

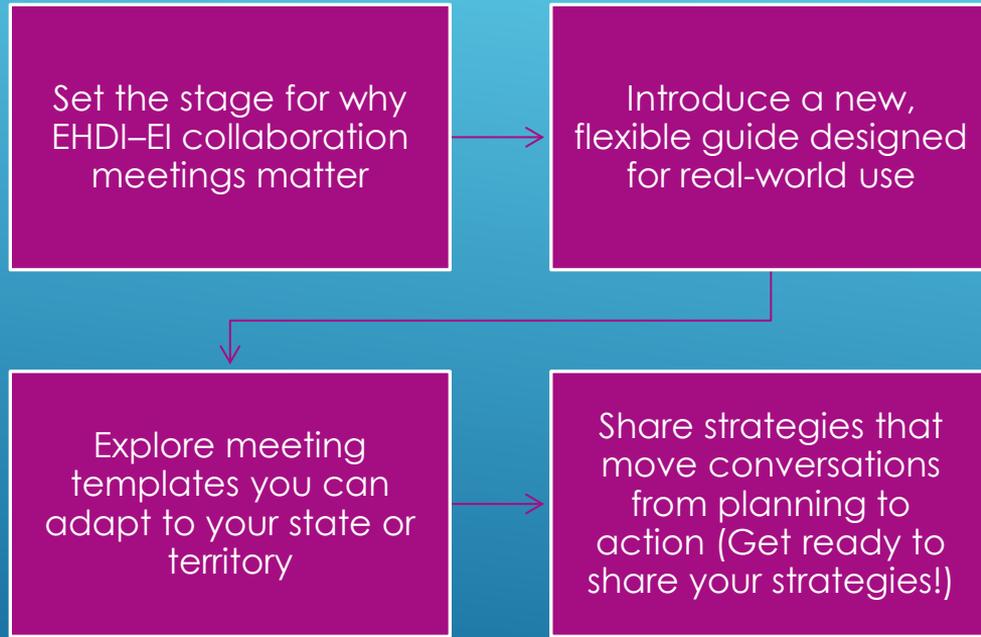


# Building Better Partnerships: Guidance and Templates for EHDI-EI Collaboration

- ▶ Janet DesGeorges, Executive Director, Hands & Voices Headquarters
- ▶ Sharon Walsh, TA Consultant, Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy)
- ▶ Karl White, NCHAM, Director

**2026 NATIONAL EHDI CONFERENCE  
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA**

**TODAY  
WE  
WILL...**



## WHY IS EHDI-EI COLLABORATION IMPORTANT FOR FAMILIES?

- ▶ This group was created for the expressed purpose of supporting collaboration in states/jurisdictions-territories to improve the experiences and outcomes of children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH).
- ▶ When agencies collaborate, share data, and create a process that works '*behind the scenes*', the lives of families flow better.
- ▶ Collaboration between agencies and stakeholders can be complex.
- ▶ When we move away from '*problem admiration*' of systems complexity (why we can't do something) and find solutions/create positive change – families benefit.

### Created by :

- EHDI Outcomes Committee – an interdisciplinary group of committed individuals and organizations trying to make...your life easier.
- Started in 2009 with facilitation by ECTA and DaSy;
- Developed several resources designed to support collaboration
- Committee ended in 2024.

### Purpose and Intent of this project :

- For anyone working to better connect EHDI, Part C, and early childhood systems
- Designed to spark practical conversations about what matters most for children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and their families
- Supports stronger teamwork across systems so families experience more coordinated, responsive care

THIS LAST RESOURCE IS A GUIDE FOR REAL-WORLD USE

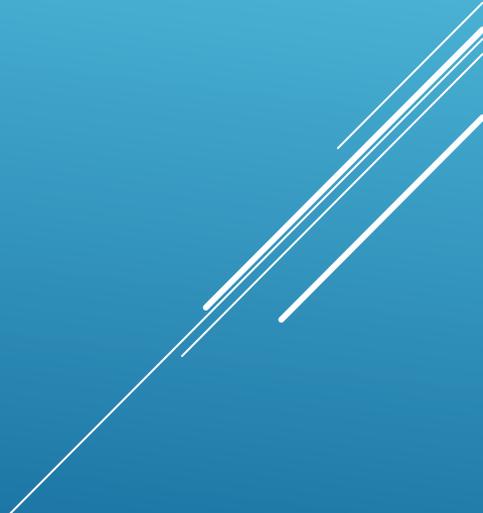


# SUPPORTING STATE EHDI-EI COLLABORATION: SELF-ASSESSMENT AND MEETING TEMPLATES

[HTTPS://ECTACENTER.ORG/TOPICS/EARLYID/EHDI-SUPPORTING.ASP](https://ectacenter.org/topics/earlyid/ehdi-supporting.asp)

- ▶ Self-Assessment Activities to identify where you are along a continuum of partnerships and prioritize areas where collaborative efforts will be most helpful.
- ▶ Sample Agendas for Collaborative Meetings on important areas of collaboration.

TWO SECTIONS ARE INCLUDED

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths and orientations, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

- ▶ **Use as a flexible framework, not a script** – The guide offers ideas and processes that can be adapted to your state's context, priorities, and partnerships.
- ▶ **Customize the meetings** – Suggested meeting agendas can occur in any order, be combined, shortened, or spread across multiple sessions based on partner readiness and availability.
- ▶ **Fit the guide to your reality** – The number, length, and format of meetings should reflect existing relationships, capacity, and opportunities (from small discussions to full retreats).

## HOW TO USE:

# Activity: Team Reflection on Family and Professional Partnerships

<https://ectacenter.org/topics/earlyid/ehdi-supporting.asp>

## Team Reflection on Family and Professional Partnerships Worksheet

Partnership Continuum	Evidence and Examples
<p><b>Coexistence:</b> There are no systematic connections between programs and personnel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<p><b>Networking:</b> Programs and personnel share information and communicate about program-specific activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<p><b>Cooperation:</b> Programs and personnel engage in format interactions, typically on specific or time-limited activities or projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<p><b>Collaboration:</b> Programs and personnel engage in long-term, ongoing formal interactions around shared goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<p><b>True Partnership:</b> Programs and personnel engage in integrated interactions, activities, and projects around shared goals, resources, and decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>

# DERIVED FROM THE HANDS & VOICES PARTNERSHIP CONTINUUM



Category	Coexistence (1)	Networking (2)	Cooperation (3)	Collaboration (4)	Partnership (5)	Co-Production (6)
(A) Awareness and Relationship Level	Family leaders, FBOs, and professionals know about each other, but don't work together.	Basic awareness, but no relational engagement or reciprocal support.	Recognizing shared goals and interests, but no fixed or long-term relationship is implied.	Clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and mission. Influence is emerging.	Mutual recognition of expertise and contributions. Shared values emerging.	Families and professionals co-design partnership strategies from shared values. Reciprocal support.
(B) Communication	Rare communication. Direct relationships not yet developed between family org and agency or company.	Occasional informal discussions or communication. No ongoing relationships yet.	Regular informal information sharing. Documentation may exist that cooperation is a goal.	Structured and ongoing communication. Trust built on agreed actions. Publicly visible to include leaders.	Collaborative communication strategies in place. Family leaders are evident in mutual efforts.	Families and professionals jointly lead communication and learning efforts in areas of joint interest.
(C) Data collection, referrals and data sharing	No data sharing or exchange.	Limited informal data exchange. Referrals are spotty.	Limited shared reporting mechanisms parallel collaborative. Referrals are not systematic.	Jointly developed data sharing agreements through negotiation. Referrals growing from EBD stakeholders.	Accessible data collection with family input. Universal referrals in process.	Integrated accessible data systems and analysis by both orgs. Universal referrals with support of database.
(D) Decision-Making and Representation	Family leaders not identified or involved in decision-making.	Families are occasionally recruited and provide isolated input. Family leaders have limited opportunities for engagement.	Families consulted on select decisions. Family leaders emerging on boards and committees with steady recruitment. FBOs report needs of families.	Shared decision-making structures exist, systemic recruitment and opportunities for leaders. FBOs evaluate agency efforts.	Families hold leadership roles in decisions. Risks, resources, and accountability visible. Issues are freely shared. Agency is transparent and seeks families' insight.	Families and professionals share decision-making and accountability to improve systems and meet goals for families and professional stakeholders.
(E) Funding and Sustainability	No shared funding or long-term plans for sustainability.	Orgs are aware of each other's funding needs. Short-term discussions on sustainability.	Initial steps taken toward shared funding and sustainability.	Jointly managed or collaborative funding structures. Formalized sustainability planning. Funding for family leaders exists.	Sustained effort toward mutually beneficial funding structures. Partnership fully embedded in policy and practice.	Family leaders and professionals co-develop funding priorities and budgets. Co-lead sustainable systems.

Partnership Continuum - Annual Rating Tool 31 Oct 2025

2 | Page

- ▶ **Where do you believe you are on the partnership continuum?**
  - ▶ What are you doing well, with respect to parent and professional partnerships, that other teams could learn from?
  - ▶ What barriers or challenges have you encountered?
- ▶ **What specific strategies can be tried to move your team along the continuum?**
  - ▶ What unique aspects of your practice will help your team progress to other levels on the partnership continuum?
  - ▶ What barriers or challenges could make it difficult for your team to advance to other levels on the partnership continuum?
- ▶ **What steps will you take by next week to support progress in creating and implementing successful partnerships?**

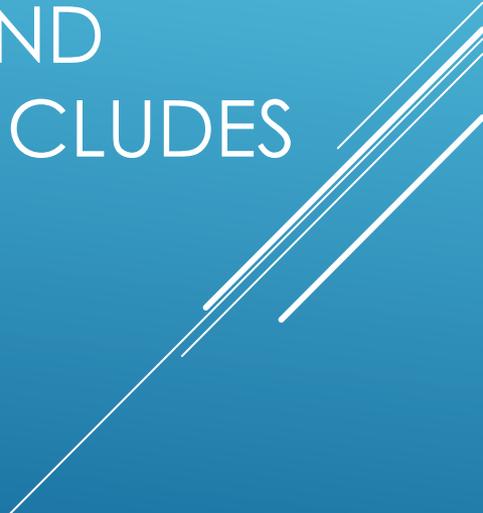


## DISCUSSION TOPICS AFTER SELF-ASSESSMENT

# TEMPLATES INCLUDED IN GUIDE

1. [Understanding Programs and Systems](#)
2. [Improving the Referral Process](#)
3. Expanding Hearing Screening for Children Up to Age 3 to Increase Identification of Children with Late Onset Hearing Loss
4. Professional Development for Healthcare and Intervention Providers
5. Improving Coordination of Services
6. Sharing Data on Outcomes
7. Using Data to Drive Improvement Efforts

EACH  
TEMPLATE IS  
IN WORD  
AND  
INCLUDES



Agenda

Meeting Basics

- Purpose
- Outcome
- Timing

Involving Partners

- Possible Attendees

Before the Meeting

- Solicit Input
- Share information

Prepare

Discussion Topics

Next Steps

What successful strategies have you used?

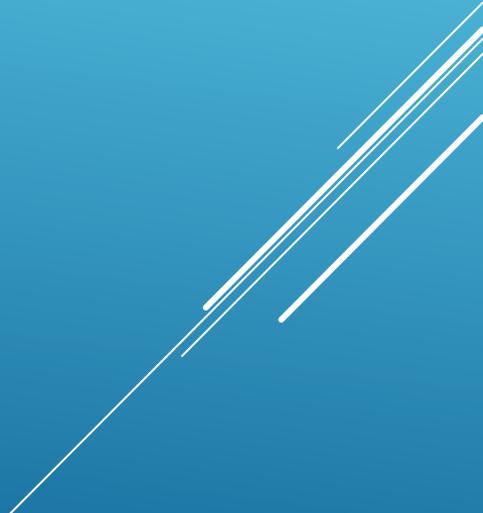


What are your biggest challenges?



What is one thing you will do after you get home?

DISCUSSION



▶ Share more with us at:

▶ [janet@handsandvoices.org](mailto:janet@handsandvoices.org)

▶ [walshtaylo@aol.com](mailto:walshtaylo@aol.com)

▶ [karl.white@usu.edu](mailto:karl.white@usu.edu)

▶ <https://ectacenter.org/topics/earlyid/ehdi-supporting.asp>



THANK YOU!