

# 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

### Aligning Adult Learning Principles with T/TA Strategies

Some training and technical assistance (T/TA) strategies reflect adult learning principles better than others do, maximizing results. When you adopt approaches to T/TA that incorporate adult learning principles, your staff will be highly engaged and sustained program change is more likely to occur.

To help you think about how to select T/TA strategies that reflect adult learning principles, read the descriptions of the 12 T/TA strategies listed below and follow these steps:

1. Use the first column to identify strategies that best reflect adult learning principles.
2. Use the second column to identify strategies that you will consider in the future.

T/TA Strategy	Reflects Adult Learning Principles	Will Consider in the Future
<p><b>On-Site Workshops and Presentations:</b> 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.</p>		
<p><b>Process Consultation:</b> Content/systems specialists work with teams to examine issues and practices and determine actions to enhance program capacities. This highly individualized technical assistance draws on staff knowledge and experience.</p>		
<p><b>Expert Consultation:</b> 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.</p>		

T/TA Strategy	Reflects Adult Learning Principles	Will Consider in the Future
<b>Clinical Consultation:</b> Hired consultants work with program staff to diagnose problems and to design and deliver solutions.		
<b>Communities of Practice:</b> 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.		
<b>Reflective Supervision:</b> Staff members meet with a consultant on a regular basis to explore their experiences, thoughts, and feelings related to their work.		
<b>Focused Discussions:</b> Staff gathers to examine and discuss their practices using a variety of resources (e.g., videos and articles).		
<b>Staggered Orientation:</b> 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).		
<b>Mentor-Coaching:</b> 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.		
<b>State, Regional, and National Conferences:</b> 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.		
<b>College Courses:</b> Staff members take academic courses that offer college credits and ideally link to paths or schedules of advancement in a career.		
<b>Network Meetings:</b> 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.		