

## ABOUT

The Family Life Coaching Association is a 501c6 organization. Our mission is to create research-based, globally recognized credentials, training standards, and networking opportunities for family life coaches.

## S.K.'S STORY

Christi Howard is a Mom Life Coach that helps moms learn to put themselves first while removing the guilt. She has a B.S. in Family and Consumer Sciences and is a Certified Professional Life Coach. Her client says “Christi juggles the daily challenges of family life, career and self-care with grace, positivity and humor. She does a great job of providing inspiration for other moms who are looking to do the same. As my coach, she has helped me break down my big ideas into achievable steps and encouraged me to believe in myself as I reached for my dream of opening my own yoga business. Even though it is often difficult to juggle motherhood with entrepreneurship, Christi's coaching helps me to stay motivated and celebrate my wins. She is excellent at helping moms to find balance in their lives and reminding them that being a great mother is not necessarily being a perfect mom.” S.K.

## How Investing in Family Life Coaching Can Yield Healthy and Resilient Families

Providing family life coaching can improve health, wellbeing, and help foster resilience in youth and families. Because coaching is nonstigmatizing, it can be used to effectively implement family science related evidence-based prevention programs (EBPPs) in a variety of settings, such as schools, family services organizations, and private practices. Across a variety of family contexts and practice areas, including youth development, parenting, and aging, research indicates that coaching is effective at improving behavioral and health outcomes. However, employers, nonprofit organizations, and third-party payers rarely reimburse clients for coaching services and thus deny an effective method to improving family health. To solve this, we need policy change that allows family life coaches to receive third-party payments through insurance and other provider services.

## What's the Problem?

Families need and desire access to support and information to help build happy, healthy families. Strong families serve as a protective factor and help build resilience, which in turn leads to positive health outcomes throughout life. While there are services available for family related interventions such as counseling and therapy, there is a dearth of services available to families that focus on improving family life because of lack of funding

and limited availability of adequate training programs. Two factors constraining how state and federal funds are used include spending rules requiring recipients of specialty services to indicate a medical diagnosis and a restricted provider class limiting who is eligible to provide services. This means that far fewer families who would otherwise benefit from coaching are not receiving them. Another constraint is the limited availability of rigorous training programs in the delivery of evidence-based coaching practices for professional coaches.

To achieve these changes, we must educate policymakers and human services professionals on the effectiveness of coaching as a prevention and intervention, the importance of funding reform, and the value of strengthening training programs and credentialing standards for paraprofessional coaches.

## What is Family Life Coaching?

Family life coaching is a collaborative partnership between a client and coach that enhances performance and well-being in personal and work domains. With roots in both *coaching psychology* and *family science*, family life coaches utilize coaching competencies and family life best practices. Coaching is voluntary, strengths-based, solution-focused, and goal-oriented. Family coaching expertise and skills are based on common elements of EBPPs, including articulating a framework of behavior change, conveying issue-

## REBECCA'S STORY

Rebecca called for an appointment with Tina Feigal, M.S., Ed., parent coach and trainer of coaches, a former school psychologist with 20 years of coaching experience. As a single woman, Rebecca was about to bring 4-year-old Natalia into her home. She and the child had never met each other, which was highly unusual in this type of arrangement, but the family members who held custody of the girl were "done" with her behavior and desperate to have her relocated. This would be the 7th place the child had lived. The resulting trauma was evident almost as soon as she entered Rebecca's home. She kicked, screamed, threw objects, refused to comply with simple requests, called Rebecca horrible names, and wet her pants regularly. Rebecca had been prepped in advance by Tina on handling traumatized child behavior, but this seemed overwhelming.

A few months passed and with highly concentrated texting and phone support, Rebecca was able to help Natalia learn that there was such a thing as love and acceptance, for the first time in her life. She would often say, "I thought you were going to hit me," which broke Rebecca's heart. Then her comment turned to "Why are you so nice to me?" as she was able to allow caring into her heart. Now adopted by the amazing Rebecca, Natalia is thriving in a loving home. She knows her mom is her safety, and is able to depend on her for comfort and support. Yes, there are still rough times, such as transition to a new school, but the school staff and Rebecca have an effective plan in place for her success. The trajectory of Natalia's life is forever altered.

specific and population-specific information, supporting self-management skills, addressing environmental barriers, and providing tools for developing social supports.

### Coaching Effectiveness

Coaching is effective at improving *self-efficacy, well-being, and goal-directed self-regulation* (e.g., goal-setting and goal-attainment) and is beneficial for diverse populations regardless of demographic or socioeconomic characteristics. Coaching has been shown to be effective in helping families with issues around caregiving, parenting skills, emotional support, and social and emotional competencies, all protective factors needed for building resilience.

### Social Return on Investment

Coaching offers a significant social return on investment (SROI), which improves upon traditional cost-benefit analyses by incorporating broader socioeconomic and environmental considerations so that outcomes are defined comprehensively and in a socially responsible manner. We know that a meaningful and holistic set of effectiveness indicators (e.g., well-being, satisfaction, organizational commitment and engagement,) is often even more important than a single monetary figure. That said, there is a growing consensus among national research centers and human services organizations that coaching is an effective intervention for improving a range of self-regulatory and executive functioning skills known to support personal and organizational performance and well-being. In other words, the return on investment is more than cost

effective; coaching truly improves quality of life.

### Policy Recommendations

To reduce barriers in accessing and providing competent family life coaching services, policymakers can take the following concrete steps:

- **Expand eligibility to use specialty services:** Current spending rules restrict families from utilizing specialty services based on a medical diagnosis. Policymakers can update and clarify medical necessity criteria for specialty services to allow third-party reimbursement of personal coaching services without a current medical diagnosis.
- **Expand the provider class for specialty services:** Current rules restrict who can provide specialty services and limits the pool of quality care. Policymakers can expand provider class eligibility to allow third-party reimbursement of coaching services provided by credentialed paraprofessionals.
- **Incentivize employers to cover family life coaching through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Policymakers can create incentives for employers to include and cover family life coaching as part of their EAP to help reduce their employee's costs.

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