



## New Jersey Adoption of Definitions

Updated December 2025

The following definitions have been adopted by multiple agencies providing supports to early childhood practitioners in New Jersey and provide common language in describing strategies and methods across state initiatives.

- **Early Care and Education Professional Development:** A strategy for enhancing learning through authentic learning experiences reflecting real-life context that equips Early Childhood Care and Education professionals with practical knowledge, skills and dispositions and addresses topics that are relevant and applicable to the audience. It is a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals to perform their responsibilities on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work and support implementation of newly learned strategies. (adapted from CCAoA & NAEYC, 2023)
- **Technical Assistance:** 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. (CCAoA & NAEYC, 2023, p. 18)
- **Coaching:** A relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized 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". (CCAoA & NAEYC, 2023, p. 22)
- **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 individual (the mentee). Mentoring is intended to Increase an individual's personal or professional capacity, resulting in greater professional effectiveness." (CCAoA & NAEYC, 2023, p. 20)
- **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". (CCAoA & NAEYC, 2023, p. 24)
- **Reflective Practice:** An active, action-based set of skills in which we seek to explore and explain events by thinking about and analyzing our actions in order to improve professional practice. Reflective practice allows us to discover, rediscover, or understand the complex range of skills and understanding we have and to develop and use the intellectual and emotional power within ourselves to try and improve a situation (Fullan, 2003), improve our ability to communicate with others and understand how our own experiences and beliefs influence our work.
- **Reflective Supervision:** A professional relationship and development activity where a supervisor and supervisee regularly explore the emotional and relational aspects of the supervisee's work, set goals together, enter into a partnership, ask questions and discuss strengths, risks, and vulnerabilities while remaining fully present and emotionally open to each other and each contributing to the other. It fosters a safe space for the supervisee to critically reflect on their own feelings and thoughts about those they serve, helping them to better understand, support and build their capacity, reduce burnout, and improve quality of care. Key elements include the collaborative relationship, regularity of meetings, and the focus on reflection rather than just problem-solving or "doing". (adapted from Zero to Three, 2016; 2021).
- **Leadership:** A conscious decision rather than solely based on a position or title. It is the practice of aligning people around a shared purpose, enabling collaboration to achieve common goals, and fostering adaptability in changing



environments. True leadership inspires individuals by affirming their worth and potential, while creating an environment that builds relationships, develops capabilities, and empowers growth. (adapted from Covey, S. 2022; Maor, D. et al., 2024)

## References

Child Care Aware of America & National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2023). *Early childhood education professional development: Training and technical assistance glossary*. Child Care Aware of America; National Association for the Education of Young Children. <https://childcareaware.org>

Covey, S. M. R. (2022). *Trust and inspire: How truly great leaders unleash greatness in others*. Simon & Schuster.

Fullan, M. (2003). *Change forces: With a vengeance*. RoutledgeFalmer.

Maor, D., Kaas, H.-W., Strovink, K., & Srinivasan, R. (2024). *The journey of leadership: How CEOs learn to lead from the inside out*. Penguin Random House.

Paradis, N., Johnson, K., & Richardson, Z. (2021). The value of reflective supervision/consultation in early childhood education. *ZERO TO THREE*, 41(3), 68–75

ZERO TO THREE. (2016, March 8). *Three building blocks of reflective supervision for early childhood professionals*. ZERO TO THREE. <https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/three-building-blocks-of-reflective-supervision/>