

PROJECT LAUNCH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) POCKET GUIDE:

Using TA to Promote Child and Family Wellness During Early Childhood





Introduction

Technical assistance (TA) can be used as a strategy to build the capacity of individuals, teams, and organizations to achieve goals. TA can help promote the successful implementation, sustainability, and expansion of a program or initiative, including efforts to promote wellness of young children and families during early childhood, such as Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health).

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Project LAUNCH aims to support the wellness of young children by promoting strategies designed to encourage positive socioemotional development during early childhood. Project LAUNCH grantees receive awards to integrate five core evidence-based prevention and promotion strategies into existing child-serving systems, including:

- · Mental health consultation in early care settings
- Enhanced home visiting to focus on socioemotional wellbeing
- · Screening and assessment
- · Family strengthening and parent skills training
- Integration of behavioral health and primary care

Many Project LAUNCH grantees—including state agencies, Expansion grantees who are explicitly tasked with providing TA, and local pilot sites—provide TA to fellow grantees, government agencies, child-serving entities, communities, and other partners to support adoption and promotion of Project LAUNCH goals and strategies.

The Project LAUNCH TA Center wrote this Pocket Guide to offer tips, insights, and resources for effectively implementing TA efforts to support effective use of evidence-based practices that promote mental health. We focus on how state-level departments and local sites, including Expansion grantees, can use TA to achieve Project LAUNCH goals.

Project LAUNCH Grantee Roles

- State-, tribe-, and territory-level entities and departments are often tasked with promoting and supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices within local sites and communities. These entities are well-positioned to focus on systems integration and sustainability efforts. They also work to expand effective practices in other communities beyond those that are funded directly via Project LAUNCH.
- Local sites are the counties and communities
 that are directly serving children and families
 in the states, tribes, and territories that receive
 Project LAUNCH grants. These sites are focused
 on adoption, implementation, and sustainability of
 the core evidence-based practices.
- Expansion grantees are grantee "alums"
 that have previously received and successfully
 completed Project LAUNCH grants. They
 typically include a state department, local site
 that was part of the original grant and is now a
 designated TA provider, and new local pilot sites
 that are implementing the core evidence-based
 practices in their communities.

The goal of this Guide is to provide information that can be quickly read and referenced in order to strengthen TA efforts. It highlights TA principles, activities, and lessons learned that we believe are particularly relevant to Project LAUNCH grantees. Ultimately, we hope the ideas in this Guide will encourage state-level departments and local sites to use TA as a strategy to promote Project LAUNCH goals. We hope you find that providing TA can be a rewarding experience of bidirectional learning that helps build capacity to promote child and family wellness in states, tribes, territories, and local communities.

Many thanks go out to the Project LAUNCH grantees who provided feedback to the Project LAUNCH TA Center regarding the need to support grantee TA efforts. We appreciate your willingness to share your needs and challenges with us, and hope that you will find this Pocket Guide useful.



Table of Contents

This Pocket Guide is divided into four main sections:

I) What is TA and why should we do it?

This section provides an overview of what TA is all about and how it can be used within the context of Project LAUNCH. It is focused on TA that is intended to disseminate best practices, such as the core Project LAUNCH strategies.

What is TA?

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- Who can provide TA?
- What is the goal of TA?
- What does TA look like?

2) Developing Your TA Approach

This section includes strategies that have been generated by the Project LAUNCHTA Center for planning TA that meets grantee needs and promotes positive change.

- How do we know where to start?
- How do we build effective TA relationships?
- How will we provide TA that helps to create and sustain change?

3) Delivering Quality TA

This section focuses on successfully delivering TA events and products and ensuring that they are effective.

- How do we conduct successful TA events?
- What are some strategies for TA publications, tools, and multimedia products?
- How do we respond to challenging situations?
- How do we use evaluation to strengthen TA?

4) Resource List

The Resource List directs readers to a wealth of information and tools regarding effective TA, as well as related topics.

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What is TA and why should we do it?

What is technical assistance?

There are many definitions of technical assistance. We can think of TA as guidance, resources, and support that aims to help individuals and groups build capacity, knowledge, and skills in a particular topic area. Below are some sample definitions of TA:

- TA: The transfer of information and tools from one entity to another in order to address an identified need for change; a process for developing creative, cost-effective ways to provide targeted support to an organization, system or individual (Models for Change: System Reform in Juvenile Justice, 2013).
- TA:An individualized and hands-on approach to capacity building in organizations and communities that is often conducted after training (Katz & Wandersman, 2016).
- TA: Non-financial assistance designed to help programs build their knowledge and capacity, and to help them enhance partnerships and services (Mathematica Policy Research, 2018).
- Training: The provision of targeted and customized supports by a professional(s) with subject matter and adult learning knowledge, and the skills to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services by recipients (NAEYC and NACRRA, 2011).
- Training: Delivered in small or large group settings (seminars, workshops, and courses) and designed to teach key concepts related to a particular topic (The National Resource Center, 2010).



TA designed to build capacity of groups or teams to achieve common goals can be structured in many ways. TA providers can use TA strategies that are proactive, responsive, passive, or a variety of these three approaches.

- Proactive—initiated by the TA provider, focused on a
 particular topic or issue. For example, the TA provider
 can identify topical areas to focus on in advance and
 develop a long-term plan to provide supports in that
 area over time.
- Responsive—initiated by the TA recipient in response to a specific need. For example, the TA recipient might suddenly be facing a challenge for which they reach out and ask for immediate help.
- Passive—information or other resources that the recipient uses primarily independently. For example, the TA provider can regularly share resources on a designated topic that is expected to be relevant to the TA recipients.

Your choice to provide TA that is proactive, responsive, and/ or passive should be guided by goals of the TA, the needs and preferences of your audience, and the resources that are available to provide TA.



Case Example: Supporting Mental Health Consultation in a Community

A local site that is successfully offering mental health consultation within a variety of early childhood settings wants to replicate this success in other areas across their county. They have identified a partner agency that has expressed interest in helping with this expansion. The partner entity has had only limited success in setting up systems to offer mental health consultation in the areas they serve. The local site decides that they will provide TA to the partner entity to bolster their ability to integrate this strategy into their systems.

- Proactive TA: The local site works with the
 partner entity to develop a plan for what support
 will be provided over the next year. The local site
 agrees to facilitate onsite training with staff at the
 partner entity, followed by monthly consultation
 focused on workforce development.
- Reactive TA: A few months into their efforts, there are major staffing changes within the partner entity. New individuals will begin to direct much of the work being done. The local site decides to spend time working with the new staff to orient them to mental health consultation and their efforts to expand this practice across the county.
- Passive TA: Over the course of the year, the local site shares relevant resources with the partner entity. They make a point to identify and share tools, publications, and upcoming events that are relevant to mental health consultation about once each month. Staff at the partner entity then use or participate in what they find helpful.

Who can provide TA?

All Project LAUNCH grantees, staff, and partners can use technical assistance as a strategy to promote adoption and integration of the core Project LAUNCH evidence-based strategies in local communities and beyond. Within this Guide, we focus on examples and ideas for how state-, tribal-, and territorial-level agencies, and local sites—including Expansion grantee TA providers and pilot sites—can use TA to support and promote Project LAUNCH activities.

TA can be provided by subject matter experts who have knowledge of the field, or "peer" experts (e.g., fellow Project LAUNCH grantees or alumni) who have both knowledge and a shared role and experience.

Tip: The parents/caregivers, home visitors, mental health consultants, program instructors, and other local partners that support or carry out Project LAUNCH work may be optimal TA providers or partners. They are the ones in the field either performing or receiving the work; they may thus have important lessons learned to share with others. They may also be known and respected within their communities. These individuals can also be encouraged to act as local champions who convince leaders and community members of the importance of offering services and supports to children and families during early childhood. As members of those communities, they can promote a focus on early childhood, and they can provide support to government agencies, providers, and other entities that are in a position to help offer effective practices for families during this time.

State-, tribal-, and territorial-level departments and agencies are well-positioned to identify and develop support that can be offered state/tribe/territory-wide. For example, state public health departments that are funded through Project LAUNCH may use TA to help local grant sites embed the core strategies into child-serving systems. These departments might also provide TA to expand promising practices and related outcomes across the state. In both instances, the state-level entity provides local communities with guidance, resources, and assistance aimed at helping achieve goals. State-level entities can support local sites through a variety of TA strategies, including, for example:

- Promoting the value of implementing evidence-based practices, and taking steps to encourage buy-in of the adoption of such practices
- Sharing information about available practices that are well-suited for various populations and contexts
- Disseminating tools and resources that make it easy to identify and implement relevant evidence-based practices
- Offering trainings to help local entities adopt evidencebased practices
- Providing funding to help local entities adopt and successfully implement evidence-based practices with fidelity
- Linking local entities with other partners that can strengthen implementation and sustainability
- Sharing success stories and highlighting how success was achieved so that others may learn and follow suit

Why should state departments provide TA?

Many state departments and agencies have adopted TA as a strategy to help communities achieve both statewide and local goals. While implementation of services and supports for young children and families often occurs at the local level, entities that have a statewide role (e.g., state departments of public health) can use their resources to guide and support local implementation of evidence-based practices. Even in contexts where states have limited authority to enforce public service providers to adopt explicit practices, states can use TA to make it easier for public service providers to successfully adopt, implement, and sustain promising practices that contribute to statewide goals.

For example, a state department may aim to improve health outcomes for children and families. They may recognize that home visiting programs are a cost effective way to support healthy children and families during early childhood. To help local providers offer home visiting programs, the state department could create and disseminate tools to help providers choose and implement programs that are a good fit for the local context. The state could also offer trainings designed to build the workforce needed to staff the programs. By helping individual providers adopt such evidence-based practices, the department is working to achieve its statewide goals.



Why should tribes provide TA?

Tribes can use TA to promote Project LAUNCH goals that help meet the needs of tribal communities and native children. Tribes are sovereign nations with their own individual tribal governments and jurisdictions. As such, entities within tribal governments are well-positioned to provide TA designed to encourage adoption and strengthen implementation and sustainability of relevant evidence-based practices in tribal communities. They can also use TA to promote expansion of those practices across the tribe. Communities within tribes that are in need of support may value assistance that is provided by those who have an understanding of the tribal culture, including how child and family services function within the tribal system.

For example, a provider within a tribal community may have committed to offering more prevention-focused services for tribal families with infants and young children. At the start of their project, they experience resistance from several community members who think more focus should be placed on directly treating behavioral health problems. The tribal governing entity could use TA to help strengthen the provider's ability to promote prevention services in the community. They could give the provider resources that highlight the benefits of taking a prevention and mental health promotion approach within tribes rather than focusing solely on treatment. They could also coach the provider and help them facilitate effective meetings with community members to overcome the issue.

Local entities that have experience with implementing evidence-based programs—particularly those that have had success—are well-positioned to provide TA to local government departments and fellow service providers. This premise was incorporated into the Project LAUNCH Expansion grants. Expansion grantees are second-time grantees that have previously been funded to integrate core LAUNCH strategies into their existing systems. They are charged with expanding this success across their states. The Expansion grants are structured so that previously funded local sites now provide TA to newly funded local sites. This peer-to-peer TA can be particularly useful since the TA providers have often faced the types of challenges and barriers that current grantees may be trying to overcome. Local entities can provide an array of TA strategies to encourage others to adopt these practices and successfully implement them, including, for example:

- Coaching others who are trying to achieve similar goals or implement comparable services
- Sharing lessons learned that may help others overcome similar challenges
- Linking local entities with others who may be able to support local efforts
- Sharing resources that have been helpful to them
- Serving as a confidant that can validate good ideas, commiserate regarding challenges and barriers, and brainstorm paths to successful implementation

Why should local pilot sites provide TA?

Local pilot sites can bolster their ability to achieve their own goals and contribute to expansion of promising practices by providing TA. Local sites that are piloting the core Project LAUNCH strategies in their communities are naturally learning lessons as they go through the implementation process. They are typically the entities in the field doing the direct work with children and families. Through that process of building and offering evidence-based programs, local sites will undoubtedly encounter many challenges. As they work to overcome those challenges, they will learn successful strategies that could be shared with and used by other local providers so that they can make similar progress. Fellow local providers may be particularly receptive to this "peer-to-peer" TA, since it does not involve sharing challenges with those that are in a position to monitor or take punitive actions against them. In addition, local sites can establish partnerships and increase collaboration via TA efforts that ultimately help achieve local goals.

For example, a local provider may have found a way to use Medicare billing codes to cover preventative services, such as family strengthening programs. The provider could use TA to share their successful strategy with other local providers, and help them make the same thing happen in their areas. The local site could establish a network that includes other local entities focused on supporting children and families during early childhood. Successes can be shared within that network, perhaps through a listserv or regularly scheduled meetings or get-togethers. The local site could also provide coaching to help ensure that other local providers are able to use Medicare billing codes to cover family strengthening programs. These TA activities could then strengthen collaboration and help establish partnerships across the network, which could be beneficial to the local provider and help them to achieve their goals.

What is the goal of TA?

Most Project LAUNCH grantees are likely to encounter challenges when trying to achieve grant objectives, including implementing the core LAUNCH strategies and integrating these strategies into existing child-serving systems. Partner entities and other community-based organizations that aim to implement and integrate evidence-based practices focused on early childhood are also likely to encounter problems and barriers. Such challenges can often be overcome with support from a subject-matter expert, experienced peer, or TA provider.

TA providers often play the role of connector or liaison to subject-matter experts, peers, and relevant resources. They may also help recipients navigate available resources to determine which would be worthwhile to use given the need and context.

In order to structure and provide effective TA, it is important to determine the goals of the TA recipient(s).

- What is the TA recipient hoping to achieve?
- What content areas or skills does the TA recipient want to learn to achieve their goals?
- How do these goals align with broader projects, plans, or initiatives?

The goal of TA is often to help build local capacity to ultimately achieve and sustain project or site goals, so that the TA recipient is not reliant on outside support. This involves increasing the TA recipient's readiness and capacity to change their practice, and helping them achieve successes along the way. Both elements occur over time, not during a single event or instance of TA. Long-term systems change is hard work that takes time and patience.

Tip: When determining the most effective TA to provide, consider the stage of the audience in relation to their goals. TA recipients may be at early stages in their projects (e.g., focused on project start-up, staffing), mid-way through (e.g., full project implementation), or a later stage (e.g., project closing, focused on sustainability).

Case Example: Enhancing Screening and Assessment to Include Substance Use/Abuse

A state agency may become aware that opioid dependency is having a significant impact on children and families in many of its communities. Because of this, they decide that they want to expand the screening and assessment that is done in local obstetrics departments to include screening for substance use and abuse. There is significant variation in such departments across the state regarding implementation of such screening and assessment. For example, some departments do not currently screen at all. To support them, the state agency might provide the local departments with a guide and related tools for establishing such systems. Other local departments in the same state may have screening systems in place that do not assess for substance use and abuse. The state agency might offer these sites training designed to help staff incorporate a substance use/abuse assessment into their current screening and assessment protocol. In both instances, TA is tailored to support the specific stage of implementation that the obstetrics departments are in.

The Various Roles of TA Providers

- Reflector
- Thought partner
- Facilitator
- Subject matter expert
- Guide or coach
- Provider of support and affirmation
- Consultant
- Planter of seeds
- Connector
- Person who models a safe, respectful, collaborative learning environment



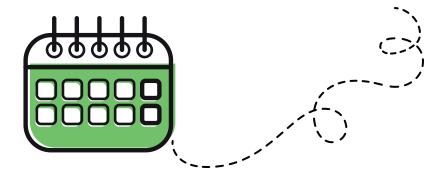
What does TA look like?

TA can take a very broad range of forms. Explore popular TA modalities below. The TA you provide will depend on many factors, including your available resources, time constraints, and your comfort level with these modalities. Remember that TA is a relationship – discuss with the TA recipient what kind(s) of TA would work best for them.

Consultation is valuable when working with individuals or small groups and the support needs to be tailored to their specific needs, goals, and contexts. For example, Technical Assistance Navigators from the Project LAUNCH TA Center provide ongoing consultation to individual LAUNCH grantees.

 Consultation can include individualized support and guidance, supervised practice, coaching, and mentorship **Events** are beneficial when providing TA to groups of individuals who may benefit from comparable support. For example, the Project LAUNCH TA Center provides cross-site distance learning events that all grantees can participate in at the same time, including some that are designed for specific cohorts (e.g., tribal grantees). Events can be done virtually and in person. Although virtual distance learning events allow for ease of participation across large groups of individuals, it is often valuable to have in person events when possible during critical times or stages (e.g., project start/kickoff). For example, the Project LAUNCH TA Center held an in person summit to connect family members and help them build an early childhood family engagement network. In-person events can help to solidify groups and teams, as well as strengthen relationships between TA providers and recipients. TA events can include:

- Distance learning events: webinars, virtual discussion hours, online communities of practice, panel presentations
- In-person events: trainings, meetings, site visits, workgroups, facilitated discussions, panel presentations



Case Example: Holding a Site Visit to Integrate Behavioral Health and Primary Care

When resources and schedules allow, an onsite visit with a selected group of participants can be an effective way to quickly build capacity to make substantial progress on an intended goal. For example, a local pediatrics office may be the site for integration efforts. The county department of public health is helping to prepare the site so that they are equipped to handle patients' behavioral health needs. At the start of their efforts, it becomes clear that the staff at the pediatrics office have mixed feelings about this shift.

The department of public health decides to provide TA to the pediatrics office and will begin with a site visit. The site visit will include all staff who will be involved in planning and implementing the new practices. A major goal of the site visit is to build relationships between staff from the county department and pediatrics office who will be working together. Another goal is to promote buy-in and help the pediatrics office staff understand the goals and importance of the project. Time is spent at the site visit doing team-building exercises. Pediatrics office staff are also given the opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns they may have. Part of the time is spent in small groups made up of individuals with similar roles in the project. The groups participate in an exercise where they work together to identify goals that they hope to achieve within the project, and then develop action plans that outline next steps. The groups also define what additional TA they would like to receive from the county.

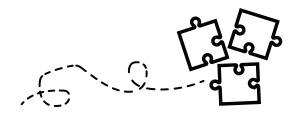
Having a site visit is an effective way to strengthen relationships, promote buy-in across groups, and help project staff feel empowered to actively contribute to the project. In this example, a site visit is used at an optimal time to overcome a challenge that could have limited the impact of the project. Even though site visits can be resource intensive, they can be an effective way to quickly overcome challenges and pave the way for success.

Connections introduce TA recipients to individuals, organizations, and resources that may collaborate with them and support their work. Making connections allows for TA providers to tap into a breadth of knowledge (e.g., grantee peers, subject matter experts). For example, grantee meetings can be used as a networking and relationship-building opportunity for LAUNCH grantees.

 Networking meetings, communities of practice, online platforms that allow for connections and sharing of resources, facilitation of peer-to-peer sharing

Collaborating with other TA providers can help maximize the breadth and type of support that is available to the intended audience, while reducing the resources that are needed to achieve this. There is certainly no sense in offering a training or creating products if these are already available elsewhere. Identifying and establishing partnerships with other relevant TA provides can help avoid duplication of efforts and ensure efficient use of available funding for TA.

 Creation of joint calendars of events, disseminating partner resources, cross-posting links to partner websites



Tools can be especially helpful when multiple individuals or groups need help working through an issue or problem at the same time, which can make it more challenging for TA providers to offer individual consultation. For example, the Project LAUNCH TA Center created a social marketing tool with series of questions to help grantees plan individual social marketing efforts.

Manuals, checklists, worksheets, templates, guidance documents, toolkits

Publications can be developed when the goal of the TA is to share knowledge with a wide array of people and entities. Publications can be shared via hard copies as well as via email, listservs, resource banks, or websites. For example, the Project LAUNCH TA Center maintains a listserv that we use to send out monthly newsletters to grantees and the broader field. This helps us to maintain a connection with our TA recipients and to share resources and events that may be relevant to their work.

Infographics, issue briefs, reports, newsletters

Multimedia products allow TA recipients to easily tap into support on their own schedules. Multimedia products can be useful for sharing information with a broad audience in an easy-to-consume manner. For example, the Project LAUNCH TA Center has made "Prezi" style videos that are created from PowerPoint slides that are animated and viewed like a video. This style of product can be created by anyone who has access to PowerPoint and does not depend on use of video cameras and a videographer. If filming of content is important for the product and you do not have access to professional cameras or a videographer, clips taken from smart phones can be used.

Videos, podcasts, archived presentations/talks

Tip: When considering the best modality of TA to use, consider your audience. TA can be offered to a diverse group of individuals, to staff or workgroups that know each other and work together regularly, or to individuals. The audience will impact how you deliver TA (e.g., remote consultation, onsite facilitated meeting) and why (e.g., develop strategic plan, establish new collaborations).

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Developing Your TA Approach

Technical assistance takes time, effort, and specific skills. Understand the needs of the individuals and groups you will be supporting—be sure to consider their needs as you plan your approach to TA.

How do we know where to start?

Providing TA should begin with an assessment of the TA recipient's needs and available TA resources.

- Start by trying to best understand recipients' needs, including their preferences for topics to focus TA on, how much time they will be able to engage in TA efforts, and their preferred modalities. Consider asking TA recipients directly for their preferences for TA topics and modalities.
- Gain insight on what other TA opportunities exist and make a point to leverage existing resources whenever possible. There may be other TA and supports available that you can refer TA recipients to. Aim to avoid duplication in the TA that you provide.
- Develop an approach that works within available resources—when necessary, prioritize TA needs. For example, you may decide that it is a priority to reach as many individuals/groups as possible, so you focus on TA opportunities that can accommodate large groups across many sites (e.g., sharing resources via newsletters). Alternatively, you may prioritize those who have the highest need for TA or greatest potential to utilize TA to implement LAUNCH strategies, and offer intensive TA to support individuals or single sites/groups.



- Establish partnerships with others who are also committed to implementing Project LAUNCH activities or those invested in early childhood more broadly. They may be able to provide direct support to your TA recipients, or to provide you with resources to support and strengthen your TA.
- Mobilize teams with a broad range of skills and expertise
 that are able to model diversity, inclusion, and respect
 for differences. This inclusiveness can be enhanced by
 partnering with other organizations and TA providers in
 the community. For example, when working with tribal
 communities, it would be important to include the tribal
 perspective when developing and implementing your
 approach to TA.

Kinds of resources to consider: people, space, equipment, supplies, time, knowledge, skills, relationships, materials, money



Tip: When working with TA recipients to plan for TA, consider these cognitive coaching planning questions:

- Where will you go? (Clarify goals.)
- How will you know? (Specify indicators of success/goal achievement.)
- How will it flow? (Identify approaches to success.)
- How will you grow? (Establish personal learning goals.)
- How will this process help you know? (Reflect on the TA provision process.)

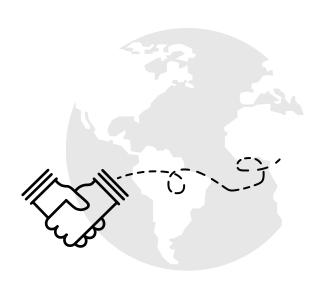
How do we build effective TA relationships?

Recognize and build on strengths — from the beginning. Design and promote TA that helps participants appreciate that their skills and talents are fundamental to future success in implementing LAUNCH strategies and supporting children and families.

Promote Buy-In

- Organizations and individuals that are committed to implementing Project LAUNCH strategies and providing supports for families during early childhood need to understand the value in TA so that time can be committed to it. When developing your approach, consider including an initial focus on helping others understand the value in TA so that you can promote buy-in and start to build relationships with those you will support.
- Get to know your intended audience. Understand their world as much as possible, including their goals, priorities, values, interests, knowledge, and skills. Demonstrate how the TA that you will provide is consistent with their goals, values, and aspirations.
- Consider starting with an approach that will allow you to strengthen your understanding of the TA recipient's goals and needs while also getting to know them on a personal level. The Project LAUNCH TA Center uses "TA Plans" that are designed to help the TA providers and recipients get to know one another and come to a consensus on what areas TA should focus on, as well as preferred modalities.
- Affirm and communicate the value of the LAUNCH work that they are doing. Highlight how change is possible, and share examples of how others have succeeded in this work and overcome challenges to achieve their goals.
 Demonstrate how TA can be used to support this process.

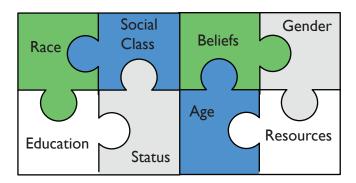
Tip: It is important to consider the contexts that you are providing TA within. For example, if you are supporting tribal work and are not a tribal entity, you should make a point to gain an understanding of the culture and expectations that the tribe may have as you begin to work with them. Broader contexts are also important to consider. For example, rural or remote communities may not have easy access to the internet or may not be easily reached via typical methods of transportation. Sites that have recently experienced natural disasters may not be in a position to participate in virtual learning events or download materials online. Such contextual factors should guide TA modalities that are being planned.



Build Rapport and Trust

- Prioritize and build positive, respectful relationships with TA recipients and other relevant members of their organizations and communities at all stages. Evaluations of TA affirm that this principle is critical to success.
- Consider sharing the experience that you have had working within the context of early childhood, as well as why you have chosen to do so. This can help highlight shared values and experiences that can provide a foundation for your relationship.
- Recognize, validate, and support individual and cultural preferences and differences. Develop and express a positive attitude about diversity and differences: open, affirming, respectful, interested, and humble. This applies to both the TA recipient and the population(s) the recipient serves.
- Affirm both possibilities and limits.

Examples of hidden or often unacknowledged differences that might affect participant's receptivity to and relationship to TA: age, gender identity, race, culture, language, sexual orientation, disability, immigration or refugee status, education, introversion/ extraversion, relationship to work, social class, values, orientation to time, assumptions and beliefs, access to resources, tolerance of uncertainty and change, and assumptions about teacher-learner dynamics and relationship.



Reflect on Your TA Approach and Practice

- Create space for reflection: One of the most important TA roles is the Reflector, who listens to, responds, connects, validates, and helps apply knowledge and wisdom of recipients of TA. Success is less about what the TA provider brings than it is developing and supporting what the TA recipient contributes.
- Providing TA involves taking on new roles, responsibilities, and relationships. Explore ways to support and promote the wellness of TA providers so that they are prepared to provide quality TA. The experience of designing and delivering training and TA can be a daunting but excellent source of professional growth, development, and satisfaction.
- Using a cultural lens, consider how TA recipients are likely to view TA and TA providers. Use this understanding to identify ways to strengthen the approach to TA for your population of focus.
- Consider an approach that allows for proactive TA that is designed to identify long-term TA activities and goals (e.g., work with TA recipients to create a "TA Plan" that describes areas to focus TA on over a designated period of time), as well as responsive TA that is designed to address short- term needs that arise (e.g., sharing of resources in response to a quick request; scheduling a coaching call to help an individual work through a crisis). Consider when, why, and how to do each.

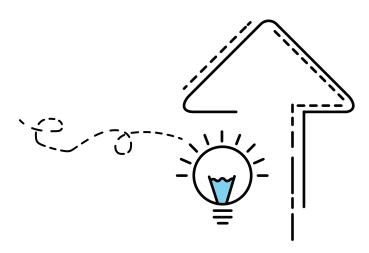
Key Additional Resources for Planning Effective TA

- Community Tool Box, by the Center for Community Health and Development of the University of Kansas
- Delivering Training and Technical Assistance, by the Compassion Capital Fund National Resource Center
- Providing and Receiving Technical Assistance: Lessons from Models for Change, by Models for Change: Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice.

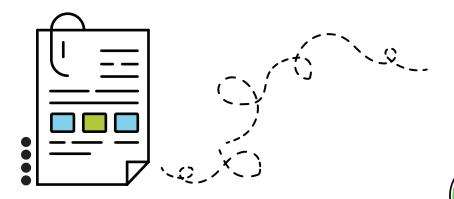
How will we provide TA that helps to create and sustain change?

The goal of Project LAUNCH is to promote change (e.g., adoption of new practices, policies, partnerships, systems) that is ultimately intended to support families and children during early childhood, and help put them on positive developmental trajectories. Depending on the context, change can be hard.

- Plant seeds: most change will happen outside of the TA space. The intended change may not occur until TA participants have the opportunity to apply new concepts to actual practice.
- Develop TA that provides scaffolding to TA recipients.
 This scaffolding allows them to learn new skills and then have support with applying those skills in their own contexts. TA may not always be linear, but there should be a natural progression to the support that is offered.
- Notice and celebrate accomplishments both big and small that are achieved along the way. Praise can be a good strategy to promote a commitment to change and the continued strives required to achieve it. TA providers are optimal cheerleaders.



- It may be necessary to encourage buy-in from others before change can occur. Are the TA participants decision-makers themselves? What do they have authority over? When will it be necessary to involve others?
- Consider ways to use TA to engage other people in the organization/system to support the change. It is often helpful to identify and designate local champions for LAUNCH goals (e.g., others in the organization, service recipients, or members of the community with influence). Parents, caregivers, and family members that have a vested interest in seeing positive change in their communities can be powerful champions.
- Develop TA events and products intended to encourage initial buy-in to the proposed change, as well as other events and products intended to facilitate and then sustain the change. Some communities may already have decision-makers who are passionate about Project LAUNCH goals; they may not need TA to encourage buy-in, but rather need help with implementation and sustainability. Other communities may need TA to help leaders see the value in Project LAUNCH efforts; TA focused on implementation may not be useful in such sites.



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Delivering Quality TA

In addition to creating a supportive TA relationship grounded in shared goals and priorities, you might also want to provide TA events (online or in-person) and resources to enhance learning.

How do we conduct successful TA events?

The most important element of successful TA events and activities is their relevance to the goals, priorities, and context of TA recipients. However, even the most meaningful and well-intentioned events can fail to produce expected results without attention to factors such as learning style and comfort in the environment.

- Facilitate peer support and communities of learning and practice—during and following the TA.
- Focus TA on intended outcomes and learning objectives; whenever possible, work with the TA recipients to define these up front. Making the TA outcome-driven helps keep everyone focused on the end goal and what they are trying to achieve. It also helps people track progress toward these goals.
- Include opportunities for TA recipients to engage actively in learning through discussion, activities, practical applications of the content, and other methods. Present information in a variety of ways (e.g., share information verbally, via slides, and with handouts).

Adults have different learning styles and processes that help them learn. Considering these styles and preferences can help you design TA to meet a variety of needs.

- Visual (e.g., presentations and graphics)
- Aural/auditory (e.g., lecture, reading something aloud)
- Print (e.g., taking notes, writing things down)
- Tactile (e.g., actively doing something or taking action to try to figure something out)
- Interactive (e.g., breakout discussions, Q&A periods)
- Kinesthetic (e.g., role play, allowing people to stand and move around while listening)

For in-person events:

- Make the TA accessible for diverse audience members. Consider time, location, transportation and parking, and dependent care needs (if working with members of the community outside of work).
- Create a welcoming space and environment, including greeting people and providing a comfortable physical space for learning. Elements of comfort can include seating that supports interaction, adequate lighting, comfortable temperature, access to restrooms, and having food and beverages available or accessible.
- Include breaks, opportunities for reflection, and time for participants to get to know and engage with each other. Opportunities to reflect, apply, discuss, and create together are often the most valuable parts of TA.

For virtual events:

 Find a solid online platform that is easy to use (on the front and back end) and accessible for TA recipients.

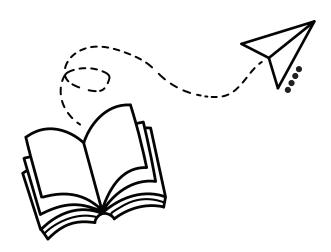


- Make sure participants know how to access support with using the online platform so that "technical difficulties" can be addressed.
- Consider giving participants an overview of how to use the features of the platform that will be used during the event (e.g., how to answer polling questions, how to ask a question, how to see or chat with other participants).
- Provide guidelines for online interactions up front (e.g., how and when to use the chat box, when/whether it is appropriate to share verbally, encouragement to use the video function if this is expected).

What are some strategies for TA tools, publications, and multimedia products?

Tools and publications are a "passive," yet very important, form of TA. Sharing tools and publications can help maximize access to information for a vast audience. Products allow TA recipients to process and make use of the information on their own timelines.

- A great array of tools and publications are available—many for free and accessible online (see the Resources section in this Guide). As with other forms of TA, strive to avoid duplicating efforts.
- Focus on identifying and/or creating products that facilitate replication of evidence-based practices, such as the core LAUNCH strategies.
- Publications can be used to showcase and describe successes, including how others have overcome obstacles and achieved their goals.
- Use color, graphics, and other design features to make tools and publications interesting, engaging, and easy to follow and understand.
- Provide TA via multiple languages, to the extent possible.



How do we respond to challenging situations?

Challenging situations arise in all facets of life, including TA. Conflict and challenge have the potential to deepen and strengthen learning, including learning by the TA provider. Be flexible and ready to adapt.

Challenge: Various forms of resistance to TA.

Possible Solution: Try to identify the source of the resistance so that you can consider ways to address it directly. Do they not see the value? Do they not have the time? Are there logistical constraints that are making it hard to participate in TA, such as Internet access, file restrictions, or timing issues (e.g., time zones)? Affirm and address issues of motivation, logistics, and other challenges. Take steps to highlight the value of TA; be sure that the proposed value is directly applicable to the goals and needs of the TA recipient.

Challenge: Group conflict.

Possible Solution: Prevent and resolve through openness to all participants' ideas, beliefs, and assumptions, including the values and experiences that underlie them. Embracing the reality that everyone makes mistakes and no one knows everything can create a shared learning environment that inspires everyone to step up and contribute their best.

Challenge: Someone talks too little or too much.

Possible Solution: Take steps to support different communication styles and comfort with verbal participation. Elicit group agreement on the structure of the TA activity, to encourage all participants to contribute in ways they feel comfortable, including quieter or less verbal participants. Include solitary or pair activities in addition to whole-group activities. Practice and support pauses, quiet, reflection, and deep listening. Talk about different cultural values related to silence and verbal expression.

Challenge: A TA recipient challenges what the TA provider says.

Possible Solution: Share appreciation for the person's interest and passion. Explore what is true and useful about the person's concern and contribution. Encourage group discussion. If the challenges are ongoing or become escalated, take breaks as needed and explore issues that the individuals might be experiencing related to the group, process, project, or otherwise.

Challenge: TA recipients fear that sharing challenges will be seen as a weakness that may have adverse consequences (e.g., lack of renewed or continued funding).

Possible Solution: Take steps to establish a trusting relationship between the TA recipients and providers. Make the intentions of the TA team clear. When possible and appropriate, ensure confidentiality.

Challenge: Ideas or concepts are brought forth within TA events or activities that are not directly relevant to the goal of the event.

Possible Solution: Create a "parking lot" (e.g., space on a white board) where such ideas and topics are noted and left to be addressed at a later date.

Challenge: TA recipients present concerns around program implementation or goals related to diverse populations served.

Possible Solution: Cultivate an awareness of differences among TA recipients and providers, and actively affirm multiple perspectives and experiences. These differences may influence receptivity to TA and the TA relationship.

Tip: Examples of ways to resolve group conflict by affirming multiple perspectives include: acknowledgement, recognition, listening, exploration, support, synthesis, validation, and development of cooperative and collaborative solutions

How do we use evaluation to strengthen TA?

Evaluation that involves defining intended outcomes and learning objectives should be the first step to developing an effective approach to TA. Evaluation should continue throughout the delivery of TA so that a continuous quality feedback loop is created and used to modify and strengthen TA, as needed.

Types of evaluation that may be useful to TA providers include:

- Conducting initial needs assessments of what topics and areas are most in need of support
- Surveying potential TA recipients to assess where they are most in need of help and how they would like to be supported through TA
- Obtaining feedback from TA recipients regarding their satisfaction with TA that has been provided
- Evaluating the impact of TA on individual participant awareness, attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are specific to TA learning objectives
- Evaluating the impact of TA on organizations that accept and engage in TA, and their ability to achieve stated goals



- TA recipients should be encouraged to honestly share their preferences for TA topics and modalities, as well as their reactions to TA that has been provided. This will enable TA to be consistently refined so that it best meets the needs of the TA recipients and is valuable and helpful to them.
- Create measurable goals for your TA at various levels (e.g., individual, cohort, organization, initiative).
 Consider developing SMART objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-oriented.

Creating SMART Objectives for Home Visiting Programs

An Expansion grantee is planning to hold an introductory webinar focused on enhanced home visiting. They identify the following learning goal for the webinar: Participants will be able to identify ways to enhance their existing home visiting programs. To make this objective SMART, it could be stated as follows: By the end of the webinar, 100% of the participants will be able to identify at least one strategy that they can implement to enhance their current home visiting programs.

After the webinar, the Expansion grantee gets a request to provide individualized TA to a local pilot site. A goal of this TA may be to support the site's implementation of enhanced home visiting. A SMART version of this objective could be: Within one year, the pilot site will provide at least one enhancement to 50% of the home visiting programs that are currently being offered in the county.

Case Example: Integrating Effective Strategies into Existing Child-Serving Systems Across a Territory

A department of health within a territorial government recognizes the need to integrate the individual evidence-based strategies that local sites have been implementing into the territory-wide systems that support children and families. Their Project LAUNCH grant will only fund these strategies for the duration of the grant. One of the local sites identified a way to incorporate billing for the effective practices into an existing funding mechanism that is available across the territory. The department would like to see the effective strategies offered by more providers across the territory. They aim to help other providers learn how to access the funding mechanism to offer the services.

To promote adoption of the effective practices, the department decides to create a "how to" guide that is designed to demonstrate how to implement the strategies and how to fund them via the existing mechanism. They first work with the local site that identified and successfully used the funding mechanism to understand the steps the site took to make this happen. They also gather relevant resources on the evidence-based strategies. They use this information to develop the "how to" guide. Upon its completion, they print hard copies of the guide and mail it to providers and other relevant entities across the territory. They include in the mailings a phone number and email address that can be used to request individualized coaching to help strengthen program implementation or overcome barriers to use of the funding mechanism.

Resource List

Resource	Торіс	Brief Description
About PCOMS: (2018). Partners for Change Outcome Management System. Retrieved from http://www.pcoms.com/ about-pcoms.	Evaluation	The Partners for Change Outcome Management System (PCOMS) is a well-researched, SAMHSA- designated quality improvement strategy that measures clinical outcomes in psychotherapy, with useful broader applicability.
Abrams DM & Mahar-Piersma C. (2010). Training for the non- trainer: tips and tools. Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Technical Assistance Program.	General Adult Learning Styles Challenging Situations Planning and Conducting Successful TA	A short outstanding resource with detailed practical information on multiple aspects of conducting a successful training session.
Andrews M & Manning N. (2016). A guide to peer-to-peer learning: How to make peer-to-peer support and learning effective in the public sector. Effective Institutions Platform. Retrieved from https://www.effectiveinstitutions.org/media/ The EIP P to P Learning Guide.pdf.	General Effective Use of TA to Create and Sustain Change	Describes and suggested strategies for peer learning as a powerful approach to public sector reform.
Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2014). Race equity and inclusion action guide: Embracing equity: 7 steps to advance and embed race equity and inclusion within your organization. Retrieved from http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF_EmbracingEquity7Steps-2014.pdf.	Diversity/Inclusion	Presents key steps to help organizations create equitable opportunities for the diverse populations they serve.
Baumgartner S, Cohen A, Meckstroth. (2018). Providing TA to local programs and communities: Lessons from a scan of initiatives offering TA to human service programs. Mathematica Policy Research Report. Retrieved from https://aspe.hhs. gov/system/files/pdf/258776/	General Guiding Principles Planning and Conducting Successful TA	Synthesizes best practices, challenges, and lessons for TA based on a scan of public and private TA initiatives.

Bruce DW. (2015). Teaching adults: What every trainer needs to know about adult learning styles. Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/teaching-adults-what-every-trainer-needs-know-adult-bruce-d-/ .	Adult Learning Styles Planning and Conducting Successful TA	Suggests application to training and TA of adult learning principles.
Capacity Building Collaborative. (2016). Findings and resources from an evaluation of training and technical assistance. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/capacity/cross-center-evaluation.	General Encouraging Participation Evaluation Planning and Conducting Successful TA Finding Time and Resources	An outstanding resource including results of an evaluation of services delivered by 15 training and TA centers funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services over 5 years. Includes tips from recipients of TA about what does and doesn't work in order for TA to support system change.
Cardona HR, Domenech-Rodriguez, M, et al. (2012). Culturally adapting an evidence-based parenting intervention for Latino immigrants: The need to integrate fidelity and cultural relevance. Family Process 5(1), 56-72. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3313069/.	Diversity/Inclusion	Discusses cultural adaptations of an evidence-based practice for Latinos and implications for advancing cultural adaptation prevention practice and research.
Center for Community Health and Development. ((2017). Providing training and technical assistance. Community Toolbox (Chapter 12). University of Kansas. Retrieved from https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/training-and-technical-assistance.	General	Invaluable resource on multiple dimensions of conducting training and TA. Chapter of a guide to support and evaluate community and system change.
Child Welfare Research and Evaluation Tribal Workgroup. (2013). A roadmap for collaborative and effective evaluation in tribal communities. Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/tribal_roadmap.pdf.	Diversity/Inclusion Evaluation	Describes a tool to create a shared vision for the future of Tribal child welfare evaluation and a common language for Tribal communities and evaluators to improve evaluation practice.

Collins CB & Sapiano TN. (2016). Lessons learned from dissemination of evidence-based interventions for HIV prevention. American Journal of Preventive Medicine 51, S140-S147. Retrieved from https://ac.els-cdn.com/S0749379716301878/I-s2.0-S0749379716301878-main.pdf?_tid=d95bc070-173e-11e8-b1e3-00000aab0f6c&acdnat=1519242123_5b0ebda0c1e3ee49639e4e3c65b358b4/	Evaluation General	Lessons about successful methods of dissemination of evidence-based interventions identified by the Diffusion of Effective Behavioral Interventions Project.
Cserti, R. (2015). 5 most useful free online sources for training activities. Delivery Matters. Retrieved from https://www.sessionlab.com/blog/5-most-useful-free-online-sources-fortraining/.	Tools and Resources	Lists and provides sources for useful tools for training.
Diagnostic Laboratory. (n.d.). Training basics: What does It mean to facilitate? Retrieved from http://www.who.int/diagnostics_ laboratory/documents/guidance/ trainer's_guide_section3.pdf	General Adult Learning Styles Challenging Situations Planning and Conducting Successful TA	A short guide that covers several aspects of designing and conducting a training session, including suggestions about responding to a range of challenging situations and people.
Edelman L. (2009). Resources for using technology for professional development, technical assistance, dissemination, and strategic communication. JFK Partners, Department of Pediatrics, University of Colorado, Denver. Retrieved from http://eotta.ccresa.org/Files/Conf09/Edelman_Technology_Handout_9-27-09.pdf.	Tools and Materials	A handout about ways to adopt, adapt, combine, repurpose, and use technology for TA and related purposes.
Evans SH & Clarke P. (2011). Disseminating orphan innovations. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/disseminating_orphan_innovations.	General Effective Use of TA to Create and Sustain Change	Case study about real- life challenges of efforts to disseminate effective community practice through TA. Includes 8 lessons for customizing innovations.

Farell, K, Kratzmann, M, et al. (2002). Evaluation made very easy, accessible, and logical. Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health. Retrieved from http://www.rosecharities.info/forms/Evaluation/Evaluation%20 Made%20Very%20Easy%202002.pdf.	Evaluation Effective Use of TA to Create and Sustain Change	Guide to evaluation fundamentals. Includes a focus on dissemination.
Goldbach J. (2017). Diversity toolkit: A guide to discussing identify, power, and privilege. USC Suzanne Dworak-Pack. Retrieved from https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/diversity-workshop-guide-to-discussing-identity-power-and-privilege/ .	Diversity/Inclusion	Group activities to address issues of diversity and inclusion.
Kapadia V. (2016). The 6 hottest training technologies that you can't overlook. Elearning trends. Retrieved from https://elearningindustry.com/6-training-technologies-cant-overlook	Tools and Materials	Short description of new technologies useful for training and technical assistance.
Katz J and Wandersman A. (2016). Technical assistance to enhance prevention capacity: a research synthesis of the evidence base. Prevention Science 17: 417-428. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11121-016-0636-5.pdf.	What Constitutes Quality TA?	An analysis of TA literature to assess the essential features of quality TA.
Kirkpatrick, D. (n.d.). Evaluating training and technical assistance. Retrieved from http://www.strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/e-learning/online/evaluatingtrainingandta/Print.aspx.	Evaluation	A guide to evaluating TA.
Lopez M, Bumgarner E, & Taylor D. (2017). Developing culturally responsive approaches to serving diverse populations: A resource guide. National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families. Retrieved from http://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Cultural-Competence-Guide.pdf	Diversity/Inclusion	A guide and compendium of resources to culturally and linguistically diverse and responsive programming.

Maley M & Eckenrode J. (2016). Best practices in professional training and technical assistance. Cornell University Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research, Systematic Translational Review. Retrieved from https://www.bctr.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Systemic-Translational-Reviewtraining-best-practices.pdf.	What Constitutes Quality TA?	A summary of what is known about elements of quality TA.
Miller WR & Rollnick S. (2013). Motivational interviewing (third edition: Helping people change. The Guildford Press, New York.	Challenging Situations Planning and Conducting Successful TA	A basic text on supporting and motivating people to make changes.
Mind Tools Content Team. (n.d.). Resolving team conflict: Building stronger teams by facing your differences. Retrieved from https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_79.htm.	Challenging Situations	Suggestions for resolving team conflict, also applicable to training and TA.
NAEYC. (2011). Early childhood education professional development: Training and technical assistance glossary. NACCRRA. Retrieved from https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/glossarytraining_ta.pdf.	General	Suggested definitions for training and TA.
Soler M, Cocozza JJ, & Henry A. (2013). Providing and receiving technical assistance: Lessons from Models for Change. Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice. Center for Children's Law and Policy and National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice.	General Planning and Conducting Successful TA What Constitutes Quality TA?	Outstanding article incorporating what is known about successful TA into specific guidance for practitioners.
Trohanis TA Projects. (2014). Guiding principles for effective technical assistance. Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. Retrieved from http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/trohanis/trohanis_guiding_principles.pdf .	General	Summary of key principles for effective TA.

Tyson S & McNeil M. (2009). How to provide effective technical assistance. BJOG 116 (Suppl. 1), 93-95. Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/store/10.1111/j.1471-0528.2009.02330.x/asset/j.1471-0528.2009.02330.x.p df;jsessionid=3877358D0D2 E820355FF5DEBB5F94753.	General	Summary of key principles for effective TA.
U Mass Dartmouth. (2018). Tips for Educators on Accommodating Different Learning Styles. Retrieved from https://www.umassd. edu/dss/resources/facultystaff/ howtoteachandaccommodate/	Adult Learning Styles	Specific suggestions for activities and approaches to accommodate different learning styles.
Yuan CT, Nembhard, IM, et al. (2010). Blueprint for the dissemination of evidence-based practices in health care. Commonwealth Fund, Issue Brief. Retrieved from http://longtermscorecard.org/~/media/files/publications/issue-brief/2010/may/1399_bradley_blueprint_dissemination_evidencebased_practices_ib.pdf.	General Effective Use of TA to Create and Sustain Change	Highlights key dissemination strategies to encourage broad adoption of effective health care interventions.





