

Strategic Use of Consultants: An Interactive Guide for Head Start and Early Head Start Leaders



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Program Management
and Fiscal Operations™

Trying a Fresh Approach

Key Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Strategies

On-Site Workshops and Presentations: Workshop presenters or program experts offer training to staff on topics of common need or interest. This can include in-service and pre-service training.

Process Consultation: Content/systems specialists work with teams to examine issues and practices and determine actions to enhance program capacities. This highly individualized support draws on staff knowledge and experience.

Expert Consultation: Consultants are hired for their knowledge and expertise to carry out a specific service for a limited time. These consultants often provide an extra pair of hands and are used to develop community assessments, design written plans, assist in the classroom, and more.

Clinical Consultation: Hired consultants work with program staff to diagnose problems and to design and deliver solutions.

Communities of Practice: Groups of colleagues who share a concern or passion meet regularly to explore evidence-based strategies and new approaches. The process is organic and is usually defined by the group in an ongoing way.

Reflective Supervision: Staff members meet with a consultant on a regular basis to explore their experiences, thoughts, and feelings related to their work.

Focused Discussions: Staff gathers to examine and discuss their practices using a variety of resources (e.g., videos and articles).

Staggered Orientation: Multiple strategies (e.g., trainings, follow-up meetings, and ongoing supervision) are implemented over time to support staff in adopting new policies, practices, and products (e.g. curriculum resources and child assessment tools).

Mentor-Coaching: Internal or external specialists interact one-on-one with staff to help them reflect on their practice and connect research and theories to their work. These mentors, or “educational guides,” capitalize on staff strengths and focus on children’s learning and outcomes.



State, Regional, and National Conferences: Staff members attend off-site staff training opportunities that typically utilize keynote, panel, and workshop sessions to introduce participants to new information. Conferences also allow staff to network with colleagues from different settings.

College Courses: Staff members take academic courses that offer college credits and ideally link to paths or schedules of advancement in a career.

Network meetings: Staff members (e.g., directors, content specialists, health managers, education managers) attend off-site, job-alike meetings to discuss issues and share resources. Network groups often invite outside experts to share new knowledge, research, and promising practices.