Continuous Quality Improvement Toolkit
A Resource for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Awardees

Module 5: The PDSA Cycle—Step by Step

**PLAN**

**Step 1: Identify area for improvement.**
- Identify the area, problem, or opportunity for improvement.
- Estimate and commit the needed resources.

**Step 2: Assemble a team.**
- Identify and assemble team members.
- Specify team member roles and responsibilities.
- Specify meeting frequency and structure.
- Develop a SMART aim.

**Step 3: Identify current process.**
- Examine the current approach or process flow.
- Obtain existing baseline data or create a plan to obtain needed baseline data.
- Obtain input from stakeholders.
- Determine root causes of the problem.

**Step 4: Identify potential change strategies.**
- Identify all potential change strategies based on root causes.
- Select change strategy (or strategies) most likely to achieve the SMART aim.

**Step 5: Identify improvement theory.**
- Develop a theory of change for the change strategy.
- Develop a strategy to test the theory on a small scale (small number of participants).
- What is the strategy? Who will apply it? How will it be measured? What is success?

**DO**

**Step 6: Test the theory.**
- Carry out the test on a small scale.
- Collect, chart, and display data to determine the effectiveness of the change strategy.
- Monitor fidelity of implementation of the change strategy; document problems, unexpected observations, and unintended side effects.

**STUDY**

**Step 7: Study the results.**
- Was the improvement successful on a small scale?
- Did the results match the theory/prediction?
- Were there any unintended consequences?
- Describe and report what you learned.

**ACT**

**Step 8: Scale up implementation.**
- Scale up successful change strategies and continue testing until improvement is achieved.
- Develop and test new theories for unsuccessful changes.
- Standardize successful improvements.

**Step 9: Establish future plans.**
- Repeat the PDSA cycle, when needed.
- Take steps to preserve gains and sustain successes.
- Make long-terms plan for additional improvements.
- Celebrate your successes.