

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.

The Purpose

Sustainability of technical assistance facilitated change requires programs, organizations, and systems to plan activities to maintain changes once formal technical assistance activities have been completed. Most models and frameworks describe these practices as capacity-sustaining activities, continuous quality improvement, ongoing technical assistance provider support and follow-up activities.

The Practices

Capacity-Sustaining Activities - The program, organization, or systems resources, activities, and professional supports that are used to sustain or maintain the changes that have been put into place as a result of technical assistance related practices.

Continuous Quality Improvement - Processes used to ensure ongoing improvements in a program, organization or system that were the focus of technical assistance.

Ongoing TA Provider Support - Procedures used to provide either or both informal and formal technical assistance supports to program staff after the completion of technical assistance related activities.

Follow-up Activities – Planned activities used to provide program staff opportunities to share concerns and accomplishments and to obtain input, feedback, and suggestions, etc. from a TA provider.

Why Are These Findings Important?

Sustainability planning is a key element to ensuring that changes, made as a result of technical assistance efforts, are maintained by the program staff. Prior to ending technical assistance activities, technical assistance providers should work with programs and organizations to engage in creating a sustainability plan using the core practices outlined.

- 1 Preparation
- 2 Plan
- 3 Implementation
- 4 Evaluation
- 5 Sustainability

