.





The Academy for Behavior Change is dedicated to advancing the science, practice, and impact of behavior change in health, wellness, and clinical care. Rooted in the belief that people are whole and capable of change, we bring evidence, equity, and humanity together to shape a new standard for how change is understood and supported.

Through research, training, and professional development, we equip leaders and practitioners with the tools to foster lasting transformation. Our work is about more than skills — it's about reimagining healthcare and wellbeing through partnership, possibility, and shared humanity.

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