

## Technical Assistance Self-Reflection Tool

A resource to technical assistance providers serving early childhood programs for engaging in reflection and continuous quality improvement

## **Explanation of Tool:**

This document is the result of a collaboration between New Jersey's Regional Technical Assistance Center Directors, Program Managers and Senior TAS, with support from the Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI), to create a tool for guiding best practices in providing technical assistance to early childhood programs throughout the state.

## Purpose of Tool:

In 2016, the *Technical Assistance Specialist Standards for NJ Early Childhood Professionals* was created as a means for informing and promoting the quality of technical assistance (TA) to early childhood and afterschool programs throughout New Jersey. In an effort to build upon this work, TA Center Directors, Program Managers and Senior TAS, along with support from ECLI, began exploring the question: What is effective TA? This led to a tool that attempts to capture specific practices and strategies related to the original TAS Standards for the purpose of promoting effective TA, facilitating the implementation of goal setting and continuous quality improvement (CQI) for TA Staff and encouraging consistency in technical assistance provided across regions.

## Tips for Implementation:

This document is meant to be used as a resource for those providing technical assistance to engage in reflective practice and routinely self-assess skills in order to identify areas of strength and areas where they would like to create goals and improvement plans for their own professional growth. Currently, it is at the discretion of each agency as to any further expectations in its use; however, below are a few tips for implementation:

- Supervisors use tool for incorporating specific practices within conversations with staff, as a reference for articulating and highlighting best practice during one-on-ones, in providing observation feedback to affirm strengths and as a basis for asking reflective questions to promote inquiry and curiosity, etc.
- Agencys provide opportunities for TA providers to use tool for informing goals during agency's annual reviews and/or for creating individual goals to focus on within small coaching groups offered through ECLI and PD opportuntites outside the organization.

FOCUS: Strength-based, culturally responsive, and collaborative relationships	COMMENTS/EVIDENCE:
<ul> <li>a) Actively utilizes knowledge, experiences and priorities of programs in developing goals for growth</li> <li>b) Sets and respects boundaries</li> <li>c) Utilizes various strategies and frameworks for engaging in meaningful and productive conversations with programs and TA systems partners</li> <li>d) Provides follow-up to programs and colleagues in a timely manner</li> <li>e) Clearly documents CQI efforts objectively and with specificity, avoiding jargon</li> <li>f) Uses knowledge and/or prior experiences in relevant ECE contexts, along with standards and classroom/program evaluation tools as a measure of quality and to assist in identifying priorities</li> <li>g) Engages in self-reflection to bring awareness of one's implicit biases and subjectivity and how it may impact work with programs</li> <li>h) Observes cultural and linguistic strengths of the program and utilizes in goal setting</li> <li>i) Guides programs in identifying CQI efforts that honors and respects the learning style, culture, language, needs and preferences of children, families and communities served</li> <li>j) Utilizes various strategies and frameworks such as Skilled Dialogue, humble inquiry, making the most of coaching conversations, etc. in working through conflict with programs</li> <li>k) Utilizes active listening</li> <li>l) Engages with programs in solution-focused discussions to promote action</li> <li>m) Applies knowledge and understanding of basic andragogy principles</li> <li>n) Researches topics and creates professional learning groups</li> </ul>	Supervisor: What TA practices are you currently observing in this area? Area(s) of growth? TA Provider: How have you grown in this area? What would be a next step in strengthening skills in this area?
<ul> <li>Associated TAS Standards:</li> <li>1.1 Relationship-based, 1.2 Communication, 1.3 &amp; 1.4 Contextual understanding of adult developmental stages, the role of the administrator, the work environment and families the programs serve, 1.5 Cultural and linguistic appropriateness</li> </ul>	

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (ECLI) \* ROWAN UNIVERSITY This resource is made possible by funding from Grow New Jersey Kids/ NJ Dept. of Human Services (DHS)/Division of Family Development (DFD)

FOCUS: Best Practices in Technical Assistance Process		COMMENTS/EVIDENCE:	
<i>a)</i>	Uses standards and evaluation tools/ERS/SFI/etc. as a measure of quality and as a basis for identifying strengths and areas for growth as well as providing feedback and guiding technical assistance	<b>Supervisor:</b> What TA practices are you currently observing in this area? Area(s) of growth?	
b)	Provides documentation that is clear, objective and free of personal feelings or assumptions related to program/provider.		
<i>c)</i>	Updates database and keeps accurate records of programs quality improvement plans, progress of goals and any revisions made throughout the process per TA Center guidelines, including quarterly updates of data		
d)	Understands how programs move through change and utilizes stages and models of change to identify priorities and where change can begin		
e)	Utilizes strategies from the Framework for Culturally Responsive Change to navigate through the TA process		
f)	Demonstrates andragogy principles for individual and group learning		
<i>g</i> )	Sees strengths in others and builds on strengths to build capacity		
<i>h</i> )	Meets programs where they are and individualizes technical assistance		
i)	Demonstrates ability to work collaboratively as well as take the lead		
j)	Utilizes SMART goals based upon needs of the program/staff for goal setting		
k)	Utilizes various strategies and frameworks for providing feedback, promoting reflection and building next set of goals		
l)	Utilizes strategy of early wins or easy changes to help empower future bigger changes in building capacity and achieving success	<b>TA Provider:</b> How have you grown in this area? What would be a next step in strengthening skills in	
m)	Intentionally utilizes mentoring strategies to provide guidance and example in supporting individual growth for programs and building their capacity within their respective roles	this area?	
n)	Intentionally utilizes consultation strategies to address specific concerns/problems, assist programs in analyzing and reflecting on strategies to address problem and come up with a solution		
<i>o</i> )	Shares knowledge, skills & experiences to strengthen program's practice, quality and positive dispositions		
p)	<i>Researches topics and actively seeks out new resources to meet program needs and to stay informed of available resources and systems</i>		
q)	Seeks consultation from others and makes referrals when needed		
r)	Understands program's cultural characteristics and developmental stages in order to connect them to resources and systems		
Asso	ciated Standards:		
	.7, 1.8 & 1.9 Use of multiple technical assistance modalities: Mentoring, Coaching and Consultation, 2.1 Stages		
of technical assistance, 2.2 Observation, assessment and reflection, 2.3 Plan development and evaluation, 2.4 & 3.2			
Supporting TA partner capacity (growth in skills, dispositions, \and knowledge) and role as an agent of change, 2.5			
	artner advocacy, 4.3 Connects data to systems, 4.2 Needs assessment for systems improvements, 4.1 Knows childhood and relevant systems and resources, 3.7 Current research and best practice		

FOCUS: Leadership, reflective practice and systems knowledge	COMMENTS/EVIDENCE:
<ul> <li>a) Demonstrates emotional intelligence and positive dispositions in leading</li> <li>b) Practices and models Growth Mindset by seeking learning opportunities from peers and others</li> <li>c) Conducts self-assessment to inform strengths and areas for growth</li> <li>d) Creates an Individual Professional Development Plan with SMART goals and assesses progress on a biannual basis</li> <li>e) Engages in activities designed to improve work-related skills, dispositions and practices</li> <li>f) Stays current with latest research, trends and best practices and embeds knowledge into practice</li> <li>g) Provides time for reflection of self and of those they are in a leadership role with as part of their professional practice</li> <li>h) Uses a systematic approach of reflection on action, in action and for action to inform their own CQI</li> <li>i) Knowledge and implementation of the TAS standards and dispositions</li> <li>j) Distinguishes specific skills for TA with center based and FCC</li> <li>k) Articulates and demonstrates the QRIS philosophy and approach in child care/family care</li> <li>l) Understands, sets and maintains appropriate boundaries with programs</li> <li>m) Models accountability to programs and peers/staff</li> <li>n) Provides consistent technical assistance efforts across systems</li> <li>o) Establishes positive relationships with and understands roles of all TA Specialists</li> <li>p) Displays knowledge of individual program and program type (center-based, FCC, etc.) in order to customize TA services and identify priorities</li> <li>q) Clearly articulates expectations, timelines and standards to programs and provides timely supports &amp; resources as needed</li> <li>r) Demonstrates knowledge and inter-relatedness of local, regional, statewide, and national early childhood systems</li> <li>s) Adheres to agency policies and procedures</li> <li>t) Secures all files and uses discretion when discussing information involving programs, maintains confidentiality at all times</li> </ul>	Supervisor: What TA practices are you currently observing in this area? Area(s) of growth? TA Provider: How have you grown in this area? What would be a next step in strengthening skills in this area?
Associated Standards 3.1 Professional orientation: philosophy, responsibilities, boundaries, legal and ethical practice, 3.3, 3.4 & 3.10 Collaboration, Roles of other TA Specialists and partners and managing the technical assistance process, 3.5 & 3.6 Self-assessment of knowledge and skills and individual professional development plan implementation 3.8 Reflective Practice, 3.9 Leadership	