



*2015 Leadership Conference  
“All In: Achieving Results Together”*

**Improving the Design and Implementation  
of Inservice Professional Development  
in Early Childhood Intervention**



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# Objectives

1. Provide an overview of the research foundations of evidence-based early childhood intervention professional development
2. Describe the key characteristics of effective inservice professional development
3. Describe challenges in implementing evidence-based inservice professional development in early childhood intervention



## Status of Inservice Professional Development

Unlike many fields that have a history of steady improvement built on a continually expanding knowledge base, professional learning for educators has a mixed history at best. Some critics argue that [professional development] lacks a strong evidence base [because] of a general absence of purpose. Others...argue that the research community has failed to offer useful guidelines for “best practice” for...improving the quality and effectiveness of professional learning activities (Guskey, 2014, p. 10).

Guskey, T. R. (2014). Planning professional learning. *Educational Leadership*, 71(8), 10-16.



# Research Foundations for the Professional Development Model

Metasynthesis of inservice professional development studies:

- 15 research reviews of different types of inservice professional development
- 555 studies included in the 15 reviews
- 50,000+ early intervention, preschool, elementary, and secondary education teachers, educators, and practitioners

Dunst, C. J., Bruder, M. B., & Hamby, D. W. (2016). *Metasynthesis of inservice professional development research: Features associated with positive educator and student outcomes*. Manuscript submitted for publication.



# Method of Analysis of the Inservice Reviews

- Multiple case study research design (Yin, 2014) was used to identify which inservice professional development characteristics ***under which conditions*** were associated with positive adult and student/child outcomes
- A replication logic (Hak & Dul, 2010) and pattern matching (Hak & Dul, 2010) were used to determine if the same or similar inservice characteristics in the different reviews were associated with the same or similar study outcomes

Hak, T., & Dul, J. (2010). Pattern matching. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.) *Encyclopedia of case study research* (pp.664-666). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hak, T., & Dul, J. (2010). Replication. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.) *Encyclopedia of case study research* (pp.805-807). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.



## Characteristics of Inservice Professional Development Coded in the Metasynthesis

**Focus of Training:** Learner objectives and content area

**Inservice Setting:** Job-embedded or non job-embedded inservice training

**Inservice Characteristics:** Trainer introduction and illustration of a practice, authentic educator/practitioner learning opportunities and learner reflection, professional development specialist coaching, mentoring, or performance feedback during inservice training

**Contextual Variables:** Extended learner supports and inservice dosage of sufficient amounts to reinforce initial learning

**Study Outcomes:** Learner outcomes and student/child outcomes



# Seven Characteristics of Effective Inservice Professional Development

- Professional development specialists' explicit explanation and illustration of the specific content knowledge and practice to be learned
- Active and authentic job-embedded practitioner opportunities to learn to use a practice and to engage in evaluation of their experiences
- Explicit inclusion of different types of practices for engaging practitioners in reflection on their understanding and mastery of a practice
- Coaching, mentoring, or performance feedback by a professional development specialist during inservice training
- Ongoing follow-up supports by professional development specialists, coaches, supervisors, peers, etc. to reinforce inservice learning sessions
- Inservice professional development of sufficient duration and intensity to provide multiple opportunities to become proficient in the use of a practice
- Inservice professional development that includes all or most of the six sets of key features described above is more likely to be effective compared to professional development including fewer features



## *Professional Development Specialists’ Explicit Explanation and Illustration of the Specific Content Knowledge and Practice to Be Learned*

This includes the methods used to introduce and describe the key characteristics of the practice constituting the focus of inservice professional development ***and the student/child outcomes that are related to the practices***, and the methods used to demonstrate or illustrate the use of the practice and its effects in terms of expected or desired outcomes.

Guskey, T. R. (2014). Planning professional learning. *Educational Leadership*, 71(6), 10-16.





## *Active and Authentic Job-Embedded Practitioner Opportunities to Learn to Use a Practice and To Engage in Evaluation of Their Experiences*

This includes, but is not limited to, job-embedded home-based or classroom-based use of a practice, simulated learning opportunities, learner-led descriptions of use of a practice, and opportunities to be actively involved in as many of the inservice training activities as possible “as opposed to passively sitting through lectures” in workshops (Desimone, 2011, p. 69).

Desimone, L. M. (2011). A primer on effective professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92, 68-71.



## *Explicit Inclusion of Different Types of Practices for Engaging Practitioners in Reflection On Their Understanding and Mastery of a Practice*

This includes, but is not limited to, performance-based group discussions, collective participation, journaling, self-assessment of mastery against a set of performance standards, and practitioner-instructor reflective conversations. Especially important are opportunities for reflection on what worked and what needs improvement based on authentic job-embedded use of a practice.

Cahen, R., & Superle, B. (2009). Beyond the two-hour workshop: Professional development that allows time for reflection and experimentation. *The Early Childhood Educator*, 24(3), 13-14.



## *Coaching, Mentoring, or Performance Feedback by a Professional Development Specialist During Inservice Training*

This includes in-vivo observations of practitioners' use of a practice and performance feedback, coaching or mentoring sessions, instructor suggestions and feedback from videos of practitioners' use of a practice, and telephone, e-mail, or web-based suggestions and mentoring (e.g., Glazer & Hannafin, 2006).

Glazer, E., & Hannafin, M. (2006). The collaborative apprenticeship model: Situated professional development within school settings. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22, 179-193.



## *Ongoing Follow-Up Supports by Professional Development Specialists, Coaches, Supervisors, Peers, etc., to Reinforce Inservice Learning Sessions*

The importance and necessity of continued supports have been noted by a number of investigators synthesizing available evidence for promoting the adoption and use of different types of intervention practices (e.g., Joyce & Showers, 2002; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). Kretlow and Bartholomew (2010) noted, for example, that coaching was most effective when it included “follow-up observations and specific feedback” (p.292) of practitioners using the intervention practice that was the focus of inservice training.

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Kretlow, A. G., & Bartholomew, C. C. (2010). Using coaching to improve the fidelity of evidence-based practices: A review of studies. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 33, 279-299.



## *Inservice Professional Development of Sufficient Duration and Intensity to Provide Multiple Opportunities to Become Proficient in the Use of a Practice*

According to Desimone (2011), professional development will likely be most effective when practitioner learning opportunities are distributed over time and include a sufficient number of contacts between professional development specialists and practitioners.

Desimone, L. M. (2011). A primer on effective professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92, 68-71.



# Improving Inservice Professional Development in Early Childhood Intervention

- Results from the metasynthesis were used to adapt models proposed by Desimone (2009) and Guskey (2002) applicable to inservice professional development in early childhood intervention
- The proposed model builds and expands upon a model developed based on a meta-analysis of adult learning methods (Dunst & Trivette, 2009).

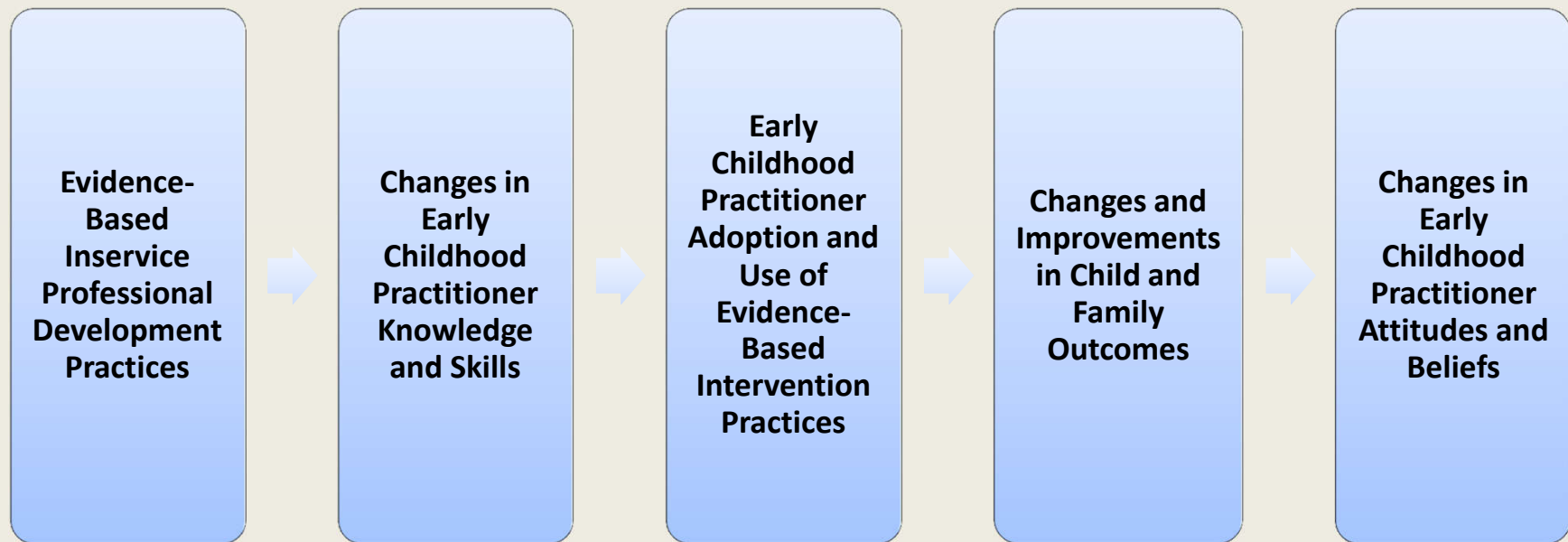
Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38(3), 181-199.

Dunst, C. J., & Trivette, C. M. (2009). Lets be PALS: An evidence-based approach to professional development. *Infants and Young Children*, 22(3), 164-175.

Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teacher and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 8(3/4), 381-391.



## Model for Conceptualizing, Designing, and Implementing Inservice Professional Development to Promote Early Childhood Practitioner Use of Evidence-Based Early Childhood Intervention Practices



Dunst, C. J. (2015). Improving the design and implementation of inservice professional development in early childhood intervention. *Infants & Young Children, 28*(3), 211-219.



## Challenges in Implementing Evidence-Based Inservice Professional Development in Early Childhood Intervention

- Limited inservice professional development resources (funding, expertise, time, etc.) to plan and implement effective training
- Sheer number of early childhood intervention professionals that are employed in early intervention and preschool special education
- Systems, policy, and practice-related barriers that discourage the use of evidence-based in service professional development
- Changing the status quo (ecology) and history of early childhood professional development





PowerPoint available at:

[www.puckett.org](http://www.puckett.org)

and

[http://www.ecpcta.org/our\\_work/powerpoints.html](http://www.ecpcta.org/our_work/powerpoints.html)