



## TECHNOLOGY LICENSING OFFICE

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### **BV 2015-15 - REACH - Reaching Educators and Children**

#### **COPYRIGHT SUMMARY:**

REACH is an early childhood teacher training program with the overall goal to increase the capacity of teachers and other staff to support social-emotional development in young children. In designing the REACH curriculum, we wanted to meet criteria outlined in our state-funded Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), Arkansas's Better Beginning. A Better Beginnings evaluation report described the features of teacher training with the greatest likelihood for achieving the desired outcomes. That report makes recommendations for Arkansas based on what other researchers have found about characteristics of trainings that are linked to improvement in quality of care. That is, training with a focus on teacher-child interaction and the following features: extended format with each session building on earlier sessions, a specific curriculum that can be individualized for participants, opportunities for teachers to practice the concepts and reflect on their own accomplishments and challenges, and on-going trainer observation and feedback. REACH training incorporates those features.

REACH was designed and is being implemented to accomplish those recommendations. 1) The workshops are sequenced and each builds on the last. Throughout the partnership our Trainer Guide instructs the coach to remind participants of an earlier concept and to turn back and relook at earlier handouts (e.g. a page in Teacher Workshop 1 that lists social-emotional skills). Additionally, the second director workshop relates the main messages of each of the teacher workshops to similar concepts and strategies at an adult level (e.g. problem solving for grownups). These are aimed at helping directors build positive adult-adult relationships and improve organizational climate. 2) Coaches build relationships with each participant during workshops and classroom visits and through staying in touch by email and texts. This allows the coach to individualize their support for teachers throughout the partnership.

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3) A monthly daily practice plan, calendar cards, toolkits, and social media keep the training session skills and concepts in participants view and in mind. During classroom visits skills and concepts are modeled by the trainer and teachers are coached as they try them. Trainers model, clarify, encourage, and give feedback as well as point out how/what the child is learning as the teacher or trainer interacts using the techniques. 4) REACH workshops include interactive components such as group activities and discussion. 5) Texts, email, phone calls, and the training sessions themselves allow time for reflection. The classroom visit allows the coach to build a relationship with each teacher. Coach interactions with teachers are supportive, not judgmental. Participants are encouraged throughout the 6 months to communicate accomplishments and challenges with their coach.

REACH participants quickly recognize that this training is different. It is not a 'hit and run' training after which handouts are placed on a shelf and forgotten. A director said, "The coaching was a great aspect. The teachers really loved it when the coach came out and followed up with them." A licensing specialist said, "Teachers are excited about the REACH program. I've heard them say, they are sad their time has ended and they wished that it could continue."

The core trainings that are a part of this project include 2 workshops for child care program directors and assistant directors and a strand of 6 workshops for child care program teachers (each has a companion implementation toolkit). Each training session is designed to be delivered monthly to small groups (e.g. to teachers in individual centers or groups of small centers).