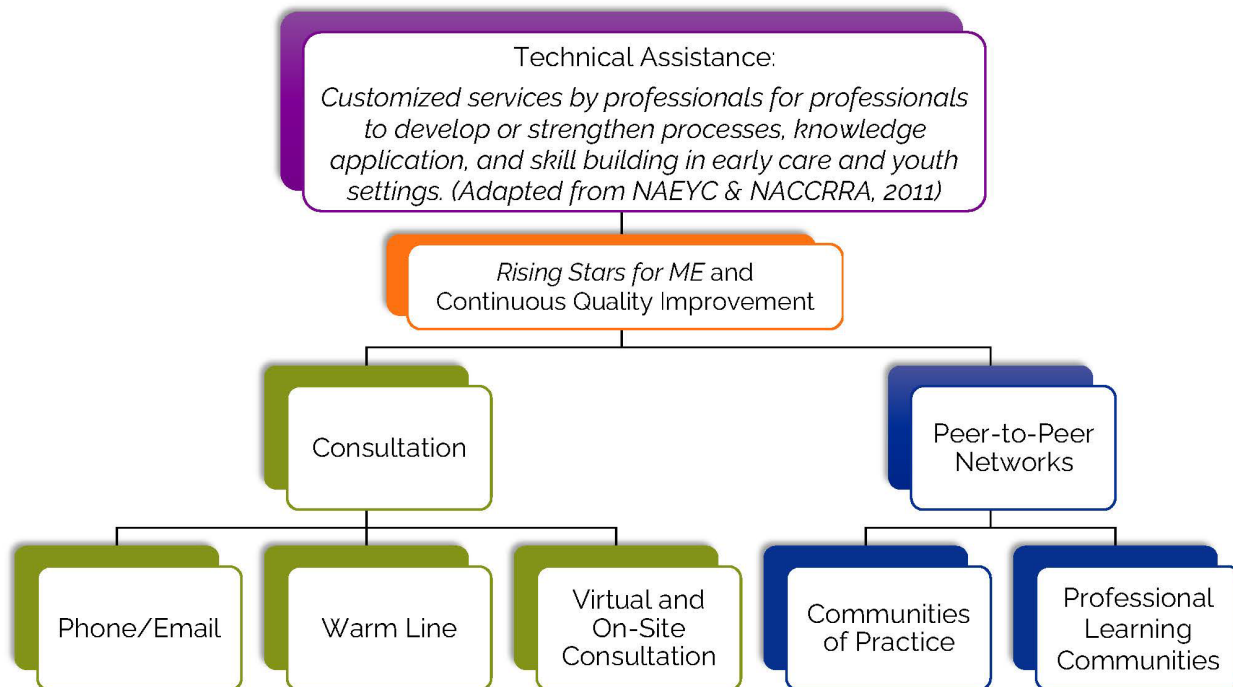


MRTQ PDN Technical Assistance System

Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network has created a statewide system to offer technical assistance (TA) services to early childhood and out-of-school time professionals and programs working to improve quality. The TA System supports the reflective processes that practitioners need in order to apply the knowledge and skills learned through education and/or training to improve or sustain high quality practices. The information below will describe in detail the different parts of this system and how the components support you and your program.

To begin, the illustration below shows the structure and components of the TA System and how the pieces relate to each other. The top box, under "Technical Assistance," gives the definition of TA that MRTQ PDN uses throughout the system.



Under the definition of TA is a box labeled "*Rising Stars for ME and Continuous Quality Improvement.*" The *Rising Stars for ME* standards are the foundation of all TA offered by MRTQ PDN. Programs not already enrolled with *Rising Stars for ME* will be encouraged to complete an application as part of the TA process, **specifically for virtual and on-site consultation.**

Recognizing the individual aspects and goals of early childhood and out-of-school time settings, the MRTQ PDN TA System includes a variety of approaches tailored to meet the



unique needs of each setting. The next level of the graphic are the two broad categories of TA offered by MRTQ PDN. Let's look at each separately.

The category of "**Consultation**" includes the following:

- **Phone and email support**, as well as the MRTQ PDN **website resources**. Phone and email support can be requested by calling 1-888-900-0055 or emailing mrtq.contact@maine.edu. Staff are available to answer questions during business hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm. Messages will be returned as soon as possible. The MRTQ PDN website is available at: <https://mrtq.org>.
- The **Warm Line** serves as the first step in providing practical, accurate information to support the successful inclusion of children with special health needs, disabilities, mental health concerns, or challenging behavior. A warm line provides preventative and non-emergency person-to-person support and resources. The MRTQ PDN **Warm Line** is jointly staffed by professionals with expertise in inclusive practices, disabilities, children's health, social and emotional development, behavior, and early childhood mental health. You can contact the **Warm Line** at (toll free) 1-844-209-5964 or by emailing mrtq.warmline@maine.edu. Calls and emails will receive a response within one business day. Learn more at: <https://mrtq.org/warmline/>.
- **Virtual and On-site consultation** involves individualized, virtual (using video conferencing technology) and on-site support to programs using a partnership approach. Trained consultants are available statewide to assist programs with a wide variety of topics, including *leadership* (e.g. policies, procedures, staff wellness, professional development) and *teaching* (e.g. curriculum, assessment, environment, challenging behaviors). Program owners or directors can request **virtual and on-site consultation** using our online form, located on our website: <https://mrtq.org/technical-assistance/>. The partnership element of **virtual and on-site consultation** is key – this means that a commitment of time and effort is required on the part of the owner/director and program staff receiving **virtual and on-site consultation**.

"The one-on-one conversations were very helpful. Sometimes having a person specifically observing our behavior, language, etc. as a teacher can be intimidating, but the conversation afterward – and the entire process – were very helpful!"

- Practitioner receiving on-site consultation

The category of "**Peer-to-Peer Networks**" offers opportunities for practitioners to learn from and with each other by problem-solving and sharing resources and strategies. There are various forms of peer-to-peer networks including **Communities of Practice** and **Professional**



Learning Communities. Peer-to-peer networks involve attendance at regular meetings (either in-person or online) and participating in the peer community.

MRTQ PDN-sponsored peer-to-peer networks receive support from a trained facilitator and include:

- **Communities of Practice (CoPs)** are a type of professional development where the content of the discussion is driven by the needs of the participants. For more information, visit our website: <https://mrtq.org/cops/>.

Communities of Practice offered by MRTQ PDN:

- **Regional and Topical CoPs** generally meet monthly, for approximately two hours. They meet in all regions of Maine and are open for new members any time.
 - **Collaborative Partnerships CoPs** are groups who work with dedicated external partners towards a focused objective (e.g. opening a new child care program). They support a reflective process, and build capacity around particular content and topics. They have a limited membership and new members are added only when they have common goals.
- **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** are typically time limited and have a closed membership (i.e. membership is limited, pre-registered, or assigned) and new members are not added during the PLC offering. **PLCs** support a reflective process and focus on a particular content, topic, training, or curriculum. For more information, visit our website: <https://mrtq.org/plcs>.

In addition to topical **Professional Learning Communities**, PLCs offered by MRTQ PDN include:

- **Accreditation cohorts** are groups for programs that meet around the specific topic of national accreditation. MRTQ PDN offers support for programs pursuing National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), or Council on Accreditation (COA) accreditation. You can read more on our website: <https://mrtq.org/accreditation-cohorts/>
- **Credential cohorts** are groups for individuals looking for additional support in pursuing one of the Maine credentials – Infant Toddler, Youth Development, Director, Family Child Care, Inclusion, or Technical Assistance. You can read more on our website: <https://mrtq.org/credential-cohorts/>
- **Book Clubs** consist of participants who agree to read a book and reflect upon the assigned chapters prior to weekly meetings. During the meetings, members participate in reflective practice and discuss how to apply what



they have learned. You can read more on our website:

<https://mrtq.org/bookclubs>

- o **Innovative Discussion Groups** are a type of professional learning community which provide a facilitated creative process, peer support while learning about a new topic, and professional knowledge or materials to bring back to your program. Possibilities include, but are not limited to, groups learning about creative movement and physical activity, mindfulness, exploring open ended materials, nature-based curriculum, developmentally appropriate learning environments, deepening our understanding of play, STREAMS (science, technology, reading, engineering, art, math and spirituality, and more. We encourage your suggestions for topics!

All of the TA services described above are provided **free of charge** and can be accessed by any person or program providing child care and early education services in Maine. Child care centers, family child care programs, out-of-school time programs, Head Start, license-exempt providers, and nursery schools are eligible. Participating in consultation, Communities of Practice and/or Professional Learning Communities is a Professional Growth Activity and the hours attended are accepted by Maine Child Care Licensing to meet yearly training requirements.

If you have questions or would like more information about any of the services described here, please explore the web links listed above or contact us directly at 1-888-900-0055 or mrtq.contact@maine.edu. We look forward to working with you!