

## ASSESSING THE NEED FOR COLLABORATION

### HOW ARE WE DOING ON OUR OWN?

- Are the lives of the children and families we serve improving? If not, why?
- Have we recently reassessed our mission in light of the overlapping needs of our families?
- Are services well integrated within our own agency? Does staff working with the same families communicate frequently? Do staff and families work together to set personal and family goals?
- Does our agency measure the impact of its services on the lives of children and families or do we simply tabulate the number of services we provide?
- Do we offer preventive supports and services to help our families avoid more serious problems?
- Are our services organized in response to family needs or are the kinds of services we offer constrained by the limitations of available funding and administrative rules?

### DO WE NEED TO CHANGE?

- How effective will we be in ten years if the needs of our families continue to increase and we continue to do “business as usual?”
- What resource limitations do we face in bringing more comprehensive services to our families?
- How might closer relationships with other agencies help us improve outcomes for the families we serve?

### HOW WELL ARE WE CONNECTED WITH OTHER AGENCIES?

- Do our line workers have effective working relationships with their counterparts in other agencies?
- When our families are referred elsewhere for services are we kept informed of their progress and changing needs?

### HOW READY ARE WE TO ENGAGE IN COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS?

- Do the community agencies serving children and families share a common vision? What is the history of collaborative relationships in the community?
- What lessons can we learn from past experience, or the lack of it?
- Do we have close working relationships with the directors of other agencies that deliver services to the same families?
- What do we know about other agencies’ current needs and priorities that might encourage them to discuss common problems and potential solutions?
- Who are the leaders from outside the direct service community who are interested in the well being of the community and who might take a leadership role in a collaborative effort or assist with the expansion and improvement of ongoing activities?
- What are we willing to pay in terms of tangible resources and the loss of unilateral control to formulate common goals with other agencies and to better serve our shared families?