

Module Eight: Building Community Partnerships

This module is designed to support group learning for a lead facilitator and participants. It offers interactive activities and reflective exercises. Individuals may also complete the activities and reflective exercises on their own.

Why This Matters for Subsidy Staff

When they are facing adversity, families are better supported when subsidy staff connect them with comprehensive services, and when subsidy staff have engaged community partners.

Connections to community partners also can ease stress for subsidy staff who may otherwise feel discouraged by not being able to capitalize on families' strengths and address their needs beyond child care.

By building community partnerships, staff can feel more confident in their ability to work with and support families.



Goal

Subsidy staff and other community agency staff know about the respective resources each agency provides for families and are able to connect families with the resources that interest them.

Learning Objectives

- Subsidy staff know why partnerships with other community agencies are important and how these partnerships can support child and family well-being and strengthen staff efficacy.
- Subsidy staff understand four types of partnerships (networking, coordination, cooperation and collaboration) and can use this information to make intentional plans and decisions to build or enhance partnerships.

Key Competency

Subsidy staff make intentional plans and decisions to build or enhance partnerships with community agencies so that families can be connected with the resources and services that interest them.

Teaching Tips for Group Facilitators

Preparing for the Training

Review the module and the handouts carefully. The handouts are: the Discussion, the Activity, and the Reflective Practice Exercise. Copy the handouts for yourself and each participant. Gather other materials (e.g., chart paper, markers, pens).

Think of the Goals, Learning Objectives, and Key Competencies as guideposts. They indicate the purpose of the training and the knowledge, skills, and practices the training is designed to enhance.



Estimated Time

45–60 minutes



Materials

Handouts for each participant

- **Module Eight: Handout 1—Discussion**
- **Module Eight: Handout 2—Activity**
- **Module Eight: Handout 3—Reflective Practice Exercise**

Supplies for Groups:

- Chart paper and markers
- Pen or pencil for each participant

Supplies for Individuals:

- Pen or pencil



Instructions

Group Facilitators

1. Present the Discussion. Distribute and use **Module Eight: Handout 1**.
2. Facilitate the Activity. Distribute and use **Module Eight: Handout 2**.
3. Facilitate the Reflective Practice Exercise. Distribute and use **Module Eight: Handout 3**.

Individual Learners

1. Read **Module Eight: Handout 1**.
2. Follow the Individual Learner instructions to complete the Activity. Use **Module Eight: Handout 2**.
3. Complete the Reflective Practice Exercise. Use **Module Eight: Handout 3**.

Create a pleasant learning environment free from distractions. For example, ensure that participants have comfortable seating and a work surface for writing (e.g., a table or clipboard). Consider allowing or serving drinks and snacks or hosting a breakfast or lunch meeting.

Dedicate time for the discussion. Avoid situations where staff leave the discussion to answer the phone or attend to a family.

Presenting the Discussion to a Group

Have the participants read **Module Eight: Handout 1**. Ask if they have any questions. Use open ended and critical thinking questions to check and enhance their understanding of the material.

Sample open-ended and critical thinking questions:

- Why is it important for subsidy agencies and staff to partner with other community agencies and their staff?
- What are four types of partnerships that agencies can have with one another?
- What are some examples of networking? Coordination? Cooperation? Collaboration?
- How does this information relate to your personal experience working with families?
- How does your personal knowledge and experience affect the way you respond to this information?
- What would it look like if you were to focus on enhancing your partnerships with other community agencies?

Consider and support participants' ways of learning. Some people find it easier to stay focused and interested when people in the group take turns reading aloud. Others prefer to read silently and then discuss what they've read with the group.

Consider the characteristics of the group you're working with (e.g., their literacy levels, languages, and speech or hearing differences). You may need to present the Discussion in multiple ways.

People tend to learn better when they move from the general to the specific. Encourage participants to begin by skimming the information. Suggest they pay special attention to the Learning Objectives and any bold or italicized words. They may note any headings, charts, or graphics.

Then ask participants to read through the material a second time more carefully. Encourage them to highlight, underline, or otherwise note any important definitions, concepts, or ideas.

Instructions for Facilitating the Discussion and Activity

For Group Facilitators

1. Use **Module Eight Handout 1** to facilitate the Discussion.
2. Distribute **Module Eight: Handout 2**. Be sure that participants also have **Module Eight: Handout 1** available for reference as they complete the Activity. Encourage each group to review both handouts.
3. Divide the larger group into smaller ones, or have the group divide into pairs. Give each group or pair a sheet of chart paper and markers.
4. **Part 1 of the Activity:** Ask each group to identify a note taker and a reporter. Let the group know that they will be creating a map of community resources using Eco Mapping (See explanation in **Module Eight: Handout 2**).
5. Ask the small groups to complete the Eco Map Exercise according to the instructions in the handout. Instruct note takers to chart their group's Eco Map on chart paper so the reporter can review it with the larger group. Encourage participants to also make notes individually on **Module Eight: Handout 2**.
6. Give groups/pairs time to complete their maps.
7. Ask the reporters to share with the larger group a summary of their group's work.
8. Discuss common themes among all of the groups' Eco Maps.
9. **Part 2 of the Activity:** Ask all participants to consider the types of partnerships they and their agency have with all the different community agencies listed on their Eco Maps. Brainstorm what the agency, leadership, and staff can do to strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones where they don't exist.
10. Share **Module Eight: Handout 3**. Encourage participants to review the Goals, Learning Objectives, Competencies, and "Thoughts from the Field" in **Module Eight: Handout 1** as they complete the Reflective Practice Exercise.
11. Encourage participants to save their handouts to use as references for completing the summary exercise after they have finished all modules.

For Individual Learners

1. Find **Module Eight: Handouts 1 and 2**.
2. Review both handouts.
3. Complete parts 1 and 2 of the Activity according to the instructions in **Module Eight: Handout 2**.
Consider how you might share this information with your colleagues.
4. Find **Module Eight: Handout 3**. Review the Goals, Learning Objectives, Competencies, and "Thoughts from the Field" in **Module Eight: Handout 1**.
Complete the Reflective Practice Exercise.
Consider how you might share this information with your colleagues.
5. Save your handouts to use as references for completing the summary exercise after you have finished all modules.

Module Eight: Building Community Partnerships

Handout 1: Discussion

Why This Matters for Subsidy Staff

When they are facing adversity, families are better supported when subsidy staff connect them with comprehensive services, and when subsidy have engaged community partners. Connections to community partners also can ease stress for subsidy staff who may otherwise feel discouraged by not being able to capitalize on families' strengths and address their needs beyond child care. By building community partnerships, staff can feel more confident in their ability to work with and support families.

Goal

- Subsidy staff and other community agency staff know about the respective resources each agency provides for families and are able to connect families with the resources that interest them.

Learning Objectives

- Subsidy staff know why partnerships with other community agencies are important and how these partnerships can support child and family well-being and strengthen staff's efficacy.
- Subsidy staff understand four types of partnerships (networking, coordination, cooperation and collaboration) and can use this information to make intentional plans and decisions to build or enhance partnerships.

Key Competency

- Subsidy staff make intentional plans and decisions to build or enhance partnerships with community agencies so that families can be connected with the resources and services that interest them.

Discussion

Families contact your agency seeking financial support for their children's child care. They may also share their hopes, dreams, interests, or goals during their time with you. During these conversations they also may share the challenges they are facing outside of their need for child care subsidy. In response, you can offer information and support to connect families with other community agencies and comprehensive services of interest to families.

How much you know about current community resources depends on intentional efforts to maintain current information and the relationships that your subsidy agency and you build and maintain with other agencies.

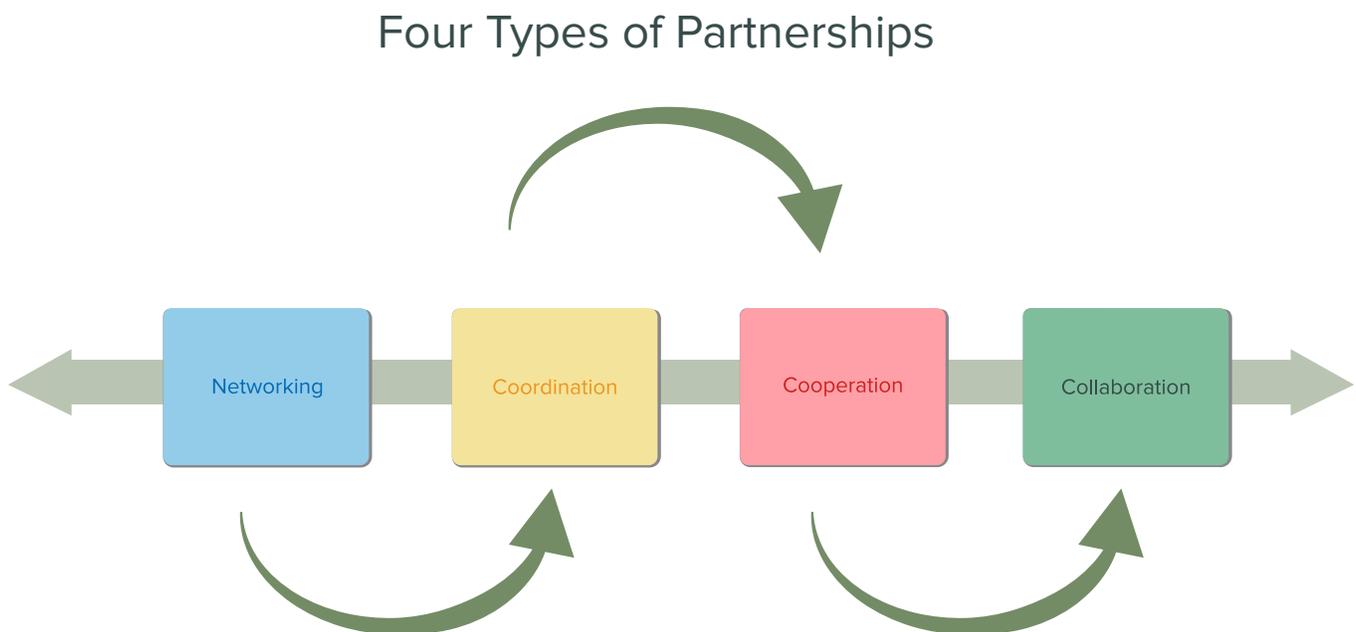
Your subsidy agency, you, and other members of the subsidy staff can partner with other community agencies and their staff who offer services to families. Strong community partnerships can help you:

- Increase families' access to services
- Reduce confusion for families and staff (subsidy staff and staff in other agencies)
- Support the overall well-being of families and children

These partnerships build connections that help subsidy staff become and stay knowledgeable about current resources to offer families. And staff may be better positioned to provide a “warm handoff” (by directly connecting a parent by phone to staff at another agency, providing support during the connection, and following up after the connection with the parent and the staff at the other agency, when possible).

Through these kinds of connections and partnerships, families, agencies, staff, and communities benefit from less duplication of effort. As well, child care and comprehensive services systems and professionals become more efficient and may benefit from the experience of working together to support families.

Your agency may be involved in many types of partnerships with other community agencies. The Four Types of Partnerships graphic (below) shows four types of partnerships: networking, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration. Understanding these types and working with agency leaders to map your agency's partnerships based on these types can be useful in identifying existing partnerships and opportunities to strengthen them.



Source: Adapted from QUILT (Quality in Linking Together) Project, through a partnership with the Community Development Institute, the Education Development Center, and the National Child Care Information Center

The first type of partnership is **networking**. This occurs when representatives from agencies meet each other and perhaps exchange business cards, emails, or print materials about their respective organizations. An example of a benefit from this type of partnership would be having a flyer about the WIC clinic on the bulletin board in your waiting room.

The second type of partnership is **coordination**. With this type of partnership, you might offer a warm handoff by saying to families, “We don’t offer that service. This agency does, and I’ll connect you.” This partnership takes a little more effort than networking because staff have to make contact with the partner (and have the contact information to share with parents) and stay current with staff changes in other community agencies.

Cooperation is the third type of partnership. With this type of partnership, two or more programs conduct joint activities in order to meet their individual goals. You might think of this as, “I’m doing my thing and you are doing yours, but we can do it at the same time. Our different efforts will support each others’ goals.” This type gives both agencies more exposure and may help both agencies be more efficient in reaching families. An example might be when a child care resource and referral agency provides space for a subsidy staff to meet with families in a familiar environment.

The fourth type, **collaboration**, is the most resource-intensive type. Collaboration requires programs to work together toward common goals that no single agency could achieve by acting alone. Collaborating partners commit resources, information, and activities to supporting a goal. An example of collaboration might involve creating a single point of entry for families to apply for multiple programs and services at one time, or a shared database for coordinating services for individual families.

It may be helpful to regularly review your partners and discuss opportunities for strengthening partnerships or developing new ones. One tool that staff can use to map partners and types of partnerships is an Eco Map. Learn more about creating an Eco Map in **Module Eight: Handout 2**.

By making intentional plans and decisions to build or enhance partnerships with community agencies, subsidy staff can better connect families with the resources and services that interest them, and staff can feel more confident in their abilities to work with and provide support to families.

Leaders can support staff by:

- Ensuring that information about resources and opportunities in the community are compiled and available to support families’ and staff safety, health, mental health, financial stability, economic mobility, and educational growth
- Enacting policies and procedures that include intentional plans for building and maintaining community partnerships (e.g., policies that provide time for staff to build partnerships with community agencies and time for staff to participate in multi-agency team planning meetings to coordinate support for families and their children)
- Ensuring that policies, guidelines, and expectations are in place to protect the confidentiality and privacy of families
- Working with families and staff to identify partnerships that are working well and potential gaps that could be filled with stronger or new partnerships

Thoughts From the Field

“When I meet with families, my biggest concern is that they might not be eligible for subsidy funds, or that the funds will be inadequate. I try to build a relationship with each family so that I can hope to understand all the challenges they may be facing. Maybe then I can offer them resources and support for those challenges, even if I have to say ‘no’ to their request for CCDF funds.

I need to be sure I am up to date with my community partners so I can provide correct information. Better yet, if I have a working relationship with some of my colleagues, I can call and introduce a family to a colleague so they can start connecting right away. My hope is the family feels listened to and supported as they leave my office.”—*Subsidy staff*

Use this space to note ideas or questions.

Plan to save copies of these handouts. You will have an opportunity to use them to create a summary reflection after completing all of the modules in this series.

Module Eight: Building Community Partnerships

Handout 2: Activity

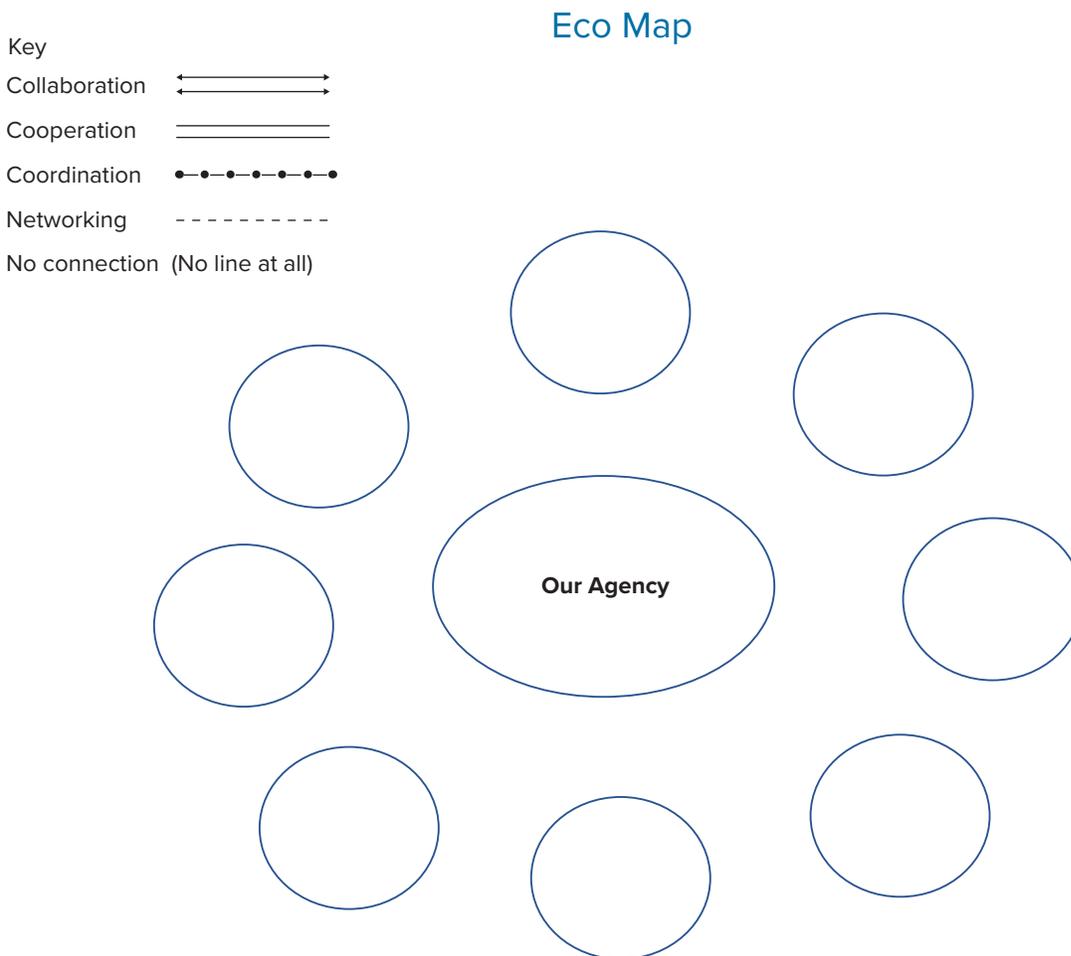
Part 1: Identifying Community Partners and Relationships Through Eco Mapping

An Eco Map is a tool that agencies and staff can use to map partners, potential partners, and types of partnerships between your agencies.

Begin by thinking about other agencies (partners and potential partners) that work with families in your community.

Write the names of these agencies in the circles surrounding “our agency.” Add as many circles as you need in order to include all the agencies that come to mind.

Next, use different kinds of lines (see examples below) to connect your agency to the other community agencies and to show the types of partnerships.



Note: Eco Maps were originally developed to show linkages between a family and a larger social system (Hartman, 1995). The Eco Map in this activity has been adapted to show linkages between your agency and community partners.

Part 2: Creating Strategies to Strengthen Partnerships

Consider the community agencies and levels of partnership identified on the Eco Map for your agency. Remember: Eco Maps are a snapshot in time.

With which community agencies do you have strong partnerships?

What can you or your agency do to strengthen these partnerships?

With which community agencies do you not have strong partnerships?

What can you or your agency do to build partnerships with these agencies?

Use this space to note ideas or questions.

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Reference: Hartman, A. (1995). Diagrammatic assessment of family relationships. *Families in Society*, 76, 111-122.

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Handout 3: Reflective Practice Exercise

Learning a new approach, skill, or activity is a process. Reflective practice is a way of thinking about your actions—what you do and how and why you do it. The purpose of this kind of examination is to continuously learn by enhancing your skills and practices. Answer the questions below to guide your reflections on building community partnerships.

Reflective Practice

Question	Your Reflections
What did I hope to learn?	
What did I learn?	
What action will I take because of my learning?	

Use this space to note ideas or questions.

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For more information about this resource, please contact us:
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