

Early Care and Education Professional Development:

# Training and Technical Assistance Glossary



National Association for the Education of Young Children

Early Childhood Education Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary.  
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“Professional Development in early childhood education is the cornerstone of building a competent, strong workforce that includes gaining new knowledge, skills and abilities, along with experience and competencies that relate to one’s profession, job responsibilities or work environment.”

—*Professional Development Companion Guide for CCR&Rs: Designing a Professional Development (PD) Roadmap (2023)*



# Executive Summary

“Each and every child, beginning at birth, has the opportunity to benefit from high-quality early childhood education, delivered by an effective, diverse, well-prepared and well-compensated workforce across all states and settings.”

—*Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession (2020)*

Supporting a strong professional learning continuum (both professional preparation and ongoing professional development) for the early childhood education profession is essential to effect positive outcomes for the young children and families served by the profession. High-quality professional development (PD) content and delivery ensures that the workforce is prepared and able to implement quality practices based on the most current research and professional guidelines. To that end, there is a critical need for more investment in training and professional development for the people who care for and educate our youngest.

According to Child Care Aware® of America’s (CCAoA’s) report, “[Catalyzing Growth: Using Data to Change Child Care](#),” technical assistance (TA) and training were the most provided and requested service offered by Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) to both center and home-based child care programs. PD offered through CCR&Rs, and other providers of PD helps address emerging quality issues and content that the workforce needs for effective practice. Similarly, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) strengthens capacity in the field by providing research-based PD, resources and publications that reflect contemporary perspectives on supporting the unique needs and interest of young children while fostering high-quality programs. In addition, new workforce challenges and needs related to implementing training and TA have arisen in recent years. This includes designing and implementing virtual learning, recruitment and retention of staff, and providing opportunities for peer interaction for isolated learners.

In considering the design and content of PD for the ECE workforce, having consistent and well-defined PD language helps us to communicate more efficiently with colleagues, stakeholders, policy makers and advocates. Effective terminology and clear definitions of PD decrease ambiguity and improve communication, making it a crucial component while striving for equitable quality care for all young children and their families. Utilizing consistent terminology definitions related to PD, including methods, roles, knowledge and capabilities, advances a collective understanding across the ECE field.

In support of the use of consistent terminology and definitions related to PD, CCAoA and NAEYC are pleased to provide this revised and updated glossary of education, training and TA terms (originally jointly developed and published in 2011) meant for use in the ECE PD field. Having the Early Care and Education Training and TA Glossary available for use by ECE professionals will enhance our ability as a field to communicate well and remain focused on our shared goal of quality PD.





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

## Introduction

The 2023 CCAoA/NAEYC *ECE Professional Development: Training and TA Glossary* is an update and refresh to the original 2011 glossary. The update reflects what we currently know about PD for the early care and education workforce as well as current trends in providing education, training and technical assistance. In addition, the impact of the pandemic has deeply influenced access to and the delivery of PD and highlighted the need to reach the workforce in innovative ways. It was also particularly important to ensure the glossary reflects the needs of diverse populations accessing PD services.

The intent of this resource is for it to serve as an informative document for individuals, programs and/or organizations and agencies to use when providing PD. This is also a tool that can be used and referenced for onboarding and training of new staff, in addition to illustrating PD opportunities for the early care and education workforce. Finally, this document serves as a resource that will educate and inform other early childhood stakeholders on the commonly used terms in early care and education PD.



**Professional preparation and ongoing PD** for the early care and 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 advance a common understanding of what PD is in the field. This remains a critical issue for the ECE field as recently states have experienced new workforce challenges and needs related to implementing training and TA. The urgency of these issues has grown, particularly as states increase their focus and work on recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

Defining what is meant by PD is vital to guiding efforts that are focused on ensuring that the ECE workforce is highly qualified, competent and effective in working with young children and their families. Consistent terminology and definitions for PD can provide a foundation and guide to forming and implementing a workforce system that will ensure ECE professionals have equitable access to quality PD. As articulated in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) rule, states and territories are encouraged to have a framework or system of service delivery for the provision of PD, including postsecondary education for caregivers, teachers and directors, including those working in school-age care.

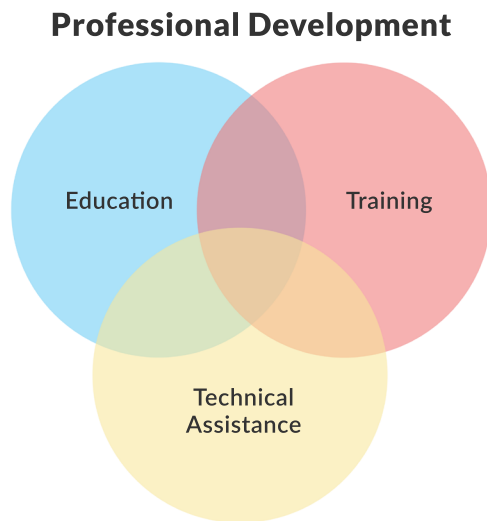
For example, many states are working to offer a broader range of PD opportunities that better fit how the workforce learns and are defining these new opportunities and how they will integrate into current PD activities and systems. They are also working on how to determine who can provide these new PD options and how to track and count them as part of an individual's PD.

This glossary is composed of global definitions that embrace what CCAoA and NAEYC believe define the current best practice ideals for PD, including 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 with an integrated system. CCAoA and NAEYC hope the definitions will provide a guide for states to adapt and adjust 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 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 document.

Although one method of PD delivery is generally predominant in a given situation, these strategies frequently overlap. In fact, best practices in PD 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, including the three broad categories of PD: **Education**, **Training** and **Technical Assistance**. The resource defines specific PD



methods of training and TA—including mentoring, coaching, consultation, advising and peer-to-peer TA which includes the various types of professional learning communities. The glossary then defines the Methods and Modalities of PD. Four appendices also are included in this resource: Appendix A – Categories of PD, Appendix B— Technical Assistance Strategies, Appendix C – Types of Professional Learning Communities and Appendix D—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 care and education. While CCAoA and NAEYC believe those who provide PD should possess a high level of knowledge and skills and participate in ongoing PD themselves, this glossary does not define the core knowledge and capabilities expected of these professionals. However, many states have developed core knowledge and competencies (CKCs) that address the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed by the TTA (Training and Technical Assistance) workforce to be effective in their role as PD professionals.*



# Glossary of Terms



**The Early Care and 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.



**Early Care and 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 the categories of **education, training** and **TA**.

Members of the ECE workforce hold varying types of education and training credentials from a variety of settings. PD may result in certificates, high school diplomas, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees. PD can be offered through high schools, career and technical schools, private consultants, for-profit and non-profit companies, institutions of higher education, CCR&Rs, national/state/local ECE organizations, and more. It may be conducted through clock hours or credit hours depending on the setting. An individual may engage in all types of PD (education, training and TA) over the course of a career in the field. PD helps early childhood professionals in all roles progress along diverse career pathways that build and recognize increasing knowledge and skills.

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All PD (education, training and TA) for early care and education professionals should:

- Be designed using evidence-based best practices that is consistent with principles of adult learning; structured to promote linkages between research such as brain development, executive functioning and toxic stress; and includes foundational theory such as the works of Piaget, Erikson, Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner and also includes current research and theories that reflect multicultural and international perspectives, and incorporates developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate practices.
- Address the developmental continuum of young children’s abilities and needs.
- Respond to each learner’s background (including cultural, language and ability), experiences, present work context, and career objectives or professional goals.
- Be high quality and engage ECE professionals to reflect on personal biases, grow cultural and linguistic competence, and support effective work with children and families from various backgrounds, to include differences and abilities that may be unlike their own.
- Be planned and facilitated by PD professionals that foster a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion acquired through parallel training and education that expands individual knowledge and practices.
- Use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles which provide learners with multiple ways to access PD content and demonstrate what they know, giving each learner an equal opportunity to succeed. UDL encourages PD professionals to use their understanding of adult learners to adjust content, depth and breadth while providing new opportunities for learners to show what they know and can do.





**Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDPs)** provide a framework connecting various PD experiences to each other to create a comprehensive approach to building an early childhood professional's capacity and ensure that individuals use current knowledge and practices in the field. IPDPs promote professional advancement and can address career opportunities for those with a goal of pursuing different roles or positions in the field. These plans require and support individuals to take responsibility for mapping future PD opportunities and creating linkages to career pathways. All ECE 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.

- 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; or
  - at the individual level with guidance from an advisor, consultant, mentor or other TA provider, with a focus on mapping one's own PD 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.



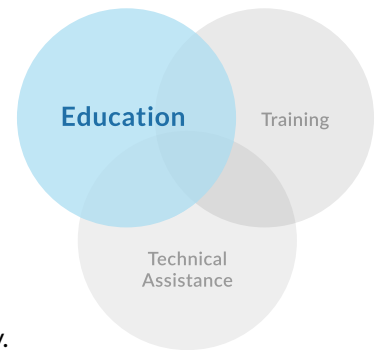
**PD System** PD systems provide consistent and uniform standards for ECE programs and guide implementation of high-quality services for all children. The systems are designed to work across all sectors of private and public early care and education. Comprehensive systems address many areas of requirements and standards. These standards and requirements may include registries, alliances, quality ratings, and credentialing and licensing requirements. They inform the nature and scope of PD at the national, state, territory and local levels.





ECE PD is categorized through three means of attainment that support a continuum of learning. These include education, training and technical assistance. You will find each category of PD defined in the next sections of the glossary.

# Education



**Definition:** **Formal education** for the field is offered through a state-approved, professionally accredited secondary school, college or university.

This education is delivered by professionals who meet qualifications required by the state, accreditor and institution and occurs between teachers, faculty and students. Completion of course work or a program requires satisfactory performance on content standards or outcomes-based assessments and results in a recognized education credential such as a diploma, postsecondary certificate, associate's degree, baccalaureate degree or graduate degree.

## FOCUS

- Excellence in the preparation of early childhood professionals
- Attainment of postsecondary education and credentialing of early childhood educators and leaders. A pipeline of potential educators and leaders across our nation.

## RELATIONSHIPS

- Education is strengthened by trusting and respectful interactions. Participants value each other as resources for learning.
- Because education programs include multiple sessions, they benefit from intentional building of positive relationships between and among trainer(s) and participants.
- Delivered by professionals who meet qualifications required by the state, accreditor and institution and occurs between teachers, faculty and students.

## PROCESS

- Planned and conducted based on the standards of the profession and an assessment of individual, group and/or system needs.
- Follows adult learning and UDL 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.
- Includes an evaluative component that gauges the effectiveness of the course, including the resulting increase in participants' knowledge or capabilities.

## DURATION

- Occurs over the course of a series of class sessions as assigned by the instructor of the course.

## DELIVERY

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

**A Professional Preparation Program**, as compared to training or a training program, is a sequenced, cohesive combination of courses and field experiences designed to prepare or advance individuals' knowledge and skills to practice effectively with young children and their families. In addition, professional preparation occurs primarily within a secondary or postsecondary context.

**Secondary Education** is education offered between elementary school and college, offering general, technical, vocational or college-preparatory courses (including any combination) which are designed to meet the educational needs of students in grades 9-12 or equivalent.

**High School Diploma** means the education credential granted to a student by the governing body of public or private high schools certifying that the student has satisfied the minimum requirements for graduating required by the public school board or private high school. It certifies a student's completion of secondary school requirements.

**Higher Education** is postsecondary education that provides quality ECE professional preparation for early childhood educators and leaders. Completion of postsecondary ECE professional preparation programs can result in a certificate or a degree. It is the pipeline of the early care and education workforce and future leaders across our nation.

## Education

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**Articulation Agreements** are formal partnerships between higher education institutions documenting that a program or series of classes completed at one institution will be accepted to satisfy particular requirements at the other institution. These agreements create seamless pathways for students transferring between postsecondary institutions.

### **Early Childhood Education Certificate/Credential Programs (ECE I)**

According to the “[Unifying Framework](#) for the Early Childhood Profession,” these programs are a minimum of 120 clock hours. ECE I completers may meet the educational requirements for industry-recognized national credentials and other portable credentials.

### **Early Childhood Education Associate Degree Programs (ECE II)**

According to the “[Unifying Framework](#) for the Early Childhood Profession,” an associate degree is at least 60 credit hours of college-level coursework.

### **Early Childhood Education Bachelor’s Degree Programs (ECE III)**

According to the “[Unifying Framework](#) for the Early Childhood Profession,” a bachelor’s degree is at least 120 credit hours of college-level coursework or Early Childhood Education Master’s Degree Programs (initial preparation). Initial-level master’s degree programs are designed for individuals with non-ECE bachelor’s degrees

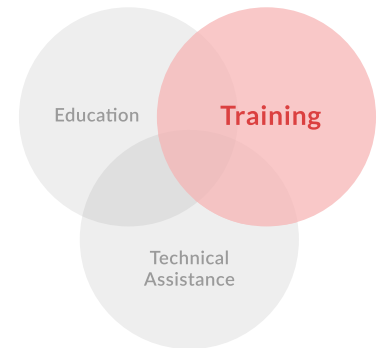
**Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™** is a widely recognized early entry credential in early childhood education administered by the Council for Professional Development. The CDA Credential guides early child care professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children. The CDA may be earned as part of a ECE professional preparation program at the secondary or postsecondary level or without professional preparation.

**Early Childhood Apprenticeship** is an arrangement between an employee and employer that allows the worker to gain direct experience with working with children through supervised on-the-job learning in conjunction with the completion of required coursework and/or training. At the end of the apprenticeship, the employee may earn a recognized credential or certificate. Check with the state or statewide PD system to determine the level of qualifications regarding apprenticeships and if there is a state-recognized certificate or credential available.

**Early Childhood Student Teaching** is designed for students working with young children as part of their professional preparation program. It is for an individual who works under the supervision of an early childhood teacher.



# Training



**Definition:** A **training** or training program is a learning experience, or series of experiences, that addresses a specific area of inquiry or related set of skills or dispositions, delivered by a professional(s) with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills.

## Characteristics of Training

### FOCUS

- Part of PD that builds or enhances the knowledge and competencies of ECE professionals.
- 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.

### RELATIONSHIPS

- All training is strengthened by trusting and respectful interactions. Participants value each other as resources for learning, in addition to the trainer serving in an official leadership role.
- Because training programs include multiple sessions, they benefit from intentional building of positive relationships between and among trainer(s) and participants.
- Delivered by an individual or a team, to an individual or a group.

## Characteristics of Training (continued)

### PROCESS

- 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).
- Follows adult learning and UDL 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.
- Includes an evaluative component that gauges the effectiveness of the training session/program, including the resulting increase in participants' knowledge or capabilities.
- Completion of training programs can lead to participants' assessment for award of the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential or other state-approved 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.
- Should be embedded in the recipient's broader PD plan.

### 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.

## Training

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Over the course of an ECE professional's learning experiences, PD may be offered through education or training experiences that may include on-boarding, pre-service, or in-service training.

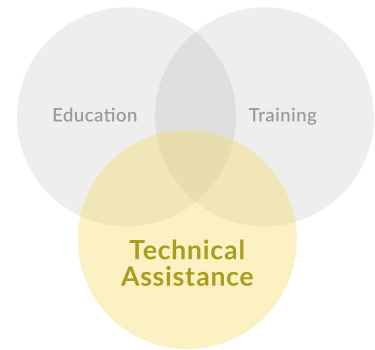
**On-boarding training** refers to a series of events and trainings that help new hires to be successful in their role and their responsibilities and how they fit into an organization. It is also about providing a new hire with the tools and information needed to be effective as a new team member. On-boarding training may include, but is not limited, to such topics as CPR, First Aide and required health and safety training.

**Preservice or initial training** refers to training in early care and education topics completed prior to working in, operating, or assuming a new role in a child care program.

**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.



# Technical Assistance



**Definition:** 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.

## Characteristics of TA

### FOCUS

- Supports the reflective processes that professionals need to translate the theories and information learned through education and/or training into best practices.
- *Mentoring, coaching, consultation* and *peer-to-peer TA* (defined below) are strategies that may be discrete processes or part of education and/or training programs.
- Should be embedded in the recipient's broader PD plan.

### RELATIONSHIPS

- Should be individualized and strengths-based to form the foundation for effective TA.
- Most TA methods are relationship-based; they benefit from the building of positive, trusting and respectful relationships.
- May be delivered by an individual or a team, to one individual or a group.

## Characteristics of TA (continued)

### PROCESS

- May include combinations of information and resource dissemination and referrals, coaching, mentoring, consultation and PD advising, peer-to-peer TA, and other forms of support.

### DURATION

- Levels, intensity and duration vary, depending on needs, responses and resources.

### DELIVERY

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



### Strategies of TA

The strategies of TA mentioned in the broad definition of TA above include mentoring, coaching, consultation and peer-to-peer TA. They are strategies that may be discrete processes or part of education and/or training programs. Though they are discrete processes they are also connected with each other through elements in the broad definition of TA, such as reflective in nature and relationship based. However, you see differences in some areas such as focus, processes, and duration. You will find each strategy defined below, and they are also summarized in Appendix B.

**Definition: 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 individual (the mentee). Mentoring is intended to increase an individual's personal or professional capacity, resulting in greater professional effectiveness.

### Characteristics of Mentoring

#### FOCUS

- Addresses a specific topic or the mentee's holistic professional growth.
- Supports the reflective processes professionals need to translate the theories and information learned through education and/or training into best practices.
- Should be included in the recipient's broader PD plan.

#### RELATIONSHIPS

- Includes the mentor and mentee establishing and maintaining a positive, trusting and respectful relationship.
- Ideal match-up of mentor and mentee is mutually agreed upon rather than assigned. A person may also enlist a mentor or be assigned to a mentor.
- Can be accomplished by some supervisors but should be distinguished from supervisory processes. It should not be used as a method of evaluating job performance.



## Characteristics of Mentoring (continued)

### PROCESS

- Begins with establishing role clarity and goal setting.
- Includes the facilitation of adult learning techniques such as guided self-reflection, resulting in the application of new ideas to the mentee's professional practice or personal disposition.
- May include unplanned contacts between mentor and mentee when the mentee has questions or specific concerns.
- Remains ongoing, concludes by mutual consent or concludes when the mentee has achieved her goals.

### DURATION

- Ongoing, iterative process.

### DELIVERY

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



**Definition: Coaching** is 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.

### Characteristics of Coaching

#### FOCUS

- Supports the development of specific skills and practices; it is focused on a performance-based outcome(s).
- Should be embedded in the recipient's broader PD plan that provides the theoretical foundations related to the specific skills being addressed.

#### RELATIONSHIPS

- Requires interactions that build trust and respect.
- A person may select a coach or be assigned to a coach.
- 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.

#### PROCESS

- Begins with a collaborative agreement between the coach and the individual to set guidelines and goals.
- Includes various combinations of questioning, listening, observation, reflection, feedback, prompting, modeling and practice.
- Likely to occur through planned onsite contacts.
- Concludes when the specified goal has been achieved.

## Characteristics of Coaching (continued)

### DURATION

- Can occur one time or in a series of sessions, dependent upon the successful achievement of the goal.

### DELIVERY

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



## Mentoring vs. Coaching

	Mentoring	Coaching
Timeframe	Tends to be more <b>long-term and relational</b> .	Likely to be <b>short-term, but depends on goals</b> to be achieved.
Focus	More <b>development-driven</b> , tapping into more experienced peer(s).	More <b>performance-driven</b> to achieve desired outcomes.
Structure	More <b>informal in nature</b> and on an as-needed basis.	More <b>structured in nature</b> , with set meeting schedule.
Agenda	<b>Agenda set by person being mentored</b> and needs at the time.	<b>Collaborative working agenda</b> to meet desired outcomes.
Outcome	<b>Shifts and changes over time</b> .	<b>Specific and measurable</b> . Working toward change in performance area.

**Definition: 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.

### Characteristics of Consultation

#### FOCUS

- Resolution of a specific concern or set of concerns.
- Capacity-building approach to facilitate the recipient’s continued use of the process employed during or as a result of the consultation.

#### RELATIONSHIPS

- Requires a collaborative relationship between the consultant and the person to whom he/she provides recommendations.
- 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.

#### PROCESS

- Begins with the joint development of goals.
- 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.
- Likely to occur through planned onsite contacts.
- Concludes with a summary process and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the consultation provided.



## Characteristics of Consultation (continued)

### DURATION

- 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.

### DELIVERY

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



**Definition: 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.

### 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

## Characteristics of Peer-to-Peer TA (continued)

### 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 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.

## Types of Facilitated or Structured Peer-to-Peer TA: Professional Learning Communities

**Professional Learning Communities** are relationship-based group PD experiences that assist ECE practitioners to dig deeper and reflect upon their ECE practices. Group professional learning communities fall into different types, such as Peer Learning Communities, Communities of Practice, Learning Cohorts, Collaboratives or Networks/Hubs. Topics are driven by the learning needs of the group.

According to the *Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University*, “**learning communities**” provide a space and a structure for people to align around a shared goal. Effective learning communities are both aspirational and practical. For all types of professional learning communities, the focus is on advancing the work of the group through relationships and opportunities for networking. For Peer Learning Communities, Communities of Practice and Cohorts, the focus is on bringing together individuals for a common purpose, while Collaboratives and Networks focus on bringing groups of programs together. *See Appendix C for detailed information about each type of professional learning community.*

The **benefits** (2020) of professional learning communities include: collaborative learning, reduced isolation of teachers, knowledge of evidence-based practices, better informed and committed educators, and creating a culture focused on the goal of improving early learning for children.



# PD Methods and Modalities

PD is offered through a variety of and accessible learning to best meet the needs of learners and to increase the likelihood that PD will transfer to everyday application in early childhood settings.

## Methods of PD Delivery



### Face-to-face

This is essentially a **teacher-centered method**. Content and learning material are taught in person to a group. This allows for live interaction between learners and an instructor.



### Technology-supported (commonly called virtual or distance learning)

This method involves the use of virtual approaches to help deliver learning opportunities. Virtual PD takes place online rather than in-person. Synchronous, asynchronous or hybrid learning environments can all be used to deliver online learning.



**Synchronous learning environments** are those where learning takes place in real time, and may include activities like an instructor lecture, group projects, and student inquiries. At the beginning of each session, everyone logs on at the same time.

**Asynchronous environments** are those in which learners participate in activities that take place apart from the instructor or their peers. Reviewing a pre-made learning module, participating in threaded discussion boards, or email exchanges with the teacher or others in the class are examples of asynchronous environments. Hybrid online learning can take a variety of shapes. While some assignments are accomplished separately or asynchronously, others are expected to be completed in real-time or synchronously.



### Blended or hybrid learning (a combination of face-to-face and virtual learning)

In blended learning, participants complete some components of professional development online and do others in person. During hybrid learning, facilitators or PD staff teach class/training content using both online and in-person modalities to deliver content.

### Modalities

To effectively reach all learners, PD professionals should consider the various ways in which adults learn and make meaning of information being provided. One effective way to reach all learners is using a range of learning modalities within the PD. By including all four modalities in planning PD, learners will have the opportunity to learn through their preferred method. This helps create a more inclusive, fair and equal opportunity for all learners.



**Visual Learning** is designed to support those who learn best by seeing. The use of PowerPoint presentations, visuals within text, diagrams, graphs and charts, as well as print resources such as white papers, blogs and summaries, assist learners in understanding concepts.



**Auditory Learning** is designed to support those who learn best by listening and talking to fully comprehend and make meaning of information.. These learners respond well to lectures, discussions, read-a-louds, share-outs and opportunities to share their thoughts verbally.



**Kinesthetic Learning** is designed for those who learn best by active participation in learning. They are those who “learn by doing” and learn better if movement is involved. They enjoy role playing and music activities, and love to create things, such as in “make-it, take-it” sessions. For virtual learning environments, you may want to use interactive flash animation and solving real-life problems by scenario and role play learning.



**Tactile Learning** is designed for those who learn best by feel and touch, through hands-on experiences and who tend to learn more effectively if physical activity is involved. They appreciate learning activities that have manipulatives, such as games and using the internet. They also appreciate fidget toys and doodling while listening to lectures. For a virtual learning environment, you may want to include artistic projects, tablet-based activities and virtual field trips.

# Conclusion

**PD** is about enhancing learning not delivering content. It is about facilitating authentic learning, learning which is facilitated by reflecting real-life context, equipping ECE professionals with practical and useful skills, and addressing topics that are relevant and applicable to the audience. By having a common understanding of what is meant by PD and using information contained in this glossary, everyone benefits:



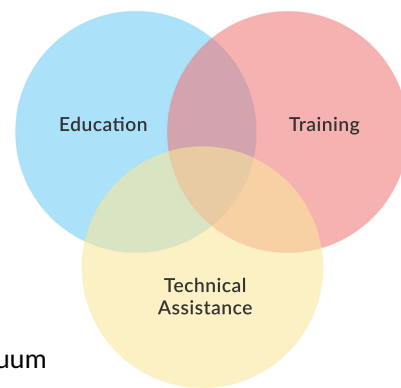
ECE professionals who partake in PD offerings will have a greater understanding of what is being offered and will be better able to make informed decisions that will best meet their individual needs.

PD specialists will be able to speak the same language with colleagues, ECE professionals and stakeholders, which will reduce misunderstandings and communication issues regarding the numerous types and kinds of PD that are available.

Funders will develop a greater understanding of the goals and outcomes of the various PD offerings and be able to advocate for and fund innovative approaches to PD.

While many ECE professionals encounter different expectations and experiences for professional learning throughout their PD journey, it is up to those planning and delivering PD to reduce confusion and eliminate barriers to understanding and accessing PD opportunities. By offering high-quality, accessible education, training and TA to the ECE workforce that has meaning for their daily work, the workforce will be better equipped to meet the needs of children and their families and offer quality early learning experiences.

# Appendices



## Appendix A – Categories of PD

ECE PD is categorized through three means of delivery that support a continuum of learning. These include education, training and technical assistance. Although one method of PD delivery is generally predominant in a given situation, these strategies frequently overlap. Education, training and TA are often interrelated and in fact, best practices in PD delivery include the use of multiple methods.

The three categories of PD are summarized in the chart below for quick reference and at-a-glance understanding of each.

### Categories of Professional Development

	Education	Training	Technical Assistance (TA)
Definition	Formal education for the field is offered through a state-approved, professionally accredited secondary school, college or university and results in a recognized education credential such as a diploma, postsecondary certificate, associate degree, baccalaureate degree or graduate degree.	Training or training program is a learning experience, or series of experiences, which addresses a specific area of inquiry or related set of skills or dispositions.	TA is the provision of targeted and customized supports to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application or implementation of practices by recipients.
Delivery	Offered through a state-approved, professionally accredited school, college or university.  Delivered by professionals who meet qualifications required by the state, accreditor and institution and occurs between teachers, faculty and students.	Can be a one-time event or organized into a training program with a planned sequence of sessions.  Delivered by a professional or entity with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills.	Often job embedded that focuses on processes, knowledge application or implementation of practices.  Delivered by professionals or entity who may need to meet the qualifications required by an employer or a state technical assistance system.



Requirements	Requires satisfactory performance on standards or outcomes-based assessments of completed coursework.	Attendance at scheduled training event or series of sessions which may include a pre/post test assessment at its conclusion.	Attendance at scheduled TA sessions (either in-person or virtual) to work on identified goals for improvement.
Credentials	<p>Credentials include certificates, diplomas, degrees and licenses awarded to individuals who complete a program of study.</p> <p>Degrees are awarded by educational institutions in accordance with state regulations.</p> <p>Professional certification is awarded by a national, non-governmental professional association.</p> <p>State certification or licensure is awarded by a state agency and may recognize or require degrees and/or professional certifications.</p>	<p>Certificates of completion to document clock hours of required training.</p> <p>The training entity or approved trainer tracks completion of the training program and awards the clock hours and certificate of completion. Completion of training hours may be tracked on a state training registry.</p>	Completion of action plans and goals achieved. In some states clock hours may be awarded for completed TA.

## Appendix B – 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.*

Definition		
Mentoring	Coaching	Consultation
<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 individual (the 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		
Mentoring	Coaching	Consultation
<p>Addresses a specific topic or the mentee’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 PD plan.</p>	<p>Supports the development of specific skills and practices; and is focused on a performance-based outcome(s).</p> <p>Should be embedded in the recipient’s broader PD 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

Mentoring	Coaching	Consultation
<p>Includes the mentor and mentee establishing and maintaining a positive, trusting and respectful relationship.</p> <p>The ideal match of mentor and mentee is mutually agreed upon rather than assigned. A person may also enlist a mentor or be assigned to a mentor.</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>Requires interactions that build trust and respect.</p> <p>The coach may be assigned to an individual or group.</p> <p>It 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>Requires a collaborative relationship between the consultant and the person to whom he/she provides recommendations.</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>

## Process

Mentoring	Coaching	Consultation
<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 mentee's professional practice or personal disposition.</p> <p>May include unplanned contacts between mentor and mentee when the mentee 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 consultation's effectiveness.</p>

## Duration

<b>Mentoring</b>	<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Consultation</b>
Ongoing, iterative process.	Can occur once or in a series of sessions, depending on the goal's success.	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.

## Delivery

<b>Mentoring</b>	<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Consultation</b>
May be provided face-to-face (onsite or offsite) or through distance, technology-based or hybrid methods.	May be provided face-to-face (onsite or offsite) or through distance, technology-based or hybrid methods.	May be provided face-to-face (onsite or offsite) or through distance, technology-based or hybrid methods.



## Appendix C – Professional Learning Communities

Listed below are the different types of Professional Learning Communities, which are relationship-based peer group learning experiences. PD may be through group professional learning communities, either technology-based or face to face. These Professional Learning Communities assist ECE professionals to dig deeper and reflect upon their early care and education practices.

Group professional learning communities fall into different types such as Peer Learning Communities, Communities of Practice, Learning Cohorts or Networks/Hubs.

### Group Professional Learning Communities

<b>Group Type:</b>	Peer Learning Community (PLC)
<b>Purpose/Outcome</b>	PLCs enable participants to share results and learn from each other, thereby improving their ability to achieve rapid yet significant progress.
<b>Elements</b>	Connects people. Sets goals and measures collective progress. Enables shared learning. Supports distributed leadership. Accelerates progress toward impact.
<b>Benefits</b>	Peer Support Sharing of best practices Collaborative discussion and development opportunities Networking
<b>Audience</b>	Anyone in ECE with an interest in the topic under discussion

<b>Group Type:</b>	Communities of Practice (CoP)
<b>Purpose/Outcome</b>	<p>CoPs are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.</p> <p>Individual members advance their own work, but also contribute to the larger field.</p>
<b>Elements</b>	<p>Shared domain of interest that is relevant and a priority</p> <p>Engagement in joint activities and discussions</p> <p>Not limited by formal structures: they create connections among people across organizational and geographic boundaries.</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>Relational interactions in support of learning</p> <p>Exchange of knowledge and information</p> <p>Innovate and create new ideas/knowledge</p> <p>Problem solving</p>
<b>Audience</b>	<p>A core group of practitioners with a shared practice...with resources experiences, stories, tools and ways of addressing problems.</p>

<b>Group Type:</b>	Cohort
<b>Purpose/Outcome</b>	A cohort is a collaborative learning style in which a group of learners enter a program together and remain together throughout its duration to create a deeper understanding of shared goals and achieve results.
<b>Elements</b>	<p>Led by facilitator or instructor with subject area expertise</p> <p>Fixed start and end dates</p> <p>Peers with similar interests, goals and experience</p> <p>Frequent group discussions</p> <p>Provides structure to the learning process</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>Small groups</p> <p>Networking and supportive engagement</p> <p>Relationship building</p> <p>More opportunities to engage with facilitator or instructor</p> <p>Accountability to the group</p>
<b>Audience</b>	Small groups of ECE professionals around a subject/topic or common learning endeavor.

<b>Group Type:</b>	Collaboratives*
<b>Purpose/Outcome</b>	The learning collaborative model brings together many ECE programs to participate in a learning system to make quality improvements in a focused area.
<b>Elements</b>	Facilitated learning sessions held at regular intervals TA during and between sessions Action Periods with self-assessments of current practices, strengths and areas for improvement
<b>Benefits</b>	Creates a network of shared ideas and mutual support. Provides access to high-quality resources for quality improvement. Offers opportunities to build important skills: implementation of best practices, nurturing a collaborative and productive ECE program team, as well as leadership and training
<b>Audience</b>	Designated number of ECE programs that wish to make policy and practice changes aligned with a particular initiative.

\*Though both Collaboratives and Networks focus on bringing groups of programs together rather than individuals, the focus is still on advancing the work through relationships and opportunities for networking.

<b>Group Type:</b>	Networks/Hubs*
<b>Purpose/Outcome</b>	Organizations that bring together programs and offer quality improvement services and business support, including professional development in the form of training, TA and peer support delivered by paid staff.
<b>Elements</b>	<p>Relationship-based practices combined with high-quality early childhood content</p> <p>Facilitated peer interaction activities that support ECE professionals' leadership and growth</p> <p>Reflection and feedback opportunities</p> <p>Business sustainability practices</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>Reach many programs at once</p> <p>Flexible to community needs</p> <p>Improve quality of care</p> <p>PD can be deployed quickly</p> <p>Emotional and psychological well-being of participants</p> <p>Opportunities for mentorships</p>
<b>Audience</b>	<p>Practitioners with common focus, challenges, and concerns.</p> <p>Program leaders</p>

\*Though both Collaboratives and Networks focus on bringing groups of programs together rather than individuals, the focus is still on advancing the work through relationships and opportunities for networking.



## Appendix D – History of the Original 2011 Technical Assistance Glossary

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 PD methods and the core capabilities of those who provide it. Several of these sessions were convened with national partners, including CCAoA, 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 ECE 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 PD and supports (trainers, TA providers, coaches, consultants, advisors, higher education faculty and others); program, agency and system administrators; national, state and local policy makers; and researchers from both within and outside the ECE field.

During this year-and-a-half dialogue, three key issues were 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 TA (including mentoring, coaching, consultation and advising).
2. Core competencies for those who provide professional development; and
3. Evaluating, measuring and tracking training and TA.

In February 2010, CCAoA partnered with NAEYC to develop national definitions for training and technical assistance. The two organizations spent several months reviewing new and historically significant related research, existing state definitions and associated quality improvement and assurance efforts.

The organizations decided that this work should start from where states' system policy efforts were, using practice and system policies as a foundation for development of definitions. The project lens and focus were 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 ECE 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 TA networks, state PD 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, CCAoA and NAEYC decided to move forward with the finalization of this glossary of training and TA definitions.

# Acknowledgements

Thank you to the individuals representing a wide range of ECE leaders and stakeholders who participated in the development of the original publication in 2011.

CCAoA and NAEYC thank the hundreds of state experts and national colleagues that shared their ideas, needs and hopes related to the original publication of this resource in 2011. Specifically, CCAoA and NAEYC thank state policy maker and PD leadership representatives from 44 states and the District of Columbia, and the following national organizations/agencies, for their participation in input and feedback processes.

- ACCESS–Associate Degree Early Childhood Teacher Educators
- Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
- Child Trends
- Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
- 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
- National Louis University: McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership
- National Professional Development Center on Inclusion
- The National Registry Alliance
- Office of Head Start
- Society for Research in Child Development
- U.S. Department of Education
- ZERO TO THREE

Additional gratitude is extended to NAEYC Affiliates' volunteer and staff leadership and CCAoA state networks and Child Care Resource and Referral agencies' leadership and staff for their support of this work and willingness to share their expertise. The original publication was funded with generous support from the Birth to Five Policy Alliance (now known as the Alliance for Early Success) and the McCormick Foundation.

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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Education of Young Children