How Do We Work Together?

Building the capacity of your partnership

Partnerships experience different developmental stages. In the beginning months of working together, your partnership needs to develop certain capacities and strengths as a group in order to be able to take on the tasks of implementing shared activities and interventions and resolving the problems that inevitably arise. **One important asset will be a shared vision:** how does the initiative propose to address the needs of children and youth that all partnership members care about? This shared vision will allow the partnership to participate in decision making that benefits it as a whole; and it will guide much of the work that individual partners perform as part of the collaboration.

Once your partnership has reached consensus on your shared vision, you will want to begin incorporating the collaborative structures and processes required to achieve it. One way to start is by asking: What level of working together is necessary to achieve the changes we envision? The table below describes the different ways in which partners can work together.

Ways Partners Can Work Together

LEVEL/TYPE	PURPOSE	STRUCTURE	PROCESS
1. Networking	Share of information	Loose, flexible, nonhierarchical	Little conflict, informal communication
2. Alliance	Limit duplication of services	Semiformal Communication hub	Facilitative leaders, complex decision-making
3. Partnership	Share resources	Defined roles, central body of decision-makers	Autonomous leadership, group decision -making
4. Partnership	Share ideas and resources	Formal defined roles, all members decision-makers	Shared leadership, formal decision-making
5. Collaboration	Build interdependent systems to address common goals; accomplish shared vision; promote systems change	Consensus decision-making, formal roles and timeline	Ideas and decisions equally shared, highly developed communication

To achieve the maximum level of working together—collaboration—you will want to develop the following *best practices of collaborative leadership:*

1. Management structures and roles are clearly defined and are operational
2. Partner organizations provide adequate supervision, including attention to accountability and quality control of the services delivered
3. The frequency of meetings for the coalition and structures for communication have been established
4. Management tools (e.g., a logic model, other planning tools) are used to keep the coalition on track
5. Collaborative decision making is the norm for the coalition
6. The partners share responsibility for achieving the coalition's goals and understand that partners have different levels of responsibility
7. Partners engage a broad spectrum of the community in the coalition

EDC Learning transforms lives.

How Do We Share Leadership?
Best Practices of Collaborative Leadership

1. Management structures and roles are clearly defined and are operational
2. Partner organizations provide adequate supervision, including attention to accountability and quality control of the services delivered
3. The frequency of meetings for the coalition and structures for communication have been established
4. Management tools (e.g., a logic model, other planning tools) are used to keep the coalition on track
5. Collaborative decision making is the norm for the coalition
6. The partners share responsibility for achieving the coalition's goals and understand that partners have different levels of responsibility
7. Partners engage a broad spectrum of the community in the coalition

Use the following tool to gauge and guide your partnership's progress towards best practices in collaborative leadership:

Best Practices of Collaborative Leadership
by Implementation Stage

1. Management structures and roles are clearly defined and are operational

START UP BENCHMARKS
- The partnership includes senior representatives from key agencies
- Partners have created a preliminary Memorandum Of Agreement/Understanding (MOA/MOU)
- The partnership has proposed structures for its work
- The partnership develop plans that specify the action steps to be taken, persons responsible, timelines, and how information will be communicated to partner agencies

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

IMPLEMENTATION BENCHMARKS
- Partners understand their roles and other members' roles within their partnership
- Partners have determined who will oversee deliverables and how deliverables will be monitored
- Partners have developed protocols for dealing with and making decisions related to program modifications
- Processes and decisions related to the partnership are communicated to partners on a regular basis

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

FULL OPERATION BENCHMARKS
- Partners contribute to tasks from start-up through implementation and sustainability
- Partners regularly report on and review the status of activities, staffing, capacity, and data collection, tracking, identifying problems and problem solving as appropriate
- The partnership's structure and functions are regularly revised
- There is an internal communications strategy to ensure partners' continued involvement in and support of the partnership

EDC Learning transforms lives.

- When new collaborative members join, they are provided with the necessary information, materials, and support to become active members
- Decision making related to resolving conflict and grievances is informed by clearly articulated policies and procedures

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

2. Partner organizations provide adequate supervision, including attention to accountability and quality control of the services delivered

START UP BENCHMARKS
- The partners understand all responsibilities associated with the partnership
- An organizational chart depicting lines of responsibility is developed
- Partners understand the roles and responsibilities of those implementing EBPs and carrying out activities.
- Discussions about quality control are carried out and a quality control plan is developed

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

IMPLEMENTATION BENCHMARKS
- Partners understand the system in place for maintaining quality control
- Partners carry out the system for maintaining quality control
- Partners oversee and monitor quality for each aspect of their collaborative work by following the quality control plan and checking in with the implementers
- Partners work together to improve quality as needed
- Partners report to the partnership about quality control issues

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

FULL OPERATION BENCHMARKS
- The partnership supports all partners in solving complex quality control issues
- Partners regularly report on and review the status of quality control issues.
- When new members join the partnership, they are provided with quality control information

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

3. The frequency of meetings for the partnership and structures for communication have been established

START UP
- Partnership meetings are held on a regular basis but members' attendance is somewhat irregular
- There is no communication system in place for partners to connect with each other between meetings
- Contact among partners is on an ad hoc basis, typically occurring just between one partner at a time
- Partners have not committed to taking on any specific tasks

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

IMPLEMENTATION BENCHMARKS
- Meeting minutes are circulated but not used
- Communication flows from the partnership to partners, but not from partners to each other

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

FULL OPERATION BENCHMARKS
- Partnership meetings occur on a monthly or bimonthly basis, with as close to full attendance as possible
- Partnership meetings follow a set schedule that is agreed upon by the partners
- Subcommittees of the partnership have been formed, with tasks to complete between meetings as needed

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

4. **Management tools (e.g., a logic model, other planning tools) are used to keep the partnership on track**

   START UP
   - The partnership created a logic model and other plans with minimal input from the partners
   - The partnership has written versions of its logic model, implementation plan, and communications plan

     ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

   IMPLEMENTATION BENCHMARKS
   - The partners have given input to the development of the logic model and have reviewed the completed logic model
   - The partners have collaborated to develop the implementation plan
   - The partners have given input to the communications plan

     ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

   FULL OPERATION BENCHMARKS
   - The partners were actively involved in developing the logic model and collaborate to revise it as needed
   - The partners use the logic model to build support for the partnership within their agency
   - The partners collaborate to develop the partnership's implementation plan, communications plan, sustainability plan, and strategic plan

     ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

5. **Collaborative decision making is the norm for the partnership**

   START UP
   - Representatives of the partner agencies are involved in the launching of the partnership
   - Partners run partnership meetings in an inclusive fashion, encouraging everyone to participate
   - Major decisions are made by the entire partnership

     ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

IMPLEMENTATION BENCHMARKS
- Partners contribute to developing the agenda for partnership meetings and rotate who facilitates the meeting
- Partners freely express their opinions and decisions are made either by consensus or majority, according to what members have agreed
- Partners have established a process for resolving conflicts and solving problems

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

FULL OPERATION BENCHMARKS
- Planning for the partnership is a product of collaboration among the partners
- The partnership use a clearly articulated decision-making process that focuses on problem solving and consensus building
- The functioning of the partnership is monitored and discussed, and mid-course corrections are made as needed

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

6. *The partners share responsibility for achieving the partnership's goals and understand that partners have different levels of responsibility*

START UP BENCHMARKS
- Every partner understands his or her agency's role and responsibilities in the partnership
- Members do not fully understand each other's roles and responsibilities

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

IMPLEMENTATION BENCHMARKS
- Partners are aware of their own and each other's responsibilities related to implementation
- Some coordination of activities occurs among partners, especially when their goals overlap

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*

FULL OPERATION BENCHMARKS
- Partners share responsibility for achieving the goals of the partnership and collaborate to support the activities being implemented by others
- Partners understand each members' role and responsibilities in the partnership

  ☐ *Check here if this level of activity most closely resembles your community*