

EARLY YEARS PLANNING TABLES

AN INTRODUCTION &
ORIENTATION

Early Years Community Development is a whole community response to link, align and leverage resources to improve child development outcomes.

Table activities include planning, advocacy, strategic thinking, influencing related policy, evidence gathering, community awareness and engagement.

WHAT THE WORK IS NOT

- Not a program or service
- Not short term
- Not just networking

The key is social change through long term, collaborative efforts to improve how communities support children and families.

THE TABLE

A multi-sector group committed to working together on identified early years issues. Each member offers time, expertise and relevant resources to achieve the overall mission and vision. A co-created strategic plan guides the work of the table.

THE COORDINATOR

- provides leadership
- manages communication
- connects individuals, organizations and other networks
- leads collaborative meetings
- builds and strengthens relationships with community partners
- keeps an eye on relevant data and research
- collects evidence (stories and data) of how working together is making a difference

BENEFITS

- reduce duplication
- improve quality of services
- widen reach
- strengthen communication
- be community driven
- share resources
- increase knowledge and ready access to information and research
- include more voices in planning
- leverage strengths, skills, and capacities
- increase innovation to address obstacles
- reduce fragmentation
- work across and influence the "system"

GOVERNANCE

Be clear on how the Table operates, WHO is a part of it and what every person's role is.

Terms of Reference clarifies roles and responsibilities, defines decision making processes, establishes communication and reporting pathways and helps keep the Table and the Coordinator accountable to all stakeholders.

Clarity on the operations can be inspiring and keep processes transparent. Work together to create a shared vision, a mission, guiding principles and structures that help you articulate HOW you will improve outcomes for children and families.



" MEETINGS "

Productive, engaging meetings are the primary vehicle for Early Years Planning Tables. Meetings allow partners to interact, build trust, share ideas and generate solutions for complex issues.

Meetings are facilitated by the Coordinator or designated Chairperson. Agendas keep the group on track, while minutes keep everyone in the loop and help to document progress, celebrate accomplishments and solidify partnership agreements.

Effective meetings have the potential to increase participation and to help shape future action through dialogue and experiential activities.

Use meetings to:

- expand knowledge sharing from each partner
- explore data and research
- learn about the local needs of children & families
- think about how to work together better to meet those needs
- generate ideas - seek innovation
- plan, prioritize and set concrete actions that will make a difference

Building Community Capacity

You can build your community capacity by bringing together individual and organizational skills, knowledge, resources. The key is to USE these networks in an intentional and emergent process.

For more information on Early Years Community Development check online information from Sby6, EYCDI and Ready to Raise.