

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.

References

Dunst, C. J., Annas, K., Wilkie, H., & Hamby, D. W. (2019). Scoping Review of the Core Elements of Technical Assistance Models and Frameworks. *World Journal of Education*, 9(2), 109-122.

Dunst, C. J., Annas, K., Wilkie, H., & Hamby, D. W. (2019). Review of the Effects of Technical Assistance on Program, Organization and System Change. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 8(2), 330-343

The Purpose

The purpose of this brief is to introduce the findings from a meta-analysis which focuses on describing the essential elements of technical assistance used to help the quality improvement efforts of early childhood programs and organizations.

The Findings

Results of this search yielded five components of technical assistance, which together include twenty-five core elements or practices used within the components. The details related to the core elements will be further explained in subsequent briefs. The five technical assistance components include: Preparation, Plan, Implementation, Evaluation and Sustainability.

Collectively, the findings showed that more intensive technical assistance was associated with greater effect sizes compared to less intensive technical assistance. Features of intensive technical assistance include clarity, frequency, intensity, duration, integrity and accountability. Intensive technical assistance was shown to improve teacher adoption and use of practice, regardless of practices that were the focus of the investigations.

The findings also showed the importance of fidelity of both technical assistance practices and intervention practices. When technical assistance practices were consistently used as described, technical assistance was shown to be most effective. Additionally, when technical assistance use the components of fidelity, program staff were more likely to use instructional practices with fidelity.



Why Are These Findings Important?

Using known practices that result in effective teacher change not only leads to improved teacher instruction but can also have a profound impact on the quality of educational services provided in programs and organizations that seek to engage in sustainable systems change.