

## SSIP Evaluation Workshops

### Key Terminology and Definitions

Please review this glossary of terms and definitions. These terms will be commonly used throughout the workshop series. *Note these terms are often used in different ways. These definitions are the ones we will use throughout the workshops.*

- **Theory of Action (TOA):** A graphical summary of hypotheses about how an improvement strategy works. The TOA will be tested by the evaluation.
- **Logic Model:** A systematic and visual way to present and share your understanding of the relationships among the resources you have to operate your program, the activities you plan, and the changes or results you hope to achieve.
- **Improvement Strategies:** Strategies in the SSIP that outline the course of action in achieving the Theory of Action.
- **Activities:** Initiatives, programs, policies
- **Outputs:** Direct, observable evidence that an activity has been completed as planned
- **Outcomes:** Statement of the benefit or change you expect as a result of the completed activities. Outcomes can vary based on two dimensions:
  - 1) When you would expect the outcomes to occur, i.e., short-term, intermediate or long-term (impact); and
  - 2) The level at which you are defining your outcome, e.g., state level, local/program level, practitioner, child/family.

#### *Examples:*

- **Short-Term Outcome:** EI practitioners have improved understanding of child social-emotional development for infants and toddlers.
- **Intermediate Outcomes:**
  - *Practice Change:* Practitioners increase their use of social emotional practices in intervention sessions.
  - *Practice Fidelity:* Practitioners implement social emotional practices with fidelity.
  - *Infrastructure/System:* The state has an improved PD infrastructure in place for ongoing statewide training and coaching in social-emotional development and evidence-based practices.
- **Results/Long-Term Outcome:** [SIMR] There will be an increase in the percentage of infants and toddlers exiting early intervention services who demonstrate an increased rate of growth in positive social-emotional development.
- **Evaluation Plan:** A written document describing what will be measured and how, the methods used to collect and analyze data, and how the results will be used.

- **Evaluation Questions:** The key questions the state wants to learn and answer with the evaluation, usually focused on two main areas:
  - Process/Implementation: How's it going? Are we effectively implementing our planned activities?
  - Outcomes: What good did it do? Are we achieving the results we intended?

*Examples:*

- To what extent are providers accessing and using resources related to typical social and emotional development?
  - What percentage of providers report enhanced understanding of typical social and emotional development?
- **Performance Indicator:** An item of information that provides evidence that a certain condition exists or that certain results have or have not been achieved.<sup>1</sup> There are a number of types of indicators, including those that measure inputs, process, outputs and outcomes. Good performance indicators identify specific, observable and measurable pieces of information and require the use of such terms as "number of", "percent of", "mean of", or similar phrases.
  - **Measurement/Data Collection Methods** - Identify the evaluation methods that will be used to collect data for each indicator and who the data will be collected on.
  - **Practices:** The teachable and doable behaviors that practitioners use with children and families which can be used, replicated, and measured for fidelity
    - **Practice Change:** Increase or decrease in the number, frequency, precision, or quality of practices implemented by a practitioner as compared across at least two points in time.

**NOTE:** Practice change typically occurs prior to a practitioner achieving fidelity.

- **Fidelity:** The extent to which practitioners are implementing an evidence-based program or practice as intended, as measured against a threshold or predetermined level. Fidelity implies strict and continuing faithfulness to the original innovation or practice that is expected to lead to the desired child/family outcomes
- **Fidelity Threshold:** A predetermined level or score, which the practitioner must meet or exceed to demonstrate the evidence-based practice has been implemented as intended.

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<sup>1</sup> Brizius, J. A., & Campbell, M. D. (1991). *Getting Results: A Guide for Government Accountability*. Council of Governors Policy Advisors.