



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

RP²: Reaching Potentials through Recommended Practices

Barbara J. Smith, Lise Fox, Glen Dunlap, Phil Strain, Carol M. Trivette,
Denise Perez Binder, Ted Bovey, Katy McCullough, and Karen Blase
Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA Center) February, 2015

Copyright © 2015



The ECTA Center is a program of the FPG Child Development Institute of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, funded through cooperative agreement number H326P120002 from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the Department of Education's position or policy.
Project Officer: Julia Martin Eile

Table of Contents

Section 1	
Stages and Structures of Implementation	3
Stages of Implementation	4
Major Structures of the Recommended Practices (RP ²) Initiative	6
Section 2	
State Leadership Team	7
State Benchmarks of Quality	10
Section 3	
Master Cadre of Training and Technical Assistance Providers	11
Section 4	
Implementation and Demonstration Sites	17
Section 5	
Data, Evaluation, and Using Data to Make Decisions	25
Appendices	26
Appendix A. State Benchmarks of Quality	27
Appendix B. State Benchmarks of Quality: Process	35
Appendix C. State Benchmarks of Quality: Action Plan	37
Appendix D. RP ² State Coordinator(s) Position Description	39
Appendix E. Sample SLT Meeting Logistics and Ground Rules	42
Appendix F. RP ² Sample Master Cadre Letter of Invitation and Application Packet	45
Appendix G. Participatory Adult Learning Strategy (PALS)	50
Appendix H. RP ² PD Event Sequence and Timeline	53
Appendix I. Sample Site Application Packet	56
Appendix J. Sample Site Application Scoring Rubric	65
Appendix K. RP ² Program Benchmarks of Quality	68
Home-Visiting Programs	69
Classroom-Based Programs	73
Appendix L. Local News Release	77
Appendix M. Program Leadership Team	79
Appendix N. Evidence-Based Practices to Promote Child Engagement	81
Glossary	84

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 selected DEC Recommended Practices that are the focus of this effort are those practices that are most likely to increase child engagement (see Appendix N for the list). The ECTA initiative is **RP²: Reaching Potentials through Recommended Practices**. 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 cross-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 RP² 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 two individuals who share leadership functions. See Appendix D for the "position description" for this role. We will refer to this individual as the "Coordinator," but it should be understood that this term might well refer to two people. 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://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/module-4>; <http://ectacenter.org/implementprocess/implementprocess.asp>), 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://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/module-4>; <http://ectacenter.org/implementationprocess/implementationprocess.asp>).

As a brief summary, we refer to four Stages of Implementation: (1) Exploration and Planning, (2) Installation, (3) Implementation (Initial to Full), and (4) 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 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 a 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 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 State Leadership 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 RP² 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*. It is, rather, 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 RP² Initiative

Four major structures are essential components in implementing the RP² 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 external 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.

Section 2

State Leadership Team

The RP² State Leadership Team (SLT) 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* (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 RP² 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 early childhood education, special education, and 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 on the team's regular self-assessment on the *Benchmarks of Quality* (see Appendix E for meeting ground rules). For samples of mission statements, action plans, meeting logistics, and activities for productive meetings, click here: <http://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. Resources for doing this work include the implementation process resources cited above: (<http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/module-4>; <http://ectacenter.org/implementprocess/implementprocess.asp>). The second resource cited

above is the *RP² State Benchmarks of Quality*. And a third resource is the ECTA System Framework <http://ectacenter.org/sysframe/>. This Framework, the needs assessment, and other resources can help the SLT determine goals within the components of the Framework (Governance, Finance, Personnel/workforce, Data Systems, Accountability and Quality Improvement, Quality Standards) to focus on to ensure the infrastructure for implementing, sustaining, and scaling-up the Recommended Practices is in place.

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 an evaluation plan that includes collecting data 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. The *State Benchmarks of Quality* details the actual critical elements of the SLT's work (Appendix A).

Planning and Installation Stage

During the early stages of the SLT's work, members 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 training and technical assistance professionals 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. All programs that are implementing the RP² initiative are "implementation sites" and have a program leadership Team that uses the *RP² Program Benchmarks of Quality* (Appendix K) and strive to reach fidelity. 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.

Some programs will serve as "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 RP² initiative.

During this stage, all 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 RP² initiative throughout the state by building statewide capacity (funding, staffing) for supporting new implementation programs while they are supporting the high-fidelity implementation of the early implementation programs and demonstration programs. Communication links or feedback loops are established to ensure the SLT is getting the information needed to address challenges and barriers and to provide the T/TA the sites need. The early implementers continue to receive the T/TA they need to sustain their high-fidelity implementation.

Scale-up and Sustainability

The SLT action plan includes strategies for sustaining all the components (e.g. 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 RP² initiative 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.

State Benchmarks of Quality

Statewide implementation of RP² 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* was developed to help State Leadership Teams (SLTs) gauge the progress of implementation efforts in the various domains of their responsibility. The *State Benchmarks of Quality* (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 49 benchmarks that 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," "Emerging/Needs Improvement," or "In Place." The tool should be completed by the full SLT to ensure consensus (see Appendix B for suggested process). Once a consensus score is reached, the Team develops an action plan to guide the work of the SLT (see Appendix C). The *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.

Section 3

Master Cadre for Professional Development

The Master Cadre (MC) of trainers/external coaches is the central element of professional development in the statewide implementation of the RP² initiative. The MC is established and supervised by the State Leadership Team, with the State Coordinator coordinating the Cadre. The MC comprises 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 RP² to their scope of work.

The MC is the chief organ of the RP² implementation for building capacity within the state, principally through training of other trainers and internal coaches as early childhood programs begin and maintain implementation of RP². 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 (see Appendix F).

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 RP² 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., home visiting, classroom), it is important that they be proficient in all areas of MC activity (e.g., training, TA, coaching, data tools.). All MC members should receive comprehensive training on the Recommended Practices 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*. The RP² approach to professional development is the Participatory Adult Learning Strategy (PALS) (see Appendix G). Appendix H is a list of professional development (PD) events and a timeline.

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 RP² initiative in subsequent years.

RP² Master Cadre Q & A

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, internal coaches, and practitioners. The ECTA Center 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 sites¹ and professionals. ECTA Center will train and mentor the MC to build their capacity in both 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 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).

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.

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 typically are selected through an application process (see Appendix F 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 Center 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 Center will train the MC in the use of an adult-learning training method called PALS (Participatory Adult Learning Strategy) 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 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 Appendix G).

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 Center 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 Center 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 4

Implementation and Demonstration Sites

While all sites and programs that implement the RP² initiative are “implementation sites”, demonstration sites are 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 might vary in their composition based on the nature of the program and the services provided. For example a demonstration site might be a building-level program, a cluster of pre-K or Head Start or child care classrooms located within a school or district, 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 Program 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 RP² 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 RP². 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 (see Appendices A and B for a sample application package and scoring rubric).

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 Center RP² 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 (see Appendix M) meets regularly and uses the *RP² Program Benchmarks of Quality* (see Appendix K) 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. 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. Appendix L contains a sample news release announcing the program's selection.

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 Recommended Practices, 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 overstressing 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.

RP² Implementation and Demonstration Sites Q & A

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 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 RP². 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.
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.

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.
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 after listening to a presentation on the benefits and process for becoming an implementation site (ECTA will provide the state with awareness materials that can be used in the recruitment presentation). The application should include information about the implementation process, the professional development and technical assistance that will be provided by ECTA Center and the Master Cadre, and the expectations of the program as they serve as an implementation site. The application (see sample application in Appendix I) 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 J) 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 could contain similar information that is in the application packet (see commitment section on last page of the application in Appendix I) and 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 Appendix L). 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 Appendix M) 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 internal 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 site 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 5

Data, Evaluation, and Using Data to Make Decisions

As noted throughout this Guide, the RP² initiative is committed to data-based decision making. Measures and evaluation procedures include:

- the State-level *Benchmarks of Quality* that is used by the State Leadership Team to guide their systems-change efforts;
- a fidelity measure or checklist 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 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 RP² initiative as well as to garner support and resources.

Appendices

Appendix A
State Benchmarks of Quality

Implementing Recommended Practices Statewide: State Leadership Team 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 to implement the RPs, 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 (SLT, staff, etc)	Element		
			Not in place 0	Emerging/ Needs improvement 1	In place (Evidence) 2
<i>The “Critical Elements” listed in this column represent the core features and structures needed to implement and sustain the use of EBPs successfully</i>	<i>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</i>	<i>In the “Who” column, indicate the person or structure (e.g., coordinator, staff, SLT) responsible for that item.</i>			<i>For each item marked as “In Place,” provide evidence such as documents, data, descriptions, minutes of meetings etc.</i>

Critical elements (and sub-elements)	Benchmarks of Quality	Who (SLT, staff, etc)	Element		
			Not in place 0	Emerging/ Needs improvement 1	In place (Evidence) 2
State Leadership Team (SLT)					
SLT Membership and Logistics	1. 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]				
	2. The SLT establishes a clear, written mission/vision [Planning Stage]				
	3. State Leadership Team members are able to clearly communicate the vision and mission of the State Leadership Team. [Planning Stage]				
	4. 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]				
	5. The SLT records decisions from each SLT meeting. [Every Stage]				
	6. 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]				
	7. 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]				
	8. The SLT meets at least monthly during Planning and Implementation Stages and as needed during the Scale-up Stage. [Every Stage]				
	9. 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]				
	10. The SLT has process in place for orienting new members. [Beginning with Planning Stage]				
Action Planning	11. 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]				

Critical elements (and sub-elements)	Benchmarks of Quality	Who (SLT, staff, etc)	Element		
			Not in place 0	Emerging/ Needs improvement 1	In place (Evidence) 2
Action Planning, <i>continued</i>	12. 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]				
	13. The SLT includes in the action plan sustainability and scale-up objectives and strategies for increasing the number of settings and services using RPs with the goal of achieving statewide, high-fidelity implementation over time. [Every Stage]				
	14. 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]				
	15. 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]				
SLT Coordination and Staffing	16. 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]				
	17. The RPs Initiative and SLT are supported by funded staff to implement the work. [Beginning with Initial Implementation Stage]				
	18. The SLT sustainability and scale-up planning (in action plan) includes plans for adequate and appropriate professional and administrative staffing. [Beginning with Planning Stage]				
SLT Funding	19. The SLT identifies funding sources to cover activities for at least three years. [Sustainability planning & Scale-up Stage]				
	20. SLT members contribute resources for the work of the action plan (staffing, materials, training, etc.). [Every Stage]				
SLT Communication & Visibility	21. 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]				
	22. The SLT identifies and implements dissemination strategies to ensure that stakeholders are kept aware of activities & accomplishments (e.g., website, newsletter, conferences). [Every Stage]				
	23. 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]				

Critical elements (and sub-elements)	Benchmarks of Quality	Who (SLT, staff, etc)	Element		
			Not in place 0	Emerging/ Needs improvement 1	In place (Evidence) 2
Authority, Priority, and Communication Linkages	24. The RPs align with the goals and objectives of each agency represented on the SLT [Every Stage]				
	25. 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]				
	26. 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]				
	27. 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	28. The SLT includes representation from family organizations. [Planning Stage]				
	29. The SLT makes training opportunities related to the RPs available for families. [Every Stage]				
	30. The SLT develops and employs mechanisms for communicating with families about the initiative. [Every Stage]				
	31. 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]				
Implementation and Demonstration Programs/Sites					
Implementation and Demonstration Programs/Sites	32. The SLT develops readiness criteria, recruitment and selection procedures, and MOUs for programs participating in the initiative as Implementation Programs/Sites. Implementation Programs/Sites have a Program Leadership Team and at least one internal coach [Initial Implementation Stage]				
Implementation and Demonstration Programs/Sites, <i>continued</i>	33. The SLT has recruitment and selection process and MOUs for Demonstration Programs/Sites 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]				
Implementation Communities	34. The SLT (where appropriate) develops readiness criteria, recruitment and acceptance procedures, and MOUs for community entities to participate in the initiative. All participating communities agree to having a Leadership Team, coaches, and trainers [Scale-up Stage]				

Critical elements (and sub-elements)	Benchmarks of Quality	Who (SLT, staff, etc)	Element		
			Not in place 0	Emerging/ Needs improvement 1	In place (Evidence) 2
	35. The SLT develops statewide capacity (funding, staffing) for training and supporting new program and community Leadership Teams, and Master Cadre in the high-fidelity adoption and implementation process while continuing to support the high fidelity of the original implementation and demonstration programs. [Implementation & Scale-up Stage]				
Professional Development					
Master Cadre	36. The SLT establishes a statewide network or Master Cadre of RPs professional-development (PD) experts to build and sustain high-fidelity implementation. [Implementation Stage]				
	37. The SLT develops an identification process, recruitment and acceptance criteria, and MOUs for RP Master Cadre members.[Initial Implementation Stage]				
	38. 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]				
	39. 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 practitioners to implementation fidelity resulting in success for children, families and providers [Implementation Stage]				
	40. 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	41. The SLT employs a technical-assistance plan for ongoing support and resources for the RPs Master Cadre, demonstration sites, implementation sites and communities 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]				
	42. 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). [Implementation Stage]				
	43. 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]				

Critical elements (and sub-elements)	Benchmarks of Quality	Who (SLT, staff, etc)	Element		
			Not in place 0	Emerging/ Needs improvement 1	In place (Evidence) 2
Evaluation/Data-Based Decision Making					
Data-Based Decision Making	44. All programs, communities, and Master Cadre submit the data agreed upon in their respective MOUs. [Implementation Stage & Sustainability planning]				
	45. 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]				
	46. 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]				
	47. 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]				
	48. 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]				
	49. The SLT provides a public celebration of outcomes & accomplishments annually. [Every Stage]				

Next Steps

- For each benchmark rated as a 0 or 1, develop/update 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.
- Jack, S. & Fox, L. (2010). *Implementing the Pyramid Model Community-Wide: Benchmarks of Quality*. Tampa, Florida: University of South Florida.
- PBS District Readiness Checklist 1.12.09.doc – *FLPBS: RtIB Project at University of South Florida*. (from Heather George via email communication).
- PBS Implementation and Planning Self-Assessment (2002). Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. (retrieved from www.PBIS.org)
- Smith, B., Dunlap, G. & Blase, K. (2013) *Implementing the Pyramid Model State-Wide: The State Benchmarks of Quality*. www.challengingbehavior.org

Appendix B

State Benchmarks of Quality: Process

State Leadership Team Benchmarks of Quality: Process for Self-Assessment

Suggested Process (3 Hours Total)

The Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) document can be shared with SLT members beforehand to review, but it is important that individuals not assign a rating before meeting together. Each individual may not have all the information necessary to inform a rating that reflects the current status of each benchmark.

Small Group (approximately 80 minutes)

Once together, the SLT members will be split into three to four groups, with a maximum of four people per group. No more than two groups should work in the same room (this helps to minimize noise and distraction from the discussion). Each small group will have approximately 80 minutes to discuss each benchmark of quality, come to consensus on a rating, and make note of any comments to be shared with the full group (either in the margin or on a separate notes page). If group members disagree on the rating, we recommend choosing the lower number. This may be more accurate if someone believes the number to be lower, and you want to be sure to show improvement overtime. Each small group designates a spokesperson who will report to the large group on their selected rating. *Each small group should appoint a timekeeper in order to get through all 49 benchmarks.*

Large Group (approximately 80 minutes)

Come back together as a large group with the purpose of reaching consensus among the small groups on a single rating for each of the benchmarks. Ask for a volunteer to take notes on ratings and any comments the SLT decides should accompany a given rating. *Ask for a timekeeper to ensure the SLT successfully obtains a rating for each of the 49 benchmarks.*

Start with Benchmark #1. Each group will be asked for their rating only. If the ratings are the same the SLT will move on to #2 without sharing comments. If the ratings differ, comments will be shared and discussion will follow in order to reach consensus for a single rating for the benchmark.

Next Steps

Have the scored *Benchmarks of Quality* document scanned and sent to the ECTA Center State Leadership Team TA staff. The ECTA SLT TA staff sends to the ECTA Data Manager who develops an Excel spreadsheet of the data to graphically depict the ratings. This completed file is then shared back with the SLT members and can be used in displaying their progress over time.

At the next SLT meeting, members will prioritize benchmarks to address via action planning. The SLT can choose three or four individual benchmarks or a cluster of benchmarks within a critical elements category to prioritize or put all of them on the action plan with short- and long-term goals.

Appendix C

State Benchmarks of Quality: Action Plan

State Leadership Team Benchmarks of Quality: Action Plan

Directions

1. Rate Benchmarks of Quality.
2. For each benchmark rated as a 0 or 1 and prioritized, develop/update action plan item with the date, status, and plans for improvement.
3. 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.
4. Chart progress on a spreadsheet.

Date: _____

BoQ Item # Date/Rating	Action Steps/ Plans for Improvement	Who	When	Outcome/Date

Appendix D

RP² State Coordinator(s) Position Description

ECTA RP² Project Coordinator(s) Position Description

This position description is provided to help states consider the skills and dispositions needed by state-level personnel responsible for supporting the RP² implementation, scale-up, and sustainability efforts. The functions are reflective of at least one full-time position that could be considered two half-time positions (e.g. one for Master Cadre and demonstration site support; and one for supporting the work of the state-level, cross-sector State Leadership Team). One full-time position may be able to conduct the early work of the initiative but as the state expands the initiative statewide, more than one-full time position will be needed.

These suggestions reflect the experiences of the states that have worked with the ECTA RP² initiative, TACSEI, CSEFEL and CELL as well as the staff that provided the T/TA to those states.

Position Description

The primary purposes of the role of the Coordinator are to: 1) facilitate and support the work of the State Leadership Team; 2) coordinate and support the work of the Master Cadre and demonstration sites; 3) provide day-to-day management of the initiative, and, 4) be the primary contact for the ECTA RP² staff.

Duties related to the support and facilitation of the State Leadership Team include: planning and facilitating monthly meetings of the team, preparing materials for the team, providing summaries and evaluation of meetings, and facilitating the policy and systems development of the team.

Second, the Coordinator facilitates training events, supports the work of the Master Cadre as they provide training and external coaching, and coordinates and supports model demonstration sites. These activities include but are not limited to: coordinating training; providing information and resources to Master Cadre members and demonstration sites; facilitating on-going communication among Master Cadre members and demonstration sites; and serving as a liaison among Master Cadre members, demonstration sites, the State Leadership Team, and the ECTA RP² staff. This includes participating in monthly Master Cadre and site coach calls with ECTA staff.

Third, the Coordinator manages the day-to-day work of the initiative and, in collaboration with the State Leadership Team, facilitates the evaluation of all of the components of the initiative: State Leadership Team, Master Cadre, and demonstration sites. These duties include, but are not limited to, working with the State Leadership Team and ECTA Center staff to develop appropriate evaluation procedures, gather data, analyze and summarize data, and prepare reports.

Knowledge, Training, and Experience

- Minimum of bachelor's degree, master's degree preferred, in early childhood education, early childhood special education, or closely related field
- Experience in early childhood education settings

- Experience with training and coaching
- Experience with project coordination
- Experience with evaluation and data collection
- Knowledge of policies and systems that affect early childhood services
- Experience with Excel, word processing, desk-top publishing, and presentation software
- Knowledge of effective adult learning and professional development strategies
- Knowledge of effective collaboration strategies including effective meeting strategies
- Disposition
 - Excellent verbal and written communication skills
 - Works well with others and as a team member
 - Able to:
 - balance multiple projects
 - set priorities
 - organize work
 - work independently
 - meet timelines
 - produce accurate and effective reports

Appendix E

Sample SLT Meeting Logistics and Ground Rules

State Leadership Team Meeting Logistics and Ground Rules

- **Team Membership:** Maximum of 15 members who are decision makers and/or can report back to the team on a decision within two weeks. Membership organizations are selected based upon criteria developed by the team and by consensus of the team. Team members attend trainings.
- **Team Roles:**
 - **Team Members** – Participate fully. Communicate with the constituencies they represent. Have the willingness and expertise to help the team accomplish its work.
 - **Chair/Co-Chairs** – Leads team meetings in a way that is perceived to be fair, helps the team stay focused and make shared decisions, and supports the building of relationships needed for effective work. Selected by Team. NOTE: This role may be shared with staff.
 - **Recorder** – Records decisions for team and disseminates to team; each member will take their own notes. Maintains team’s “master” file or notebook. May be staff.
 - **Timekeeper** – Keeps track of time allotments on agenda and reminds team of time remaining for each agenda item so that the team can complete items efficiently or adjust agenda as needed. Volunteer for each meeting.
 - **Facilitator** – Guides meetings in a way that is perceived to be fair, helps the team stay focused and make shared decisions, and supports the building of relationships needed for effective work. Guides the team through activities and strategies for meeting the objectives of the meeting, ensuring all members participate, and making decisions. Volunteer for each meeting.
 - **Buddy** – Support to new member, update absent member. Volunteer for each meeting.
 - **Snacks** – Provides coffee, tea, and light snacks. Volunteer for each meeting.
 - **Host** – Welcomes guests, explains expectations, seating, provides handouts, and answers questions. Volunteer for each meeting.
- **Meeting Attendance:** Attend rather than sending representatives, prepare for meetings, if must be absent-review summary, talk to peer for updates, and support decisions made in absence.
- **Team Meetings are open to the public:** Members explain the following expectations to guests: **Guests** are not team members and may not vote. They may be invited to participate on an “as-needed basis,” may sit at the table, and must respect the confidentiality of discussions.
- **New Member Orientation:** Members and/or staff provide an orientation session along with the “Buddies” for each new member.
- **Decision Making:** Use consensus if possible. If consensus is not achieved, use: “*modified consensus*”, i.e., what can be changed so that we can live with this decision and publicly support it?
- **Interactions:** Respect all opinions (all ideas have value), share decision making, share the floor, and honor confidentiality.
- **Stakeholder Input:** Use *ad hoc* participants, workgroups, focus groups, surveys, interviews, special projects, etc., as needed, to ensure broad representation and input.

- **Staff:** Support the work of the team.
- **Start and end on time.**
- **Stay outcome-focused:** Use “Parking Lot” when appropriate.
- **If meetings have to be canceled due to weather:** Chair(s) or staff will send an email by 7:00 a.m. the day of the meeting.
- **Materials for meetings:** to be sent out two days prior, or copies will be brought (double-sided).
- **Celebrate big and small accomplishments!**

Appendix F

**RP² Sample Master Cadre Letter of Invitation
and 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 and promote child outcomes. 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 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
- 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-based 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.

Appendix G

Participatory Adult Learning Strategy (PALS)

Participatory Adult Learning Strategy (PALS)

Overview of PALS Model

One of the most important aspects of scaling-up evidence-based intervention practices is to use evidenced-base professional development practices to ensure that practitioners are able to reach fidelity in their use of the intervention practices. In Reaching Potentials through Recommended Practices (RP²), the evidence-based intervention practices are the DEC Recommended Practices that will be used in both home-visiting programs and classrooms. The evidence-based professional development practices are the practices that make up the Participatory Adult Learning Strategy (PALS) model (Dunst & Trivette, 2009a).

The PALS professional development practices were identified through a meta-analysis of adult learning methods that included accelerated learning, coaching, guided design, and just-in-time training and focused on those practices that make adult learning effective. This meta-analysis was guided by a characteristics-consequences framework that focuses on identifying the practice characteristics that are most strongly associated with the study outcomes (Dunst & Trivette, 2009b). This approach to a meta-analysis enables the identification of specific practices that are associated with the greatest positive outcomes.

From the findings of this meta-analysis, the PALS model was developed. The PALS approach to professional development is a four-phase process. A key characteristic of each of the PALS phases is that learning opportunities are explicitly developed so that practitioners have the chance to actively participate at every phase. The four phases of the learning process include the following: 1) the introduction and illustration of the targeted practices; 2) practitioners' application of the practice and their evaluations of their experience; 3) practitioners' reflection on and assessment of their mastery of the practices to promote informed understanding of the practices; and 4) practitioners' use of their informed understanding to decide the next steps in the learning process to further develop their understanding, use, and mastery of the practices. The PALS model shown in the figure at right demonstrates the cyclical nature of the model. There is no expectation that practitioners will master new practices in one cycle. In order to fully master a new practice, practitioners will need to repeat the learning cycle using the practice in a different context or with different individuals (parents or children).

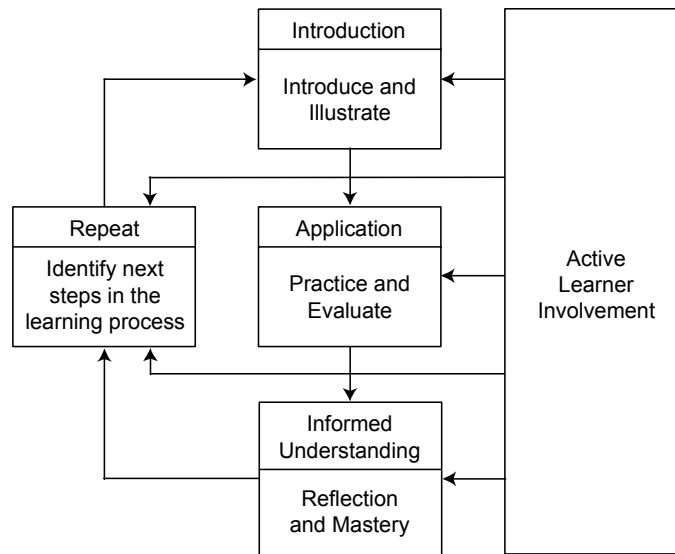


Figure. Components of the Participatory Adult Learning Strategy (PALS) Model (Dunst & Trivette, 2009a)

Use of the PALS Model in the RP² Initiative

The PALS model includes the following assumptions about the learning context: 1) the trainer has the opportunity to work one-on-one with the learner as the learner uses the practice in the context of the learner's work; 2) the trainer and the learner will have the opportunity to work together over multiple sessions; 3) the learner will have multiple opportunities to build a foundation for continuous learning and a more informed understanding of the practice; and 4) trainer will guide the practitioner's learning based on observations and the practitioner's self-reflection as opposed to direct instruction or self-directed learning. However it is not always possible to meet all of these assumptions in every context or initiative.

In the RP² initiative, ECTA will deliver training workshops that offer the initial exposure for participants to the complete set of targeted practices. These workshops will include an introduction of the practices, illustration of the practices, and some opportunities for practice and evaluations of the practice. The training materials also include tools that practitioners can use to reflect on their use of the practices during the workshop in order to encourage deep understanding. These reflection tools allow practitioners to examine their practices against a target for the practice which specifies what the practice should look like. Following the workshops, the internal coach works collaboratively with the practitioner to complete the first cycle of the learning process by supporting and guiding practitioners' application and mastery in the real-world context of their work with children and families.

In this initiative, the work of deepening the practitioner's skills in using the RPs through a cyclical process begins after the workshop training. The internal coach takes the role of supporting the practitioner's learning through multiple learning opportunities with reflection and guidance. The internal coach develops with the practitioner a plan of action to guide the work, observes the practitioner using the designated practices, and uses both her/his observations and the practitioner's self-reflection about the experience of using the practices to determine what, if any, changes are made and what will be the focus of the next learning opportunity. It is in the repeated cycle of application and reflection with a coach who facilitates the process that the later phases of the PALS model, deep understanding and mastery, occur. In these repeated cycles, practitioners are able develop a deep understanding of the RP² practices.

References

- Dunst, C. J. & Trivette, C.M. (2009a). Let's be PALS: An Evidence-Based Approach to Professional Development. *Infants & Young Children*, 22(3), 164-176.
- Dunst, C.J. & Trivette, C.M. (2009b). Using research evidence to inform and evaluate early childhood intervention practices. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 29, 40-52.

Appendix H

RP² PD Event Sequence and Timeline

ECTA Center PD Event Sequence and Timeline for RP²

Timeline	Training Event	Participants
	Master Cadre (MC) Orientation – Webinar Launches monthly calls that ECTA-PD team will conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Cadre (MC) • State Coordinator
	Meet-and-Greet Site Visits Master Cadre members assigned to sites make “meet-and-greet” visits (if needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC members assigned to sites
	Program-Wide Implementation Planning – On-Site, 2 Days Brief Master Cadre meeting after 1 st training day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Leadership Teams • All MC members • State Coordinator • SLT members can observe, however this a working meeting for site leadership teams
	Site Internal Coach Training – Webinars*: 5 sessions that are 2 weeks apart Dates and times of calls will be established at Program-Wide Implementation Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC members • Site Internal Coaches • State Coordinator
	Site Data Coordinator Orientation – Webinar*: One 1-hour event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Data Coordinators • MC members assigned to sites • Other site leadership team members welcome to participate
	Practitioner Training, Part 1 – On-Site, 2 Days Brief Master Cadre meeting after 1 st training day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site practitioners • Site Leadership Teams • MC members • State Coordinator • SLT welcome to participate
	Practitioner Training, Part 2 – On-Site, 2 Days Brief Master Cadre meeting after 1 st training day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site practitioners • Site Leadership Teams • MC members • State Coordinator • SLT welcome to participate
	Monthly Master Cadre Calls* 1-hour events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC members • State Coordinator
	Begin Quarterly Site Data Coordinator Calls* 1-hour events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Data Coordinators
	Begin Monthly Site Internal Coach Calls* 1-hour events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Internal Coaches • MC members • State Coordinator
	RP² Program Meeting – 1 Day Conducted 4-6 months after Program-Wide Implementation Planning Programs provide progress presentation, review data, and address challenges Brief Master Cadre meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT • Site Leadership Team • MC members • State Coordinator

Timeline	Training Event	Participants
	<p>RP² Implementation Strategic Planning Meeting Conducted after Year 1 of implementation (9-12 months) or natural end of program year Programs engage in strategic planning for Year 2 of implementation Brief Master Cadre meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT • Site Leadership Team • MC members • State Coordinator

* All webinars and calls will be recorded and posted online for later viewing/listening.

Note 1: Based upon feedback received on calls, ECTA staff may offer additional webinars or calls. So, for example, if all internal coaches are having similar issues with getting staff to fidelity on a certain recommended practice, it would be in everyone’s best interest to offer an additional on-line follow-up to address this concern. Not only do we want people to make data-based decisions, but we need to do the same in regard to ensuring that there are no failures. Sometimes that may require more input from the ECTA team.

Note 2: The PD training and technical assistance (TA) reflected in this chart is in addition to the TA provided to the State Leadership Team. This TA consists of monthly (in the first year, and as needed in the second year) calls with the State Coordinator regarding work of the SLT and 3-4 on-site visits with the SLT in the first year and 1-2 in the second year.

Additionally, ECTA TA staff will work with the State Coordinator to plan a half-day to one-day overview for the State Leadership Team and selected others about the approach and the Recommended Practices. This would take place in the first couple of months of TA.

Appendix I

Sample Site 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 facilitate 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.

_____ 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 cluster of classrooms located in a program 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 a master cadre of training and technical assistance professionals, 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.
- 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 Master Cadre members 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 Master Cadre member who will guide implementation steps.
- Commit to the participation of the leadership team in 4.5 days of state meetings. The first strategic planning meeting is 2 days, followed by a full-day meeting after 4-6 months, and a final day at the end of the first year of implementation.
- Commit to monthly, hour-long leadership team meetings to guide their implementation efforts.
- Send program staff and the program leadership team to two two-day training events in the use of Recommended Practices within their classroom or home-visiting work.
- Identify internal coaches to participate in a six-session, two-hour, web-based training on the use of practice-based coaching. Internal coaches will provide coaching to practitioners in the program and participate in monthly, one-hour coaching conference calls to receive ongoing assistance and support in 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 _____ at _____.

Application: State/ECTA Center Partnership Implementation Site

Please submit application via e-mail to _____ no later than _____.

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, Public Preschool:

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
<p>Strong Leadership List key program leaders and the length of time each has been in a leadership role within partner program</p>		
<p>Stability of Staff What percent of participating staff have been employed by the program for two years or more?</p>		
<p>Prior Experience with Implementing Evidence-Based Practices Describe prior district / program experience with implementing a model or RP with fidelity</p>		
<p>Sustainability Describe the program's ability to sustain the use of RPs once training and technical assistance ends</p>		
<p>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</p>		

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 State master cadre members 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 Master Cadre member who will guide implementation steps.
- Committing to the participation of the leadership team in 4 days of stated meetings. The first strategic planning meeting is 2 days, followed by a full-day meeting after 4-6 months of implementation, and a final day at the end of a year's implementation.
- Sending the program leadership team and additional program staff to attend two two-day training events in Recommended Practices.
- Identifying internal coaches to participate in a six-session, two-hour, web-based training on the use of practice-based coaching, monthly coaching conference calls, and to provide coaching to personnel within our program.
- Participate in evaluation and self-assessment activities. Provide data that are collected to ECTA and the state coordinator.

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; and
- 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, participate in monthly coaching calls 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 quarterly, one-hour conference calls and organize data for leadership team review.

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.

Appendix J

Sample Site Application Scoring Rubric

Sample Site Application 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						

Demonstration Site Selection criteria	1	2	3	4	5	Score
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						
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:						

Appendix K

RP² Program Benchmarks of Quality

Reaching Potential through Recommended Practices (RP²)¹ Benchmarks of Quality for Home-Visiting Programs²

Carol Trivette and Allison Jones

Program Name _____ Location _____ Date _____

Team Members _____

Critical Elements	Implementation Components	Check One		
		Not in Place	Partially in Place	In Place
Establish Leadership Team	1. Team has broad representation that includes at a minimum an administrator, a home visitor, a parent, and a member who will serve as an internal coach. Other team members might include related-service specialists and other program personnel.			
	2. Team has administrative support. Administrator attends meetings and trainings, is active in problem-solving to ensure the success of increasing child engagement, provides clerical support as needed, and is visibly supportive of the implementation of Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices (RP) to promote child engagement. Administrator ensures budgeting and professional development opportunities are available to result in high-fidelity implementation of RP program-wide.			
	3. Team has regular meetings. Team meetings are scheduled at least 1x per month for a minimum of 1 hour. Team member attendance is consistent. Team establishes meeting ground rules and other logistics for effective team meetings.			
	4. Team has established a clear mission/purpose related to high-fidelity implementation. The team purpose or mission statement is written. Team members are able to communicate clearly the purpose of the Leadership Team.			

¹DEC Recommended Practices, <http://www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>.

²Note. Adapted with permission from the Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality by Lise Fox, Mary Louise Hemmeter, and Susan Jack (2010). University of South Florida.

Critical Elements	Implementation Components	Check One		
		Not in Place	Partially in Place	In Place
	5. Team develops implementation goals for each of the critical elements. A written action plan guides the work of the team. The team reviews the plan and updates their progress at each meeting. Action steps are identified to ensure achievement of implementation and sustainability goals.			
	6. Team reviews and revises the action plan for implementing Recommended Practices and increasing child engagement at least annually.			
Staff Readiness and Buy-In	7. Staff members are aware of the need for program-wide implementation of Recommended Practices. The Leadership Team provides staff with information on the importance of increased child engagement. Through a short staff meeting, all staff members understand the long-term goals, the personal responsibilities of program-wide implementation of DEC RPs, and the potential increase in positive outcomes for all children and families.			
	8. Staff members are supportive of program-wide implementation of Recommended Practices. A process is used to establish that program staff have buy-in and agree with a focus on program-wide implementation.			
	9. Staff input and feedback are obtained throughout the implementation process. The Leadership Team provides updates on the process, data, and the outcomes of the implementation to program staff on a regular basis.			
Family Engagement	10. Family input is solicited as part of the planning process. Families are informed of the program-wide goals for increasing child engagement and asked to provide feedback on adoption and mechanisms for promoting family involvement in the implementation.			
	11. There are multiple mechanisms for sharing the program's implementation goals with families including narrative documents, parent handbook, and individual discussions to ensure that families are informed of the implementation.			
Program-Wide Action Plan	12. A program-wide Action Plan is developed by the Leadership Team to guide the implementation process. Data are used to guide the development of the Action Plan.			
	13. Specific action steps are identified to ensure achievement and sustainability of the implementation goals.			

Critical Elements	Implementation Components	Check One		
		Not in Place	Partially in Place	In Place
	14. All program staff members are aware of and regularly review the implementation goals.			
All Home Visitors Demonstrate Implementation of Recommended Practices with Families and Children	15. The Leaderships Team's effort to improve the implementation of Recommended Practices is visible throughout the program within program materials and practice guidance.			
	16. Home visitors help families identify or arrange environments and materials in a manner that promotes and guides increased engagement of their children in everyday activities and routines.			
	17. Home visitors help families identify appropriate interactional and instructional strategies that can be embedded in interest-based everyday routines and activities in a manner that is meaningful to their children and promotes engagement.			
	18. Home visitors use strategies derived from Recommended Practices to develop a positive and supportive relationship with families and caregivers through participation in everyday routines and activities that are interesting to the child.			
	19. Home visitors use strategies derived from Recommended Practices to enhance the confidence and competence of families to support their children's learning in everyday routines and activities.			
Building Staff Capacity	20. A plan for providing ongoing coaching on the implementation of Recommended Practices with fidelity is developed and implemented.			
	21. The staff responsible (i.e., internal coach) for facilitating coaching and support processes (e.g., community of practice) are identified and trained.			
	22. The coach uses home visitors' reflections on needed support, implementation fidelity checklists, home visit observations, and interviews to identify implementation goals collaboratively with home visiting staff.			
	23. A process for training new staff members is developed and has been implemented.			
Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes	24. The program Leadership Team monitors implementation fidelity of the use of the components of program-wide implementation and uses data for decision-making about their implementation plan.			

Critical Elements	Implementation Components	Check One		
		Not in Place	Partially in Place	In Place
	25. The program measures implementation fidelity (practice checklists) of the use of Recommended Practices by home visitors and uses data on implementation fidelity to make decisions about professional development and coaching support.			
	26. The program monitors the family's use of the intervention plan developed with the home visitor that promotes child learning.			
	27. The program monitors the level of child engagement in learning activities and uses the child engagement data to make decisions about intervention and instructional support.			
	28. Data are collected, summarized with visual displays, and reviewed by the Leadership Team on a regular basis.			
	29. Program-level data are summarized and shared with program staff and families.			



www.ectacenter.org

Reaching Potential through Recommended Practices (RP²)¹ Benchmarks of Quality for Classroom-Based Programs²

Denise Binder and Lise Fox

Program Name _____ Location _____ Date _____

Team Members _____

Critical Elements	Implementation Components	Check One		
		Not in Place	Partially In Place	In Place
Establish Leadership Team	1. Team has broad representation that includes at a minimum an administrator, a teacher, and a member who will serve as an internal coach. Other team members might include a parent, a teaching assistant, related-service specialists, and other program personnel.			
	2. Team has administrative support. Administrator attends meetings and trainings, is active in problem-solving to ensure the success of increasing child engagement, provides clerical support as needed, and is visibly supportive of the implementation of Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices (RP) to promote child engagement. Administrator ensures budgeting and professional development opportunities are available to result in high-fidelity implementation of RP program-wide.			
	3. Team has regular meetings. Team meetings are scheduled at least 1x per month for a minimum of 1 hour. Team-member attendance is consistent. Team establishes meeting ground rules and other logistics for effective team meetings.			
	4. Team has established a clear mission/purpose related to high-fidelity implementation. The team purpose or mission statement is written. Team members are able to communicate clearly the purpose of the Leadership Team.			

¹DEC Recommended Practices, <http://www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>.

²Note. Adapted with permission from the Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality by Lise Fox, Mary Louise Hemmeter, and Susan Jack (2010). University of South Florida.

Critical Elements	Implementation Components	Check One		
		Not in Place	Partially In Place	In Place
	5. Team develops implementation goals that include all critical elements. A written action plan guides the work of the team. The team reviews the plan and updates their progress at each meeting. Action steps are identified to ensure achievement of implementation and sustainability goals.			
	6. Team reviews and revises the action plan for implementing RP and increasing child engagement at least annually.			
Staff Readiness and Buy-In	7. Staff members are aware of the need for program-wide implementation of RP. The Leadership Team provides staff with information on the importance of increased child engagement. Through a short staff meeting, all staff members understand the long-term personal responsibilities of program-wide implementation of DEC RP and the potential increase in positive outcomes for all children.			
	8. Staff members are supportive of program-wide implementation of Recommended Practices. A process is used to establish that program staff have buy-in and agree with a focus on program-wide implementation.			
	9. Staff input and feedback are obtained throughout the implementation process. The Leadership Team provides updates on the process, data, and outcomes of the implementation to program staff on a regular basis.			
Family Engagement	10. Family input is solicited as part of the planning process. Families are informed of the program-wide goals for increasing child engagement and asked to provide feedback on adoption and mechanisms for promoting family involvement in the implementation.			
	11. There are multiple mechanisms for sharing the implementation goals with families including narrative documents, parent handbook, and parent meetings to ensure that families are informed of the implementation.			
	12. Families are encouraged to team with program staff in the development of individualized plans of support for children including the development of strategies that may be used in the home and community.			
Program-Wide Action Plan	13. A program-wide Action Plan is developed by the Leadership Team to guide the implementation process. Data are used to guide the development of the Action Plan.			

Critical Elements	Implementation Components	Check One		
		Not in Place	Partially In Place	In Place
	14. Specific action steps are identified to ensure achievement and sustainability of the implementation goals.			
	15. All program staff members are aware of and regularly review the implementation goals.			
All Classrooms Demonstrate Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices	16. The Leadership Team's effort to improve the implementation of RP is visible throughout the program within program materials and practice guidance.			
	17. Teachers and program staff have strategies to promote positive relationships with children, each other, and families in place and use those strategies on a daily basis to facilitate an engaging learning environment for all.			
	18. Teachers and program staff have arranged environments, materials, and curriculum in a manner that promotes and guides increased engagement for all children.			
	19. Teachers and program staff are proficient at teaching skills within daily activities in a manner that is meaningful to children and promotes engagement and skill acquisition.			
	20. Teachers and program staff respond to individual children's needs by appropriately using evidence-based approaches to promote engagement and learning outcomes.			
Procedures for Responding to Individual Children	21. Strategies for individualizing classroom supports are developed. Teachers use evidence-based approaches to respond to individual children's needs in a manner that promotes child engagement and learning.			
	22. A process for problem solving with other teachers, the internal coach, or other professionals in the program around individualizing support is developed. A process or processes are established for teachers to collaborate with colleagues in developing ideas for addressing intensive support within the classroom (e.g., peer-support, classroom mentor meeting, brainstorming session, etc.).			
	23. Strategies for partnering with families when there are concerns are identified. Teachers have strategies for initiating parent contact and partnering with the family to develop strategies to promote appropriate skill acquisition.			

Staff Capacity-Building and Support	24. A plan for providing ongoing, in-classroom coaching on the implementation of Recommended Practices with fidelity is developed and implemented.			
	25. Staff responsible (i.e., internal coach) for facilitating classroom coaching and support processes (e.g., community of practice) are identified and trained.			
	26. The coach uses needs-assessment data, implementation-fidelity checklists, classroom observations, and interviews to collaboratively identify implementation goals with teaching staff.			
	27. A process for training new staff members is developed and has been implemented.			
Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes	28. Data are collected, summarized with visual displays, and reviewed by the leadership team on a regular basis			
	29. The program leadership team monitors implementation fidelity of the components of program-wide implementation and uses data for decision-making about their implementation goals.			
	30. The program measures implementation fidelity of the use of RP by classroom teachers and uses data on implementation fidelity to make decisions about professional development and coaching support.			
	31. The program monitors child outcomes and uses child-outcome data to make decisions about intervention and instructional support.			
	32. Program-level data are summarized and shared with program staff and families on a regular basis.			



www.ectacenter.org

Appendix L
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.

_____ programs were competitively select to participate in this effort provided by the _____ 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)

Appendix M
Program Leadership Team

Choosing Your Program Implementation Leadership Team and Leadership Team Responsibilities

Questions and Answers

What is a Program Leadership Team?

The Program 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.

Appendix N

Evidence-Based Practices to Promote Child Engagement

Evidence-Based Practices to Promote Child Engagement

Selected Practices from the DEC Recommended Practices in
Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education

Environmental Practices

1. Practitioners work with the family and other adults to modify and adapt the physical, social, and temporal environments to promote each child's access to and participation in learning experiences. (E3)¹
2. Practitioners work with families and other adults to identify each child's needs for assistive technology to promote access to and participation in learning experiences. (E4)
3. Practitioners work with families and other adults to acquire or create appropriate assistive technology to promote each child's access to and participation in learning experiences. (E5)

Family Practices

4. Practitioners build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity. (F1)
5. Practitioners are responsive to the family's concerns, priorities, and changing life circumstances. (F3)
6. Practitioners and the family work together to create outcomes or goals, develop individualized plans, and implement practices that address the family's priorities and concerns and the child's strengths and needs. (F4)
7. Practitioners support family functioning, promote family confidence and competence, and strengthen family-child relationships by acting in ways that recognize and build on family strengths and capacities. (F5)
8. Practitioners engage the family in opportunities that support and strengthen parenting knowledge and skills and parenting competence and confidence in ways that are flexible, individualized, and tailored to the family's preferences. (F6)

Instruction Practices

9. Practitioners, with the family, identify skills to target for instruction that help a child become adaptive, competent, socially connected, and engaged and that promote learning in natural and inclusive environments. (INS2)
10. Practitioners gather and use data to inform decisions about individualized instruction. (INS3)
11. Practitioners plan for and provide the level of support, accommodations, and adaptations needed for the child to access, participate, and learn within and across activities and routines. (INS4)
12. Practitioners embed instruction within and across routines, activities, and environments to provide contextually relevant learning opportunities. (INS5)

13. Practitioners use systematic instructional strategies with fidelity to teach skills and to promote child engagement and learning. (INS6)
14. Practitioners use explicit feedback and consequences to increase child engagement, play, and skills. (INS7)
15. Practitioners use peer-mediated intervention to teach skills and to promote child engagement and learning. (INS8)
16. Practitioners implement the frequency, intensity, and duration of instruction needed to address the child's phase and pace of learning and/or the level of support needed by the family to achieve the child's outcomes or goals. (INS10)
17. Practitioners use coaching or consultation strategies with primary caregivers or other adults to facilitate positive adult-child interactions and instruction intentionally designed to promote child learning and development. (INS13)

Interaction Practices

18. Practitioners promote the child's social-emotional development by observing, interpreting, and responding contingently to the range of the child's emotional expressions. (INT1)
19. Practitioners promote the child's social development by encouraging the child to initiate or sustain positive interactions with other children and adults during routines and activities through modeling, teaching, feedback, and/or other types of guided support. (INT2)
20. Practitioners promote the child's communication development by observing, interpreting, responding contingently, and providing natural consequences for the child's verbal and non-verbal communication and by using language to label and expand on the child's requests, needs, preferences, or interests. (INT3)
21. Practitioners promote the child's cognitive development by observing, interpreting, and responding intentionally to the child's exploration, play, and social activity by joining in and expanding on the child's focus, actions, and intent. (INT4)
22. Practitioners promote the child's problem-solving behavior by observing, interpreting, and scaffolding in response to the child's growing level of autonomy and self-regulation. (INT5)

¹Letter and number following practice indicates the letter and number of the selected DEC Recommended Practice, e.g. E3 is DEC Recommended Practice #3 in Environmental Practices. To learn more about the DEC Recommended Practices and materials go to: <http://www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>

Glossary

DEC Recommended Practices – These practices were developed by the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children to provide practitioners and families with guidance on the most effective ways to promote the learning of young children with and at-risk of developmental delays or disabilities. <http://www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>

Demonstration Site – 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 practices. A site might be one agency, one program, or one location.

Expansion – Refers to a systematic effort to increase the number of communities and settings using the targeted practices within the state so that more children and their families have ready access to effective interventions and supports.

External Coach – The external coach provides guidance and support to the program leadership team on the implementation of targeted practices. The external coach provides an outside perspective that is informed by experiences across programs. External coaches are members of the Master Cadre.

Implementation Site – Implementation sites are local sites or programs that participate in training and enroll in an effort to implement the targeted practices. A site might be one agency, one program, or one location.

Internal Coach – The internal coach provides coaching to practitioners for their implementation of targeted practices. The internal coach is typically employed by the program or site or has an ongoing relationship with the program.

Master Cadre – A group of carefully-selected professional-development experts who are responsible for delivering training and providing external coaching to establish high-fidelity implementation of targeted practices in implementation sites.

Program-Wide Implementation – Program-wide implementation refers to a systematic effort to support the implementation of targeted practices by all practitioners in the program. Program-wide implementation is guided by a program leadership team.

Reaching Potentials through Recommended Practices (RP²) Program-Wide Benchmarks of Quality – The Program-Wide Benchmarks of Quality are used by program leadership teams to assess their current status in program-wide implementation. The tool is used to plan implementation activities and monitor progress. These tools come in two versions, one that is appropriate for programs that deliver services through classrooms and one that is appropriate for home-visiting programs.

Scale-up – Scale-up is synonymous with expansion. It refers to a systematic effort to increase the number of communities and settings using the targeted practices within the state so that more children and their families have ready access to effective interventions and supports. The state leadership team plans for and provides an expanded infrastructure to support additional programs to achieve full implementation.

State Benchmarks of Quality – A tool used by the state leadership team to assess their status in the implementation of the elements needed to support implementation and scale-up of targeted practices in the state. The Benchmarks of Quality are used to assess initial status, plan activities, and monitor progress through all stages of implementation.

State Coordinator – Person (or persons) authorized by leading state agencies that facilitates and represents the state leadership team, supports the master cadre, and coordinates the state implementation activities.

State Leadership Team – A team of cross-agency state leaders and agency representatives who are responsible for planning and supervising all aspects of the initiative including funding, policy initiatives, evaluation and data-based decision-making, training and coaching, site selection, publicity, dissemination, expansion, and sustainability.

Data and Evaluation Systems – The statewide implementation, scale-up, and sustainability process uses data-based decision-making in almost all activities to ensure that implementation fidelity and outcomes are achieved. Data and evaluation systems refers to the use of tools for data-based decision-making and evaluation of progress and outcomes.

Program Leadership Team – A leadership team that is charged with ongoing guidance of program-wide implementation of the targeted practices. This team includes leaders in the program and key stakeholders (e.g., practitioners, family member). The leadership team meets monthly to discuss program needs and program-wide implementation progress.