ACTIVE IMPLEMENTATION EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALIST TOOLKIT

WELCOME TO THE ACTIVE IMPLEMENTATION EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALIST TOOLKIT

The Active Implementation Early Childhood Specialist Toolkit contains tools and resources to help Early Childhood Specialists (ECSs) conduct implementation-informed process consultation.

Implementation-informed process consultation can be used to support Head Start grantees in the use of any evidence-based child development, teaching and learning practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive and lead to positive child outcomes across learning programs.

In addition to tools and resources, this toolkit provides guidance on how and when ECSs can use specific tools to support their process consultation with Head Start grantees. All tools and resources contained within the toolkit were developed for ECSs to use with grantees at each stage of implementation. The National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning (NCECDTL) has collaborated with the National Center on Performance Management and Fiscal Operations (NCPMFO) to ensure that the Active Implementation tools are aligned with NCPMFO resources.

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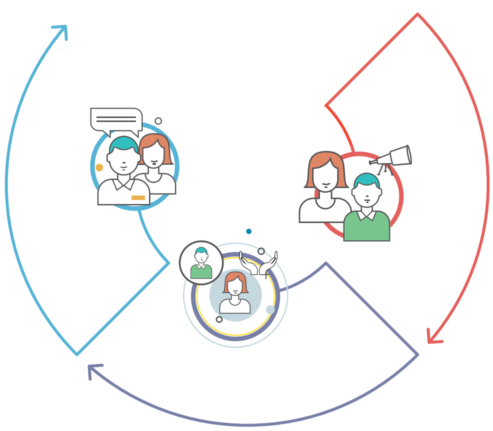
ECS TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

Early Childhood Specialists engage in process consultation as a part of their technical assistance to build grantees' capacity to achieve Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).

The ECS Toolkit specifies three phases of process consultation: Discover, Support, and Follow-Up. The three phases of process consultation highlight the partnership between ECSs and grantees to establish mutually agreed upon goals, making a plan to achieve these goals, and tracking progress and making adjustments along the way.

Early Childhood Specialist Process Consultation

What is the Early Childhood Specialist trying to achieve with the grantee?



FOLLOW-UP

Track progress towards technical assistance goals

DISCOVER

Establish technical assistance goals

SUPPORT

Plan and execute technical assistance goals

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Early Childhood National Centers
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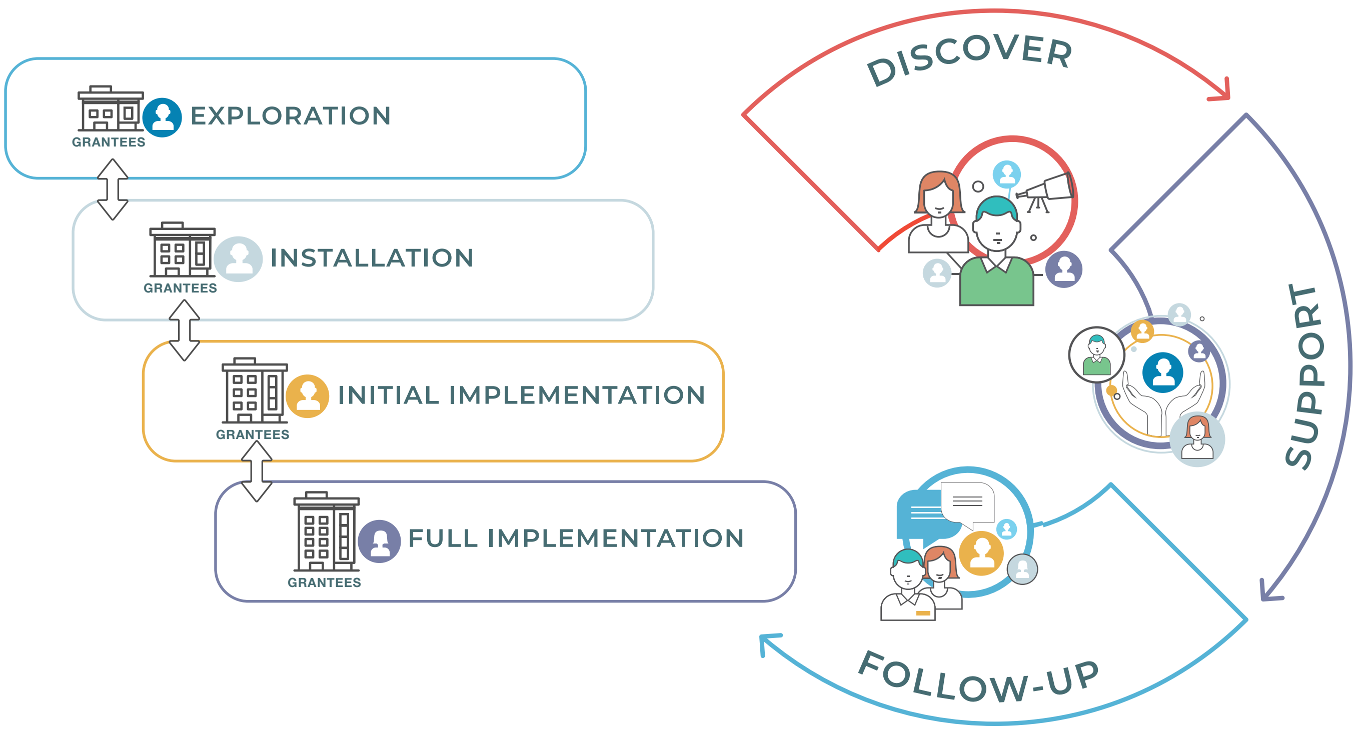
Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning

ECS PROCESS CONSULTATION & IMPLEMENTATION STAGES:

As ECSs move through the phases of process consultation, grantees are simultaneously moving through the 4 stages of Active Implementation: Exploration, Installation, Initial Implementation, and Full Implementation.

ECSs use the three phases of process consultation to discover the stage a grantee is in related to a particular goal, provide stage-matched support to the grantee to move to the next stage, and follow-up to assess whether a grantee has moved to the next stage and can sustain progress.



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ECS PROCESS CONSULTATION: USING THE TOOLKIT

Early Childhood Specialists can use implementation science best practices and resources as a part of their process consultation with grantees. The ECS toolkit provides ECSs with concrete tools and resources to further incorporate implementation science into their process consultation easily.

Early Childhood Specialists can use all or any of the tools in this toolkit during their process consultation. These tools may be replicated and shared with grantees prior to or during a meeting, or used for planning purposes by the ECS to inform work with the grantee.

IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT PAGE 5

The Implementation Assessment tool is a planning tool used to support process consultation.
The tool can be used to establish, plan, execute and track TA goals in partnership with grantees.
This tool can be used during all 3 phases of the ECS' Process Consultation.

ECS Process Consulation Phase	Active Implementation Stage
▪ Discover ▪ Support ▪ Follow-Up	▪ Exploration ▪ Installation ▪ Initial Implementation ▪ Full Implementation

TOGGLE TOOL PAGE 13

The Toggle Tool provides guidance to help ECSs and other TA Providers provide technical assistance matched to a grantee's stage of implementation. The Toggle Tool can be used at any Implementation Stage.

ECS Process Consulation Phase	Active Implementation Stage
▪ Discover ▪ Support ▪ Follow-Up	▪ Exploration ▪ Installation ▪ Initial Implementation ▪ Full Implementation

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THE HEXAGON	PAGE 25
The Hexagon is a discussion and analysis tool designed to help ECSs assess the fit and feasibility of new and existing practices across 6 domains: need, fit, resources, evidence, usability and capacity to implement. The Hexagon Tool can be used when a grantee is selecting a practice to implement during the Exploration phase. The Hexagon can also sometimes be used at other stages of implementation when a grantee is concerned about the fit of a program.	
ECS Process Consulation Phase	Active Implementation Stage
▪ Support	▪ Exploration
The domains are categorized as a Practice or Grantee Indicator. Practice Indicators are used to assess the strength of the new or existing practice that will be implemented. The Practice Indicators are evidence, supports, and usability. Grantee Indicators are used to assess how the new or existing practice would match the grantee's context. The Grantee Indicators are need, fit, and capacity.	

IMPLEMENTATION DRIVERS CHECKLIST	PAGE 42
The Implementation Drivers Checklist is an assessment tool used during the Installation, Initial Implementation and Full Implementation phases, after a grantee has selected a practice to implement. The checklist can help ECSs assess the extent to which grantees have the necessary infrastructure supports in place for specific practices.	
ECS Process Consulation Phase	Active Implementation Stage
▪ Support	▪ Installation ▪ Initial Implementation ▪ Full Implementation
This tool focuses on the Organizational and Competency drivers. Organizational drivers help ensure sustainability and improvement at the organization and system levels. Competency drivers help develop, improve, and sustain grantees' competence and confidence to implement effective practices.	

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APPENDIX A

IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT

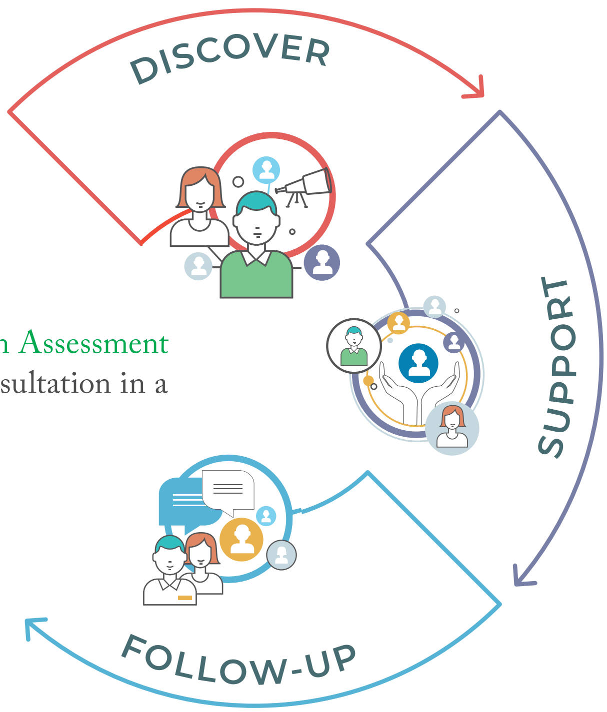
FOR TA PROVIDERS

IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS

The Implementation Assessment is designed to be used by Early Childhood Specialists in their process consultation with Head Start grantees. Early Childhood Specialists can use process consultation as they work with grantees to establish TA goals, plan and execute these goals, and track progress towards these goals.

The Implementation Assessment is developed from the perspective of the ECS.

The Implementation Assessment outlines process consultation in a three-phase cycle:



DISCOVER

- What stage of implementation is the grantee in?
- What does the grantee want or need to do?

SUPPORT

- How will the grantee move to the next stage?
- How can ECSs ensure their technical assistance is matched to the grantee's stage of implementation?

FOLLOW-UP

- Has the grantee moved to the next stage?
- How can the grantee sustain progress?

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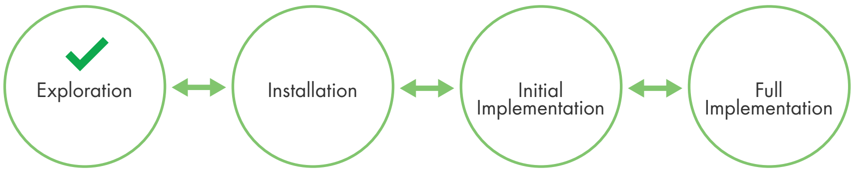
WHEN TO USE

The Implementation Assessment can be used by the ECS:

- At any point in process consultation
- With new activities or ongoing activities



RESOURCES NEEDED

- Toggle Tool
- Implementation Stage Flowchart
- Pen & paper for note taking

HOW TO USE

ECSs can use the Implementation Assessment during the Discover phase of process consultation to co-identify grantee goals and to assess which stage of implementation grantees are in related to their goal. Throughout the Support and Follow-up phases, ECSs will support and track grantees' progress towards goals and assess whether grantees move to the next stage of implementation for their goal.

PRIOR TO USING

1. Use the Implementation Stage Flowchart to identify what stage of implementation the grantee is in currently. These stages include: Exploration, Installation, Initial Implementation, and Full Implementation.
2. Prepare to listen to the grantee's needs, concerns, and questions.
3. Determine a strategy for completing the Implementation Assessment either during a meeting, virtually or in-person with the grantee, or after a grantee meeting.

DURING USE

1. Complete the Implementation Assessment for the current phase of process consultation.
2. Share the assessment with the grantee either during the meeting or after the meeting by email.

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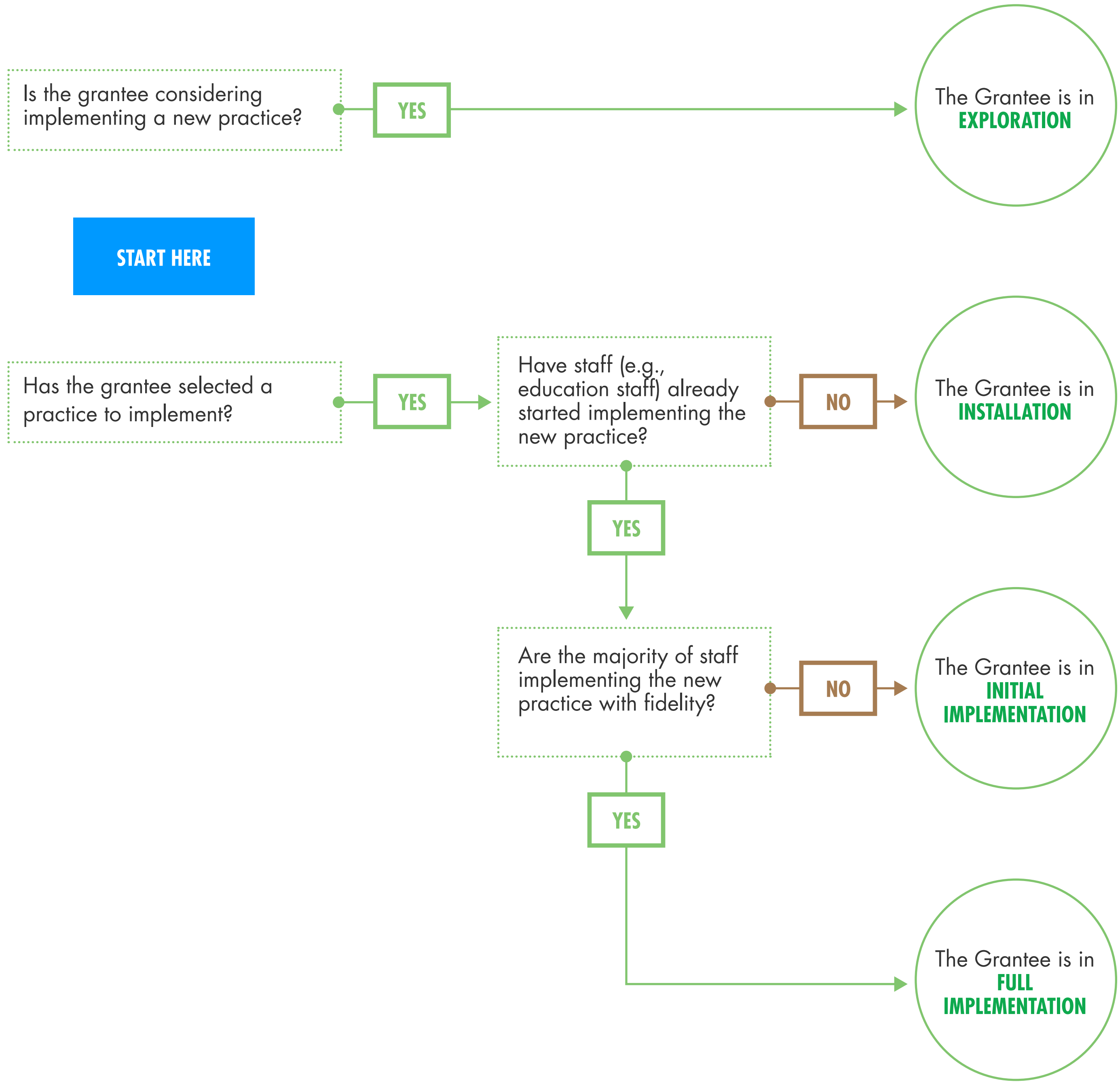
IMPLEMENTATION STAGE FLOWCHART

Follow the flow chart to identify the grantee's Implementation Stage for a specific practice.

Use the grantee's Implementation Stage in the Implementation Assessment and Toggle Tool to guide your process consultation.



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IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT AT-A-GLANCE

Worksheet 1

DISCOVER: BUILD RELATIONSHIP AND TRUST WITH GRANTEE

What Implementation Stage is the grantee in?
What does the grantee want or need to do?

1. What is the grantee proud of?
2. What is the grantee's goal? A year from now, what does the grantee want to see?
3. Is there a priority or urgent need?
4. What data support this goal?
5. What Implementation Stage is the grantee in related to the goal they want to achieve?
   ☐ Exploration ☐ Installation ☐ Initial Implementation ☐ Full Implementation
6. Is there shared agreement about the opportunity for improvement?

Worksheet 2

SUPPORT: GROW RELATIONSHIP AND TRUST WITH GRANTEE

How can we ensure that our consultation is matched to the grantee's stage?
How can we support the grantee to move to the next stage?

1. How would the grantee's future state look different from their current state?
2. What is the plan for supporting the grantee to move to the next stage of implementation? How does this plan fit with the grantee's goals?
3. What data or information can be used to determine progress to the next stage of implementation for the grantee?
4. Is the grantee using stage-based best practices to move to the next stage of implementation related to the goal they want to achieve? Consider:
   ☐ Teams ☐ Drivers ☐ Data Use and Communication

Worksheet 3

FOLLOW-UP: SUSTAIN RELATIONSHIP AND TRUST WITH GRANTEE

Has the grantee moved to the next stage?
How can the grantee sustain progress?

1. Has the grantee made progress or achieved the identified goal?
2. Were there any unintended consequences?
3. What data or information were used to determine the progress or achievement?
4. Is the grantee using stage-based best practices to sustain the change or improvement associated with the goal? Consider:
   ☐ Teams ☐ Drivers ☐ Data Use and Communication

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WORKSHEET 1

DISCOVER THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST
What stage of implementation is the grantee in? What does the grantee want or need to do?
1. What is the grantee proud of?
2. What is the grantee's goal? A year from now, what does the grantee want to see?
3. Is there a priority or urgent need?
4. What data support this goal?
5. What Implementation Stage is the grantee in related to the goal they want to achieve? Review the Implementation Stage Flowchart (P. 12) and select the appropriate stage(s). ☐ Exploration ☐ Installation ☐ Initial Implementation ☐ Full Implementation
6. Is there shared agreement about the opportunity for improvement?

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WORKSHEET 2

SUPPORT THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST

How can we ensure that our consultation is matched to the grantee's stage?
How can we support the grantee to move to the next stage?

1. How would the grantee's future state look different from their current state?

2. What is the plan for supporting the grantee to move to the next stage of implementation? How does this plan fit with the grantee's goals?

3. What data or information can be used to determine progress to the next stage of implementation for the grantee?

4. Is the grantee using stage-based best practices to move to the next stage of implementation related to the goal they want to achieve? Review the Toggle Tool and consider:
   - ☐ Teams
   - ☐ Drivers
   - ☐ Data Use and Communication

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WORKSHEET 3

FOLLOW-UP THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST
Has the grantee moved to the next stage? How can the grantee sustain progress?
1. Has the grantee made progress or achieved the identified goal?
2. Were there any unintended consequences?
3. What data or information were used to determine the progress or achievement?
4. Is the grantee using stage-based best practices to sustain the change or improvement associated with the goal? Review the Toggle Tool and consider: ☐ Teams ☐ Drivers ☐ Data Use and Communication

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APPENDIX B

TOGGLE TOOL

FOR PROGRAM AND TA PROVIDERS

TOOGLE TOOL INSTRUCTIONS

The Toggle Tool provides guidance for how Head Start TA Providers can coach and support programs throughout implementation. The tool is called the "Toggle" tool because users must move between observing programs' work and taking action themselves.

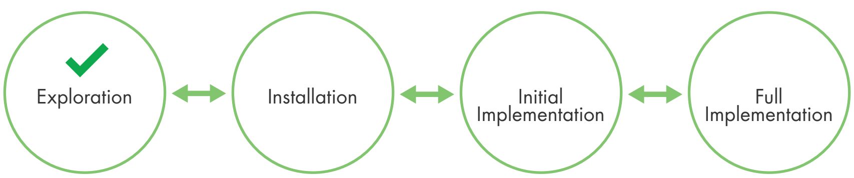
The Toggle Tool provides guidance for Head Start and Early Head Start programs to help:

- Grantees implement new or ongoing activities systematically, using best practices from implementation science
- Early Childhood Specialists and other TA Providers' discovery and support work with grantees using implementation-informed process consultation

WHEN TO USE

The Toggle Tool can be used:

- At any stage in a program's implementation
- With new activities or ongoing activities



RESOURCES NEEDED

- Toggle Tool
- Implementation Assessment
- Pen & paper for note taking

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HOW TO USE FOR GRANTEES

PRIOR TO USING

1. Identify the Implementation Stage(s) that match your program's current effort. To determine the Implementation Stage(s), use the Implementation Assessment.

DURING USE

1. Find the Implementation Stage(s) that match your current effort.
2. Review:
    a. What should the grantee's Implementation Team be doing?
    b. How should the grantee build infrastructure?
    c. How should the grantee use data and communicate?
3. Identify which best practices are currently happening and which are not.
4. Identify best practices you can use to improve your effort. Use tools and resources identified for these best practices.

FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALISTS & OTHER TA PROVIDERS

PRIOR TO USING

1. Determine the Implementation Stage(s) that match the grantee's current effort. To determine the Implementation Stage(s), use the Implementation Stage Flowchart.
2. Determine whether the Toggle Tool will be shared with the grantee as guidance, or used for the TA Provider's planning purposes. If the tool will be shared with the grantee, make copies of the tool or share with the grantee electronically.

DURING USE

1. Find the Implementation Stage(s) that match the grantee's current effort.
    a. Prior to providing TA, review:
        i. What should the grantee's Implementation Team be doing?
        ii. How should the grantee build infrastructure?
        iii. How should the grantee use data and communicate?
    b. Identify which best practices are currently happening and which are not.
    c. Identify best practices the grantee can use to improve their effort.
2. Review the TA Provider's activities for the grantee's current Implementation Stage(s). Consider how you can:
    a. Support the grantee Implementation Team.
    b. Support the grantee to build infrastructure.
    c. Support the grantee's use of data and communication.
3. Identify TA strategies, tools, and resources to help you support the grantee's effort.

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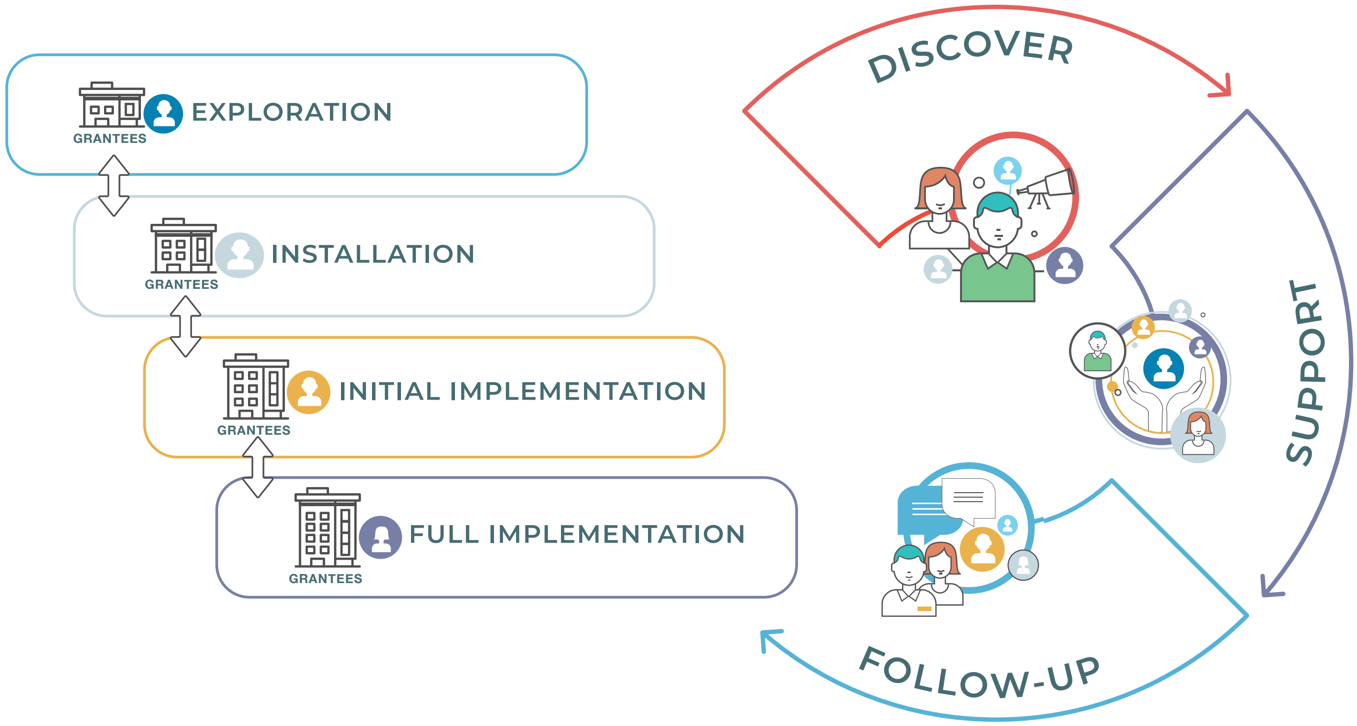
EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALIST PROCESS WITH GRANTEES



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EXPLORATION

GRANTEE

What should the Implementation Team be doing?	How should the grantee plan for infrastructure?	How should the grantee use data and communicate?
1. Form an Implementation Team. a. Identify members, including diverse positions, as well as perspectives and a decision maker. b. Develop team member buy-in and readiness to participate. c. Ensure members have leadership support from supervisors to participate. 2. Develop a team agreement that briefly explains how the team will work together. 3. Establish a team meeting process with a regular meeting schedule. 4. Establish communication protocols with management and leadership.	1. Assess and identify existing and needed supports for staff to implement the practice, using the IImplementation Drivers Checklist. 2. Assess and identify existing and needed supports for the grantee to monitor and improve implementation of the practice, using the Implementation Drivers Checklist. 3. Assess and identify existing and needed grantee resources to support the practice, using the Implementation Drivers Checklist.	1. Develop messaging to use with staff and partners about the need for and importance of implementation of the practice. 2. Build buy-in from all levels of the system including staff, supervisors, coaches, administrators and directors, etc. Grantees can ask all levels of the system for feedback on messaging regarding the practice. Questions could include, *"What do you think about our new initiative? What can we do to make sure you are in support or understand what we are doing?"* 3. Gather information on what data are available and what data may need to be generated to understand and share progress.

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EXPLORATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALISTS & OTHER TA PROVIDERS

How can the TA Provider support the grantee Implementation Team?	How can the TA Provider support the grantee to plan for infrastructure?	How can the TA Provider support the grantee to use data and communicate?
1. Provide programs with guidance on the purpose, role, and functions of team members on an Implementation Team. 2. Help grantees select and invite members. a. Help the team to consider: i. What perspectives should be represented on the team? ii. What skills would be helpful on the team (e.g., understanding of fiscal practices)? iii. What types of different work styles and personalities would be helpful? 3. Help the team develop ways of work. 4. Support the grantee to develop a communication protocol.	1. Help the grantee understand what implementation of the practice will require, including: staffing, training, coaching, documentation forms, data collection processes, etc. Use the Hexagon Tool. 2. Use tools and resources with grantees to explore what resources are needed to support the practice organizationally (e.g., partnerships, technology, budget). Use the Hexagon Tool.	1. Support grantees to develop "stakeholder-centered rationales" to tailor communication and buy-in efforts for different stakeholder groups. 2. Support the grantee to develop their own protocol. 3. Use tools and resources to conduct readiness assessments for implementation of the practice. 4. Support grantees to use readiness data to develop buy-in strategies. 5. Coach the Implementation Team to use appropriate data for the current Implementation Stage. For Exploration: population need, resources available, initiative inventory.

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INSTALLATION

GRANTEE

What should the Implementation Team be doing?	How should the grantee build infrastructure?	How should the grantee use data and communicate?
1. Convene the Implementation Team regularly (e.g., weekly or every other week) with set agendas. 2. Work as a team to identify, assess availability, and acquire needed resources to support implementation of the practice. 3. Use communication protocols with management and leadership regularly to communicate the team's work.	1. Develop and modify professional development supports that practitioners will need to improve practice, using the Implementation Drivers Checklist. 2. Develop and modify organizational resources needed to support practitioners to improve practice, using the Implementation Drivers Checklist.	1. Develop communication plans internally and externally. 2. Discuss how communication challenges will be addressed. What will you do if communication doesn't go well – either with the grantee or other stakeholders? 3. Identify data sources that will be used to assess fidelity and outcomes of practice implementation and develop data sources as needed. 4. Discuss how data will be used to support effective and timely communication, decision making and continuous improvement. Think about what data will be shared with which stakeholders.

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INSTALLATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALISTS & OTHER TA PROVIDERS

How can the TA Provider support the grantee Implementation Team?	How can the TA Provider support the grantee to build infrastructure?	How can the TA Provider support the grantee to use data and communicate?
1. Support the Implementation Team to follow their team agreement, including regular meetings to discuss the status of action items. Recommend that the grantee schedule regular, recurring weekly/biweekly meetings with the Implementation Team. 2. Build team knowledge and skills to support effective implementation by linking the team to necessary training. a. Identify the skills the team needs to support the implementation of the practice. b. Provide or coordinate skill-based trainings that meet identified needs. 3. Support the team to identify resources they need to have successful team meetings. Plan for meetings. Suggested activities include: a. Identify roles (facilitator, note taker, data analyst, team members). b. Set a meeting agenda ahead of time. c. Follow meeting norms (e.g., start and end on time, notes provided within 24 hours, respectful conversations).	1. Coach grantees to create supports to build practitioners' ability to implement the practice with fidelity. Use the Implementation Drivers Checklist to help grantees plan what supports are needed. Additional suggested tools and resources include: a. Staff hiring: interview guides, updated job descriptions b. Training: training plans, training evaluation data c. Coaching: coaching service delivery plans, coaching fidelity data 2. Develop organizational resources for practitioners. Use the Drivers Best Practices Checklist to help programs plan and build what supports are needed. Additional suggested tools and resources include: a. Data Use: sample data collection tools and systems b. Policies and Procedures: sample policies and processes from other grantees c. Partnerships: sample partnership agreements (MOUs) with external partners from other grantees	1. Support the grantee to use their communication protocol to connect with stakeholders and share information. Help grantees develop a protocol if they do not have one. 2. Coach the grantee to develop a process to use data for decision making. The process can outline who evaluates data and makes decisions, when information will be shared, and with whom information will be shared. Examples of decision making processes include Look, Think, Act or Plan, Do, Study, Act. 3. Coach the Implementation Team to use appropriate data for the current Implementation Stage. For Installation: training evaluation data, coaching evaluation data, surveys.

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INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION

GRANTEE

What should the Implementation Team be doing?	How should the grantee build infrastructure?	How should the grantee use data and communicate?
1. Convene Implementation Team regularly. Meet weekly or biweekly with set agendas. 2. Work as a team to support implementation of the practice. Use data to identify resoures and carry out strategies to improve the practice. 3. Communicate team's progress with grantee management and leadership. Consistently follow communication protocols and evaluate their effectiveness.	1. Use the Implementation Drivers Checklist to assess and identify existing and needed supports for: a. Staff to improve implementation of the practice. b. The grantee to monitor and improve implementation of the practice. c. Resources to support operations that align with practice needs.	1. Follow communication protocols to communicate information between staff, Implementation Team and leadership. 2. Evaluate effectiveness of communication protocols. Gather feedback from staff and stakeholders on how to improve communication and feedback loops. 3. Use data to: a. Share how the practice is working. b. Show how communication protocols are working within the system. c. Improve implementation of the practice. Improvements may be small, incremental steps toward effective implementaton. d. Improve system organization. Improvements may be small, incremental steps.

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INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALISTS & OTHER TA PROVIDERS

How can the TA Provider support the grantee Implementation Team?	How can the TA Provider support the grantee to build infrastructure?	How can the TA Provider support the grantee to use data and communicate?
1. Ensure the Implementation Team is functioning well. 2. Coach the Implementation Team to use data effectively. This may include: a. Assisting the team with identifying data sources. b. Helping the team ensure they are using the right data for the current Implementation Stage. c. Using a formal data-based decision-making process, such as Look, Think, Act or Plan, Do, Study, Act. 3. Coach the Implementation Team to consistently follow communication protocols and evaluate their effectiveness.	1. Share the Implementation Drivers Checklist with grantees to assess effectiveness of the supports to: a. Build competency of practitioners. i. Review practice training plans, assessments from trainings, coaching effectiveness surveys. b. Improve organizational functioning. ii. Review policies, data plans, and partnerships.	1. Coach grantees to use communication protocols and feedback from stakeholders to strengthen their work. 2. Support grantees to evaluate how communication is working and make adjustments to their communication protocols to improve the process if needed. 3. Coach the team to use data regularly to make small, incremental improvements. Guide the Implementation Team to use appropriate data for the current Implementation Stage. For Initial/Full Implementation: fidelity data, outcome data. 4. Support the grantee to improve the process for data use.

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FULL IMPLEMENTATION

GRANTEE

What should the Implementation Team be doing?	How should the grantee build infrastructure?	How should the grantee use data and communicate?
1. Convene the Implementation Team regularly. Continue to hold meetings on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. 2. As a team, use informal data based decision making processes, like Plan, Do, Study, Act cycles, to improve use and sustainability of the practice. 3. Communicate team's progress with management and leadership. Consistently use communication protocols with management and leadership to communicate the team's work.	1. Continue to improve and maintain skillful practice of practitioners. a. Provide ongoing professional development for practitioners that includes development of practice skills, monitoring fidelity to the model, and ensuring that plans are in place to address turnover. 2. Seek strategies to make organizational resources more efficient and effective. a. Integrate coaching into the professional development plan, improve access to data dashboards for practitioners to use.	1. Identify ways to: a. Sustain use of communication processes internally and externally. Continually follow and improve communication protocols between staff, leadership, and stakeholders. b. Strengthen and sustain data guided decision-making processes. Use team feedback to enhance and sustain data guided decision-making processes.

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FULL IMPLEMENTATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALISTS & OTHER TA PROVIDERS

How can the TA Provider support the grantee Implementation Team?	How should the grantee sustain infrastructure?	How can the TA Provider support the grantee to use data and communicate?
1. Support the Implementation Team to continue meeting consistently. When appropriate, guide them to review their team agreement and update as needed. 2. Coach the Implementation Team to continue using data for ongoing improvement. Provide support as the team uses data to improve practice and organizational supports, and sustain their implementation.	1. Coach the Implementation Team to continue their work to sustain and improve: a. Practitioner competency i. Suggested resources include training plans, pre/post assessments from trainings, coaching effectiveness surveys, and action plans for the practice. b. Efficiency and effectiveness of organizational supports i. Suggested resources include assessment and action planning for administrative and leadership practices.	1. Support grantees to assess and revise communication protocols for implementation. 2. Coach grantees to continue following their data-guided decision-making process. 3. Coach the team to continue to use data, and make small, incremental improvements. Guide the Implementation Team to use appropriate data for the current Implementation Stage. For Initial/Full Implementation: fidelity data, outcome data. 4. Support the grantee to improve the process for data use.

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APPENDIX C

HEXAGON DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS TOOL

for Program and TA Providers

HEXAGON DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS TOOL INSTRUCTIONS

The Hexagon Discussion and Analysis Tool can be used by Early Childhood Specialists and other technical assistance providers with grantees to better understand how a new or existing practice or practices could fit into the grantee's existing work. The Hexagon should be used alongside other resources, such as the Management Systems Wheel, the Curriculum Consumer's Report Tool, and the Dual Language Learners Program Assessment (DLLPA), to make decisions about what practice(s) to implement. The Hexagon can be used to discuss and score six categories:

GRANTEE INDICATORS

Grantee Indicators are used to assess how the new or existing practice would match the grantee's context. The three grantee categories are:

NEED

What need in the community does the grantee want to address?

FIT

How well would this practice fit in the grantee's existing service(s) and community?

CAPACITY

What kind of capacity does the grantee have to implement this practice?

PRACTICE INDICATORS

Practice Indicators are used to assess the strength of the new or existing practice that will be implemented. The three practice categories are:

EVIDENCE

How strong is the evidence that this practice can improve outcomes for children and families?

USABILITY

How well can the practice be used in a real world setting?

SUPPORTS

What kind of resources and supports are available to the grantee as support for implementing the practice?

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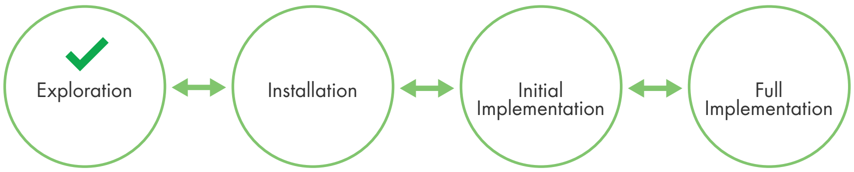
WHEN TO USE

The Hexagon Tool is used during the Exploration stage when grantees are identifying possible new practices to implement. It can also be used at other stages of implementation when a grantee is concerned about the fit of a program.



HOW TO USE

PRIOR TO USING

1. Identify what practice or practices (up to three) will be assessed using the tool.
2. Identify the team who will complete the assessment. If the grantee has an Implementation Team, the Implementation Team can complete the assessment. The team should reflect diverse perspectives: team members may include grantee leaders and managers, education staff, parents and family members, and Board and Policy Council representatives.
3. Read the discussion questions prior to meeting to ensure that any necessary data and resources that will need to be reviewed during the assessment are available. The grantee may need to obtain additional information about the proposed practice from its developer to answer some of these questions. It may also be useful to have copies of the grantee's Community Assessment and 5 Year Goals for reference during the assessment.

If appropriate, the grantee may prioritize questions for deeper exploration based on the context and potential practice(s).

DURING USE

1. The team should review, discuss and document the questions for each category.
2. Extra space is included in each indicator for additional questions or notes.
3. After discussing the indicator, the team will rate the category using the 5-point Likert scale and indicators in each section.
4. Using the discussion notes and ratings, the team can make a recommendation about whether to adopt, replicate or stop the practice. While ratings should be taken into account during the recommendation process, ratings alone should not be used to determine final recommendations.

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THE HEXAGON: AN EXPLORATION TOOL

The Hexagon can be used as a planning tool to guide selection and evaluate potential practices for use.

GRANTEE INDICATORS

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT

Staff meet minimum qualifications

Able to sustain staffing, coaching, training, data systems, performance assessment, and administration

- Financially
- Structurally
- Cultural responsivity capacity

Buy-in process operationalized

- Practitioners
- Families

FIT WITH CURRENT INITIATIVES

Alignment with community, regional, state priorities

Fit with family and community values, culture and history

Impact on other interventions & initiatives

Alignment with grantee's organizational structure

NEED

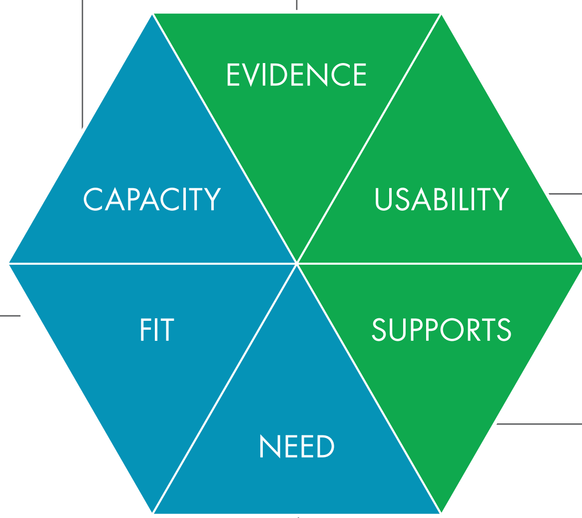
Target population identified

Disaggregated data indicating population needs

Parent & community

perceptions of need

Addresses service or system gaps



PRACTICE INDICATORS

EVIDENCE

Strength of evidence—for which children in what settings?

- Number of studies
- Head Start context
- Diverse cultural groups
- Efficacy or effectiveness

Outcomes – Is it worth it?

USABILITY

Well-defined practice

Successful grantees to observe

Several replications

Adaptations for context

SUPPORTS

Expert Assistance

Staffing

Comprehensive professional development

Data systems

Technology supports (IT)

Administrative systems

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Facilitator(s):	Today's Date:
	Practice(s) Being Assessed:
Individuals Participating in the Assessment:	

Identify the practice(s) to be assessed. Write the numerical rating that best describe each component below.

		PRACTICE 1	PRACTICE 2	PRACTICE 3
Practice	Evidence	☐	☐	☐
	Usability	☐	☐	☐
	Supports	☐	☐	☐
Grantee	Need	☐	☐	☐
	Fit	☐	☐	☐
	Capacity	☐	☐	☐

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PRACTICE INDICATOR

EVIDENCE

1. Are research data available to demonstrate the effectiveness of the practice (e.g., randomized trials, quasi-experimental designs)? If yes, note citations or links to publications.
2. What is the strength of the evidence? In what context was the evidence developed?
3. If research data is not available, are there evaluation data to indicate effectiveness (e.g., pre/post data, testing results)? If yes, note citations or publications.
4. What outcomes are expected when the practice is implemented as intended?
5. Is there a theory of change or logic model that demonstrates how the practice is expected to contribute to short-term and long-term outcomes?
6. Has the practice been researched or evaluated in a Head Start setting? If yes, note citations or publications.
7. Does the research or evaluation data provide any information about the effectiveness of this practice for a variety of learners (e.g., Dual Language Learners, children with disabilities or suspected delays)? If yes, note citations or publications.
8. Does the research or evaluation data provide any information about the effectiveness of this practice for populations with cultural or linguistic characteristics similar to those served by the grantee? If yes, note citations or publications.
9. Is there evidence in any other context that this practice is effective (e.g., evidence from another grantee or community using the practice)? If yes, note citations or publications.

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RATINGS FOR EVIDENCE

RATINGS

5. HIGH EVIDENCE

The practice has documented evidence of effectiveness based on rigorous research design and has been investigated using experimental design(s), single case design(s), or regression discontinuity design(s).

4. EVIDENCE

The practice has demonstrated moderate effectiveness and has been investigated using quasi-experimental design(s) but causal relationships cannot be determined.

3. SOME EVIDENCE

The practice shows minimal evidence of effectiveness and has been investigated using descriptive or correlational method(s) (e.g., case studies, survey, naturalistic observation, etc.).

2. MINIMAL EVIDENCE

The practice is guided by a well-developed theory of change or logic model, including clear inclusion and exclusion criteria for the target population, but has not demonstrated effectiveness through a research study.

1. NO EVIDENCE

The practice does not have a well-developed logic model or theory of change and has not demonstrated effectiveness through a research study.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/NOTES

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PRACTICE INDICATOR

USABILITY

1. Is the practice clearly defined (e.g., the practice has operationalized principles and values)? Does it clearly state for whom it is intended?
2. Are the core components of the practice identified?
3. Is each core component well operationalized (e.g., staff know what to do and say, how to prepare, how to carry it out)?
4. Is there guidance on core components that can be modified or adapted to increase fit with the grantee's context?
5. Is there a fidelity assessment that measures staff behavior (e.g., assessment of whether staff use the practice as intended)? If yes, note how to access the fidelity assessment.
6. Has the practice been adapted for use within culturally and linguistically specific populations? Is there a recommended process for gathering community input into culturally specific enhancements?
7. What do we know about the key reasons for previous successful replications of this practice?
8. What do we know about the key reasons for previous unsuccessful replications of this practice?
9. Are there other grantees with successful histories of implementing the practice who are willing to be interviewed or observed?

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RATINGS FOR USABILITY ☐

RATINGS

5. HIGHLY USABLE

The practice has operationalized principles and values, core components that are measurable and observable, and a validated fidelity assessment; modifiable components are identified to support contextualization for new settings or populations.

4. USABLE

The practice has operationalized principles and values and core components that are measurable and observable but does not have a fidelity assessment; modifiable components are identified to support contextualization for new settings or populations.

3. SOMEWHAT USABLE

The practice has operationalized principles and values and core components that are measurable and observable but does not have a fidelity assessment; modifiable components are not identified.

2. MINIMALLY USABLE

The practice has identified principles and values and core components; however, the principles and core components are not defined in measurable or observable terms; modifiable components are not identified.

1. NOT USABLE

The practice does not identify principles and values or core components.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/NOTES

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PRACTICE INDICATOR

SUPPORTS

1. Is there a qualified 'expert' who can help with implementation (e.g., a consultant, TA Provider)? If yes, note names and organization.
2. Are there start-up costs for implementation of the practice (e.g., fees to the developer)? If yes, itemize in notes section. What does the grantee receive for these costs?
3. Are there on-going costs for implementation (e.g., fees to the developer)? If yes, itemize in notes section. What does the grantee receive for these costs?
4. Are curricula and other resources related to the practice readily available? If so, note publisher or links. What is the cost of these materials?
5. Is training and professional development related to the practice readily available? Is training culturally sensitive? Does it address issues of race equity, cultural responsivity or implicit bias? What is the cost of professional development?
6. Can the practice be used in the grantee's coaching system of supports or does it require expert coaching from outside of the organization? Is it possible to train existing coaches for sustainability? If so, list coaching resources and cost in notes section.
7. Are there sample job descriptions and interviews available for hiring or selecting staff to implement the practice? If so, identify resources and any associated costs.
8. Is guidance on administrative policies and procedures available? If so, identify resources and any associated costs.
9. Are there resources available to develop a data management plan for the practice, including a data system and monitoring tools? If so, identify resources and any associated costs.
10. Is there a recommended orientation to facilitate "buy-in" for staff, key stakeholders and partners? If so, identify resources and any associated costs.

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RATING FOR SUPPORTS ☐

RATINGS

5. WELL SUPPORTED

Comprehensive resources are available from an expert (a program developer or intermediary) to support implementation, including resources for building the competency of staff (staff selection, training, coaching, fidelity) and organizational practice (data system and use support, policies and procedures, stakeholder and partner engagement).

4. SUPPORTED

Some resources are available to support implementation, such as resources to support staff competency but not organizational practice.

3. SOMEWHAT SUPPORTED

Limited resources are available, such as a curriculum available for purchase.

2. MINIMALLY SUPPORTED

General guidance is provided but no specific resources, such as a suggestion to use strengths based approaches with staff.

1. NOT SUPPORTED

Few to no resources are available to support implementation.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/NOTES

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GRANTEE INDICATOR NEED

1. Who is the identified population of concern?
2. What are the identified needs of this population?
3. Was an analysis of data conducted to identify specific area(s) of need relevant to the practice? If yes, was this data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, language or other characteristics specific to the population the grantee plans to serve?
4. How does the Community and Self-Assessment inform the need?
5. Were family and community members (e.g., Policy Council, Parents Committees) engaged in identifying this need? How do families and other community members perceive this need? What do they believe will be helpful? How were community members engaged to assess their perception of need?
6. Is there evidence that the practice addresses the specific area(s) of need identified? For the age(s) of interest? For the needs of all children? If yes, note how this evidence was developed.
7. If the practice is implemented, what can potentially change for this population?

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RATING FOR NEED ☐

5. STRONGLY MEETS NEED

The practice has demonstrated meeting a need for identified population through rigorous research (e.g., experimental design) with comparable population; disaggregated data has been analyzed to demonstrate program or practice meets need of specific subpopulations.

4. MEETS NEED

The practice has demonstrated meeting a need for identified population through rigorous research (e.g., experimental design) with comparable population; disaggregated data has not been analyzed for specific subpopulation.

3. SOMEWHAT MEETS NEED

The practice has demonstrated meeting a need for identified population through less rigorous research design (e.g., quasi-experimental, pre-post) with comparable population; disaggregated data has not been analyzed for specific subpopulation.

2. MINIMALLY MEETS NEED

The practice has demonstrated meeting a need for identified population through practice experience; disaggregated data has not been analyzed for specific subpopulation.

1. DOES NOT MEET NEED

The practice has not demonstrated meeting a need for identified population.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/NOTES

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GRANTEE INDICATOR FIT

1. How does the practice fit with the grantee's priorities?
2. How will this practice address goals identified during the grantee's annual planning process?
3. How does the practice fit with the regional and OHS priorities?
4. How does the practice fit with family and community values and priorities in the community where the grantee operates? How does it fit with family and community values and priorities of culturally and linguistically specific populations?
5. How does the practice fit with the community's history?
6. What other initiatives or practices currently being implemented will intersect with the practice?
7. How will the practice fit with other existing initiatives or practices? Will other initiatives or practices make it easier or more difficult to implement the proposed practice and achieve the desired outcomes?

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RATING FOR FIT ☐

5. STRONG FIT

The practice fits with the grantee's priorities, families' and community values, including the values of culturally and linguistically specific populations, and other existing initiatives.

4. FIT

The practice fits with the grantee's priorities and families' and community values; however, the values of culturally and linguistically specific population have not been assessed for fit.

3. SOMEWHAT FIT

The practice fits with the grantee's priorities of the implementing site, but it is unclear whether it aligns with families' and community values and other existing initiatives.

2. MINIMAL FIT

The practice fits with some of the grantee's priorities, but it is unclear whether it aligns with families' and community values and other existing initiatives.

1. DOES NOT FIT

The practice does not fit with the grantee's priorities of the implementing site or families' and community values.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/NOTES

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GRANTEE INDICATOR CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT

1. Typically, how much does it cost to implement the practice each year? Are there resources to fund this? If the current budget cannot support this cost, outline a resource development strategy.
2. What are the staffing requirements for this practice (e.g., number and type of staff, credentials, qualifications)? Does the grantee currently employ or have access to staff to meet these requirements? If yes, do the staff have a cultural and linguistic match with the population they serve, as well as relationships in the community?
3. What administrative policies or procedures must be developed or adapted for this practice to succeed?
4. Is the governing body and Policy Council knowledgeable about and supportive of the practice? Do leaders have diverse skills and perspectives representative of the community being served?
5. Do grantee staff have the capacity to collect and use data to inform ongoing monitoring and improvement of the practice?
6. Will the grantee's communication strategies facilitate effective internal and external communication with stakeholders, including impacted families and the community, about the practice?
7. Does the practice require use of or changes to the physical plant (e.g., facilities and learning environment)? If so, identify resources and any associated costs.
8. Does the practice require use of or changes to the transportation system? If so, identify resources and any associated costs.
9. Does the practice require new technology (e.g., hardware or software, such as a data system)? If so, identify resources and any associated costs.
10. Does the practice require use of or change to the recordkeeping and reporting system? If so, identify resources and any associated costs.

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RATING FOR CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT

RATINGS

5. STRONG CAPACITY

Grantee adopting this practice has a qualified workforce and all of the financial supports, technology supports, and administrative supports required to implement and sustain the practice with integrity.

4. ADEQUATE CAPACITY

Grantee adopting this practice has a qualified workforce and most of the financial supports, technology supports, and administrative supports required to implement and sustain the practice with integrity.

3. SOME CAPACITY

Grantee adopting this practice has a qualified workforce and some of the financial supports, technology supports, and administrative supports required to implement and sustain the practice with integrity.

2. MINIMAL CAPACITY

Grantee adopting this practice has a qualified workforce and only a few of the financial supports, technology supports, and administrative supports required to implement and sustain the practice with integrity.

1. NO CAPACITY

Grantee adopting this practice does not have a qualified workforce or any of the financial supports, technology supports, and administrative supports required to implement and sustain the practice with integrity.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/NOTES

NIRN NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH NETWORK

Metz, A. & Louison, L. (2018) The Hexagon Tool: Exploring Context. Chapel Hill, NC: National Implementation Research Network, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at & Smith (2007) and Blase, Kiser & Van Dyke (2013).

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APPENDIX D

IMPLEMENTATION DRIVERS CHECKLIST

FOR PROGRAM AND TA PROVIDERS

IMPLEMENTATION DRIVERS CHECKLIST INSTRUCTIONS

The Implementation Drivers Checklist provides guidance for Head Start and Early Head Start grantees who want to improve the way they implement specific practices.

Using the Drivers Checklist, grantees can:

- Identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in their current infrastructure;
- Select implementation best practices to strengthen staff competency and organizational practices.

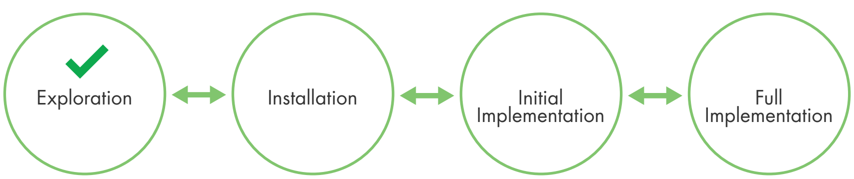
The Drivers Checklist can be used for any practice a grantee is implementing, such as Practice-Based Coaching or a curriculum in home-based programs.

Early Childhood Specialists and other TA Providers can use the Drivers Checklist during the implementation-informed process consultation as a resource.

WHEN TO USE

The Implementation Drivers Checklist can be used:

- At the Installation, Initial Implementation, or Full Implementation stages
- With new activities or ongoing activities



RESOURCES NEEDED

- Implementation Drivers Checklist
- Implementation Assessment
- Pen & paper for note taking

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HOW TO USE FOR GRANTEES

PRIOR TO USING

1. Identify what practice you are preparing to implement or are implementing currently.
2. Identify your current Implementation Stage(s). To determine Implementation Stages, use the Implementation Stage Flowchart.

DURING USE

1. Complete the Implementation Drivers Checklist through discussion with your Implementation Team.
2. Identify which best practices are currently happening and which are not.
3. Identify best practices you can use to improve your infrastructure.
4. Review what resources from the Head Start Management Systems Wheel are available to support implementation drivers.

FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALISTS & OTHER TA PROVIDERS

PRIOR TO USING

1. Determine what practice the program is preparing to implement or is implementing currently.
2. Determine the grantee's current Implementation Stage(s). To determine Implementation Stages, use the Implementation Stage Flowchart.
3. Determine when the Drivers Checklist will be shared with the grantee as guidance and used for the TA Provider's planning purposes. Make copies of the tool or share with the grantee electronically.

DURING USE

1. Introduce the purpose of the Implementation Drivers Checklist and how the tool will support their grantee's implementation activities.
2. Guide the team in a discussion to determine which best practices are currently happening and which are not.
3. Guide the team in discussion to determine which best practices the grantee can use to improve their infrastructure.
4. Identify TA strategies, tools, and resources to help you support the grantee's effort.

This tool is based on the work of the National Implementation Research Network and the Implementation Drivers framework. For more information on implementation drivers:
See the Drivers Ed lessons and Module 2: Implementation Drivers on the NIRN Active Implementation Hub
https://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/modules-and-lessons

For more information on Head Start Program Performance Standards:
See https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii

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IMPLEMENTATION DRIVERS BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST

Consider the grantee's current strengths and needs when implementing new practices. Use the following sections to identify implementation drivers best practices in which the grantee excels (+), does well (/), and needs improvement (-).

ORGANIZATIONAL DRIVERS FACILITATIVE ADMINISTRATION	
Do program leaders and managers put supports in place to make the work of staff more effective and less burdensome?	
PROGRAM LEADERS AND MANAGERS...	
☐	Secure resources to support education staff competency development (e.g., resources for training and coaching)
☐	Support the use of a consistent fidelity assessment
☐	Invest in resources for data system to support decision-making (e.g., data collection and reporting tools)
☐	Develop or refine internal policies or procedures (e.g., classroom coverage for education staff, communication polices)
☐	Make changes in organization roles, functions, and structures
☐	Engage in regular communication with all staff
☐	Visibly promote the importance of effectively implementing the program or practice
☐	Identify and problem solve challenges to implementation
☐	Recognize and appreciate staff contributions

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS WHEEL RESOURCES

- Leadership & Governance
- Program Planning & Service System Design
- Data & Evaluation
- Fiscal Management
- Ongoing Monitoring & Continuous Improvement
- Technology & Information Systems
- Communication

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ORGANIZATIONAL DRIVERS SYSTEMS INTERVENTION

How do program leaders and managers engage stakeholders to identify and address challenges?

PROGRAM LEADERS AND MANAGERS...

- [ ] Engage stakeholders and staff in developing a shared understanding of the need and rationale for the practice (e.g., through policy council meetings)
- [ ] Create opportunities for stakeholders and staff to come together and learn from each other
- [ ] Create opportunities for stakeholders and staff to design solutions together for implementation (e.g., through regular progress review meetings informed by fidelity and data)
- [ ] Support regular communication with stakeholders

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS WHEEL RESOURCES

- Leadership & Governance
- Program Planning & Service System Design
- Community & Self-Assessment
- Ongoing Monitoring & Continuous Improvement
- Data & Evaluation
- Communication
- Record Keeping & Reporting

ORGANIZATIONAL DRIVERS DECISION-SUPPORT DATA SYSTEM

How is the data system used to make decisions?

- [ ] Program has access to relevant data for making decisions about the practice (e.g., grantees have access to implementation, fidelity, and outcome data)
- [ ] Data for the practice are useful and usable
- [ ] Program has a process for using data for decision-making about the practice (e.g. relevant data are consistently integrated into meeting agendas)

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS WHEEL RESOURCES

- Ongoing Monitoring & Continuous Improvement
- Record Keeping & Reporting
- Technology & Information Systems

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IMPLEMENTATION DRIVERS BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST

Consider the grantee's current strengths and needs when implementing new practices. Use the following sections to identify implementation drivers best practices in which the grantee excels (+), does well (/), and needs improvement (−).

COMPETENCY DRIVERS FIDELITY ASSESSMENT	
How can a fidelity assessment be used to understand if the practice is being implemented as intended?	
☐	Consistent fidelity measure for the practice is available (e.g., from program developer or purveyor)
☐	Protocol for fidelity assessments defines the process and supports consistency. Protocol for fidelity is used to periodically assess if the practice is being done as intended
☐	Fidelity assessment data is used to improve outcomes and implementation supports (e.g., regular data review and reflection to inform improvement efforts)

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS WHEEL RESOURCES	
▪ Ongoing Monitoring & Continuous Improvement	▪ Data & Evaluation

COMPETENCY DRIVERS STAFF SELECTION	
How are staff selected to implement the practice?	
☐	Job descriptions are in place that include the skills and competencies needed to implement the practice
☐	Interviewers understand the skills and abilities needed for the position (e.g., interview team includes staff with experience in the relevant position/practice)
☐	Interview protocols are in place that relate to and address the skills and abilities needed for the position
☐	Interview processes are regularly reviewed (e.g., process reviewed after each hiring)

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS WHEEL RESOURCES	
▪ Human Resources ▪ Record Keeping & Reporting	▪ Fiscal Management

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COMPETENCY DRIVERS TRAINING

How does training build staff competency to implement the practice?

☐	Skill-based training is secured for relevant staff (e.g., training integrates opportunities for practice and feedback)
☐	Training is delivered by highly competent individuals
☐	Training data are used to develop competency and improve training of staff (e.g., inform subsequent coaching)

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS WHEEL RESOURCES

- Training and Professional Development
- Human Resources
- Fiscal Management
- Data & Evaluation

COMPETENCY DRIVERS COACHING

How does coaching build staff competency to implement the practice?

☐	There is coaching available to help staff develop their skills to implement the practice
☐	A coaching service delivery plan guides coaching (e.g., training data used to focus coaching on priority needs)
☐	Coaching effectiveness is regularly assessed and used for improvement (e.g., through regular feedback from staff)
☐	Supports are in place for coaches to ensure their skill development and competency

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS WHEEL RESOURCES

- Communications
- Ongoing Monitoring & Continuous Improvement
- Data & Evaluation

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