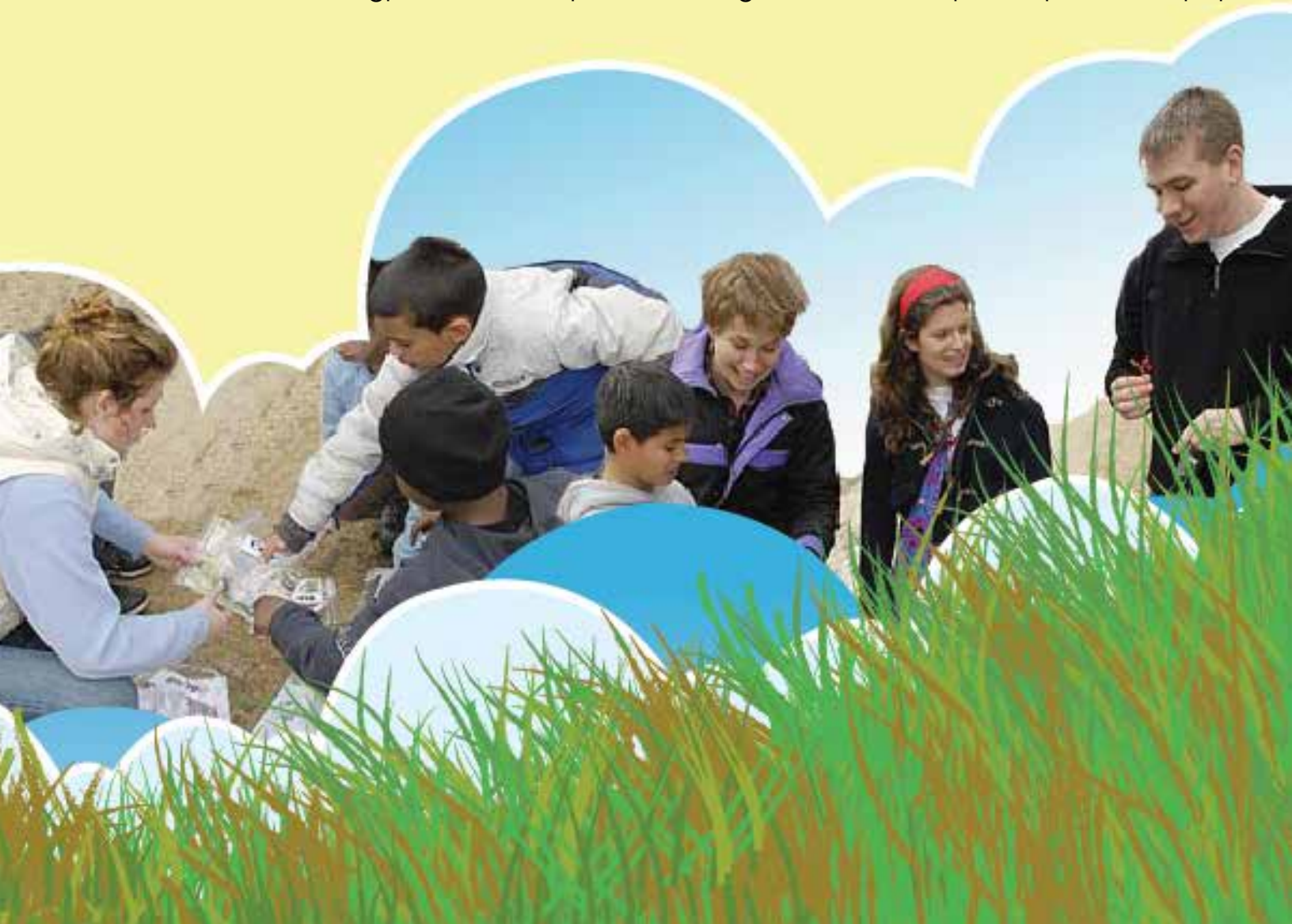# Wisconsin Training and Technical Assistance Professional (T-TAP) Competencies

For Early Childhood and Related Professionals Working with Adults

www.collaboratingpartners.com/professional-guidance-wi-t-tap-competencies.php

WI Early Childhood Cross-Sector Professional Development Initiative (WI PDI)

Vision: Enhanced coordination of the Cross-Sector Early Childhood Professional Development System.

Goal: Support the knowledge, skills and dispositions of Cross-Sector Training and Technical Assistance Professionals as they provide high quality aligned professional development to the early childhood workforce.

WI Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP)

Vision: Wisconsin communities, agencies, associations, and state government will work together as a system of high-quality comprehensive early childhood services for all children and families.

Purpose:

Wisconsin Training and Technical Assistance Professional (T-TAP) Competencies

One of the goals of WI Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) and the WI Early Childhood Cross-Sector Professional Development Initiative (WI PDI) is to strengthen and align cross-sector training and technical assistance for the early childhood and related professionals workforce. A specialized portion of this workforce provides training and technical assistance to support others who work directly with children and families. Training and Technical Assistance (T-TA) Professionals require specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions to provide training and various types of technical assistance such as mentoring, coaching, consultation, professional development (PD) counseling, and peer-to-peer technical assistance. T-TA Professionals will benefit by having these statewide Competencies that outline best practices in supporting the workforce.

In order to support quality in the general Early Childhood workforce, T-TA Professionals need to know and demonstrate understanding of the systems, policies, research, and collaboration that support diverse early childhood programs, settings, and efforts, both nationally and specific to Wisconsin.

When adult capacities are supported and strengthened, the opportunities increase for improved outcomes for children, families, and communities in Wisconsin.

Description:

The Wisconsin Training and Technical Assistance Professionals (T-TAP) Competencies define the relevant knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed by T-TA Professionals. The T-TAP Competencies are organized into seven areas:

I: **Building Relationships**
II: **Communication**
III: **Professionalism and Ethics**
IV: **Adult Learning Principles**
V: **Planning Learning Opportunities for Adults**
VI: **Delivering Learning Opportunities for Adults**
VII: **Continuous Quality Improvement**

The T-TAP Competencies are not intended to be an exhaustive list; rather, they provide general guidance for best practices when working with the professionals who directly serve young children and their families.

Uses:

The Wisconsin Training and Technical Assistance Professionals (T-TAP) Competencies have been designed as a framework that complements other professional development systems. Here are some examples of how the WI T-TAP Competencies are being used:

Framework
- to provide continuity across sectors for T-TA to the workforce
- to inform, guide, and evaluate professional development opportunities that support T-TA Professionals
- to support T-TA Professionals in career pathways by providing content for three courses recognized by The Registry
- for Institutions of Higher Education to support students

Guidance
- for Communities of Practice
- to support new and existing T-TA Professionals
- for evidence-based and high-quality practices in T-TA
- for contract language for proposals for T-TA

Resource
- for personal and professional growth
- for organizations to support employees involved in T-TA
- for 4K Community Approaches to support teachers and other staff
- for linkages to K-12 (WI DPI Educator Effectiveness System and Administrator Standards), National AfterSchool Association Core Competencies For Afterschool Trainers, and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Early Childhood Systems Core Competencies (MCH Navigator).

Definitions:

Training and Technical Assistance (T-TA)*
Training and Technical Assistance (T-TA) includes a variety of strategies to provide professional development (PD) to the diverse early childhood workforce to increase quality in a variety of programs, settings, and services. Definitions are provided below to create a common cross-sector language.

Training is a learning experience, or series of experiences, specific to an area of inquiry and related set of skills or dispositions, delivered by a professional(s) with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills. A planned sequence of training sessions comprises a training program.

> **Pre-service or initial training** refers to PD in which an individual engages prior to beginning a position. Pre-service training may be required for early childhood professionals to serve in their roles.

> **In-service or ongoing training** is PD in which early childhood professionals engage to enhance their skills and remain current regarding knowledge and practice in their fields. In-service training may be required for early childhood professionals to continue serving in their roles.

Technical Assistance is the provision of targeted and customized supports by a professional(s) with subject-matter and adult learning knowledge and skills to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services by recipients. Mentoring, coaching, consultation, PD counseling, and peer-to-peer TA are strategies that may be discrete processes or used as part of education and/or training programs.

> **Mentoring** is a relationship-based process between colleagues in similar professional roles, with a more-experienced individual with adult learning knowledge and skills, the mentor, providing guidance and example to the less-experienced protégé or mentee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual's personal or professional capacity, resulting in greater professional effectiveness.

> **Coaching** is a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills, who often serves in a different professional role than the recipient(s). Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors and is focused on goal-setting and achievement for an individual or group.

> **Consultation** is a collaborative, problem-solving process between an external consultant with specific expertise and adult learning knowledge and skills and an individual or group from one program or organization. Consultation facilitates the assessment and resolution of an issue-specific concern—a program-/organizational-, staff-, or child-/family-related issue—or addresses a specific topic.

> **PD Counseling** (sometimes referred to as career or PD advising) is a one-on-one process through which a PD Counselor offers information, guidance, and advice to an individual about professional growth, career options, and pathways to obtain or meet required qualifications.

> **Peer-to-Peer TA** fosters the development of relationship-based learning and support communities (Communities of Practice and Professional Learning Communities) among colleagues, often in like roles. Peer-to-peer TA is based on the premise that a significant expert knowledge base exists in the field and that peers who have solved challenges on the ground have developed tools and strategies that can be shared with their colleagues.

Background:

Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP)

www.collaboratingpartners.com
WECCP was started in 1994 and focuses on collaboration among diverse early childhood partners. WECCP exists now as a 'braided' funding effort among three state agencies: the Departments of Public Instruction (DPI), Children and Families (DCF), and Health Services (DHS).

The vision of WECCP is for Wisconsin communities, agencies, associations, and state government to work together as a system of high-quality comprehensive early childhood services for all children and families.

Wisconsin Early Childhood Cross-Sector Professional Development Initiative (WI PDI)

The WI Early Childhood Cross-Sector Professional Development Initiative (WI PDI) is comprised of diverse organizations, agencies, and people who are dedicated to strengthening high-quality, aligned professional development for the early childhood workforce. The vision of WI PDI is enhanced coordination of the Cross-Sector Early Childhood Professional Development System. The Training and Technical Assistance (T-TAP) Competencies were created on behalf of WI PDI by the T-TAP Competency Work Group.

Organization:

The Wisconsin Training and Technical Assistance Professional (T-TAP) Competencies are organized into seven (7) areas:

I: **Building Relationships:** T-TA requires a solid foundation of respect and trust in order to be successful.

II: **Communication:** T-TA requires effective and intentional communication that is timely, focused, descriptive, and strength-based and respects individual and cultural needs.

III: **Professionalism and Ethics:** An effective T-TA Professional demonstrates integrity in meeting the needs of others, without personal bias in values and beliefs, without prejudice, and through reflection on past experiences.

IV: **Adult Learning Principles:** T-TA Professionals need solid understanding of how adults learn and the use of various strategies to build professional capacity.

V: **Planning Learning Opportunities for Adults:** T-TA Professionals use evidence-based practices and statewide protocols (as applicable) to plan individual and group learning experiences.

VI: **Delivering Learning Opportunities for Adults:** T-TA provides experiences that demonstrate sensitivity to and accommodate diverse learners, including persons who differ in abilities, cultures, and experiences.

VII: **Continuous Quality Improvement:** T-TA embeds systematic processes to ensure overall effectiveness of T-TA efforts.

The knowledge, skills, and dispositions in each Competency Area are required for quality practices as a Training Professional and as a Technical Assistance Professional. However, a professional might demonstrate these Competencies in different ways, depending on which of the two roles is applicable in a particular situation. These Competencies also apply to higher education in work with students.

Each Competency Area is described in more detail on the following pages.

I: Building Relationships

A. Honors the importance of relationship-based learning by engaging in respectful relationships and development of a sense of trust with each individual and organization.
B. Demonstrates an individualized and culturally curious approach to each relationship.
C. Demonstrates respect for and interest in the individual abilities of others.
D. Partners to identify styles and preferences for learning and communicating.
E. Demonstrates feelings of care and empathy that are strength-based and focused on positive change.
F. Provides support as needed while maintaining professional boundaries in the relationship.
G. Demonstrates a commitment to the concept of shared learning by utilizing strategies that encourage sharing, joint problem-solving, and developing partnerships.
H. Remains aware of the organizational systems that may affect trust, relationships, and individual progress on goals.

Building Relationships

II: Communication

A. Demonstrates active and responsive listening techniques.
B. Utilizes effective verbal communication techniques, both written and oral.
C. Complements oral communication with nonverbal cues and behaviors, with consideration for individual and cultural preferences.
D. Creates effective written reports that may be shared with a wider audience.
E. Asks what, where, when, who, and how questions to clarify beliefs, thoughts, and actions.
F. Demonstrates the ability to facilitate timely, goal-focused meetings and conversations.
G. Identifies possible conflicts and addresses them through positive conflict-management strategies.
H. Provides timely and ongoing feedback that is focused on progress toward meaningful goals, respectful, understandable, trustworthy, descriptive, and strength-based.
I. Uses relevant and effective technology to convey information, including photos, video, electronic resources, and other media to meet the needs of the individual and organization.
J. Is intentional in the use of intrapersonal communication, to reflect and to reason.

III: Professionalism and Ethics

A.   Demonstrates knowledge and competence and stays current in the specific content area(s) on which T-TA is being provided.

B.   Demonstrates knowledge and competence in additional competencies such as the Wisconsin Core Competencies for Professionals Working with Young Children and Their Families and other competencies that are related to best practices in a specific discipline.

C.   Advocates, supports, and works towards implementation of standards of quality that are applicable to the setting in which T-TA is being provided.

D.   Demonstrates personal leadership in the field through ongoing education and professional contributions.

E.   Demonstrates knowledge of sector-specific requirements and regulations when providing T-TA.

F.   Articulates and follows a sector-specific professional code of ethics in making personal and professional decisions.

G.   Maintains confidentiality in all areas, especially when discussing issues and solving problems.

H.   Demonstrates ethical and professional behavior that includes trustworthiness and individual integrity.

I.   Addresses the needs of the adult(s)/setting without personal bias in values and beliefs, without prejudice, and through reflection on past experiences.

J.   Uses reflective practices to examine actions and feelings expressed by an individual, group, or program (e.g. appreciative inquiry, transformational learning, relational leadership, etc.).

IV: Adult Learning Principles

A. Demonstrates the ability to apply motivational strategies.
B. Demonstrates a partnership model when planning and designing goals and improvement plans.
C. Acknowledges and builds on the experience and knowledge that adults bring to the setting.
D. Facilitates opportunities to practice new learning before integrating new knowledge into daily practices.
E. Provides opportunities to integrate new learning into the current setting, experience, and knowledge base of individuals and organizations.
F. Lays the groundwork for transfer of learning by providing materials and activities that promote ongoing learning and the development of learning communities.
G. Demonstrates a commitment to shared learning and co-inquiry by utilizing a feedback and dialogue process that is strength-focused.
H. Facilitates a comfortable learning environment that acknowledges all contributions.
I. Provides adult interactions that are tailored to individual learning styles and preferences.
J. Incorporates a process of goal-setting and ongoing review of goals.

V: Planning Learning Opportunities for Adults

A. Uses evidence-based practices when planning learning opportunities.

B. Develops measurable and descriptive learning outcomes that are based on participants' levels of knowledge and experience and that are linked to program goals.

C. Chooses instructional methods and materials that are appropriate for the learning outcomes.

D. Sequences and paces learning activities appropriately.

E. Adjusts learning opportunities to be meaningful and applicable to the target audience, while maintaining fidelity to statewide content, requirements, and initiatives.

F. Meets the individual, regional, and cultural learning needs of each audience and makes adjustments, modifications, or accommodations.

G. Plans learning opportunities that are consistent with the mission and goals of the hiring organization, as well as with the mission, goals and coordinating efforts of the corresponding statewide project or initiative.

H. Works with the hiring organization to design a business agreement for professional development services, if applicable.

VI: Delivering Learning Opportunities for Adults

A.   Sets up a comfortable learning environment with necessary tools, equipment, and materials.
B.   Demonstrates sensitivity to and accommodates diverse learners, including persons who differ in abilities, cultures, and experiences.
C.   Invites participants to clarify, negotiate, and adhere to agreements or ground rules for the training session.
D.   Provides an introduction, an overview of goals and outcomes, the content, a summary, and an evaluation in the specified timeframe.
E.   Delivers training based on principles of adult learning, using a variety of instructional]methods and media appropriate for the proposed learning outcomes.
F.   Adapts training to respond to the needs of the targeted audience's knowledge, skills, and abilities.
G.   Stimulates and sustains learner motivation and engagement.
H.   Facilitates and continually assesses group dynamics to ensure learning involvement, interactions, and participation.
I.   Effectively co-facilitates with other adult educators, when applicable.
J.   Advises participants of further professional development experiences that expand on the content presented within each professional development opportunity.
K.   Demonstrates knowledge of local, state, and national agencies, organizations, services, and resources to which referrals can be made.
L.   Provides current topic-related resources in order to refer participants with questions, concerns, or experiences that are beyond the level of expertise of the T-TA Professional.

VII: Continuous Quality Improvement

A. Receives training and is reliable and accountable in the valid use of relevant tools (such as rating scales, program assessments, and classroom assessments).
B. Uses an objective approach in all aspects of observation, feedback, reflection, and action.
C. Uses multiple strategies and tools to assess the improvement needs of the adult(s) and setting, to develop measurable goals, and to assess progress.
D. Provides the skills and tools necessary for self-evaluation and the opportunity to discuss and analyze findings.
E. Supports the adult(s)/setting in using relevant data to prioritize needs and develop and adjust personal and professional goals.
F. Integrates current and appropriate media and technology effectively into practice.
G. Provides reliable, evidence-based data in all aspects of work.
H. Contributes to the learning of the entire T-TAP community by sharing data at the system level and participating in system-wide collaborative planning.

Development

The Wisconsin Training and Technical Assistance Professional (T-TAP) Competencies were created on behalf of the WI Early Childhood Cross-Sector Professional Development Initiative (WI PDI). More information about the WI PDI can be found at:
www.collaboratingpartners.com/professional-guidance-wi-pd-initiative.php

The following members of WI PDI reviewed and provided input into the T-TAP Competencies during quarterly PDI meetings. Starred members were part of the T-TAP work group:

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- Wisconsin Early Childhood Association: Jeanette Paulson*, Autumn Gehri, Claire Lind*, Tammy Bartholomew, Erin Gernetzke*
- Wisconsin Head Start Association: Lilly Irvin-Vitela
- Wisconsin Regional Collaboration Coaches: Karen Apitz, Corie Davis, Carrie Holden, Robin Mainhardt, Teresa Nuttelman*, Teressa Pellett
- Wisconsin Technical College System: Katie Roberts

The following resources were referenced in the development of the WI Training and Technical Assistance Professional (T-TAP) Competencies:

Bergen, Sharon. Best Practices for Training Early Childhood Professionals. Saint Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2009.

Chu, Marilyn. Developing Mentoring and Coaching Relationships in Early Care and Education: A Reflective Approach. Boston: Pearson, 2014.

Acknowledgments

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Effective May 1, 2015