

Direct Online Link: <http://ilearlychildhoodcollab.org/git/partnerbasicgit.html>

Partnership Basics

Advice from the field...experienced partners share lessons they have learned

Share A Vision

- Establish a shared philosophy and mission -- it provides a solid foundation for the partnership.
- Return to your shared mission when you and your partner clash.
- Identify and assert the benefits of the partnership for children and families, and for each partner.
- Link the partnership to an overall commitment to and vision of Quality. Repeat this often.
- Start small. Set realistic expectations for change. Remember that systemic change is a long-term process. Create opportunities to feel successful rather than to disappoint.

Communicate

- Create and sustain a spirit of openness, flexibility, and confidence about the partnership.
- Decide how and when partners will communicate to exchange information, and to address partnership issues.
- Communicate often.

Work At It

- Commit thoroughly to all aspects of partnership: expectations, financial and legal requirements and standards, systems, resources, etc.
- Educate all entities/parties about Federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- Build an atmosphere in which you can apply the partnership's "lessons learned" to future work together.
- Remember: Successful partnerships create mutual benefits, but they also require mutual compromise and sacrifice.

Clarify Expectations

- Develop a detailed, written legal agreement with clear, measurable expectations tailored to your partnership's specific needs. Borrow from others' agreements but resist shortcuts and seek legal counsel in developing yours.
- Put all expectations in writing -- who does what, how does it happen, what are expected outcomes for all parties.

Reach Out

- Reach out to the community to create more support for the partnership and to access additional resources.
- Seek advice from specialists (legal and financial especially) associated with your program, and training and technical assistance resources as much as possible on all aspects of the partnership.
- Articulate your partnership's goals to federal and state officials.
- Network with colleagues who have experience with similar partnerships.

Source: Website of QUILT (Quality in Linking Together, Early Education Partnerships): <http://www.quilt.org>