

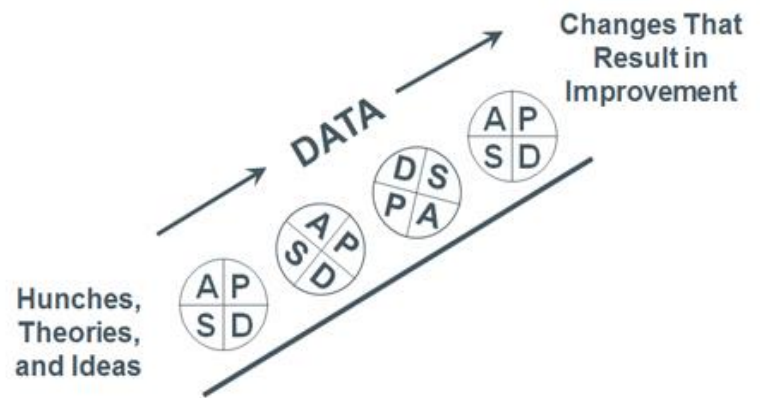
Continuous Quality Improvement Toolkit

A Resource for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Awardees

Module 5: PDSA Ramps

Introduction

A Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) ramp is a set of related, repeated cycles, focused on a common change strategy. The goal of a PDSA ramp is to build with each cycle from testing and refining to implementing the strategy and sustaining change. As CQI teams prepare for the first PDSA cycle, starting with a small number of participants is important. The team should also use a PDSA ramp to think through what future tests of change strategies may look like. Only when PDSA cycles demonstrate that a strategy is promising should the team increase the numbers for the next cycle — moving up the ramp. This process helps to build new knowledge faster and informs future scale-up efforts.



Langley, G., Moen, R., Nolan, K., Norman, C., & Provost, L. (2009). *The improvement guide: A practical approach to enhancing organizational performance* (2nd ed., p.103). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Tips for Successful, Linked Tests of Change

Plan more than one cycle for your change strategy.

- ▶ Think a couple of cycles ahead.
- ▶ Scale down the size of your initial test. The first couple of tests should be small. Remember the “Power of One.” Try your change strategy with one family or one home visitor first.
- ▶ Focus on completing the test and use volunteers.
- ▶ Study past cycles, and learn from past successes and failures.
- ▶ Use innovative ideas to test your change strategy on a small scale. Not all tests are easy to implement, and the timeline for some change strategies may not fit a small scale.
- ▶ Collect useful data during each test. Measure what you are changing.
- ▶ Do not worry about buy-in at the beginning. While obtaining buy-in is important to implement change on a large scale, it is not critical during initial testing. Initial tests will build confidence and lead to buy-in.
- ▶ Consider testing your change strategy in various ways. What worked under one condition may not work in another. Test part of the change strategy initially, and think about what you can do in the upcoming days or week.

Adapted from <http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/HowtoImprove/ScienceofImprovementLinkingTestsofChange>

Example 1: Improve the breastfeeding rate of new mothers with children aged 6 months

- Cycle 1: Develop a policy for home visitors to complete an infant feeding plan with mothers by 36 weeks of pregnancy, and test with one home visitor at his or her next home visit.
- Cycle 2: Revise the feeding plan based on learning from cycle 1. Have the home visitor test with additional mothers, and ask another home visitor to test with one of his/her mothers.
- Cycle 3: Further revise and improve the feeding plan and protocol based on learning from cycles 1 and 2. Test with more home visitors and mothers.
- Cycle 4: Implement at scale the new policy across all mothers enrolled during pregnancy and with all home visitors.

Ramp Worksheet

Use the lines next to the PDSA wheels to list each repetition of the PDSA cycle in the ramp. These cycles are repetitions based on the same aim statement and should be used to aid in testing and scaling the change strategy. This is not meant to replace an individual PDSA worksheet, but to provide a place to either plan future cycles or list the repetitions. There are no set number of repetitions to complete before adopting and scaling up the change strategy.

AIM Statement: _____

