Head Start A to Z Communication Resources

Effective communication is key to the success of a program in meeting the needs of children and families. There are many facets of communication in the workplace, and some have legal and cultural implications. This list of resources is not exhaustive, but it is a starting point for delving deeper into a topic or piece of communication. Many of these resources are one- or two-page overviews available on the Internet. As always, it is important that you check with your regional office, funders, state offices, and human resources advisors to ensure that you are complying with expectations, regulations, and laws.

Communication Planning and Systems

Resource	Description	Source
Communications Audits: How Effectively Are You Communicating?	Summarizes the purpose of a communications audit, gives recommendations for how to initiate an audit, and lists important components, objectives, and strategies.	Scott, Susan. CharityVillage (2007). https://charityvillage.com/Content.aspx?topic=communications_audits_how_effectively_are_you_communicating_
Internal Communication Toolkit	A comprehensive toolkit that takes you through the three stages of internal communications planning: understanding the communications audit, establishing a plan and strategies, and evaluating your efforts. Includes sample surveys, planning templates, etc.	Hume, Jessica. CIVICUS (2011). http://www.civicus.org/resources/toolkits/265-internal-communication-toolkit9
Maximizing the Value of Communications: Conducting a Communications Audit/Assessment	Recommends customizable procedures to include in a communications assessment.	Schade, Jenny. JRS Consulting. (2008). http://www.jrsconsulting.net/free articles_1.html

Resource	Description	Source
Network Patterns and Analysis: Underused Sources to Improve Communication Effectiveness	Describes the most common communication networks (or communication flow).	Lunenberg, Fred C. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2011). http://www.nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/Lunenburg,%20Fred%20C%20Network%20Patterns%20and%20Analysis%20NFEASJ%20V28%20N4%202011.pdf
Strategic Communications Audits	Provides detailed tools for one approach to conducting a comprehensive communications audit.	Coffman, Julia. Communication Consortium Media Center (2004). http://www.ccmc.org/sites/default/files/WorkingPaper1.pdf
Ten Steps for Conducting a Communications Audit	A step-by-step plan for organizing a communications audit, including questions to consider and methods of analysis.	Smith Katlin. Urbanwords Group (n.d.). http://www.urbanwordsgroup.com/tensteps.pdf
Tips for Establishing an Effective Communication System	Lists suggested methods for directors and staff to communicate with various groups (e.g. families, governing bodies, etc.)	HHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB, 2006. http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/mgmt-admin/communication/comm-sys/manage_fts_00023a_052006.html

Communication Skills and Tips

Given the many available modes for communicating (e.g., email, texting, voicemail, etc.), it is important to choose the right one and to use it effectively. Finding the time and focus to connect and truly listen to others is also important, as effective listening builds relationships, resolves conflict, ensures accuracy, improves efficiency, and decreases stress.

Resource	Description	Source
"Are You Really Listening?" and "Effective Communication Strategies"	Two posters from the *Stress* poster packet providing tips and strategies for effective communication.	Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (n.d.). http://www.ecmhc.org/documents/CECMHC_GrafittiPosters.pdf
The Discipline of Listening	Tips for leaders on becoming more empathetic and effective listeners.	R. Charan, 2012. http://blogs.hbr.org/2012/06/the-discipline-of-listening/ © 2014 Harvard Business School Publishing. All rights reserved.
10 Steps To Effective Listening	Ten tips to help you develop effective listening skills.	Schilling, Daiane, 2012 Forbes.com http://www.forbes.com/sites/womensmedia/2012/11/09/10-steps-to-effective-listening
10 Common Communication Mistakes: Avoiding Communication Blunders and Misunderstandings	Common communication mistakes to avoid. Includes the tip that bad news should be delivered in person and never via email or text.	Mind Tools (n.d.). http://www.mindtools.com © Mind Tools

Conflict: Being Proactive, and Resolution

Conflict in the workplace is inevitable. How it is addressed is what matters.

Resource	Description	Source
Conflict Resolution: Resolving Conflict Rationally and Effectively	Describes two theories for effective conflict resolution: the Thomas–Kilmann conflict resolution styles and the "interest-based relational approach." By understanding how people react to conflict and establishing some foundational understandings, one can move toward a five-step process for resolving a conflict in the workplace.	Mind Tools (n.d.). http://www.mindtools.com ©Mind Tools
Resolving Team Conflict: Building Stronger Teams by Facing Your Differences	Explores how "Healthy and constructive conflict is a component of high-functioning teams." Includes some steps and tips on resolving and preventing team conflict.	Mind Tools (n.d.). http://www.mindtools.com ©Mind Tools
Want Collaboration? Accept—And Actively Manage—Conflict	Discusses the process for and the necessity of establishing an integrated conflict resolution process for your organization.	by J. Weiss and J. Hughes, 2005 Harvard Business Review Article preview at http://hbr.org/2005/03/want-collaboration-accept-and-actively-manage-conflict/ar/1 © 2014 Harvard Business School Publishing. All rights reserved

Head Start-Specific Resources

Resource	Description	Source
45 CFR 1304.51 (b-f) Communications	Includes the Head Start standard that applies to the communication management system. Head Start programs are required to establish and implement systems to ensure that timely and accurate information is provided to parents, policy groups, staff, and the general community.	HHS/ACF/OHS (2006). http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/mgmt-admin/communication/comm-sys/manage_fts_00023a1_052006.html
Communication	Lists links to the communication sections on PMFO's website on ECLKC.	HHS/ACF/OHS (n.d.). http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/mgmt-admin/communication
Head Start Acronyms	Lists acronyms often used in Head Start.	HHS/ACF/OHS (2008). http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/mgmt-admin/hr/staff-dev/HeadStartAcrony.htm
Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Serving Children Ages Birth to Five	Provides recent research and perspectives on key multicultural principles and offers guidance to Head Start staff on how to implement these principles in their programs.	HHS/ACF/OHS (2013). http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/center/Dual%20Language%20Learners/ecd/culture_and_diversity/manage_pub_00602a1_092305.html
Tips for Establishing an Effective Communication System	Features a tip sheet to identify strategies for establishing an effective communication system.	HHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB (2006). http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/mgmt-admin/communication/comm-sys/manage_fts_00023a_052006.html

Marketing

Nonprofit marketing uses for-profit marketing strategies to reach out to the community and garner involvement and support. Its focus is usually fundraising, but it can extend to much more than that; for example, to recruiting families and volunteers, to connecting with potential partners, and to celebrating successes in order to strengthen a program.

Resource	Description	Source
Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die	Shares successful and unsuccessful real-life examples of messaging to identify and explain six traits for effectively communicating winning ideas.	Heath, Chip; Dan Heath. New York: Random House, 2007.
Robin Hood Marketing: Stealing Corporate Savvy to Sell Just Causes	Provides examples and steps for ethically and effectively marketing good causes.	Andresen, Katya. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006.
Suffering from Information Overload? Help Your Product, Service or Issue Stand Out	Tips on making your message stand out in an age of information overload.	Clear Language @ Work. *NSGD 's Y-I-Design 04: Bridging the Communication Gap* (2009). http://clearlanguageatwork.com/documents/Drowning_In_Information.pdf © NSGD, 2009.

Plain Language

Plain language focuses on the reader and on clear communication. It involves writing so the reader is able to receive, understand, and act on the information given. It is not about making it so simple that you talk down to your reader; instead, it is about being inclusive.

Resource	Description	Source
Center for Plain Language	Tips and resources on getting started using plain language. Includes a definition of and guidelines for plain language.	http://centerforplainlanguage.org/resources/
Clear Language at Work, Inc.	Information and resources to ensure that your internal and external communications are clear.	http://clearlanguageatwork.com/complimentary-resources/ © Clear Language @ Work Inc.
Plain Language.Gov	Tips and tools from the federal government's website on plain language.	http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/index.cfm

Social Media

Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.), computers, and smartphones have made communication among individuals and groups easier and more fluid. These tools can produce both positive and negative effects on your organization. The positive impacts may include an increase in donors, volunteers, and enrollment. The negative may involve tarnishing your program's reputation and could even have legal ramifications. It is strongly recommended that all organizations develop a social media policy as it pertains to marketing and human resources (HR). As with other HR-related policies, it is important to get legal advice to ensure that your organization is in compliance with pertinent labor laws and union contracts.

Resource	Description	Source
Creating a Social Media Policy	A description of components and considerations when developing a social media policy.	Berry, Andrea; Ben Stuart. TechSoup.org (2012). http://www.techsoup.org/support/articles-and-how-tos/creating-a-social-media-policy# © 2014, TechSoup Global
NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment	NAEYC's position statement on the ethics of working with children, families, work colleagues, and the community. You may want to use it as a foundation and reasoning for your social media policy.	National Association for the Education of Young Children (2005). http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSETH05.pdf © 2005, National Association for the Education of Young Children
Nonprofit Social Media Policy Workbook	An in-depth guide for developing and establishing a social media policy. Includes templates and worksheets.	Berry, Andrea; Laura S. Quinn, Lisa Colton. Balance Interactive/ Idealware (2012). http://www.idealware.org/sites/idealware.org/files/sm_policy_full_web_version.pdf
Social Media Policies: What They Are and Why Your Organization Should Have One	A clear, concise explanation on why a social media policy is needed and considerations and general guidelines for a policy.	http://www.probonopartner.org/FileLib/Documents/socialmediapolicies.pdf © 2010 Pro Bono Partnership, Inc.

Labor Laws and Regulations

Federal laws, particularly those having to do with discrimination, affect communication in the workplace (for example, sexual harassment laws). It is your legal and ethical responsibility as an employer to ensure compliance with all laws. Your state labor office may have additional laws that you must be aware of to ensure a nonhostile work environment.

Resource	Description	Source
Laws Enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)	A list of the laws enforced by EEOC, which enforces statutes that ensure nondiscrimination in the workplace.	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/index.cfm
Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) Laws and Regulations	A page of links to OSHA standards and to health and safety laws and regulations, as overseen by this division of the Department of Labor, which has a mission "to assure safe and healthful workplaces by setting and enforcing standards, and by providing training, outreach, education, and assistance."	Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA).https://www.osha.gov/law-regs.html
State Labor Laws and Regulations	An updated list of state labor offices with state labor laws, as your state -- and even county or city -- may have its own requirements for employers.	United States Department of Labor. http://www.dol.gov/whd/state/state.htm

Other Related Topics

Resource	Description	Source
Emotional Intelligence: Developing Strong "People Skills"	An overview of emotional intelligence, the ability to recognize your emotions and how they affect people around you and your perception and understanding of other's emotions. Cites Daniel Goleman's five elements of emotional intelligence.	Mind Tools (n.d.). http://www.mindtools.com © Mind Tools
Why Knowledge Management Is Important to the Success of Your Company	Highlights three reasons why knowledge management is important for an organization's success: (1) facilitates decision-making capabilities, (2) builds learning organizations by making learning routine, and (3) stimulates cultural change and innovation.	Quast, Lisa, Forbes (2012). http://www.forbes.com/sites/lisaquast/2012/08/20/why-knowledge-management-is-important-to-the-success-of-your-company/
The Learning Organization: Principles, Theory and Practice	An overview of Peter Senge's essential principles for becoming a *learning organization*, including the principles of effective communication and a shared vision. Provides a resource list to help you get started in making yours a learning organization.	Smith, Mark K. *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education* (2001): 207. http://www.infed.org/biblio/learning-organization.htm
Mixing and Managing Four Generations of Employees	Examines generational divides in the workplace in terms of motivation, work ethic, communications style, etc. Gives ideas for addressing conflicts that result from these differences.	Hammill, Greg. *FDU Magazine Online* (2005). http://www.fdu.edu/newspubs/magazine/05ws/generations.htm © 2005 Fairleigh Dickinson University