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Technical Assistance: Evaluation
Models & Frameworks

2020

A meta-analysis was conducted to describe core elements of technical assistance that lead to sustainable program and organization change (Dunst et al, 2018). Technical assistance (TA) has been used to describe a wide variety of behaviors used by professionals to support program staff build capacity and improve the quality of instruction. As a result there is no one consistent definition recognized that clearly conveys the essential practices used by a TA provider. Authors of this meta-analysis sought to describe the essential elements for planning, implementing and evaluating technical assistance. Twenty-five technical assistance models and frameworks were analyzed in order to identify essential elements of technical assistance that facilitates program and organizational change.

Findings from this analysis contribute to the improvement of in-service professional development focused on improving the capacity of programs and organizations to deliver high quality early childhood experiences.

1. **Preparation**
2. **Plan**
3. **Implementation**
4. **Evaluation**
5. **Sustainability**

The Purpose

Evaluation refers to the practices used by technical assistance providers to understand what changes have been made as a result of their work with a program. Evaluation supports understanding if goals have been achieved and if plans were implemented with fidelity.

The Practices

Process Evaluation - Methods for determining if the practices, activities, or interventions specified were implemented as planned and resulted in identifiable outputs.

Outcome Evaluation - Methods of determining if the practices, activities, or actions have resulted in desired changes and affect progress or benefits in the target group(s) of a program, organization, or system.

Fidelity of use of Intervention Practices - The extent to which the key characteristics of targeted practices that are the focus of technical assistance were implemented in a way they were designed to be used or delivered.

Fidelity of use of Technical Assistance Practices - The extent to which the core elements of technical assistance were used as intended and in a consistent manner with program staff responsible for use of the intervention practice constituting the focus of technical assistance.

Lessons Learned (Reflection) - Learnings gained from use of technical assistance to promote staff use of the targeted intervention practice(s) constituting the focus of technical assistance and the use of that information to make changes or improvements in the overall implementation of program activities.

Why Are These Findings Important?

Evaluation provides necessary data allowing TA providers and their partners to adjust/change their approach and/or strategies to accommodate unexpected challenges along the way. Evaluation also provides the necessary data that shows if technical assistance was effective in helping teachers/programs to make improvements in their work and to achieve the goals/outcomes planned.

The studies reviewed for this analysis showed that when TA providers used measures evaluating both technical assistance fidelity and implementation fidelity, the results had a greater impact on program improvement.