



# Early Childhood Education Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary



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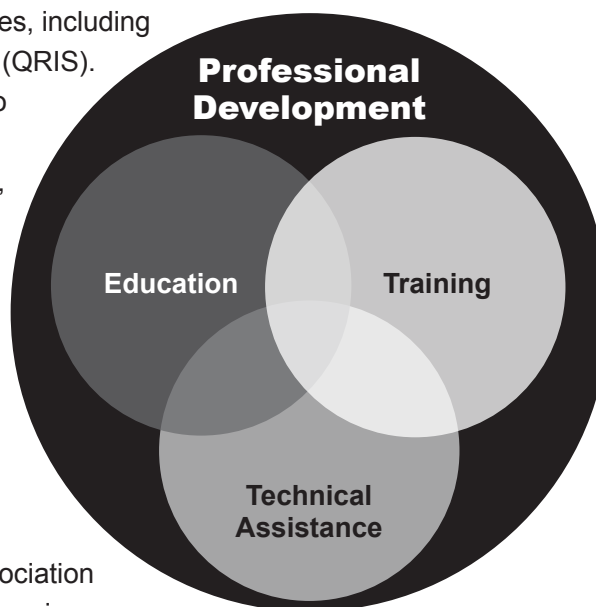
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## Early Childhood Education Professional Development Training and Technical Assistance Glossary

**Professional preparation and ongoing professional development (PD)** for the early childhood education workforce is essential to providing high-quality services to children and families. Consistent terminology and definitions related to PD methods, roles, knowledge, and capabilities have emerged as a critical issue for the early education field. Recently, states have experienced new early childhood education system challenges and needs related to training and technical assistance (TA). The urgency of these issues grows, particularly as states increase their focus and work on quality improvement activities, including quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS). For example, many states are working to define what training and TA is needed to support successful participation in QRIS, and how it integrates with PD activities and systems; how to determine who can provide training and TA—and how; and how to track and count TA as part of an individual’s professional development.



To support related efforts, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) jointly developed this glossary of professional development, training, and technical assistance (TA) terms. Additionally, NAEYC and the Alliance of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (a collaborative effort of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators and ACCESS—Associate Degree Early Childhood Teacher Educators) will continue to explore and develop national education-related definitions as a companion to this training and TA glossary.<sup>1</sup>

This glossary is composed of global definitions that embrace what NAEYC and NACCRRA believe define the current best practice ideals for training and TA. The definitions were developed for those who provide PD, state policy makers, early education advocates, and program administrators working to connect PD activities and initiatives

<sup>1</sup> Details about the development process of this training and TA glossary are located in Appendix B.

into an integrated system. NAEYC and NACCRRA hope the definitions will provide a guide for states to adapt and adjust as needed to meet their specific system(s) needs in clarifying roles and policies, assisting with the related work of determining and supporting the knowledge and capabilities of those providing PD, and also in data efforts to count and track all types of PD. We also hope these definitions will help provide common understandings, or starting points, for research and national or cross-state discussions—knowing that there are a variety of different models and approaches to each strategy included in this high-level definitions document.

Although one method of PD delivery is generally predominant in a given situation, these strategies frequently overlap. In fact, best practices in professional development delivery include the use of multiple methods. However, in this glossary training and TA methods are defined as discrete processes. This glossary begins with definitions that provide a broad overview of PD context. The resource then defines specific PD methods of training and TA—including mentoring, coaching, consultation, advising, and peer-to-peer TA. Two appendices also are included in this resource: Appendix A—Technical Assistance Strategies and Appendix B—Project Overview and Process.

The job titles of the individuals who provide PD are many and varied—higher education faculty, trainers, program administrators in their training and TA roles, individual consultants, child care resource and referral training and TA staff, and others. These professionals provide education, training, and/or TA to individuals working or preparing to work with young children and their families and those working or preparing to work on behalf of children in training, licensing, resource, and other administrative roles related to early childhood education. While NAEYC, NACCRRA, and the Alliance of Early Childhood Teacher Educators believe that those who provide PD should possess a high level of knowledge and skills and participate in ongoing professional development, this glossary does not define the core knowledge and capabilities expected of these professionals. In future work, NAEYC, NACCRRA, and the Alliance of Early Childhood Teacher Educators will explore the core knowledge and capabilities of those who provide professional development and what national resources may be helpful to support related state efforts.



## Contextual Definitions

The **Early Childhood Education Workforce** includes those working with young children (infants, toddlers, preschoolers, 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.

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**Early Childhood Education Professional Development** 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. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early education professionals. Professional development encompasses **education, training, and technical assistance**.

Some of the early childhood workforce have college degrees in early education, some have degrees in closely related fields, some are enrolled in degree programs, some are taking college courses, some are graduates of technical high schools or technical school programs, some have no previous related education—and almost all of them are engaged in training every year. An individual may engage in all types of PD (education, training, and TA) over the course of a career. Professional development helps early childhood professionals in all roles progress along diverse career pathways that build and reward increasing knowledge and skills.

All professional development (education, training, and TA) should

- be designed using evidence-based best practices<sup>2</sup>; consistent with the principles of adult learning; and structured to promote linkages between research, theory, and practice.
  - address the continuum of young children’s abilities and needs.
  - respond to each learner’s background (including cultural, linguistic, and ability), experiences, and the current context of her role and professional goals.
  - include resources to ensure access for all.
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**Individual Professional Development Plans** (IPDPs) are 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

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<sup>2</sup> “A decision-making process that integrates the best available research evidence with family and professional wisdom and values.” V. Buysse, V., P. Wesley, P. Snyder, & P. Winton. 2006. “Evidence-Based Practice: What Does It Mean for the Early Childhood Field?” *Young Exceptional Children* 9 (4): 2-10.

holistic approach to building an early childhood professional's capacities and to ensure that individuals remain current regarding knowledge and practices in the field. Individual professional development plans promote professional advancement. They can address career opportunities for those with a goal of pursuing different roles or positions in the field. Individual professional development plans require and support individuals taking responsibility for mapping their own professional development and career pathway.

- Individual professional development plans can be developed in one of two ways:
  - at the workplace level with review and approval by a supervisor, based on needs and strengths of the individual as identified through self-reflection, performance appraisal, and other information, including program evaluation and improvement processes<sup>3</sup>; and
  - at the individual level with guidance from an advisor, consultant, mentor, or other TA provider, with a focus on mapping one's own professional development and career pathway.
- Individuals use their IPDPs on an ongoing basis to remain focused on their professional goals and needs.
- IPDPs are reviewed and revised as necessary on at least an annual basis, or as professional goals, development needs, or PD resources or opportunities change.
  - Individuals review their plans as they reflect on their knowledge, practice, professional development endeavors, and goals—with guidance from an advisor or other TA provider, adult educator, and/or the administrative leadership of the individual's workplace.

All early childhood education professionals should have IPDPs to assist in developing or articulating their career goals, and to guide and inform desired career advancement and decisions regarding PD opportunities.

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<sup>3</sup> NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria. 2007. Standard 10.E.12. [www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/AllCriteriaDocument.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/AllCriteriaDocument.pdf)



## Training Definitions

**Training** is 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. A planned sequence of training sessions comprises a training program.

### Additional Characteristics of Training

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Focus</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of professional development that builds or enhances the knowledge and competencies of early childhood education professionals.</li> <li>• Training sessions and programs can focus on information dissemination; comprehension of content; application of knowledge or skills, and related attitudes and dispositions; analysis or synthesis of content; or a combination of these.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Relationships</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All training is strengthened by trusting and respectful interactions. Participants value each other as resources for learning, in addition to the trainer serving in the official leadership role.</li> <li>• Because training programs include multiple sessions, they benefit from intentional building of positive relationships between and among trainer(s) and participants.</li> <li>• Delivered by an individual or a team, to an individual or a group.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Process</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned and conducted based on the standards of the profession and an assessment of individual, group, and/or system needs. Standards, needs assessment, and other evidence are also used to define learning outcomes for training session(s).</li> <li>• Follows adult learning principles including interactive learning activities, exercises, and instructional aides (handouts, audiovisuals, and other components of instruction) to teach the content that supports the defined outcomes.</li> <li>• Includes an evaluative component that gauges the effectiveness of the training session/program including the resulting increase in participants' knowledge or capabilities.</li> <li>• Completion of training programs can lead to participants' assessment for award of the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential or another type of credential, continuing education units (CEUs), clock hours, or certification. In some instances participants who successfully complete a training program are awarded credit hours or may qualify for college credits. Trainers and/or their training content may need to meet specific approval requirements in order for participants to be awarded CEUs, clock hours, or other state-required documentation.</li> <li>• Should be embedded in the recipient's broader professional development plan.</li> </ul> |

**Additional Characteristics of Training** (*continued*)

**Duration**

- Can occur one time or in a series of sessions (training program).

**Delivery**

- May be delivered through face-to-face, distance, technology-based, or hybrid methods.

*Preservice or initial training* refers to PD in which an individual engages prior to beginning a position. Preservice training may be required for early childhood professionals to serve in a role.

Professionals engaged in initial training should work alongside or under the supervision of a qualified coworker until such training is completed.

*In-service or ongoing training* is PD in which early childhood professionals engage to enhance their skills and remain current regarding knowledge and practice in the field. In-service training may be required for early childhood professionals to continue serving in a role.

Because of the field's varying requirements, there is often crossover regarding preservice and in-service education and training. An individual could receive preservice education and/or training to be a teaching staff member in a community-based organization and also receive in-service education and/or training during her employment. The same individual could be pursuing a degree for a role as a teacher in a setting where individual licensure is required (e.g., public schools)—this education would be considered in-service professional development for the individual's current role and would be considered preservice preparation for the certified teaching position. Therefore, the labels preservice and in-service must be seen as related to the requirements of a position or established role in the field.





## Technical Assistance Definitions

**Technical Assistance** (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.

### Additional Characteristics of Technical Assistance

<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the reflective processes that professionals need to translate the theories and information learned through education and/or training into best practices.</li> <li>• <i>Mentoring, coaching, consultation, PD advising, and peer-to-peer TA</i> (defined below) are strategies that may be discrete processes or used as part of education and/or training programs.</li> <li>• Should be embedded in the recipient’s broader professional development plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most TA methods are relationship-based; they benefit from the building of positive, trusting, and respectful relationships.</li> <li>• May be delivered by an individual or a team, to one individual or a group.</li> </ul>
<b>Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May include combinations of information and resource dissemination and referrals, coaching, mentoring, consultation, and professional development advising, peer-to-peer TA, as well as other forms of support.</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels, intensity, and duration vary greatly, depending on needs, responses, and resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be provided face-to-face or through distance, technology-based, or hybrid methods.</li> </ul>

**Mentoring** is 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 or mentee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual’s personal or professional capacity, resulting in greater professional effectiveness.

**Additional Characteristics of Mentoring**

<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses a specific topic or the protégé’s holistic professional growth.</li> <li>• Supports the reflective processes professionals need to translate the theories and information learned through education and/or training into best practices.</li> <li>• Should be included in the recipient’s broader professional development plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes the mentor and protégé establishing and maintaining a positive, trusting, and respectful relationship.</li> <li>• Ideal match up of mentor and protégé is mutually agreed upon rather than assigned. A person may also enlist a mentor, be assigned to a mentor, or the mentor may be assigned to an individual.</li> <li>• Can be accomplished by some supervisors, but should be distinguished from supervisory processes. Should not be used as a method of evaluating job performance.</li> </ul>
<b>Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins with establishing role clarity and goal setting.</li> <li>• Includes the facilitation of adult learning techniques such as guided self-reflection, resulting in the application of new ideas to the protégé’s professional practice or personal disposition.</li> <li>• May include unplanned contacts between mentor and protégé when the protégé has questions or specific concerns.</li> <li>• Remains ongoing or concludes by mutual consent or when the protégé has achieved her goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing, iterative process.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be provided face-to-face or through distance, technology-based, or hybrid methods.</li> </ul>

**Coaching** is 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.

### Additional Characteristics of Coaching

<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the development of specific skills and practices; it is focused on a performance-based outcome(s).</li> <li>• Should be embedded in the recipient’s broader professional development plan that provides the theoretical foundations related to the specific skills being addressed.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires interactions that build trust and respect.</li> <li>• A person may select a coach, be assigned to a coach, or the coach may be assigned to an individual or group.</li> <li>• Should be distinguished from supervisory processes; however, its findings and conclusions may contribute to job performance evaluation. In these instances, the recipient of the coaching should be made aware of this possibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins with a collaborative agreement between the coach and the individual to set the guidelines and goals.</li> <li>• Includes various combinations of questioning, listening, observation, reflection, feedback, prompting, modeling, and practice.</li> <li>• Likely to occur through planned onsite contacts.</li> <li>• Concludes when the specified goal has been achieved.</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can occur one time or in a series of sessions, dependent upon the successful achievement of the goal.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be provided face-to-face or through distance, technology-based, or hybrid methods.</li> </ul>

**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.

### Additional Characteristics of Consultation

<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resolution of a specific concern or set of concerns.</li> <li>• Capacity-building approach to facilitate the recipient’s continued use of the process employed during or as a result of the consultation.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires a collaborative relationship between the consultant and the person to whom he/she provides recommendations.</li> <li>• Consultants may be engaged by the administrative leadership of a workplace. In some instances the consultancy is arranged or directed by a regulatory or funding agency or organization.</li> </ul>
<b>Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins with the joint development of goals.</li> <li>• Supports the development of goal-related solutions and the implementation strategies recommended to achieve them. Recommendations may include the provisions of other relationship-based TA methods.</li> <li>• Likely to occur through planned onsite contacts.</li> <li>• Concludes with a summary process and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the consultation provided.</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally short term. Long-term relationships with consultants may develop if individuals, programs, or organizations use them for assistance in addressing multiple, often interrelated, concerns over time. As an example, long-term relationships with consultants may evolve as they help guide overall program quality improvement processes.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be provided face-to-face (onsite or offsite) or through distance, technology-based, or hybrid methods.</li> </ul>

**Professional Development Advising** (sometimes referred to as career or PD counseling) is a one-on-one process through which an advisor offers information, guidance, and advice to an individual about professional growth, career options, and pathways to obtain or meet required qualifications.

### Additional Characteristics of PD Advising

**Focus**

- Supports individuals seeking to further their professional growth and advancement.

**Relationships**

- Requires establishing and maintaining a trusting and respectful relationship.
- Advisors may be enlisted by an individual or assigned by a system, program, or supervisor.
- Supervision processes may include advising on professional development needs, requirements, and opportunities as an ongoing process and/or as a part of job performance evaluations.

**Process**

- Begins with career or PD goal setting.
- Includes navigation of resources (financial, educational, and personal) and systems. May include assessment of current educational attainment and the development of an individual professional development plan, offering assistance to recipients in connecting previously taken and potential PD opportunities to achieve the individual's career goals.
- Concludes by mutual consent, when career or other identified goals have been achieved, or may continue throughout a career.

**Duration**

- May be an ongoing or limited-time process depending on needs, response, and available resources.

**Delivery**

- May be provided face-to-face (onsite or offsite) or through distance, technology-based, or hybrid methods.

**Peer-to-peer TA** fosters 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.

### Additional Characteristics of Peer-to-Peer TA

#### Focus

- Enhancing and encouraging the sharing of information and support between and among interested peers and establishing linkages between individuals invested in professional growth.
- When peer-to-peer TA occurs between two people, it is often called “peer learning.” Regular and structured group peer-to-peer TA may be called “Communities of Practice” or “Professional Learning Communities.”

#### Relationships

- Requires respectful and trusting relationships between and among peers.
- May use a combination of formats such as one-to-one, one-to-many, or group-to-group exchanges.
- An essential characteristic of peer-to-peer TA is that participants are on equal footing; supervisors do not participate in peer-to-peer TA with their employees, although they can be called upon to provide information, resources, or other support.

#### Process

- Peers come together around a shared interest, challenge, or goal. Those engaged in peer-to-peer TA begin their work with a common awareness of the field’s challenges and realities. They draw upon many of the same experiences and “speak the same language.”
- Each participant offers unique strengths, knowledge, perspectives, and strategies that support increased capacity for all.

#### Duration

- May be a one-time peer learning event to address a specific issue, but generally forges ongoing partnerships for continued reflection, support, and problem solving that persist over time.

#### Delivery

- May occur face-to-face or through distance, technology-based, or hybrid methods.



## Appendices



## Appendix A—Technical Assistance Strategies

Listed below are the TA strategies of mentoring, coaching, and consultation defined earlier in this document. This table is designed to allow easy comparison between and among these specific strategies, which are often similar in practice and intent.

Note: Although one TA strategy is generally predominant in a given situation, these strategies frequently overlap. However, in this chart the TA methods are defined as discrete processes.

	Mentoring	Coaching	Consultation
Definition	<p>Mentoring is 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 or mentee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual’s personal or professional capacity, resulting in greater professional effectiveness.</p>	<p>Coaching is 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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
Focus	<p>Addresses a specific topic or the protégé’s holistic professional growth.</p> <p>Supports the reflective processes that professionals need to translate the theories and information learned through education and/or training into best practices.</p> <p>Should be included in the recipient’s broader professional development plan.</p>	<p>Supports the development of specific skills and practices; it is focused on a performance-based outcome(s).</p> <p>Should be embedded in the recipient’s broader professional development plan that provides the theoretical foundations related to the specific skills being addressed.</p>	<p>Resolution of a specific concern or set of concerns.</p> <p>Capacity-building approach to facilitate the recipient’s continued use of the process employed during or as a result of the consultation.</p>
Relationships	<p>Includes the mentor and protégé establishing and maintaining a positive, trusting, and respectful relationship.</p> <p><i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Requires interactions that build trust and respect.</p> <p>A person may select a coach, be assigned to a coach, or the coach may be assigned to an individual or group.</p>	<p>Requires a collaborative relationship between the consultant and the person to whom he/she provides recommendations.</p>



	<b>Mentoring</b>	<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Consultation</b>
<b>Relationships (cont'd)</b>	<p>Ideal match up of mentor and protégé is mutually agreed upon rather than assigned. A person may also enlist a mentor, be assigned to a mentor, or the mentor may be assigned to an individual.</p> <p>Can be accomplished by some supervisors, but should be distinguished from supervisory processes. Should not be used as a method of evaluating job performance.</p>	<p>Should be distinguished from supervisory processes; however, its findings and conclusions may contribute to job performance evaluation. In these instances, the recipient of the coaching should be made aware of this possibility.</p>	<p>Consultants may be engaged by the administrative leadership of a workplace. In some instances the consultancy is arranged or directed by a regulatory or funding agency or organization.</p>
<b>Process</b>	<p>Begins with establishing role clarity and goal setting.</p> <p>Includes the facilitation of adult learning techniques such as guided self-reflection, resulting in the application of new ideas to the protégé's professional practice or personal disposition.</p> <p>May include unplanned contacts between mentor and protégé when the protégé has questions or specific concerns.</p> <p>Remains ongoing or concludes by mutual consent or when the protégé has achieved her goals.</p>	<p>Begins with a collaborative agreement between the coach and the individual to set the guidelines and goals.</p> <p>Includes various combinations of questioning, listening, observation, reflection, feedback, prompting, modeling, and practice.</p> <p>Likely to occur through planned onsite contacts.</p> <p>Concludes when the specified goal has been achieved.</p>	<p>Begins with the joint development of goals.</p> <p>Supports development of goal-related solutions and the implementation strategies recommended to achieve them. Recommendations may include the provisions of other relationship-based TA methods.</p> <p>Likely to occur through planned onsite contacts.</p> <p>Concludes with a summary process and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the consultation provided.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>Ongoing, iterative process.</p>	<p>Can occur one time or in a series of sessions, dependent upon the successful achievement of the goal.</p>	<p>Generally short term. Long-term relationships may develop if individuals, programs, or organizations use consultants for assistance in addressing multiple, often interrelated, concerns over time. As an example, long-term relationships with consultants may evolve as they help guide overall program quality improvement processes.</p>
<b>Delivery</b>	<p>May be provided face-to-face (onsite or offsite) or through distance, technology-based, or hybrid methods.</p>	<p>May be provided face-to-face (onsite or offsite) or through distance, technology-based, or hybrid methods.</p>	<p>May be provided face-to-face (onsite or offsite) or through distance, technology-based, or hybrid methods.</p>

## Appendix B—Project Overview and Process

One of NAEYC's three broad goals is to improve professional practice and working conditions in early childhood education. In support of this goal, NAEYC's governing board and staff review and discuss ways to enhance quality early childhood professional development. In 2009 creating a cross-sector framework for role, function, and core capabilities for those who provide professional development was identified as an important issue that could be immediately addressed.

One of NACCRRA's five strategic imperatives is to promote policies and practices that increase families' access to quality, affordable child care and early learning services. In support of that objective, NACCRRA provides national leadership in professional development policies and practices that promote a prepared, qualified, and diverse child care workforce able to transfer knowledge into practice. The need for consistent national definitions for professional development, particularly those related to the training and technical assistance services provided by Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) across the country, was recognized as a foundational goal.

From 2009 through mid-2010 NAEYC hosted multiple focus groups and facilitated input sessions on states' critical policy questions, strategies, challenges, ideas, and needs related to professional development methods and the core capabilities of those who provide it. Several of these sessions were convened with national partners including NACCRRA, the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion, and National Louis University: McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership. Participants in these focus groups included representatives from all sectors of the early childhood field (e.g., child care, Head Start, schools, early intervention) and its varied roles, including direct service practitioners (center- and school-based teachers and family child care providers); those who provide professional development and supports (trainers, technical assistance providers, mentors, coaches, consultants, advisors, higher education faculty, and others); program, agency, and system administrators; national, state and local policy makers; and researchers both within and from outside of the early education field.

During this year-and-a-half dialogue, three main issues were consistently raised as most urgent:

1. Consistent, national definitions and standards to help further clarify and move forward state and local efforts, particularly in relation to technical assistance (including mentoring, coaching, consultation, and advising);
2. Core competencies for those who provide professional development; and
3. Evaluating, measuring, and tracking training and technical assistance.

In February 2010 NACCRRA partnered with NAEYC in a joint effort to develop national definitions for training and technical assistance. The two organizations spent several months engaged in a review of new and historically significant related research as well as existing state definitions and associated quality improvement and assurance efforts. The organizations decided that this joint work should start from where states' system policy efforts are, using practice and system policies as a foundation for definitions development; the project lens and focus was practice and state policy-based. During the drafting process the definitions work expanded to include training, TA, and education definitions, as well as contextual information about the early education field and workforce.

In September 2010 an early draft was circulated for review and feedback to key experts representing early childhood researchers, national and state technical assistance networks, state professional development system administrators, policy consultants, and higher education faculty. A second early draft was also used for a state feedback discussion at The National Registry Alliance annual conference in late September. From October through December 2010 targeted feedback was solicited from additional key national organization and association partners, including ACCESS and the National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE), and state stakeholders representing the varied roles of the field.

Based on the feedback provided, as well as the time-sensitive needs expressed by state policy and system administrators, NAEYC and NACCRRA decided to move forward with the finalization of this glossary of training and TA definitions. NAEYC and the Alliance of Early Childhood Teacher Educators will continue to explore and develop national education-related definitions as a companion to this training and TA glossary. Additionally, NAEYC, NACCRRA, and the Alliance of Early Childhood Teacher Educators will explore the core knowledge and capabilities of those who provide professional development and what national resources may be helpful to support related state efforts.

## Acknowledgments

NAEYC and NACCRRA thank the hundreds of state experts and national colleagues that shared their ideas, needs, and hopes related to this work. We sincerely hope this glossary helps us all in our efforts to improve the quality of practice and supports available to our nation's early education workforce.

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- National Association for Family Child Care
- National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators
- National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education
- National Center for Children in Poverty
- National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center
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- National Professional Development Center on Inclusion
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- Zero to Three

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