ECTA Center
The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

Planning Guide to Statewide Implementation, Scale-up, and Sustainability of Recommended Practices

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Table of Contents

Section 1
Stages and Structures for Implementation

This document is a guide for implementing widespread use of evidence-based practices for improving the outcomes for young children with or at risk for delays or disabilities and their families. For our purposes, the evidence-based practices are the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices which we will refer to as "Recommended Practices" throughout the Guide. The Guide is written for statewide systems change, although it could be used for regions within a state or even for a large metropolitan area, as long as the administrative authority enables the necessary policy statements and resource allocations.

The Guide is written for use by a multi-agency team whose purpose is to provide resources, guidance, and coordination for the systems-change effort. These agencies commit to work in a united manner to accomplish the goal of implementing the Recommended Practices throughout the state's early childhood and early intervention service-delivery systems where young children with disabilities and their families are served. Usually the process is facilitated and represented by an individual or a small, core group of individuals. We will refer to this individual as the "Coordinator," but it should be understood that this term might well refer to more than one person. The Coordinator must be authorized by the leading state agencies to undertake this effort.

The remainder of this introduction addresses three major elements that are instrumental in the process of planning and sustaining the high-fidelity implementation of the DEC Recommended Practices. The first element is the Stages of Implementation (**http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/**), which refers to the major steps that must be followed in any effort of full-fledged implementation. A deep understanding of these major stages and how they unfold is extremely useful in planning for sustainable adoption of Recommended Practices. The second element is an overview of the four major structures that are needed for high-fidelity implementation of Recommended Practices: (1) the State Leadership Team, (2) the state's Master Cadre of coaches/trainers, (3) Demonstration and Implementation Sites, and (4) data and evaluation systems. The third element to be covered in this introduction is a tool for planning and monitoring the implementation process—the *State Benchmarks of Quality*.

Stages of Implementation

Time and effort over several years are needed to implement Recommended Practices broadly and with the necessary level of attention to fidelity, achievement of outcomes, and sustainability. And it takes many years beyond the initial implementation period to replicate strategies throughout a state's numerous sites and programs that provide care and education for young children. Coordinators are more likely to be successful in their efforts to implement Recommended Practices when they understand and use the Stages of Implementation to engage in the activities that are appropriate at each stage. Much has been written about the Stages of Implementation, and we urge readers of this Guide to become familiar with how the stages are conceptualized and utilized (**http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/**).

As a brief summary, we refer to four Stages of Implementation: Exploration and Planning, Installation, Implementation (Initial to Full), and Expansion and Scale-up. Within each of these stages, project leaders must attend to both the short-term goal of implementation of the practices and the long-term goal of sustaining high-fidelity use of the practices. Without a concerted effort to continue to support and measure fidelity, even the most conscientious implementers can, over time, experience “drift” away from high-fidelity use of the practices.

Exploration and Planning Stage

Coordinators must conduct the initial work of exploration and planning with care and diligence to set the stage for successful implementation of Recommended Practices. This involves determining whether three conditions exist: (1) a need to implement the Recommended Practices, (2) a widespread commitment to implement the Recommended Practices, and (3) availability of the resources necessary to implement the Recommended Practices effectively. This stage culminates in a decision whether or not to implement the Recommended Practices and, if so, a written implementation plan (or action plan) as a map for the work ahead.

Installation Stage

The activities during this stage include the “getting-ready work” that is necessary before practitioners can deliver high-fidelity Recommended Practices in their early childhood settings. These activities are related to site and staff selection (e.g., implementation/demonstration sites, Master Cadre), arranging for training for each group, developing coaching resources, plans and processes, and establishing the infrastructure for evaluation (e.g., data systems, selection of data liaisons). This stage culminates when staff, trained and coached in the targeted Recommended Practices, begins to provide them in the selected service settings (early implementers). Sustainability planning in this stage includes looking ahead and predicting the resources—such as additional trainers and coaches, expanded data systems, etc.—that will be needed as additional programs and services implement the Recommended Practices

Implementation Stage — From Initial Implementation to Full Implementation

Initial Implementation is characterized by high levels of coaching and support for every function. With everyone new to their roles, the first miles of this journey can be filled with detours and unexpected barriers to negotiate and overcome. Initial implementation usually refers to efforts to implement with high fidelity in parts of the program, such as in a few classrooms of a Head Start or public pre-K program or a few locations within early intervention (EI)/infant-toddler services while having a vision for program-wide implementation. Full Implementation, or program-wide implementation, occurs at a given site or EI service-delivery area when all elements of the infrastructure needed to support high-fidelity implementation by staff are in place (e.g., training, coaching, data collection, etc.). This usually means that all of the classrooms (or other service units) are implementing the Recommended Practices with fidelity and that all adults and children are engaged with the Recommended Practices at all levels.

During the implementation stage, State Leadership Teams develop structures to assure communication among all stakeholders. For instance, the State Leadership Team can establish feedback loops with demonstration sites as a way to help the Team identify any program-level challenges that they need to resolve. They also establish communication protocols with other stakeholders such as programs, policy makers, funders, etc., to ensure widespread awareness of the Recommended Practices and outcomes as well as shared understanding of terms, vision, mission, etc. Finally, all data and monitoring systems are in place at this stage.

Expansion/Scale-Up Stage

In this Guide, Expansion and Scale-up refer to the same thing—increasing the number of communities and settings using the targeted Recommended Practices within the state so that more children and their families have ready access to effective interventions and supports. Scale-up typically requires the State Leadership Team to plan for and provide an expanded infrastructure (e.g., increased numbers of Master Cadre so that training and external coaches are available, increased support for data systems) for the new implementers, as well as sustaining support for the programs that have achieved full implementation.

With each expansion effort, the State Leadership Team must revisit the Stages of Implementation. This means: (1) a return to planning for the expansion or scale-up effort; (2) installation work to get everyone trained, organizations on board, and materials developed or purchased for the new settings and communities; (3) extra support at new sites and in new communities during initial implementation and ongoing monitoring and support until full implementation is reached; and 4) sustaining support to the early implementers to ensure the maintenance of high-fidelity implementation. Scale-up involves expanding from the original, early implementers and demonstration sites to additional programs that are referred to in this Guide simply as Implementation Sites.

While traversing the four stages described above, it is always important to think about how high-fidelity implementation will be sustained over time. We do not consider sustainability to be a stage *per se*. Rather, it is an important part of each and every stage. If we wait until the end of a project or grant period, or wait until we reach full implementation, it might be too late to sustain current efforts, expand our implementation sites, or scale-up access to evidence-based practices.

Major Structures of the Recommended Practices Initiative

Four major structures are essential components in implementing the Recommended Practices initiative statewide.

State Leadership Team. This is the team of cross-agency state leaders and agency representatives who are responsible for planning and supervising all aspects of the initiative. The team arranges for funding, policy initiatives, evaluation and data-based decision-making,

training and coaching, site selection, publicity, and dissemination.

Master Cadre of Training and Technical Assistance Professionals. This is a group of carefully-selected professional-development experts who are responsible for delivering training and providing coaching to establish high-fidelity implementation of Recommended Practices in initial early implementation/demonstration sites and, subsequently, in all implementation sites. The Master Cadre also promotes awareness and adoption through presentations and training on the targeted Recommended Practices.

Demonstration Sites. While all programs that adopt the Recommended Practices are considered "implementation sites," several implementation programs are selected to serve as "demonstration" sites. Demonstration sites are local implementation sites or programs that agree to be early implementers and to serve as initial showplaces for high-fidelity implementation of the targeted Recommended Practices. Demonstration sites are high-quality sites eager and able not only to reach program-wide high fidelity quickly but to provide the added work of hosting tours and performing other public-awareness activities with the State Team. Each program has its own leadership team and staff who receive training and coaching and collect data. Sites also gain the capacity to make data-based decisions. Demonstration sites receive early and extensive training and technical assistance (T/TA) to reach program-wide high fidelity. In return they agree to provide the state, at least annually, with data demonstrating the effectiveness of the utilization of the Recommended Practices. They also agree to provide tours and other information indicating how and why programs should adopt the widespread use of the Recommended Practices. Demonstration sites play an important role in communicating to the State Leadership Team any challenges or barriers to full-scale high-fidelity implementation that the State Leadership Team can then resolve to pave the way for future program implementation.

Data and Evaluation Systems. The initiative is committed to data-based decision making. Organizers of the Recommended Practices initiative have developed measures and evaluation procedures that are tailored to high-fidelity implementation of the targeted Recommended Practices. One such instrument, for instance, is a fidelity measure or checklist that will be used for indicating the level to which personnel are accurately using the Recommended Practices. Additionally, procedures are in place to measure child progress as well as progress of the program in its program-wide efforts.

State Benchmarks of Quality

Statewide implementation of Recommended Practices is a complex and multi-faceted endeavor. The process has many moving parts, and it can be a tremendous challenge for the State Leadership Team to organize and monitor the numerous activities that need to occur. The ECTA Center's *State Benchmarks of Quality* (Smith, Dunlap, Fox, Blase & Bovey, 2014) was developed to help State Leadership Teams (SLTs) gauge the progress of implementation efforts in the various domains of their responsibility. *State Benchmarks of Quality* (Section 1 Appendix A) is a tool SLTs will use for monitoring and self-evaluation, and it can be used as a template for understanding and mapping the overall initiative through all stages of implementation.

The tool consists of 50 benchmarks, which are organized under various “critical elements” of the implementation process. For each benchmark, there is a column to indicate the person or persons responsible for the activity and an evaluation section where each benchmark is rated as being either “Not in Place,” “Needs Improvement,” or “In Place.” The tool can be completed by SLT members individually or as a group, however it should always be reviewed by the SLT as a whole to reach a consensus score and make plans for next steps. *State Benchmarks of Quality* is a helpful feature of the implementation process, and it will be referred to often in the remainder of this Guide.

State Leadership Team

The State Leadership Team is a group (this may be an already-existing group) of state-level people who decide to form a collaborative, cross-agency team to develop policies, procedures, resources, and other mechanisms to plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain a professional-development (PD) system that supports the high-fidelity use of Recommended Practices statewide. The primary goal of the SLT is to ensure structures and resources are available to programs so that they are able to adopt the use of targeted Recommended Practices with fidelity. These structures include training, coaching, data systems, demonstration programs, and the necessary financial and technical assistance. See *State Benchmarks of Quality* (Section 1 Appendix A) for the specifics of this infrastructure. The ECTA Center state leadership team technical assistance staff works with the State Leadership Team and Coordinator to support their progress through the implementation stages and establishing the structures.

The SLT comprises approximately 10-15 people who are passionate about the Recommended Practices initiative and who can either make decisions for their agency/program or can report back a decision within two weeks. Members of the Team include: IDEA Part C/early intervention and Part B/preschool, family members, Head Start, Early Head Start, child care, public school preschool, and other programs and settings where young children, including those with or at-risk for delays or disabilities and their families, participate. Additional Team members should include: statewide training and technical assistance (T/TA) initiatives; state department of education early childhood, special education, maternal and child health; child welfare; family organizations; evaluators; and higher education (community colleges, four-year institutions).

The SLT agrees to meet monthly and to adopt logistics and activities that ensure their effectiveness as a collaborative team. Such logistics include: developing a written, collaborative mission statement; decision-making logistics and activities that lead to feelings of ownership and full participation of all team members (e.g., only members may attend and participate in meetings and, if absent, they agree to support decisions made in their absence); regular meeting times with agendas, meeting evaluations and meeting summaries; and a written action plan based upon the team’s regular self-assessment on the *Benchmarks of Quality*. For samples of mission statements, action plans, meeting logistics, and activities for productive meetings, click here: **http://www.challengingbehavior.org/communities/TACSEIstates.htm.**

The SLT develops, implements, expands/scales-up, and sustains these resources over time. Research and experience tell us that implementing such a professional-development (PD) system statewide takes several years and progresses through stages of implementation. The SLT should plan on two-to-three years for the development of a Master Cadre of trainers and coaches, demonstration sites, and evaluation systems sufficient to serve the state.

As the SLT develops and implements the various components of the PD system, such as demonstration sites and Master Cadre, it is also planning for future needs related to sustaining these components and scaling them up. For instance, as the Master Cadre is selected and trained, the SLT develops plans for addressing turnover in the Master Cadre members and for adding trainers and coaches to the Master Cadre as more areas of the state are brought into the project. Second, as new programs are implementing the Recommended Practices, the SLT ensures that the early implementers and demonstration sites continue to receive the T/TA resources they need to sustain high-fidelity implementation. The SLT ensures that fiscal resources continue to grow as the number of programs and communities implementing and sustaining the Recommended Practices grows.

The main components of the SLT's work are:

- Forming a Master Cadre of professional-development experts who can train and coach to high fidelity;
- Establishing demonstration sites where the process and outcomes of high-fidelity implementation are showcased;
- Enlisting family participation and involvement throughout the system;
- Creating a data system to evaluate fidelity of implementation as well as outcomes; and
- Carrying out a plan to scale-up and sustain all of these components.

Each component is briefly described below within the implementation stage of the SLT's work. *State Benchmarks of Quality* details the actual critical elements of the SLT's work.

Planning & Installation Stage

During the early stages of the SLT's work, they focus on forming as an effective team; making decisions together about the Recommended Practices initiative's PD system team; developing their norms and logistics; and confirming their membership, vision, and mission. They develop their action plan based on their self-assessment on the *State Benchmarks of Quality* and begin the early activities of building the PD system. Their goal is to ensure that programs and communities statewide will have access to effective PD support—including the Master Cadre, necessary resources for program-wide implementation, and on-site coaching—that result in the high-fidelity adoption, implementation, and sustainability of the Recommended Practices. They also begin to develop the data systems that will ensure they have the information needed for quality improvement, ensuring fidelity of implementation, and tracking and reporting child and program outcomes.

Implementation Stage

During initial and full-implementation stages, the SLT establishes the major components of the Recommended Practices initiative's work by ensuring adequate resources (financial and staffing) for their own work as well as for all the other components (e.g. Master Cadre, demonstration sites, evaluation, and family involvement). Data are collected and used for making decisions.

First, a statewide Master Cadre of trainers and coaches is established to build and sustain high-fidelity implementation. This Master Cadre provides external training, coaching and T/TA to Program Leadership Teams while at the same time training the program staff to provide coaching to practitioners, thus building internal program capacity to sustain high-fidelity implementation.

Second, the SLT selects and partners with a small number of programs to be the initial implementers. Once at program-wide fidelity, these programs will serve as demonstration sites. They develop their own Leadership Teams to guide their process, use the program-level *Benchmarks of Quality*, and are provided T/TA by the state's Master Cadre to ensure they reach high-fidelity implementation and become demonstration sites. They provide outcome and process data to the SLT at least annually, and they provide information and site tours for other interested programs and stakeholders. They also give the SLT important information about challenges and barriers the SLT will need to address in order for more programs to join the Recommended Practices initiative. Each program leadership team is trained and coached by Master Cadre members, and their staff is trained to become internal coaches, the number of whom is dictated by the size of the program.

During this stage, all demonstration programs and Master Cadre members have a written memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the SLT that outlines their responsibilities, expectations, and data requirements, as well as the responsibilities and supports they will receive from the SLT. All begin to submit the data agreed upon in their respective MOU.

The SLT also plans for the scale-up of the use of the Recommended Practices throughout the state by building statewide capacity (funding, staffing) for supporting new implementation programs while they are supporting the high-fidelity implementation of the demonstration programs. Communication links or feedback loops are established to ensure the SLT is getting the information they need to address challenges and barriers and to provide the T/TA the demonstration sites need. The early implementers continue to receive the T/TA they need to sustain their high-fidelity implementation, and, in turn, continue to provide tours and data for the state.

Scale-Up and Sustainability

The SLT action plan includes strategies for sustaining all the components (Master Cadre, demonstration sites, and data systems) as well as scaling-up the number of programs

and communities using the Recommended Practices with high fidelity. The plan addresses turn-over and succession of key individuals on the SLT and in the demonstration sites and Master Cadre. Plans are installed to provide ongoing support and resources for trainers, external and internal coaches, demonstration sites, and implementation sites. Plans are put into place to address the future need for more Master Cadre members as well as for refreshing and deepening the expertise of Master Cadre members and site personnel.

Additionally, the SLT institutionalizes and embeds the Recommended Practices within state initiatives such as Quality Rating Systems and Early Learning Guidelines. The SLT creates a web site, newsletter, and reports on the outcomes of high-fidelity implementation to raise interest and commitment from programs, policy makers, funders, and other stakeholders.

The SLT annually prepares an evaluation report that describes: a) the extent to which program- and community-wide high-fidelity adoption is being implemented, sustained, and scaled-up; b) the impact of program-wide adoption and/or community-wide adoption on child, provider, and program outcomes; and c) the impact of training and coaching. The evaluation report is used by the SLT for their progress monitoring and planning as well as for providing a public report on outcomes. The State Leadership Team organizes an annual public celebration of outcomes and accomplishments and recognizes the work of high-fidelity programs, Master Cadre, staff, and funders.

Demonstration Sites

While all sites and programs that implement the Recommended Practices with fidelity are “Implementation Sites”, demonstration sites are local implementation sites or programs that agree to be early implementers as well as to serve as initial showplaces for high-fidelity implementation of the targeted Recommended Practices. Demonstration sites can be a building-level program, a cluster of pre-K or Head Start or child care classrooms, an early childhood program comprised of multiple centers guided by an organizational unit, or a unit of Part C/early intervention services. Part C/early intervention home-visiting programs might be a demonstration site when a group of home visiting professionals works within an organizational structure providing supervision, collaborative teaming, and professional development.

Each demonstration site has its own Leadership Team and staff who provide training and coaching and collect data on the fidelity of implementation and on child outcomes. Demonstration sites serve the statewide Recommended Practices initiative by sharing data on the outcomes of high-fidelity implementation of the Recommended Practices throughout the multi-year process of implementation and by hosting visits from policy makers and from personnel interested in implementing the practices in their own programs. These functions not only promote awareness of the initiative’s efficacy, they help build the political will necessary to fund, support, and sustain the statewide effort. In exchange, demonstration sites receive intensive training, coaching, and evaluation support from the state. In many states, demonstration sites receive public recognition as important partners with the State

Leadership Team.

The average time required for a site to achieve a high level of fidelity in implementing broad use of Recommended Practices throughout their program is approximately two years. It may take a year or two longer for very large programs. The process requires the development of a Program Leadership Team; an investment in staff training and ongoing professional development including internal coaching; and the collection, summary, and use of data for making decisions. From the perspective of implementation stages, the work of demonstration programs is described below.

Planning/Installation Stage

The State Leadership Team (SLT) establishes criteria for selecting demonstration sites and identifies three-to-five sites for initial training and implementation. These need to be high-quality sites that are eager to partner with the state as early implementers, willing to provide information to the State Leadership Team about challenges, and to provide data, tours, and other public-awareness functions. Each site creates its own Leadership Team, and members of the Program Leadership Teams participate in training for program-wide implementation of the targeted Recommended Practices. Personnel from each site are identified to participate in training on the Recommended Practices and at least one professional from each site is identified to participate in training to serve as the site's evaluation coordinator or data liaison.

Implementation Stage

The implementation stage begins with the completion of all training for site personnel. This training is organized by the SLT and provided by members of the Master Cadre (MC) with assistance from national ECTA Recommended Practices trainers or others capable of training the material with accuracy. Then, the MC provides external coaching to help the demonstration site's Leadership Team begin implementation of evidence-based strategies and collection of fidelity data. The program Leadership Team meets regularly and uses the Program-Wide *Benchmarks of Quality* to guide their efforts. The data are used for internal decision making (such as identifying professional-development objectives) and for sharing with the SLT so that the SLT can deliver targeted assistance as well as build public awareness of the outcomes of high-fidelity implementation of the model. Typically, a demonstration site will begin implementation with only a few units (classrooms, demonstration professionals) and will add units as the initial implementers gain fluency in the application of the Recommended Practices. Demonstration sites provide "demonstration" functions by sharing their data with the SLT and offering tours and descriptions of their program efforts so that prospective implementers can see the process and the benefits of the broad utilization of the Recommended Practices as they are put in place.

It is vitally important to keep in mind that demonstration sites need continuing support and recognition to maintain high levels of implementation fidelity. It is equally important that support for existing sites continue without compromise when the initiative begins training and

coaching for additional sites. Often there is a need for additional resources to ensure that adequate levels of support (training, coaching, and evaluation) are offered to sustain existing programs while investing in expansion and scale-up efforts. Both the State Leadership Team and the Program Leadership Team should have written sustainability plans.

Expansion and Scale-up

As demonstration sites acquire proficiency in implementing the evidence-based strategies, the SLT should add new implementation sites. This usually occurs in the second year. The SLT must again establish criteria and procedures for site selection. Arrangements for training and initial implementation must be made. The SLT must take care to configure the deployment of training and external coaching resources to avoid overstretching the capacity of the MC personnel. Some implementation sites may choose to participate as additional demonstration sites, and others may focus entirely on their own implementation. Either way, the sites must agree to share data on fidelity and on child outcomes. These data are essential for the SLT to monitor progress, identify problems, and continue to advocate for improvements and expansion of the initiative.

Master Cadre for Professional Development

The Master Cadre of trainers/coaches is the central element of professional development in the statewide implementation of Recommended Practices (RPs). The MC is established and supervised by the State Leadership Team, with one or two members or representatives of the SLT or staff associated with the SLT serving as paid coordinators or liaisons. The MC comprises approximately 15 individuals from around the state who are experienced providers of training and technical assistance and whose current professional responsibilities can enable them to add training, technical assistance, coaching support, and model program development in the use of the RPs to their scope of work.

The MC is the chief organ of the RPs implementation for building capacity within the state, principally through training of other trainers and coaches as early childhood programs begin and maintain implementation of the RPs. The members of the Master Cadre are selected by the SLT as one of the initial activities during the first year of implementation. Criteria for selection include: (a) experience and skills as trainers and providers of T/TA and coaching; (b) experience and expertise with young children, family support, and disability; (c) availability of time and ability to commit FTE; (d) interest and commitment to the fidelity use of the RPs; and (e) geographic distribution within the state and the state's population centers. Some states use a competitive application process for selection of MC members.

When members are selected, a commitment to participate should be formalized with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the MC member, the member's employer, and a representative of the SLT. The MOU should specify the total amount of time (FTE) that is expected for training, meetings, and delivery of the Recommended Practices training and technical assistance over a year's period of time. Ideally the commitment should be for a minimum of three-to-five years.

All members of the MC must participate in training on all elements of the Recommended Practices and fidelity implementation. Even if a member will be expected to focus on a specific area of expertise (e.g., pre-K, Part C), it is important that they be proficient in all areas of MC activity (e.g., training, TA, coaching, pre-K, Part C, etc.). All MC members should receive comprehensive training on the Recommended Practices for pre-K and infant/toddler strategies before they begin any implementation activities. At a minimum, training involves coverage of the packet of core articles and documents on the Recommended Practices and in-depth familiarity with the training materials.

The principal activities necessary for MC operations are listed below according to the stages of implementation, and they are listed also in the *State Benchmarks of Quality*.

Planning/Installation Stage

This stage occurs in the first year and is when the SLT plans for the establishment and operations of the MC. The SLT must consider how they will select MC members, write MOUs, provide initial training for the MC, document and evaluate the MC training, manage the MC's work, maintain and exercise oversight, and ensure that the MC's membership and high-quality training and coaching activities will be sustained and expanded over time. The SLT must address how the MC will reach all sectors of the early childhood system (e.g., Head Start, school districts, child care, Part C/early intervention) and whether the MC will have representatives from these sectors. The plan for MC development, implementation, maintenance, and expansion should be prepared in written form.

Implementation Stage

In the initial Implementation Stage, initiative organizers recruit, select, and train MC members. Procedures for managing activities of the MC and for reporting to the SLT must be implemented. Assignments for MC members need to be put in place with consideration for training of trainers and T/TA and external coaching for the demonstration sites. Areas of expertise should be delineated and assignments made accordingly. It is important to keep in mind that all members of the MC should be actively involved in filling roles that are functional for: (a) building statewide capacity, (b) developing fidelity implementation in the demonstration sites and eventually in the implementation sites, and (c) expanding awareness of the use of the Recommended Practices in communities and early childhood agencies around the state.

Scale-up and Sustainability

Plans are put into place for addressing attrition, for installing and training replacement members of the MC, and possibly for expanding the membership of the MC as program sites are added to the statewide Recommended Practices initiative in subsequent years.

Data, Evaluation, and Using Data to Make Decisions

As noted throughout this Guide, this RPs initiative is committed to data-based

decision making. Measures and evaluation procedures include:

- a fidelity measure or check list for indicating the level to which personnel are using the practices accurately;
- the Program-level *Benchmarks of Quality* that is used by teams to examine implementation fidelity and identify action steps; and
- a measure of child progress related to the intended outcomes associated with the targeted RPs.

Planning/Installation Stage

During the Planning and Installation Stage, the SLT examines measurement instruments being used by programs to gauge their alignment to the need for measuring fidelity of implementation and child outcomes. The SLT develops procedures for and provides training in using evaluation tools, and the SLT installs data systems that will be used for tracking and analyzing evaluation data.

Implementation Stage

In the Implementation Stage, the programs and the SLT decide who will collect the data, how and when the data will be collected, and how the results will be displayed and used for decision making. Additionally, in this stage, the data are collected and used by program and State Leadership Teams for making decisions such as targeting professional-development needs or identifying providers who are proficient and may serve as mentors or coaches to their peers, etc. The data are provided to the SLT as along with descriptions of challenges or barriers that require SLT attention and/or needs for program T/TA.

Scale-up and Sustainability Stage

Data are used by programs and the SLT to ensure continued high fidelity of implementation and desired child outcomes. Data are reported to the public, funders, and policy makers to market the impact of the RPs initiative as well as to garner support and resources.

Section 1 Appendix A

State Benchmarks of Quality

ECTA Center
The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

Implementing Recommended Practices Statewide: State Benchmarks of Quality

Purpose

The *State Benchmarks of Quality* is used by a collaborative State Leadership Team (SLT) to assess progress and plan future actions so that Recommended Practices (RPs) are available for providers and families statewide. The Benchmarks are grounded in the science of implementation which bridges the gap between an evidence-based practice (EBP) and the actual high-fidelity implementation of that practice. Implementation has several stages beginning with assessing needs and exploring which EBPs to implement. Once the SLT has chosen which RPs to implement, the *Benchmarks of Quality* is used to track progress on the stages of planning/installation, implementation and scale-up as well as planning for sustainability. Activities related to sustaining the effort are embedded throughout the process rather than being left until later.

Directions

Benchmarks of Quality is a self-assessment tool that can be completed by the SLT as a whole or in small groups with the results from each group compiled into one consensus document to ensure all SLT members are in agreement. The SLT should use the data for planning future work and tracking progress. Suggestions for how to use the data are found at the end of this document. Progress can be charted using a spreadsheet.

Critical elements (and sub-elements)	Benchmarks of Quality	Who (STL, staff, etc)	Elements in Place		
			Not in place 0	Needs improvement 2	In place (Evidence) 3
The "Critical Elements" listed in this column represent the core features and structures needed to implement and sustain the use of EBPs successfully	The items under the "Benchmarks of Quality" column describe the functions to be performed in order to operationalize the core feature. The relevant implementation stage is aligned with each Benchmark function to help the SLT match activities to the stage of work	In the "Who" column, indicate the person or structure (e.g., coordinator, staff, SLT) responsible for that item.			For each item marked as "In Place," provide evidence such as documents, data, descriptions, minutes of meetings etc.
State Leadership Team (SLT)					

SLT Membership and Logistics	The SLT has written criteria for membership which ensures broad representation from a range of stakeholders, programs, and agencies (e.g., early childhood special education, early intervention, higher education, Head Start, families, child care, mental health). [Planning Stage]				
	The SLT establishes a clear, written mission/vision [Planning Stage]				

Critical elements (and sub-elements)	Benchmarks of Quality	Who (STL, staff, etc)	Elements in Place		
			Not in place 0	Needs improvement 2	In place (Evidence) 3
SLT Membership and Logistics, *continued*	SLT members are able to communicate clearly the vision and mission of the State Leadership Team. [Planning Stage]				
	The SLT adopts written ground rules and logistics including criteria for membership, no substitutes at meetings, agreeing to decisions made in ones' absence, all agencies will share resources, all members attend RPs training, uses effective meeting strategies to ensure meetings are engaging and all members' voices are heard (see the TACSEI website for Meeting Tool Kit and examples of effective meeting ground rules and logistics). [Planning Stage]				
	The SLT records decisions from each SLT meeting. [Every Stage]				
	The SLT evaluates each meeting and uses the data to improve meetings (see Meeting Tool Kit on the TACSEI website for samples of meeting materials such as meeting evaluations). [Every Stage]				
	The SLT achieves consistent attendance and quality of meetings (75% average attendance over the year; and at least an average of 4 on the 5-point meeting evaluations). [Every Stage]				
	The SLT meets at least monthly during Planning and Implementation Stages and as needed during the Scale-up Stage. [Every Stage]				
	The SLT has a process in place for membership succession within their own agencies (replacing themselves) that ensures continued commitment, understanding, and progress of State Team work. [Sustainability planning]				
	The SLT has process in place for orienting new members. [Beginning with Planning Stage]				
Action Planning	The SLT develops an action plan that includes objectives related to all critical elements of these benchmarks. The action plan guides the work of the Team including designation of work groups, if necessary. The action plan has both short- and long-term objectives. [Every Stage]				
	The SLT reviews the action plan and updates their progress at each meeting. The action plan has an evaluation component for each action item and the evaluation is reviewed at each meeting. [Every Stage]				
	The SLT includes in every action plan objectives and activities that attend to sustainability and scale-up efforts by developing strategies for increasing the number of settings and services using RPs with the goal of achieving statewide, high-fidelity				

	implementation over time. [Every Stage]				
	The SLT action plan includes strategies for institutionalizing and embedding RPs into state infrastructures such as Quality Rating Systems and Early Learning Guidelines, etc. [Sustainability planning and Scale-up Stage]				
	The SLT annually reviews its mission/vision statement, action-plan outcomes and other evaluation data, SLT membership, ground rules, and logistics, and makes revisions as necessary. The annual review includes a celebration of accomplishments. [Every Stage]				

Critical elements (and sub-elements)	Benchmarks of Quality	Who (STL, staff, etc)	Elements in Place		
			Not in place 0	Needs improvement 2	In place (Evidence) 3
SLT Coordination and Staffing	A SLT member serves as Team Coordinator or Chair (i.e., lead contact) to represent the Team and work with staff to facilitate the work of the SLT and to coordinate internal and external communication. [Planning Stage]				
	The RPs Initiative and SLT are supported by funded staff to implement the work. [Beginning with Initial Implementation Stage]				
	The SLT sustainability and scale-up planning includes plans for adequate and appropriate professional and administrative staffing. [Beginning with Planning Stage]				
SLT Funding	The SLT identifies funding sources to cover activities for at least three years. [Sustainability planning & Scale-up Stage]				
	SLT members share resources for the work of the action plan (staffing, materials, training, etc.). [Every Stage]				
SLT Communication & Visibility	The SLT develops an annual written report on the progress and outcome data and distributes it to programs, funders, and policy makers. [Beginning with Initial Implementation]				
	The SLT identifies and implements dissemination strategies to ensure that stakeholders are kept aware of activities & accomplishments (e.g., website, newsletter, conferences). [Every Stage]				
	The SLT develops a written awareness and marketing plan that includes a presentation (e.g., presentation based on annual data and report) to policy makers and current and potential funders. It is used to recruit programs and individuals to participate in the RPs initiative. [Initial Implementation Stage]				
Authority, Priority, and Communication Linkages	The RPs work aligns with the goals and objectives of each agency represented on the SLT [Every Stage]				
	Each SLT representative is authorized to make decisions for their agency related to the RPs Initiative and/or is able to return a decision to the SLT within two-weeks. [Every Stage]				
	SLT members engage in activities within their agency that result in support for the RPs Initiative (e.g., succession planning, presenting annual reports, orientation presentations). [Every Stage]				
	The SLT develops written communication protocols for regularly hearing from staff who are charged with implementing the RPs as well as the Master Cadre, demonstration sites, implementation sites, and communities. The protocols focus on bringing to light				

	any challenges that need to be attended to by the SLT and that cannot be resolved by individual programs or staff. [Initial Implementation Stage]				
Family Involvement					
Family Participation and Communication	The SLT includes representation from family organizations. [Planning Stage]				
	The SLT makes training opportunities related to the RPs available for families. [Every Stage]				
	The SLT develops and employs mechanisms for communicating with families about the initiative. [Every Stage]				
	The SLT develops mechanisms for family members to provide feedback at least annually on the quality of the RPs experienced by their children. [Every Stage]				

Critical elements (and sub-elements)	Benchmarks of Quality	Who (STL, staff, etc)	Elements in Place		
			Not in place 0	Needs improvement 2	In place (Evidence) 3
Demonstration Sites					
Demonstration Programs	The SLT selects demonstration programs/sites (and for the case of home visiting, demonstration professionals) and partners with them to provide data that show the effectiveness of the RPs. The sites provide tours and information for interested parties. Demonstration sites have a Program Leadership Team and at least one internal coach [Initial Implementation Stage]				
	The SLT develops readiness criteria, recruitment and acceptance procedures, and MOUs for programs participating in the initiative as demonstration programs. [Initial Implementation Stage]				
Implementation Communities and Sites	The SLT develops readiness criteria, recruitment and acceptance procedures, and MOUs for new community and program entities to participate in the initiative. All participating programs and communities agree to having a Leadership Team, coaches, and trainers [Scale-up Stage]				
	The SLT develops a statewide capacity (funding, staffing) for training and supporting new program and community Leadership Teams, coaches, and trainers in the high-fidelity adoption/implementation process while continuing to support the high fidelity of the original demonstration programs. [Implementation & Scale-up Stage]				
Professional Development					
Master Cadre	The SLT establishes a statewide network or master cadre of RPs professional-development (PD) experts to build and sustain high-fidelity implementation. [Implementation Stage]				
	The SLT develops an identification process, recruitment and acceptance criteria, and MOUs for RP Master Cadre members.[Initial Implementation Stage]				
	The SLT develops statewide RPs training capacity that includes providing ongoing training and support for Master Cadre members who, in turn, train and support community and program staff and Leadership Teams. [Implementation Stage]				
	The SLT creates and puts in place a quality-assurance mechanism (e.g., certification, approval) to ensure that trainers are able to provide				

	training in the RPs accurately and effectively; and that coaches are able to coach coaches to implementation fidelity resulting in success for children and providers [Implementation Stage]				
	The SLT implements a plan ensuring that programs and communities statewide have access to Master Cadre members, including necessary resources and on-site coaching that result in the high-fidelity adoption, implementation, and sustainability of RPs. [Planning Stage]				
Ongoing Support and Technical Assistance	The SLT employs a technical-assistance plan for ongoing support and resources for the RPs Master Cadre, demonstration sites, and implementation sites to ensure high-fidelity implementation and sustainability. Such support includes planning for turn-over and succession of key individuals. [Sustainability planning and Scale-up Stage]				
	An external coach (Master Cadre) is available to meet at least monthly with each emerging Program Leadership Team (emerging teams are teams that have not met the high-fidelity implementation criteria), and at least quarterly with established teams. [Sustainability planning & Scale-up Stage]				

Critical elements (and sub-elements)	Benchmarks of Quality	Who (STL, staff, etc)	Elements in Place		
			Not in place 0	Needs improvement 2	In place (Evidence) 3
Ongoing Support and Technical Assistance, *continued*	An external coach (Master Cadre) is available to meet at least quarterly with Program Leadership Teams who have been implementing the RPs for at least one year with high fidelity. [Sustainability planning]				
Evaluation/Data-Based Decision Making					
Data-Based Decision Making	All programs, communities, coaches, and trainers submit the data agreed upon in their respective MOUs. [Implementation Stage & Sustainability planning]				
	Training, materials, and support are available to Master Cadre members, programs, and communities on what data to collect, why, and how to use the data for making decisions for improving outcomes for children, providers, programs, and communities as well as how to submit the data. [Every Stage]				
	A process is in place for programs and communities to enter and summarize the data elements above as well as training on how to use the data for program improvement. [Every Stage]				
	A process is in place for the SLT to access the data or summaries of the data described above. The Team uses these data as part of their action plan for regular evaluation as well as the annual evaluation report. [Every Stage]				
	The SLT annually prepares an evaluation report that describes: a) the extent to which program- and community-wide high-fidelity adoption is being implemented, sustained, and scaled-up; b) the impact of program-wide adoption and/or community-wide adoption on child, provider, and program outcomes; and c) the impact of training and coaching. The SLT uses the evaluation report for their own progress monitoring and planning as well as for providing a public report on outcomes [Every Stage]				

	The SLT provides a public celebration of outcomes & accomplishments annually. [Every Stage]				

Next Steps

- For each benchmark rated as a 0 or 1, update the appropriate action plan item with the date, status, and plans for improvement.
- For each benchmark rated as a 2, update the appropriate action item. Note plans for sustainability and scale-up, and include the progress and evidence in the annual report.
- Chart Progress on a spreadsheet.

Acknowledgements

This document was adapted from :

Fox, L., Hemmeter, M.L., & Jack, S. (2006). *Early Childhood Program-Wide Positive Behavior Support Benchmarks of Quality.* Tampa, Florida: University of South Florida.

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Section 2
Master Cadre of Training and Technical-Assistance Providers

What Is the Master Cadre/External Coach?

To build state-wide capacity for implementation of Recommended Practices (RPs), the state must identify a Master Cadre of training and technical assistance professionals who will be responsible for providing training and technical assistance to programs, coaches, and practitioners. ECTA requires that the state identify 12-20 professionals who will commit to serving in this role for a minimum of two years.

The Master Cadre might include professionals who currently are in training and technical assistance (T/TA) roles, or the state might identify and allocate the resources to establish this group of T/TA providers. The MC could include specialists who focus on the delivery of specific elements of the T/TA services (e.g., training). However, professionals who will specialize in only one element in their service provision must participate in all cadre training events to ensure deep exposure to the model and an understanding of all elements related to implementation. The MC might include an equal number of professionals who specialize in training and technical assistance to center-based programs and of those who specialize in programs providing family coaching through Part C service delivery.

ECTA Center will provide multiple training events within your state to begin the process of state-wide implementation and to establish Implementation Sites. The MC will be deeply involved in those activities with the goal that they gain the capacity to continue the work in the absence of the ECTA Center professional-development team. ECTA Center will provide monthly technical-assistance calls to the MC and be available via phone, e-mail, and video conferencing as MC professionals provide training to practitioners and external coaching to the Implementation Sites. It is critical that MC members be able to commit a substantial amount of time to participating in these activities (i.e., a minimum of one day per week). The goal of ECTA Center is for the state to have a highly-qualified group of training and technical assistance providers who can sustain, support, and scale-up implementation of RPs after ECTA Center support has ended.

Master Cadre members will be involved in both training and external coaching to implementation sites[1] and professionals. ECTA Center will train and mentor the MC to build their capacity in all of those aspects. In the first year, the MC will dedicate time to attending all trainings and providing external coaching to Implementation Sites' leadership teams. This provides the MC with an opportunity to understand the various aspects of

[1] Implementation sites refer to the programs that are selected for the implementation of RPs. Programs might be an early childhood center program, Part C provider agency, public school early childhood classrooms that are part of a district program, Head Start center, or other entities that provide services to children birth to five that are supported by IDEA. Programs must have administrative leadership that provides guidance and supervision related to the professional practices that are used by practitioners within the program.

implementation and to strengthen their skills with the content area and guiding implementation leadership teams.

Because the MC will be working directly with practitioners and programs, they will be in a critical position to bring information about local implementation to the SLT. They will have knowledge about the capacity of practitioners and programs, the barriers to implementation that are being encountered, and the supports needed by practitioners and programs. In addition, they will be critical partners in the delivery of the state's efforts toward implementation. Thus, the SLT should establish a communication mechanism for obtaining feedback from the MC and working formally with the MC while the infrastructure for delivering professional development is refined.

How Are Master Cadre Members Selected?

Master Cadre members should have the background, knowledge, experiences, and time needed for this critical role in the state-wide implementation process. Other factors that might be considered in the selection of MC members are the desire to achieve geographic representation or to ensure that members are included who can bring specialized knowledge that might be needed (e.g., ability to work with tribal programs, expertise in Part C).

The knowledge, skills, and experiences that will be important for MC members are:

- Educational experiences including coursework in EC education or a related field
- Experiences working with young children (with and without special needs) and their families
- Experiences leading or participating on collaborative teams
- Experiences providing technical assistance across diverse EC settings
- Experiences in providing consultation to classrooms and/or coaching to practitioners
- Skills and experiences in providing training to early educators and early interventionists
- Knowledge of RPs and their application in providing intervention and supports to young children and their families receiving IDEA services.

Master Cadre members are typically selected through an application process (see Section 2 Appendix A for a sample recruitment announcement and application packet). The use of an application is desirable, even if your recruitment is from an existing technical-assistance system, as it provides the team with an opportunity to be explicit about the initiative and the commitment necessary to become a MC member.

Prior to releasing the application for potential MC members, the State Leadership Team should consider the following issues and determine how the MC will be used within the state. The answers to these questions should be determined before inviting applications:

- What is the time commitment for the MC member? How many hours will a member need to commit each month and for how many years?
- How will MC members be supported to do this work? Will agencies commit these resources and provide the role release for MC members or will new resources be identified?

- Will you seek geographic representation of MC members? Will you seek other specializations for your MC?
- Will formal agreements be needed with current employers to support the work of MC members?
- Who will serve in a role as coordinator for the MC? The coordinator will be needed to organize the work, make assignments for training and program technical assistance, and serve as the link between the SLT and the members of the MC.

Typically, the SLT will designate a committee to manage the selection of MC members. They will develop the application, determine the application-process steps, and score applications. After applications are scored the committee selects the MC members.

How Are Master Cadre Members Prepared?

Master Cadre members are trained and mentored by the ECTA Center professional development team assigned to your state. The process of training and mentoring includes:

- The provision of background readings for review prior to training
- Attendance of the MC members at each training event
- Debriefing sessions after each training event
- The provision of all training materials used by the ECTA Center professional development team
- Monthly technical-assistance calls to discuss external coaching and the support of implementation sites and expansion efforts.

The ECTA professional development team will assist the MC by sharing training and technical-assistance materials, reviewing training materials and other documents, and guiding problem-solving as each MC member works with sites, practitioners, and other requests.

ECTA will train the MC in the use of an adult learning training method called PALS II (Participatory Adult Learning Strategy, PALS II) that emphasizes (a) active learner participation in all phases of learning new material or practices, (b) instructor/trainer facilitation of learner experiences, and (c) a framework for introducing new material in an incremental fashion so that the learning builds on or adds to existing knowledge. The PALS II model is based on the findings from adult learning method research syntheses as well as findings from evaluation studies of use of this adult learning method. The training will be organized in four phases of training (Foundation, Application, Evaluation, and Mastery (See Section 2 Appendix B).

Much of the training preparation of the MC occurs through their experiences in seeing effective training delivered and reflecting on how they will deliver training to future audiences. In addition, the MC will be learning how to serve as external coaches to implementation sites. External coaching to an implementation site involves guiding the implementation Program Leadership Team as they conduct team meetings, evaluate implementation and intervention fidelity, use data-based decision-making tools, provide coaching to practitioners and program personnel, implement PD activities, promote family engagement, and other critical elements related to implementation fidelity. The ECTA professional development team will guide the MC

in the provision of external coaching and serve as a support to the MC members as they learn those skills.

How Will the Master Cadre Support Programs and Professionals?

The MC will be the training and technical-assistance providers who form the foundation of the state's cross-sector, integrated, professional-development effort. They will serve as the first generation of training and technical-assistance providers who, after mentorship by the ECTA Center professional development team, will train and support the next generation or an expanded cadre of additional training and technical-assistance providers. One of the tasks of the State Leadership Team is to determine how this cross-sector, integrated, professional-development system will be designed and the role of the MC in expansion and sustainability.

A critical focus of the MC will be to promote program-wide implementation by implementation sites. Program-wide implementation is essential to implementation fidelity as it ensures that programs have the capacity to support the implementation of RPs. This is ESSENTIAL to the effort of the state to achieve implementation and intervention fidelity that will optimize child and family outcomes. In this role, the MC member will serve as an external coach to the site's implementation leadership team. An external coach guides the team in establishing staff buy-in, promoting family involvement, using practitioner and program-implementation fidelity tools, ensuring practitioner/professional development and coaching, designing a system to provide assessment-based individualized interventions to children with intensive learning needs, and using data to guide the team's decisions about implementation and outcomes.

During the first year of ECTA Center support to the state, the MC will become familiar with the training materials, begin planning how to provide training to practitioners within the state, and learn how to support program-wide implementation in the role of an external coach. By the end of the first year of our partnership, the MC should begin to expand training efforts and initiate a process for recruiting and supporting additional implementation sites and practitioners. The plan for expansion activities and statewide training will be guided by the SLT. In addition, the SLT should consider how they will expand the ranks of the MC. Master Cadre members can be used to mentor new members as a way to expand the numbers of available training and technical-assistance providers.

What Supports Are Needed for the Master Cadre?

The State Leadership Team should ensure that the MC is guided by a coordinator who provides leadership for the activities of the MC and attends all ECTA Center training events and technical-assistance conference calls. The MC coordinator will work with the ECTA professional development team to ensure communication between ECTA Center and the MC. The coordinator will also serve as a communication link to the SLT.

To ensure that the MC can work efficiently, it will be critical that they have access to technology for communication (e.g., conference calls, web-supported calls) and file sharing

(e.g., shared drive, file-share system). In addition, the MC will need to have support for promoting and offering training events (e.g., space, materials, registration systems, continuing education credit, evaluation, etc.) and the recruitment and support of implementation sites (e.g., recruitment, travel reimbursement, materials, etc.).

Section 2 Appendix A

Sample Application Packet

Sample Letter of Invitation for Master Cadre Members

In (State name), we are highly committed to ensuring that young children (birth to five) receive effective early intervention and early childhood special education services that improve child outcomes. We are working with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA Center) to increase the implementation of Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices (RPs) and enhance the outcomes for children and families. ECTA Center will be assisting (state name) in strengthening our capacity to ensure that all practitioners and programs are implementing DEC Recommended Practices that will promote child engagement in learning opportunities. This effort includes establishing a state-level, cross-sector, leadership team to guide the initiative; a master cadre of training and technical-assistance providers to build the capacity of programs and practitioners; and demonstration and implementation sites.

The State Leadership Team is seeking applications from individuals who meet the criteria outlined below and who are willing to make a two-year commitment to become part of a statewide Master Cadre of Training and Technical-Assistance (T/TA) Providers. Applications must be submitted by e-mail to _____. Applications are due on or before _____.

The Master T/TA Cadre will be limited to no more than 12-20 experienced technical-assistance providers/coaches who will be responsible for training other trainers and coaches as the state scales up and sustains the implementation of Recommended Practices following the state's two-year involvement as a ECTA Center state partner. Master Cadre (MC) members initially will be trained and mentored by ECTA Center staff as the MC member provides external coaching to establish high-fidelity implementation sites. Master Cadre member activities over the next two years are listed below. The State Leadership Team will support MC members with funding for travel, lodging, meals, and substitute teachers, as needed, in order to participate in the face-to-face trainings.

Master Cadre Member Activities

- Monthly contacts with the ECTA Center staff through multiple conference calls and training events
- Participation in all ECTA Center training and technical-assistance events (PW Leadership Team training, coach training, data-coordinator training, practitioner training)
- Review background readings and training materials from the ECTA Center
- Learn and use the Participatory Adult Learning Strategy (PALS II) model for training and coaching activities
- Provide external coaching to support implementation-site leadership teams
- Assist in the development of a training plan for state training activities
- Plan future training events with ECTA Center guidance.
- Provide train-the-trainer events to build state training capacity
- Provide coach-training events to build coaching capacity
- Provide data-coordinator training to build data decision-making capacity
- Conduct program-wide implementation events to build the capacity of program-wide

implementation leadership teams
- Provide ongoing, sustainable consultation and guidance to trainers and coaches within the state

Benefits to Program/Agency/Employer of the Master Training Cadre Member

As a result of your participation in this project, you will gain:
- Increased organizational capacity
- Increased skills and knowledge in the use of DEC Recommended Practices to promote child learning
- Evidence-based, high-quality support for your staff
- Promotion of school readiness
- Connection to a statewide network of early childhood programs and resources
- Access to follow-up materials and high-quality print/web-based resources
- Support for your MC member in terms of travel, lodging, and substitutes, as needed, in order to participate in the face-to-face RPs trainings

Master Cadre Member Criteria

Required Qualifications:
- Coursework in early childhood education or a related field
- Experience in a training, coaching, or mentorship role
- Five years' experience working with infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers, and their families.

Preferred Experience or Educational Background:
- Experience with observational assessment tools
- Experience working with children with special needs
- Experience leading and participating on collaborative teams
- Providing technical assistance as well as training across diverse early childhood settings
- Working in early care and education and/or early intervention settings (at least five years of experience)
- Master's Degree in early childhood, early childhood special education, or related field
- Must commit to ___ FTE (a minimum of .20 FTE) for training, consultation, and preparation

Required Commitment:
- ECTA Center mentorship
- Must attend all training events, in person and online

Master Cadre Application Packet

Applications are due on or before _____ by e-mail to: (state coordinator contact information) Name Organization/Agency Name

School District (if applicable)
Address
Phone
Fax
E-mail

- ☐ I/We have read the information in this document in full regarding the opportunity to become a Master Cadre Member for the ECTA Center Recommended Practices (RPs) project.
- ☐ Our names below indicate our program's commitment to meeting the expectations outlined in the previous pages.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Applicant	Applicant Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Program Administrator Center Director, Board Chair, or School Principal	Signature	Date

- ☐ The program director signature section does not apply to me.
- ☐ Attached is a signed letter of commitment from my program administrator (or Center) director/ supervisor/board chair or school principal indicating an understanding of the training commitment I will be required to fulfill as well as a commitment on the part of my agency to assist with ongoing activities to sustain the RP training and implementation in the state.
- ☐ I understand that if selected as a Master Cadre member I will be required to participate in at least 10 days of face-to-face training and a minimum of one day per week participation in web-based training, leadership team site visits, conference calls, and state training/outreach activities.
- ☐ I also understand that I will be expected to fulfill additional training requirements in year two of the project and that I will be responsible to provide train-the-trainer, program-wide implementation, and coach training events and collect evaluation data to help build training capacity and program-wide adoption and implementation of the RPs.

Work Experience

Please provide complete responses to the items below.

1. Describe your educational experience including coursework in early childhood special education or related field.
2. Describe your work experience in working with infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers with/without special needs.

3. Describe your work experience in coaching and working with families.
4. Describe your experience in leading and participating on collaborative teams.
5. Describe your experience in providing technical assistance across diverse early childhood settings.
6. Describe your experience in providing coaching/mentoring.
7. Describe your experience in working in early intervention and/or early care and education settings (at least five years of experience).
8. Describe any experience you may have with program-wide implementation of evidence-based practices or providing consultation to programs for systems change.
9. Describe your experience in supporting practitioners to use data-based decision making.

Section 2 Appendix B

PALS II Model

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Let's Be PALS

An Evidence-Based Approach to Professional Development

Carl J. Dunst, PhD; Carol M. Trivette, PhD

An evidence-based approach to professional development is described on the basis of the findings from a series of research syntheses and meta-analyses of adult learning methods and strategies. The approach, called PALS (Participatory Adult Learning Strategy), places major emphasis on both active learner involvement in all aspects of training opportunities and instructor/trainer-guided learner experiences. The use of PALS practices has been found to be associated with improved learner knowledge, use, and mastery of different types of intervention practices. Implications for in-service training are described. **Key words:** *adult learning, evidence-based, in-service training, instructor-guided learning, participatory learning*

NO INTERVENTION PRACTICE, no matter what its evidence base, is likely to be learned and adopted if the methods and strategies used to teach or train students, practitioners, parents, or others are not themselves effective. It is therefore useful to make a distinction between intervention practices informed by research (Dunst & Trivette, 2009; Kazdin, 2008) and the methods used to teach or train others to use the practices (Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999; Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). As Fixsen et al. (2005) noted, it is important to be aware of the difference between the intervention practices that are used to affect behavior change and the training methods used to promote adoption and use of the intervention practices.

This article includes a description of an adult learning strategy called PALS (Participatory Adult Learning Strategy) informed by findings from several recently completed meta-analyses of adult learning methods (Trivette, 2007; Trivette & Dunst, 2009a, 2009b; Trivette, Dunst, Hamby, & O'Herin, 2009a, 2009b). The syntheses were completed, in part, to discern whether different opinions about adult learning are supported by research evidence and to identify the conditions under which adult learning methods are optimally effective. Even a cursory review of the adult learning literature finds varied assertions about what are and what are not the most important characteristics of adult learning (eg, Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006; Merriam, 2001a).

The article includes 4 sections. The first section includes a brief overview of both adult learning theory and the 4 adult learning methods that were the focus of analysis in our research syntheses. The second section includes a summary of the major findings from one of our meta-analyses of studies of adult learning (Trivette et al., 2009a, 2009b). The third section includes a description of the key elements of PALS based on the results of all our

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meta-analyses. The fourth section includes a description of the implications of PALS for professional development, with particular focus on in-service training opportunities.

ADULT LEARNING THEORY

Adult learning refers to a collection of theories, methods, and approaches for describing the characteristics of and conditions under which the process of learning is optimized (Merriam, 2001b; Trotter, 2006; Yang, 2003). Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (1998) used the term "andragogy" to describe the assumptions and foundations of adult learning: readiness-to-learn, self-directedness, active learner participation, and solution-content. Knowles' (1996) adult learning principles have been used widely to propose teaching methods and strategies for instructors, teachers, trainers, and others to enhance learner knowledge acquisition and use (eg, Imel, 1998; Merriam, 2001a).

Adult learning methods

The 4 adult learning methods that have been the focus of our meta-analyses are *accelerated learning* (Meier, 2000), *coaching* (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990), *guided design* (Hancock, Coscarelli, & White, 1983), and *just-in-time training* (Beckett, 2000). Each of the methods, to varying degrees, includes elements that Knowles et al. (1998) and others (eg, Trotter, 2006) consider the essential features of adult learning. Accelerated learning includes methods for creating a relaxed emotional state, an orchestrated and multisensory learning experience, and active learner participation in the learning process (Russell & Morrow, 1999). "Coaching is a . . . method of transferring skills and expertise from more experienced and knowledgeable practitioners . . . to less experienced ones" (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990, p. 230). Guided design is characterized by a decision-making and problem-solving process that includes procedures for using real-world problems for mastering learning content in the context of group learning and facilitator guidance and feedback (Wales & Stager, 1982). Just-in-time training includes access to and provision of information, advice, guidance, and so forth in response to learner requests that are intended to improve learner performance (Brandenburg & Ellinger, 2003).

Research reviews on the effectiveness of these different adult learning methods (eg, Felix, 1989; Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987; Stephenson, 2003), as well as research reviews of adult learning approaches in general (eg, Bishop, 1996; Brookfield, 2006; Merriam, 2001a; Smith & DeFrates-Densch, 2008), can be found scattered throughout the literature. Most of these reviews have analyzed adult learning methods at a macrolevel and have not focused on the features of the methods and strategies that affect learning. Available research reviews are informative but have not identified the specific characteristics of adult learning methods and strategies that best explain what matters most in terms of explaining learner outcomes.

META-ANALYSIS OF ADULT LEARNING METHODS

Trivette et al. (2009a, 2009b) recently completed a meta-analysis and research synthesis of studies of accelerated learning, coaching, guided design, and just-in-time training that focused on those practices that make adult learning effective. (The complete report can be obtained free of charge at www.wbpress.com, www.practicalevaluation.org or http://tnt.asu.edu) The meta-analysis is part of a series of research syntheses on adult learning focusing on the characteristics of the practices that are associated with learner outcomes (Trivette, 2007; Trivette & Dunst, 2009a, 2009b). The conduct of the syntheses was guided by a characteristics-consequences framework that focuses on unpacking, disentangling, and identifying the practice characteristics that are most strongly associated with study outcomes (Dunst & Trivette, 2009).

Method

Four searches were conducted, one for each adult learning method, using the search procedures described by Lucas and Cutspec (2007). ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center), Psychological Abstracts (PsycINFO), Academic Search Elite, Business Source Elite, WorldCAT, Social Sciences Citation Index, InfoTRAC Expanded Academic ASAP, MEDLINE, OCLC PapersFirst, and Dissertation Abstracts were searched to identify studies. These were supplemented by searches of Ingenta, Google Scholar, ABI/INFORM Global, the Cochrane databases, and an EndNote library maintained by the Puckett Institute. We also conducted manual searches of seminal papers and all retrieved articles, chapters, books, and journals devoted to the different adult learning methods. We also conducted Social Sciences Citation Index author searches of leaders in the development of each of the adult learning methods.

Studies were included if (1) the participants were *adult learners* (defined as post–high school age), (2) sufficient information was included to code the use of different adult learning method characteristics (see the following text), (3) the adult learning methods were compared with some control or contrasting condition, and (4) either a randomized controlled trial or comparison group design was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the adult learning methods. Studies were excluded if the participants were elementary or secondary school students, insufficient information was included about specific elements of the adult learning procedures, and preexperimental or single-participant research designs were used (see Trivette & Dunst, 2009b, for a synthesis of an adult learning method that includes single-participant design studies).

Findings reported in *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Bransford et al., 2000; Donovan et al., 1999), a research review on the *science of learning*, were used to identify 6 adult learning method characteristics and to code the studies in the research synthesis using these characteristics to determine the extent to which the presence of the characteristics was related to variations in study outcomes. Table 1 shows the characteristics that were the focus of analysis. The 3 main features were planning, application, and deep understanding. Each

Table 1. Characteristics of the adult learning methods that were the focus of analysis

Features/characteristics	Definition
Planning	
Introduce	Engage the learner in a preview of the material, knowledge, or practice that is the focus of instruction or training
Illustrate	Demonstrate or illustrate the use or applicability of the material, knowledge, or practice for the learner
Application	
Practice	Engage the learner in the use of the material, knowledge, or practice
Evaluate	Engage the learner in a process of evaluating the consequence or outcome of the application of the material, knowledge, or practice
Deep understanding	
Reflection	Engage the learner in self-assessment of his or her acquisition of knowledge and skills as a basis for identifying "next steps" in the learning process
Mastery	Engage the learner in a process of assessing his or her experience in the context of some conceptual or practical model or framework or some external set of standards or criteria

of the main features included 2 practice characteristics. Planning included methods and procedures for both: (1) introducing new knowledge, material, or practices to learners (eg, class/workshop presentations, preclass assignments) and (2) illustrating and demonstrating the use of the knowledge, material, or practices (eg, demonstrations, role-playing). Application included methods and procedures for both: (1) learner applied use of the knowledge, material, or practices (eg, learner use of a practice, problem-solving activities) and (2) learner evaluation of the outcome or consequence of application (eg, instructor/learner review, instructor feedback). Deep understanding included methods and procedures for (1) engaging the learner in reflection on his or her learning experience (eg, performance improvement reviews, group reflection) and (2) self-assessment of the knowledge and mastery as a foundation for identifying new learning opportunities (eg, learner self-assessment, standards-based assessment). The 6 characteristics are nearly identical to those described by Graham and Wedman (1989) as the key features of effective adult learning practices.

Search results

Seventy-nine studies were located in 66 research reports for the meta-analysis. The studies used either randomized control designs ($n = 58$) or nonequivalent comparison group designs ($n = 21$). The studies included 3152 experimental group participants and 2988 control or comparison group participants. The learners included classroom teachers, student teachers, undergraduate students, graduate students, medical personnel, counselors, English as second language learners, and business personnel (eg, sales and customer service personnel). The settings in which the adult learning methods were implemented included college classrooms; elementary, junior, and high schools; special education classrooms; hospitals and private physician practices; and various business and work settings. The learner outcomes in the studies included teaching practices, foreign language learning, nursing and medical practices, science and engineering, mathematics and statistics, economics, and rare vocabulary.

Seventy-six studies included the introduction of some type of knowledge, material, or practices, and 37 studies included the demonstration or illustration of some type of knowledge, material, or practices. Fifty-eight studies included some type of learner application, and 31 studies included some type of learner evaluation of their use of the knowledge, material, or practices. Thirty-three studies included some type of learner reflection, and 29 studies included some type of learner self-assessment of mastery. One-third of the studies evaluated training provided between 1 and 10 hours, one-third of the studies evaluated training between 11 and 40 hours, and one-third of the studies evaluated training of more than 40 hours.

Method of analysis

Cohen's d effect sizes for the mean difference in the posttest study outcomes between the experimental groups and the control or comparison groups were used for assessing the effectiveness of the adult learning methods. The average Cohen's d effect size was computed for each of the 6 adult learning method characteristics as well as type of practice for each characteristic to ascertain which characteristics and practices accounted for the largest between group differences. The average size of effects and their 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were used for substantive interpretation. A CI not including zero indicates that the average effect size is significantly greater than zero at the .05 level (Hedges, 1994).

SYNTHESIS FINDINGS

The average effect size (95% CI) for all studies and outcomes combined was 0.58 (95% CI = 0.45–0.70), indicating that the adult learning methods were associated with positive posttest outcome differences between the experimental and control or comparison

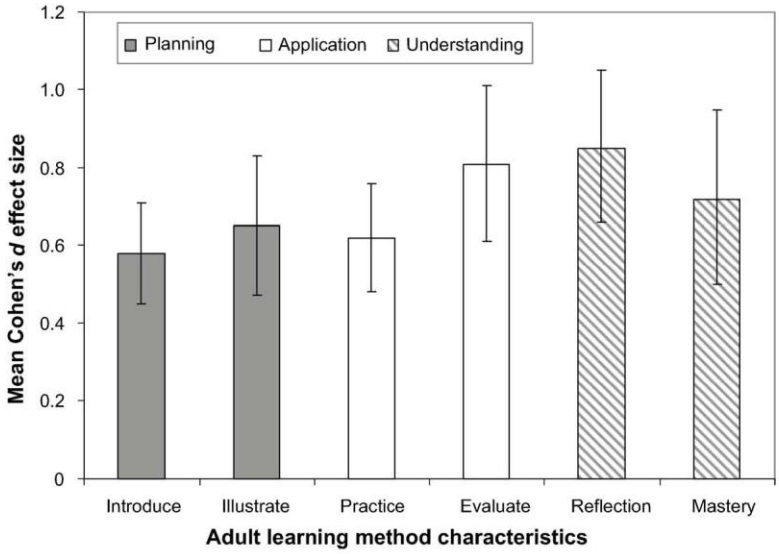

Figure 1. Average effect size and 95% confidence intervals for the relationship between the 6 adult learning method characteristics and the study outcomes.

groups. The average effect sizes and 95% CIs for the individual adult learning methods were 0.86 (95% CI = 0.41–1.31) for just-in-time training, 0.68 (95% CI = 0.47–0.90) for coaching, 0.67 (95% CI = 0.39–0.95) for guided design, and 0.35 (95% CI = 0.20–0.51) for accelerated learning.

Adult learning method characteristics

Figure 1 shows the average effect sizes and 95% CIs for each of the 6 adult learning method characteristics for all outcomes measures combined. All of the characteristics were associated with positive learner outcomes as evidenced by the average sizes of effects and the fact that none of the CIs included zero. The pattern of results shows that the more actively involved the learners were in judging the consequences of their learning experiences (evaluate, reflection, and mastery), the stronger the relationship between the adult learning method characteristics and the study outcomes. This finding highlights the relative importance of active learner participation in learning new knowledge or practice and learner engagement in judging his or her experience with new material.

In addition to the main results, there were several other findings that helped elucidate the conditions under which the adult learning methods were most effective. Large doses of learning opportunities distributed over time increased the effectiveness of the adult learning methods ($d = 0.70$, 95% CI = 0.50–0.88). Instructor- or trainer-guided learning opportunities positively affected learner outcomes ($d = 0.83$, 95% CI = 0.52–1.14).

Adult learning method practices

Table 2 shows the results for the different practices used for each of the adult learning method practices. All of the practices, except a combination of imagery and dramatic readings for introducing new information, were significantly related to the study outcomes.

Introduction of the learning topic

Two methods proved to be the most effective in terms of introducing new knowledge, material, or practices to the learners: (1) out-of-class activities and self-instruction and (2) warm-up exercises and preclass quizzes. Both practices actively involved learners in some type of exercise or task prior to instructor

Table 2. Effect sizes for the different adult learning method characteristics and practices

Characteristics/practices	Number: Studies	Number: Effect sizes	Cohen's *d* mean effect size	95% Confidence interval
Introducing information				
Preclass exercises	9	9	1.02	0.63–1.41
Out-of-class activities/self-instruction	12	20	0.76	0.44–1.09
Classroom/workshop lectures	26	108	0.68	0.47–0.89
Dramatic readings	18	40	0.35	0.13–0.57
Imagery	7	18	0.34	0.08–0.59
Dramatic readings/imagery	4	11	0.15	−0.33–0.62
Illustrate/demonstrate				
Learner input	6	6	0.89	0.28–1.51
Role-playing/simulation	20	64	0.87	0.58–1.17
Real-life example/real life + role-playing	6	10	0.67	0.27–1.07
Instructional video	5	49	0.33	0.09–0.59
Practicing				
Real-life application + role-playing	5	20	1.10	0.48–1.72
Problem-solving tasks	16	29	0.67	0.39–0.95
Real-life application	17	83	0.58	0.35–0.81
Learning games/writing exercises	9	11	0.55	0.11–0.99
Role-playing (skits, plays)	11	35	0.41	0.21–0.62
Evaluation				
Assess strengths/weaknesses	14	48	0.96	0.67–1.26
Review experience/make changes	19	35	0.60	0.36–0.83
Reflection				
Performance improvement	9	34	1.07	0.69–1.45
Journaling/behavior suggestion	8	17	0.75	0.49–1.00
Group discussion about feedback	16	29	0.67	0.39–0.95
Mastery				
Standards-based assessment	13	44	0.76	0.42–1.10
Self-assessment	16	29	0.67	0.39–0.95

presentation or explanation of the learning topic as a means of introducing new information or practice. Classroom lectures were also significantly related to the study outcomes but not as strongly as active learner participation in having them introduced to the learning topic.

Illustrating the learning topic

Two methods for illustrating the use of new knowledge, material, or practices were most strongly related to the study outcomes: (1) instructor use of role-playing or simulations and (2) incorporating learner input into demonstrating the applicability of the new knowledge, material, or practices. A combination of real-life demonstrations and role-plays also proved to be an effective strategy for illustrating the learning topic.

Practicing the use of the learning topic

A combination of real-life application and role-plays proved to be the most effective method for engaging learners in the use of the newly learned knowledge, material, or practice. Problem-solving tasks, real-life application, and some type of learning game or writing exercises also proved to be highly effective for engaging learners in application.

Evaluating the consequences of application

The 2 methods for engaging learners in the evaluation of the consequences of their use

of the new knowledge, material, or practices proved equally effective: (1) assessing learner strengths and weaknesses related to the application experience and (2) reviewing learner solutions to problems or answers to quizzes about their experiences.

Reflection on learner acquisition

Engaging the learner in a process of determining the next steps in learning targeted knowledge or practice was most effective (performance improvement). Engaging learners in journaling about their newly acquired knowledge and skills and positive learner feedback were also effective strategies for learner reflection. Group reflection on instructor feedback or peer feedback was an effective method of reflection as well.

Learner assessment of mastery

Actively involving learners in some type of self-assessment of their mastery of the learning topic and having learners use a set of a priori identified standards or external criteria for assessing their learning were both strongly related to the study outcomes for assessing their performance.

Combined influences of the adult learning method characteristics

The extent to which the simultaneous presence or use of the different adult learning method characteristics and practices was related to the study outcomes was determined by summing the number of characteristics used per study and relating variations in this measure to learner outcomes. The presence of a characteristic was limited to only those practices that were associated with positive learner consequences (see Trivette et al., 2009a, 2009b). The average number of characteristics per study was 2.18 (SD = 1.63, range = 0–5) with this metric.

Figure 2 shows the results for the relationship between the number of practice characteristics and the learner outcomes. The more adult learning method characteristics that were used, the larger the sizes of effects between the practices and the study outcomes. Studies in which none or only one characteristic was used had little or no effect on learner outcomes. Studies that included 2, 3, or 4 characteristics were associated with an average effect size of about 0.75. In those cases in which 5 adult learning

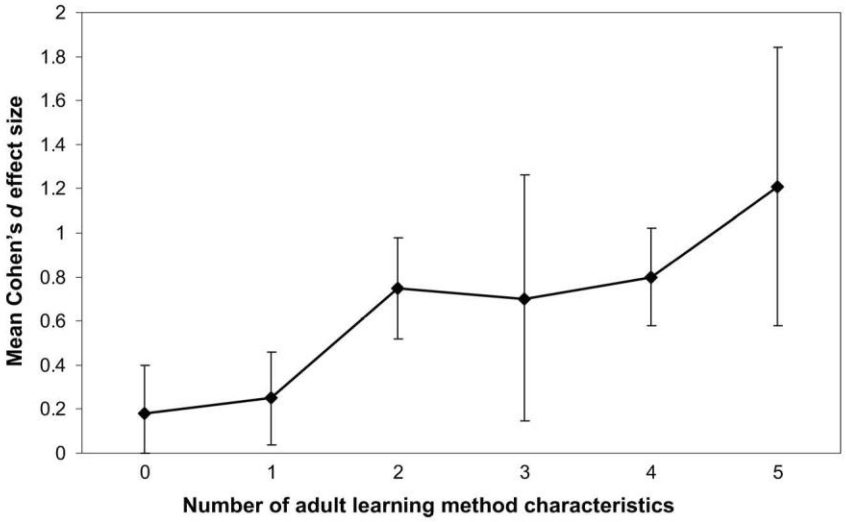

Figure 2. Average effect sizes and 95% confidence interval for the relationship between the number of the different adult learning method characteristics included in a study and the learner outcomes.

method characteristics were used, the average effect size was about 1.25, indicating that there were value-added benefits of adult learning methods that included multiple characteristics.

Discussion

The results briefly described here, and reported in detail in Trivette et al. (2009a, 2009b), showed that all 6 adult learning method characteristics were associated with more positive learner outcomes and that adult learning methods that more actively involved learners in using, processing, and evaluating their mastery of newly acquired knowledge and skills were most effective. In addition, the more characteristics that were incorporated into training opportunities, the more the adult learning methods had optimal positive consequences. Results from our research synthesis extend findings by other investigators by isolating *what matters most* in terms of adult learning methods being effective and the *conditions under which* the methods are likely to have optimal positive learner consequences.

PARTICIPATORY ADULT LEARNING STRATEGY

PALS model

The findings from the meta-analysis of adult learning studies by Trivette et al. (2009a, 2009b), our other research syntheses on adult learning (Trivette, 2007; Trivette & Dunst, 2009a, 2009b), and experiences developing, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of in-service training projects (eg, Wilson & Raab, 1997) have resulted in the development of a procedure we call PALS. The PALS model is shown in Figure 3. The 4-phase process includes instructor or trainer introduction and illustration of targeted knowledge or practice, trainee or practitioner application of the knowledge or practice and their evaluation of their experience, trainee or practitioner reflection on and assessment of mastery of the knowledge or practice to promote informed understanding, and learner use of informed understanding to decide next steps in the learning process to further develop learner understanding, use, and mastery. A key ingredient of PALS is

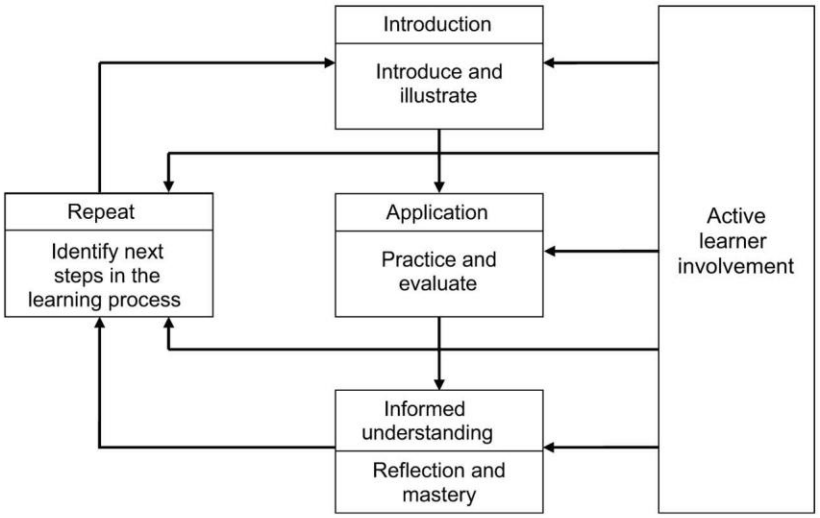

Figure 3. Major components of PALS (Participatory Adult Learning Strategy) for active learner involvement in a learning opportunity.

Table 3. Trainer and trainee roles in the different phases of PALS

PALS phases	Trainer roles	Trainee roles
Introduction	Preview learning topic Describe key elements Provide examples Include trainee input Illustrate application Demonstrate application	Complete pretraining preview Preclass/workshop exercises Provide input on the learning topic In-class/workshop warm-up exercises
Application	Facilitate application Observe trainee application Provide in vivo feedback/ guidance Facilitate learner assessment of options	Provide examples of application Trainee role-playing, games, etc Implement/practice use of the subject matter Evaluate use of the knowledge or practice
Informed understanding	Establish learning standards Engage learners in self-assessment Provide guidance to learners Provide behavioral suggestions	Standards-based evaluation Conduct self-assessment Trainer-guided learner reflection Journaling Group discussions of understanding
Repeat Learning Process	Joint planning Trainer guidance Trainer/trainee mentoring	Joint planning Identify needed information/ experiences Trainer/trainee mentoring

active learner involvement in all phases of the learning process that is explicitly intended to have capacity-building consequences (Jarvis, 1995; Kolb, 1984).

PALS practices

Table 3 shows the instructor/trainer and learner/trainee practices at each phase of PALS that were identified from our research syntheses of the characteristics of adult learning that contributed to optimal benefits. The different practices, although listed separately for trainers and trainees, are best thought of as bidirectional where instructor and learner interactions are the contexts for learning and mastering new knowledge and skills (Dickover, 2002; Galbraith, 1991; Garrison & Archer, 2000).

The PALS framework includes the roles both trainers and trainees play in the learning process. Trainers elicit input from trainees before, during, and after training sessions and incorporate learner input into describing and illustrating the targeted knowledge or practice. Trainers promote trainee use of the knowledge or practice and provide in vivo suggestions, feedback, guidance, etc. to elicit trainee feedback and evaluation of their experiences. Trainers engage trainees in a self-assessment of their mastery with standards-based tools (eg, performance checklists), a priori mastery criteria, or other methods (eg, journaling), and together with the trainees reflect on the totality of the learner's experiences. The outcome from performance assessment and reflection is the identification of the next steps in the learning process. The learner process is repeated in as many times and ways as possible to further develop learner knowledge and skills.

Key PALS features

Three features of PALS "stand out" as different from other approaches to instruction and training. The first has to do with the fact that learners do not need to fully understand everything about a knowledge base or practice to be able to use and evaluate the knowledge or practice to develop a better understanding of either (Kolb, 1984). PALS introduces information in an incremental fashion so that new learning builds on or adds to existing knowledge and skills (Jarvis, 1995).

The second feature of PALS that makes the learning process different in that as many learning opportunities as possible are afforded to learners during any one learning session in which this happens repeatedly over time. The multiple learning opportunities afforded within a session either or both build on the same subject matter or illustrate how one set of knowledge or practice is related to another knowledge base or practice. The repeated learning opportunities afforded learners over time provide a foundation for continuous learning and deeper and more informed understanding of the knowledge or practice that is the focus of PALS.

The third feature of PALS that makes it different from other adult learning methods is the role instructors and trainers play in facilitating learner involvement in the learning process. Instructors or trainers neither direct learning nor encourage only self-directed or discovery learning but rather guide learning based on observations of learners' experiences and evaluation of the use of the knowledge or practice and learner self-assessment of understanding against some standards or a priori established criteria. According to Bransford et al. (2000), for example,

> A common misconception [of] "constructionist" theories of knowing (that existing knowledge is used to build new knowledge) is that teachers should never tell [learners] anything directly, but, instead, should always allow them to construct knowledge for themselves. This perspective confuses a theory of pedagogy (teaching) with a theory of knowing . . . . There are times when [instructor guided learning] can work extremely well. (p. 11)

IMPLICATIONS FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING

PALS has evolved from more than 20 years of research and practice and, more recently, from our meta-analyses of different adult learning methods. Versions of PALS have been used to teach practitioners' family systems intervention practices (Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 1988), capacity-building, help-giving practices (Trivette & Dunst, 2007), preschool classroom practices (Wilson & Raab, 1997), early childhood intervention practices (Raab, Dunst, Wilson, & Parkey, in press), and natural environment practices (Dunst et al., 2001). The adult learning method is now at a point where we know both the characteristics of and conditions under which PALS is likely to be most effective. As part of the use of PALS to promote practitioner adoption and use of family systems intervention practices, for example, we found that the practices were still being used more than 10 years after the training was completed (Trivette & Dunst, 2000).

PALS can be easily used for planning, implementing, and evaluating *in-service training* (as well as other types of instruction) to the extent that training is provided on multiple occasions and multiple learning opportunities are afforded within any one training session. The PALS model (Fig 3) and associated practices (Table 3) can help facilitate in-service training opportunities by ensuring that all adult learning phases are covered and practices informed by research are used to provide or conduct training.

The version of PALS described in this article is currently being used as part of the Center for Early Literacy Learning (www.earlyliteracylearning.org) and the Center for Everyday Child Language Learning (www.cecll.org) to promote practitioner and parent adoption of evidence-based child literacy, communication, and language learning practices. In both applications, the kinds of practices listed in Table 2 are used to introduce the center models and associated practices to learners, engage them in the

use and evaluation of the targeted practices, have the learners assess their knowledge and practice against performance standards, and together with the trainers, plan next steps for engaging in new learning opportunities to further improve knowledge and practice.

CONCLUSION

The manner in which training opportunities should be afforded to students, practitioners, and other learners has been the focus of theory and practice for hundreds of years (eg, Hiemstra, 1995; Hudson, 1851). Professional in-service training as currently practiced falls along a continuum from 1-time didactic workshops to informal discovery or experiential learning. Findings reported in this article point to a middle ground where professional development personnel structure learning opportunities for learners in which learners are actively involved and take responsibility for learning and mastering targeted knowledge and practice. PALS was specifically developed to include key elements of such an approach to in-service training informed by research evidence on different adult learning methods. The PALS model and associated practices should therefore prove useful for in-service training, as well as other types of instruction in which the focus is on the use of evidence-based practices for promoting learner understanding and use of the targeted knowledge or practice.

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Section 3
Implementation and Demonstration Sites

The following addresses common questions related to the recruitment and development of implementation and demonstration sites. The term “implementation sites” will be used to describe sites that are working to implement Recommended Practices (RPs) program-wide within their agency, center, or with their practitioners. Demonstration Sites will refer to a set of implementation sites that are used to showcase fidelity of implementation (e.g., promoting their program, hosting tours) and make public their data on implementation and outcomes.

Why Have Demonstration Sites?

One of the key ingredients to adopting, scaling-up, and sustaining RPs is selecting sites throughout the state that agree to function as Demonstration Sites. These programs serve four vital functions, as described next.

1. Demonstration Sites show all interested parties the potential for staff, children, families and service systems. There always will be competing initiatives that vie for time, attention, and resources. If a RP is to permeate a large system, there must be clear evidence that this initiative is value-added and that it yields fundamentally better results for providers, consumers, and systems as a whole. Demonstration Sites are the best vehicles we know to advocate for an innovation. Specifically, Demonstration Sites provide comprehensive sets of data to show that: a) providers are implementing the RP to fidelity; b) providers judge the RP(s) to be doable; c) children’s behavior improves in response to the use of the RP(s); d) adult family members are highly satisfied with services and; e) the program as a whole has committed the resources needed to support providers’ use of the RPs.

2. Demonstration Sites help build the political will needed to scale-up and sustain RPs. It is a fair assumption that any state-wide effort to support RPs will require changes, but not always additions, to budgets; to a professional-development and career-ladder system that directly encourages and promotes the use of RPs; and to ongoing data systems to ensure quality control. Individually and collectively these system elements rely on the political will needed to make decisions that directly support RPs. When utilized fully, Demonstration Sites can be of enormous help in this regard. In our prior work with states, the SLTs have used site visits to Demonstration Sites strategically to make certain that key politicians, administrators, advocates, family members, and the general public have a clear understanding of what RPs have to offer them. Section 3 Appendix A contains an example tour packet from one such Demonstration Site. In addition to site visits *per se*, political will also has been generated by media reports on the demonstration efforts. Section 3 Appendix B contains an example story from a small-town newspaper.

3. Demonstration Sites also serve the direct function of providing a “model” of RPs use

for other providers. It is said that “seeing is believing,” but there is more to this story. It is also true that seeing someone more like you is even more believable. As we explain in greater detail below, this is why it is important to have a collection of Demonstration Sites that together represent a broad array of contexts, providers, and administrative arrangements. Each Implementation Site needs to generate a strategic plan to target specific audiences that they intend to reach via site visits and training events.

4. Demonstration Sites also help “ground” the SLT in the realities, ongoing needs, successes and challenges faced by those implementing RPs. It is easy, in our experience, for SLTs to get lost in the systems-level details of installing, scaling-up, and sustaining RPs. That is, of course, the work of the SLT! However, the SLT also needs and greatly profits from regular contact with Demonstration Sites. In order to foster such contact, some SLTs have organized yearly celebration conferences to highlight Demonstration Sites, and they have invited focused presentations by demonstration leaders at regular SLT meetings (Section 3 Appendix C shows one state's agenda for their meeting that includes a Demonstration Site presentation).

How Do We Select Demonstration Sites?

The goal of the State/ECTA Center partnership is to plan, implement, and sustain a professional development system to enhance the knowledge and skills of the early childhood work force in meeting the educational needs for young children, particularly those with or at-risk for delays or disabilities, in inclusive and natural environments. State Leadership Teams will need to identify Demonstration Sites, a small number of programs that will begin implementation of the statewide initiative. Demonstration Sites might vary greatly in their organizational structure from early childhood centers that include multiple classrooms, to a district program that includes classrooms in multiple locations, or a Part C service program that provides family coaching and classroom consultation to families of infants and toddlers. Demonstration Sites will serve to showcase the implementation of the new initiative with fidelity. The nine steps that follow provide guidance for selecting potential Demonstration Sites.

1. When the SLT begins their process of choosing Demonstration Sites, they must consider high-quality programs that will have the capacity to implement with fidelity and sustain the effort. Some characteristics to consider would be: 1) strong, stable administrative team; 2) limited turnover in program staff; 3) free from competing initiatives to focus on this effort; and 4) a willingness to change policies and procedures, collect data, and provide coaching support to staff. The SLT will recruit and select implementation sites and select from them a smaller set of programs that will serve as Demonstration Sites. This might be conducted as part of the initial application, occur after a few months with a separate application and review process, or be a designation as sites begin to distinguish themselves by their implementation fidelity.

2. A critical component in the success of a Demonstration Site is the commitment of the administrative team from the selected programs. The SLT will need to confirm

that administrators are willing to allocate resources necessary to sustain implementation (budget, time, staff, etc.). Administrators must exhibit a true commitment to implementing RPs, ongoing professional development, and a data-based decision-making process program-wide. It might be necessary for a representative from the SLT to meet with potential administrators to describe the implementation process, the level of commitment expected, and the length of time required to reach fidelity. The administrator should leave this meeting with information and resources that can be taken back and shared with his or her staff.

3. When selecting initial Implementation Sites, the SLT might want to consider establishing sites in all parts of their state. They might want to make sure they include some urban and some rural sites, some small sites, and some very large sites. The Implementation Sites should represent a variety of socio-economic classes, cultures, and geographic regions.

4. When selecting initial Implementation Sites, the SLT should consider programs that serve preschool children receiving 619 services under IDEA as well as Part C services for infants and toddlers. In states where Part C services are provided by private contract providers, the state might establish Demonstration Professionals who serve as exemplars for the implementation of RPs with fidelity within their professional practices with families.

5. The selection process could become daunting for the SLT. A great way to streamline the selection process is to have interested sites complete an application. The application should include information about the implementation process, the professional development and technical assistance that will be provided by ECTA Center and MC members, and the expectations of the program as they serve as an implementation site. The application (see sample application in Section 3 Appendix D) should include questions about the demographics of the program and ask programs to provide information on their program structure including curricula, related services, teaming model, supports to families, and other relevant information. At the end of the application, the applying program should identify who will serve on their Program Leadership Team and include signatures of each member. Those signatures indicate that each member of the Leadership Team is aware of the commitment that is being made and the obligations of team members.

6. In the selection of programs, we recommend that SLTs send the application to programs that have been nominated by others as being high-quality and having the potential for serving as high-fidelity Demonstration Sites. The ECTA Center's liaison with the SLT will assist the SLT in the application development by reviewing drafts and making suggestions about what might be included. The SLT should discuss and identify the minimal criteria they desire in their Implementation Sites before developing the application and then include those as eligibility criteria (e.g., serving children with disabilities, QRIS minimum rating, etc.).

7. After receiving and scoring (see sample scoring rubric in Appendix E) completed applications, the SLT will need a process for their selection of sites. We strongly

recommend that SLT members include a site visit as part of the application-and-selection process. The team might send two members to tour the site, interview the administrator, and discuss the opportunity in more detail. Once site visits are complete, the SLT or their selection committee can determine which applicants have the most promise to serve as Implementation and Demonstration Sites.

8. When the Implementation Site is selected, we recommend that the Implementation Site sign a Memorandum of Understanding that is countersigned by the SLT Chair. This MOU (see sample at end of application in Section 3 Appendix D) will make clear the expectations of both parties in this process.

9. Once all the Implementation Sites are selected, the SLT should embrace that opportunity to promote the initiative through a press release or public announcement (see sample in Section 3 Appendix F). This is a great way to gain public attention and spread the word about the work that will be done in the coming years.

How Do Programs Achieve Fidelity?

A Demonstration Site must provide an example of the implementation of the RPs or innovation with fidelity. Fidelity refers to both implementation and intervention fidelity. Those terms, as they relate to implementation sites, are defined below:

- **Intervention Fidelity** – Refers to the extent to which the intervention, as designed, was actually implemented. This refers to the extent to which the professionals within the program are using the targeted RPs in the intended manner to promote child outcomes.
- **Implementation Fidelity** – Refers to the extent to which the program has put in place the factors that support implementation of the intervention. For Implementation Sites, those factors might include the following: delivery of professional development, the use of data for decision-making, family engagement, capacity of professionals to use RPs, and other contextual factors that support the delivery of the intervention.

The implementation site must be guided by a Leadership Team (see description of the leadership team in Section 3 Appendix G) that will ensure implementation and intervention fidelity. The Leadership Team will be trained by ECTA Center in the tools and processes they will use to guide implementation fidelity. Leadership Teams will be required to meet monthly and to include membership of administrators who have decision-making and resource-allocation authority.

The Leadership Team will determine the purpose and desired outcomes of implementation and assess their current status with implementation by using the *Benchmarks of Quality* tool. Once the current status of fidelity (both intervention and implementation) is assessed, the Leadership Team will develop an action plan for the goals and activities needed to move the program toward fidelity.

Below are six key considerations for Leadership Teams as they consider fidelity:

1. The Leadership Team will be obliged to make many decisions to guide the implementation process to fidelity. As the program launches efforts for implementation, the Leadership Team will be making critical decisions about resource allocation, procedures, policies, professional development, data collection, and staff support. In this regard, the team must be organized, meet regularly, use teaming skills, and have an explicit decision-making process.

2. The Leadership Team will be taught how to use data to guide their decision-making. Using data to guide the implementation will help teams know exactly what is working, where it is working, and why it is working. Without this kind of information, teams can waste a lot of valuable time training and creating resources or making changes that will have little influence over their desired outcomes.

3. Making sure that all program staff are on board with the change process is critical to the process of implementation. Staff must become aware of the initiative and support the changes before the Leadership Team begins implementation. All staff must then be trained on all aspects of the program-wide initiative (i.e., processes and practices). The Program Leadership Team should make sure to regularly share their action plan and data with all staff. The staff must feel comfortable asking questions and requesting additional information or resources regarding implementation from the Leadership Team.

4. Research suggests that, in order to see high-fidelity implementation, programs will need to consider training and coaching for all staff. The provision of practice-based coaching is critical to assisting practitioners in the implementation of RPs with children and families. Leadership Teams will be required to include personnel who will be trained by ECTA Center staff as coaches and to establish a process for providing coaching to program staff. The goal of coaching is to support implementation and intervention fidelity.

5. The program will use data to guide coaching content that is focused on fidelity of implementation of RPs. The Program Leadership Team will use needs assessments, observation tools, and other sources of data to determine how to deliver coaching. Coaches will use action plans, observation tools, and other sources of data to guide coaching activities that result in implementation and intervention fidelity.

6. Please remember that implementation of any new initiative should not be thought of as a single event. It is a mission-oriented process that involves multiple complex decisions, actions, and corrections. Implementing RPs in programs should be considered a journey. Teams should understand that implementation can take two-to-four years to be completed program-wide with fidelity.

How Do We Maintain Fidelity at Implementation Sites?

Reaching fidelity is a great accomplishment for any program. However, research has

shown that it is essential to install processes and procedures to ensure that fidelity is maintained over time. Four such procedures/processes are enumerated below.

1. State Leadership Teams need to establish a yearly MOU between the team and each Demonstration Site. The MOU should specify: a) what supports the SLT will provide/broker; b) data to be provided to the SLT; c) expectations for site visits; d) expectations for functioning of the demonstration leadership team; e) availability of internal coach(es); and f) any policies/procedures needed to support the RPs.

2. It is strongly recommended that the SLT organize an annual meeting to highlight the work of each Demonstration Site. Sites can present and learn from one another, and the SLT can highlight the major accomplishments of each site. This meeting is also a great opportunity for the SLT to be reminded that their work at policy and support levels has real and tangible effects on the lives of children, adult family members, and those that serve them.

3. One predictable event that we know occurs with frustrating frequency is that personnel in EC change jobs. This turnover issue can have a devastating effect on Implementation Site fidelity, but it need not be so. In order to maintain fidelity, SLTs need to ensure that Implementation Sites have multiple internal coaches available. From a logistical and fiscal standpoint it may take a couple of years to achieve such capacity.

4. Related to the turnover issue mentioned above, it is also crucial that the SLT promote ongoing policies, procedures, and necessary funding at each program to ensure that new staff members are brought up to speed on the use of the designated RPs.

Section 3 Appendix A

Sample Demonstration Site Tour Packet

Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments
Fremont County Head Start

TOUR MENU

Thank you for your interest in our program. We at Fremont County Head Start welcome you to our center. There are many aspects to the program-wide implementation of DEC Recommended Practices. To determine what might best suit your needs, please take a moment and answer a few questions about where you are in the process of implementing Recommended Practices and look through our menu and mark the areas of your interest. When you have completed the menu please fax or e-mail to the numbers below. This will help us better plan the time you have for your experience with our program.
E-mail: chrishenager@fcheadstart.org
Fax: 719-275-4806

Tell us about you

1. Please mark the statement that describes your level of experience with Recommended Practices:
   ___ I have only heard of Recommended Practices
   ___ We have begun implementation of Recommended Practices
   ___ I have attended training on Recommended Practices
   ___ I am very familiar with the implementation of Recommended Practices

2. Please mark all that apply to you or your center:
   ___ My center has a leadership team in place
   ___ My center uses fidelity checklists
   ___ My center provides coaching to teachers
   ___ We have begun program-wide implementation

3. I am most interested in hearing about (mark all that apply):
   ___ Administrative support for implementation
   ___ Classroom strategies
   ___ Data collection & use
   ___ Providing coaching
   ___ Leadership team activities
   ___ Family Engagement

Thank You again for your interest in our program. One of our staff will be contacting you to confirm the visit. If you have any questions please call: 719-275-8636.

Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments
Fremont County Head Start

OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

WELCOME to the Fremont County Head Start Demonstration Site!!
We appreciate your interest in our program. The following guidelines will help make your visit to the classroom more productive and less disruptive to the classroom routine.

Please sign in at the front desk and receive a "visitor badge" prior to proceeding.

- Please do not bring coffee, food, or other drinks into the classroom while observing. Silence cell phones prior to entering classrooms.
- Confidentiality—Please do not ask personal information about a child or their diagnosis. Staff members are expected to respect the confidentiality of all of the children and families with whom we work. Personnel are instructed not to answer these types of questions. We hope you will discuss information and strategies you have observed at our Center, however, please respect staff and child confidentiality by refraining from using names. You will need to sign a confidentiality statement prior to the beginning of the tour.
- We ask if you have questions while observing, that you please write them down. The Director/tour guide will answer them when children are not present. This will limit the amount of talking while teaching is taking place.
- We want you to see all the tools that we are using, and feel free to walk around the classroom during center time. Our goal is for this to be a typical preschool day for our students. Please consider this an observation and not an interaction. If children approach you with questions/comments feel free to respond to them.
- You may not get to see/observe all teaching strategies or a child using a specific strategy. If you have questions about something you did not observe, please write down your question and ask your tour guide at the appropriate time.

Thank you very much for joining us today. If you have additional questions after today's visit please do not hesitate to call us at 719-275-8636 or chrishenager@fcheadstart.org, Chris Henager, Education Coordinator.

Section 3 Appendix B

Sample Article

Ensuring the Social Emotional Support of All Young Children

When you walk into the center your eye is immediately drawn to the program-wide expectations. In this program, children and adults are to: be safe; be honest; and be friendly. These are expectations that you hear adults reference as they talk with children. Outside each classroom are photos of children who have been “caught” engaging in the expectations. You are intrigued to see that a child is being guided by his teacher to “Be Friendly. Can you help Noah (a child with autism) pick out a book?” and think that the teacher is doing a masterful job at ensuring that all children, including children with disabilities, are engaged and learning.

At each door of the classroom, you see a star with the name of the room and small Post-it notes on the star. How delightful! Each Post-it has a gratitude or “great work” message for a teacher or family members. The program feels friendly and supportive. As you wander outside, you see that there is a small garden with notes attached to some of the plants. A 3-year-old tells you that it is their “friendship garden” and asks you if you want to add a note.

When observing in the preschool classroom, you notice a child who seems to be having some emotional difficulty. He wanders over to the “safe place” and lies down in the pillows. He looks at the feeling faces and when you join and ask how he is doing, he says that “I want to cuddle now. I am sad. I can play later.” Another child is having difficulty sharing a toy with a peer. You wonder if a greater conflict between the children is about to occur and look for a teacher. You are surprised to see another child come over and bring a small box. The child announces “I brought you the solution kit. Want to look at the pictures?”. The three children look at the solution kit and carefully select the picture that depicts “use a timer”. One child runs to get the timer and sets it for five minutes. They have decided to take turns with the toy by letting each child have the toy for five minutes.

These are the scenes that you are likely to see in the five programs in Florida that are working hard in their program-wide implementation of the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) (also known as the Pyramid Model for Promoting the Social Emotional Competence of Infants and Young Children). Through funding from the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, five early childhood programs are receiving training and technical assistance to become model inclusive programs that have made a commitment to program-wide implementation of the approach. These five programs are:

- Just Kids Learning Center, Orange Park, Florida
- Winter Park Day Nursery, Winter Park, Florida
- Discovery Point 68, Land O' Lakes, Florida
- Magic Moments, Clermont, Florida
- Pro Child Learning Center, Lake Worth, Florida

These programs are receiving intensive training and technical assistance from nationally recognized faculty members at the University of South Florida who developed the early childhood PBS model. Research on the implementation of early childhood PBS has validated the effectiveness of the model for reducing child challenging behavior and promoting children's social emotional competence. This model holds great promise for providing effective early intervention that helps children with the foundations needed for school readiness.

Each of the selected programs has adopted program-wide expectations, has developed an action plan for partnering with families, is training teachers, has provided information to their families, and has developed systems to ensure that all young children grow in their social emotional skills, including children who might have persistent challenging behavior.

Each program has identified a leadership team to ensure the implementation of the model. Leadership teams include internal coaches to support teachers, an evaluation coordinator to gather and organize data for decision-making, and a behavior specialist who ensures that children who have behavior challenges receive effective support. Program leadership teams use data-based decision-making to make sure that they are on track with implementation and that the social emotional needs of all children in the program can be met. Each leadership team also includes an external coach (Inclusion Specialist) from the Early Learning Coalition who assists them with their implementation efforts. The Inclusion Specialist from the Early Learning Coalition assists teams in organizing their leadership team meetings, developing action plans, guiding teachers' professional development, gathering and using data, and provides training to the program. Once these Centers are successful in their implementation, the Inclusion Specialist will assist other programs in their region that wish to begin the program-wide implementation effort. The implementation of program-wide PBS is ambitious and challenging. However, the rewards are tremendous.

This research-based framework provides programs with the skills needed to ensure that the social emotional skills of all children are supported and the needs of children with persistent challenging behavior can be addressed effectively.

Section 3 Appendix C

Sample Agenda for Presenting to State Team

Pyramid Plus State Policy Team Meeting

VISION: All early childhood settings support the social and emotional development and inclusion of all children birth through five.
MISSION: To promote a collaborative professional-development system that fosters and sustains the state-wide, high-fidelity use of the Pyramid Model and SpecialQuest Approach, with other related evidenced-based practices integrated with relevant Colorado efforts.

Date: January 9, 2013 8:30am – 12:30

Next Meeting: February 13, 2013

Meeting Objectives:
1. Have the third of four Conversations with a Pyramid Plus Demonstration Site: Fremont County Head Start and the first conversation with a CDE Pyramid Model site: Cherry Creek School District
2. Update Team members on related activities **Meeting Roles:** Chair: Sarah& Sudy; Snack: Joyce; Timekeeper: Linda; Recorder: Geneva

Agenda

8:30	Welcome, introductions, roles, birthdays, review objectives and agenda
8:40	Have a Conversation with Fremont County Head Start, Certified Pyramid Plus Demonstration Site
9:45	Have a Conversation with Cherry Creek School District, CDE Pyramid Model site
10:45	Break
11:00	Review and approval of October and November meeting summaries and “to-do” list
11:15	Standing Agenda Items/updates Pyramid Plus Center • State Policy Initiatives (Race to the Top; Lt. Gov. EC Office; ECMH Navigation Guide; Blue Ribbon Policy Council; other) • Registry update • Other related initiatives:CDE Pyramid Model; inclusion initiatives • TACSEI, CSEFEL; NTI
12:30	Meeting Evaluation; adjourn

Section 3 Appendix D

Sample Application Packet

State/ECTA Center Partnership Implementation Site Selection

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA Center) has been funded by OSEP to improve state early intervention and early childhood special education service systems, increase the implementation of effective practices, and enhance the outcomes for young children and their families. One of the objectives is to provide intensive training and technical assistance (T/TA) to four states on implementing, scaling-up, and sustaining DEC Recommended Practices (RPs) for improving outcomes for young children with or at-risk for delays or disabilities.

The evidence-based practices that the Center will help states implement, scale-up, and sustain are the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices (DEC RPs). The particular practices will be the DEC RPs that are linked to improving child engagement. High-quality engagement with people and objects is an important mediating variable in the growth and development of young children. Research shows that higher levels of child engagement with adults, peers, or tasks during the early childhood years facilitates the development of children with disabilities and without disabilities (Frantuzzo, Sekino, & Cohen, 2004; Greenwood, Carta, & Dawson, 2000; McWilliam & Bailey, 1992, 1995; Palermo, Hanish, Martin, Fabes, &Resiser, 2007; Williford, Vick Whittaker, Viriello, & Downer, 2013). Focusing on increasing the level of children's engagement is an important short-term outcome that is likely to enhance their growth and development across outcome areas.

XXX is one of the states selected to partner with ECTA Center as part of their five-year grant. The goal of the State/ECTA Center Partnership is to plan, implement, and sustain a professional-development system to enhance the knowledge and skills of the early childhood work force in meeting the learning needs of young children, particularly those with or at-risk for delays or disabilities in inclusive and natural environments.

To meet this goal, the specific objective of the State/ECTA Center Partnership is to build state capacity to foster professional development of the early care and education workforce that:

1. Enhances knowledge and skills
2. Supports the implementation and sustainability of Recommended Practices
3. Increases the size of the workforce skilled in supporting the learning outcomes of young children (birth–5 years) in inclusive, natural environments

Implementation Sites: Purpose, Benefits, Expectations, and Selection:

We invite you and your program staff to consider becoming one of our implementation sites. An implementation site may include multiple sites operated by a single program or may be a single classroom or a Part C program that serves children through a home-based model and consultation with child care, Early Head Start or ECFE. Implementation sites will receive training and technical assistance to implement RPs program-wide.

What Are the Benefits for an Implementation Site?

Each implementation site will receive training and individualized technical

assistance and support that represents over $10,000 in high-quality professional development. The ECTA Center, with support from the State Leadership Team and Professional Development Facilitators, will provide:

- Training and ongoing support to internal coaches from your program who will support demonstration site staff
- Training and support to a leadership team from your program in the process of program-wide implementation
- Training in the practices that will be implemented by your site practitioners
- Materials and tools that can be used for implementation and evaluation
- Training in program evaluation and monitoring tools. Lodging, meals, and mileage will be reimbursed for staff from any demonstration site located more than 60 miles from the training locale. Any substitute costs incurred by the demonstration site will be reimbursed.

Implementation Sites must:

- Maintain a high-quality early childhood program with a stable staff and strong leadership.
- Serve young children with disabilities (on IEPs/IFSPs) in natural or inclusive settings through program partnership. Ideal partnerships include ECSE & child care, Head Start, or ECFE/School Readiness.
- Commit to the implementation of Recommended Practices program-wide as a demonstration site for two years after completion of training.
- Work in collaboration with the ECTA Center trainers and Professional Development Facilitators to ensure implementation fidelity
- Collect and use evaluation data to guide program-wide implementation, support practitioner implementation, and monitor child progress and outcomes.
- Establish a leadership team that meets on a regular basis and includes key local stakeholders. The local leadership team will receive support from a State Professional Development Facilitator who will guide implementation steps.
- Commit to the participation of the leadership team in 4.5 days of meetings. The first strategic planning meeting is 2.5 days, followed by a full-day meeting after six months, and a final day at 12 months' of implementation.
- Select program staff to attend two two-day training events in Recommended Practices and participate in a webinar following each event.
- Identify internal coaches to participate in a six-session, two-hour, web-based training on the use of practice-based coaching.
- Select local site(s) (classrooms, family child care) to commit to RPs implementation.
- Participate in evaluation and self-assessment activities.
- Allow for observation by others, obtaining the appropriate confidentiality statements and permissions.
- Complete the attached application and submit it to the State Department of Education by (Date).

High-Fidelity Demonstration Sites

In addition to becoming an implementation site, the state will be seeking to select a

few of the implementation sites to serve as demonstration sites. Demonstration sites will serve to showcase the implementation of DEC RPs with fidelity. The responsibilities of implementation sites that become demonstration sites are to: maintain high fidelity of implementation; provide tours and information about the program; provide public information about the implementation process and outcomes; and allow for information about the site to be widely disseminated. In this application, sites can indicate if they are interested in pursuing the designation of demonstration site.

How Can Potential Implementation Sites Get More Information?

Potential demonstration site staff can learn about this effort by contacting XXX at XXXX

Application: State/ECTA Center Partnership Implementation Site

Please submit application via e-mail to XXXX no later than XX/XX/XXXX

Program Contact Information

School District/ECSE Program:
ECSE Coordinator:
Phone:
E-mail address:

Director of Special Education:
Phone:
E-mail address:

Other Administrator (as necessary):
Phone:
E-mail address:

Inclusion Partner such as child care, Head Start, ECFE/School Readiness:
Program Name:
Program Leader 1 (name/title):
Phone:
E-mail address:

Program Leader 2, as necessary
(name/title):
Phone:
E-mail Address

1. **Why we want to be an Implementation Site (200 words or less):**

2. **If your site would also like to be considered as a potential Demonstration Site, provide a description of your capacity and interest to serve as a showcase of high quality practices, host tours, and share evaluation information.**

   Our program is interested in also becoming a Demonstration Site
   ___ Yes (provide support below),
   ___ No
   ___ Not sure

3. **Complete the table below by providing information on your program.**

Component	Applicant Response	Scoring
Strong Leadership List key program leaders and the length of time each has been in a leadership role within partner program		
Stability of Staff What percent of participating staff have been employed by the program for two years or more?		
Prior Experience with Implementing Evidence-Based Practices Describe prior district / program experience with implementing a model or RP with fidelity		
Sustainability Describe the program's ability to sustain the use of RP once training and technical assistance ends		
Site Selection Describe the site(s) being considered by your program as a demonstration site. Include the total number of participating children, ages of children served, staff/child ratio and the number of children with disabilities served		

Commitment to Participate as an Implementation Site

As an administrator associated with a program listed in Section A of this application, I commit the program and staff to:

- Implementing Recommended Practices program-wide as a demonstration site for two years after completion of training.
- Working in collaboration with ECTA Center trainers and Professional Development Facilitators to ensure implementation fidelity.
- Collecting and using evaluation data to guide program-wide implementation, support practitioner implementation, and monitor child progress and outcomes.
- Establishing a leadership team that meets on a regular basis and includes key local stakeholders. The local leadership team will receive support from a State Professional Development Facilitator who will guide implementation steps.
- Committing to the participation of the leadership team in 4.5 days of meetings. The first strategic planning meeting is 2.5 days, followed by a full-day meeting after six months, and a final day at 12 months' of implementation.
- Selecting program staff to attend two two-day training events in Recommended Practices and participate in a webinar following each event.
- Identifying internal coaches to participate in a six-session, two-hour, web-based training on the use of practice-based coaching.
- Participate in evaluation and self-assessment activities.

Signatures of Program Administrators

ECSE Program:

_____ _____

Signature/Title Date

Inclusion Partner:

_____ _____

Signature/Title Date

Implementation Site Leadership Team

Program Name:

Date:

Please list the names of the persons who will commit to serving on the Implementation Site Leadership Team and their team responsibilities. This team should represent the program and can consist of administrators, therapists, consulting staff, teachers, and a family member. Center program teams might include teachers who represent both infant/toddler classes and classes for 3- to-5-year-olds. Part C provider programs might include program administrators, supervisors, family coaches, and therapists.

Teams MUST include an administrator who can allocate resources and make fiscal and personnel decisions and program staff who will serve in the role of internal coach to program practitioners.

Signatures indicate that team members will, to the best of their ability, commit to the following:

- Have the ability to meet on-site as a leadership team on a regular basis (once a month);
- Facilitate collection of data and make data-based decisions as a team;
- Assist staff in identifying professional-development needs
- Assist with coaching teachers (selected team members) around professional-development needs;
- Access e-mail on a regular basis for communication purposes;
- Attend three mandatory Leadership Team training events (initial 2.5-day meeting, a one-day meeting at six months, and an annual one-day meeting)

Leadership Team Role[2]	Print Name	E-Mail	Person's Signature
Administrator			
Internal Coach[3]			
Data Coordinator[4]			
Practitioner			

[2] Add additional rows if needed for more members

[3] The internal coach must have release to attend a six-session on-line training (sessions are two hours) for coaching and be provided with the time to coach program practitioners

[4] Any team member can serve in the role of data coordinator. The data coordinator will collect evaluation data and bring it to Leadership Team meetings for review. Data coordinators will participate in monthly, one-hour conference calls and make data-based decisions to promote program success.

Choosing Your Leadership Team and Leadership Team Responsibilities Questions and Answers

What is a Leadership Team?

The Leadership Team is a group of professionals who represent the program and promote the implementation of Recommended Practices program-wide. The team meets on a regular basis (at least monthly) to discuss program needs and progress and provides coaching and acknowledgement to staff.

What are the activities of the Leadership Team?

- Hold regular monthly on-site meetings (this can be part of regularly scheduled staff meetings)
- Monitor and support implementation and outcomes: *Benchmarks of Quality*
- Plan and implement professional-development activities
- Maintain communication with staff
- Track data, evaluate progress, and make data-based decisions
- Communicate with and involve families
- Provide incentives and acknowledgement

How regularly does the Leadership Team meet?

Monthly, but the members of the team also participate in trainings.

Who are internal coaches and why are they needed?

Program-wide implementation requires that practitioners in the program be able to implement Recommended Practices with fidelity. Coaching support is often needed to assist and support practitioners in their implementation of practices. The role of an internal coach might be fulfilled by a curriculum coach, assistant director, professional-development specialist, or supervisor.

We have so many other meetings, projects, and paperwork; how can we do one more thing?

If this is a question that you are asking yourselves, then you should carefully consider your commitment to becoming a demonstration site. This project is intended to enhance your program's capacity to promote child outcomes and serve as an exemplar of high-fidelity implementation to other programs in the state. Programs that are struggling with providing a high-quality program or that are not willing to invest additional time to build the capacity of staff are unlikely to be successful in meeting these expectations.

Section 3 Appendix E

Sample Scoring Rubric

Sample Scoring Rubric

Demonstration Site Selection criteria	1	2	3	4	5	Score
1) Strong Leadership Listed key program leaders and the length of time each has been in a leadership role within partner program	All the leaders have been in the program for 5 or more years.	At least some of the leaders have been in the program for 5 or more years.	All the leaders have been in the program for 3 years.	At least some of the leaders have been in the program for 3 or more years.	Less than 3 yrs in the program.	
Comments						
2) Stability of Staff What percent of participating staff have been employed by the program for 2 years or more	100% of the staff have been employed by the program for 2 years or more	80% of the staff have been employed by the program for 2 years or more	70% of the staff have been employed by the program for 2 years or more	60% of the staff have been employed by the program for 2 years or more	50% of the staff have been employed by the program for 2 years or more	
Comments						
3) Prior Experience with Implementing Evidence-Based Practices	Documented prior experience with implementing RPs in ECE				No documented experience with RPs or program model	
Comments						

4) Sustainability Describe the program's ability to sustain the use of RP once training and technical assistance ends	Documented, in detail, factors that will contribute to the program's ability to sustain program-wide implementation		Provided some detail about the factors that will contribute to the program's ability to sustain program-wide implementation		Did not provide enough information about the factors that will contribute to the program's ability to sustain program-wide implementation	
Comments						

Demonstration Site Selection criteria	1	2	3	4	5	Score
5) Site Selection Described sites being considered as a demo site	Documented number of participating children, ages of children served, staff/ child ratio, and no. of children with disabilities served		Documented some details about the characteristics of the demo sites being chosen		Did not provide enough detail about the sites that are being considered as a demonstration site	
Comments						
					TOTAL SCORE:	

Section 3 Appendix F

Local News Release

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Media Contact: (List local contact)
Date (List phone and e-mail)

Local Early Childhood Programs Selected to Become Model Sites Promoting the Learning Outcomes of All Young Children

WHAT: The _____early childhood program has been selected to become a state demonstration site for the implementation of evidence-based practices to support the learning of children with special needs.

WHY: (Program name) is committed to providing a high-quality program to all young children between ___ and ___ years. Participation in this effort provides early educators with the knowledge and tools needed to promote the school readiness of all children, including children who have disabilities.

X programs were competitively select to participate in this effort provided by the XXXX Department of Education with support from the national Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA Center). The programs are:
(List programs)

The (Program name) was selected because of its commitment to ensuring the success of every child, its history of providing a high-quality early education program, and its readiness to become a model program. (Insert quote of interest here from state or program administrator)

These programs will receive intensive training and technical assistance from professional development facilitators and faculty from the ECTA Center. Research on the implementation of evidence-based practices has validated the effectiveness of this approach for enhancing the learning outcomes for children who have special needs.

This approach holds great promise for providing effective early intervention that helps children with the foundations needed for school readiness.

As a model program, the (program name) will be training teachers, working with families, and implementing this model program-wide. This effort will be guided by a program leadership team who will use data-based decision-making to make sure that the learning needs of all children in the program can be met.

###

(List information about your program here)
(Provide your program name, address, contact information, and web site address)

Section 3 Appendix G

Leadership Team

Choosing Your Implementation Leadership Team and Leadership Team Responsibilities

Questions and Answers

What is a Leadership Team?

The Leadership Team is a group of professionals and key stakeholders (e.g., parents) who represent the program and promote the implementation of Recommended Practices. The team meets on a regular basis to discuss program needs and progress, provides coaching and acknowledgement to the teaching staff, and makes data-based decisions to promote program success.

What are the activities of the Leadership Team?

- Hold regular monthly on-site meetings (this can be part of regularly scheduled staff meetings)
- Monitor and support implementation and outcomes
- Promote and support staff buy-in
- Design and implement strategies for family engagement
- Plan and implement professional-development activities including coaching for implementation fidelity
- Design strategies for program-wide implementation
- Promote high-fidelity implementation of Recommended Practices by all staff
- Design procedures to ensure the delivery of effective individualized supports to children
- Maintain communication with staff
- Track data, evaluate progress, and make data-based decisions

How regularly does the Leadership Team meet?

Monthly, but the members of the team also participate in trainings that they identify as needed by their program.

Who might be chosen to be on the Leadership Team?

The director, assistant director, teacher, behavior specialist, curriculum coordinator, therapist, community T/TA provider, teaching assistant, office assistant, or any other staff personnel who would be able to contribute. Teams will be supported by a state Master Cadre member who will serve as the external coach to the program.

What are roles of Leadership Team members?

In determining membership of the Leadership Team, consider professionals who will serve in these roles: facilitator or leader of the team; internal coach who will provide in-classroom coaching to teachers and staff; and a data manager who will coordinate data collection and prepare data for team-meeting review. In addition, the team will need to ensure that monthly agendas are developed and team-meeting minutes are recorded and archived.