Collaboration
and
Teaming

# Enhancing Team Functioning

**Session 6**

# SpecialQuest

**Multimedia Training Library**

*Supporting Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and Their Families in Inclusive Settings*

Developed by

**The Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program**

California Institute on Human Services | Sonoma State University

SESSION

6



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*Facilitator's Planning Worksheet*

# Enhancing Team Functioning

**2 hours,
30 minutes total**

## Learning Outcomes

- *Participants will identify strategies and tools to build and strengthen teams in developing the following:*
  - *Mission and Goals*
  - *Roles and Responsibilities*
  - *Communication and Interpersonal Relationships*
  - *Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution*
  - *Reflection/Continuous Improvement*
- *Participants will apply the 5 elements of team functioning and identify team development strategies.*

| Agenda | Length | Facilitator |
|---|---|---|
| Introduction and Overview | **5 minutes** | |
| Agree on Ground Rules | **5–10 minutes** | |
| Strategies to Enhance Effective Team Functioning | **1 hour, 15 minutes** | |
| Review "Building Effective Teams" | *15 minutes* | |
| Small-Group Activity: Identifying Strategies | *30 minutes* | |
| Large-Group Share-Back | *30 minutes* | |


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SESSION 6

# Enhancing Team Functioning

| Agenda | Length | Facilitator |
|---|---|---|
| Apply Strategies to Your Work | **45 minutes** | |
| Small-Group Activity | *25 minutes* | |
| Large-Group Share-Back | *20 minutes* | |
| Wrap-Up | **5 minutes** | |
| Reflections/Continuous Improvement | **10 minutes** | |

## Icon Key

Chart

Note

Handouts

DVD

Key Point

## Facilitator Team

Name/Family Voice

Name/Early Care and Education Voice

Name/Early Intervention Voice

## Presentation

Date/Time

Location

# of Participants



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## What you will need:

**Charting Equipment:**

- ❑ Flip chart and markers
- ❑ Masking tape or pins

**Other Items:**

- ❑ A container or mini trash can for the "Yes, but . . ." activity
- ❑ Charts collected from participants in previous session, "Session 5: Teamwork: Elements of Effective Teaming"

**Handouts (English/Spanish):**

- ❑ #1 Learning Outcomes
- ❑ #2 Building Effective Teams: Self Assessment and Strategy Guide for Enhancing Teamwork
- ❑ #3 Teaming Scenario (same as session 5 for those who do not bring this handout with them from the previous session)
- ❑ #4 Considerations When Choosing a Teaming Activity


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## Important Considerations

This session builds on "Session 5: Elements of Effective Teaming." Materials used and developed in session 5 are required; and the same small groups from that session will continue the work they began with the team scenario. These two sessions, 5 and 6, may be presented during a day-long training (for example, present session 5 in the morning and session 6 in the afternoon), or presented separately over a short period (for example, presented in half-day sessions a week apart).

"Session 6: Enhancing Team Functioning," covers strategies and tools to enhance team functioning. Participants will apply the five elements of team functioning and identify team development strategies. Participants will work in small groups to discuss how they might apply these strategies to the teams with which they work.

It is essential that facilitators thoroughly review all handouts, particularly "Building Effective Teams: Self Assessment and Strategy Guide for Enhancing Teamwork" (Handout #2), before presenting this session.

It is also important that facilitators have experience working with teams and have a basic understanding of group facilitation. Facilitators should discuss with the participants any unique challenges from scenarios they've discussed and explain how specific strategies might successfully address these challenges. Many of the teams will suggest going back to the mission and vision and conducting a self-assessment. It is helpful to have tried some of these strategies so you can extend the discussion.

Before the session starts, take the charts you collected from the teams during the previous session and post them on the walls so they can be referred to during this session.


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# Enhancing Team Functioning

**2 hours,
30 minutes total**

**Before the participants arrive, take the charts you've collected from the previous session and post them on the wall.**

**As participants arrive, ask them to sit with the same small groups they worked with in "Session 5: Elements of Effective Teaming."**

## Introduction and Overview

*5 minutes*

Welcome to our training session on "Enhancing Team Functioning." My name is _____. I represent the voice of _____ (family, early intervention, early care and education). Facilitating with me today are_____ (name/voice) and _____ (name/voice).

**Facilitators briefly introduce themselves and describe the unique background and experiences they bring to this session.**



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SESSION 6

# Enhancing Team Functioning

In this session, you will explore strategies that will help you build more effective teams by applying the elements of teaming you learned in the previous session. Working collaboratively is an essential element of serving infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in inclusive settings; so teaming skills are important.

**Add participant introductions/openers, as needed.**

**Review the Learning Outcomes and Agenda.**

**See Facilitator's Guide.**

## Learning Outcomes

**Handout #1: Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcomes for this session are:

- *Participants will identify strategies and tools to build and strengthen teams in developing the following:*
  - *Mission and Goals*
  - *Roles and Responsibilities*
  - *Communication and Interpersonal Relationships*
  - *Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution*
  - *Reflection/Continuous Improvement*
- *Participants will apply the 5 elements of team functioning and identify team development strategies.*


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## Agenda

Agree on Ground Rules

Strategies to Enhance Effective Team Functioning

- Review "Building Effective Teams"
- Small-Group Activity: Identifying Strategies
- Large-Group Share-Back

Apply Strategies to Your Work

- Small-Group Activity
- Large-Group Share-Back

Wrap-Up

Reflections/Continuous Improvement

*5–10 minutes*

# Agree on Ground Rules

**See Facilitator's Guide.**

**Chart and post ground rules.**



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1 hour,
15 minutes total

# Strategies to Enhance Effective Team Functioning

*15 minutes*

## Review "Building Effective Teams"

Let's review the critical elements of team functioning that we discussed in session 5:

- *Mission and Goals*
- *Roles and Responsibilities*
- *Communication and Interpersonal Relationships*
- *Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution*
- *Reflection/Continuous Improvement*

**Handout #2: Building Effective Teams:
Self-Assessment and Strategy Guide for Enhancing Teamwork**

**Briefly review the organization of the material and activities in each of the areas of effective team functioning. Facilitators should be familiar with the guide and strategies, have examples of how the strategies might be applied, and refer to previous discussions during "Session 5: Elements of Effective Teaming."**


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The guide is organized into 5 sections that correspond to the elements of team functioning.

Each section has:

- *An introduction*
- *Self-assessment questions*
- *Strategies for team development*
- *Annotated descriptions of each strategy that might apply to this area*
- *Detailed instructions on how to implement the strategy with a team*

The table of contents will help you find the materials you need. We will be working with these materials in the next activity.

*30 minutes*

## Small-Group Activity: Identifying Strategies

Be sure you are sitting with the same small group you worked with in the previous session. You will be building on the work you did then.

**Handout #3: Teaming Scenario (distribute to those who did not bring it from the previous session)**

**Refer participants to the scenario and to the charts (posted on the wall) the small groups developed in session 5 to record their priority areas for team development.**


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# Enhancing Team Functioning

From the scenario you discussed in session 5, you will be identifying strategies that will strengthen team functioning. Each small group will continue to work from the perspective of the team member you were assigned (for example, the parent or the teacher).

Start by reviewing the description of the team member you were assigned and the priorities you developed in session 5. Each group will examine the guide and locate the teaming activities in your priority area. Then you'll chose those activities from the guide that you feel will enhance team functioning from the perspective of the team member you represent. Finally, you'll apply the strategies from the guide to the hypothetical team.

## Handout #4: Considerations When Choosing a Teaming Activity

With your team, review the strategies in the section of the guide that addresses your priorities. Consider the following questions listed on your handout:

- *Which strategies would best enhance this team's functioning?*
- *Why did you choose the strategies? Start with the priority areas you identified in session 5.*
- *What considerations would you have in using these strategies (for example: time, expertise, use of outside facilitator)?*
- *What concerns would you have about using a particular strategy?*
- *What skills and resources would you need to implement the strategies?*

You have 25 minutes. After that time, be prepared to share with the large group.


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*30 minutes*

## Large-Group Share-Back

Now we will hear from each group about the top 2 strategies identified to enhance team functioning and why. Each team has 4–5 minutes to summarize their character from the scenario and share their thoughts on the following questions:

- *Which strategies would best enhance this team's functioning?*
- *Why did you choose the strategies? Start with the priority areas you identified in session 5.*
- *What considerations would you have in using these strategies (for example: time, expertise, use of outside facilitator)?*
- *What concerns would you have about using a particular strategy?*
- *What skills and resources would you need to implement the strategies?*

Let's hear from the group that had the role of Amelia the parent.

OK—let's hear from the next group.

**Allow each group to respond to the questions from the perspective of the role they represent.**



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**45 hour total**

*25 minutes*

# Apply Strategies to Your Work

## Small-Group Activity

Now, let's take some time to think about the teams you work with on a daily basis. We have talked about a variety of ideas that can strengthen team functioning. As you think about using these ideas with your program or with other teams you work with, you may anticipate some resistance. This activity is designed to help you think through and address the resistance, the "Yes, but . . ." reaction you might get in response to your suggestions for team development.

*What are some of the "Yes, but . . ." responses you might hear?*

**Add any of the following key points not mentioned by the group:**

- *"Our team has strong interpersonal conflict between 2 of its members. It seems like we need to bring in an outside facilitator. Seems like a good idea, but how will we pay for the facilitator?"*
- *"How will we have time to do all these team-building activities when we are so swamped with work and barely have time to meet as a team?"*


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Please write down any "Yes, but . . ." responses you think you might hear from your own team or program. Then share them in your small group. As a group, pick your top two "Yes, buts . . ." and develop strategies to address them. You will share one "Yes, but . . ." strategy with the large group. You have 20 minutes.

*20 minutes*

## Large-Group Share-Back
## Identify Elements of Effective Teaming

**Each group has about 3 minutes to share one "Yes, but . . ." and a related strategy. Have a container available to collect the "Yes, buts . . ." you resolve.**

Briefly share one "Yes, but . . . " and the strategies your group came up with. To make the point that you have "gotten rid of" the "Yes, but . . . ," throw your "Yes, but . . ." in the trash to symbolize that it is gone.


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*5 minutes*

## Wrap-Up

We know that teaming—like any other relationship—takes time and attention. You have examined the elements of effective team functioning in the last 2 sessions and identified strategies to enhance team functioning. There is an ongoing balance between getting work done and how the team does its work. Attention to both of these elements will make you more effective in serving infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, who need coordinated services from all the service providers they work with.

Are there any questions or comments about the training today?

**Review Learning Outcomes.**

**See Facilitator's Guide**

*10 minutes*

## Reflections/Continuous Improvement

We would like to give you an opportunity to think about how this session applies to your work situation. Please take a few minutes and list 2–3 strategies you can start to use right away.

**Gather Continuous Improvement feedback.**

**See Facilitator's Guide.**


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Your suggestions for improvements help us to make our sessions responsive to your needs as learners. We'd like to hear about what worked for you in this session, and what could be done to improve.

Divide a piece of chart paper into two columns, as shown. Entitle one column **"What Worked?"** and the other column **"Suggestions for Improvement?"**

| What worked? | Suggestions for Improvement? |
|---|---|
| | |

Chart participants' comments without rebuttal or discussion. Facilitators can act on these suggestions, as appropriate, in future training sessions.

*What worked for you today?*

*What suggestions for improvement do you have?*

Thank you for your participation today.

## End training session



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# Learning Outcomes

- *Participants will identify strategies and tools to build and strengthen teams in developing the following:*
  - *Mission and Goals*
  - *Roles and Responsibilities*
  - *Communication and Interpersonal Relationships*
  - *Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution*
  - *Reflection/Continuous Improvement*
- *Participants will apply the 5 elements of team functioning and identify team development strategies.*



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# Building Effective Teams

## Self-Assessment and Strategy Guide for Enhancing Teamwork

## Contents

**Introduction** . . . . . 3

Why Is Teaming Important? . . . . . 4

What Is a Team? . . . . . 5

**Section I: Mission and Goals** . . . . . 6

Overview of Strategies . . . . . 7

Strategy 1: Self-Assessment and Discussion . . . . . 8

Strategy 2: Our Team's Mission and Vision. . . . . 9

Strategy 3: Reviewing and Reflecting on Other Mission Statements . . . . . 10

Strategy 4: Our Goals and Action Plans . . . . . 14

Strategy 5: Goals for Team Meetings . . . . . 15

**Section II: Roles and Responsibilities** . . . . . 16

Overview of Strategies . . . . . 16

Strategy 1: Self-Assessment and Discussion . . . . . 18

Strategy 2: What I Bring and What I Need . . . . . 19

Strategy 3: "Lifeline of Experiences" Activity . . . . . 23

Strategy 4: Sharing Strengths and Skills . . . . . 24

Strategy 5: Clarifying Meeting Roles . . . . . 25

Strategy 6: Characteristics of a Good Facilitator . . . . . 27



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**Section III: Communication and Interpersonal Relationships . . . . . 29**

Overview of Strategies . . . . . 29

Strategy 1: Self-Assessment and Discussion . . . . . 30

Strategy 2: Developing Meeting Guidelines and Ground Rules . . . . . 31

Strategy 3: Developing Communication Skills . . . . . 33

Strategy 4: Assessing Your Personal Styles . . . . . 37

**Section IV: Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution . . . . . 38**

Overview of Strategies . . . . . 38

Strategy 1: Self-Assessment and Discussion . . . . . 40

Strategy 2: Team Problem-Solving Process . . . . . 41

Strategy 3: Structuring Problem-Solving Activities . . . . . 45

Strategy 4: Using Good-Faith Workplace Principles
for Conflict Resolution . . . . . 49

Strategy 5: Building Conflict Management Skills . . . . . 50

**Section V: Reflection and Continuous Improvement . . . . . 52**

Overview of Strategies . . . . . 52

Strategy 1: Self-Assessment and Discussion . . . . . 54

Strategy 2: Questions for Team Reflection . . . . . 55

Strategy 3: Characteristics of an Effective Team . . . . . 56

Strategy 4: Attending to Both Task and Relationship . . . . . 58

Strategy 5: Taking Time to Celebrate! . . . . . 59

**References . . . . . 60**

**Appendix: Self-Assessment and Discussion . . . . . 62**



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# Introduction

This guide was developed to support participants in learning specific activities and strategies to build effective teams.

It is arranged to help you think about your team's functioning in the following five areas:

- *Mission, vision, and goals*
- *Roles and responsibilities*
- *Communication and interpersonal relationships*
- *Problem solving and conflict resolution*
- *Reflection and continuous improvement*

Each section contains:

- *A description of the area of team functioning*
- *An overview of suggested strategies for building your strengths and addressing your challenges, with space to capture additional ideas and strategies*
- *Descriptions of team-building strategies, including self-assessment questions*

**Portions of this workbook are adapted from the work of Larry Edelman (Senior Instructor, Department of Pediatrics, University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center, Denver, Colorado). Larry generously provided his time, resources, and suggestions to the training and resource materials. A list of additional references is provided at the end of this workbook.**



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# Why Is Teaming Important?

We all have had experience being part of a teams—sports teams, civic groups, early care and education teams, management teams, community teams, IFSP teams, family teams, etc. The skill of working together with others is critical if any team is to work; it is especially critical in serving infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Early care and education staff, early interventionists, families, and other community partners must work closely together to provide coordinated, inclusive services.

Ensuring that team members are able to work together smoothly to accomplish their goals requires attention and maintenance, like any relationship. It does not happen automatically. It is essential that teams consciously build their capacity to function well and complete their tasks.

One additional challenge that teams regularly encounter is that of changing membership. Certainly, many teams have had this experience. Any time membership changes, the dynamics of the team change, roles and responsibilities may shift, and the team must, to some degree, reinvent itself. All members of the team need to be involved in this reinvention process.

Because changes can happen at any time, each team may be in a different place in its development. For example, a team may just be getting together, may have been working together for years, or some of the team members may have been together for a long time and a new member has just joined the group. At various stages of development, teams need to focus on different aspects of the way it functions.



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# What Is a Team?

Young children with disabilities and their families receive services from providers from a variety of disciplines and agencies. These services are most effective when they are coordinated. This is why legislation and regulations include provisions for collaboration and teaming. The following definitions of "team" are given below to spark your thinking about what it means to work together as a team.

> A number of persons, functioning as a collaborative unit, each doing a clearly defined portion, and subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole (*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 1998, p. 1,209).
>
> A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable (Katzenbach and Smith, 2003, p. 45).
>
> In an effective group, members pay attention to both 1) how the task gets done, and 2) what is happening to relationships in the group. A group's "task" is the work it is trying to get done, the objective it is trying to achieve. "Relationship" refers to the group's trust, openness, and cohesiveness. Research shows clearly that groups that don't pay attention to both dimensions don't work as well as groups that do (Jones and Miller, 1993, pp. 10–12).
>
> Team learning is a process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire. . . . The world is full of teams of talented individuals who share a vision for a while, yet fail to learn. The great jazz ensemble has talent and a shared vision (even if they don't discuss it), but what really matters is that the musicians know how to play together (Senge, 1994, p. 236).
>
> A group of people who come together, under shared leadership, mutual responsibility, and conscious authority, to achieve agreed-on goals in a mutually effective fashion (Sugar and Takacs, 2000, p. 5).
>
> Teams are defined not by the people on them but by what the team must do. Teambuilding is simply a set of messages successfully shared among a group of people. Individuals who want to get their work done through interaction with others must learn to make their wants and desires known without ambiguity and without magical thinking (Avery, 2001, p. 14).
>
> Team: 1) a group on the same side, 2) a group working together, 3) a group organized to succeed (from *Together We're Better*, Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program, SpecialQuest DVD, 2002).

As you think about these definitions, consider what being part of a team means to you and to the children and families you serve.



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# Section I: Mission and Goals

**. . . high performance teams have both a clear understanding of the goal to be achieved and a belief that the goal embodies a worthwhile or important result (Larson and LeFasto, 1989, p. 27).**

Effective teams have a clear vision for what they want to be, a shared mission for what they want to do, and well-defined goals for how they are going to get it done. These serve as the group's compass, guiding their activities and development and helping them stay focused on what they want to accomplish. High-performing teams have a sense of purpose that indicates how that team will contribute to the world in their unique way (Senge, 1994). A clear mission statement for the team will describe the purpose of the team, the "why" of its existence.

An empowering mission statement focuses on the accomplishments and contributions the team wants to make, the qualities the team wants to develop, and the values by which the team wants to live and work (Covey, Merrill, and Merrill, 1995). The statement itself may be very brief and simple, but its effect on team functioning is quite dramatic.

A clear mission and well-defined goals help a team maintain its vision of where it is headed and what it wants to accomplish for young children and their families. The strategies in this section are selected to assist teams in developing or refining their mission, vision, and goals to guide their work.



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# Overview of Strategies

## 1—Self-Assessment and Discussion

The self-assessment questions are designed to help you identify strengths and weaknesses in the mission statement and goals that guide your work. Self-assessment questions are included on page 8.

## 2—Our Team's Mission and Vision

Your team may want to review and reconfirm your mission and vision statements to make sure that they reflect your vision for inclusion. Refer to existing statements, or create a new one on page 9.

## 3—Reviewing and Reflecting on Other Mission Statements

Examine the mission statements of other organizations on pages 10 through 13. These examples may provide you with ideas to incorporate into your team's mission and vision.

## 4—Our Goals and Action Plans

A team review of the goals and action plans developed by your team will be helpful in orienting new team members, refocusing the team, or evaluating team accomplishments. See page 14.

## 5—Goals for Team Meetings

Clear goals and outcomes for your team meetings will help the group get its work done more effectively. The Team Meeting Planning Form on page 15 will help structure your team meetings.

## Other Suggested Strategies

Record any ideas for additional strategies that your group might find useful.



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# Strategy 1: Self-Assessment and Discussion

*Adapted from Phillips and Elledge, 1989*

***Directions:*** Circle the number on the scale that corresponds to your perception of how your team is currently operating. Are your feelings about your team better represented by the statement on the right or the statement on the left?

***Discussion/Action Plans:*** Each member in your team should complete the ratings independently. Compile the responses. Then, compare and discuss the ratings to identify areas of strength and areas where you need work. You may identify agreements or discrepancies in how team members view your mission and goals. Based on the discussions of their ratings, team members can identify strategies and develop action plans to enhance areas that need work or reinforce areas of strength. A facilitator might be helpful to support these discussions if there is no clear agreement among the team.

| Team Mission and Goals | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Mission, vision, and goals are clear; understanding is shared by all team members. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Mission, vision, and goals are unclear, fluctuating, and conflicting. |
| 2. Team is committed to the mission, vision, and goals. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Team displays lack of commitment to the mission, vision, and goals. |
| 3. Priorities for action are established and realistic. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Team has too many priorities. |
| 4. Team regularly reviews the mission, vision, and goals and updates action plans. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Team does little planning and goal setting. |



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# Strategy 2: Our Team's Mission and Vision

Review your team's mission and vision. Identify additional ideas from all team members about making your programs and community a great place for **all** infants and toddlers, including those with disabilities and their families. Revise your mission and vision to incorporate any new ideas that the group agrees are important to add.

| What is our team's mission and vision? What do we want to accomplish for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in our community; what is our vision for the future; and how will we work together to make this a reality? |
|---|
| |

***Action/Next Steps***

- *Use these ideas to identify how you will share your team's mission and vision for providing inclusive services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families with your community.*
- *Create a banner, song, advertisement, TV commercial, poster, etc. that represents your mission/vision.*
- *Be prepared to share your creation with others.*

**Session 6 Handout #2**



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# Strategy 3: Reviewing and Reflecting on Other Mission Statements

Review and discuss the following mission and vision statements collected from a variety of organizations and programs. Do these mission statements provide any ideas that you want to incorporate into your team's mission or vision?

## Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program

**Mission:** The mission of the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program is to support Early Head Start (EHS) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) staff and family members—in collaboration with Early Intervention, Head Start, and child care partners—to develop skills and strategies for accessing and using services, resources, and technology to include infants and toddlers with significant disabilities and their families in EHS/MSHS programs.

**Vision:** We believe infants and toddlers with significant disabilities and their families are valuable members of our communities, honored for their diversity and uniqueness. Providing quality services for infants and toddlers with disabilities enrolled in EHS/MSHS requires a commitment to ongoing, collaborative relationships among families, Early Intervention service providers, Head Start staff, and other community partners.

Just as EHS/MSHS staff support and nurture relationships with children, families, and community partners, the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program will model supportive approaches to individual and team growth. Effective teaming, ongoing reflection and opportunities for application of recommended practices provide the means to enhance services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

## Exceptional Family Resource Center

**Mission:** The mission of the Exceptional Family Resource Center is to provide support, information, and education for families of children with disabilities and the professionals who assist these families. By offering emotional support and factual information, the Center enables families to help their children reach their fullest potential.

**Vision:** All children with disabilities will be given the opportunity to live with a supported and empowered family, fully participating within their community. Every community will be enriched by the inclusion of people with diverse abilities.



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## University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), Children's Center

**Mission:** We are committed to striving for the highest possible standards in early care and education programs and, in so doing, supporting the children, families, students, and early childhood education professionals of UCSB. University affiliation inspires us to be leaders in early care and education through direct service to families enrolled and as a valuable resource for the greater UCSB and surrounding community.

**Vision:** The Center strives to be a dynamic, professional force dedicated to improving the lives of young children through providing: consummate care and early education for children, support systems and resources for families, and model training and development opportunities for early childhood educators.

## Primero Los Niños

**Mission:**

- *To promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women*
- *To enhance the development of very young children*
- *To promote healthy family function*

### Vision:

- *To provide safe and developmentally enriching care-giving, continuity of care, and environments which promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth of infants and toddlers and prepare them for future growth and development.*
- *To support parents, both mothers and fathers, and pregnant mothers in their role as primary caregivers and educators of their children, and families in meeting personal goals and achieving self-sufficiency across a wide variety of domains.*


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## St. Charles Parish Head Start Program (Early Head Start and Head Start)

**Mission:** The mission of the Head Start Program in St. Charles Parish Public Schools is to provide children, including children with disabilities, with high quality service, that result in long-term positive effects on their physical, health, intellectual, and social-emotional development. These services are built upon the highest regard for culturally and linguistically responsive approaches and activities in warm and caring environments.

**Vision:** Children, including those with disabilities, have early childhood development and learning experiences that honor their unique characteristics, and prepare them for future school success. Families receive encouragement and support from service systems and their communities so that they can achieve their own goals, and provide safe and nurturing environments for their young children.

## New Mexico Early Childhood Transition Initiative

**Mission:** To support community teams in developing and/or improving their system of transitioning children and families from early intervention services to other services and supports.

**Vision:** All children and families will experience a smooth and effective transition as a result of collaborative, intentional community planning.

## Division for Early Childhood

*www.dec-sped.org*

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) promotes policies and advances evidence-based practices that support families and enhance the optimal development of young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities.



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## Communities Can!

*www.dml.georgetown.edu/depts/pediatrics/gucdc/commcan.html*

Communities Can! is a network of communities committed to making sure that all children and families (including those with or at risk for disabilities) have the services and supports they need to develop, flourish, and be valued members of the community, and that those services are family-centered and culturally competent. Communities Can! members make it the business of the whole community—not the worry of individual families—to find, provide, organize, and fund services needed by children and families.

## The Early Head Start National Resource Center

*www.ehsnrc.org*

The Early Head Start National Resource Center (EHS NRC) provides training and technical assistance to Head Start's new Early Head Start program, which supports the healthy development of infants, toddlers, and their families, and pregnant women.

## Family Village

*www.familyvillage.wisc.edu*

We are a global community that integrates information, resources, and communication opportunities on the Internet for persons with cognitive and other disabilities, for their families, and for those that provide them services and support. Our community includes informational resources on specific diagnoses, communication connections, adaptive products and technology, adaptive recreational activities, education, worship, health issues, disability-related media and literature, and much, much more!



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# Strategy 4: Our Goals and Action Plans

Review the Goals and Action Plans that you developed with your team. Think about the following questions. If the answer to any of the questions is "no," you may want to revise your plans to make them clear, meaningful, achievable, and measurable.

| |
|---|
| Are our goals and action plans clear? If not, what can we do to clarify them? |
| |
| Are the goals and action plans meaningful to everyone involved? If not, what can we do to make them meaningful to all? |
| |
| Are these goals and action plans achievable within the targeted time frame? If not, how can we revise them to make them achievable? |
| |
| Do you have clear indicators of success? If not, what needs to happen so that we clearly know when we have accomplished our action plans? |
| |

**Action plan forms are available for download at**
***www.specialquest.org/materials.html***

**Session 6 Handout #2**


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# Strategy 5: Goals for Team Meetings

Team meetings are one of the vehicles for accomplishing your goals and action plans, for helping you move toward your mission and vision. Meetings that are focused and well planned make good use of participants' time and energy. The Team Meeting Planning Form below will help structure effective team meetings by defining the purpose and projected outcomes for each meeting. It will make it easier for your team to evaluate whether its outcomes were met and ultimately help the group get its work done more effectively.

## Team Meeting Planning Form

Meeting Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____
Facilitator: _____ Time Keeper: _____
Note Taker: _____ Action Item Recorder: _____
Other Participants/Roles: _____

| Agenda Items/Time | Intended Outcome | Discussion | Action Item/Next Steps (timeline and person(s) responsible) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Example: Review status of Action Plan I (60 min.) | Determine progress toward the Action Steps around Action Plan I. | We have made progress towards our first two Action Steps. Need to talk with community partners to plan our training around transitioning children at age 3. | Dianne & Terri will follow up with all of our EI, Child Care, Head Start, and Part B partners by the end of next week regarding our joint training event. |
| • | • | • | • |
| • | • | • | • |
| • | • | • | • |

Continuous Improvement:

| What Worked | Suggestions for Improvement |
|---|---|
| | |

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**Team Meeting Planning Forms available for download at *www.specialquest.org/materials.html***

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# Section II: Roles and Responsibilities

Serving infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families effectively requires a variety of skills and perspectives. A coordinated team approach to service delivery is needed. However, the team will be effective only if everyone on the team is aware of the strengths and skills of other team members, and there is a clear understanding of who is doing what so there are no gaps or duplication in services. Teams may experience conflict in this area unless there is ongoing communication and clarification about roles and responsibilities.

## Overview of Strategies

### 1—Self-Assessment and Discussion

The self-assessment questions can help you identify the strength and weaknesses your team faces in developing and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of your team members.

### 2—What I Bring and What I Need

This activity helps teams identify personal strengths and needs, and the strengths and supports required from the team in order to accomplish team goals. Since strengths and needs can change over time, it is important to periodically revisit these issues. In addition, if team membership has changed, it is important to include the new team members in this process. Use page 21 to clarify the strengths within your team and the supports you need to function most effectively as a team. On page 22 (the Commitment for Working Together worksheet), your team can list ground rules to maximize its members' strengths and support each member's needs.

### 3—"Lifeline of Experiences" Activity

This exercise, which is described in detail on pages 23, is a fun and powerful way to help team members let each other know of the rich experiences that each member is bringing to the team.

### 4—Sharing Strengths and Skills

This activity helps teams identify their team members' strengths, skills, and interests that can contribute to the team's ability to accomplish its goals. The activity is described on page 24.



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## 5—Clarifying Meeting Roles

In order to hold effective meetings, each team member needs to know his or her roles in the meeting. Use page 25 of this workbook to decide which roles are necessary for your meetings to be successful, agree on the description of each role, and determine who will take on that role.

## 6—Characteristics of a Good Facilitator

The effectiveness of the facilitator is a determining factor in the success of a meeting. He or she coordinates the meeting and keeps things focused. Look at pages 27–28 to get an idea of the qualities an effective meeting facilitator must possess.

## Other Suggested Strategies

Use this space to record any ideas or additional strategies that your group would find useful.



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# Strategy 1: Self-Assessment and Discussion

*Adapted from Phillips and Elledge, 1989*

***Directions:*** Circle the number on the scale that corresponds to your perception of how your team is currently operating. Are your feelings about your team better represented by the statement on the right or the statement on the left?

***Discussion/Action Plans:*** Each member in your team should complete their ratings independently. Compile the responses; then compare and discuss the ratings to identify areas of strength and areas where you need work. You may identify agreements or discrepancies in how team members view your roles and responsibilities. Based on the discussions of their ratings, team members can identify strategies and develop action plans to enhance areas that need work or reinforce areas of strength. A facilitator might be helpful to support these discussions if there is no clear agreement among the team.

| Team Roles and Responsibilities | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Team roles and responsibilities are interrelated. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Team roles and responsibilities are unrelated. |
| 2. Members are very clear about their roles. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members are unclear about their roles. |
| 3. Tasks are well organized. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Tasks are fragmented, not well organized. |
| 4. Members coordinate their efforts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members do not coordinate their efforts. |
| 5. Leadership is shared. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Leadership is held by one person. |
| 6. Members are aware of others' skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members are unaware of other's skills. |
| 7. Members' abilities are used by the team. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members' abilities are not used by the team. |
| 8. Individual strengths are valued. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Individual strengths are not valued. |



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# Strategy 2: What I Bring and What I Need

This activity helps teams identify personal strengths and needs, and the strengths and supports needed from the team in order to accomplish its goals. Since strengths and needs can change over time, it is important to periodically revisit these issues. In addition, if team membership has changed, it is important to include the new team members in this process. Use the handout on page 21 to clarify strengths within your team and supports you need to function most effectively as a team. On page 22 (the Commitment for Working Together worksheet), your team can list ground rules to maximize your team's strengths and support each member's needs.

## What I Bring

Reflect on your personal contributions to the team. This might include something about your **role** ("I bring the parent perspective about day-to-day life with a child with a disability"; or "as an early intervention provider I know a lot about resources for children with disabilities"; or "as a child care provider I know a lot about young children and how to provide responsive care giving") or it may be a **personal characteristic** ("I'm very organized," "I'm creative," "I bring humor to the group," "I keep everyone on track," etc.). You might also think about **personal experiences** or professional training that you have that will help the team in designing effective, inclusive services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

In the **left-hand column** write down all of the things that you can think of that you bring to the team. Be prepared to share strengths with your team.

## What I Need

In this space, write down the kinds of things that help you participate best as a team member. This may have something to do with your **role** or it may be a **personal style of communication** (for example, "I've never done this, and I need to know what is expected of me," "I need child care in order to participate in meetings," "I need to understand more about the different programs participating on the team in order to best participate in the meetings," "I need to be invited to participate," "I need people to respect my time constraints," etc.). Be prepared to share your ideas with the group so that everyone understands the strengths and needs of the group to work most effectively together.


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Finally, develop some strategies for how you want to work together as a team to best use everyone's talents and to respect each other's styles and needs. Record these strategies on the Commitment for Working Together worksheet on page 22. As a team, how will you work together to maximize the strengths that each of you brings and to address the unique styles and needs of your team members?



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# What I Bring to My Team/ What I Need from My Team

Each person should complete this form individually.

| ***What strengths do I bring*** that will help me and my team provide services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families? | ***What do I need*** from my team members so that I can do my best and my team can accomplish its goals? |
|---|---|
| | |

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# Commitment for Working Together

| As a team, how will we work together to maximize our strengths and address our unique styles and needs? |
| --- |
| |

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# Strategy 3: "Lifeline of Experiences" Activity

*Adapted from* Strategies and Tools for Teams: Building High Performance Teams*, p. 10; Larry Edelman, unpublished training materials, 1999.*

This exercise will help team members let each other know what rich experiences they are bringing to the team. The exercise takes about two hours for a team of ten people.

***Note:*** This activity has the potential to evoke powerful emotions as individual members may choose to tell very personal, and sometimes difficult, memories. Make sure that there is sufficient trust within the team and a promise of confidentiality among team members before using this exercise.

## 1. Set-up

Choose a room that has a long wall. Tape a length of butcher paper along the entire wall to create a timeline. Allow enough space to cover everyone's lifespan up to the present. End the timeline with the current year. You may need to wrap the paper around a corner of the room in order to create enough space.

## 2. Team members create their personal timelines

Give each team member a different-colored marker. The task for group members is to note the key events in their lives that have influenced who they are and what skills, knowledge, wisdom, and perspectives they are bringing to the team by writing or drawing key words or pictures next to the year in which the events occurred. These events can be both personal and professional. Have all team members work at the same time, but silently. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for this portion of the exercise.

## 3. Team members share their stories

When everyone has finished writing on the timeline, allow each member 5 to 10 minutes to go to the time line and highlight key events or experiences they want to share with the group.

## 4. Summarize

After everyone has told his or her story, have the team members offer summarizing remarks about what they have learned from the exercise about themselves, others, and the team.

## 5. Allow some time after the activity for general socializing


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# Strategy 4: Sharing Strengths and Skills

*Adapted from* Strategies and Tools for Teams: Building High Performance Teams, *p. 23; Larry Edelman, unpublished training materials, 1999.*

Team members who know the skills, strengths, and experiences of other team members are better able to use these assets in accomplishing their goals.

## 1. Individually

Working individually, list specific skills you have that you would like the other team members to know about. (This is also mentioned in Section II, Strategy 2).

List those specific areas of strengths that you have for working with children and families, including any special areas of focus and interest.

Also include other activities that you perform well that can be an asset to the team's functioning, such as project management, writing, negotiating, organizing, directing, budgeting, cooperating, thinking, and teaching.

## 2. As a Team

Once all of the members of your team have had a chance to list their strengths, devote a meeting or portion of a meeting to sharing these with one another. Identify how each team member's strengths can be used to contribute to the work of the team as a whole.

The strengths and skills list can be compiled and updated periodically. This allows you to see the rich resources within your group, as well as to recognize any possible gaps.



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# Strategy 5: Clarifying Meeting Roles

In order to hold effective meetings, each team member needs to know his or her role in the meeting. Having clearly defined responsibilities for each of the roles in a team meeting assures that there are clear expectations for each of the team members during the meeting. The following activity can help teams decide which roles are necessary for productive meetings and clarify the responsibilities for each of the roles.

As a team, review the roles described below. Review the possible responsibilities listed for each of the roles and decide on your team's expectations for each role. Some teams rotate responsibilities from meeting to meeting, asking team members to assume various meeting roles so that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and build leadership skills. Other teams have individuals assigned to the same roles for a longer period of time.

## Facilitator

- *Propose and coordinate group processes and problem-solving strategies.*
- *Suggest ways to use the available time.*
- *Remain neutral to the issues—focus on the process.*
- *Guide the group through the agenda.*
- *Assure the opportunity for equal participation.*
- *Recognize obstacles and assist the group in working through them.*
- *Provide feedback for the group.*
- *Keep the group focused on the task.*
- *Continually check the "pulse" of the group.*
- *Make sure the meetings begin and end on time.*

## Recorder

- *Support the facilitator, without competing or taking over.*
- *Collect, organize, and maintain the group's thoughts.*
- *Document the major parts of the meeting, such as attendance, ideas, decisions, plans, and actions to be taken.*
- *Record exactly what is said—rather than interpreting, ask the speaker for clarification.*



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## Timekeeper

- *Remind the group when the time allotted for each agenda item is approaching.*
- *Support the group in making sure meetings begin and end on time.*

## Group Members

- *Commit to the group, the process, and the ground rules.*
- *Participate actively.*
- *Listen to the ideas of others.*
- *Remain open to new information and ideas.*
- *Display patience with others, processes, and ideas.*
- *Be hard on the issues, but soft on people.*
- *Share responsibility for making the meeting successful.*
- *Assist the facilitator and recorder.*
- *Follow through on commitments.*

**The Team Meeting Planning Form in section I, strategy 5, on page 15 could supplement this activity.**



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# Strategy 6: Characteristics of a Good Facilitator

*Adapted from* Strategies and Tools for Teams: Building High Performance Teams, *p. 24; Larry Edelman, unpublished training materials, 1999.*

Answer the following questions to identify your areas of strengths and areas needing further development as an effective meeting facilitator.

| Self-Assessment Questions | Rating<br>N = Never<br>R = Rarely<br>S = Sometimes<br>O = Often<br>C = Consistently | Examples of these Qualities |
|---|---|---|
| Do I take responsibility for the process, not the problems? | N — R — S — O — C | |
| Do I know my personal agenda and biases and avoid letting them get in the way of effective facilitation? | N — R — S — O — C | |
| Do I model and encourage respect, active listening, empathy, accommodation for diversity, and good humor? | N — R — S — O — C | |
| Do I accept and admit to my own mistakes? | N — R — S — O — C | |
| Do I help create an open and inviting climate? | N — R — S — O — C | |


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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Do I encourage participation and ensure equal opportunity; i.e., do I know how to engage people who speak too little and help to temper people who dominate discussions? | N — R — S — O — C | |
| Do I effectively handle disruptive behavior, conflict, and personal problems within a group? | N — R — S — O — C | |
| Do I exercise restraint rather than try to fix things? | N — R — S — O — C | |
| Do I use agendas to focus people on the appropriate issues for the appropriate amount of time? | N — R — S — O — C | |
| Am I clear when I introduce each part of the meeting, give directions, confirm comprehension among the group, summarize what is happening, and offer transitions throughout the session? | N — R — S — O — C | |
| Am I flexible? | N — R — S — O — C | |
| Do I help facilitate the group to make decisions and determine next steps? | N — R — S — O — C | |

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# Section III: Communication and Interpersonal Relationships

To work effectively as a team, team members must communicate on an ongoing basis about the children and families they are serving, their progress toward goals, and their work as a team. The relationships among team members also can facilitate or inhibit the work of the team. Having strategies to communicate effectively and build interpersonal relationships supports your team in working in a coordinated way to meet the unique needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

## Overview of Strategies

### 1—Self-Assessment and Discussion

The Self-Assessment questions can help you identify your strengths and weaknesses in the areas of communication and interpersonal relationships among team members.

### 2—Develop Meeting Guidelines and Ground Rules

Developing guidelines and ground rules for the group's meetings will help your team members spend their time together in more satisfying and productive ways. See pages 31–32 to get some ideas on how to do this.

### 3—Developing Communication Skills

Good communication among members is essential to effective teaming, and communication skills can always be improved. Look to pages 33–36 of this workbook for some examples of communication skill-building activities for teams.

### 4—Assessing Your Personal Styles

Team members will want to identify their personal styles and share what they learn with the team in order for all team members to better understand each other and improve communications. There are a variety of self- and peer-assessment instruments designed for just this purpose and available through the mail or online.

## Other Suggested Strategies

Use this space to record any ideas or additional strategies that your group would find useful.



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# Strategy 1: Self-Assessment and Discussion

*Adapted from Phillips and Elledge, 1989*

***Directions:*** Circle the number on the scale below that corresponds to your perception of how your team is currently operating. Are your feelings about your team better represented by the statement on the right or on the left?

***Discussion/Action Plans:*** Each member in your team should complete his or her ratings independently. Compile the responses; then compare and discuss the ratings to identify areas of strength and areas where you need work. You may identify agreements or discrepancies in how team members view your communication skills and interpersonal relationships. Based on the discussions of their ratings, team members can identify strategies and develop action plans to enhance areas that need work or reinforce areas of strength. A facilitator might be helpful to support these discussions if there is no clear agreement among the team.

| Communication and Interpersonal Relationships | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Our team communicates effectively. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team communicates ineffectively. |
| 2. Feedback on individual work is effective and frequent. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Feedback on individual work is poor or non-existent. |
| 3. Member's efforts are acknowledged. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Member's efforts are not acknowledged. |
| 4. Members communicate openly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members are guarded when communicating. |
| 5. Feelings are freely expressed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Feelings cannot be freely expressed. |
| 6. Members care about each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members do not care about each other. |
| 7. Members trust each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members do not trust each other. |



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# Strategy 2: Developing Meeting Guidelines and Ground Rules

*Adapted from* Strategies and Tools for Teams: Building High Performance Teams, *p. 29; Larry Edelman, unpublished training materials, 1999.*

Deciding on meeting guidelines and ground rules will help members spend their time together in more satisfying and productive ways. Ground rules might be logistical or they might be about the expected behavior of the members. Whatever they are, they should establish the conditions that will support the group to achieve its goals.

## Examples of issues for which the group may wish to develop guidelines:

- *Attendance*
- *Promptness*
- *Meeting place and time*
- *Level of participation expected from each member*
- *Courtesies*
- *Assignments*
- *Breaks*
- *Interruptions*
- *Dealing with conflict*
- *Making decisions*
- *Hidden agendas*
- *Side conversations*
- *Rotation of routine chores*
- *Other norms*

## A Suggestion for Developing Ground Rules and Guidelines

Decide on group guidelines or ground rules by answering questions such as the ones offered below. Do not try to answer them all, but choose the ones that you think address the unique needs of your team. After the group comes to an agreement, have the ground rules typed up and distributed to the members. You may choose to review the ground rules at the beginning of each meeting. They should always be accessible at meetings. The ground rules will also be a valuable aid when orienting new members to the group.



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## Discussion Questions

- *How shall we communicate with each other in ways that make us feel good about ourselves and make us want to do our best for the team?*
- *What behaviors will establish a safe atmosphere for sharing and risk-taking?*
- *How will we behave in meetings?*
- *How will we give each other useful, constructive feedback to support the work of our team?*
- *Do we need ground rules about:*
  - *Attendance?*
  - *Promptness?*
  - *Levels of participation?*
  - *Civilities and courtesies?*
  - *Rotation of chores?*
  - *What to do when someone does not follow through on commitments?*
  - *How to celebrate accomplishments?*
  - *How to handle interruptions such as cell phones?*
  - *Confidentiality?*
  - *Listening with respect?*



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# Strategy 3: Developing Communication Skills

*Adapted from* Strategies and Tools for Teams: Building High Performance Teams, *p. 12–13; Larry Edelman, unpublished training materials, 1999.*

Communication skills can always be improved. Individual team members and teams as a whole should commit to continually improving their abilities in these areas.

## Some areas that teams may need to work on include:

- *Recognizing how emotions influence communication*
- *Understanding one's own biases and assumptions*
- *Developing active listening skills*
- *Learning to give constructive feedback and to accept feedback from others*
- *Developing skills in facilitating team discussion and dialogue*

## Use the following activities to build these team communication skills

### 1. Walking in Another's Shoes

*(From Seagal and Horne, 1997, p. 218)*

Practice a new personality trait for a time (during a meeting, for example). If you don't already, you might want to:

- *Slow down*
- *Speak more deliberately*
- *Speak with enthusiasm and emphasizing important words*
- *Practice connecting with others more personally by sharing something you normally wouldn't*
- *Focus on one thing at a time*
- *Pause before speaking*


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**Reflect and notice how you feel.**

- *Do you notice a difference?*
- *Does this experience change your perceptions?*
- *Will it change your future behavior?*
- *What have you learned from it?*

**Ask others for feedback.**

- *Did they notice anything different about you or your participation?*

## 2. Changing Habits

*(From Seagal and Horne, 1997, p. 222)*

Our habits have been created out of countless repetitions. The more deeply ingrained a pattern, the harder it is to change. The following practice is exceedingly simple in structure, but surprisingly challenging to do.

**Identify a behavior you want to adopt or stabilize, or a quality you wish to nurture in yourself.** For example, you might decide that you want to allow a colleague to speak without interruption; or you may decide that you will practice a personal development exercise every morning.

**Whatever behavior you select, repeat it consistently over a 21-day period.** If you forget the practice, you must begin again at Day One!



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### 3. Active Listening Skills

The purpose of active listening is to help you clearly understand exactly what the speaker is trying to communicate and to let the speaker know that you have understood. In active listening, we listen for both the content and the feeling conveyed in the message. Active listening includes the following elements:

- *Being Attentive*

  Pay close attention to what is being said; demonstrate that you are listening through attentive body language.

- *Suspending Judgement*

  This is perhaps the most difficult of these elements—it means not agreeing or disagreeing. Remember, the purpose of active listening is to understand the other person, not judge him or her.

- *Reflecting Back to the Speaker*

  This technique helps both to convey your interest and to elicit more information. Use the same or similar words to reflect the speaker's idea back to him or her. For example:

  *Speaker:* I'm really unhappy about the meeting we had today.

  *Listener:* It sounds like you have some concerns about how it went.

- *Listening for Feelings*

  If something is important to the speaker, he or she will have feelings about it. Often, the feelings themselves are the most important part of the message. Acknowledge the feelings the other person is conveying to you. For example:

  *Listener:* From the way you describe your situation, it sounds like you are very frustrated.

- *Summarizing*

  Pick out what you think were the most important parts of the speaker's message. Summarize them back to the speaker to be sure you understand the message correctly.



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Active Listening Activity:

- *Have the team review and discuss the elements of active listening.*
- *Divide the team into groups of three (a triad). Then have each triad assign themselves the roles of speaker, listener, and observer.*
- *The speaker tells a personal story to the listener. The listener uses the elements of active listening. The observer watches the interaction in order to give the pair feedback later.*
- *After the speaker is through, ask the speaker and listener to discuss the experience, answering questions such as:*

  How did the speaker feel?

  How did the listener feel?

  What did the listener do that the speaker liked?
- *Once the experience has been discussed, ask the observer to offer his or her constructive observations and comments.*
- *Switch roles and complete the exercise until everyone has had the opportunity to play all three roles. Get the whole team together and have a conversation about how the team will benefit from listening attentively to one another.*



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## Strategy 4: Assessing Your Personal Styles

There are a variety of self- and peer-assessment instruments designed to identify personal styles to help people better understand each other and improve communication. These instruments focus on a variety of personal characteristics, including personality/temperament, learning and communication styles, creativity, leadership, and thinking.

***Note:*** it is often helpful to have a trained external facilitator work with the group in using such tools.

Myers Briggs Type Indicator
*www.myersbriggs.org*

Keirsey Temperament Sorter
*www.keirsey.com*

True Colors
*www.truecolors.org*

Knowledge Team Effectiveness Profile (KTEP)
*www.great-teams.com/*

Team Leadership Practices Inventory
*www.josseybass.com*


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# Section IV: Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution

Problem solving is a necessary life skill. A problem can be defined as "any situation in which a gap is perceived to exist between what is and what should be" (VanGundy, 1981 p. 301). Using this definition, it is clear that not only will groups always encounter problems, but that problems can be viewed as opportunities.

For teams working with infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, every situation is unique and requires continual problem solving to provide individualized services. Teams need strategies to address the bumps in the road when working toward their visions and goals for children and families. There may be problems in implementing goals or resolving conflicts among team members (the up- and downside of having multiple perspectives). Resolving these conflicts can turn ongoing struggles into positive teaming.

## Overview of Strategies

### 1—Self-Assessment and Discussion

The self-assessment questions can help you identify strengths and needs in relation to problem-solving skills and conflict-resolution processes.

### 2—Team Problem-Solving Process

A simple team problem-solving process, outlining a Cause to Pause, is provided. Activities to practice this problem-solving process are also included.

### 3—Structuring Problem-Solving Activities

Groups have more success in addressing problems if they use a structured problem-solving model that has the flexibility of allowing a variety of problem-solving techniques. The following pages 45–48 offer one problem-solving model; and page 62 of the Self-Assessment and Discussion guide offers questions that can be useful in evaluating and selecting the ideas you want to use.



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## 4—Using Good-Faith Workplace Principles for Conflict Resolution

A sample set of principles for guiding conflict resolution is on page 49. Your team might review these principles and discuss, modify, and adapt a conflict-resolution process so that when conflict arises, you have a process to manage it.

## 5—Building Conflict-Management Skills

Investing the time to plan how you will deal with conflicts when they arise and making sure that all team members learn the skills for conflict resolution will save your team a great deal of time and unnecessary grief. One model that you can use for managing conflict is on pages 50–51.

## Other Suggested Strategies

Record any other ideas or additional strategies that your group would find useful.



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# Strategy 1: Self-Assessment and Discussion

*Adapted from Phillips and Elledge, 1989*

***Directions:*** Circle the number on the scale that corresponds to your perception of how your team is currently operating. Are your feelings about your team better represented by the statement on the right or on the left?

***Discussion/Action Plans:*** Each member in your team should complete his or her ratings independently. Compile the responses; then compare and discuss the ratings to identify areas of strength and areas where you need work. You may identify agreements or discrepancies in how team members view problem solving and conflict resolution. Based on the discussions of their ratings, team members can identify strategies and develop action plans to enhance areas that need work or reinforce areas of strength. A facilitator might be helpful to support these discussions if there is no clear agreement among the team.

| Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The team uses an effective process for problem solving. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The team has no effective process for problem solving. |
| 2. Decisions are made by the team. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Decisions are not made by the team. |
| 3. Decisions are based on the best information. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Decisions are not based on the best information. |
| 4. There is strong commitment to decisions within the team. | 1 2 3 4 5 | There is weak commitment to decisions within the team. |
| 5. Conflicts are confronted appropriately within the team. | 1 2 3 4 5 | The team denies or avoids dealing with conflict. |
| 6. There is harmony among members. | 1 2 3 4 5 | There is discord among members. |



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# Strategy 2: Team Problem-Solving Process

This activity will provide your team with one way to structure the problem-solving process so an effective solution can be developed, drawing upon all of the team members' experience, knowledge, and creativity.

The problem solving process includes the following steps:

1. Identify and analyze your Cause to Pause
2. Brainstorm solutions—generate possible solutions
3. Analyze the solutions—consider pros and cons of each suggested solution
4. Build consensus—identify the best solution

The Cause to Pause guide (below) and the What Are the Causes of Our Pause worksheet are used to ensure that the entire team agrees on the problem that is to be solved and what is causing this problem.

Once a solution is identified, your team should develop action plans to address the Cause to Pause, implement the action plans, and evaluate the results to determine if the problem has been satisfactorily addressed.

## Cause to Pause

**What Is a Cause to Pause?**

Causes to Pause are the things we need to consider (that make us stop and think), but are not necessarily problems. Challenges, barriers, or Causes to Pause are inevitable in our work and in our lives. Teams can reflect on and use problem-solving strategies to address their challenges and issues, and to identify possible resources (e.g., colleagues, consultants, families, or the Internet) to gather input, insight and information to address their Causes to Pause.

**What's the Cause of This Pause?**

There can be many underlying causes that make you pause. They can be categorized as follows:

- *Systems Issues*
- *Relationship Issues*
- *Environmental/Curricular Issues*
- *Attitudinal Issues*


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The following questions for each category of issues can help your team identify the underlying Cause to the Pause.

***Systems Issues***

Is the issue caused by . . .

1. A program's rules and regulations?
   - *Is it in the law?*
   - *Is it policy dictated by federal or state regulations, local interagency agreements, or local procedures? Is it negotiable?*
2. A lack of a procedure?
3. A need for an interagency agreement?
4. An interagency agreement that has been written and filed, but not understood and implemented at all levels of the organizations involved?

***Relationship Issues***

Is the issue caused by . . .

1. A lack of relationship with a community partner?
2. A negative past history with a community partner?
3. A lack of understanding and trust throughout all levels of both agencies (administration through direct service providers)? Relationships might be strong with the partner, but only on one level (for example: home visitor to home visitor, but not administrator to administrator, or home visitor to administrator).
4. Situations where families feel that programs are competing with one another?



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***Environmental/Curricular Issues***

Is the issue caused by . . .

1. Special accommodations or modifications that need to be made to the curriculum, intervention strategies, or the environment?
   - *Health or nutrition*
   - *Lighting and sound*
   - *Touch (sensory/tactile)*
   - *Environmental accommodations to provide orientation and mobility supports for a child with vision problems*
   - *Adaptive equipment or toys*
   - *Accessibility*
2. Availability of safe and suitable play areas for ambulatory and non-ambulatory children?
3. Physical barriers? Does space meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards?

***Attitudinal Issues***

Is the issue caused by . . .

1. Line staff and/or decision makers doing things the way they have always been done?
2. People operating out of fear or lack of information?
3. People worrying that they weren't "trained to do this" (i.e., work with children with disabilities)?
4. People working from stereotypes or prejudices that interfere with their ability to collaborate?


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# What Are the Causes to Pause?

**Our Cause to Pause:** _____

| 1. What are the systems issues that impact our Cause to Pause? |
|---|
| |
| 2. How does the environment and curriculum influence our Cause to Pause? |
| |
| 3. How do our relationships with our partners affect the Cause to Pause? |
| |
| 4. How do attitudes in our community relate to our Cause to Pause? |
| |

**Use these ideas to create an action plan for your next steps.**

**Session 6 Handout #2**


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# Strategy 3: Structuring Problem-Solving Activities

Adapted from *Strategies and Tools for Teams: Building High Performance Teams*, p. 19; Larry Edelman, unpublished training materials, 1999.

Every team encounters problems to be solved on a regular basis. Having effective strategies to address those challenges is essential to teams achieving their goals.

## Definitions of "Problem"

Any situation in which a gap is perceived to exist between what is and what should be (VanGundy, 1981, p. 301).

## The Following are Four Stages to Solving a Problem

**1. Redefine and Analyze the Problem**

". . . the analysis and redefinition of a problem are the most important activities in the problem solving process, since the procedure of this stage will largely determine the nature and quality of any solutions that follow. However, once a problem has been analyzed and redefined, the new problem statement should be considered tentative. Next to failing to adequately analyze a problem, the largest error made by many problem solvers is rigidly sticking with the first new viewpoint that emerges" (VanGundy, 1998).

Defining and analyzing the problem is the important first step in problem solving. Careful analysis of the situations can help ensure that the solutions fit the issue at hand. Some of the strategies for this phase might involve:

- *Having team members share what they know about the problem*
- *Testing team members' perceptions and assumptions*
- *Organizing and analyzing information and the major elements of the problem*
- *Suggesting and/or analyzing problem statements*
- *Clarifying or redefining problems*


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**2. Generate Ideas**

"When you're stuck, more thinking about the problem won't get you out of it. You have to adventure" (Friedman, 1996).

Once you clearly understand the problem, it will be helpful to think about as many solutions as possible. It's beneficial at this stage for everyone who is involved in the problem to contribute. Working with your team in this way can generate creative solutions.

Here are some basic principles for this stage:

- *Defer judgement—do not criticize or comment*
- *Quantity breeds quality—the more ideas you have, the more you have to choose from*
- *The wilder the idea, the better—shoot for the moon*
- *Piggybacking is fine—combine and improve upon each other's ideas*
- *Set a time limit—take a break from the problem*

(Adapted from VanGundy, 1988)

**3. Evaluate and Select Ideas**

"The process of evaluation is logical and judgemental and is not directly part of creativity—nor should it be" (De Bono, 1992).

The next step in problem solving is to review the ideas generated and use the team's wisdom to develop an effective solution or strategy. Look at the pros and cons in light of the benefits, feasibility, resources needed, and "fit" of a potential solution. This will lead you to selecting the best options for action.

Take great care in establishing evaluative criteria to select ideas. The considerations below can help guide your team in identifying the conditions that a selected idea must meet.



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# Major considerations to be used in evaluating ideas

## Benefits

What are the benefits?

How large are the benefits likely to be?

How will the benefits be derived?

How durable are the benefits?

Who would get the benefits?

## Feasibility

How will it work?

How much effort is needed to make it feasible?

Who will need to expend the effort?

Will others need extensive convincing?

## Resources

Do we have the resources to make it work?

Do we want to allocate the resources to this idea?

What is the cost in terms of time, money, and friction and disruption of ongoing activities?

Who is going to be responsible?

## Fit

Does the idea "fit" the policy, strategy, objectives, values, and culture of the organization?

If an idea does not seem to fit, can it be made to fit?

*(Adapted from Bono, 1992)*



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### 4. Implement Ideas

The next step is to plan who will do what; and when, where, and how they will do it. The group must also decide how the plans will be monitored and evaluated. The team action plans might be used for this purpose.

## Some final thoughts

Guidelines for selecting and using a technique (adapted from VanGundy, 1988):

- *A problem-solving technique that works well for one type of problem and situation may not be as effective when applied to another.*
- *If time is available and a ready-made solution is not likely to solve the problem, use creative problem-solving techniques. Otherwise, use ready-made solutions.*
- *If time is available and the acceptance of others is critical, use group techniques. Otherwise, use individual techniques.*
- *Select techniques that are proportionate in complexity to the scope of the problem.*
- *Select techniques that will be proportionate in implementation difficulty to the need to solve the problem.*



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# Strategy 4: Using Good-Faith Workplace Principles for Conflict Resolution

1. Although conflict at work may be uncomfortable, it often produces positive results when handled well—certainly better results than if the conflict were ignored or avoided.
2. People who disagree can still respect each other.
3. Both you and the other participants in this conflict desire mutually positive results. Nobody is intentionally trying to destroy or harm others.
4. Each person in a conflict can help create an atmosphere of hope, trust, respect, and safety for all.
5. There is something worth listening to in the other person's position, a grain of truth that adds to your own ideas and positions.
6. An attitude of openness toward others, putting your "no" on the shelf, enhances the likelihood for effective problem solving.
7. Conflict offers an opportunity to develop personal integrity; a chance to think carefully about one's deepest wants, needs, and values.
8. The final product of well-handled workplace conflict may be the mutual creation of a slightly better shared environment.

*(Adapted from Potter-Efron, 1998.)*


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# Strategy 5: Building Conflict Management Skills

Conflicts are inevitable. It is important for teams to invest the time to plan how they will deal with them when they arise. Below is a very basic summary for one conflict resolution model, based on the popular book *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* by Fisher and Ury (1991).

**Separate the person from the problem**

- *Agree that there is a disagreement.*
- *Try to put yourself in the shoes of the other person.*
- *Don't blame the other person for your problem.*
- *React honestly, but try not to react so emotionally that you are unable to solve the problem.*

**Establish interests, goals, and priorities**

- *All parties should take the opportunity to define how they see the problem and to identify their goals and desired outcomes, without jumping too quickly to solutions or hard-and-fast positions.*
- *Try to identify mutual goals when possible. Look for things that you can agree on.*
- *Try to be flexible and open to a compromise, especially if it gives you an important part of what you want.*

**Generate options to achieve a win-win position**

- *Based on the goals of each person, brainstorm as many options for solving the problem as possible.*
- *Do not make premature decisions or judgements on the option until all options have been explored.*
- *If it is difficult to generate creative options, consider inviting others who can help brainstorm and mediate.*



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**Strive for agreement**

- *Realize that people may want to digest information and weigh options with their family.*
- *Avoid pushing each other to make hasty decisions.*
- *Evaluate options in terms of effectiveness in meeting each party's goals.*
- *Mutually agree upon the outcome that best meets the needs of all parties.*
- *Develop agreement as to the next steps.*
- *If it is difficult to come to an agreement, consider inviting others who can help brainstorm and mediate.*

*(Adapted from Fisher and Ury, 1991)*


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# Section V: Reflection and Continuous Improvement

Effective organizations use ongoing reflection and continuous improvement as a foundation for their services. As teams work on their action plans toward meeting their goals, they need to evaluate what they are doing and how they can do it better. This spirit of openness and reflection creates a climate for making inclusive services the best they can be for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

## Overview of Strategies

### 1—Self-Assessment and Discussion

The self-assessment questions can help you identify strengths and needs in relation to reflection and continuous improvement processes.

### 2—Questions for Team Reflection

As teams begin their work together, these five conversations and questions can be instrumental in shaping effective teamwork.

### 3—Characteristics of an Effective Team

The characteristics of an effective team can help you and your group define your goals and strategies to improve your team's functioning. See pages 56–57 for an overview of the characteristics of an effective team.

### 4—Attending to Both Task and Relationship

A team is more effective in accomplishing its goals if it gives attention to the team processes. Therefore, teams must balance their focus on ***completing*** tasks with attention to ***how*** they complete tasks. Use the handout on page 58 to discuss how your team balances these two important aspects of team functioning.



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## 5—Taking Time to Celebrate!

Take time to honor the good work that is happening within your team. It will help everyone feel a sense of pride and accomplishment, and will fuel the team's efforts for the tasks ahead. Try the activity on page 59 to celebrate your successes.

## Other Suggested Strategies

Record any ideas or additional strategies that your group would find useful.



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# Strategy 1: Self-Assessment and Discussion

***Directions:*** Circle the number on the scale that corresponds to your perception of how your team is currently operating. Are your feelings about your team better represented by the statement on the right or on the left?

***Discussion/Action Plans:*** Each member in your team should complete the ratings independently. Compile the responses; then compare and discuss the ratings to identify areas of strength and areas where you need work. You may identify agreements or discrepancies in how team members view reflection and continuous improvement. Based on the discussions of their ratings, team members can identify strategies and develop action plans to enhance areas that need work or reinforce areas of strength. A facilitator might be helpful to support these discussions if there is no clear agreement among the team.

| Reflection and Continuous Improvement | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Plans are fully implemented. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Plans are not implemented. |
| 2. Spirits are usually high. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Spirits are usually low. |
| 3. Our team works efficiently. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team works inefficiently. |
| 4. Our team is meeting our goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team is not meeting our goals. |
| 5. Team members are accountable for their commitments and plans. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team has no system of accountability. |
| 6. Our team reflects on our progress toward action plans and goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team does not reflect on its progress. |
| 7. Our team examines and evaluates the impacts of our team action plans and goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team does not evaluate the impact of our goals and action plans. |

*(Adapted from Phillips and Elledge, 1989)*

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# Strategy 2: Questions for Team Reflection

Teams are defined both by the people on them and by what those people do. The way team members work together is central to realizing the team's goals. Consequently, team-building activities are of primary importance, especially when the work you do depends on the work of your fellow team members. Team building involves articulating and acting on a set of messages that are successfully shared among a group of people. Some team-building activities can also help individuals learn how to make their wants and desires known without ambiguity and without magical thinking. The following questions provide a framework for team-building conversations.

**Conversation One: Focusing on the Collective Task**

- *What is our team formed to do?*
- *What tasks and deliverables are expected of us?*

**Conversation Two: Aligning Interests**

- *Do all of our team members share the same level of motivation to make the team successful?*

**Conversation Three: Establishing Behavioral Ground Rules**

- *What are our team norms? In other words, what behaviors do we agree that we want to see in our collective efforts (and what behaviors do we not want to see)?*
- *How will we "enforce" those agreements? How will we provide behavioral feedback to teammates? How can we make it safe to both give and receive feedback on broken agreements?*

**Conversation Four: Setting Bold Goals and Anticipating Conflicts, Breakthroughs, and Synergy**

- *How will our desired accomplishments occur over time? (Realizing that a team's performance may be flat during its beginning efforts and then improve rapidly.)*

**Conversation Five: Honoring Individuals and Their Differences**

- *What does each member bring to the task?*
- *In what ways will we honor differences in perspectives and approaches?*

*(Adapted from Avery, 2001)*


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# Strategy 3: Characteristics of an Effective Team

The characteristics of an effective team can help you and your group define your goals and strategies to improve your team's functioning.

| Characteristics | Self-Assessment Questions |
|---|---|
| Clear, Elevating Goals | Does our team have goals that:<br>◆ Are worthwhile and challenging?<br>◆ Are compelling enough to create a team identity?<br>◆ Have clear consequences connected with their achievement? |
| Results-Driven Structure | ◆ Does our team have a design or structure that will assist us in meeting our goals?<br>◆ Is the design supported by clear lines of responsibility?<br>◆ Is the design supported by open communication?<br>◆ Is the design supported by fact-based judgements?<br>◆ Is the design supported by methods for providing individual performance feedback? |
| Competent Team Members | Do our team members possess the essential skills and abilities to:<br>◆ Accomplish the team's goals?<br>◆ Demonstrate confidence in each other?<br>◆ Collaborate effectively? |
| Unified Commitment | ◆ Is the achievement of our team goal a higher priority than any individual objective?<br>◆ Does the goal inspire a willingness among members to devote whatever effort is necessary to achieve team success? |



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| | |
|---|---|
| Collaborative Climate | Has the team established a climate that:<br>◆ Embraces a common set of values?<br>◆ Allows team members to trust each other enough to accurately share information, perceptions, and feedback? |
| Standards of Excellence | ◆ Has the team established high standards?<br>◆ Does the team continually seek to improve performance? |
| External Support and Recognition | ◆ Does the team have the necessary resources and external supports required to accomplish its objectives?<br>◆ Does the team receive recognition or incentives for its accomplishments? |
| Principled Leadership | Does the team share commitments based on the principles of:<br>◆ Trusting team members with meaningful levels of responsibility?<br>◆ Confronting inadequate performance?<br>◆ Rewarding superior performance? |

*(Adapted from Larson and LeFasto, 1989)*


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# Strategy 4: Attending to Both Task and Relationship

Adapted from *Strategies and Tools for Teams: Building High Performance Teams*, Larry Edelman, unpublished training materials, 1999.

In an effective group, members pay attention to both 1) how the task gets done and 2) what is happening to relationships in the group. A group's "task" is the work it is trying to get done—the objective it is trying to achieve. "Relationship" refers to the group's trust, openness, and cohesiveness. Research shows clearly that groups that don't pay attention to both dimensions don't work as well as groups that do. Research also shows that certain behaviors increase the chances that the task will be accomplished and that a group will display cohesiveness (Jones & Miller, 1993, pp. 10–12).

| Discuss how well your team balances tasks and relationships. You might want to have each team member draw a picture of how they see the balance. |
|---|
| |
| Discuss your team's desired balance. What can you do as a team to move toward the desired balance? |
| |



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# Strategy 5: Taking Time to Celebrate!

It is important to take the time to honor the good work that is happening within your team. It will help everyone feel a sense of pride and accomplishment and will fuel your team's efforts for the tasks ahead. Try the following activities to celebrate your team's performance:

- *Ask each of your team members to identify your team's successes.*
- *Open or close each team meeting with a celebration of your accomplishments or proud moments.*
- *Using art materials, design awards for your team. In the center of the award, write the name of the award that you are about to bestow upon your team.*
- *Develop a "bragging board" where you can post the individual and team accomplishments and where everyone can see them.*
- *Develop ground rules for how you will recognize and celebrate successes.*
- *Mark important events or small milestones with a celebration.*
- *Make sure everyone knows what is being celebrated and why.*
- *Send personalized notes to team members acknowledging them for their contributions.*
- *Explore the ways you support effective work by reviewing the "Encouragement Index" (in Kouzes and Posner,* Encouraging the Heart, *2003, pp. 31–33).*
- *Give each member of the team a treasure box or other container. Have members write what they appreciate about their teammates. Put the notes in each of the treasure boxes and review them periodically.*
- *Review "150 Ways to Encourage the Heart," and use the strategies that make sense for your team (in Kouzes and Posner,* Encouraging the Heart, *2003 pp. 151–175).*

*(Adapted from Kouzes and Posner, 2003)*


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# Appendix: Self-Assessment and Discussion

Self-assessment questions have been woven throughout this workbook. All of these questions are collected here to allow teams to complete a comprehensive assessment of their teamwork.

***Directions:*** Circle the number on the scale that corresponds to your perception of how your team is currently operating. Are your feelings about your team better represented by the statement on the right or on the left?

***Discussion/Action Plans:*** Each team member should complete his or her ratings independently. Compile the responses, compare and discuss the ratings to identify areas of strength and areas that need work. You may identify areas of agreement or discrepancy in how team members view your team. Teams can identify strategies and develop action plans to enhance areas that need work or reinforce areas of strength, based on the discussions of their ratings. A facilitator might be helpful to facilitate these discussions if there is not clear agreement among the team.

| Team Mission and Goals | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mission and goals are clear; understanding is shared by all team members. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Mission and goals are unclear, diverse, and conflicting. |
| Team is committed to our mission and goals. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Team displays lack of commitment to our mission and goals. |
| Priorities for action are established and realistic. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Team has too many priorities. |
| Team regularly reviews the mission, goals and updates action plans. | 1 2 3 4 5 | Team does little planning and goal setting. |



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| Team Roles and Responsibilities | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Team roles and responsibilities are closely interrelated. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Team roles and responsibilities are unrelated. |
| Members are very clear about their roles. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members are unclear about their roles. |
| Tasks are well organized. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Tasks are fragmented, not well organized. |
| Members coordinate their efforts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members do not coordinate their efforts. |
| Leadership is shared. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Leadership is not shared. |
| Members are aware of others' skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members are unaware of others' skills. |
| Members' abilities are used by the team. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members' abilities are not used by the team. |
| Individual strengths are valued. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Individual strengths are not valued. |
| **Communications and Interpersonal Relationships** | | | | | | |
| Our team communicates effectively. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team communicates ineffectively. |
| Feedback on individual work is effective and frequent. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Feedback on individual work is poor or non-existent. |
| Member's efforts are acknowledged. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Member's efforts are not acknowledged. |
| Members communicate openly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members are guarded when communicating. |
| Feelings are freely expressed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Feelings cannot be freely expressed. |
| Members care about each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members do not care about each other. |
| Members trust each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Members do not trust each other. |


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| Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The team uses an effective process for problem solving. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The team has no effective process for problem solving. |
| Decisions are made by the team. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Decisions are not made by the team. |
| Decisions are based on the best information. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Decisions are not based on the best information. |
| There is strong commitment to decisions within our team. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | There is weak commitment to decisions within our team. |
| Conflicts are confronted appropriately within our team. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team denies or avoids dealing with conflict. |
| There is harmony among members. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | There is discord among members. |
| **Reflection and Continuous Improvement** | | | | | | |
| Plans are implemented. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Plans are not implemented. |
| Spirits are usually high. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Spirits are usually low. |
| Our team works efficiently. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team works inefficiently. |
| Team members are accountable for their commitments and plans. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team has no system of accountability. |
| Our team reflects on our progress toward action plans and goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team does not evaluate the impact of our goals and action plans. |
| Our team examines and evaluates the impacts of our team action plans and goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Our team does not evaluate the impact of our goals and action plans. |



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# Teaming Scenario

***Directions:*** Each small group will be assigned to take the perspective of one of the team members listed below. Assign one person in your group to read your assigned character description out loud. Then reflect on and discuss answers to the questions on handout #4.

## Team Description

Each of the team members in the following description is committed to doing his or her best for young children with disabilities and their families.

### Amelia: the Parent

Amelia is the parent on the team and has served in leadership roles with the Head Start (with her older children) and the Early Head Start program (with her 2.5-year-old Kyle, who has significant disabilities). She has served on the policy council and other parent committees. She is very involved with her children, and has also offered her support to other families in the program who have children with disabilities. She participants in listservs and other networking and support opportunities with other parents who have children with the same diagnosis as Kyle.

Amelia enjoys being part of the team, but sometimes feels frustrated that the team seems to focus more on rules and regulations than on family support—which she feels is the heart of their program. She is very involved with the upcoming transition for Kyle and is unclear about how she will participate in the team after the transition takes place. She also does not want to do anything to jeopardize her relationship with the team while she is going through this stressful transition process.

### Irene: the Early Intervention Partner

Irene is new to the team and new to her job. She recently graduated as a registered occupational therapist and has not had many opportunities to work on a team, other than through a practicum in graduate school. She was trained to conduct therapy in a one-on-one setting, although she has read literature on the importance of children with disabilities being with their typically developing peers. She knows the law about natural environments but has not had experience delivering services in inclusive settings. She is getting to know the early intervention system in this community.


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Irene is feeling a bit overwhelmed by having to learn so much. She does not feel completely confident in her skills as a practitioner, let alone her role on the team. She is also concerned about being able to train other people in her areas of expertise. She is taking advantage of being part of the SpecialQuest team to network with other early intervention practitioners on strategies for providing early intervention services in Early Head Start and child care settings.

## Sarina: the Teacher

Sarina is a friend of Amelia's family and is committed to having Amelia's child in her class. She enjoys her home visits with Amelia's family. She appreciates the clear goals that the team has for the community, but sometimes gets frustrated that they are not moving quickly enough in implementing those goals.

Sarina is a very intense individual and passionate about her work. Because she gets frustrated when things do not happen right away, she sometimes comes across as abrupt and judgemental.

## Daniel: the Disabilities Coordinator

Daniel has worked in Head Start for years, beginning as a parent and later going to school in order to move up within the agency. There has been some reorganization in the agency in response to implementing the Head Start Performance Standards; so many of the managers are generalists, but have additional specialized responsibilities. Daniel has been assigned as disabilities coordinator for both Early Head Start and Head Start.

Although Daniel has extensive experience in Head Start, he has little formal training in the area of serving infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. He is starting to take some classes and is learning as much as he can from networking with other colleagues in his state.

Daniel feels that he has a lot to offer from his experience in Head Start—his father involvement and his experience with transition of preschoolers to kindergarten. But sometimes he feels undervalued by the other team members because of his limited experience with infants and toddlers.



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## Juanita: the Administrator

Juanita is completely committed to the inclusion of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in her Early Head Start program. She has served as a disabilities coordinator in the past and provides support and information to the new disabilities coordinator and to families and staff in this area.

Juanita must work with administrators from the larger organization who are not particularly supportive of the work that she is doing to serve children with disabilities and their families in their program. The administration is concerned about liability issues and has many fears about serving young children with disabilities and their families.

Juanita is committed to quality and would like to enhance the continuous improvement process, although that is not the "cultural norm" in her agency.

## Steve: the Child Care Director

Steve is the director of the community child care center serving children birth to five years of age. Early Head Start has developed a partnership agreement with his center to expand childcare opportunities for their Early Head Start families. He is supportive of inclusion, but some of the child care staff have been reluctant to include children with disabilities in their classrooms and are questioning their ability to provide services for these children. Steve and Amelia have been discussing the possibility of Kyle receiving child care in Steve's program when he transitions from Early Head Start.



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## The Team's Action Plans

- *To partner with child care to increase opportunities for children with disabilities in natural environments.*
- *To communicate and collaborate among Early Head Start /early intervention/child care in order to share resources, training, strengths, and knowledge and to make referrals and support families of children with disabilities.*
- *To develop a transition team with all early childhood community partners to expand inclusive services to preschoolers and their families.*

## The Team's Causes to Pause

- *They need support from the executive director and the other agency administrators from early intervention and child care.*
- *They have experienced some conflict among the Early Head Start teaching staff and other early intervention service providers because Early Head Start staff are not included in the planning and development of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs).*
- *The early intervention system tends to refer only children with "mild" disabilities to the Early Head Start program; so Kyle is the only child with a significant disability in this Early Head Start program. Amelia was already being served in Early Head Start when Kyle was born. He was identified as having a disability at birth, so joint services between Early Head Start and early intervention were a natural fit.*



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# Considerations When Choosing a Teaming Activity

With your team, consider the following questions:

- *Which strategies would best enhance this team's functioning?*
- *Why did you choose the strategies? Start with the priority areas you identified in Session 5.*
- *What considerations would you have in using these strategies (for example: time, expertise, use of outside facilitator, and so on)?*
- *What concerns would you have about using a particular strategy?*
- *What skills and resources would you need to implement the strategies?*



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**Session 6 Handout #4**



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**Session 6 Handout #4**



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