

Head Start
a **to** **Z**



Head Start A to Z, 2.0



Communication



Early Childhood
National Centers

NATIONAL CENTER ON

Program Management and Fiscal Operations

Learning Objectives

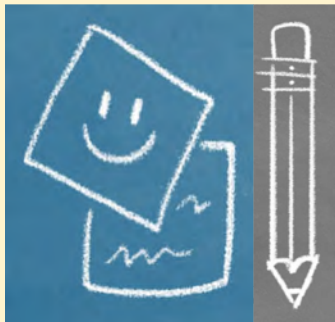
In this module, participants will:



- Learn the foundational elements of internal and external communication
- Recognize the central role of leaders in creating and maintaining effective communication



- Identify key considerations in communication planning



- Learn key elements of branding, social media policy, and crisis communication planning

Six Guiding Principles for A to Z Learning Modules

1

Successful programs are learning organizations.

2

The effective delivery of services grows out of strong systems.

3

Sound decision-making is informed by quality data.

4

Relationship-building is at the heart of transformational leadership.

5

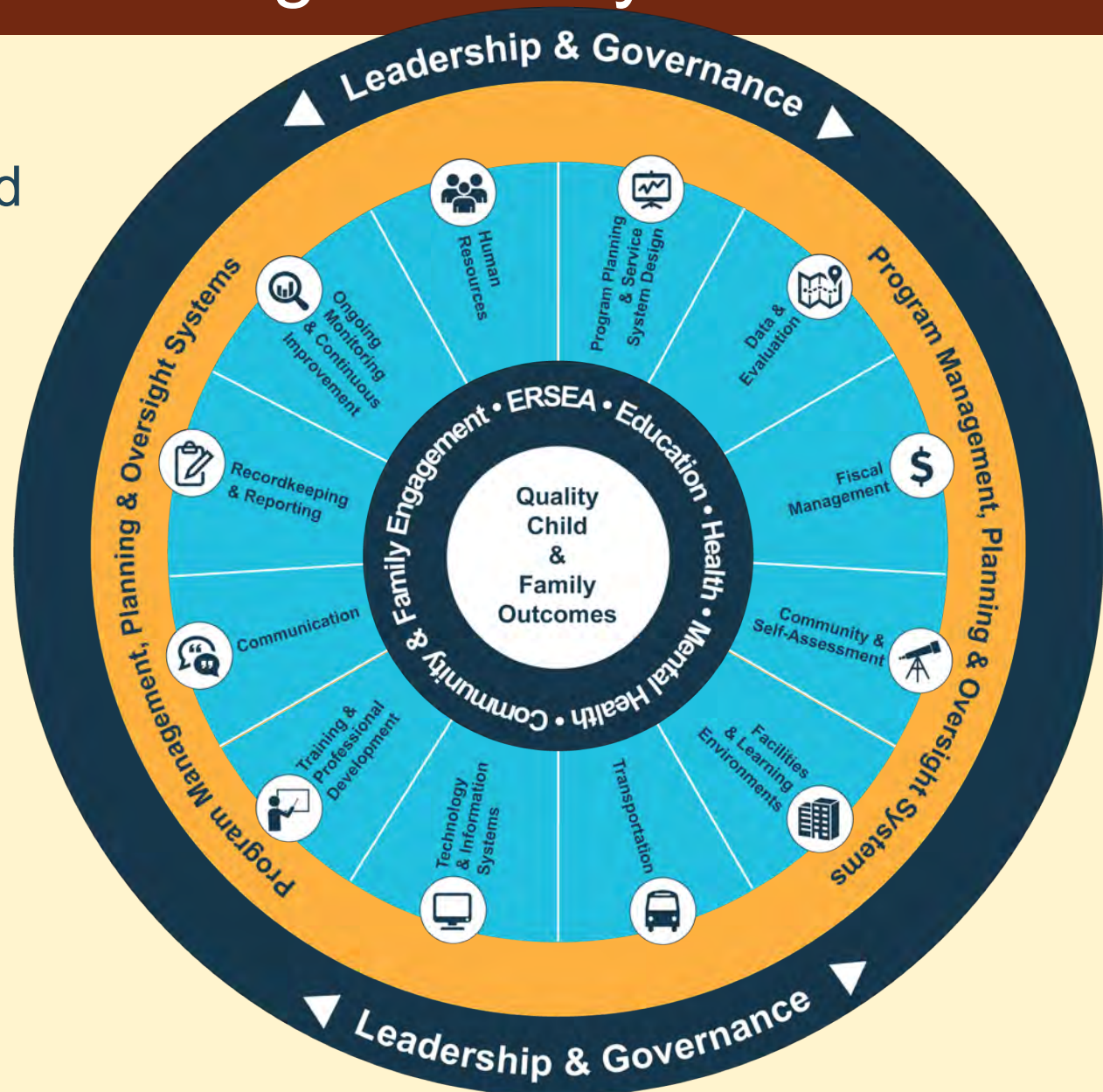
School readiness for all is our driving goal.

6

Culturally and linguistically diverse organizations rely on intentional, specific, and coordinated approaches.

Head Start Management Systems Wheel

Five-Year
Project Period



Communication



Communication

- Builds relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- Helps programs "tell their stories" as they pursue program and school readiness goals

45 CFR §1301 – Program Governance

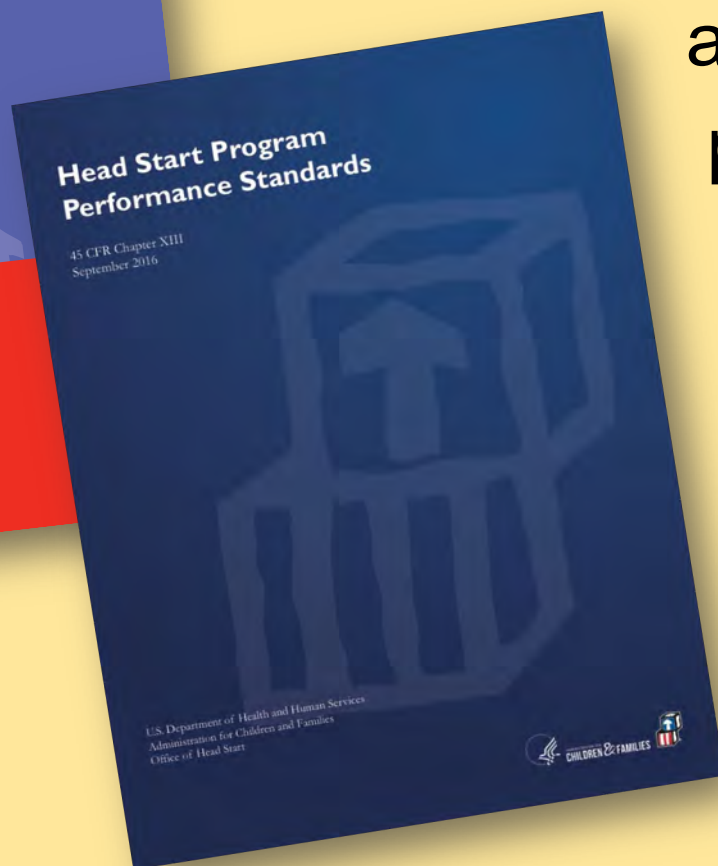
45 CFR §1302 – Program Operations

45 CFR §1303 – Financial and Administrative Requirements

45 CFR §1304 – Federal Administrative Procedures

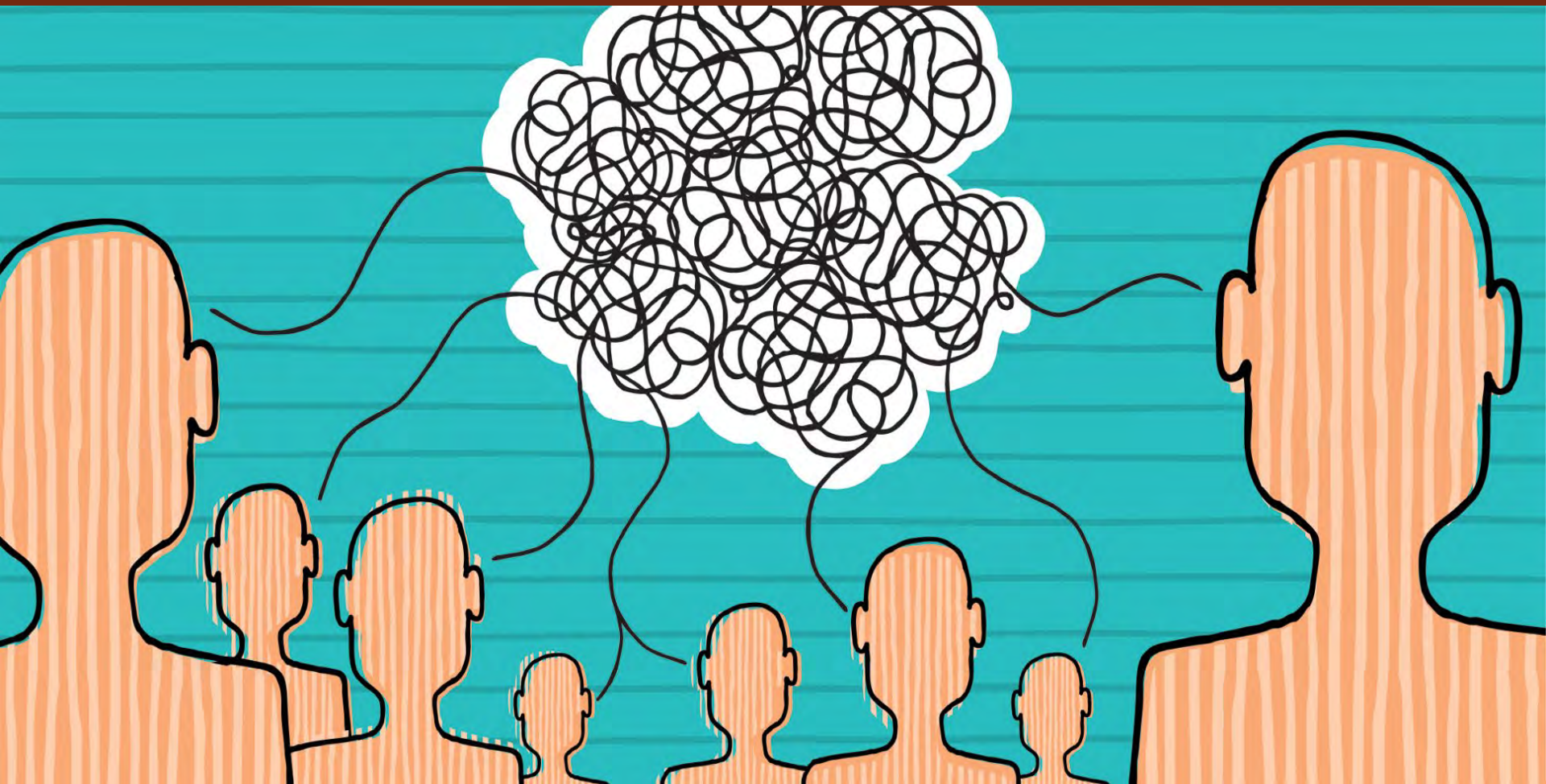
45 CFR §1305 – Definitions

Communication Requirements



Sec. 644(a)(2)(a–h) – Each Head Start agency shall make available to the public a report disclosing specific program and financial information

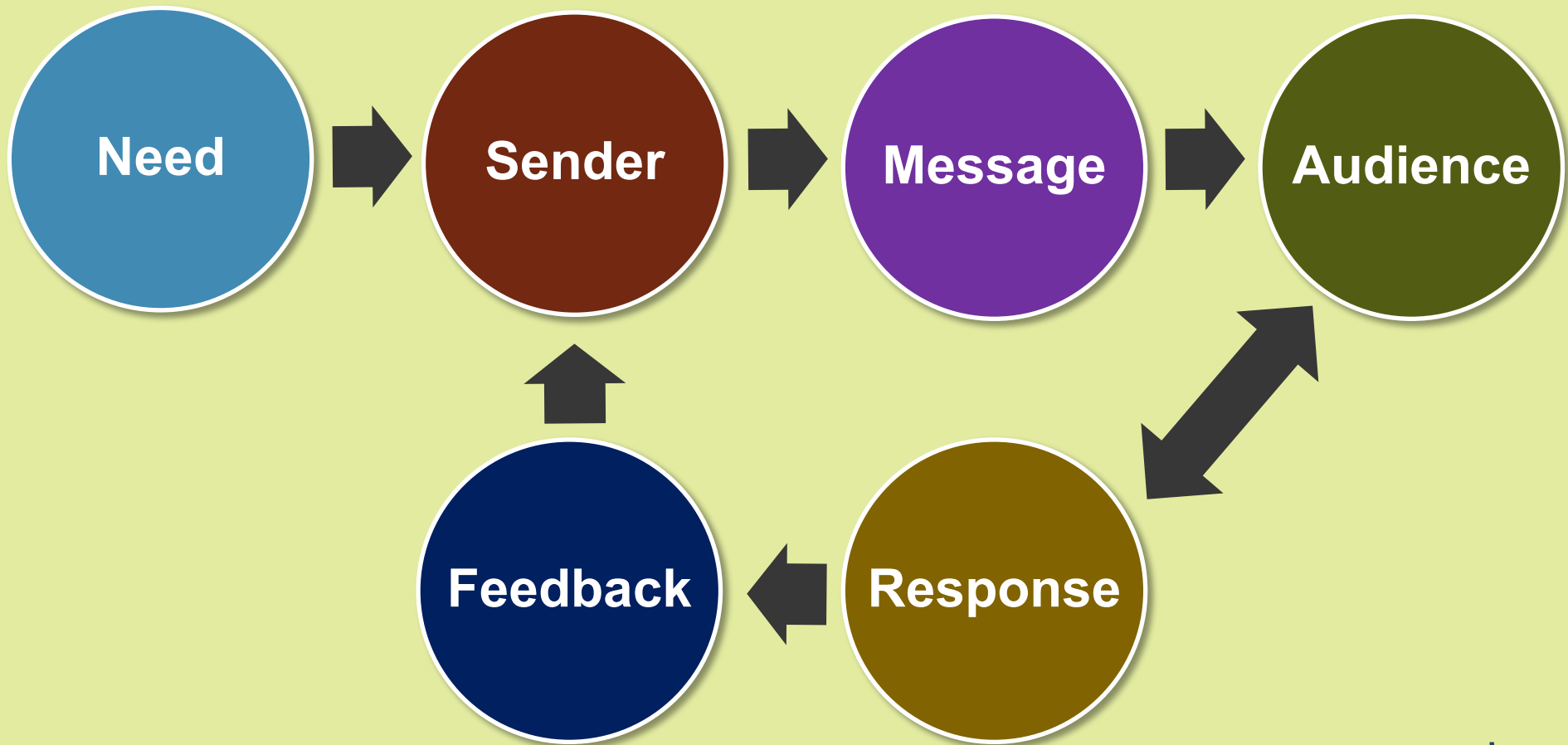
What Communication Is and Does



The Tasks Communication Performs

- Exchange information
- Prepare plans and policies
- Track progress toward goals
- Increase efficiency
- Troubleshoot problems
- Promote services
- Manage controversy
- Inform stakeholders
- Gain support

Elements of Communication



Communication Barriers



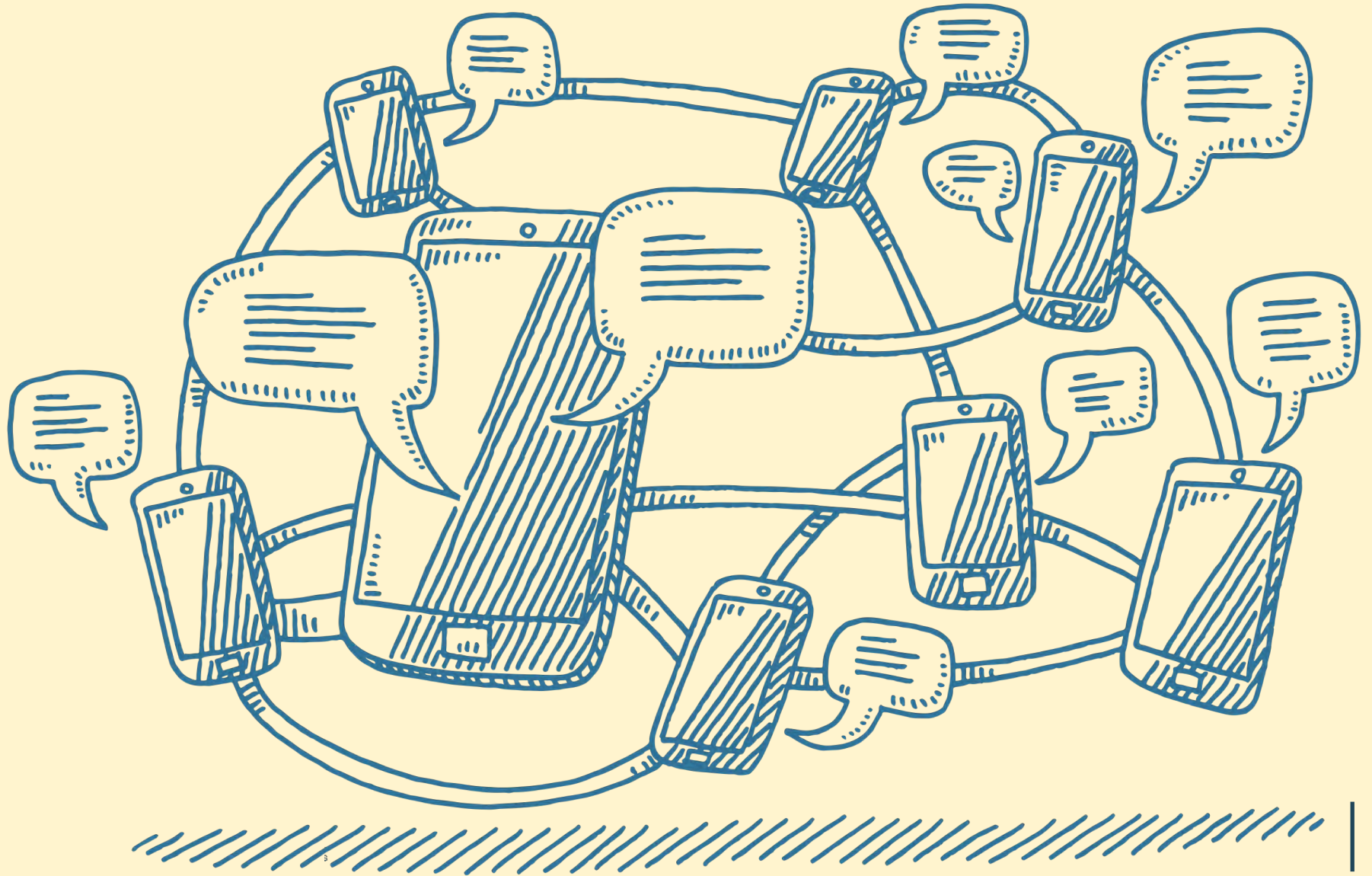
- Limited knowledge or vocabulary
- Differences in interpretation
- Language differences
- Inappropriate use of expressions
- Strong or polarized viewpoints
- Ambiguity

Types of Communication

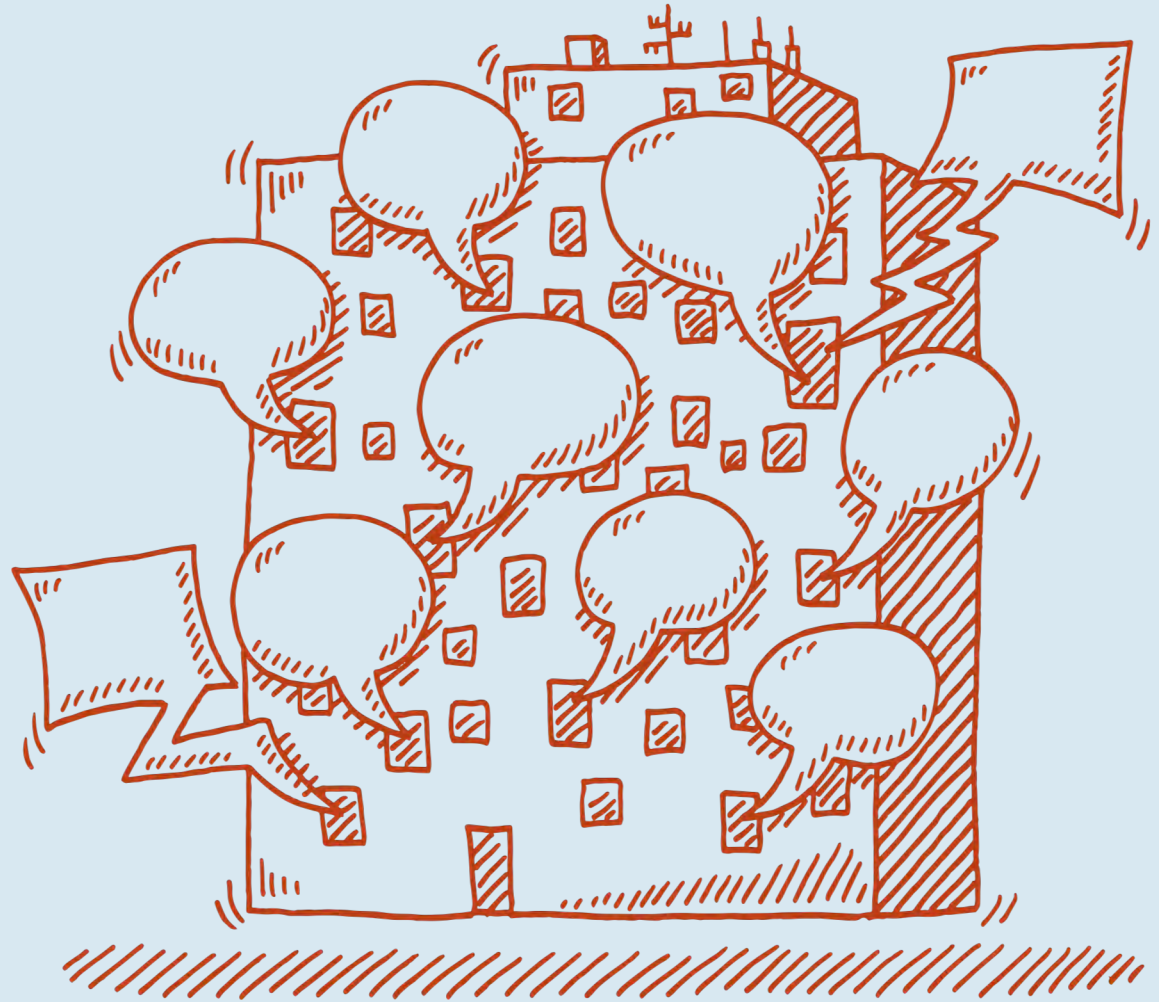


- Internal or external
- Written, verbal, or visual
- Formal or informal

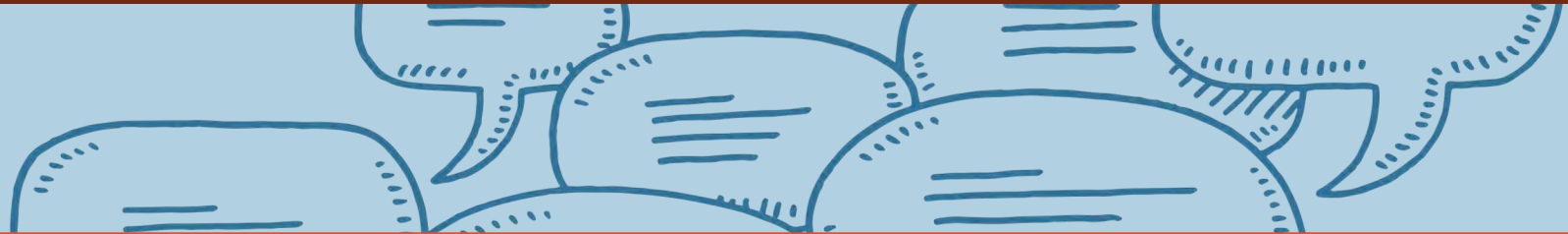
Internal Communication



Formal and Informal Styles



Formal and Informal Styles



FORMAL

Pre-defined channels

Official

Timely and systematic

More confidential

Reliable

Slow

Maintains written trail

INFORMAL

All directions

Grapevine

Free-flowing

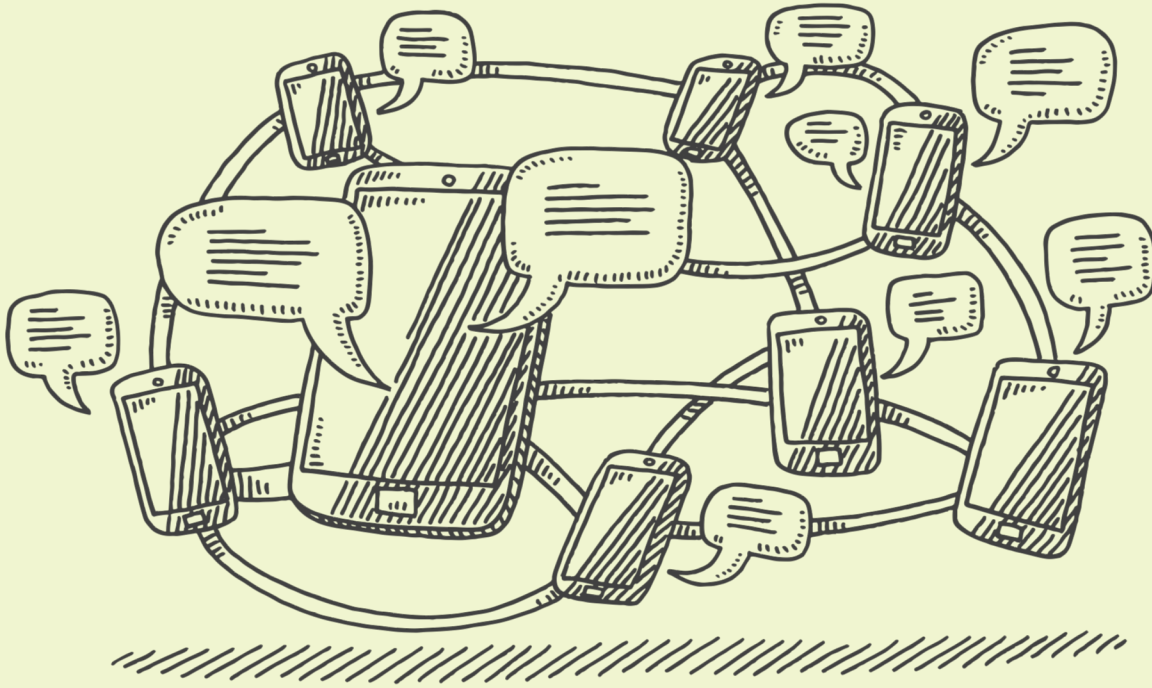
Less confidential

Less reliable

Fast

Often doesn't maintain trail

Your Internal Communication Map



Hallmarks of Good Internal Communication

- Leaders create a culture where staff ideas are sought and valued.
- Leaders are excellent communicators and listeners.
- Mechanisms exist to disseminate information to staff and help staff communicate with one another.
- Leaders survey staff about communication.

Huddle Technique



Teams



When teams come together on a regular basis to share news and plan, our programs work better and we can accomplish more with children and families.

External Communication



See Through the Eyes of Your Audience



Communicate in Images



Use Emotion Words

A photograph of three young children sitting on a carpeted floor, engaged in play with wooden blocks and dinosaur toys. The child on the left is a young girl with light brown hair in two buns, wearing a denim dress and a colorful beaded necklace. The child in the middle is a young boy with dark curly hair, wearing a grey t-shirt, holding a grey dinosaur toy. The child on the right is a young girl with dark hair in braids, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, holding a wooden block. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

Confidence

Trust

Teamwork

Adventure

The Power of Stories



Stories:

- Help us remember
- Influence how we decide
- Link us to our sense of generosity

Stories need:

- Characters
- Desire
- Conflict
- Beginning, middle, and end

Communication Planning



Creating a Plan

Desired action

Audience

Goal

Message

Modes of communication

Your Communication Planners

- Program leadership
- Communications specialists
- Administrative or program staff with responsibility for writing press releases or newsletters, posting on social media, updating the program website, or carrying out other communications activities
- Staff responsible for the community assessment, annual report, or other regular processes with strong communication components

The Importance of Your Brand

- A brand is an idea that stakeholders have about your organization's character, core values, and mission.
- Developing a strong, well-defined identity is important to Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- Building a recognizable, trustworthy brand is crucial to attracting and retaining a base of stakeholders, donors, and partners who will support your program over time.
- Brands are connected to reputation, which means they can be tarnished by scandal or bad press.

Branded Promotions Audit



Social Media



Benefits and Risks of Social Media



Crafting Social Media Workplace Policies

- Who posts on your social media pages, and what guidelines are in place for which information gets posted?
- Should you allow individual staff members to use social media for personal reasons at work? If so, what limitations should you impose?
- If you prohibit or limit personal social networking at work, how will you enforce the rules?
- When employees are posting on social media in their off-duty time, do you want them to identify themselves as employees of Head Start or Early Head Start programs?
- Ask employees to behave appropriately online, but define what "appropriate" means.
- Ask families in your program to come to you with concerns rather than posting critical comments on social media.

Effective Crisis Communication

critical

urgent

ASAP!

Action Needed

immediate

important

don't wait

act now!

The Crisis Plan

- The crisis communications team members and 24/7 contact information
- Organizational spokesperson and 24/7 contact information
- Which stakeholders needs to be told about the crisis, when they should be told, and by whom
- Guidance on what types of information particular audiences need
- How information should be communicated (e.g., emails, social media posts, telephone, press briefings or interviews, etc.)
- Guidance about when to include an "ask"



Is This Situation a Crisis?



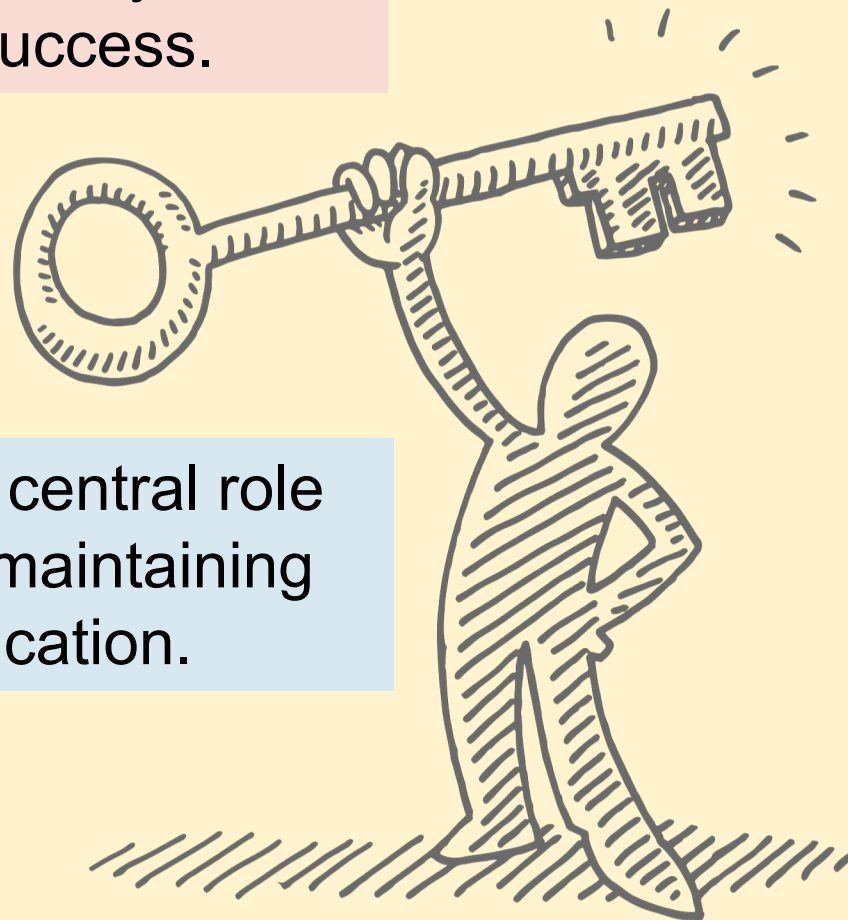
**ARE
YOU
READY
?**

- Your reputation could be harmed
- The impact or fallout will extend beyond your program
- The media is likely to take notice
- There will be a backlash from families, supporters, or partners
- Funding could be jeopardized
- Your program will become a trending topic on social media

Key Messages

Strong internal and external communication is key to organizational success.

Communication planning is based on organizational goals.



Leaders have a central role in creating and maintaining strong communication.

Branding, social media, and crisis communication are important aspects of overall communication.

Closing Reflections

What have I learned?

What will I do with what I've learned?

What excites or concerns me about what I learned?

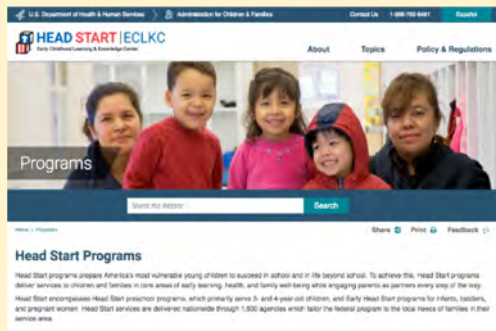


Related ECLKC Resources



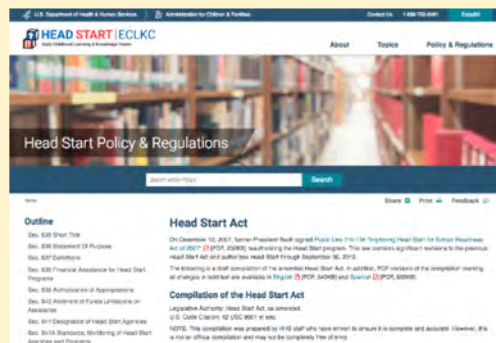
About Us

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/office-head-start-ohs>



Head Start Programs

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/programs/article/head-start-programs>



Head Start Act

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/head-start-act>



Contact PMFO



pmfo@ecetta.info



<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/ncpmpfo>



Call us: 888-874-5469



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Program Management and Fiscal Operations