

A NINE STEP PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING A WRITTEN AGREEMENT

WHAT	HOW
Step 1. Create a shared vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Review the team’s description of quality early care & education & culture. ❑ Review what is, and isn’t, collaboration. ❑ Identify the team’s ideals for quality care & education in the community. ❑ Summarize ideals that everyone can support.
Step 2. Learn about the community’s needs, resources and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Review resource directories, databases & other sources to broadly identify the community’s current early care & education resources and services. ❑ Focus the review & gather in-depth information on areas of greatest interest & concern. ❑ Summarize & share findings of the team’s broad & in-depth efforts. ❑ Identify how the team will periodically disseminate & update this information.
Step 3. Develop goals for the team and identify potential strategies to address goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Discuss how findings from the review of resources & services will influence the team’s goals. ❑ Identify connections between the team’s vision & its priority concerns for children & families. ❑ Develop the broad goals the team will pursue. ❑ For each goal, discuss what needs to change to accomplish the goal. ❑ Brainstorm actions and steps that address the things that need to change. ❑ Review brainstorming results and use them to identify potential strategies. ❑ Create a summary of goals and potential strategies.
Step 4. Learn about innovative strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Learn how other communities use strategies being considered by the team. ❑ Review findings with the team. ❑ Identify strategies to consider implementing.
Step 5. Build support for new working relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Identify where support for collaboration is strong in the community. ❑ Assess the feasibility of drawing on this support for each potential strategy. ❑ Where potential strategies need additional support, brainstorm ways the team can increase support.

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Step 6. Select feasible strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Discuss the feasibility of each potential strategy. Consider the fit with the team’s vision, required resources, sensitivity to children & families of the community, support from agencies & the community, and interests of the team. ❑ Select two or three strategies as starting points for the team. ❑ Keep additional strategies, if desired, but develop longer timelines & devote fewer resources.
Step 7. Identify tasks, responsibilities, and time lines to achieve strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ For each strategy, identify who will benefit and which changes are expected. ❑ Identify the tasks that will lead to these benefits and expected changes. ❑ For each task, identify the resources needed, the team’s roles and responsibilities, and a time line. ❑ Review and refine the description of tasks, responsibilities, and time lines across goals.
Step 8. Draft written agreements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Use the work of the team to date to draft the written agreement. ❑ Gather feedback and secure support for the written agreement. ❑ Revise and finalize the written agreement. ❑ Celebrate and publicize the signing of the written agreement.
Step 9. Monitor progress and revise written agreement on a regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Review progress on the written agreement at each team meeting. ❑ Revise the written agreement, as needed. ❑ Share successes and accomplishments of the team frequently. ❑ Disseminate information about the team’s progress to decision makers, parents and others in the community.

--Source: The Early Care and Education Community Collaborative Tool Kit: A Collection of Activities to Support Collaboration and Early Care and Education; The Texas Head Start-State Collaboration Project; August 1997.