



Culture of Continuous Learning Project:

A Breakthrough Series Collaborative for Improving Child Care and Head Start Quality

Instrument 16: Individual BSC Teams Focus Group Discussion Guide

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Respondents	Time of Data Collection
BSC Teams (Administrator, Teachers, Other Staff, Parent)	Midpoint (T2) Post-test (T3)

Note: Specific questions and probes in this guide are illustrative; different questions or follow-up questions may be asked during an interview depending on the nature and flow of participants' responses. This interview guide was pulled from CCL Phase I instruments and has been adapted to meet the needs of the current project.

Questions will be selected based on relevance at time of data collection such that the length of the focus group is no more than 90 minutes.

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion. Your participation is very important to our research.

- (i.) We are conducting a research study for the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation at the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The **purpose** of this study is to learn about the options for integrating a Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) into early care and education quality improvement systems. The BSC is a specific training approach designed to support learning and improvement among practitioners at all levels of an organization, from directors to teachers who work in a classroom with children. This BSC aims to support children's social and emotional learning practices among staff who work in child care and Head Start settings. The **intended use** of the information collected is to study whether a BSC can enhance existing Head Start and child care training and technical assistance activities to support social and emotional learning practices.
- (ii.) Our conversation will last approximately **an hour and a half**. We will ask you about your experiences participating in the BSC and the changes you've noticed in yourselves and in your center through your participation in the BSC.
- (iii.) You will receive a \$50 gift card as a thank you for your participation.
- (iv.) There is a chance that you may feel uncomfortable answering some of our questions. Being part of this discussion is completely **voluntary**. You can choose to skip any question and you can leave the focus group at any time. Additionally, there is no direct benefit to participating in this discussion. We hope the information you provide will benefit the early child care and education field.
- (v.) We would like to record this conversation will be recorded for note-taking purposes only. We will delete the recordings after the notes have been cleaned. We will separate your name and personal information from our notes and transcripts. Your identity and the information you share will be kept **private** by the research team, but because this is a group discussion, we cannot guarantee confidentiality. To respect the privacy of other participants, we ask you to please not repeat anything that is said during the discussion. This will also help everyone feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences with the group. Our report will describe the experiences and viewpoints expressed, but comments will not be attributed to specific individuals. No individuals will be quoted by name. Information shared during this conversation may be made available to other researchers for future study. However, your identity will be kept private and no comments will be able to be attributed to you.
- (vi.) Data files from the research component of this project may be stored in a trusted online location where they could be made available to other researchers who commit to keeping the data secure. Any personal information that could identify you will be removed before files are shared with other researchers. No research findings will include any personal information. This research is also covered by a Certificate of Confidentiality from the National Institutes of Health. This means that researchers cannot release or use information that may identify you in any way unless you say it is ok.
- (vii.) [For questions:] If you would like a copy of this information or have questions, please email us at ktout@childtrends.org or the IRB at irbparticipant@childtrends.org or by phone at 1-855-288-3506.
- (viii.) **[Send comments:]** Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Kathryn Tout, ktout@childtrends.org or Child Trends, 708 N 1st Suite #333 Minneapolis, MN 55401 Attention: Kathryn Tout_

(ix.) **[PRA statement:]** *A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and no individual or entity is required to respond to, nor shall an individual or entity be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. The OMB number for this collection of information is 0970-0605 and the expiration date is 03/31/2026.*

Are you willing to participate in this discussion and be recorded? [Yes/No]

Topic	Subtopic	Type of Respondent
Feedback on evaluation itself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burden of data collection activities • Appropriateness and relevance of questions that were asked • Areas of change or aspects of the BSC that were personally important but not captured in evaluation measures • Suggestions for improvement for future evaluations 	Core BSC Team members
State and center-level factors that may have helped or hindered BSC participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECE center-level supports (i.e., paid protected time, supportive leadership in terms of PD opportunities, organizational culture of quality improvement and readiness for change) • Areas where more support is needed at the ECE center-level • State or regional factors (i.e., perception of state focus on quality improvement) • Barriers to participation in the BSC that differ by role, identity or personal circumstances, and ways implementation staff and faculty can improve equitable access to BSC participation (see follow-up below) 	Core BSC Team members
BSC Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of strength and areas for improvement of BSC implementation • How to overcome barriers to BSC implementation and participation 	
Participant goals, needs, and expectations of the BSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of the goals and expectations of the BSC • Participant feelings of meaningful contribution • Barriers to participation for participants • How BSC is meeting participant needs and expectations of QI training • Reflections on ways the BSC may be adapted or modified to better address participants' needs and expectations • Flexibility of the BSC to address differing needs of participants • Changes in participant's expectations of the BSC over time • Perception of shifting power dynamics and equity processes within BSC teams [as defined by the BSC implementation staff and faculty] 	Core BSC Team members
BSC elements that were most helpful and most challenging to Core BSC Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of BSC elements used • Overall experience with each type of element • Expectations for each BSC element at the beginning of the learning sessions • How did expectations for each BSC element change over time? • Similarities and differences of experiences across team members (e.g., 	Core BSC Team members (Center administrators)

	<p>administrative staff compared to classroom staff or program staff compared to parents)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which each Core BSC Team member felt included in the process • Successes and challenges of the BSC to assess SEL needs and strengths; strategies to address SEL needs • Extent to which the BSC addressed differences in perceived SEL needs among center administrators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learned from each element 	
Impacts of BSC participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in BSC participants' knowledge, attitudes, and/or practices aligned with the collaborative change framework. Examples are below, but these are subject to change as the implementation team finalizes the change framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships and environments • Social skills and emotional competencies • Family partnership • Racial equity and cultural responsiveness • Organizational capacity and support • Biggest perceived change for self, team, and program • Changes in methods to track child's progress in SEL growth and ability to communicate that progress to parents 	Core BSC Team members
Spread of QI practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in knowledge, attitudes, and/or practices of colleagues outside of BSC Team members • Changes in how the ECE programs address needs other than those included in the BSC (for SEL quality improvement) 	Core BSC Team members
Sustainability of QI practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which changes were sustained beyond the last learning session and perceptions of whether and how changes will be sustained in the future • Tools provided to the BSC team to support sustainability of outcomes short- and long-term • Reflections on resources (financial and otherwise) thought to be necessary to sustain this CQI process in the center • Tools and knowledge provided to BSC teams to recognize and address instances where positive outcomes may be faltering • Suggestions for ways to support sustainability of outcomes more effectively in the future 	Core BSC Team members

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback received about the continued use of BSC QI practices since the end of the BSC (T4) • Feedback received about the reach of the information presented in the BSC beyond the BSC team 	
How the BSC compares to other experiences of QI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall opinions of elements of the BSC • Similarities and differences to past experiences with QI • Aspects of previous QI experiences that would be helpful to implement in the BSC • Areas in which the BSC methodology excels compared to other QI • Areas of the most unmet needs that the BSC can address 	Core BSC Team members