Can We Talk? Frank Dialogue to Support Head Start, School Districts and Families in Collaboration

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Objectives

Participants will...

1. learn about national perspectives on the inclusion challenges faced by families, Head Start and school district personnel

2. identify personal challenges and successes for collaboration to support high quality inclusion

3. learn about effective communication strategies, including skilled dialogue, to facilitate collaboration
Who’s in the Room?
Head Start Policies & Perspectives
The full and effective participation of all children with disabilities, including but not limited to children eligible for services under IDEA, by providing services with appropriate facilities, program materials, curriculum, instruction, staffing, supervision, and partnerships, at a minimum, consistent with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act;
Head Start Collaboration Challenges with School Districts

- Referrals not being addressed in timely manner
- Role confusion over IEP / IFSP planning and implementation
- School district human resource shortages
- School district/Head Start communication
- Lack of meaningful collaborative agreements

School District Policies & Perspectives
Least Restrictive Environment in IDEA

(i) To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and

(ii) Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

§300.114(a)(2)
Dear Colleague Letter from OSEP (January 9, 2017)

School District Challenges to Preschool Inclusion

Three Main Areas:

1. Attitudes
2. Procedures/policy
3. Resources

Barton & Smith (2014)
Underlying Myths and Assumptions: Why Inclusion is not Happening

- Too expensive
- Illegal to blend funds
- Children need to be ready (developmentally) to benefit
- Parents do not want it
- Harm typical child learning
- Cannot deliver necessary intensity of instruction
- Too stimulating

Strain (2016)
Family Perspectives
Family Perspectives on Preschool Inclusion Challenges

- Difficulty finding a high quality preschool program
- Concern about the qualifications and expertise of the child care or preschool staff
- Concerns about their child’s participation and inclusion in group settings
- Having to serve as the “service coordinator” since that may fall between the cracks
- Developing trusting, respectful, culturally responsive, reciprocal partnerships with staff

(Erwin & Soodak; Odom, et al; Ward, et al; Turnbull et al;)}
Family Perspective

• Who knows my child best and can best advocate for them?

• “Parents are their children’s first teacher”
Family Perspectives

- Who helps me receive and understand complete information about my child’s evaluation results and eligibility?

- What channels of communication exist to share this information with me?

- Who takes the lead?
Family Perspectives

• Does everyone at the table (SLP, LEA/EI case managers/service coordinators, family) agree on service delivery and goals?
  
  • Family-guided
  • Routines-based
“Sometimes I think the collaborative process would work better without you.”

The New Yorker: “Sometimes I think the collaborative process would work better without you” by Peter C. Vey, published in the May 18, 2009 issue, p. 65. © Condé Nast.
What Are Your Challenges?
What Are Your Biggest Challenges in Collaboration?

TOPICS:
1. Communication
2. Collaborative agreements
3. Role clarity/confusion
4. Human resources
5. Understanding individual programs (procedures, regulations)
6. Other:
Moving from Challenges to Solutions!
“The act of collaboration must start with dialogue.

You cannot build relationships without having an understanding of your potential partners, and you cannot achieve that understanding without a special form of communication that goes beyond ordinary conversation.”

-Daniel Yankelovich
1. How can we explore finding ways to collaborate when the way seems impossible?

2. What assumptions am I making?
Effective Communication

1. **Attending and Active Listening Practices**
   Convey respect
   Get to know people better

2. **Seeking and Verifying Information**
   Identify concerns and perspectives
   Convey an open and non-judgmental attitude

3. **Joining and Supporting**
   Convey support
   Provide responsiveness to others’ ideas
   Demonstrate a genuine desire to work together to achieve mutual goals
FPG - Connect Module 3
RESOURCE: http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-3
Skilled Dialogue: Dispositions, Attitudes and Intentions

1. Choose relationship over control

2. Set the stage for an outcome that can’t be predicted


Skilled Dialogue: **Critical Questions**

1. **WELCOME:** Am I looking forward to this interaction confident that I’ll learn something new?

2. **ALLOWING:** Can I listen to other without contradicting his/her perspective or needing to defend my own?

3. **SENSE-MAKING:** Can I find how other’s perspective makes sense?

4. **APPREICATING:** Am I willing to appreciate the value of other’s perspective?

5. **JOINING:** Can I restate other’s perspective in ways he/she feels are accurate?

6. **HARMONIZING:** Can I find an inclusive “3<sup>rd</sup> choice”?
Small Group Activity
Small Group Work

- Assumptions?
- Forces that impede and propel us?
- Ways of addressing issues with community partners?
Small Group Logistics

a. Count off by number of topics
b. Address challenges and solutions
c. Discuss topic for 10 minutes, then rotate
Report Back:

1. How have you built trust or created common ground?

3. When does it seem easy and natural to cooperate?

4. What has made it possible to work across and within institutional boundaries?

5. How do you form a sense of identity within newly created relationships?
Resources

1. Dear Colleague Letter: Preschool LRE
2. Skilled Dialogue
3. CADRE Webinar of Skilled Dialogue
4. Connect Module 3
   http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-3
5. Magic of Dialogue
6. Dialogue for effective communication
   https://thesystemsthinker.com/the-process-of-dialogue-creating-effective-communication/
7. SpecialQuest Community Assessment
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Thank you