IMPLEMENTING A COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY CURRICULUM

The Issue: It is not enough to select a literacy curriculum and place the guide and materials in the educator's hands. Effective curricular implementation is a process, led by a leadership team, that is focused on providing educators with ongoing support to deliver high-quality literacy instruction.

What Are Some Common Pitfalls That Impede Impact?

Common Pitfalls	What We're Learning
1. Educators are provided a day's training and a manual, but not on-going support with curriculum implementation.	1. Instruction improves when the site's leaders provide educators with the necessary support and training to implement a curriculum with fidelity (see Memos 8 & 9).
2. A curriculum is adopted but not delivered by all educators consistently or as intended (e.g., "dipping" in and out).	2. Children need to experience consistent learning routines; they benefit from a long-term, content-rich learning plan that will help them accumulate skills and knowledge over time (see Memos 4 & 15).
3. Educators are held accountable for implementing a curriculum with fidelity, but often not provided with adequate support or opportunities to collaborate.	3. Effective implementation takes time, requires leadership support, and demands opportunities to collaborate; even the highest quality materials do not automatically translate into better practice.

For More on This…

- The National Center on Response to Intervention features guidance and tools for implementing school-wide practices
- McREL Keys to Learning has a section on implementing curriculum effectively
- Fidelity of Implementation within an RTI Framework by Daryl Mellard is a free publication online that has sample observation checklists

Key Strategies for Impact: A checklist for the leadership team

☐ Develop your own knowledge of the curriculum

Why? Leadership needs a firm understanding of a new curriculum to provide effective guidance and support.

☐ Provide educators with training opportunities before and during implementation, and personally participate. Training should include:

- A rationale for the curriculum's design and lessons
- Guidance on how to carry out the various components of the curriculum

Why? Curricula are not intuitive and therefore require ongoing training. Continuous training improves implementation quality , builds collective commitment to the curriculum, and gets new staff up to speed.

☐ Set up and perform regular formal and informal observations of educators using the curriculum

- Gather specific information on educators' strengths and needs
- Monitor the quality of curriculum implementation

Why? Information obtained through classroom observations can be used for tailoring professional development to educators' needs, and ensuring all children experience comparable instruction.

☐ Facilitate conversations about instructional practice and improvement

Why? A curriculum provides a shared professional language that enables educators to discuss and refine their instructional practices during meetings and planning time.

☐ Make curricular materials available to address the individual needs of struggling or at-risk students, as well as children who need enrichment

Why? Individualized student support is most effective when it corresponds with classroom learning.