

NCCIC Is a Service of the Child Care Bureau

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COLLABORATION CONTINUUM?¹

	Cooperation*	Coordination	Collaboration
Key Relationships and Work	Shorter-term informal relations that exist without any clearly defined mission, structure, or planning effort characterize cooperation. Cooperative partners share information only about the subject at hand. Each organization retains authority and keeps resources separate so virtually no risk exists.	More formal relationships and understanding of missions distinguish coordination. People involved in a coordinative effort focus their longer-term interaction around a specific effort or program. Coordination requires some planning and division of roles and opens communication channels between organizations. While authority still rests with individual organizations, everyone's risk increases. Power can be an issue. Resources are made available to participants and rewards are shared.	A more durable and pervasive relationship marks collaboration. Participants bring separate organizations into a new structure with full commitment to a common mission. Such relationships require comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels operating on all levels. The collaborative structure determines authority, and risk is much greater because each partner contributes its resources and reputation. Power is an issue and can be unequal. Partners pool or jointly secure the resources, and share the results and rewards.
Examples	One group of Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations meets each month to exchange information on service approaches. They update each other on the latest techniques, on pending changes in legislation, and on which funders are likely to support their program types.	The Council of Agency Executives meets monthly to help the United Way plan for human service delivery. This often requires more than the exchange of information because the participants must work out philosophical differences and agree on a range of plans. But they do not share the vision of a larger purpose.	A group of Hispanic organizations comes together to address the need for job development and job training. They are looking at long-term plans to develop businesses that will provide jobs. They will involve government training services (to help secure grants and provide job training) and post-secondary institutions (for academic and vocational education).
Intensity (risk, time needed, opportunity)			

* Different authors use cooperation and coordination interchangeably. This book follows the work of Sharon Kagan, in defining the least intense level as cooperation. Used with permission from Sharon L. Kagan, *United We Stand: Collaboration for Child Care and Early Education Services*. (New York: Teachers College Press, copyright 1991 by Teachers College, Columbia University. All rights reserved.), pp. 1-3.

¹ Ray, K. and Winer, M. (1994) *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining and Enjoying the Journey*. Fieldstone Alliance. Used with permission, all rights reserved. www.FieldstoneAlliance.org