



The Communication Plan

Communication that works well is communication that is planned well. To build effective communication, Child Care and Development Fund State Administrators (SAs) may want to establish informal and formal communication links and communicate openly and frequently with partners. Informal communication creates a more personal connection. It happens as SAs share information with their partners and as they report back to their own organizations. Formal communications require time and effort to document, produce, and distribute, so SAs may want to make an agreement with partners about what to communicate, and in what format. Communication plans support effective communication, because they help keep partners focused, involved, and accountable.

When developing a communication plan, consider the following¹:

- Determine the information that is most important to all partners/agencies and how they want to receive it.
- Identify all possible communication tools – meeting agendas and minutes, agency reports and newsletters, email, internet, fax, conference calls, presentations, webinars, community bulletin boards and newspapers, radio, television, community meetings, social media, and events.
- Consider all audiences – from the core members of the collaboration to the consumers, the organizations that deliver services and those that offer guidance and support.
- Outline the different communication needs of partners and audiences. Plan when each type of communication will be sent. Decide who will provide feedback and how it will be obtained.
- Keep all formal communications focused on decisions and actions.
- Identify key people in each organization who participate in decisionmaking and are to receive formal communication.
- Set up a system for tracking formal communications.
- Determine who in the collaboration will be responsible for monitoring communication among the key people in each organization.
- Develop a logo, tag line, avatar or ‘special look’ for all collaboration documents and printed materials so they will be easily recognized (consistent image or brand collateral).
- Organize a communication steering committee to guide the planning process, implement the plan, and monitor its effectiveness.
- Acknowledge significant milestones of the collaboration as it relates to communication (e.g., funding announcements, new partners, and collaboration results).

The Child Care State Systems Specialist Network does not endorse any non-Federal organization, publication, or resource. This document complements the Early Care and Education Systems Building Resource Guide: Effective Communication Module
<https://ECESystemsBuilding.icfwebsiteservices.com>

¹ Adapted from Winer, M., & Ray, K., (2000). *Collaboration handbook, creating, sustaining and enjoying the journey*. St. Paul, MN: Fieldstone Alliance; and Ray, K., (2002). *The nimble collaboration – Fine-tuning your collaboration for lasting success*. St. Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.