

Online Direct Link: <http://www.ILEarlyChildhoodCollab.org/git/sandtrapsgit.html>

DANGEROUS SAND TRAPS

Overview: All collaborations experience challenges. Some are inevitable, while others are dangerous sand traps that can be avoided by alert collaborative partners. Below are some common sand traps to avoid, or act upon if they appear.

Organizational Sand Traps

- Deciding not to begin until all partners are at the table
- Failing to set clear ground rules
- Losing sight of the collaborative's purpose and mission
- Choosing unattainable goals
- Trying to handle too many issues or actions at once
- Inadequate resources for carrying out plans
- Adverse community relations or media attention
- Not stopping to evaluate, reflect, and celebrate
- Not acknowledging or avoiding conflict

Leadership Sand Traps

- Trying to maintain control by resisting power-sharing or shared decision-making
- Allowing political pressure or individual partner self interests to drive the collaboration
- Not involving consumers, direct services staff, and policy-makers in critical decisions
- Lack of shared leadership
- Becoming too dependent on one or two partners to keep the collaborative going
- Unrealistic demands or expectations

Membership Sand Traps

- Attempting to act before partners establish a sense of trust and ownership in a shared vision
- Frequent turnover in partners or membership organizations
- Unequal distribution of work or recognition of members
- Not taking the time to involve opponents, who could easily block the collaborative's mission or goals
- Failing to recognize an individual partner's needs or self interests
- Turf battles or power struggles among partners

Adapted from Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank with Gelareh Asayesh, *“Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Profamily System of Education and Human Services”* (Washington, D.C.: US Dept. of Education and US Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1993).

BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION



- ❑ **Time**
- ❑ **Absence of Community Vision**
- ❑ **Resources**
- ❑ **Conflicting Requirements**

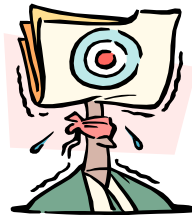
- ❑ **Attitude**



- ❑ **Turf-ism**
- ❑ **Lack of Shared Information**



- ❑ **Lack of Awareness of Need/Opportunity**
- ❑ **Loss of Autonomy**



- ❑ **Lack of Leadership**
- ❑ **Ineffective Inter- OR Intra-Agency Structures or Systems**
- ❑ **Comfort with the Status Quo/Resistance to Change**

