



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships

SHAPING THE EARLY
HEAD START-CHILD CARE
PARTNERSHIP:
**AN ASSESSMENT
CHECKLIST**



Shaping The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership: An Assessment Checklist will assist partners in identifying skills, developing strategies, and strengthening the results of the partnerships. It is appropriate for partnerships that are in the early and later stages of the partnership; the installation, initial implementation, and full installation implementation stages as described by implementation science. This checklist should be completed with all actively involved partners.

Directions: Read the statements below and use the checkbox to determine the status of the partnerships.

The tool consists of six sections with space to identify needed action steps. Partners may want to focus on one section at a time.

1. Planning and Developing the Partnership
2. Communicating, Decision Making, and Negotiating in the Partnership
3. Managing the Partnership
4. Leading the Partnership
5. Assessing and Stimulating Continual Quality Improvement of the Partnership
6. Partnering With the Greater Community.

SECTION I:

Planning and Developing the Partnership

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
1.	Articulate with your partners the partnership's goals and needs; set priorities and timelines in the partnership agreement or contract.				
2.	Clarify and commit to writing down the responsibilities of each partner, the governing body, and the policy council or committee so that each group understands its distinct roles and points of intersection.				
3.	Schedule adequate time for partnership planning and development meetings.				
4.	Develop conflict resolution and impasse procedures for the partnership.				
5.	Use all viable funding sources to enhance the partnership's services.				
6.	Ensure that financial allocations for partners are fair and adequate to allow partners to meet new expectations and deliver new services.				
7.	Identify and clearly communicate the financial and staff resources each program will contribute to the partnership initiative.				
8.	Link technical assistance to partners' development or training.				
9.	Involve all partners in establishing and implementing a systematic, meaningful annual program self-assessment.				

SECTION I:

Planning and Developing the Partnership

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
10.	Ensure that partners are kept informed of, and can implement all federal, state, and tribal requirements.				
11.	Use community and family assessment data to develop a comprehensive and responsive approach to working with families.				
12.	Agree on desired outcomes and outcome measures for children, families, and staff and include these in the partnership agreement.				
13.	Build in support for partners' efforts to build a highly qualified and skilled staff.				
14.	Assist partners in implementing effective supervision systems for their staff members.				
15.	Develop effective ways to involve other Head Start managers, specialists, and staff in supporting the partnership and in building capacity.				
16.	Work toward individualizing the partnership's design and services to respond to the changing needs of the community's families.				
17.	Ensure that parents served by all partners actively contribute to shaping the partnership initiative.				

SECTION II:

Communicating, Decision Making, and Negotiating in The Partnership

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
1.	Allow ample time for partners to discuss the agreement and negotiate all major issues, including the financial aspects of the partnership.				
2.	Ensure that each partner's staff are aware of and understand the partnership's purpose, goals, structure, and plans.				
3.	Hone negotiation and communication skills and maintain a commitment to strengthening relationships with each partner and to the partnership's continual quality improvement.				
4.	Support and stimulate participatory decision making with staff members, families, the community and state level policy leaders.				
5.	Promote effective communication between governing bodies and the policy council or committee as it relates to the partnership and its initiatives.				
6.	Ensure that parent groups, the policy council or committee, and governing bodies receive timely information so they can make informed decisions.				
7.	Use sound communication skills to proactively resolve differences and to avoid escalation and conflict among partners, staff members, and parents.				
8.	Ensure that parents have a voice in hiring qualified staff members with appropriate skills, knowledge, and beliefs about children and families.				
9.	Articulate, and include in the partnership agreement, the process for engaging in shared decision making.				

SECTION II:

Communicating, Decision Making, and Negotiating in The Partnership

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
10.	Guide decisions through the approval processes to avoid unnecessary bottlenecks and delays.				
11.	Develop written procedures for resolving internal disputes, community complaints, and impasses.				
12.	State observations about each partner's operations in a specific, nonjudgmental manner when providing feedback.				
13.	Make full use of technology to maximize communication, information sharing, and decision making among the partners.				
14.	Establish systems to gather information about children's and families' interests and needs; use the data to guide decision making about the partnership's design and services.				
15.	Create an environment of openness and questioning to stimulate continual quality improvement.				
16.	View diverse opinions and conflict as a stimulus for positive change.				

SECTION III:

Managing the Partnership

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
1.	Foster among all partners a culture that values continual quality improvement, building in management supports for each partner.				
2.	Work productively and cooperatively with key leaders of each partner.				
3.	Meet regularly with the partnership team (no less than twice monthly) and contribute to the team's efforts.				
4.	Engage in partnership meetings in a constructive, efficient, results-oriented manner.				
5.	Promote and support an integrated service delivery model in the partnership.				
6.	Recognize that partners' skills and capacity are built through shared responsibility, involvement, and accomplishment of tasks.				
7.	Use the expertise of all partners, as well as internal and external consultants, to build capacity within the partnership.				
8.	Refer regularly to the written partnership agreements or contracts to guide the partnership initiative.				
9.	Review and revise partnership plans at least annually and engage each partner's staff and participating parents in revisions.				

SECTION III:

Managing the Partnership

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
10.	Keep abreast of Head Start, CCDF, state, tribal, and other regulations, information, and materials that affect the partnership.				
11.	Assist partners in developing, instituting, and using effective management information tracking systems to achieve accountability, and use technology to assist in this effort.				
12.	Ensure that partners have systems for maintaining orderly and confidential records.				
13.	Regularly review written requirements to ensure compliance with federal, state, tribal, and local regulations.				
14.	Participate in developing Head Start and other grant applications and work plans and ensure that partnership issues are addressed.				
15.	Schedule adequate time during each week to support the partnership.				
16.	Recognize and talk regularly about the strengths of each partnering provider.				
17.	Ensure that partners have sound personnel policies such as recruitment, qualifications, compensation, evaluation, and staff development.				
18.	Support partners in their efforts to conduct employee appraisals and develop realistic and measurable professional goals for staff.				
19.	Listen to issues raised by partners and, when feasible, adjust the partnership's operations.				

SECTION IV:

Leading the Partnership

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
1.	See yourself as responsible for building and sustaining a supportive, cohesive team environment for the partnership.				
2.	Foster the development of a partnership team that collectively holds expertise in all early education content areas and can implement a coordinated approach.				
3.	Promote a responsive team approach and high morale among all partnership players.				
4.	Participate as an active and supportive member of the partnership team.				
5.	Develop a spirit of collegiality and cooperation and a greater sense of community in the partnership.				
6.	Support the creation of a community early education partnership vision by involving numerous stakeholders.				
7.	Create opportunities for ongoing leadership development for parent leaders from all participating partners.				
8.	Establish high expectations for all partners and believe that, collectively, the partnership team can improve each partner's services.				
9.	Value wellness for yourself and all partners so that all can function at their full potential.				

SECTION IV:

Leading the Partnership

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
10.	Ensure that the partnership and its families and staff reflect an appropriate racial, cultural, and gender mix.				
11.	Establish and work toward high professional and ethical standards.				
12.	Draw on topics and best practice in all fields affecting the well-being of children, families, and staff members to stimulate discussion among partners and to create a learning culture for the partnership.				
13.	Promote the view that parents and the community are valued customers.				
14.	Stimulate innovation, creativity, and cooperation among partners.				
15.	Encourage partners to engage in personal and professional growth activities.				
16.	Institute a strong, supportive approach to providing technical assistance to each partner's staff that builds relationships that foster trust and openness.				
17.	Provide support to partnerships in other communities and share your partnership's successes about lessons learned.				
18.	See early education partnerships as a vehicle for creating positive change for children and families in the community, state, and nation.				

SECTION V:

Assessing and Stimulating Continual Quality Improvement of the Partnership

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
1.	Draw on key data and observations to develop and refine partnership plans with all partners.				
2.	Establish systems that will help partners achieve shared outcomes for children, families, and staff.				
3.	Familiarize yourself and others in the partnership with program and partnership evaluation tools.				
4.	Use team meetings to assess partnership activities and practices and to evaluate progress in attaining outcomes.				
5.	Seek and value the involvement of partners' staff, parents, and the community in the annual self- assessment process.				
6.	Use ongoing observation and self-assessment, as well as Head Start's federal monitoring process, to evaluate the partnership's effectiveness in achieving standards and outcomes and to stimulate the continual growth of the partnership.				
7.	Ensure that systems are in place throughout the partnership to gather and analyze data from numerous sources (for example: community assessment, child assessment, staff evaluations, Head Start's Program Information Report).				
8.	Draw on data sources to evaluate the partnership's effectiveness in responding to the needs of the community, each program, children, parents, families, and staff.				
9.	Communicate your observations and the results of data and document assessment in clear, direct, specific ways and develop with each partner specific steps for quality improvement.				

SECTION V:

Assessing and Stimulating Continual Quality Improvement of the Partnership

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
10.	Build in adequate support from all Head Start specialty area managers and consultants to ensure partnership success.				
11.	Document the positive aspects of each partner's operations, as well as those that need improvement.				
12.	Consider participation in Quality Rating and Improvement System and/or national accreditation as other vehicles to enhance and achieve high quality.				
13.	Link partners' self-assessment results to partnership and development priorities.				
14.	Adopt a comprehensive view of technical assistance and training that uses all modes of learning, builds providers' competencies, and results in improved practices that benefit children, families, and each partner's staff.				
15.	Systematically assist partners with their staff and program training needs and interests.				
16.	Help partners link the design and evaluation of their trainings to their staff performance goals and outcomes.				

SECTION VI:

Partnering With the Greater Community

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
1.	View membership on the policy council or committee, governing bodies of all partners, and advisory committees as an opportunity to build and sustain collaborations with a wide range of community groups.				
2.	Assist each partner in linking with key community agencies and programs.				
3.	Involve a wide range of community programs and agencies in assessing community needs and in developing plans to enhance program services for children and families.				
4.	Use community assessment and program planning processes to establish collaboration goals and develop concrete action steps.				
5.	Consider all possible community collaborations, including those with businesses, to advance the partnership and each partner's services to children and their families.				
6.	Develop written Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to formalize the link with other community organizations.				
7.	Involve people from the greater community in the partnership's annual self-assessment activities.				
8.	As a partnership, build solid relationships with local education agencies to create smooth transitions for children and families.				
9.	Incorporate staff responsibilities for working with the greater community into the program's position descriptions, where appropriate. Make sure that your staff has sufficient time to accomplish community partnership work.				

SECTION VI:

Partnering With the Greater Community

		Needs to be addressed	Under discussion	Finalized	Action steps
10.	Assist all program decision makers, staff members, and parents in acquiring the skills needed to further the development of community partnerships and collaboration.				
11.	Annually assess the partnership efforts of your program and staff.				
12.	Include community leaders in the program's decision-making bodies, and encourage partners to do the same.				
13.	Draw on the power of the partnership to develop new community linkages and to advance early education issues, such as professional development and staff compensation.				
14.	Use the power of the partnership to effect systems change, at the community, state, and tribal levels, that improves outcomes for children and families.				



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