

Supporting Preschool Expansion Grant Communities in Collaboration and Partnership - Community Systems Development Toolkit

The Community Systems Development Toolkit supports the hands-on implementation of collaborative systems work at the local level, providing resource tools that cover the full spectrum of community systems and coordination work. In order to address the unique needs of IL communities collaborating as part of their Preschool Expansion Grant, a shorter version of the full Toolkit has been created with tools targeted at the needs of this work. Additionally, tools were added to the full Toolkit or existing tools modified, to address needs identified by Preschool Expansion Grant communities.

Tailored to the needs of community-based collaboration and organized in systems change theory, the toolkit is designed to provide accessible, comprehensive resources supporting the changing stages and needs of communities engaged in collaborative work. Tools include forms, examples of community level strategies, questions, guidance, samples, processes and articles.

SECTION 1. Setting and Resetting the Stage

1A. Developing and Maintaining Participation, Roles and Responsibilities: These resources and tools support collaborations to ensure that the "right mix" of organizations, and families, are recruited, reflective of community, and prepared for and able to advance collaboration work. Resources will be included that support the development of what participation in the collaboration means, and roles and responsibilities within the collaboration that support decision making, accountability, and shared activities.

Tools:

- 1) **Identifying Members for your Collaboration** – This tool supports brainstorming of categories of organizations/ groups to participate in the collaboration and the contact person.
- 2) **Engagement/Re-engagement of Stakeholder(s)** – This guide supports discussion on engaging/re-engaging stakeholders and exploring what engagement in the collaboration means.
- 3) **Parent Leadership** – This resource provides an overview of the philosophy of strong parent leadership and involves parents in the collaboration.
- 4) **Parent Leadership on the Great Start Collaboratives** – This toolkit focuses on the robust engagement of parents in all levels of collaboration and includes support for why and how to engage parents.
- 5) **Building a Memorandum** – This template provides content areas/examples for a basic memorandum of agreement/support demonstrating commitment of one organization to a collaboration.
- 6) **Building a Memorandum of Collaboration** – This template is for building a two way memorandum of collaboration and includes a community sample.
- 7) **Memorandum Samples:**
 - a. **Memorandum of Agreement Sample** – This form approach has basic information on collaboration prepopulated for partner.
 - b. **Memorandum of Understanding** – This sample outlines of all the fields for a memorandum of understanding.

1B. Building and Supporting an Inclusive Collaboration Structure and Decision Making/Governance

Structure: These resources, tools and examples support creating a positive environment and structure for the collaboration that will advance common purpose and productivity. Resource content includes exploring and implementing an organizational structure for the collaboration, ensuring clarity on structure across participants and maintaining a clear, inclusive decision making structure.

Tools:

- 1) **Types of Partnerships: Continuum of Coordination** – This resource provides examples of three partnership models and the decision-making process for each type.
- 2) **Considering Your Current State of Collaboration** – This resource covers the potential functions and systems change strategies of collaboration work and supports assessing the level of collaboration functioning along a continuum of strength of vision and ability to execute.
- 3) **Setting Ground Rules** – This tool supports determining what needs to take place at each meeting (i.e. meeting place, time, member roles, create organizational structure, etc.)
- 4) **Resolving Conflict** – This tool outlines the causes of conflict and offers suggestions for how to address conflict.

1C. Creating and Sustaining a Shared Vision: These resources will support creation and reassessment of a shared vision across community stakeholders.

Tools:

- 1) **Developing Mission and Vision Statements** – This tool supports the collaborative group in defining their agreed upon goals (i.e., answering the question “What is/are our purpose(s)?”)
- 2) **Vision Statement Development Worksheet** – This worksheet guides thinking about what it is the initiative really seeking to achieve, and how the coalition will work towards accomplishing those goals and crafting a vision statement.
- 3) **Mission Statement Development Worksheet** – This worksheet supports thinking about what drives the initiative and what the coalition needs to accomplish to fulfill the mission, and how to craft a mission statement.
- 4) **Information to be Shared by All Collaborative Members: Organizations** – Through this tool each participant shares information on their organization (mission, programs/services, supporters, decision making body etc.) and also what they hope to gain from the collaborative.
- 5) **Self-Assessment/Self-Identification Tool: Pre-Partnership Organizational Assessment** – This assessment tool is an opportunity to self-reflect, to encourage discussion, and to brainstorm ideas on how to further cultivate an organizational culture amenable to partnership.

SECTION 2. Assessment and Planning

2A. Assessing Community Need and Capacity: These resources and tools will support the collection of data to define and outline problems, resources, and readiness within a geographic area to address needs and gaps. Additional resources are included to support the ongoing assessment of community needs, resources, opportunities and capacity.

Tools:

- 1) **The State of Your Community: Basic Needs, Assets and Gaps** – This resource considers community demographic information alongside comparable data for your state and includes guiding questions to determine gaps and priorities.

- 2) **Program Inventory** –This tool includes variables such as target population and type of services provided by a program with sub-tools designed to consider the best evidence based programs to match need. Current version uses home visiting as example of inventory.
- 3) **Adapting Interventions for Culture and Diversity** – This series of questions, covering different culture and diversity factors, supports conversation on ensuring planning and programming is responsive to the diversity of the community.

2B. Building Goals and Objectives and Tracking Systems against the Collaborative Strategies: These resources, tools and examples support defining and tracking collaboration progress against goals and objectives of the work, and ensuring these are measurable and reflect the collaborative strategies used to carry out the work.

Tools:

- 1) **Tips for Action Planning** – This tool provides an overview of how to create an action plan and guidelines for strategies to ensure a successful action planning process.
- 2) **Systems Collaboration Goals and Objectives** – This plan sample form provides an example of goals and objectives as part of a collaboration logic model, and includes space for vision, goals, objectives and measurement.
- 3) **Action Plans –Planning Worksheet** – This example includes strategies and outcomes, timeline and responsibility but no data or completion tracking fields.

2C. Defining and Building Collaborative Leadership: These resources and tools ensure that strong leadership is established early in the collaboration and sufficiently nurtured. These resources will support the development of collaborative leadership.

Tools:

- 1) **What is Collaborative Leadership?** – This resources offers a definition of different aspects of collaborative leadership.
- 2) **Self Assessment: Leadership Trait Questionnaire** – This self-rating tool emphasizes traits shared by strong leaders.

SECTION 3. Working Together/Taking Action

3A. Communicating across Collaboration: These tools, strategies and examples ensure support for planning and implementation of communication across all levels of the collaboration and community. The communication includes both internal and external communication to engage the public in the work.

Tools:

- 1) **Meeting and Agenda Reporting Tool** - This tool provides a template that can be used when developing meeting agendas and reporting on the outcomes of meetings, with a focus on using meetings to accomplish goals.
- 2) **Meeting Summary Template** – This tool provides a standard format that can be used to develop consistent meeting summaries.
- 3) **Communication Strategies to Build Collaboration** – This tool covers communication strategies that can be used by individuals to work collaboratively in group settings. The strategies are

designed to build individual capacity and skills with examples to assist in implementing the various communication techniques.

- 4) **Parent Coalitions Communication** – These resources include an introduction letter for parents and a one pager designed to answer parent questions about engaging in the collaboration through the parent leadership coalition.

3B. Planning for and Implementing Shared Activities: These resources, tools and examples support the planning and implementation of activities that cross systems and programs, and focus on systemic change. Areas of shared activities work include coordination of resources and referrals and professional development.

Tools:

Planning and Implementing

- 1) **Collaboration Multiplier** - This tool guides organizations through a collaborative discussion to identify activities that accomplish a common goal, delineate each partner’s perspective and potential contributions, and leverage expertise and resources. (Introduction document and Blank Multiplier)
- 2) **Subcommittee Templates** – These tools are samples from a local community collaboration of how they organize their subcommittee approach to activities. The tools offer examples of: outlining the charge and formation of the subcommittee; a brief descriptor of the work of the subcommittee for recruiting community participation; and, the **reporting tool required of the subcommittee.**
- 3) **Community Equity Self Assessment** - This tool is designed to help collaboratives test their ideas and solutions within an equity frame, focusing on intentional efforts to close the opportunity and access gaps that exist by income, race and ethnicity, language, and culture must be a part of any initiative.

Coordination of Resources and Referrals

- 4) **Building Effective Referral and Follow Up Systems** – This resource outlines six key components to help guide communities when selecting and adapting a referral and follow-up method that best fits the community served.
- 5) **Referral Brainstorming Worksheet** – This tool guides collaboration participation through brainstorming of available referral options in the community.

3C. Engaging in Program Development: These resources and tools support collaborative work to enhance birth to eight programs, support programs in evidence-based and evidence-informed implementation, and advance high quality instruction and effective learning experiences for all children.

Tools:

- 1) **A Checklist for Facilitating Family Engagement** - A checklist for determining the family engagement in museums, libraries and early learning systems.

SECTION 4. Measuring Progress and Evaluating Impact

4A. Assessing Collaboration Functioning: These tools focus on collaboration functioning and support gathering participant and stakeholder input on the collaborative process and evaluating the functioning of a collaboration.

Tools:

- 1) **Partnerships and Collaboratives: Diagnostic Tool for Evaluating Group Functioning** – This self-assessment guides each member of the group to rank how they feel the collaborative is functioning across key elements, which can be used to plan for improvements.
- 2) **Collaborative Self-Assessment** – This survey assesses experiences with a School Readiness collaborative to find out how useful the collaboration is to the work of each participating organizations.

4B. Understanding Systems Development and the Impact of Systems Change: These resources support growing an understanding of the theory of collaboration and systems change work, including resources on the impact and outcomes of community based systems change and specific approaches to the work, such as collective impact.

Tools:

- 1) **Comprehensive Early Childhood Systems in States** – This resource outlines the values, principles, systems, and functions of early childhood systems work. The systems engaged are laid out graphically as ovals and the functions organize around these systems. While the content is focused at the state level it can be applied to local systems work as well.