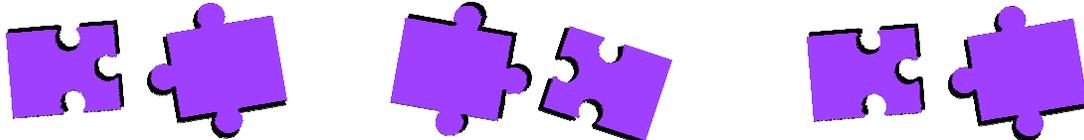




Developing Early Learning Guidelines in the Context of School Readiness Initiatives and Other State Efforts



As States move forward in developing or revising early learning guidelines, they do so in the context of other related efforts in their States. These efforts may include a national project such as the School Readiness Indicators initiative, an early care and education pilot project in the State, the State's KIDS COUNT project, Head Start or State prekindergarten program activities, research projects funded by State, Federal, or local governments or foundations, public will campaigns, or other initiatives.

One challenge for States is to develop their early learning guidelines in light of these other efforts and, to the extent it is feasible and desirable, make links between and among elements of these disparate efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the entire "system."

State groups working on early learning guidelines can take the following steps to coordinate these efforts:

1. Identify Related Projects and Areas of Overlap

- What other efforts are underway that are directly related to early learning guidelines? Examples include the development of birth-to-three guidelines by a State-level group, the development of a State prekindergarten program, and revisions of State child care licensing regulations.
- What other efforts are being undertaken with a focus on young children and related to key elements of early learning guidelines?

Process

- Are other groups working on early education issues starting up or in the early stages of their work? Are their visions/missions compatible with the work on early learning guidelines?

Content

- Are other groups working to develop content around issues related to early learning guidelines? (literacy would be a natural)

Implementation

- Are other groups working on children's issues moving ahead with implementation steps that could benefit the work on early learning guidelines? (examples include changes to the professional development or licensing systems, or public will campaigns)

Assessment

- Are other groups working on children's issues collecting data that is relevant to the work on early learning guidelines?

2. Assess the Desirability and Feasibility of Joint Efforts

- Is it desirable to join early learning guidelines work with the work of other groups?
 - What are the potential benefits?
 - What are the potential challenges?
- Is it feasible to work with other groups?
 - Are sufficient resources (time, money, personnel) available?
 - Are there insurmountable boundaries?
 - Is there already a culture of collaboration among potential partners? If not, will it be worth the effort to try to develop such a culture?

3. Coordinate Efforts When Possible

- Even when groups engaged in similar kinds of activities do not work closely together, those groups are likely to benefit from coordinated efforts. Examples include sharing data, sharing strategic plans, co-facilitating overlapping functions, and engaging stakeholders in support of more than one's own project.

4. Develop Communication Channels and Protocols

- Regardless of the depth of collaboration intended with other groups, keeping abreast of their work and keeping them informed of your work are strategies that are likely to lead to more coordinated efforts and more thoughtful strategizing. Regular email updates, phone calls among key personnel, occasional phone conferences, and sharing of newsletters and upcoming events can provide the kind of information that will enable the parties to respond more fully and creatively to circumstances as they arise.

5. Review Your Own Process to Determine When It Is Best to Collaborate

- Make use of the Early Learning Guidelines and Professional Development tools to assess your State's progress and identify next steps.
- Consider widening the group of stakeholders working on Early Learning Guidelines to include those working on related initiatives.