



State Capacity Self-Assessment Tool

State Name:

Date:

Capacity Self-Assessment Purpose

The Capacity Self-Assessment tool aims to highlight capacities within and surrounding your management team, your target population, and the project you are launching to improve your early childhood system. Identifying what resources are currently available and the gaps that need to be addressed will facilitate the development of your management team priorities, strategies, and action steps. The self-assessment tool allows the team to identify strengths and challenges with regard to planning and delivering on your initiatives. Identifying areas of strength, areas of challenges, and making progress is crucial for ensuring success with your project goals.

Capacity Self-Assessment Use

The dimensions and sub dimensions outlined in the matrix below provide a high level overview of key capacity areas for the management team to consider. The Self-Assessment tool may be used in whole or in part depending on what makes the most sense for your management team and state project. Where you begin and the order in which you proceed within the tool will depend on the most pressing needs of your team. Some states may start with creating or strengthening engagement and partnerships, while others may be ready to build knowledge and skills for systems thinking and doing to better address a priority. It is likely that some of the capacity dimensions will be more helpful to you than others.

Instructions

This self-assessment tool is meant to be completed as a collaborative process by Impact Project Management Team. As a group, please review the dimensions below (culture and climate, engagement and partnerships, financial resources, infrastructure, and knowledge and skills) and determine which dimensions are integral to achieving success with your Impact Project. You may select all of the dimensions or a subset of the dimensions. Once you've determined which dimensions are a priority for you state project, please review the sub-dimensions and come to a consensus around your State's level of capacity for each sub-dimension. Check the box per sub-dimension to indicate your current level (basic, moderate, or high) of capacity.



DIMENSION 1: Culture and Climate

Dimension Goal: The Management Team has the culture and climate capacity necessary for developing and implementing their identified project goals and strategies.

Sub Dimensions	High-Level of Capacity in Place	Moderate level of Capacity in Place	Basic Level of Capacity in Place
Establishing leadership behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Common set of basic beliefs and values exists and are widely shared within the management team; ◆ Beliefs provide members sense of identity and clear direction for behavior; ◆ Beliefs embodied are timeless and stable across leadership changes; ◆ Beliefs clearly support overall purpose of the team and are consistently harnessed to produce impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Common set of basic beliefs held by majority of the management team; ◆ Beliefs provide members with a sense of identity; ◆ Beliefs are aligned with the team's purpose and are occasionally harnessed to produce impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Common set of basic beliefs exists in some groups within the management team, but are not shared broadly; ◆ Values may be only partially aligned with team purpose or rarely harnessed to produce impact
Promoting equity	<p>Shared knowledge and understanding of equity practices exists <u>and</u> are widely used within the management team; the team provides clear direction on equity practices, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ "Equity" assessment of policies and practices (ongoing) ◆ Equity goals within the strategic plan ◆ Process for seeking, distributing, and using resources is based on equity goals ◆ Management team is accountable for equity goals and empowered to uphold goals ◆ Management team has multi-sector partnerships and relationships with communities affected by inequities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Shared knowledge and understanding of equity practices held by majority of people on management team; ◆ Knowledge of equity provides members with a sense of how to value the differences of team members and stakeholders, and how to address disparities; ◆ Equity efforts may be only partially aligned with management team purpose or only rarely harnessed to produce impact on goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Shared knowledge and understanding of equity practices exists within some part of the management team but is not shared broadly; ◆ Equity efforts may be only partially aligned with management team purpose or only rarely harnessed to produce impact on goals



Sub Dimensions	High-Level of Capacity in Place	Moderate level of Capacity in Place	Basic Level of Capacity in Place
Sharing and understanding of common vision and goals throughout the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Clear, specific, and compelling vision is articulated, as well as a deep understanding of what management team aspires to achieve; ◆ Common vision and goals broadly held, including between partners and stakeholders; ◆ Common vision and goals are consistently used by management team to direct actions and set priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Clear and specific understanding of what the management team aspires to become or achieve; ◆ Held by many within the team, sometimes used to direct actions but not shared widely with partners and stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Somewhat clear vision or specific understanding of what management team aspires to become or achieve; ◆ Lacks specificity or clarity; ◆ Held by only a few; or “on the wall,” but rarely used to direct actions or set priorities
Setting expectations to accommodate and sustain change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Common team approach to change and change management, which may include practices that: ◆ Secure buy-in, and align individual behavior and skills with the change; ◆ Are truly shared and adopted by all members of the management team; ◆ Actively designed and used to clearly support overall purpose of the team and to drive performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Common team approach to change and change management exists within some part of the management team, which may include practices that: ◆ Secure buy-in, and align individual behavior and skills with the change; and ◆ Are adopted by many people within the management team; ◆ Practices are aligned with the team’s purpose and occasionally harnessed to drive towards impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ There is not a common approach to change or change management by the team
Valuing performance throughout the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Management team highlights and promotes each member’s contribution to the project impact (social, financial and performance); ◆ Use of performance data in day-to-day processes and decision making is embedded in comprehensive performance thinking and analysis for team; ◆ Key elements of performance is constantly referred to in team meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Individuals of the management team contribute toward project impact, and important decisions about projects are based in performance thinking and analysis, and ◆ Key elements of performance are regularly discussed at meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ At times, important decisions for the management team are embedded in comprehensive performance analysis and thinking



DIMENSION 2: Engagement and Partnerships

Dimension Goal: The Management Team has the partnerships and engagement capacity necessary for implementing the project, and achieving success. Decisions are informed by and responsive to the needs and interests of a broad array of stakeholders.

Sub Dimensions	High-Level of Capacity in Place	Moderate level of Capacity in Place	Basic Level of Capacity in Place
Establishing and maintaining relationships with stakeholders (e.g. state agency partners, advocates, providers, parents and oversight groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management team has built, leveraged, and maintained strong, high-impact, relationships with variety of relevant parties (state and federal government entities as well as for-profit, and private sector); Relationships are deeply anchored in stable, long-term, mutually beneficial collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management team has effectively built and leveraged a few key relationships with some of the project’s relevant parties; Some relationships not fully developed; Some relationships may be precarious or not mutually beneficial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The management team is in the early stages of building relationships (e.g. limited communication and no defined structure or planning) and collaborating with agency partners, families, providers and other stakeholders vital to the management team’s project
Establishing and sustaining local community presence and involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management team is widely known within communities in the state, and perceived as actively engaged with and extremely responsive to it; Many members of the communities actively and constructively involved in management team efforts (e.g. implementing goals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management team reasonably well known within communities within the state, and perceived as open and responsive to community needs; Members of communities constructively involved in management efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management team’s presence somewhat recognized, and is viewed neutrally by communities; Some members of larger communities are constructively engaged



Sub Dimensions	High-Level of Capacity in Place	Moderate level of Capacity in Place	Basic Level of Capacity in Place
<p>Implementing formal feedback loops as part of stakeholder engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Management team has a formal feedback loop in place that: ◆ Provides opportunities for families and providers to engage in leadership and inform decisions; ◆ Ensures effective lines of communication among service providers, administrators, policymakers and other professionals across sectors regarding goals and policies; ◆ Uses available data and assessment systems to reach out and inform stakeholders about project efforts; ◆ Measures stakeholder engagement and, in particular, parent and provider engagement around decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Management team has some elements of a feedback loop in place that: connects with families and providers; ◆ Has some lines of communication among service providers, administrators, policymakers and other professionals across sectors regarding their goals and policies; and ◆ Is beginning to measure stakeholder engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Management team has started to plan the necessary elements of a feedback loop to authentically engage parents, providers and stakeholders in a more formal process to inform decision making
<p>Mobilizing and motivating stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Stakeholders most affected by the project see the work as inspiring and motivating; ◆ Stakeholders are authentically engaged to be taking action; ◆ Meetings are held regularly at convenient times for stakeholders, and are well-attended; ◆ Management team has ability to mobilize a broad range of stakeholder groups into specific action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Those with potential to be most affected by the project are knowledgeable and likely to be engaged; ◆ Meetings held regularly and are generally well-attended; and ◆ Management team has ability to motivate a segment of stakeholders to mobilize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Those with potential to be most affected by the project have some knowledge of the work; ◆ Meetings held regularly to inform, but attendance varies widely; ◆ Management team has ability to motivate a small core group of stakeholders



DIMENSION 3: Financial Resources

Dimension Goal: The Management Team has the capacity to leverage and maximize all available resources necessary for implementing their identified project. The Management Team considers how financing decisions support and incentivize system-building goals connected with the project.

Sub Dimensions	High-Level of Capacity in Place	Moderate level of Capacity in Place	Basic Level of Capacity in Place
Maximizing revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The management team has identified and mobilized sufficient resources --within limited budget realities-- from across the team, and other partner organizations for the project to maximize impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The management team has identified possible sources of funding, and other resources from partner organizations for the project. ◆ Management team has access to expertise to coordinate (pool) and/or integrate (blend or braid) funding for maximum impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The management team has started to have discussions about leveraging and coordinating resources for funding the project, and maximizing impact.
Managing finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Very solid financial plans and management ◆ Continuously updates full management team; ◆ Budget integrated into full operations of the work; ◆ Used as a strategic tool; ◆ Financing plan reflects management team needs and objectives; ◆ Well understood divisional project budgets within overall budget; ◆ Performance-to-budget closely and regularly monitored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Solid financial plans in place ◆ Management team is regularly updated regarding finances; ◆ Budget integrated into operations; ◆ Reflects organizational needs; ◆ Solid efforts made to isolate project budgets within central budget; ◆ Performance-to-budget monitored regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Management team has limited financial plans, and financing is rarely discussed; ◆ Budget utilized as operational tool; ◆ Budget used to guide/assess financial activities; ◆ There is some attempt to isolate project budgets within overall budget; ◆ Performance-to-budget monitored periodically



DIMENSION 4: Infrastructure

Dimension Goal: The Management Team has the infrastructure capacity necessary for implementing their identified project, including leadership, vision and cohesion. The management team is working together according to shared understanding of common goals and what their roles and functions are within the project and system. The management team has established processes for ongoing communication, coordination, and decision-making as they relate to achieving their shared goals.

Sub Dimensions	High-Level of Capacity in Place	Moderate level of Capacity in Place	Basic Level of Capacity in Place
Creating a high-functioning management team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Diverse membership with broad variety of fields of practice and expertise, and drawn from the full spectrum of constituencies (nonprofit, academia, corporate, government, etc.); includes functional and program content-related expertise, as well as high-profile names; ◆ There is a high willingness and proven track record of investing in learning about the organization and addressing its issues; ◆ There is an outstanding commitment to the organization’s vision and success; meet in-person regularly, good attendance, achieve results, frequent meetings of focused and disciplined subcommittees that perform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Good diversity, including fields of practice and expertise; ◆ Diverse membership represents most constituencies (nonprofit, academia, corporate, government, etc.); ◆ Good commitment to organization’s success, vision and mission; and ◆ Regular, purposeful meetings that are well-planned, achieve results, and where attendance is consistently good, including occasional subcommittee meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Some diversity, including fields of practice; ◆ Lack of a diverse membership represents only a few different constituencies (from among nonprofit, academia, corporate, government, etc.); moderate commitment to organization’s vision and success; and ◆ Regular, purposeful meetings are well-planned and attendance is good overall
Establishing high-functioning interagency planning and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Constant and seamless integration between staff and agencies represented on management team who work together effectively on planning and implementation; ◆ Relationships are dictated by project planning and implementation needs (rather than hierarchy or politics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Agencies and staff of management team function together effectively with sharing of information, resources and working together on planning efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Interactions between the different agencies represented on management team are generally good/somewhat effective in planning efforts



Sub Dimensions	High-Level of Capacity in Place	Moderate level of Capacity in Place	Basic Level of Capacity in Place
Developing and using a strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Strategic plan used extensively to guide management team decisions; ◆ Strategic planning exercises and revisions carried out regularly; ◆ Regular progress reporting on strategic plan execution and revisions as needed ◆ Sustainability planning routinely incorporated as part of the process; ◆ Efficient use of external, sustainable, highly qualified resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ability and tendency to develop and refine concrete, specific and realistic goals; ◆ Some internal expertise in strategic planning or access to relevant external assistance; ◆ Strategic planning is an activity occurring on a near-regular basis; ◆ Sustainability planning included in strategic planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Team has intention to develop high-level strategic plan but has not written or updated such plan
Using performance management and continuous quality improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High functioning performance team, and well-developed comprehensive, integrated system (e.g., PDSA cycle; balanced scorecard – see glossary) used for measuring performance and continuous quality improvement, including modifying activities; ◆ Small number of clear, measurable, and key performance indicators; ◆ Social impact (Glossary) measured based on evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Performance team in place, and performance measured and progress tracked in multiple ways, several times a year but no formal CQI system in place; ◆ Stakeholder input a part of the performance process, as well as other social, financial, and organizational impact of activities; ◆ Some performance indicators but evaluation is missing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Performance team in place, and performance partially measured and progress partially tracked; ◆ Management team regularly collects solid data on activities and outputs but lacks data-driven measurement of impact
Influencing of high-level decision-makers and policy making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Management team pro-actively and reactively influences other decision-makers and policymaking relevant to the project in a highly effective manner, on state and national levels; ◆ Always ready for and often called on to participate in substantive discussion and at times initiates discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Management team is fully aware of its possibilities in influencing other key decision makers and policy-making and is active in relevant discussions at the state or national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Management team is aware of its possibilities in influencing high-level decision-makers and policy-making; ◆ There is some readiness and skill to participate in higher-level policy discussion



Sub Dimensions	High-Level of Capacity in Place	Moderate level of Capacity in Place	Basic Level of Capacity in Place
<p>Using organizational structures and processes to function effectively and efficiently in critical areas, such as: communication; decision making; and planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Robust, lean, and well-designed ◆ set of processes (e.g., communication, decision making, planning) in place in all areas to ensure effective and efficient functioning of organization; ◆ The organizational processes are widely known, used and accepted, and are key to ensuring full impact of organization; ◆ There is continual monitoring and assessment of processes, and systematic improvement made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Solid, well-designed set of processes in place in core areas to ensure smooth, effective functioning of organization; ◆ The organizational processes known and accepted by many, often used and contribute to increased impact; and ◆ There is occasional monitoring and assessment of processes, with some improvements made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Basic set of processes in place, such as: communication; decision making and planning; however, processes are known, used, and accepted by only a portion of team; ◆ There is limited monitoring and assessment of processes, with few improvements made in consequence
<p>Developing, aligning and integrating a system of support for children, families and early childhood programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A clear set of integrated cross-sector expectations and monitoring systems for early childhood programs and professionals exist to enable services and practices to reach common goals on behalf of children and families ◆ Early Childhood programs' policies and activities build on one another rather than contradict or duplicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Clear and aligned expectations for early childhood programs and professionals exist to enable services and practices to reach common goals on behalf of children and families. ◆ Work has begun to re-conceptualize programs toward integrated vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Well-designed programs, monitoring, standards and policies exist, and are effectively implemented but were conceptualized and are delivered as stand-alone; often contradicting other similar programs or duplicating other programs



DIMENSION 5: Knowledge and Skills

Dimension Goal: The Management Team has the systems leadership capacity necessary for implementing their identified project.

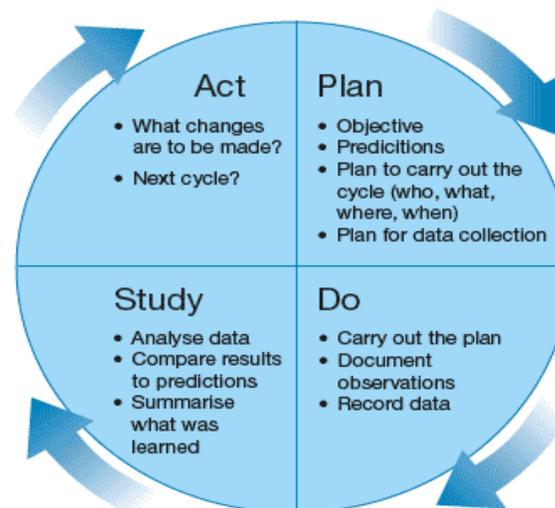
Sub Dimensions	High-Level of Capacity in Place	Moderate level of Capacity in Place	Basic Level of Capacity in Place
Using systems thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ability to see the whole ecosystem (see glossary) ◆ The ability to help groups of people see the larger system so they can build a shared understanding of complex problems ◆ The ability to foster reflection, creativity and generative conversations ◆ Has the ability to think about one's thinking, to see the taken-for-granted assumptions that can be carried into any conversation and appreciating how our mental models may limit us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Has a clear understanding of the whole systems but not yet moving groups of people to a shared understanding of complex problems ◆ Has the ability to reflect and think creatively, and test assumptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understands the concepts of systems thinking but has not had the opportunity to practice in settings with a group of people
Incorporating distributed leadership perspective (Glossary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Able to set new directions through a distributive leadership model, empowering others to jointly lead and manage ◆ Able to shift the group focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future ◆ Artful at helping people move beyond just reacting to problems to building positive visions for the future in a joint approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understands the concepts of a distributed leadership perspective, such as: leading and managing from multiple places within a system, not just from formal designated leadership positions; ◆ Empowers others to share leadership ◆ Management team has had the opportunity to practice in real life situations but not yet able to move groups beyond reacting to problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understands the concepts of a distributed leadership perspective, such as: leading and managing from multiple places within a system, not just from formal designated leadership positions; ◆ Empowers others to share leadership ◆ Has not had very many opportunities to practice in real life situations



Sub Dimensions	High-Level of Capacity in Place	Moderate level of Capacity in Place	Basic Level of Capacity in Place
Using strategic thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Possesses keen and exceptional ability to synthesize complexity; ◆ Makes informed decisions in ambiguous, uncertain situations; ◆ Develops strategic alternatives and identifies associated rewards, risks, and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Quickly assimilates complex information and able to distill to core issues; ◆ Welcomes ambiguity and comfortable dealing with the unknown; ◆ Sometimes or often develops robust strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Able to cope with some complexity and ambiguity; ◆ Able to analyze and periodically generate strategies
Executing the work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Extremely capable set of individuals that bring complementary skills to the management team; ◆ Culturally competent, reliable, loyal, highly committed to the project's success and to "making things happen"; ◆ Often goes beyond call of duty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Capable set of individuals that bring required skills to the management team; ◆ Culturally competent, reliable and committed to the project's success and to "making things happen" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Capable set of individuals but not all skills or abilities necessary for project success on the team
Valuing equity & diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Widespread knowledge and skills for equity and diversity practices exists, such as: ◆ Work groups or staff positions in place to implement equity policies ◆ Ongoing training and dialogue among staff and management to help make cultural competency and equity a part of standard operating procedures ◆ Staff accountable for activities that support equity policies ◆ Data tracking those who are benefiting from services, and those that are not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Shared understanding for equity and diversity policies exists, but not fully implemented, such as: ◆ Work groups or staff positions in place to implement equity policies ◆ Ongoing training and dialogue among staff and management to help make cultural competency and equity a part of standard operating procedures ◆ Staff accountable for equity activities ◆ Data tracking those who are benefiting from services, and those that are not ◆ Some are in use, while many are not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Shared awareness of equity and diversity exists but practices are not in place, such as: ◆ Work groups or staff positions in place to improve equity practice ◆ Ongoing training and dialogue among staff and management to help make cultural competency and equity a part of standard operating procedures ◆ Staff accountable for equity activities ◆ Data tracking those who are benefiting from services, and those that are not

Glossary

- ◆ **Promoting Equity:** To eliminate disparities that adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to participating in quality early learning experiences. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/pdfs/health-equity-guide/health-equity-guide-sect-1-1.pdf>
- ◆ **PDSA Cycle:** The PDSA cycle refers to a four-part management method that preaches continuous improvement. This and other similar continuous improvement models have been integrated into public and private sectors. The PDSA or Deming cycle includes the following continuous quality improvement steps:
 - Plan: Choose a process and set objectives
 - Do: Implement the plan and begin collecting data on the results
 - Check/Study: Analyze the results using varying methods
 - Act: Decide what changes to make in order to improve the process.

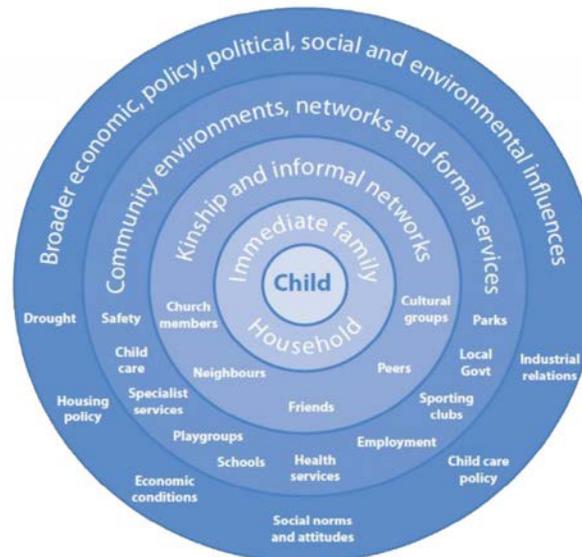


- ◆ **Social Impact:** The effect of an activity or investment on the social fabric of the community and well-being of individuals and families.
- ◆ **Distributed leadership:** Distributed leadership is a conceptual and analytical approach to understanding how the work of leadership takes place among the people and in context of a complex organization. Though developed and primarily used in education research, it has since been applied to other domains, including business and even tourism. Rather than focus on characteristics of the individual leader or features of the situation, distributed leadership foregrounds how actors engage in tasks that are "stretched" or [distributed](#) across the organization. With theoretical foundations in [activity theory](#) and [distributed cognition](#), understanding leadership from a distributed perspective means seeing



leadership activities as a situated and social process at the intersection of leaders, followers, and the situation. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distributed_leadership and <http://distributedleadership.org/>

- ◆ **Ecological Systems Theory:** The [ecological systems theory](#) identifies five environmental systems with which an individual interacts and develops. Each level of the system contains roles, norms and rules which interact and may shape development.



The State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) works with State and Territory leaders and their partners to create innovative early childhood systems and programs that improve results for children and families. The SCBC is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care.

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