

**CHECKLIST: YOUR CURRENT COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES
STAGES OF COLLABORATION**

Yes	No	
		Program-wide, is there a clear understanding of your program's mission, goals & available resources for children & families?
		Has your agency completed a community needs assessment within the last year?
		Would having a collaborative partner strengthen and/or enhance the services you currently provide for children and families?
		Have you identified the benefits to having a partner?
		Has collaboration activity been discussed with the program parents and staff, allowing them the opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns, and provide input?
		Have individuals within your program been identified to represent your agency in the collaboration?
		Do you currently have formal or informal "working agreements" with other agencies in your community?
		Have you developed a list of criteria for potential collaborative partners?
		Are you aware of any agencies in the community that meet these criteria?
		Are the services they offer compatible with the services offered by your agency?
		Are you familiar with their management structure? How would it adapt to working with another program?
		What are the resources they might bring to the partnership?
		Have you developed a plan of how to get potential partners to the table to begin collaboration discussions?

COLLABORATION STAGE ONE:

GETTING TOGETHER CHECKLIST

Question	Yes	No	Action Required
Has a small group decided to act?			
Do the players meet the following criteria for membership in the collaborative?			
Clout			
Commitment			
Compatible Mission			
Diversity			
Other			
Are the right people involved, including:			
Consumers			
Public sector organizations?			
Private providers/non-profits?			
Business?			
Other?			
Have partners established a strong commitment to collaborate as evidenced by:			
Deciding whether collaboration will work?			
Agreeing on a unifying theme/mission?			
Establishing shared leadership?			
Setting ground rules?			
Securing/committing financial resources?			
Have partners reflected on their work & celebrated their accomplishments?			

**COLLABORATION STAGE TWO:
BUILDING TRUST & OWNERSHIP CHECKLIST**

Question	Yes	No	Action Required
Has the collaborative built a base of knowledge by:			
Learning about each other?			
Learning to value personal style differences & resolve conflict?			
Achieving small victories?			
Has the collaborative conducted a comprehensive community assessment that:			
Identifies indicators of child & family needs?			
Produces a profile of child & family well being in the community?			
Assess existing service delivery system?			
Maps existing community services?			
Identifies other community reform efforts?			
Have partners defined a shared vision & goals for changing services by:			
Learning from each other's experiences?			
Asking hard questions?			
Writing a vision statement?			
Has the collaborative developed a mission statement that clarifies its role in the community?			
Has the collaborative communicated its vision & mission to the community and received public endorsement from the community's other institutions as well as from funders?			
Have the partners reflected on their work & celebrated their accomplishments?			

**COLLABORATION STAGE THREE:
DEVELOPING A PLAN CHECKLIST**

Questions	Yes	No	Action Required
Has the collaborative narrowed its focus to a specific area & service delivery type?			
Has the collaborative conducted an analysis of the area that:			
Identifies key leaders who should be involved in the planning?			
Assesses the service delivery system?			
Has the collaborative defined target outcomes?			
Has the collaborative engaged a person to direct the service delivery & engaged this person in the planning process?			
Has the collaborative developed a strategy for involving leaders, school principals, teachers, agency directors & frontline workers?			
In making service delivery choices, did the collaborative:			
Select what services they would offer?			
Develop criteria for assessing its design?			
Determine a service delivery location that meets the objectives?			
Decide & define how to finance the services?			
Has the collaborative developed the technical tools of collaboration, including:			
Interagency case management?			
Common intake & assessment forms?			
Common eligibility determination process?			
Procedures for dealing with confidentiality & shared information?			
Have the partners signed a written agreement?			
Has the collaborative defined its governance structure?			
Is a structure in place to help the program manager deal with operational issues?			
Have partners reflected on their work & celebrated their accomplishments?			

**COLLABORATION STAGE FOUR:
TAKING ACTION CHECKLIST**

Questions	Yes	No	Action Required
Do job descriptions for collaboration staff reflect the collaborative vision of high quality service delivery & responsibility for achieving outcomes?			
Has the collaborative designed & implemented a comprehensive & interdisciplinary staff training program?			
Are mechanisms in place to facilitate communications & to nurture the relationship between collaboration & other agency staff?			
Is the collaborative implementing an inclusive outreach approach?			
Have partners incorporated awareness & respect for diversity into the collaborative?			
Is the collaborative evaluating progress by:			
Using process evaluation techniques?			
Measuring outcomes?			
Have the partners reflected on their work & celebrated their accomplishments?			

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

SEVEN KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER ...

1. Collaboration is not a quick fix for many of the vexing problems society faces. It will not build affordable housing, ... end poverty or stop the tragedy of abuse and neglect.
2. Collaboration is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Policy makers must ask what problems collaboration is designed to solve prior to proposing collaboration as the means to solve them.
3. Developing interagency collaboration is extremely time consuming and process intensive. ... collaboration will not create resources. Collaboration is not always the best investment of resources; depending on local needs and circumstances, some services may be better provided without multiple agency involvement.
4. Interagency collaboration does not guarantee the development of a client-centered service system, nor does the establishment of a trusting relationship between an at-risk child or family and a helping adult. If that is the goal of policy makers, they must make collaboration ... a central part of their initiatives and not trust it to occur because agencies are required to coordinate with one another at the administrative/management level.
5. Collaboration occurs among people – not among institutions. Workers must be supported at each level of organization where collaboration is expected to take place. ... Interagency agreements – important mechanisms to clarify, formalize, and spell out relationships and avoid misunderstandings among agencies – must be structured to support interactions at all levels.
6. Creative problem-solving skills must be developed and nurtured in those expected to collaborate. Among these skills are the ability to deal with the ambiguity and stress that increased discretion brings ... If workers are expected to share responsibility ... they must be provided with back-up support and guidance to assure that this autonomy is wisely employed ...
7. Collaboration is too important a concept to be trivialized. ... If the very real needs of children and families are to be met, service providers must find ways to meet these needs more comprehensively and more holistically. Ultimately, this will require more careful, considered, and extensive collaboration.

The above seven tips excerpted from C. Bruner, "Thinking Collaboratively: Ten Questions and Answers to Help Policy Makers Improve Children's Services," Washington, DC: Education and Human Services Consortium, 1991.