Gateways Technical Assistance Credential

Technical Assistance Content Areas

Leadership & Professional Skills

All professional development, including leadership, education, training, and technical assistance should use evidence-based best practices and be structured to promote linkages between research, theory and practice. A technical assistance provider acts as a learner as well as a leader and mentor, continually improving knowledge, skills and dispositions of the early childhood profession.

- Model dispositions and skills of leadership, including the ability to recognize others' strengths with the goal of building the capabilities of people and capacities of organizations

- Mobilize and inspire action towards the goal of excellence in early childhood leadership

- Hold and encourage high expectation for quality improvement and increasing professionalism of programs and staff

- Pursue ongoing professional development opportunities in early care and education to fine tune and refine research-based practices and techniques

- Model leadership, professionalism, responsibility in organization, time-management, and planning

- Provide leadership to promote the growth and development of beginning teachers

- Facilitate various modes of service delivery including face-to-face meeting, on-site observation and feedback, technology-based communication, and hybrid methods of coaching, mentoring, and professional development

- Provide leadership to create linkages to state quality improvement systems and efforts and resources for professional development

- Understand coaching methods, including modeling and providing opportunities for teachers and home-based child care providers to intentionally practice new strategies

- Respect the unique history, philosophy, mission and culture of early childhood programs

- Demonstrate commitment to evidence-based practices in consultation and technical assistance, including knowledge of high-quality, research-based best practices in early care and education that promote optimal achievement and development for all children

Adult Learning

Adult learning theory recognizes the unique strengths and assets of learners within the specific context of their professional knowledge and experience, including the ability to apply life and professional knowledge, to identify and solve problems, and to use self-identified goals as a motivation for positive growth and change. A technical assistance provider fosters a safe collaborative environment by respecting each professional's unique learning style, encouraging active participation, and ensuring shared responsibility for planning and accountability.

- Acknowledge and build on each learner's strengths, knowledge, and experiences

- Show sensitivity and responsiveness to the unique characteristics of each professional, including cultural, linguistic, ability, and community and life experiences

- Engage and involve the learner through adult learning techniques, such as guided self-reflection and application of new learning to professional practice or personal dispositions

- Use a variety of techniques that promote self-directed learning including active communication, case-study, role-play, observation and shared reflection

- Invite learners to reflect on learning by asking guiding questions that invite mutual dialogue and ongoing insight regarding the early childhood profession, children and families, and high-quality practices

Technical Assistance Content Areas *(cont.)*

Collaborative Relationships

A collaborative relational framework guides effective quality improvement efforts through shared decision making and iterative (on-going) planning to review practices, set priorities, define goals and objectives, evaluate progress, and document success. Technical assistance providers nurture successful collaboration by establishing credibility and trust, building on core knowledge and capabilities, and ensuring a professional relationship.

- Recognize and build on strengths, assets, capabilities and capacities of people and programs

- Develop respectful and responsive relationships through positive interpersonal skills

- Use shared decision making and mutual agreement to facilitate quality improvement plans

- Use shared decision making and mutual agreement to design quality improvement plans

- Ensure awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness to cultural competencies of people and organizations, and understand their relevance to effective partnerships

- Build professional relationships by clarifying roles, respecting boundaries, and setting clear expectations

- Foster collaborative partnerships by clarifying needed goals and modeling effective and positive professional interactions

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice in early care and education is a dynamic and ongoing process of reciprocal thought and evaluation that energizes dialogue and informs meaningful action. The continuing cycle of learning is characterized by self-awareness and mutual empathy that includes observation, reflection, response, and evaluation to set goals for improved practice. A technical assistance provider facilitates reflective practice by engaging the perceptions and feedback of others to enrich decision making about professional practices.

- Observe actions, feelings, and experiences of individuals and groups with objectivity (without bias or judgment), respecting differences in knowledge, understanding, and skill

- Solve ethical dilemmas through an exchange of ideas and perspectives that increase mutual understanding

- Guide decision making, practice, and action through discussion and raising questions with the goal of adding to existing knowledge and fostering deeper understanding

- Reflect on one's own work and engage in critical exploration of one's practices, biases, values, and behaviors to gain insight into one's values, knowledge, skills, and dispositions

- Promote mutuality and understanding of self and others through competence building, objectivity, adaptability, caring, and honesty (Hanft et al., 2004)

- Ensure flexible perspective taking by understanding practices from another viewpoint and frame of reference (e.g., how staff and teachers perceive or view a program)

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Technical Assistance Content Areas *(cont.)*

Communication

Effective communication in technical assistance provides the basis for genuine care, respect, collaboration, and shared purpose. The technical assistance provider develops competency in effective communication through speaking, listening, writing, and leadership skills.

- Build a repertoire of positive communication strategies and skills that include effective discussion and problem solving, through multiple mediums (e.g., telephone and e-mail, on-site visits, meetings, tele-conference, and various training approaches)

- Build a repertoire of positive communication strategies and skills that include, mediation techniques through multiple mediums (e.g., telephone and e-mail, on-site visits, meetings, tele-conference, and various training approaches)

- Activate authentic listening skills (e.g., attending, acknowledging, and associating), responding (e.g., probing, summarizing, sharing feedback and support), and using information received to move towards problem solving and planning

- Provide verbal and non-verbal cues (e.g., focused attention, matched pace and affect) and feedback to validate, affirm, and encourage authentic conversation and engagement

- Develop effective writing skills for professional communication (e.g., e-mail, letter, training materials)

- Use positive conflict management and mediation skills to build on common goals, and respect unique experiences of program to solve problems and support growth

Assessment and Planning

Successful assessment and planning for quality improvement relies on clearly defined goals to gather and analyze data for the purpose of positive change. Technical assistance providers collaborate with professionals to evaluate practice, establish goals and priorities, and set action steps that lead to specific and meaningful outcomes.

- Use observation strategies and tools that are based on quality standards of the profession to gather information and define strengths and needs

- Gather and analyze data, and support others' ability to reflect on and analyze the data

- Use formal and informal assessment data to inform goal setting and collaborative planning related to individual, group, and program needs

- Use data to develop quality improvement plan (e.g., establish purpose and goals, determine areas for improvement, set priorities and action steps, and summarize/review needs)

- Develop action steps that leads to measurable realistic and attainable goals including creation of resources and tools

- Utilize standards and evidence-based practices to guide goal-setting and collaborative planning

- Establish follow-up plans with realistic time frame to keep goals on track and affirm progress

- Promote collaborative engagement for on-going evaluation of progress

- Provide guidance in making adjustments to action steps and goals

- Maintain integrity and ethical conduct and protect confidentiality in communication and record keeping

Technical Assistance Content Areas *(cont.)*

- Use critical thinking skills by gathering data, analyzing, applying standards, and using logical reasoning and insight to apply knowledge to practice

- Engage in critical thinking (e.g., Identify needs, gather information, evaluate evidence in light of professional standards, weigh options, choose plans of action)

Change Process

Change processes are influenced by the assumptions, values, beliefs, and perceptions of people and programs that motivate or hinder positive change. Technical assistance providers work with professionals to gain needed insight and to plan strategies that will build the strengths, assets, and capabilities of an organization, and will increase needed skills, dispositions, and behaviors to achieve desired goals and outcomes.

- Knowledge of change process, including ability to document evidence of change

- Knowledge and ability to facilitate individual and organizational readiness for change and to collaborate with individuals and program staff to create that change

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- Demonstrate responsiveness to individuals' and organizations' ongoing professional needs

- Understand that improvement is continuous and takes time; is incremental and should be celebrated along the way

- Embrace the complexity of change and the need for adaptability and flexibility in supporting others

- Develop strategic plans and processes that lead to ongoing quality improvement in programs

- Provide evidence-based materials and resources that maximize practitioner access to professional research and best-practices

- Translate professional development, training, and resources into practice through active reflection, discussion, problem solving techniques, identifying and linking training to practice

- Motivate positive change through commitment to the profession, ability to present evidence of the impact of quality practice on positive outcomes for children and to use compelling and relevant dialogue to advocate for best practices for children and families