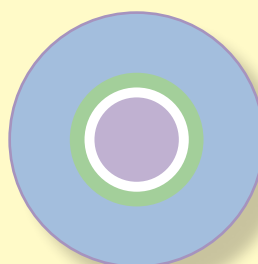


Technical Assistance Competencies for Maine's Early Childhood Workforce



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These competencies were created in collaboration with KVCAP, Educare Central Maine, Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network (MRTQ PDN), and the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disabilities Studies. The competencies align with the training, *Foundations of Relationship-Based Technical Assistance*, and the TA professional role expectations developed by MRTQ PDN, as well as the Office of Head Start National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning Practice-Based Coaching approach. Other key stakeholders were the Maine Department of Education, Child Development Services and Head Start.

We would like to thank Kathryn Colfer, Director of KVCAP Child & Family Services, Educare Central Maine; for her leadership and commitment to the development of these TA competencies to help support high quality services within Maine's early childhood system.

We would also like to thank the many early care and education professionals who generously contributed their time and expertise in reviewing and field-testing this document. For a complete list of contributors, see Appendix C.



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Introduction

This publication, *Technical Assistance Competencies for Maine's Early Childhood Workforce* (2017), was developed to define the relevant knowledge, skills and dispositions required by Technical Assistance (TA) professionals who support early childhood practitioners (serving prenatal through age 8) in Maine. TA professionals represent a wide range of disciplines and support a diverse early childhood workforce. These professionals adhere to varying regulations and standards and work within multiple settings. The framework for Maine's TA Competencies defines the components of quality TA service provision across disciplines and also aligns with state priorities and national efforts. More information about this alignment is found in Appendix A.

The core work group tasked with developing Maine's TA Competencies conducted a thorough review of other state and national resources and current research on competencies and relationship-based technical assistance. Maine was a collaborator and participating state in the development of the Administration for Children and Families' publication, *A Guide to Effective Consultation with Settings Serving Infants, Toddlers, and their Families: Core Knowledge, Competencies, and Dispositions* (2011). The *Guide* served as the foundation for this publication and is the primary source for the five dispositions of effective TA professionals.

Much of the terminology used in this publication was adopted from the *Early Childhood Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary* (2011) developed jointly by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). The decision to use definitions from these two leading professional associations was made to help advance a common understanding of what TA practice is within Maine and among other states across the country. An alphabetical list of these terms may be found in the Glossary in Appendix B. Other key resources appear in the References and Footnotes sections that follow the appendices.

Technical Assistance Competencies for Maine's Early Childhood Workforce supports an integrated, cross-system and cross-sector professional development system: a system whose ultimate goal is to provide high quality services to young children and their families. These competencies represent the collective efforts of several key stakeholders, thereby assuring that they reflect Maine's unique system of early care and education and its diverse early childhood communities, programs and workforce.

Key Definitions¹

Early childhood professional development, as defined by NAEYC and NACCRRA, is “a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. Professional development encompasses education, training, and technical assistance.” See graphic at right. (Graphic source: NAEYC & NACCRRA, *Early Childhood*, 2011.)



Technical assistance (or TA) is “the provision of targeted and customized supports by a professional(s) with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services by recipients.”

A **technical assistance partner** is the recipient of technical assistance services provided by a technical assistance professional.

A **technical assistance professional** is an individual who provides these targeted and customized supports to recipients of TA services through specific strategies or approaches, such as mentoring, coaching, consultation and peer-to-peer networks. See graphic below. (Graphic adapted from North Carolina DHHS, *Framework*, 2013.)



Mentoring is a process between colleagues in similar professional roles, with a more experienced individual, the mentor, providing guidance and example to the less-experienced protégé or mentee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual's personal or professional capacity, resulting in greater professional effectiveness.

Coaching is a process led by an expert with specialized knowledge and skills, who often serves in a different professional role than the recipient(s). Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors and is focused on goal setting and achievement for an individual or group.

Consultation is a collaborative, problem-solving process between an external consultant with specific expertise and adult learning knowledge and skills and an individual or group from one program or organization. Consultation facilitates the assessment and resolution of an issue-specific concern—a program-/organizational-, staff-, or child-/family-related issue—or addresses a specific topic.

Peer-to-Peer Networks foster the development of relationship-based learning and support communities among colleagues, often in like roles. Peer-to-peer TA is based on the premise that a significant expert knowledge base exists in the field and that peers who have solved challenges on the ground have developed tools and strategies that can be shared with their colleagues. Communities of Practice (CoP) and Professional Learning communities (PLC) are two forms of peer-to-peer networks.

Purpose

The purpose of Maine's TA Competencies is to improve the quality of early care and education by providing professional development that supports a highly competent workforce. The competencies are designed to accomplish this by providing TA professionals with a research-based inventory of the dispositions, knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively with practitioners within the field. When TA professionals have appropriate knowledge and experience in specific subject matter, an understanding of adult learning, and both skills and knowledge in technical assistance pedagogy, they can more effectively impact positive change. Maine's TA Competencies support statewide consistency and understanding of the key components of quality TA service provision for the TA professional, the recipients of the TA services (TA partners) and for the purposes of further defining and enhancing an integrated, cross-system and cross-sector professional development system.

Use

Maine's TA Competencies are intended for use by all TA professionals working within the early care and education field in Maine. The following bulleted list offers some suggestions on how these competencies may be used:

As a **Framework** to:

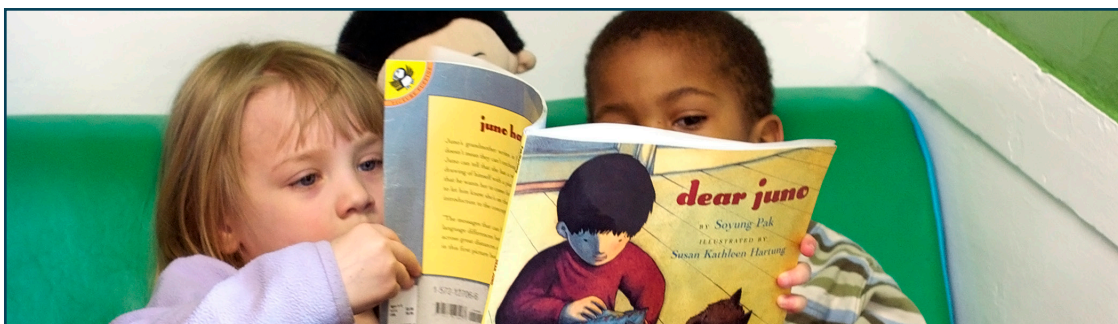
- Provide continuity across early care and education sectors for TA to the workforce.
- Develop and offer foundational training for TA professionals.
- Develop and offer a Maine Technical Assistance Professional Credential.
- Support institutions of higher education to develop courses and advise students in order to increase the pool of highly qualified TA professionals.

As a **Resource** for:

- Individual TA professionals as a self-assessment tool for personal and professional growth and to inform professional development plans.
- Administrators and supervisors to develop job descriptions, hire qualified TA professionals and support reflective supervision.

As **Guidance** for:

- New and practicing TA professionals.
- Planning, delivering and evaluating evidence-based and high quality TA practices.
- Contract and proposal language for procuring additional TA resources.
- Ongoing conversations regarding TA in the field of early care and education.



Guiding Principles/Core Values

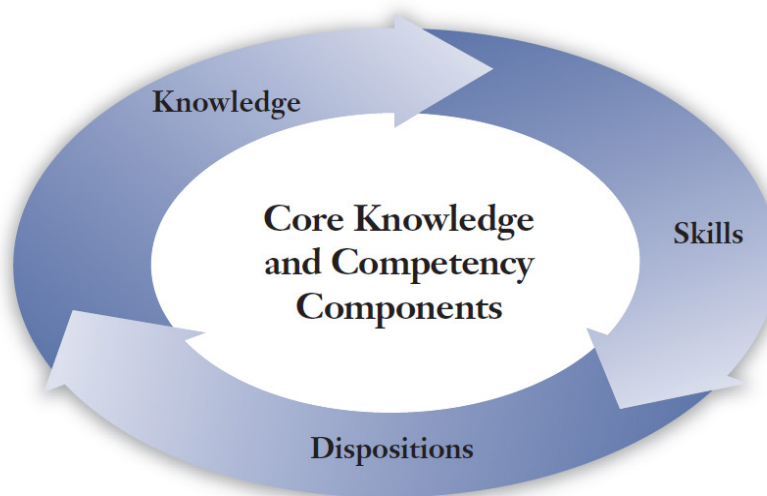
The following principles guided the process for developing Maine's TA Competencies:

- Use evidence-based and best practices;
- Implement TA as a parallel process; TA professionals practice and model behaviors and dispositions that support adult learning;
- Support interactions and relationships that foster self-reflection;
- Build upon the work previously done within Maine and nationally;
- Support and promote culturally competent practices;
- Reinforce family-centered practices acknowledging that children develop within the context of families;
- Define the knowledge and skills necessary for promoting the development and well-being of children;
- Inform practices of TA professionals working in all early childhood settings and sectors including Head Start/Early Head Start, early intervention and early childhood special education, school-age child care, school-age enrichment programs, center-based child care, infant/toddler care, family child care, family, friend and neighbor care; preschool, public preschool and home visiting; and
- Support strength-based, authentic collaboration: it must be a partnership to be effective.

Organization of Technical Assistance Competencies for Maine's Early Childhood Workforce

The first section of *Technical Assistance Competencies for Maine's Early Childhood Workforce* introduces the five attributes, known as dispositions, of effective TA professionals: Caring, Communicative, Creative, Critical, and Professional. These dispositions were developed by an Administration for Children and Families Region 1 Workgroup for the *Guide to Effective Consultation*, and were informed by *The Iowa Disposition Model: A Framework for Developing Effective Teacher Dispositions*.

The second section addresses the knowledge and skills that represent the foundational principles of high-quality TA. While the knowledge and skills demonstrate **what** the TA professional knows and can do, dispositions denote **how** the TA professional interacts and works with practitioners. The graphic below (from the *Guide to Effective Consultation*) depicts the interrelated nature of Core Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions.



Technical Assistance Competencies for Maine's Early Childhood Workforce Dispositions, Knowledge and Skills Overview

Dispositions	
Caring	Communicative Creative Critical Professional
Knowledge and Skills	
Competency Area 1: Professionalism 1.A. Legal Requirements and Ethical Practices 1.B. Responsibilities and Boundaries 1.C. Maintaining Documentation for Timely and Accurate Reporting 1.D. Role as Change Agent 1.E. Self-reflection and Assessment of Knowledge and Skills 1.F. Individual Professional Plan Development and Implementation 1.G. Current Research and Best Practice 1.H. Advocacy	
Competency Area 2: Adult Learning Principles 2.A. Adult Learning Principles 2.B. Effective Learning Environment 2.C. Adapting to Participant Styles and Needs	
Competency Area 3: Building Relationships 3.A. Trust with a TA Partner 3.B. Clear Agreements 3.C. Collaborative Problem-Solving/Conflict Resolution 3.D. Ongoing Feedback 3.E. Effective Communication	
Competency Area 4: The Technical Assistance Process 4.A. Stages of Technical Assistance 4.B. Gathering Information and Conducting Assessments 4.C. Goal Setting and Action Planning 4.D. Supporting TA Partner to Implement and Evaluate the TA Plan 4.D(a). Mentoring 4.D(b). Coaching 4.D(c). Consultation 4.D(d). Peer-To-Peer Networks 4.E. Evaluating TA Plan and Ending The TA	
Competency Area 5: Systems Knowledge 5.A. Early Childhood Systems' Components 5.B. Regulation and Standards 5.C. Resource and Referral	

Dispositions

Attributes, called dispositions, are an inherent part of being an effective TA professional. Below is the framework of dispositions TA professionals should use to reflect upon and strive to demonstrate in their work. The following dispositions comprise many, but not all, of the qualities, tendencies, and/or behaviors that characterize each type of disposition below.

Caring Dispositions

TA professionals with this set of dispositions value and appreciate all aspects of the wellbeing of children, practitioners, and program administrators.

- **Empathic:** Identifies with and sees things from the perspective of others.
- **Compassionate:** Sympathizes, often with a desire to understand and help improve conditions of others' lives.
- **Understanding:** Develops appropriate relationships.
- **Respectful:** Shows appropriate regard for the needs, ideas, and experiences of others.
- **Passionate:** Demonstrates excitement, enthusiasm, and optimism for the people, content, and context of the TA, teaching and learning process.
- **Culturally Competent:** Appreciates and capitalizes upon diversity; is aware of and acts to reduce one's own biases; employs culturally sensitive pedagogy.

Communicative Dispositions

TA professionals with this set of dispositions are sensitive to and skilled in the various aspects of adult learning. They have effective interpersonal relationship skills and attitudes that foster collaboration useful for the process.

- **Present:** Keenly engaged in interactions and observations.
- **Responsive:** Inclined to act to best meet the needs, subtle as well as obvious, of others and their circumstances. Responsiveness can be demonstrated quickly in a conversation or over time by, for example, providing follow up resources as needed.
- **Attentive:** Pays attention to all aspects of communication and applies active listening techniques such as paraphrasing what the other person has said to ensure clear understanding.
- **Collaborative:** Involves and works with others in planning, problem solving, and implementing evidence based or best practices.
- **Vocal:** Willing to openly engage and respond to peers, administrators, families and community.
- **Linguistic Sensitivity:** Identifies the language(s) used by the client and/or their linguistic abilities and tailors services and materials accordingly.

Creative Dispositions

TA professionals with this set of dispositions display the capacity to envision and craft things in novel and meaningful ways.

- **Flexible:** Adapts, adjusts, and modifies practices to meet the needs of those with whom she/he is providing TA; thinks on his/her feet; is comfortable with change.
- **Inventive:** Visualizes and can support implementation of innovative ideas and practices.
- **Resourceful:** Identifies and uses resources in effective ways; adapts practices to unforeseen challenges; helps practitioners find and use resources and informal supports.
- **Resilient:** Endures stress and maintains stability in the face of disruption and chaos; recovers poise or spirit that enables moving forward in an effective manner.

Critical Dispositions

TA professionals with this set of dispositions have the ability to examine closely, to critique, and to ask questions. They do not accept the status quo at face value but employ higher level thinking skills to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize. Self-evaluation and reflection characterize individuals with this set of dispositions.

- **Reflective:** Takes time consistently to evaluate effectiveness of technical assistance and behavior in terms of the larger goals of TA; nurtures reflectivity in practitioners; reflects on own growth and accountability; reaches out to find a mentor for support.
- **Enterprising:** Exhibits a willingness to pursue solutions to problems or questions; gathers relevant data and persistently seeks to improve situations or areas of need.
- **Open-Minded:** Exhibits an ability to look at different sides of an issue; recognizes the possibility of error in one's own beliefs and practices; does not display or act upon prejudices against people or ideas.
- **Effective:** Nurtures high expectations; demonstrates self-direction and confidence; encourages others to display their own skills and strengths.
- **Modest:** Places the needs of the learner and/or learning task above own ego; reflects on own growth and accountability.

Professional Dispositions

These are general expected qualities and practices of all professionals, including TA professionals.

- **Professional:** Meets the standards expected of a professional, such as appropriateness of dress, grooming, demeanor, punctuality, tact, discretion, courtesy, etc.
- **Ethical and Principled In-Person and Profession:** Adheres strongly to personal and professional morals, principles, and ethical standards established by the profession; evidences integrity; makes known a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest, discusses it with a supervisor/employer and when appropriate TA partner, to determine how best to resolve the situation.
- **Responsible and Reliable:** Conducts work and related tasks in a reliable, thorough, and efficient manner; has strong work ethic.
- **Discreet:** Complies with federal, state, and program policies relating to confidentiality.
- **Objective:** Fosters and enhances the teaching and learning process while exercising judgment about personal and professional boundaries; displays genuineness.



Competency Areas and Indicators

Maine's TA Competencies are organized into five areas: Professionalism; Principles of Adult Learning; Building Relationships; The Technical Assistance Process; and Systems Knowledge. Each competency area includes indicators that articulate necessary knowledge and skills. This is not intended to be a definitive list for the TA professional, but rather a foundation upon which additional knowledge and skills, informed by emerging evidence, best practices, and advanced professional knowledge and experiences, are built.

Competency Area 1: Professionalism

Competency Area 2: Principles of Adult Learning

Competency Area 3: Building Relationships

Competency Area 4: The Technical Assistance Process

Competency Area 5: Systems Knowledge



COMPETENCY AREA 1: Professionalism

Professionalism is the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize a person in a work setting or profession.² Effective TA professionals know the applicable codes of ethical practices and standards of professionalism and apply them appropriately in their TA practice.

Indicators:

- A. Legal Requirements and Ethical Practices
- B. Responsibilities and Boundaries
- C. Maintaining Documentation for Timely and Accurate Reporting
- D. Role as a Change Agent
- E. Self-Assessment of Knowledge and Skills
- F. Individual Professional Plan Development and Implementation
- G. Current Research and Best Practice
- H. Advocacy

Also consider Dispositions detailed on pages 6 & 7.

1.A. Legal Requirements and Ethical Practices

Knowledge:

- 1.A.1. Understands the legal requirements for the provision of TA within the early childhood field.
- 1.A.2. Identifies the professional codes of ethics for making professional decisions.
- 1.A.3. Recognizes the importance of knowing one's own personal values, beliefs and bias and how these can affect the TA process.

Skill:

- 1.A.4. Follows established professional, ethical, and legal standards including maintaining confidentiality of children, families, and TA partners at all times.
- 1.A.5. Uses professional codes of ethics to guide decision-making when a situation involves competing professional values and/or has more than one possible solution.
- 1.A.6. Presents sensitive information fairly, acknowledging the validity of contrasting perspectives.

1.B. Responsibilities and Boundaries

Knowledge:

- 1.B.1. Understands the role, responsibilities and boundaries of a TA professional.
- 1.B.2. Is aware of and maintains a professional demeanor and appropriate conduct in different venues (face-to-face, online and through social media) and settings.

Skill:

- 1.B.3. Establishes clear expectations and sets boundaries regarding appropriate roles and relationships.
- 1.B.4. Works as a partner without asserting self as an expert.
- 1.B.5. Models and promotes positive self-care practices.
- 1.B.6. Maintains professionalism by being on time, organized and prepared for each TA session.

COMPETENCY AREA 1: Professionalism

Professionalism is the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize a person in a work setting or profession.² Effective TA professionals know the applicable codes of ethical practices and standards of professionalism and apply them appropriately in their TA practice.

1.C. Maintaining Documentation for Timely and Accurate Reporting

Knowledge:

- 1.C.1. Understands the documentation, record keeping and reporting requirements and timelines of the employer and/or system governing the work.

Skill:

- 1.C.2. Develops an organizational system to independently meet requirements and timelines.
- 1.C.3. Maintains accurate records to document TA contacts, goals, activities, progress and next steps.
- 1.C.4. Records, manually or electronically, the needed documentation at the established intervals.
- 1.C.5. Submits reports and data that are accurate, grammatically correct and error-free.

1.D. Role as Change Agent

Knowledge:

- 1.D.1. Is aware of typical responses and barriers to change.
- 1.D.2. Understands the TA professional's role as a change agent.

Skill:

- 1.D.3. Assess TA partner's readiness for change.
- 1.D.4. Works with the TA partner to plan for change.
- 1.D.5. Supports TA partner "where they are" in implementing change.

1.E. Self-Reflection and Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Knowledge:

- 1.E.1. Understands the tenets of reflective practice and how it supports professionalism.
- 1.E.2. Has the content knowledge and skills needed to support the TA partner, including core knowledge in child development and Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) as well as the knowledge and skills within their own discipline and/or area of expertise.
- 1.E.3. Is aware of the knowledge and skills needed by TA professionals to implement the TA process.
- 1.E.4. Is aware of the dispositions that are needed to be an effective TA professional.

Skill:

- 1.E.5. Engages in self-reflection as a tool for growth and enhancement of knowledge and skills.
- 1.E.6. Applies the content knowledge and skills needed to support the TA partner including knowledge of child development and Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP), as well as the knowledge and skills within their own discipline and/or area of expertise.
- 1.E.7. Uses the *Technical Assistance Competencies for Maine's Early Childhood Workforce* and other resources to assess own personal dispositions, professional knowledge and skills as a TA professional.
- 1.E.8. Uses the self-assessment process and TA partner feedback on an ongoing basis to guide own professional growth and development.

COMPETENCY AREA 1: Professionalism

Professionalism is the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize a person in a work setting or profession.² Effective TA professionals know the applicable codes of ethical practices and standards of professionalism and apply them appropriately in their TA practice.

1.F. Individual Professional Plan Development and Implementation

Knowledge:

- 1.F.1. Recognizes the importance of establishing own goals and professional development plan.
- 1.F.2. Is aware of the resources and continuing education opportunities available for TA professionals to grow their knowledge and skills.

Skill:

- 1.F.3. Develops own professional development plan and goals.
- 1.F.4. Engages in a variety of professional development activities to enhance the quality of TA practices.

1.G. Current Research and Best Practice

Knowledge:

- 1.G.1. Is aware of the latest research, evidence-based practices and trends and their relevance for early care and education best practices.

Skill:

- 1.G.2. Shares relevant research and evidence-based practices with TA partner.
- 1.G.3. Integrates current research and evidence-based practices in TA work.

1.H. Advocacy

Knowledge:

- 1.H.1. Identifies when TA partners may need support to advocate for their needs.
- 1.H.2. Is aware of the resources available to support TA partners in their advocacy efforts.

Skills:

- 1.H.3. Supports the TA partner to identify effective advocacy techniques.
- 1.H.4. Shares resources and contacts with TA partners to support their efforts to advocate.



COMPETENCY AREA 2: Principles of Adult Learning

Effective TA professionals ensure success by incorporating adult learning principles. They use approaches to learning that are solution-oriented and collaborative rather than merely didactic; they also emphasize equality between the TA professional and the TA partner.³

Indicators:

- A. Adult Learning Principles
- B. Effective Learning Environment
- C. Adapting to Participant Styles and Needs

Also consider Dispositions detailed on pages 6 & 7.

2.A. Adult Learning Principles

Knowledge:

2.A.1. Identifies the key principles of adult learning.

Skill:

2.A.2. Uses the principles of adult learning in the TA process.

2.B. Effective Learning Environment

Knowledge:

- 2.B.1. Understands the features of an effective learning environment including the physical and psychological aspects.
- 2.B.2. Identifies how to create an accessible environment that embraces and appreciates diversity.

Skill:

- 2.B.3. Arranges meeting space/learning environments with the TA partner that are physically comfortable, free from distractions and allow for confidential or private conversations.
- 2.B.4. Takes the time to learn about the culture of the organization and community in which the TA professional is working.
- 2.B.5. Models an approach to diversity characterized by an open mind, a willingness to learn from each other and mutual respect.
- 2.B.6. Seeks different points of view in group processing and decision-making.

2.C. Adapting to Participant Styles and Needs

Knowledge:

- 2.C.1. Understands strategies and approaches that support cultural diversity and varied learning styles.
- 2.C.2. Knows or can locate resources and information to modify approaches and/or materials to accommodate individual learners.

Skill:

- 2.C.3. Selects culturally responsive strategies and resources that are based on the TA partner's current knowledge and skills as well as learning style, culture, language, needs and preferences.
- 2.C.4. Makes adjustments and accommodations to meet the learning needs of each TA partner.
- 2.C.5. Adjusts learning opportunities to be meaningful and applicable to the TA partner while maintaining fidelity to identified content, requirements or standards set by an organization or initiative.

COMPETENCY AREA 3: Building Relationships

Relationships are central to the TA process. To build effective relationships, TA professionals demonstrate the ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust; to be present with the TA partner in the moment, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident.⁴

Indicators:

- A. Trust with TA Partner
- B. Clear Agreements
- C. Collaborative Problem-Solving/Conflict Resolution
- D. Ongoing Feedback
- E. Effective Communication

Also consider Dispositions detailed on pages 6 & 7.

3.A. Trust with TA Partner

Knowledge:

- 3.A.1. Understands the importance of and factors that contribute to building positive relationships as a foundation for effective TA.
- 3.A.2. Understands the components of a strength-based approach.

Skill:

- 3.A.3. Takes adequate time to develop reciprocal relationships through sharing experiences, exploring expectations and clarifying roles, while maintaining appropriate boundaries.
- 3.A.4. Demonstrates personal integrity, honesty and sincerity throughout the TA process.
- 3.A.5. Ensures the TA partner understands that information shared will be kept confidential.
- 3.A.6. Asks permission prior to sharing ideas and new approaches.

3.B. Clear Agreements

Knowledge:

- 3.B.1. Determines with the TA partner the guidelines for providing TA including leadership involvement, participants, as well as, the duration and delivery mode (onsite, telephonic email/video conferencing etc.).
- 3.B.2. Identifies the decisions to be made and who will be responsible.

Skill:

- 3.B.3. Creates a mutual agreement such as a memorandum of understanding (MOU), that includes defining roles in the TA process.
- 3.B.4. Follows through on agreed upon plans and commitments.
- 3.B.5. Demonstrates a balance between building rapport and getting the work done.
- 3.B.6. Engages the TA partner to explore alternative ideas and solutions, evaluate options and make decisions when barriers to progress are identified.

COMPETENCY AREA 3: Building Relationships

Relationships are central to the TA process. To build effective relationships, TA professionals demonstrate the ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust; to be present with the TA partner in the moment, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident.⁴

3.C. Collaborative Problem-Solving/Conflict Resolution

Knowledge:

- 3.C.1. Identifies strategies that encourage shared learning.
- 3.C.2. Describes a collaborative problem-solving approach.
- 3.C.3. Knows appropriate conflict resolution strategies.

Skill:

- 3.C.4. Uses strategies to encourage participation and generate ideas.
- 3.C.5. Models the steps in an intentional collaborative problem-solving process.
- 3.C.6. Uses appropriate conflict resolution strategies to address identified issues or conflicts.

3.D. Ongoing Feedback

Knowledge:

- 3.D.1. Understands the different types of feedback.
- 3.D.2. Is aware of the process for providing effective feedback

Skill:

- 3.D.3. Provides verbal and written feedback in the context of agreed upon expectations.
- 3.D.4. Provides feedback that is clear, data driven and delivered in a timely manner.

3.E. Effective Communication

Knowledge:

- 3.E.1. Understands effective communication techniques including active listening, powerful questioning and direct communication.
- 3.E.2. Recognizes how the use of reflective questions promotes problem-solving, understanding points of view, analysis and planning.

Skill:

- 3.E.3. Uses effective communication strategies including active listening, powerful questioning and direct communication.
- 3.E.4. Uses a variety of questions with the TA partner that promote problem-solving, understanding points of view, analysis and planning.



COMPETENCY AREA 4: The Technical Assistance Process

Effective technical assistance requires an intentional, systematic approach to support meaningful change toward improved program quality.⁵ Effective TA professionals know the TA stages and follow an established TA framework while appropriately adjusting the process to be meaningful and applicable to the primary TA strategy used. TA professionals know and apply varied TA strategies to address intended outcomes.

Indicators:

- A. Stages of Technical Assistance
- B. Gathering Information and Conducting Assessments
- C. Goal Setting and Action Planning
- D. Supporting TA Partner to Implement and Evaluate the TA Plan
 - D(a). Implementation Strategies: [Mentoring](#)
 - D(b). Implementation Strategies: [Coaching](#)
 - D(c). Implementation Strategies: [Consultation](#)
 - D(d). Implementation Strategies: [Peer-to-Peer Networks](#)
- E. Evaluating the TA Plan and ending the TA

Also consider Dispositions detailed on pages 6 & 7.

4.A. Stages of Technical Assistance

Knowledge:

- 4.A.1. Recognizes the TA process as specific framework that includes beginning, middle and ending stages.

Beginning

- ~ Gathering information and conducting assessments.

Middle

- ~ Planning and goal setting.
- ~ Supporting the TA partner to implement the plan.
- ~ Reviewing progress and developing new goals.

Ending

- ~ Evaluating the TA plan and ending the TA.
- ~ Engaging in a planned conclusion of the TA.

Skill:

- 4.A.2. Follows the established TA framework while appropriately adjusting the process to be meaningful and applicable to the primary TA strategy used.

COMPETENCY AREA 4: The Technical Assistance Process

Effective technical assistance requires an intentional, systematic approach to support meaningful change toward improved program quality.⁵ Effective TA professionals know the TA stages and follow an established TA framework while appropriately adjusting the process to be meaningful and applicable to the primary TA strategy used. TA professionals know and apply varied TA strategies to address intended outcomes.

4.B. Gathering Information and Conducting Assessments

Knowledge:

- 4.B.1. Understands what information is important to collect to identify the TA focus and plan.
- 4.B.2. Is aware of the various methods and tools that can be used to identify the primary focus and goal of the TA.
- 4.B.3. Understands how to organize and share data collected with TA partner.

Skill:

- 4.B.4. Uses a variety of information gathering strategies to assist the TA partner with identifying TA priorities.
- 4.B.5. Models objective observation, interviewing, assessment and feedback.
- 4.B.6. Helps the TA partner analyze and interpret the collected data to identify strengths and areas of need for continued growth and desired outcomes.

4.C. Goal Setting and Action Planning

Knowledge:

- 4.C.1. Understands the sequence of tasks and resources needed to develop shared goals and prioritize action steps.
- 4.C.2. Is aware of the essential components of a TA plan and how to develop a plan that is relevant to the specific TA strategy implemented.

Skill:

- 4.C.3. Supports the TA partner to connect goals and activities with the program's goals and mission as appropriate within specific TA strategies.
- 4.C.4. Reviews with the TA partner any state, federal or project-specific standards to help inform the development of the TA plan within specific TA strategies.
- 4.C.5. Co-creates the TA plan with the TA partner.



COMPETENCY AREA 4: The Technical Assistance Process

Effective technical assistance requires an intentional, systematic approach to support meaningful change toward improved program quality.⁵ Effective TA professionals know the TA stages and follow an established TA framework while appropriately adjusting the process to be meaningful and applicable to the primary TA strategy used. TA professionals know and apply varied TA strategies to address intended outcomes.

4.D. Supporting the TA Partner to Implement and Evaluate the TA Plan

Knowledge:	Skill:
<p>4.D.1. Recognizes that TA is a capacity building process and knows the strategies to build TA partner capacity.</p> <p>4.D.2. Understands the range of implementation methods that can be provided by the TA professional including problem-solving, skill development, modeling, reflecting, facilitating, and providing feedback.</p> <p>4.D.3. Understands the difference among and appropriate uses of mentoring, coaching and consulting strategies, peer-to-peer networks including Communities of Practice (CoP) and Professional Learning Communities (PLC).</p> <p>4.D.4. Understands that while one strategy is generally predominant while supporting the TA partner to implement the TA plan, these strategies frequently overlap.</p>	<p>4.D.5. Works in collaboration with the TA partner to apply new ideas and learnings.</p> <p>4.D.6. Provides information, resources and/or support to strengthen the TA partner's ability to use and sustain the activities/strategies.</p> <p>4.D.7. Uses the appropriate mentoring, coaching, consulting and peer-to-peer networking strategies to address the TA plan and meet the needs of the TA partner. (See 4.D(a), 4.D(b), 4.D(c) & 4.D(d)).</p> <p>4.D.8. Checks in periodically to review progress on the TA plan.</p> <p>4.D.9. If the TA partner is participating in more than one TA initiative, assists in coordinating efforts.</p>

4.D(a). Implementation Strategies: **Mentoring**

Knowledge:	Skill:
<p>4.D(a).1. Understands that mentoring is a TA approach between colleagues of similar professional roles with a more experienced individual providing guidance to the less experienced professional.</p> <p>4.D(a).2. Identifies when TA support is needed to increase an individual TA partner's professional growth.</p>	<p>4.D(a).3. Facilitates goal identification to strengthen or expand on the TA partner's skills.</p> <p>4.D(a).4. Jointly develops a TA plan and uses it to review progress and set goals.</p> <p>4.D(a).5. Shares specialized approaches or skills that will increase the TA partner's capacity in the area identified.</p> <p>4.D(a).6. Uses mentoring strategies to support individual growth such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Modeling; ~ Shadowing; ~ Observation; ~ Guided self-reflection; and ~ Feedback.

COMPETENCY AREA 4: The Technical Assistance Process

Effective technical assistance requires an intentional, systematic approach to support meaningful change toward improved program quality.⁵ Effective TA professionals know the TA stages and follow an established TA framework while appropriately adjusting the process to be meaningful and applicable to the primary TA strategy used. TA professionals know and apply varied TA strategies to address intended outcomes.

4.D(b). Implementation Strategies: Coaching

Knowledge:

- 4.D(b).1. Understands that coaching is a TA approach led by a TA professional with particular expertise or specialized knowledge and skills.
- 4.D(b).2. Identifies when coaching support is needed to learn or refine a strategy or skill within the work environment.

Skill:

- 4.D(b).3. Jointly develops a TA plan and uses it to review progress and set goals.
- 4.D(b).4. Uses coaching strategies to support the TA partner's self-efficacy (confidence and competence) in using the identified practice(s) such as:
 - ~ Using assessment data to identify the goal;
 - ~ Conducting, or participating in focused observations;
 - ~ Using questions that provide information and stimulate thinking;
 - ~ Sharing materials and resources;
 - ~ Demonstrating and/or modeling skills and behaviors identified;
 - ~ Sharing feedback; and
 - ~ Discussing and reflecting on progress.



COMPETENCY AREA 4: The Technical Assistance Process

Effective technical assistance requires an intentional, systematic approach to support meaningful change toward improved program quality.⁵ Effective TA professionals know the TA stages and follow an established TA framework while appropriately adjusting the process to be meaningful and applicable to the primary TA strategy used. TA professionals know and apply varied TA strategies to address intended outcomes.

4.D(c). Implementation Strategies: Consultation

Knowledge:

- 4.D(c).1. Understands that consultation is a collaborative problem-solving approach between an external TA professional with specific expertise and an individual or group from a program or organization.
- 4.D(c).2. Identifies when collaborative problem-solving strategies are needed to enhance quality improvement efforts and/or resolve specific concerns.

Skill:

- 4.D(c).3. Discusses with the TA partner the initial focus of the consultation using assessment data.
- 4.D(c).4. Jointly develops a TA plan and uses it to review progress and set goals.
- 4.D(c).5. Uses consultation strategies to address the activities on the TA plan including:
 - ~ Brainstorming ideas, resources and potential solutions that are practical and doable;
 - ~ Modeling a problem-solving process;
 - ~ Providing information, resources and materials;
 - ~ Meeting with administrators, staff and/or families to support the TA plan;
 - ~ Conducting observations;
 - ~ Demonstrating a new strategy or approach;
 - ~ Facilitating reflection by asking open-ended questions; and
 - ~ Providing supportive and constructive feedback.



COMPETENCY AREA 4: The Technical Assistance Process

Effective technical assistance requires an intentional, systematic approach to support meaningful change toward improved program quality.⁵ Effective TA professionals know the TA stages and follow an established TA framework while appropriately adjusting the process to be meaningful and applicable to the primary TA strategy used. TA professionals know and apply varied TA strategies to address intended outcomes.

4.D(d). Implementation Strategies: **Peer-to-Peer Networks**

Knowledge:

- 4.D(d).1. Understands how peer-to-peer TA such as Communities of Practice (CoP) and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) promote ongoing professional development and lead to sustained change.
- 4.D(d).2. Describes TA professional's role in supporting ongoing adult learning groups such as Communities of Practice and Professional Learning Communities.
- 4.D(d).3. Identifies effective facilitation skills and can describe how facilitation differs from training.

Skill:

- 4.D(d).4. Uses supportive adult learning groups such as Communities of Practice and Professional Learning Communities when peer learning and networking are needed.
- 4.D(d).5. Jointly develops a TA plan and uses it to review progress and set goals.
- 4.D(d).6. Uses peer-to-peer strategies including:
 - ~ Guiding members in planning the focus, activities and structure of the learning community;
 - ~ Identifying common interests and goals (the CoP or PLC Plan);
 - ~ Facilitating and organizing the CoP or PLC schedule, agenda, and ongoing communication;
 - ~ Engaging all members;
 - ~ Building on ideas;
 - ~ Guiding discussions and keeping the group on track;
 - ~ Redirecting the conversation toward productive channels;
 - ~ Clarifying comments and issues;
 - ~ Seeking consensus;
 - ~ Encouraging members to share in the facilitation, planning and/or sharing their knowledge about selected topics, specific content or relevant resources; and
 - ~ Supporting the group to meet desired outcomes.

4.E. Evaluating the TA Plan and Ending the TA

Knowledge:

- 4.E.1. Understands the importance of evaluating the TA plan.
- 4.E.2. Is aware of resources to support the TA partner to track TA progress and outcomes.
- 4.E.3. Recognizes the value of intentionally concluding the TA.

Skills:

- 4.E.4. Jointly reviews the TA plan and goals.
- 4.E.5. Engages in a planned conclusion of the TA.

COMPETENCY AREA 5: Systems Knowledge

Effective TA professionals have a general knowledge of the components of a comprehensive Early Childhood System to include, but not be limited to, programs and agencies that deliver services, applicable laws, rules, regulations, standards and professional development opportunities, as well as workforce certification and licensure requirements.⁶ The TA professional should know where to refer the TA partner for additional support and assist the TA partner in locating or accessing additional resources, when needed.

Indicators:

- A. Early Childhood Systems' Components
- B. Regulations and Standards
- C. Resource and Referral

Also consider Dispositions detailed on pages 6 & 7.

5.A. Early Childhood Systems' Components

Knowledge:	Skill:
5.A.1. Is aware of the systems, sectors and settings that serve children and families who attend programs or receive services where TA is provided.	5.A.3. Customizes TA to best meet the needs of systems, sectors and settings in which TA is provided.
5.A.2. Understands the importance of cross-system and cross-sector collaborations to better serve and support children, their families and their practitioners.	5.A.4. Creates and maintains working partnerships with service networks and other TA professionals.
	5.A.5. Facilitates effective communication and services among practitioners, families, and other TA professionals and/or agencies such as licensing, health, early intervention, and mental health consultants, when needed.

5.B. Regulation and Standards

Knowledge:	Skill:
5.B.1. Identifies the state and federal regulations, and health, safety and quality improvement standards that apply to settings in which TA is provided.	5.B.3 Shares resources and materials with the TA partner to support accurate compliance with laws, regulations, policies and procedures.
5.B.2. Understands the protocols and procedures related to incidences of violation of rules, laws or regulations specific to early childhood settings or services.	5.B.4. Promotes and supports the TA partner to use the various standards to assess program quality and guide program improvement and TA goals.
	5.B.5. Uses appropriate protocols to address unsafe, unhealthy, and questionable practices.

COMPETENCY AREA 5: Systems Knowledge

Effective TA professionals have a general knowledge of the components of a comprehensive Early Childhood System to include, but not be limited to, programs and agencies that deliver services, applicable laws, rules, regulations, standards and professional development opportunities, as well as workforce certification and licensure requirements.⁶ The TA professional should know where to refer the TA partner for additional support and assist the TA partner in locating or accessing additional resources, when needed.

5.C. Resource and Referral

Knowledge:

- 5.C.1. Maintains knowledge of current state and community resources available to children, families and TA partners including health, mental health, hearing, vision, oral health, early intervention, home visiting and/or special education services.
- 5.C.2. Understands how to find and access community and state resources that are needed.

Skill:

- 5.C.3. Shares information with TA partner on how to access appropriate resources.
- 5.C.4. Assists the TA partner with the referral process, as needed.



Appendices

Appendix A: Alignment with State and National Resources

Maine's TA Competencies align with quality improvement efforts within the state and nationally with the intent to create system alignment and integration and to promote the use of professional development practices that are informed by research.

National efforts to improve quality in early learning settings have more recently become the hallmark of both the federal Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education. Within these departments, the various offices and divisions continue to make strides toward cross-system collaboration and resource sharing. Examples include the following:

- The **Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) System** launched in the fall of 2015 and is jointly funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care. This system brings together resources from these partners to create more efficient and effective ways to provide program leaders and teaching staff with consistent, high quality resources based on the latest evidence-based practices. This TTA structure promotes the value of shared goals within integrated and aligned professional development systems to reduce duplication and increase investments in supporting workforce quality across settings and sectors.
- The **Early Head Start Child Care Partnership** initiative is also jointly funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care. Funding and project implementation requirements emphasize the seamless integration of resources across Head Start and Child Care programs, as well as the promotion of a continuum of professional development supports to increase quality.
- The **Preschool Development/Expansion Grant Program**, jointly administered by the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, is funded to support state and local efforts to build, develop, and expand high quality public preschool programs. Priorities include building the capacity of the workforce to deliver high quality services and supporting a continuum of early learning and development by collaborating with others within the state system of services and support.

All of these initiatives utilize recent research and evidence about the most effective professional development structures and approaches. Informed by implementation science research, more emphasis has been placed on the development of technical assistance supports including mentoring, coaching, consultation and peer-to-peer networks.

In Maine, the Maine Children's Growth Council Professional Development Alignment Team (PDAT) brings together representatives from various systems and sectors involved in early childhood professional development activities. Members of the PDAT were involved in the development of Maine's TA Competencies. The work to create cross-system competencies aligns with the PDAT goal to "integrate the early childhood professional development systems in Maine – birth through age 8, focusing on professional development - defined as education, training and technical assistance." The PDAT also adopted the definitions from the 2011 *Early Childhood Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary* developed jointly by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA).

Additionally, Maine's TA Competencies align with the priorities of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine Department of Education to create systems alignment and promote professional development informed by research. Recent efforts to include various systems and sectors in program and professional standards and program approval processes include the development and revision of the following:

- The [Rising Stars for ME Standards](#) (Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System).
- [Maine Early Learning and Development Standards](#) and core knowledge training.
- [Child Development Services \(CDS\) Program Approval Process](#)

Maine's TA Competencies are intended to support TA professionals in understanding how to support programs as they progress to higher levels of quality. The development of the TA competencies aligns with the Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network (MRTQ PDN) career development activities. As Maine's publicly funded early care and education career development center, MRTQ PDN provides professional development services such as TA, with the goal of program quality improvement directly linked to the Rising Stars for ME Standards. Careful consideration was made to align the competencies to the existing relationship-based TA model, adult learning principles and TA role expectations utilized by the MRTQ PDN. The competencies will also inform future initiatives such as a pathway to a Maine Technical Assistance Professional Credential.

Appendix B: Glossary

Accreditation – A process that identifies that an early childhood program has met a specific set of quality standards such as the Council on Accreditation (COA), the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), or as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Active listening – Interactions with another person that demonstrate the listener understands what the speaker is talking about.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) – Federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that provides funding to state, territory, local, and tribal organizations to provide family assistance, child support, child care, Head Start, child welfare, and other programs related to children and families. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov>

Adult learning principles – Dr. Malcolm Knowles received national recognition for his influence on how people apply the theory of adult learning—“andragogy”—to their work with adult learners. He and others identified seven research-based adult learning principles. These principles support an understanding of how adults learn. Adult learning differs from children’s learning in that it is self-directed, problem-centered, experience-based, and more often relevant to life.

Advocacy – Families, organizations, or volunteers speaking or working on behalf of the rights, interests, or needs of others.

Assessment – A process of collecting and recording information through the use of multiple tools to gather data about current strengths, needs, and practices to determine the focus and goal for technical assistance and to measure progress over time.

Best practice – Term used to describe any instructional technique, scientifically based practice, or method proven through research to be effective or valid.

Capacity building – Any assistance that improves the ability of families, practitioners, administrators, and programs to support the healthy development of children.

Center-based child care – Programs that are licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services in a non-residential setting. In Maine, a center-based program is one that has the capacity for 13 or more children at one time.

Child care – Comprehensive care and education of young children, usually outside their homes.

Child Development Services – Maine’s system of early intervention and special education and early intervention service provision for children birth through the end of age five.

Coaching – A relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills, who often serves in a different professional role than the recipient(s). Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors and is focused on goal setting and achievement for an individual or group.

Code of ethics – Core values of the field that provide guidance for what professionals should do when they encounter conflicting obligations or responsibilities in their work. (Examples: [NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct](#), [Division of Early Childhood Code of Ethics](#) and [International Coach Federation Code of Conduct](#).)

Collaborative – To work jointly with others or a group toward a common goal.

Collaborative stance – According to Johnston and Brinamen (2006), the central tenet of mental health consultation to early care and education is the “consultative stance,” used to capture and describe the consultant’s “way of being” in relationship-based work. At its core, this descriptor represents the belief that the ways in which people are treated influence their views of themselves, and in turn, their relationships with others.

Community of Practice (CoP) – As a form of peer-to-peer technical assistance, Communities of Practice emphasize increased dialogue among professionals about professional knowledge and practice, with ongoing reflection and active inquiry.

Competencies (for TA) – The relevant knowledge, skills and dispositions needed by TA professionals in order to effectively guide programs and individuals to provide quality services to children and families.

Competency area (for ME TA Competencies) – One of the five broad categories in which the knowledge, skills and dispositions for TA professionals are organized.

Confidentiality – A set of rules or a promise that limits access or places restrictions on certain types of information.

Consultation – A collaborative, problem-solving process between an external consultant with specific expertise and adult learning knowledge and skills, and an individual or group from one program or organization. Consultation facilitates the assessment and resolution of an issue-specific concern—a program-/organizational-, staff-, or child-/family-related issue—or addresses a specific topic.

Credential – Document or record certifying that an individual has met a defined set of requirements set forth by the grantor of the credential, usually related to skills and knowledge and may include demonstrations of competence.

Culture – The unique collection of beliefs, practices, traditions, valued competencies, worldviews, and histories that characterize a group of people.

Cultural competence – The ability to respect and value the differences seen in other people, including customs, thoughts, behaviors, communication styles, values, traditions, and institutions. Cultural competence includes the ability to learn from and relate respectfully to the other cultural backgrounds, heritages, and traditions.

Cultural sensitivity – The recognition that there are differences between cultures and that these differences are reflected in the ways that different groups communicate and relate to one another.

Curriculum – A planned sequenced set of activities and experiences based on the developmental needs of children that includes goals and principles, learning experiences for children, teaching strategies and environment.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) – The foundation for effective teaching, based on child and youth physical, cognitive, and social/emotional needs. These practices are responsive to each child’s individual strengths, interests, and needs, which are based on knowledge of child development and learning, knowledge of the child, and the cultural context in which the child lives.

Dispositions – Values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward children, families, colleagues, and communities and affect both child and adult learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice.

Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children – Promotes policies and advances evidence-based practices that support families and enhance the optimal development of young children (0-8) who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities. DEC is an international membership organization for those who work with or on behalf of young children (0-8) with disabilities and other special needs and their families.

Early care and education (ECE) – General term to describe the system of services provided to young children (birth – age 8) and their families including, but not limited to, center-based child care, family child care, in-home or family, friend, and neighbor child care, home visiting, infant mental health, early childhood mental health, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Intervention and early childhood special education.

Early childhood education professional development – A continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families.

Early childhood workforce – Includes those working with young children (infants, toddlers, three to five-year olds, and school-age children in centers, homes, and schools) and their families or on their behalf (in agencies, organizations, institutions of higher education, etc.), with a primary mission of supporting children’s development and learning.

Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) – Research-based, measurable expectations about what children should know (understand) and be able to do (competencies and skills) in different learning domains.

Educare – The Educare model is based on research from early childhood development, education, social work and other allied fields. Four core features compose the Educare model: data utilization, embedded professional development, high-quality teaching practices and intensive family engagement.

Evidenced-based – Any concepts or strategies that are derived from or informed by objective evidence such as data, academic research or scientific findings.

Family-centered practices – A way of working with families, both formally and informally, across service systems to enhance their capacity to care for and support their children. Family-centered practices treat families with dignity and respect; provide family members with information needed to make informed decisions and choices; actively involve families in obtaining resources and supports.

Family child care – Child care program in which a provider cares for children within a private residence other than the child’s residence.

Family, friend, and neighbor care – Child care provided by relatives, friends, and neighbors in the child’s own home or the in another home, often in unregulated settings. Related terms include “informal child care” and “kith and kin” care.

Head Start/Early Head Start – A program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children, pregnant women and their families with infants, toddlers and preschoolers. All Head Start, Early Head Start, American Indian and Alaska Native and Migrant or Seasonal programs are required to adhere to the Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Chapter XIII (September 2016). These can be found at <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy>

Home visiting program – A program that involves visitation of children, parents, and other family members in their homes by trained personnel who provide information, training, and support.

Integrated early childhood professional development system – System designed to help develop and retain a competent and stable early childhood workforce across all sectors of the early care and education field.

Infant/toddler programs – Various public and private programs and settings that serve children from birth to age three and their families.

Licensing – Requirements or regulations necessary for a provider to legally operate child care services in a State or locality, including registration requirements established under State, local, or Tribal law.

License exempt child care provider – An individual who is not licensed, certified or otherwise regulated to provide Child Care Services. The license-exempt Child Care Provider must be 18 years of age and not be living in the child's home or be a member of the child's family.

Maine Afterschool Network (MASN) – Serves as a hub for collaborative efforts that will enable every child to have access to quality, inclusive, affordable afterschool programming which meets the needs of the child, the family and the community. MASN has a close partnership with Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network and is part of a national network funded in part by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Maine Children's Growth Council – Council established in statute in 2008 focused on the achievement of sustainable social and financial investments in the healthy development of Maine's young children and their families. The Children's Growth Council works with a diverse group of legislators, business leaders, providers, parents, researchers, community leaders and government officials to implement and plan for a unified, statewide early childhood services system. <http://www.maineecgc.org/about/>

Maine Department of Education (MDOE) – The Maine Department of Education's mission is to provide leadership and to collaborate with educators and learning communities in order to ensure that every learner has the opportunity to be successful. The MDOE is the administrative department for Pre-K through 12 education and encourages the development of public preschool programs. Decisions to implement public preschool programs are made by local school units, dependent upon local school board approval. Any school district in Maine may develop a public preschool program.

Maine Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) – DHHS is Maine's administrative department that is home to the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS). The OCFS oversees statewide projects that support professional development for early care and education providers. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs>

Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network (MRTQ PDN) – Early Care and Education Career Development Center for Maine. Established in 1999, the PDN's mission is to promote and support professionalism in the field of early childhood education and to improve the quality of early care and education in Maine. MRTQ PDN works with various partners across the state, including Maine's Higher Education System, to promote professional development opportunities throughout the state. <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/maineroads/>

Mentoring – A relationship-based process between colleagues in similar professional roles with a more-experienced individual with adult learning knowledge and skills, the mentor, providing guidance and example to the less experienced protégé mentee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual's personal or professional capacity, resulting in greater professional effectiveness.

National Afterschool Association (NAA) – Formerly the National School-Age Care Alliance, this national professional association represents after-school and out-of-school programs. They are dedicated to the development, education, and care of children and youth during their out-of-school time. Their products and services include program improvement, conferences, public policy advocacy, and membership journal. <http://naaweb.org/>

National Association for Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) – Currently called Child Care Aware of America, this agency works with state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) and other community partners to ensure that all families have access to quality, affordable child care. In order to achieve their mission, they lead projects that increase the quality and availability of child care, offer comprehensive training to child care professionals, undertake research, and advocate for child care policies that improve the lives of children and families. <http://www.naccrra.net/>

National Association for Family Childcare (NAFCC) – A national professional association dedicated to promoting quality child care by strengthening the profession of family child care. Their products and services include education, research, conferences, program accreditation, policy, advocacy, and numerous publications. <http://www.nafcc.org/>

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – Membership-supported organization of individuals who share a desire to serve and act on the needs and rights of children from birth through age 8. <http://www.naeyc.org/>

Observation – The intentional, systematic act of looking at the behavior of another individual in a particular setting, program, or situation.

Office of Child Care – Formerly the Child Care Bureau, a division of the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to States, Territories, and Federally recognized Tribes. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/>

Office of Head Start – A division of the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which administers the Head Start and Early Head Start (EHS) program.

Parallel process – A process by which feelings and interactions from one relationship can be carried forward and inform the feelings and actions of another. For example, when a TA professional demonstrates a particular disposition with a supervisor and that supervisor then emulates the same disposition when working with their staff.

Peer-to-peer networks – Groups of practitioners engaging to improve their skills and knowledge through collaborative study, expertise exchange, and professional dialogue. See also **Communities of Practice and Professional Learning Community**.

Practitioner – Individual who works directly with children to foster growth and development and partner with families for the purpose of early care, education and/or intervention. Settings in which practitioners work include: homes, child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, family, friend and neighbor care settings, and early intervention professionals and home visitors.

Preschool programs – The varied public and private programs and settings that serve children from age three to five prior to formal school entry, and their families.

Professional development – Continuum of learning and support activities, including the provision of education, training and technical assistance, in order to prepare and enhance the knowledge and skills of individuals who work with and on behalf of young children and their families, *as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work.*

Professional development plan – Documents that provide a framework connecting various professional development experiences to each other and to the common core of knowledge and professional standards for early education professionals. Individual professional development plans are designed to create a holistic approach to building an early childhood professional's capacities and to ensure that individuals remain current regarding knowledge and practices in the field.

Professional development systems – Provide consistent and uniform standards for early childhood education (ECE) programs and guide implementation of high quality services for all children. The systems are designed to work across all sectors of private and public early education and care. Comprehensive systems address many areas of requirements and standards.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) – A type of peer-to-peer technical assistance comprised of collaborative teams usually in school-based or educational settings. Members typically focus on learning and sharing about improved classroom practice and child outcomes.

Public Preschool Program – In Maine, this means a program offered by a public school that provides instruction to children who are four years of age by October 15th. These programs are also known as four-year-old or pre-kindergarten programs.

Quality initiatives – Initiatives designed to increase the measurable quality of programs serving children and families including targeted research-based improvements in administration and management; staff qualifications and professional development; program setting and environment; health and safety practices; and curriculum and assessment implementation.

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) – A QRIS is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. Similar to rating systems for restaurants and hotels, QRIS award quality ratings to early and school-age care and education programs that meet a set of defined program standards.

Readiness to change – The developmental point at which a person, organization, or system has the capacity and willingness to engage in a particular activity or make a particular behavior change.

Reflective practice – The process of studying one's own teaching methods and determining what works best for young children, youth, or adult learners. Reflective practice can help an individual to develop and grow professionally.

Reflective questioning – The process of asking questions that evoke discovery, insight, commitment or action.

Regulations – Rules or orders issued by an executive authority or regulatory agency of a government and have the force of law.

Relationship-based technical assistance – Refers to the approach of using relationships to facilitate meaningful change toward improved program quality.

Rising Stars for ME (State of Maine Early Care and Education Quality Rating and Improvement System) – Maine’s five star quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) based upon a set of standards used to evaluate the quality of early childhood programs.

School-age child care – This designation applies to programs that operate as out-of-school-time programming for school age children.

Sector – The core regulatory or funding sectors that deliver early childhood education: Head Start/ Early Head Start, child care, preschool, early intervention and special education services, home visiting and public school pre-K to third grade.

Self-efficacy – An individual’s belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one’s own motivation, behavior, and social environment.

Setting – The locations in which early childhood education takes place and includes child care centers, child care homes and schools that are state licensed or registered, family homes, public or private, for-profit or nonprofit organizations.

Strengths-based approach – Emphasizes individuals’ self-determination and strengths, is TA partner led, with a focus on future outcomes and strengths that the individuals bring to address a problem or crisis.

Technical assistance (TA) – Provision of targeted and customized supports by (a) professional(s) with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services by recipients.

Technical assistance partner (TA partner) – The recipient of technical assistance services provided by a Technical Assistance professional.

Technical assistance plan (TA plan) – A technical assistance plan is jointly developed by the TA professional and the TA Partner. It provides a road map for the technical assistance support and includes the goal/ focus of the TA written in specific and observable terms as well as the steps, specific activities, responsibilities of the TA professional and TA partner and timeline for meeting the goal.

Technical assistance professional (TA professional) – A professional who provides targeted and customized supports to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services to recipients. TA professionals provide specific TA approaches through coaching, consultation, mentoring and peer-to-peer networking.

Training – A learning experience or series of experiences, specific to an area of inquiry and related set of skills or dispositions, delivered by a professional(s) with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills.

University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS) – CCIDS is Maine’s University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service; has a statewide mission to build capacity and create systemic change consistent with the principles of inclusion, universal access, diversity and social justice. The Center’s work in the area of early care and education helps to expand Maine’s capacity to support increased access and participation of children with developmental, linguistic, cultural and other diverse learning needs in quality inclusive early learning settings.

Appendix C: Contributors

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Footnotes

Footnotes

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²Definition of professionalism appears in the Pennsylvania General Core Competencies for Relationship-Based Technical Assistance Self-Assessment Checklist (pg.2) and is used with permission from the PA Departments of Human Services and Education, Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). Retrieved from <http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/TA/TA-Consultant%20Competencies.pdf>

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⁴Building Relationships definition is adapted from “Co-Creating the Relationship” in Coaching Competencies for Colorado Early Childhood Education, (pg. 4), Colorado Coaching Consortium. Retrieved from http://www.cocoaches.net/uploads/Coaching_competencies_Oct_2010.pdf

⁵The Technical Assistance Process definition was informed by Strategic Directions: Technical Assistance Professionals in State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Retrieved from http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/TA_Professionals.pdf

⁶Systems Knowledge definition is adapted from “Domain 5.0: Systems Knowledge” in Framework for the North Carolina Technical Assistance Practitioner Competencies, (pg. 20), North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education. Retrieved from http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/PDF_forms/TACompetenciesApril232013.pdf

