LEAD EARLY EDUCATORS FOR SUCCESS
Guidance on leading quality improvement in early education

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Implementing Effective Professional Development:
Key Improvement Structures

ISSUE: To create and sustain high-quality learning environments, leaders designing and implementing reform efforts must devote resources and attention to: (1) **key improvement structures** — the tangible, concrete elements of an improvement plan; and (2) **key improvement processes** — the interactions and continuous learning that result from the effective use of these structures, and that ultimately influence quality. All too often, reform efforts focus on either structures or processes; in fact, attention to both is necessary to achieve long-lasting, high-quality learning environments. In this brief, we describe key structures; brief 7 describes key processes.

KEY IMPROVEMENT STRUCTURES		ACTION STEPS AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPACT
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY (PLC) — BRIEF 3	Participants	· Design groups to enable purposeful and relevant discussions (e.g., teachers of similar aged children, · group size limited to 6–10) · Separate evaluation from ongoing professional development by excluding supervisors who have authority over participants
	Facilitators	· Select a facilitator who is skilled at recognizing and applying best practices in early education, and who has experience mentoring adults
	Classroom coverage	· Create a coverage plan for participating educators, including backup plans for situations when the primary coverage plan falls through
	Space	· Provide a consistent and appropriate space, away from children, for optimal learning conditions
	Instruction and Materials	· Identify who will purchase and prepare materials (e.g., classroom books, posters, discussion protocols, case examples, refreshments), ensuring timely access · Choose materials and design implementation plans that allow teachers to make classroom-appropriate adjustments
COACHING — BRIEF 4	Coaches	· Have the same individual facilitate PLC sessions and carry out coaching, connecting these professional learning opportunities with each other
	Classroom visits	· Separate coaching visits from evaluations, promoting and supporting effective teaching · Schedule regular and frequent visits, and ensure there is follow through
	1:1 conversations	· Provide out-of-classroom time for conversations and debriefings · Hold coaching conversations soon after classroom visits, maximizing relevance and uptake · Use a discussion protocol to guide conversations, ensuring productivity and focus
ASSESSMENT — BRIEF 5	Tools used to collect information	· Use all information gathered, including teacher artifacts, daily logs (e.g,. injury, behavior), and coach reflections, to inform everyday teaching and learning · Use the data you already collect before layering on additional assessment requirements · Hold regular data meetings in which data gathered are used for planning and decision-making

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