

LIAISON GUIDE



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE WIC AND HEAD START BETTER TOGETHER LIAISON?

The role of the WIC and Head Start Better Together Liaison is to support collaboration between WIC and Head Start and serve as a point of contact between the local WIC and Head Start sites and the WIC State agency and Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO).

The liaison meets with local WIC and Head Start sites at a regular interval to facilitate:

- goal setting
- monitor progress
- provide resources
- address barriers
- and celebrate successes.

To ensure local collaboration is a success the liaison may also provide assistance with:

- scheduling
- agenda development
- note taking
- and meeting facilitation

The liaison can take the following steps to ensure that the WIC and Head Start Better Together Collaboration is a success.

ASSESS CURRENT COLLABORATION AND PRIORITIES

Before beginning the initial collaboration, the liaison can use the WIC and Head Start Better Together Collaboration Intake Form found in the WIC and Head Start Better Together Toolkit to conduct an initial intake to determine the ways in which each intervention community is already collaborating, identify potential areas for growth, and determine the collaboration team's priorities and expectations for the project.

As part of the intake process, it may also be helpful to ask the staff from WIC and Head Start to rate their level of collaboration on the following scale and to discuss their rating. The liaison can then ask staff to reassess their level of collaboration at a regular interval throughout the project to track progress.

FIVE LEVELS OF COLLABORATION AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

0 NO INTERACTION AT ALL	1 NETWORKING <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Aware of organization- Loosely defined roles- Little communication- All decisions are made independently	2 COOPERATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provide information to each other- Somewhat defined roles- Formal communication- All decisions are made independently	3 COORDINATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Share information and resources- Defined roles- Frequent communication- Some shared decision making	4 COALITION <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Share ideas- Share resources- Frequent and prioritized communication- All members have a vote in decision making	5 COLLABORATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Members belong to one system- Frequent communication is characterized by mutual trust- Consensus is reached on all decisions
---	---	---	--	--	---

Adapted from the Frey et al., 2006

LIAISON GUIDE



SET GOALS

After the initial intake, the liaison can use the information gathered to help each site set goals for the collaboration using the WIC and Head Start Better Together Collaboration Goal Setting Form found in the WIC and Head Start Better Together Toolkit. General goals for the collaboration might include:

- Establish an interagency referral process
- Host collaborative outreach and nutrition education events
- Establish a satellite site at Head Start for WIC to provide services to families
- Coordinate nutrition messages

Revisit the goals every 6 months or so or as the sites accomplish the goals they've set.

MEET REGULARLY

It is important to maintain regular communication between WIC and Head Start. The liaison should plan to meet monthly or quarterly to discuss upcoming projects and events, follow-up on referrals made between the agencies, help address challenges, share resources, monitor progress toward collaboration goals and to set new goals. These meetings will help build and sustain the relationship between WIC and Head Start and maintain the collaboration as an agency priority.

PROVIDE TIMELY FOLLOW-UP

In addition to the monthly/quarterly meetings the liaison should provide phone, email, and in person follow-up as needed. Follow-up activities include attending collaboration events to take pictures and assist with outreach activities, review recently developed collaboration materials such as referral forms and outreach materials, and communicate about staffing changes.

SHARE BEST PRACTICES

The liaison can play a crucial role in ensuring the success of collaboration across the local area or state by sharing best practices amongst sites. When sites overcome challenges or have a particular success with collaboration it is important for the liaison to share these stories with other WIC and Head Start teams so the sites can learn from one another. It may even be appropriate to put two sites in touch so they can share their successes and challenges.

COMMUNICATE WITH THE STATE COLLABORATION TEAM

The liaison should communicate challenges and successes from the local sites to the state collaboration team and indicate any needs for additional training, resources, and support.

TIP

Help the the WIC and Head Start Better Together Collaboration team maintain an up-to-date contact list to ensure members of the team stay in touch even if there is staff turnover.