Realizing the Promise of Learning Networks: Getting to Real Results

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OSEP Project Directors' Conference |
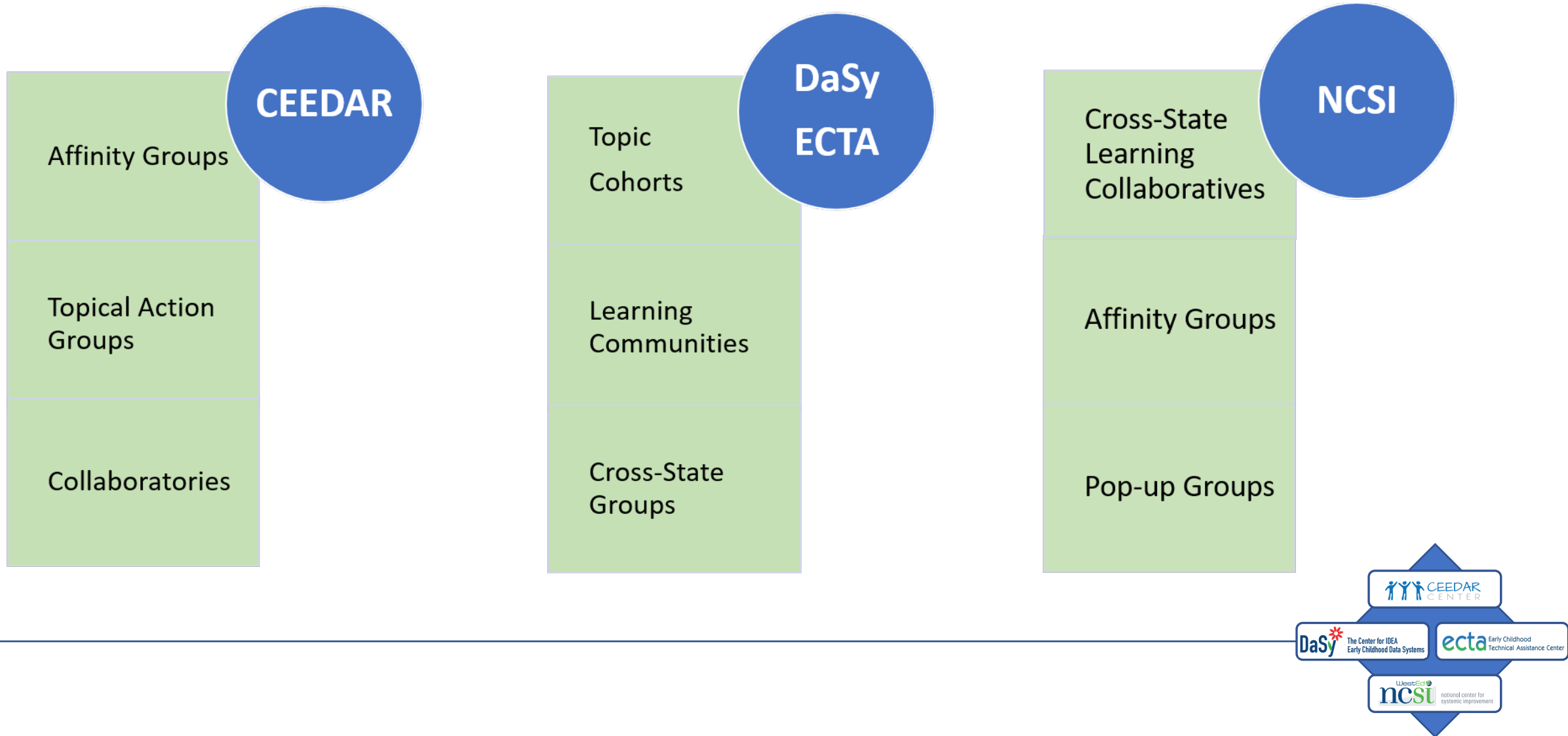July 2018

A look at the Research

Effective Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) are:

Focused on a well-specified aim

Guided by a deep understanding of the problem, the system that produces it, and a theory of improvement relative to it

Disciplined by the rigor of improvement science

Coordinated to accelerate the development, testing, and refinement of interventions and their effective integration into practice across varied educational contexts.
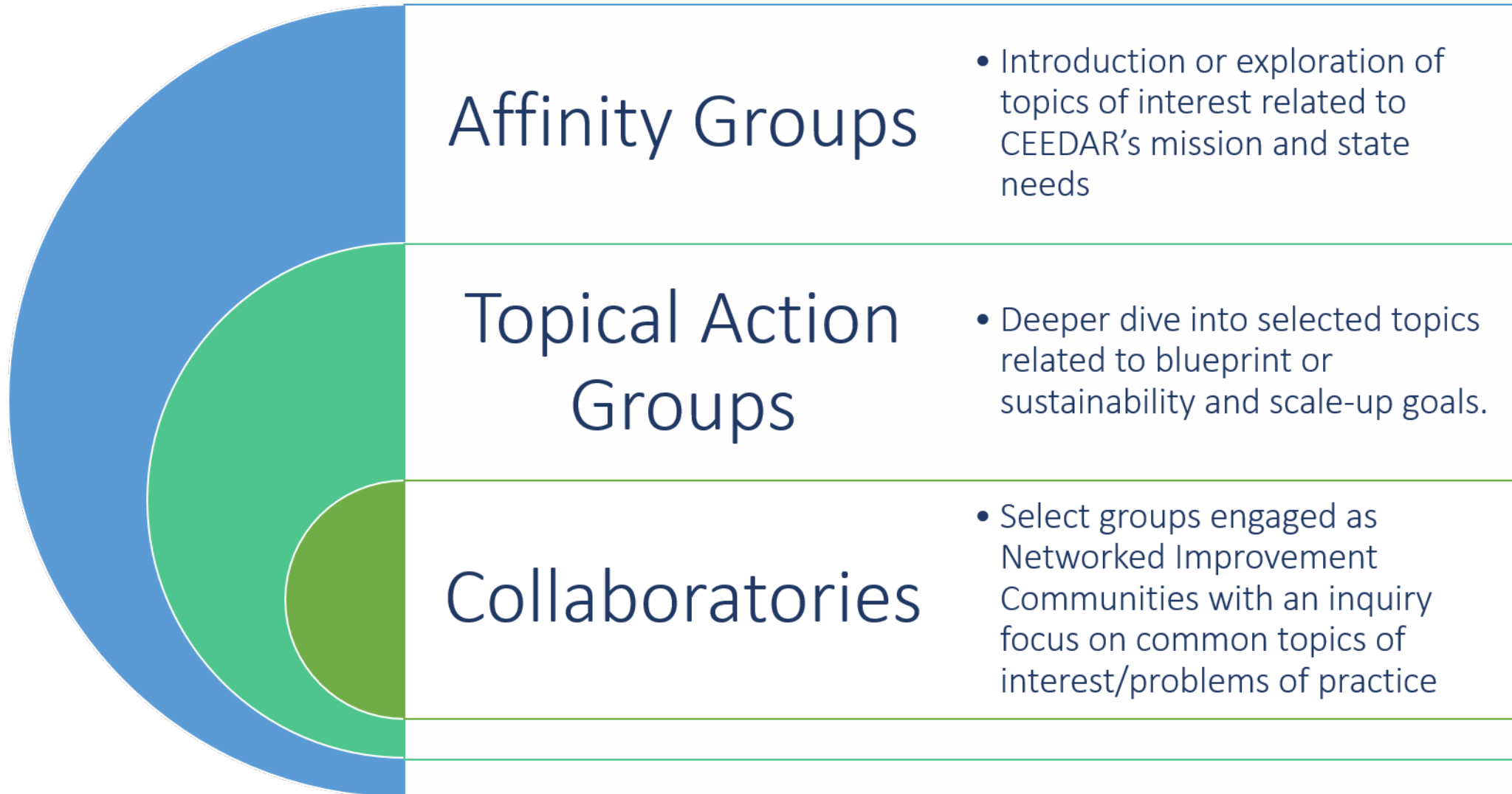
Learning to Improve: How America's Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better, edited by Bryk . S., Gomez L. M., Grunow A., and LeMahieu P. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2015. 280 pp. ISBN-10: 1612507913.

Learning Networks Featured Today

CEEDAR

- Affinity Groups
- Topical Action Groups
- Collaboratories

DaSy ECTA

- Topic Cohorts
- Learning Communities
- Cross-State Groups

NCSI

- Cross-State Learning Collaboratives
- Affinity Groups
- Pop-up Groups

CEEDAR Cross-State Learning Groups

Affinity Groups
- Introduction or exploration of topics of interest related to CEEDAR's mission and state needs

Topical Action Groups
- Deeper dive into selected topics related to blueprint or sustainability and scale-up goals.

Collaboratories
- Select groups engaged as Networked Improvement Communities with an inquiry focus on common topics of interest/problems of practice

ECTA/DaSy Cross-State Opportunities

Topic Cohorts

- Intensive TA
- Mix of cross-state and individualized TA
- States are brought together around a common topic
- 5 Collaborative Topic Cohorts

Learning Communities

- Offers states and opportunity to share lessons learned and promising practices in their work around common topics/needs
- Community is lead by the the needs of the states
- States share issues and solutions

Cross-State Groups

- Ad hoc groups formed to meet common needs
- Short-term

NCSI Networked Improvement Communities

Learning Collaboratives

Five Part B NICs:
- Grad/Post-School SIMRs
- Language & Literacy SIMRs
- Math SIMRs
- Results-Based Accountability
- Systems Alignment

Four Part C NICs:
- Family Outcomes
- Knowledge & Skills
- Social and Emotional Outcomes
- Results-Based Accountability

Affinity Groups

Sub-groups *within* a given Learning Collaborative.

Issues arise through the membership to form Affinity Groups.

More sustain over time or disband as problems are solved and/or sufficient capacity is built.

Example: Differentiating TA in response to local performance results within the Systems Alignment Collaborative

Pop-Up Groups

Like an Affinity Groups but includes membership from *across two or more* different Learning Collaboratives.
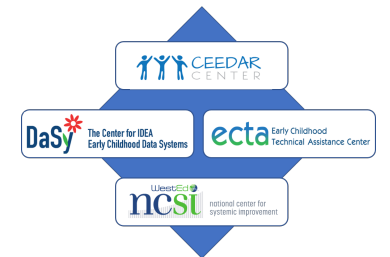
Formed ad hoc to meet short term needs.

Example: SSIP Writing Group operated from January – March to craft 2018 SSIP submissions, including members from 3 Collaboratives.
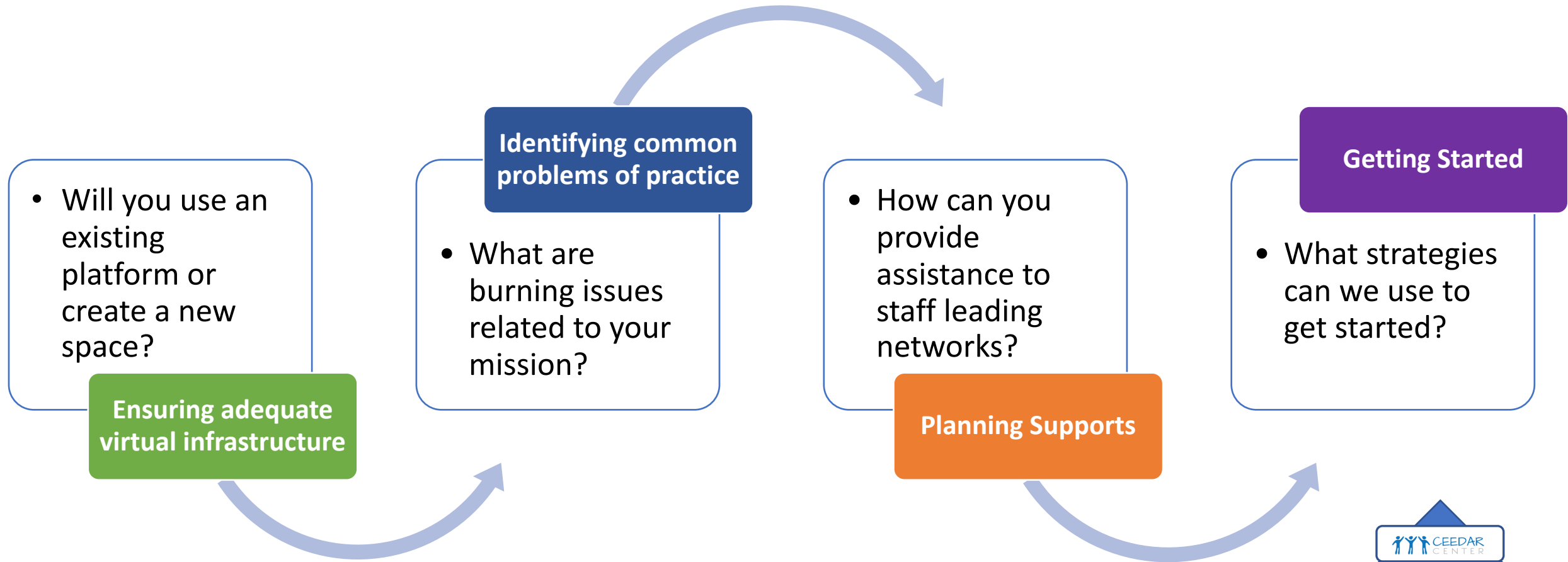
WestEd
ncsi
national center for systemic improvement

Launching, Growing/Sustaining, and Measuring the Impact of Learning Networks

Lessons Learned

Launching Learning Networks

Identifying common problems of practice

Ensuring adequate virtual infrastructure

Getting Started

Planning Supports

- Will you use an existing platform or create a new space?

- What are burning issues related to your mission?

- How can you provide assistance to staff leading networks?

- What strategies can we use to get started?

Lessons Learned
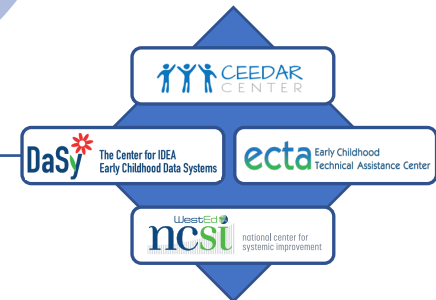
Launching Learning Networks:
Adequate Virtual Infrastructure

- **Will you use an existing platform or create a new space?**

Ensuring adequate virtual infrastructure

Identifying Common Problems of Practice

Identifying common problems of practice

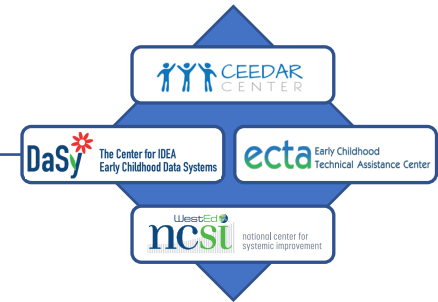- **What are burning issues related to your mission?**

Affinity groups:

- State leads submitted topics based on state interests and needs
- Compiled common areas to select 4 groups
  1. Dyslexia/literacy
  2. Licensure/ shortages
  3. Data/outcomes for preparation programs
- Added two groups in topics the center hopes to push the field in
  4. Inclusive Leadership
  5. Culturally Responsive Policy and Practice

Topical Action Groups:

- Selected topics aligned to common state blueprint goals
  - High Leverage Practices, Inclusive Leadership and Clinical Practice

- Templates for planning
  - Scope and sequence
  - Synchronous
  - A-synchronous
  - Engagement strategies

- **How can you provide assistance to staff leading networks?**

Planning Supports

Affinity Group Planning Template

Topic:

Conceptual Lead:
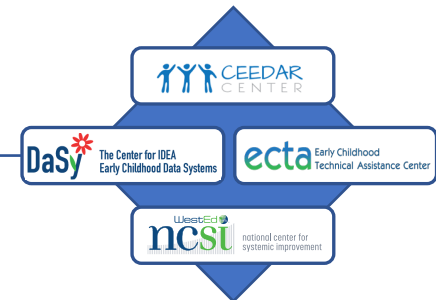
Facilitator-Co-Lead:
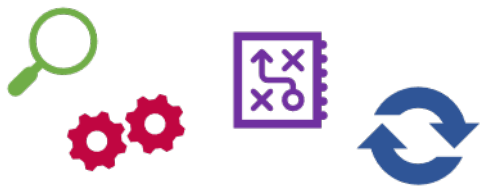
Engagement Specialist:

Collaborating Centers:

Implementation Specialists:

Scope and Sequence:

- **First Virtual Meeting- Introduction Meeting**
  - Meeting Topic: Introduction and Level Setting
  - Example in Action (EIA) (Optional):
- **Virtual Meeting 2- Meeting**
  - Meeting Topic:
  - Example in Action:
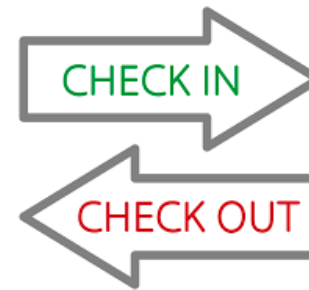 - EIA Contact:
  - Collaborating Centers:
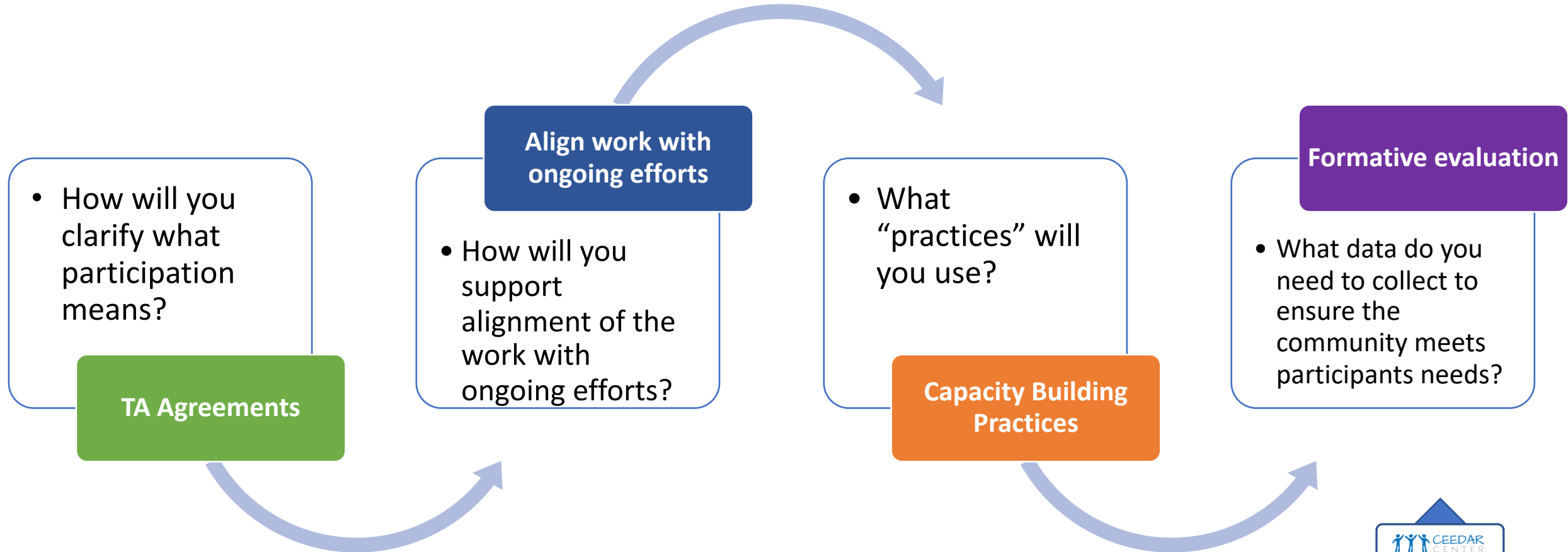
Launching Learning Networks:
Getting Started

- Initial Activities
  - Building Relationships
  - Setting Group Norms
  - Establishing a shared vision and goals
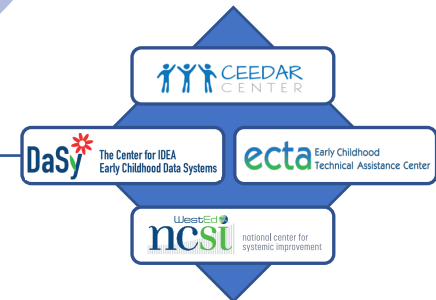
Getting Started

- **What strategies can we use to get started?**

CHECK IN

CHECK OUT

Growing and Sustaining
Learning Networks

TA Agreements

- How will you clarify what participation means?

Align work with ongoing efforts

- How will you support alignment of the work with ongoing efforts?

Capacity Building Practices

- What "practices" will you use?

Formative evaluation

- What data do you need to collect to ensure the community meets participants needs?

Lessons Learned

- How will you clarify what participation means?

TA Agreements

- Application process
  - Participants apply
  - Selection criteria

- Clearly articulate the TA activities and the expectations of participation in the learning network
  - Cross-state
  - Individualized action plan
  - Evaluation expectations

- Clearly articulate outcomes

Lessons Learned

CEEDAR CENTER

DaSy The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems

ecta Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

ncsi national center for systemic improvement

- **How will you support alignment of the work with ongoing efforts?**

Align work with ongoing efforts

- Ensure cross-state activities are driven by common needs
- Action Plans should be based on data and connect with ongoing participant work
  - Needs to be meaningful

Lessons Learned

Growing and Sustaining
Learning Networks continued..
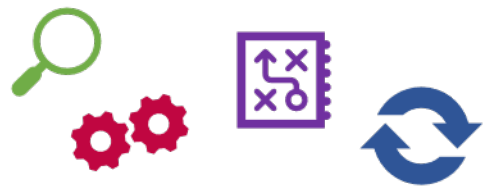
- What "practices" will you use?

Capacity Building Practices

- Capacity building is key!
  - Mix of cross-state and individualized
- TA providers should be using best practices to support participants in building capacity and making progress
- Structure activities to maximize participant engagement and learning
  - All participants bring important knowledge, but may need support in engaging in learning networks
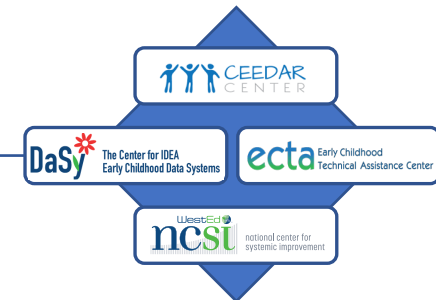
Lessons Learned

- **What data do you need to collect to ensure the community meets participants needs?**
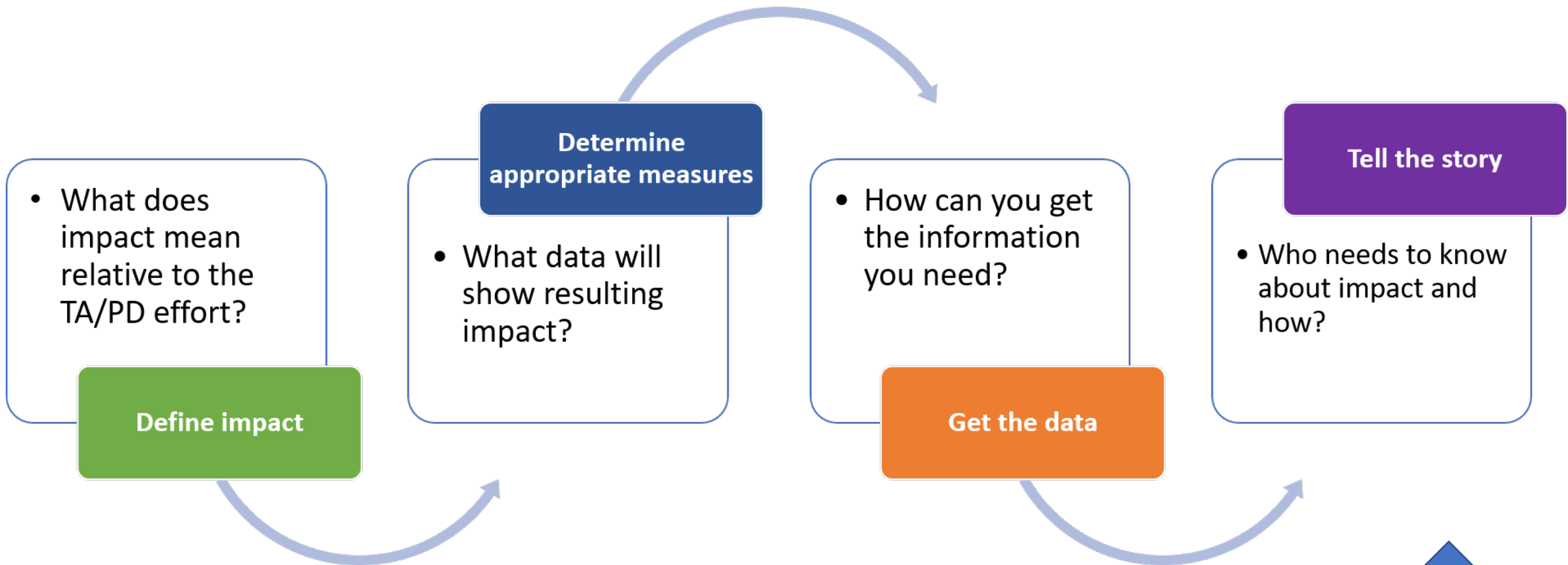
Formative evaluation

- Gather data on an ongoing basis about the processes used within the learning network
  - Are people actively engaging and sharing knowledge?
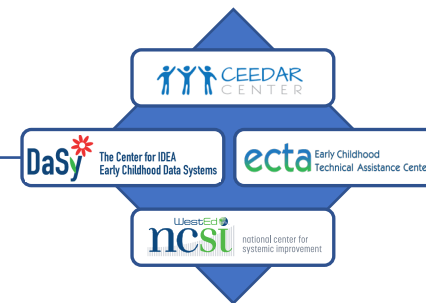 - Are people making progress and building capacity?
  - If not, why not?

Measuring the Impact of
Learning Networks

Define impact
- What does impact mean relative to the TA/PD effort?

Determine appropriate measures
- What data will show resulting impact?

Get the data
- How can you get the information you need?

Tell the story
- Who needs to know about impact and how?

Lessons Learned

- **What does impact mean relative to the TA/PD effort?**

Define impact

- Look to existing evaluation guidance
  - logic model, theory of action, outcomes chart, etc.…

- Get concrete
  - What does it mean to "succeed" in the TA/PD?
  - What tangible actions or artifacts will show change?

- Be aware of **outputs** vs **outcomes**
 - Did policies, procedures, and/or practices change?

Lessons Learned
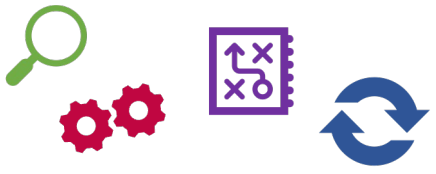
Measuring Impact | Step 2

- **What data will show resulting impact?**

Determine appropriate measures

- Data access
  - Do you have connections with the right sources to access the data that would tell your story?
- Data legitimacy
  - Think about causality; consider inference
- Be realistic
  - Think about grain size and level of impact within pragmatic parameters
    - Child/student/family impact; systems impcat; incremental benchmarks vs large scale impact
- Plan for mixed methods
 - Qualitative and quantitative outcomes

Lessons Learned
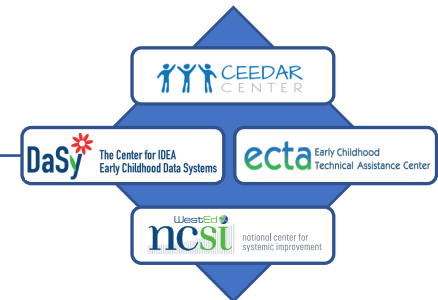
Measuring Impact | Step 3

- **How can you get the information you need?**

Get the data

- Partner among program staff and project evaluators to develop and implement data collection; use data
- Coach/explain purpose of impact data to clients so they can give you the kinds of evidence you need
  - Not fabricating results —giving useful info when it exists
- Help staff understand importance of impact data and project's approaches to capturing / using impact data
  - Set expectations up front for data collection
  - Coordinate data collection to reduce over-burden
- Elevate importance of measuring impact
  - E.g., Director-level communication about purpose, approach, use of impact data…both internally and externally
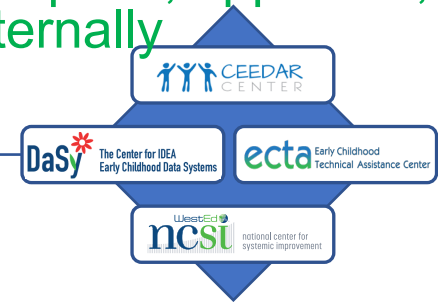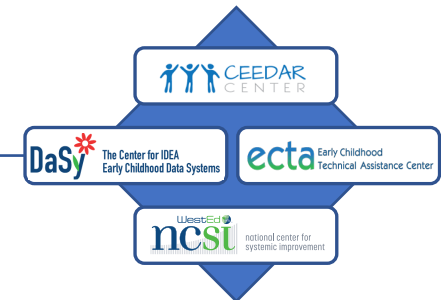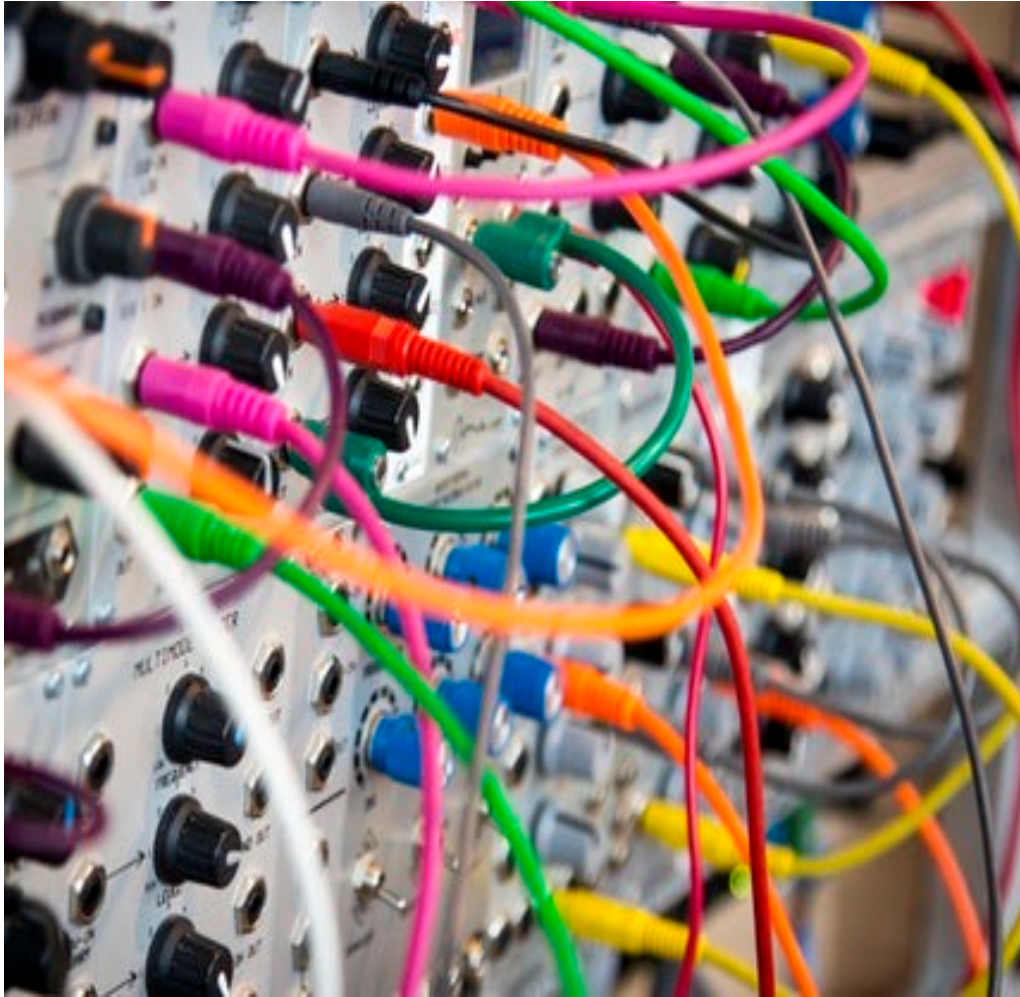
- **Who needs to know about impact and how?**

Tell the story

- Use your data
  - Formative planning
  - Return on investment
  - Annual Performance Reports
  - Stakeholder partnerships
- Lead with Qualitative data, bolster with quantitative data to support contextual understanding and nature of the systems change

Lessons
Learned

Let's Talk!

The research...

- To what extent are you anchoring the design and implementation of your current learning networks on the research-based principals of networked improvement communities? Do you need to up your game in translating research to practice?

The pragmatics...

- How can these lessons learned from national TA projects inform the launch, growth, sustainability or measurement of learning networks in your own projects?

For more info or follow up...

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Thank you to our funders!