

# Inservice Training

Ongoing job-related learning for personnel who provide early childhood intervention



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)

## Quality Indicators

- **A statewide system for in-service personnel development and technical assistance is in place for personnel across disciplines.**
  - A statewide system for in-service personnel development is aligned to state & national professional organization personnel standards across disciplines.
  - The statewide system for in-service personnel development provides a variety of technical assistance opportunities to meet the needs of personnel.
  - The in-service personnel development component of the CSPD plan is guided by updated needs assessments of the capability of the workforce in relation to the desired knowledge and skill competencies.
  - In-service personnel development is coordinated across early childhood systems and delivered collaboratively, as appropriate.
  - In-service personnel development employs evidenced based professional development practices that incorporate a variety of adult learning strategies including job embedded applications such as coaching, reflective supervision and supportive mentoring.
  - In-service learning opportunities are individualized to the needs of the participants and the objectives of the personnel development.
  - Families and/or parent organization participate in the design and delivery of in-service personnel development.



# Quality Indicators

- **A statewide system for in-service personnel development and technical assistance is aligned and coordinated with higher education program and curricula across disciplines.**
- The content for in-service personnel development is based on evidence-based practices.
- Faculty from IHEs and in-service staff meet on a quarterly basis to plan for, coordinate, and collaborate on in-service content.
- Content for in-service personnel development extends the depth of core knowledge and skills acquired in pre-service programs and addresses updated knowledge on evidence based practices and changes in state policies and initiatives.

# Effective Training

1. The explicit explanations and illustrations of content or practice to be learned
2. Active and authentic job-embedded opportunities to learn the new practice
3. Performance feedback on the implementation of the practice
4. Opportunities for reflective understanding and self-monitoring of the practice implementation
5. Ongoing follow-up supports
6. Sufficient duration and intensity of training to provide multiple opportunities to become proficient in the use of a practice

# Improving the Design and Implementation of In-Service Professional Development in Early Childhood Intervention

Dunst, (2015)

## Improving the Design and Implementation of In-Service Professional Development in Early Childhood Intervention

Carl J. Dunst, PhD

A model for designing and implementing evidence-based in-service professional development in early childhood intervention as well as the key features of the model are described. The key features include professional development specialist (PDS) description and demonstration of an intervention practice, active and authentic job-embedded practitioner opportunities to learn to use the practice, opportunities for practitioner reflection on the understanding and mastery of the practice, PDS coaching, mentoring, or performance feedback during in-service sessions, PDS follow-up supports to reinforce initial practitioner in-service learning, in-service training and follow-up of sufficient dosage to produce sustainable change, and the inclusion of as many key features as possible as part of the provision of in-service training afforded early childhood practitioners. The need for systematic reviews and meta-analysis of early childhood in-service professional development studies is noted to identify which key features in which combinations under which conditions are most effective. **Key words:** early childhood intervention, in-service professional development, in-service training, key model features, professional development model, research evidence

Unlike many fields that have a history of steady improvement built on a continually expanding knowledge base, professional learning for education has a mixed history at best. Some critics argue that professional development lacks a strong evidence base because of a general absence of purpose. Others ... argue that the research community has failed to offer useful guidelines for "best practice" for ... improving the quality and effectiveness of professional learning activities.

Goskey (2014, p. 10)

**A**LTHOUGH Goskey (2014) made these comments with regard to teacher pro-

fessional development in elementary and secondary schools, his remarks apply no less to in-service professional development in early childhood intervention (early intervention and preschool special education) and to professionals other than teachers and educators.

The purpose of this article is to describe an approach to in-service professional development based on existing models of in-service training and the key practice features of the models (Desimone, 2009; Goskey, 2002b). Literature reviews of the features of in-service professional development used in early childhood intervention studies (Sueß, Fursten, Stanton-Chapman, & Walker, 2013; Snyder et al., 2012), and research evidence for the hypothesized relationships between the key features of in-service professional development and the outcomes of in-service learning opportunities (e.g., Cavanaugh, 2013; Fokkink & Lott, 2007; Isner et al., 2011; Zaslav, 2014). The material, together, is intended to be used to guide the design and

*Author affiliation:* Carolina Health Promotion Institute, Morganton, North Carolina.

*The author declares no conflict of interest.*

*Correspondence:* Carl J. Dunst, PhD, Carolina Health Promotion Institute, 129 S. Sterling St., Morganton, NC 28653 (cdunst@chpi.org).

DOI: 10.1097/JYC.0000000000000042

210

Copyright ©2015 Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc. Unauthorized reproduction of this article is prohibited.



Early Childhood Personnel Center

www.ecpcta.org

## Key Feature # 1

“PD specialists’ explicit explanation and illustration of the specific content knowledge and practice to be learned”



Introduce & describe key characteristics



Demonstrate or illustrate use of the practice and its effects



Explain how practice and effects are aligned with professional development (PD) standards



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)

## Key Feature #2

“Active and authentic job embedded practitioner opportunities to learn to use a practice and to engage in evaluation of their experiences”



Provide practice opportunities that facilitate active learner participation



Facilitate learner self-evaluation of the consequence of using the knowledge, skills, or practice



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)

### Key Feature #3

“Explicit inclusion of different types of practices for engaging practitioners in reflection on their understanding and mastery of a practice”



Facilitate opportunities for reflection on what worked and what needs improvement on authentic use of practice



Include learner self-assessment against a standard, reflective conversations, journaling, group discussion, etc.



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)



## Key Feature #4

“Coaching, mentoring, or performance feedback by a PD specialist during in-service training”



Support transfer of skills and expertise from more to less experienced/knowledgeable practitioners



Provide a means of reflection on actions in a safe environment



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)

## Key Feature #5

“Ongoing follow-up supports by PD specialists, coaches, supervisors, peers, and so forth, to reinforce in-service learning sessions”



Include follow-up observations and specific feedback about use of practice



Prepare for follow-up support in training



Provide support in response to use of practice in context



## Key Feature #6

“In-service PD of sufficient duration and intensity to provide multiple opportunities to become proficient in the use of a practice”



Learning opportunities are distributed across time



Include sufficient number of contacts with PD specialists and practitioners



Recommended in-service dosage: at least 20 hours distributed over 15- 20 weeks or sessions



# Evidenced Based Education and Training Practices for Adult Learners

Topic	Activity	Explanation or illustration of practice	Job embedded opportunities to learn practice	Performance feedback on the practice	Reflective understanding and self-monitoring of the practice implementation	Follow up activities and support

**How are you implementing these features in your current inservice opportunities?**

**What are some of the challenges you face in implementing these features?**



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)