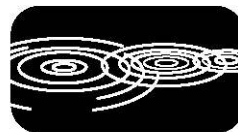# 2016

Technical Assistance Specialist Standards

for NJ Early Childhood Professionals

**professional
IMPACT NJ**
advocating growth for
early childhood educators

*Developed by the PINJ Clearinghouse Committee's Ad-Hoc
Technical Assistance Specialist Standards Committee*

Acknowledgements

Professional Impact NJ offers many thanks to Cindy Wheeler and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education for granting us permission to base this document on their *Framework for the North Carolina Technical Assistance Practitioner Competencies* issued in 2013. This document uses the terminology defined in 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).

Professional Impact NJ (PINJ) implemented its *PINJ Instructor Approval System* in 2003. Since then, we have identified a need to further delineate the specialized knowledge and skills necessary for those in the early childhood and afterschool field who offer targeted services, or technical assistance (TA), to practitioners and administrators in the field. The intent in developing *Standards for New Jersey's Technical Assistance Specialists* in 2014 was to inform and promote the quality of technical assistance (TA) to early childhood and afterschool programs in all settings in New Jersey.

Professional Impact NJ invited a diverse group of early childhood, afterschool, and family support stakeholders to engage in dialogue which would inform the development of the standards for TA Specialists across New Jersey's early care and education, afterschool, and family support settings. Many thanks to the following individuals who contributed to this work in 2014:

Linda Bartek-Smith, Child & Family Resources

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Dence Vereen Young, Programs for Parents, Inc.

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Introduction and Overview

The NJ Technical Assistance Specialist Standards are divided into four areas:

Standards Area 1:
Technical Assistance Approaches

Standards Area 2:
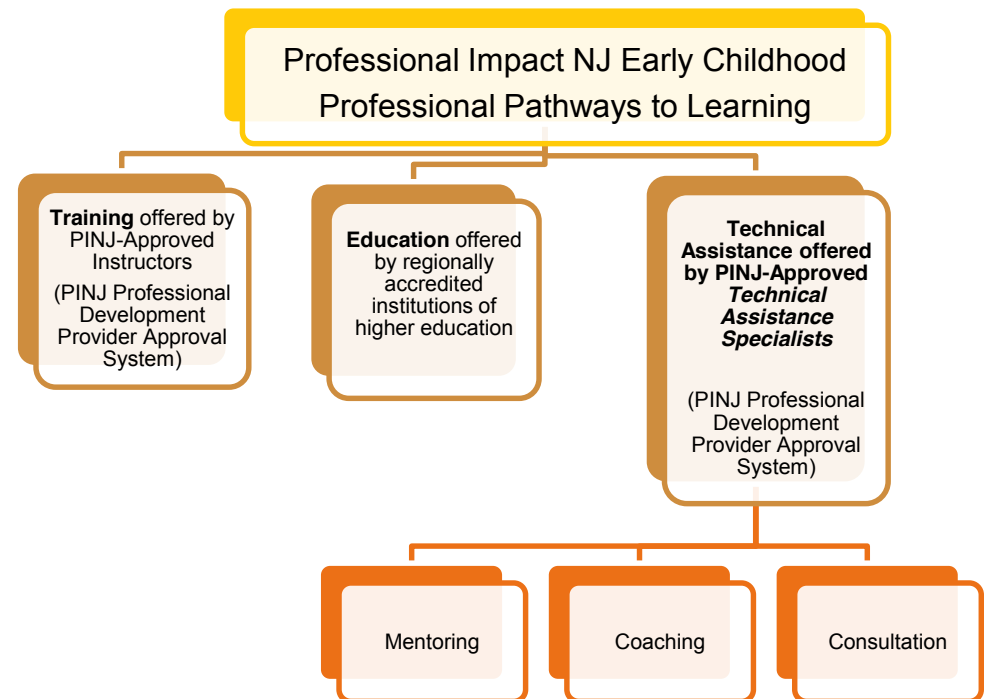The Technical Assistance Process

Standards Area 3:
Professionalism

Standards Area 4:
Systems Knowledge

Utilizing the terminology from the NAEYC/NACCRRA training and technical assistance glossary, **these TAS standards are intended for those individuals, or Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists, who provide mentoring, coaching and consultation services and support to New Jersey's early childhood, afterschool, and family support professionals and administrators.**

This chart illustrates the professional pathways to learning for early childhood educators in New Jersey supported by Professional Impact NJ.

Professional Impact NJ Early Childhood Professional Pathways to Learning

Training offered by PINJ-Approved Instructors

(PINJ Professional Development Provider Approval System)

Education offered by regionally accredited institutions of higher education

Technical Assistance offered by PINJ-Approved *Technical Assistance Specialists*

(PINJ Professional Development Provider Approval System)

Mentoring

Coaching

Consultation

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to articulate quality standards for all early care and education, afterschool, and family support Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists who support the improvement of developmentally-appropriate experiences for young children birth through age eight. Quality services should be provided by TA Specialists which build the knowledge and skills of early educators and their program administrators using relationship-based technical assistance strategies which are grounded in best practices. The intent of these *Standards* is to provide Technical Assistance Specialists in New Jersey with a research-based inventory of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are considered necessary for all TA Specialists in all of New Jersey's settings related to early childhood, afterschool, and family support.

The Technical Assistance Specialist Standards Committee has come to view these standards to be the foundation for New Jersey's "next steps" for informing the professional development provided to Technical Assistance Specialists which will guide their relationship-based practices.

These next steps may include creating some or all of the following:

- Hiring guide
- External assessment tool
- Guidance document
- Six-hour Standards Training
- Alignment with other elements of the early childhood education, afterschool and family support system

As defined by the Technical Assistance Specialist Standards Committee, **technical assistance (TA) is the provision of targeted and customized supports by a professional with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services by early childhood professionals which lead to improved outcomes for children and support of families.***

*Adapted from the NAEYC/NACCRRA Early Childhood Education Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary

TA Specialists working in New Jersey's early care and afterschool sectors include but are not limited to:

- Early Interventionists
- Preschool/Pre-K Mentors
- Playground Safety Consultants
- School District Early Childhood Supervisors
- New Jersey First Steps Infant/Toddler Specialists

- Family Worker Coordinators
- Child Care Health Consultants
- School District Master Teachers
- Head Start Child Development Specialists
- Grow NJ Kids Quality Improvement Specialists

- Family Child Care Coordinator/Specialists
- Health Consultants
- Program Specialists
- Mentors/Coaches/Consultants
- Home Visitors

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The committee adopted the term **Technical Assistance (TA) Specialist to include all of these individuals regardless of organizational title or setting**. The individuals or organizations being served by TA Specialists are hereafter referred to as **TA Partners**. The committee was united around the vision that TA Specialists meet and exceed the standards articulated in this document. With this goal in mind, the minimum requirements for approval by Professional Impact NJ as a Technical Assistance Specialist in the PINJ Professional Development Provider Approval System will be aligned with these standards. The content of New Jersey's Six-Hour Technical Assistance Specialist Standards Orientation Training will be aligned with these standards as well.

Guiding Principles

The committee endorsed the Guiding Principles for TA Specialists promoted in the Administration for Children and Families' publication, *A Guide to Effective Consultation with Settings Serving Infants, Toddlers, and their Families* (2011).

1. **Reflect** the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for all TA Specialists working with all children, their families and practitioners in any capacity, setting or sector;
2. **Inform** practices of TA Specialists working in all early childhood settings and sectors including Head Start/Early Head Start (EHS), early intervention and preschool exceptional children, school-age child care, center-based child care, infant/toddler care, family child care and preschool and Pre-K programs;
3. **Reflect** best practices and are research-based guiding principles;
4. **Build upon** the work previously conducted nationally;
5. **Support** collaborative, multi-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary consultation practices;
6. **Reflect** individual, social, economic, and cultural diversity that must be understood and honored in practice;
7. **Support and promote** culturally-competent practice; and
8. **Acknowledge** that children develop within the context of their families, and are relationship-based and family centered.

The Development of Technical Assistance Practice

The table below demonstrates the progression of an individual Technical Assistance Specialist's attainment of the knowledge and skills needed to support the provision of quality technical assistance in a variety of early care and education, afterschool, and family support settings.

Acquired Specialized Content Areas	• Accreditation and Quality Initiative Support • Organizational Development • Grow NJ Kids (Quality Rating & Improvement System) • Preschool (ages 3-5) / Pre-K • Children with Special Needs • Professional Development • Child Health • Afterschool • General Early Care and Education • Social Emotional Development / Infant Mental Health • Curriculum Areas / Curricula • School Readiness • Early Intervention • Learning Environments • Healthy Social Behaviors • Infants and Toddlers And others…
Professional Recognition	• *Technical Assistance Specialist Approval* by PINJ in the Professional Development Provider Approval System
Necessary Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for TA Specialists	• Completion of ten hours of professional development in the past three years of PINJ-approved train-the-trainer instruction covering leadership, mentoring, coaching, adult learning, and reflective practice • Successful completion of PINJ's six-hour Technical Assistance Specialist Standards Orientation Training
	• Knowledge of New Jersey's early care and education, afterschool, and family support systems
	• Three years of work experience directly with children and/or families in a regulated early childhood setting **and** with adults as a learning facilitator • Documented demonstration of 60 hours in the past three years responsible for the professional development of other adults • Two letters of reference from individuals who have observed the TA Specialist instructing adults
	• Minimum of **Degreed Professional** level on *NJ Registry for Child Care Professionals Career Lattice* (BA / BS degree or higher in Early Childhood, Child Development, Human Services, or a related field) • Demonstrated competence in *NJ Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals* through PINJ's NJ Professional Development Provider Approval System lessons and quizzes

NJ Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals

The foundation of the standards for New Jersey's Technical Assistance Specialists is knowledge about child development, which in turn should serve as the foundation of all technical assistance provided in the field. This is most often demonstrated by a minimum of a four-year degree in early childhood, child development or a related field, as well as demonstrated competency in NJ's *Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals.*

Core Knowledge & Competencies Areas:

1. **Child Growth and Development**
2. **Family and Community Relationships**
3. **Learning Environment and Curriculum**
4. **Teaching-Learning Interactions and Approaches**
5. **Child Assessment**
6. **Child Wellness: Health, Safety, Nutrition, and Physical Activities**
7. **Serving Diverse Populations**
8. **Professionalism and Leadership**
9. **Program Organization and Management**

Professional Ethics

TA Specialists must possess technical knowledge and demonstrate effective practices in specialized content areas, including working with infants and toddlers, school-age care, early intervention, child health and wellness, and other areas. A TA Specialist is also responsible for meeting the specifications of applicable governing, regulatory, and individual certification or licensing bodies.

All technical assistance services must be provided in an ethical manner. PINJ-approved TA Specialists must read and sign off that they agree to abide by the *NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment* (2011) and the *Supplement for Adult Educators (2004).*

Professionalism

To support the highest quality of technical assistance services, it is important that the TA Specialist know and demonstrate an understanding of the systems and policies that inform the professional early childhood environment, both nationally and in New Jersey. This requires staying current in relevant research, membership in professional associations, and advocating for policy initiatives that affect children, families, teachers, and programs. The TA Specialist should have at least three years of professional work experience with children and/or families in a regulated early childhood setting and with adults as a learning facilitator.

Possible Specialized Content Areas and Technical Assistance Approaches

Specialized areas of content knowledge required by New Jersey's Technical Assistance Specialists working in diverse sectors or settings are delineated in the table on page 6 in the row labeled, "Acquired Specialized Content Areas."

Dispositions

According to Oxford Dictionaries, a disposition is defined as "a person's inherent qualities of mind and character." However, many qualities necessary for providing quality TA services can be learned or enhanced. While knowledge and skills are demonstrated by what the TA Specialist knows and can do, dispositions reflect "how" the TA Specialist interacts and works with TA Partners. Dispositions are an important component of these standards and are discussed later in this document.

This section focuses on attributes, called dispositions, which are an important part of being an effective TA Specialist. Dispositions can be innate to the TA Specialist or can be learned or acquired through self-reflection and ongoing professional learning. Reflecting on dispositions takes the TA Specialist beyond knowledge and skills—what they know and can do—to thinking about "how they are" with their TA Partners. In turn, this supports TA Partners to consider their own dispositions and "how they are" with others (children, families, colleagues, and the TA Specialist). This is not intended to be a complete list, but a starting point for reflection.

Caring Dispositions

TA Specialists with this set of dispositions value and appreciate all aspects of the well-being of children, practitioners, and program administrators. The following list comprises many, but not all, of the qualities, tendencies, and/or behaviors that characterize a set of caring dispositions.

- **Empathic:** Identifies with and sees things from the perspective of others
- **Compassionate:** Sympathizes, often with a desire to understand 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 learning process
- **Culturally Competent:** Appreciates and capitalizes upon diversity; is aware of and acts to reduce one's own biases; employs culturally sensitive instruction & support
- **Patient:** Deals with others without becoming annoyed or anxious

Communicative Dispositions

TA Specialists with this set of dispositions are sensitive to and skilled in the various aspects of human activity. They have effective interpersonal relationship skills and attitudes that foster collaborative initiatives useful in enhancing the teaching-learning process. The following list comprises many, but not all, of the qualities, tendencies, and/or behaviors that characterize a set of communicative dispositions.

- **Present:** Is keenly engaged in interactions and observations
- **Responsive:** Is inclined to act as best meets 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 effective practices
- **Vocal:** Is willing to openly engage and respond to peers, practitioners, administrators, and community

Creative Dispositions

TA Specialists with this set of dispositions display the capacity to envision and craft things in novel and meaningful ways. The following list comprises many, but not all, of the qualities, tendencies, and/or behaviors that characterize a set of creative dispositions.

- **Flexible:** Adapts, adjusts, and modifies practices to meet the needs of those with whom she/he is advising; thinks on his/her feet; and is comfortable with change
- **Inventive:** Uses the interest, preferences, and needs of children, families, and early childhood practitioners to collaboratively design multiple strategies to support the children's successful participation in natural learning opportunities; creates, reviews, problem solves, and revises intervention strategies teachers can successfully implement throughout typical routines and activities; visualizes and can support implementation of novel ideas and practices

Critical Dispositions

TA Specialists 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. The following list comprises many, but not all, of the qualities, tendencies, and/or behaviors that characterize a set of critical dispositions.

- **Reflective:** Takes time consistently to evaluate effectiveness of services provided and behavior in terms of his/her larger goals; nurtures reflectivity in practitioners; reflects on own growth and accountability
- **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 Specialists. The following list comprises many, but not all, of the qualities, tendencies, and/or behaviors that characterize a set of professional dispositions.

- **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 (i.e. the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct); evidences integrity
- **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 regarding confidentiality
- **Objective:** Fosters and enhances the teaching and learning process while exercising judgment about personal and professional boundaries; displays genuineness

"The heartbeat of leadership is a relationship, not a person or a process. Leadership becomes a collective relationship where individuals are both shapers of and shaped by one another."

-Gordon A. Donaldson, Jr. (2001)*

*As cited in Biddle, J. K. (2012). The three Rs of leadership: Building effective early childhood programs through relationships, reciprocal learning, and reflections. (p. 33). Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Press.

The NJ Technical Assistance Specialist Standards

TAS Standards-Area 1: **Technical Assistance Approaches**

Description:
The Approved Technical Assistance Specialist effectively manages technical assistance and meets expectations of requirements, systems, standards, and credentials specific to the Technical Assistance Specialist's discipline.

Requires knowledge and skills in:	**Using dispositions:**
1. Relationship-based practice 2. Communication 3. Contextual understanding of families 4. Contextual understanding of adult developmental stages, the role of the administrator, and work environments 5. Cultural and linguistic appropriateness 6. Differences between and appropriate uses of coaching, mentoring, and consultation strategies 7. Conflict resolution 8. Communities of Practice and Professional/Adult Learning Communities	• Caring • Communicative • Creative • Critical • Professional

1.1 Relationship-based practice

Knowledge	Recognizes that strength-based relationships form the foundation for effective TA services and is aware of own contribution to the relationship dynamic.
Competency	Uses relationship-based principles to establish and foster strong relationships with TA Partners by establishing rapport, buy-in and consensus with TA Partner regarding necessary areas of improvement and/or critical issues.

1.2 Communication

Knowledge	Knows and can list effective communication techniques when working with other adults.
Competency	Demonstrates active and reflective listening and adjusts communication style when gathering information and responding to the needs of TA Partners by providing evidence of the use of common language, active listening skills, explanation of jargon, making connections, building rapport through conversation and reflective questioning, and reflective listening in interactions with TA Partner.

1.3 Contextual understanding of families

Knowledge	Understands and can describe the importance of the dynamics and context of families: culture, language, child rearing practices, and demographics.
Competency	Demonstrates respect for families, their responsibilities and community settings by describing each family's composition and values, and their impact on each child's development.

1.4 Contextual understanding of adult developmental stages, the role of the administrator, and the work environment

Knowledge	Understands and can describe the importance of the dynamics and context of the TA Partner's setting: culture, language, demographics, values, policies, procedures, physical space, and organizational structure.
Competency	Demonstrates respect for the TA Partner's roles, responsibilities, and community setting articulated orally and in written form.

1.5 Cultural and linguistic appropriateness

Knowledge	Understands and can articulate the importance of cultural and linguistic sensitivity throughout the TA process.
Competency	Selects strategies and resources based on the TA Partner's learning style, culture, language, needs and preferences by showing evidence of making recommendations of best practices and strategies which are tailored to the TA Partner's needs and preferences.

1.6 Use of mentoring, coaching, and consultation strategies	
Knowledge	Knows the difference between and appropriate uses of coaching, mentoring, and consultation strategies as defined by the NAEYC/NACCRRA *Early Childhood Education Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary* (2011).
Competency	Uses the appropriate coaching, mentoring, and consultation strategies to meet the needs of the TA Partner by showing evidence of different TA strategies used with the TA Partner in different situations.
1.7 Mentoring	
Knowledge	Knows of mentoring as a collegial relationship-based process intended to increase an individual's personal or professional abilities.
Competency	Uses appropriate mentoring strategies to support individual growth, by working with the TA Partner to create a growth plan which will move the TA Partner from where they are to where they would like to be (their intended goal).
1.8 Coaching	
Knowledge	Uses coaching as a focused strategy to support achievement of specific goals for individuals or groups.
Competency	Uses appropriate coaching strategies to support individual or group growth by collaborating with the TA Partner to develop an improvement plan and checking in with the TA Partner to support changes in performance.
1.9 Consultation	
Knowledge	Knows of consultation as a collaborative problem-solving process to address specific concerns and facilitate program change.
Competency	Uses appropriate consultation strategies to address specific concerns by assisting TA Partner to analyze and reflect on different strategies that address the TA Partner's concerns, and lead them to improved outcomes.

1.10 Conflict resolution	
Knowledge	Knows and understands appropriate conflict resolution strategies.
Competency	Uses appropriate conflict resolution strategies in support of the TA processes, using active listening and collaborating with the TA Partner to find possible solutions.
1.11 Convenes and facilitates ongoing adult learning in a community	
Knowledge	Applies knowledge of supportive, ongoing adult learning groups such as *Communities of Practice* and *Professional Learning Communities* to promote ongoing professional development and to sustain change.
Competency	Appropriately uses supportive ongoing adult learning groups such as *Communities of Practice* and *Professional Learning Communities*, convening a group of professionals in similar roles for purposes of ongoing learning and support.

TAS Standards-Area 2: The Technical Assistance Process
Description: The approved Technical Assistance Specialist has knowledge of the technical assistance process.

Requires knowledge and skills in:	**Using dispositions:**
1. Stages of technical assistance 2. Observation and assessment 3. Plan development and evaluation 4. Supporting TA Partner capacity 5. TA Partner advocacy	• Caring • Communicative • Creative • Critical • Professional

2.1 Stages of technical assistance

Knowledge	Understands technical assistance stages and steps.
Competency	Uses an appropriate technical assistance process, including establishing a productive relationship, assessing TA Partner's willingness and commitment, and identifying the TA purpose and focus by documenting technical assistance activities and having TA Partner sign improvement plan and timeline.

2.2 Observation, assessment and reflection

Knowledge	Knows the principles and techniques of objective program observation, assessment, and reflection.
Competency	Applies and models objective observation, interviewing, assessment, feedback, reflection, and demonstration by documenting technical assistance and observation records.

2.3 Plan development and evaluation

Knowledge	Knows and can describe how to develop a technical assistance plan and formal agreements with TA Partners which include goals, expectations, strategies, timelines, outcomes, and evaluation.
Competency	Develops and adheres to a TA plan with TA Partners including goals, expectations, strategies, timeline, outcomes, and evaluation to address progress and revisions, as needed.

2.4 Supporting TA partner capacity (growth in skills, abilities, and knowledge)

Knowledge	Understands that TA is a capacity-building process and knows the strategies for supporting TA Partner capacity.
Competency	Effectively works with TA Partners to reflect on progress and engage in collaborative quality improvement by documenting TA activities in areas of success and areas that need further supports.

2.5 TA partner advocacy	
Knowledge	Knows when TA Partners may need support to advocate for needs and the resources and connections that are available to support them.
Competency	Connects TA Partner to early childhood resources and system supports as needed, by keeping and maintaining a current applicable resource binder and referral log.

TAS Standards-Area 3: Professionalism

Description: The approved Technical Assistance Specialist conducts technical assistance in a respectful manner, exhibiting a professional philosophy consistent with the requirements and expectations of standards and credentials specific to the professional's discipline.

Requires knowledge and skills in:
1. Professional orientation
2. Role as a change agent
3. Roles of other TA Specialists and partners
4. Managing a TA practice
5. Self-assessment of knowledge and skills
6. Creation and implementation of professional development plans for self and others
7. Current research and best practice
8. Reflective practice
9. Leadership
10. Partnering and collaboration
11. Foundations of training
12. Dealing with resistance to change

Using dispositions:
- Caring
- Communicative
- Creative
- Critical
- Professional

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3.1 Professional orientation: philosophy, responsibilities, boundaries, legal and ethical practice

Knowledge	Understands and articulates a professional philosophy including: guiding principles, legal requirements governing their practice and those whom they serve, maintaining professional boundaries, ethical standards, and common practices of a TA Specialist.
Competency	Follows established professional, ethical, and legal standards including maintaining confidentiality of children, families, and TA Partners at all times by keeping files secure, discussing situations/information in a private setting, and sharing written expectations and agreements with other TA Specialists as necessary.

3.2 Role as a change agent

Knowledge	Understands and can describe the TA Specialist's direct and indirect roles or responsibilities in supporting professional/partnering expectations; understands one's own responsibilities as an agent of change.
Competency	Applies appropriate theories and resources to support TA Partner's growth and change by individualizing TA, meeting TA Partner where they are, and making referrals when needed.

3.3 Roles of other TA Specialists and partners

Knowledge	Identifies and respects the roles of all TA Specialists working with the same TA Partner (i.e. a school district Master Teacher and a Grow NJ Kids Quality Improvement Specialist at same site) and coordinates with them to serve the best interests of the TA Partner.
Competency	Establishes positive relationships with all TA Specialists that are in the best interests of the TA Partner (i.e. by maintaining open communications with all TA Specialists).

3.4	Managing the technical assistance process
Knowledge	Understands the dynamics of the technical assistance process consistent with the requirements of the employer, systems governing the work, the standards, and credentials specific to the professional's discipline.
Competency	Manages technical assistance and meets expectations of requirements, systems, standards, and credentials specific to the professional's discipline by being flexible in supporting the needs of the TA Partner.

3.5	Self-assessment of knowledge and skills
Knowledge	Able to articulate and draw from individual knowledge and skills needed to support the provision of technical assistance to a diverse population. This includes but is not limited to evidence-based or informed methods in the following key areas: • Developmentally appropriate practice • Observation • Assessment of settings, individuals, and groups of children • Relationship-based approaches • Adult learning theory and effective strategies • Facilitation of learning processes for adults and children • Planning tools and methods to support adult learning • Planning tools and methods to support child learning • Self-assessment of individual practice • Individual professional development planning • *NJ Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals*
Competency	Identifies personal dispositions and professional knowledge and skills, and sets professional development goals by staying current with best practices and innovations for continuous quality improvement, and reflecting on individual practice for continuous self-discovery.

3.6	Individual professional development plan implementation
Knowledge	Knows the resources and continuing education opportunities available for TA Specialists to grow their knowledge and skills.

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Competency	Works continuously to improve work-related skills and performance through continuing education, self-reflection, journaling, and participation in professional communities of practice by seeking opportunities such as NJ Technical Assistance Specialist approval through the *NJ Registry for Childhood Professionals*, the NJ Early Childhood Mentors' Network, the NJ Consortium of Early Childhood Consultants, the NJ Early Childhood Trainers' Collaborative, and other professional organizations.

3.7 Current research and best practice

Knowledge	Is aware of the latest research and trends and their relevance for early care and education best practices.
Competency	Integrates current research and trends regarding child development, adult learning, mentoring, coaching, TA, and capacity-building by applying theories of change in technical assistance work.

3.8 Reflective practice

Knowledge	Is aware of the tenets of reflective practice and the manner in which they support strong technical assistance relationships.
Competency	Models and encourages reflective practice by providing opportunities for reflective practice and documenting outcomes.

3.9 Leadership

Knowledge	Understands the characteristics of an effective leader.
Competency	Identifies and uses leadership, advocacy, and communication skills by representing the TA Partner's needs at stakeholder meetings and assisting to formulate policies that impact the TA Partner.

3.10 Collaboration	
Knowledge	Understands the principles of collaboration with TA Partners, TA Specialists, and other professionals.
Competency	Works proactively to develop partnerships and collaborations to support quality by exchanging knowledge, skills, ideas, methodological research, and best practices.

TAS Standards-Area 4: **Systems Knowledge**
Description: **The approved Technical Assistance Specialist has knowledge of NJ's early childhood systems, resources, and regulations.**

Requires knowledge and skills in:	**Using dispositions:**

1. Early childhood and relevant local, regional, and statewide systems, including but not limited to:
   • Programs and agencies that deliver services
   • Legislative, regulatory and policy-making processes
   • Educator certification and licensure
   • Assessment and evaluation
   • Data collection, analysis, and reporting
2. Needs assessment and advocacy
3. Connecting data to systems
	Caring
	Communicative
	Creative
	Critical
	Professional

4.1 Knows early childhood and relevant systems and resources	
Knowledge	Possesses and demonstrates knowledge of the local, regional, statewide, and national early childhood system resources to support TA Partners' needs and interests.

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Competency	Makes reference to the local, regional and statewide early childhood system resources to support TA Partners' needs and interests by maintaining current resources and a list of key stakeholders who provide oversight of those systems/resources.

4.2 Needs assessment for systems improvements

Knowledge	Understands the importance of and the ability to assess needs and document strengths and challenges in order to enhance systems.
Competency	Analyzes data from formal and informal assessments and confidentially shares results with TA Partners and stakeholders.

4.3 Connects data to systems

Knowledge	Knows how to use evidence-based, reliable, and valid assessment instruments for data collection, and how to use them effectively to make change at the individual, program, and system levels.
Competency	Uses standardized, evidence-based, reliable and valid assessment instruments for data collection by sharing aggregate data to inform change at the individual, program, and system levels.

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