

Understanding Professional Development



Professional Development (PD) is an excellent way to teach specific learning objectives to a targeted group. Choosing the correct type of PD event is important to understand the level of knowledge and skill that may be acquired. Providers of PD events need consistent definitions in order to provide and promote the appropriate type of PD event. It is critical to understand that trainings and workshops do not mean the same thing—one can produce long-term benefits while the other may simply increase awareness.

This overview provides basic definitions for the following PD terms: training, workshop, technical assistance, presentation, and information session. Learn more at the [CDC's Healthy Schools](#) website.

What is Professional Development?

PD is consciously designed to actively engage learners and includes the planning, design, promotion, delivery, follow-up and evaluation; such as, events, information sessions, and technical assistance. It is a set of skill-building processes and activities designed to assist targeted groups in mastering specific learning objectives. Such events are delivered in an adequate time span and may include trainings, workshops, and online or distance learning courses to assist targeted groups in mastering specific learning objectives.

Design all PD events to include the six PD practices—Sustain, Design, Promote, Deliver, Follow-Up, and Evaluate. Please refer to [CDC's Healthy Schools](#) website for more information about the PD practices. When developing and delivering PD events, integrate all six of these practices.

The Six PD Practices

1. SUSTAIN a PD Infrastructure
2. DESIGN PD Offerings
3. PROMOTE PD Services
4. DELIVER PD
5. Provide FOLLOW-UP Support
6. EVALUATE PD Processes

The PD standards require up to 3-hour informational presentations and 3 or more hours to transfer skills and to practice the skills acquired. Include action planning, and evaluation, as well as a 1-year follow-up as part of this process.

