Systems Building Resource Guide 1: Leadership

Systems building and leadership go hand-in-hand, and systems leaders often find that leading and managing change is central to their leadership. Systems Building Resource Guide 1: Leadership shares leadership approaches and issues that are often in play during times of change, including: Change Management, Teams and Change, Governance, Decisionmaking, Conflict Resolution, Public-Private Partnerships, and also provides Resources. Please use the navigation bar on the left to explore the guide.

Change Management

Change management may be a strategic initiative that is planned from within—an internal change—or something imposed externally, such as changes in leadership, organizational structure, regulations, or a changing political or fiscal environment. Two examples follow: one focuses on the need for change management due to external factors and the other shows how change management may be needed due to internal decisions.

> **Technical Assistance in Systems Building for State Leaders**
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> Technical assistance to support systems building, including strategic planning, is available through the State Capacity Building Center and may be available through other federal technical assistance centers. Please check with your State Systems Specialist for more information.

Example: Externally Driven Change

For the field of early childhood, change is afoot at the national level which is commanding change at the state and local levels. The Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Office of Child Care (OCC), Office of Head Start (OHS), and Maternal Child Health Bureau (MCHB) have been collaborating and asking States, Territories, and Tribes to envision and implement a cross-sector approach to create a more seamless support system for children and families across the nation. Simultaneously to the ACF vision, the President signed into law the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014. Congress reauthorized the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program, another name for CCDBG, for the first time since 1996 and it represents a historic re-envisioning of the purposes for the program. The new law, with its changed purpose, adds to the cultural shift within the early childhood field. It is asking States to rethink child care in innovative ways—to change mindsets and stimulate new levels of action so that it operates more intentionally as both a support to parents' working and care that promotes child development. As CCDF Administrators work to fully implement the new requirements of CCDF, leading change with others will be paramount to their success.

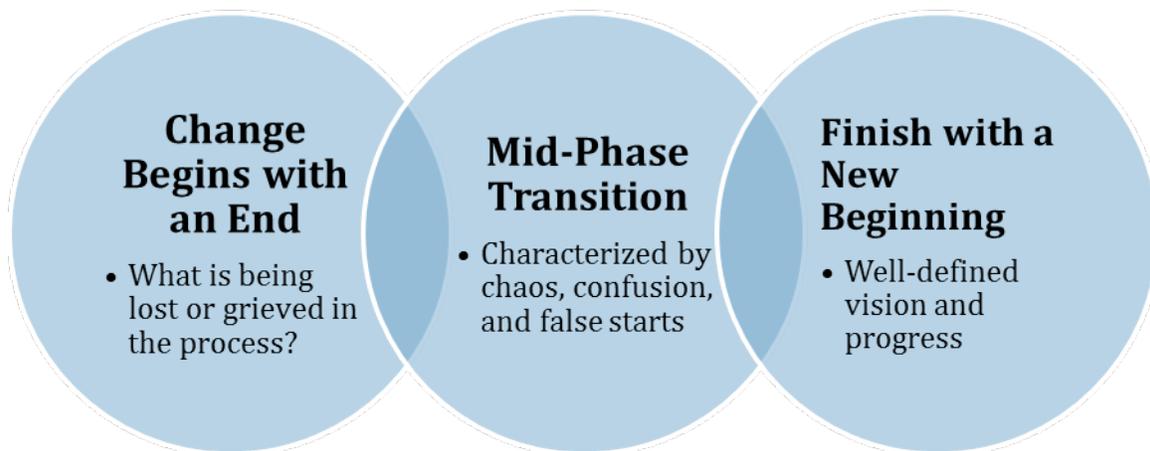### Example: Internally Driven Change

States are moving beyond the traditional minimum licensing standards (MLS)—a monitoring structure—to creating and supporting the design and implementation of a quality-based approach that blends standards with supports and processes for quality improvement focusing on child development and school readiness. To make this shift, States have been designing and developing Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) that align minimum licensing standards, create new standards for quality, provide financial, technical and professional resources, integrate outreach and communications, and include a rating and monitoring approach to support ongoing quality improvement. This internal shift that is occurring in so many states requires CCDF Administrators to reboot the culture in early childhood and lead change with many other partners and stakeholders.

Key Strategies for Leading Change

Five key strategies are noted to support sound leadership during a period of intentional change.

1. **Lead the change you want to see.** Change management is an approach to transitioning individuals, teams, and organizations to a desired future state. While change--for individuals, teams, and organizations may feel constant—leading and managing with clear and frequent communication of the vision, i.e. the desired change, enhances the opportunity for success.

2. **Understand (and implement) the key strategies of leading change.** John Kotter's influential book, Leading Change, identifies these key, practical strategies to support change:[1]

   - Create a sense of urgency

   - Assemble a guiding coalition for external change or a guiding team for internal change

   - Identify a vision

   - Communicate the vision (i.e. cultivate ownership, commitment, and buy-in)

   - Empower action toward the vision (i.e. remove obstacles)

   - Generate short-term wins (i.e. focus on low hanging fruit)

   - Consolidate gains and build on successful change

   - Institutionalize the change (i.e. make it stick)

3. **Know the stages of change**. Individuals, as well as organizations, pass through multiple stages as they go through the cycle of change. Each of the following stages can be matched with appropriate strategies to promote and support how changes are viewed, implemented, and sustained. William Bridges, in his work on *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes,*[2] identified three stages of change, applicable to both individuals and organizations, shown in the graphic below:

Change Begins with an End
- What is being lost or grieved in the process?

Mid-Phase Transition
- Characterized by chaos, confusion, and false starts

Finish with a New Beginning
- Well-defined vision and progress

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[1] For summaries and other materials from John Kotter, see Kotter, J and J. Schlesinger, Choosing Strategies for Change. https://hbr.org/2008/07/choosing-strategies-for-change/ar/1 as well as http://www.kotterinternational.com/insights/landing-page/8-steps-to-accelerate-change-in-2015/

[2] Bridges, W. (2004). *Transitions: Making sense of life's changes* (Revised 25th Anniversary Edition). Boston: Da Capo Press (Perseus Book Group).

4. **Understand how individuals respond to change and innovation.** Diffusion of Innovations[31] is a theory that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and ways of being, as well as technology, spread through cultures. Everett Rogers, a professor of communication studies, popularized the theory in his book *Diffusion of Innovations*; the book was first published in 1962, and is now in its fifth edition (2003). Rogers argues that diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the participants in a social system. The origins of the diffusion of innovations theory are varied and span multiple disciplines. Rogers proposes that four main elements influence the spread of a new idea: the innovation itself; communication channels; time; and a social system.

This process relies heavily on human capital. The innovation must be widely adopted in order to self-sustain. Within the rate of adoption, there is a point at which an innovation reaches critical mass. Diffusion manifests itself in different ways in various cultures and fields and is highly subject to how people adopt the innovation and innovation-decision process. How people adopt depends on how they respond to innovation, change, crisis, and opportunity so thinking about the people involved can be helpful to leading during a time of change. Rogers' *Diffusion of Innovations* categorizes the different responses as follows:

- **Innovators:** People who are most willing to take risks and the first to adopt new ideas.

- **Early Adopters**: These individuals adopt new ideas and innovations easily but generally use more discretion than Innovators when making choices. Early Adopters are thought to have a high degree of "opinion leadership" which means they are especially educated about certain subjects and therefore capable of influencing others. Opinion leaders, acting as change agents, can bring new ideas and innovations to communities and organizations. As a collaborative leader, the CCDF Administrator should search out early childhood opinion leaders who are considered influential in the community and among their peers to act as champions for the early childhood systems building efforts.

- **Early Majority:** They adopt an innovation after a varying degree of time that is significantly longer than the Innovators and Early Adopters. Early Majority have above average social status, contact with Early Adopters, and seldom hold positions of opinion leadership in a system.

- **Late Majority:** They adopt an innovation after the average participant. These individuals approach an innovation with a high degree of skepticism and after the majority of society has adopted the innovation. Late Majority are typically skeptical about an innovation, have below average social status, little financial liquidity, are in contact with others in Late Majority and Early Majority, and have little opinion leadership.

- **Laggards:** They are the last to adopt an innovation. They tend to focus on tradition and typically avert change. Unlike some of the previous categories, individuals in this category show little to no opinion leadership. These individuals typically have an aversion to change-agents. Laggards typically tend to be focused on "traditions," lowest social status, lowest financial liquidity, oldest among adopters, and in contact with only family and close friends.

5. **Understand why people sometimes resist change.** Organizational change can cause stress for those impacted by the change, and resistance to change can manifest itself through rebellion and avoidance. Failure to understand and validate emotions associated with change can hamper efforts to lead and implement changes successfully. Common reasons people resist change include:

- Risk (i.e. threat to security and what is known)

- Loss (i.e. perceived or real loss of control, power, rewards, esteem, competence, or relationships)

- Lack of clarity (especially painful in the ambiguity of the mid-phase)

- Lack of participation

- Demand for new behaviors

- Negative memories of change

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[3] Rogers, E. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th Edition updates the 1962 classic). New York: Free Press (a division of Simon & Schuster).

Avoiding Resistance to Change and Innovation

There are several classic strategies for dealing with resistance to change, based on the fundamental research conducted by Kotter & Schlesinger.[4] Nine key strategies are provided below. Consider incorporating these as part of your overall change management strategy.

1. **Address personal concerns.**

   Most organizations justify the need for change by telling staff about all of the wonderful things the change will mean for the organization. This is a weak approach to gaining audience buy-in. When faced with a change, people react first with their own concerns: "What's in it for me?" "Does this mean I'll have a different role?" "Will this break up our department?" So, first things first. Deal with personal concerns first, before organizational benefits.

2. **Link the change to issues people care about.**

   Increase the perceived need for a change by linking it to other issues that people already care about. For example, by showing how a change is connected to bigger-picture issues in early childhood (e.g., research; return on investment, etc.) sustainability, job security, and other things that are already in the front of people's minds, you can increase the "stickiness" for change.

3. **Tap into the desire to avoid loss.**

   People are more attuned to loss than to gain. Our brains are wired for this. "Negativity bias" is a longstanding survival trait that has kept humans alive throughout their development as a species. Historically, it was always more important to avoid stepping on a snake than to find a soft place to sleep. Humans may have advanced in many ways, but something scary still gets and holds attention more quickly and longer than something pleasant. Therefore, rather than just telling people what they stand to gain from a change, you may have a greater impact by telling them what they stand to lose if they don't accept the change.

4. **Cater to people's expectations.**

   People generally hold firm views of how the world works. These "mental models" govern much of people's thinking including how they perceive a potential change. For example, they may tend to see a change as something good about to happen and willingly accept it, or they may see a change as something bad about to happen and focus their energy on avoiding loss. You can provide all the logical arguments in the world in support of change, but if your arguments don't match the basic assumptions and rules to the way the person sees the world, you aren't likely to get far. Additionally, people hold fast to their current beliefs, desires, or feelings; this means that if the change you are promoting doesn't appeal to their current beliefs, desires, or feelings, you may have a hard time making any headway.

5. **Take advantage of natural biases.**

   People tend to see things that are happening now as more urgent than those that will happen in the future. This tendency is often referred to as "discounting the future." For instance, when presented with the option of getting $500 now or $750 in a year (a 50 percent rate of interest), the average person will choose the $500 now. This suggests that when trying to persuade others that a change is necessary, even though the future threat and loss may be great, it is desirable to emphasize that inaction now poses its own threat and loss. Also, it is often easier to get people to agree now on a solution, if they can postpone implementation until sometime in the future. People tend to believe that they will be in a better position to change in the future; they expect to have more time, more money, and fewer demands then than they do now. While experience does not support this belief, it is one that provides people with the motivation to act in the present toward a future goal. Therefore, it is often easier to get people to agree now on a change that won't take place until some point in the future.

6. **State the change in concrete terms.**

   Often organizational changes are responses to some sort of threat. If that threat is seen as more relevant to others outside the organization than to the employees, or if the threat is presented in the abstract, then

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[4] Choosing Strategies for Change. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2008/07/choosing-strategies-for-change/ar/1-.

employees will have little motivation to change. However, if you can demonstrate in concrete terms that the threat is local and will have a real impact on them, you may find it easier to persuade them to buy-in. For instance, when people think about the threat of pollution, many think of it as a threat to other people and other places. In a situation like this, getting people to adopt inconvenient changes, such recycling, is difficult. On the other hand, if you can show them with concrete examples exactly how recycling will positively impact them in their local community, then they are more likely to adopt the necessary changes.

7. **Appeal to the entire brain.**

   Often, when making a case for a change, leaders use lots of numbers, charts, tables, etc. Such facts and figures appeal especially to one side of the brain. But the human brain has two sides, and although they work together, each has a different way of processing information. The left side is analytical and controls the processing of quantitative information. The right side is experiential and controls the processing of emotional information. Even for people where one side may dominate (e.g., engineers who favor facts and figures), the most effective communication targets both sides of the brain. To appeal to both sides of the brain, you might consider:

   - Combining analytic information with vivid imagery in the form of film footage, metaphors, personal accounts, real-world analogies, and concrete comparisons; and

   - Employing messages designed to emphasize relevant personal experience and elicit an emotional response.

8. **Beware of change saturation**.

   While connecting with people's emotional side, it is important not to overload with too much change. People can attend to only a limited number of things. Much like pouring water into a sponge, at first the sponge can absorb the water. However, at some point, the sponge becomes full and any additional water simply runs off. The finite pool of worry is full. This has implications for leaders. Often people's lives are already filled with change. When you ask that they worry about more things, you may inadvertently introduce "emotional numbing," a state in which people fail to respond to anything except threats that are immediate. So, beware of overusing emotional appeals, particularly those relying on fear.

9. **Know your change.**

   Not all changes are equal. Some are more beneficial, and some cause more inconvenience and pain. It is important for change agents to know how their change stacks up against six change characteristics:

   - Simple: Is your change complex or is it relatively simple to understand and do?

   - Compatible: Is your change compatible with what your people are used to?

   - Better: Does your change offer clear advantages over other alternatives, including the status quo?

   - Adaptable: Can people adapt your change to their own circumstances or must they do it exactly the way you prescribe?

   - Painful: Does your change alter social relationships in any way by changing where people work, who they deal with, or how they spend their time?

   - Divisible: Can you break the change you offer into smaller parts or phases, or must audiences implement it all at one time?

When evaluating your change against these characteristics, note that any change can have both positive and negative aspects in the same characteristic. For instance, a change might be relatively advantageous in one way and be relatively disadvantageous in another. Also, as you evaluate these characteristics, do so from multiple perspectives. You need to understand the change from the point of view of those who will feel it most acutely so that you can lead and manage to greatest success.

Teams and Change

To manage change, whether it is internal to your organization—a new Secretary of the agency with a new vision—or change that includes external partners—such as CCDBG reauthorization or a new plan from a statewide coalition—skills are needed in developing, implementing, and sustaining a team or coalition to reach the desired outcome. Groups change as team or coalition members come and go; however teams and coalitions will most likely move through various stages of development throughout their time together.

The following model, known as the Tuckman Model, is one that can be used to address stages of internal team or cross-sector coalition development. Bruce Tuckman reviewed more than 50 studies of group development in the mid-sixties and synthesized their commonalities in one of the most frequently cited models of group development.[5] The model describes four linear stages (forming, storming, norming, and performing) that a group will go through in its unitary sequence of decisionmaking. A fifth stage (adjourning) was added in 1977 when a new set of studies were reviewed.[6]

Tuckman Model of Group Development

Forming Group Development Stage: Group members learn about each other and the task at hand. Indicators of this stage might include: Unclear Objectives, Uninvolvement, Uncommitted Members, Confusion, Low Morale, Hidden Feelings, or Poor Listening.

Working with Internal Teams Examples	Working with Guiding Coalitions Examples
Staff within your agency may have experienced change within government many times due to the episodic nature of new administrations. Even though team members may have worked together over time, when change occurs, often teams can take steps backwards into the forming stage. Know that what the team needs most is clarity about where they are headed, and how that differs from where they are now.	The field of early childhood is interdisciplinary at its core. It has a focus on the whole child and includes goals that promote comprehensive services for children and families. Leading and participating in cross-sector partnerships are part of doing business. However, the partners that need to be involved constantly shift due to contextual influences and change. With new coalitions just launching or in the event of new (powerful) partners joining an existing cross-sector table, coalitions begin at a stage of "forming;" becoming grounded in the who, what, why, where, when, and how of the group and the problem they are solving.

Storming Group Development Stage: As group members continue to work, they will engage each other in arguments about the structure of the group, which often are significantly emotional and illustrate a struggle for status in the group. These activities mark the storming phase: Lack of cohesion, Subjectivity, Hidden agendas, Conflicts, Confrontation, Volatility, Resentment, Anger, Inconsistency, or Failure.

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[5] Tuckman, B. (1965). Sequences in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin,* 63, 384-399.
[6] Tuckman, B. & Jensen, M. (1977). Stages of small-group development revisited. *Group and Organization Studies. December 1977,* 2(4), 419-427.

Working with Internal Teams Examples	Working with Guiding Coalitions Examples
In times of change, team members can be opportunistic, pessimistic, or devoid of enthusiasm—positive or negative—toward the new direction. As teams work through their individual biases and struggle to come together collectively, meetings can feel combative and lack cohesion. The important tack here is to allow the team to be in this phase of storming long enough to begin to coalesce, developing common ground for the new direction. However, don't allow the team to overstay in the storming phase. You want progress; move through the storm process. You don't want them to stay and build a camp in the storm.	Building an early childhood system requires the work of many. Coalitions form to solve problems. One of the first action steps a coalition can take is to define the problem they want to solve and secure agreement on their focus. This doesn't come easily. There may be hidden agendas, historical conflict patterns, and/or inconsistent leadership. The storming stage can include the work of naming and overcoming barriers to coalition functioning and structure design. Know that this is a natural part of group dynamics and getting to a place of higher functioning.

Norming Group Development Stage: Group members establish implicit or explicit rules about how they will achieve their goal. They address the types of communication that will or will not help with the task. Indicators include: Questioning Performance, Reviewing/Clarifying Objectives, Changing/Confirming Roles, Opening Risky Issues, Assertiveness, Listening, Testing New Ground, and Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses.

| Working with Internal Teams Examples	Working with Guiding Coalitions Examples
In this phase of the process, the group begins to create norms that will assist in smoothly addressing the work. This may involve new work for newly-created inside government teams, or may involve revisiting and update these communications and other norms as internal early childhood team members change.	The norming process is critical with early learning guiding coalitions, such as state early learning advisory councils or other bodies. As these guiding coalitions establish group approaches to essential communication and organizational functions, including clarity about purpose and roles, the opportunity to engage in the most meaningful work begins to emerge.

Performing Group Development Stage: Groups reach a conclusion and implement the solution to their issue. Indicators include: Creativity, Initiative, Flexibility, Open Relationships, Pride, Concern for People, Learning, Confidence, High Morale, and Success.

Working with Internal Teams Examples	Working with Guiding Coalitions Examples
At this phase, the internal group is working hard and focuses on achieving its objectives. During this process, an early childhood group may have its best success if it continues to position and promote a learning perspective for accomplishing the work.	During the performing stage, external early childhood groups are mixing a focus on the outcome/solution with ongoing processes that embrace learning, flexibility and openness.

Adjourning Group Development Stage: As the group project ends, the group disbands in the adjournment phase.

Working with Internal Teams Examples	Working with Guiding Coalitions Examples
For internal teams, while a specific project-oriented team may adjourn, with the reality of the relatively small staffing within most governmental early childhood teams, the participants are likely to keep working together, so taking care to celebrate accomplishments before moving on supports the next phase of internal team work.	For guiding coalitions, having the opportunity to "check" the box and celebrate an accomplishment can be useful in the overall and often ongoing work with guiding coalitions. With so much work to be done, guiding coalitions may change focus and may reconstitute themselves.
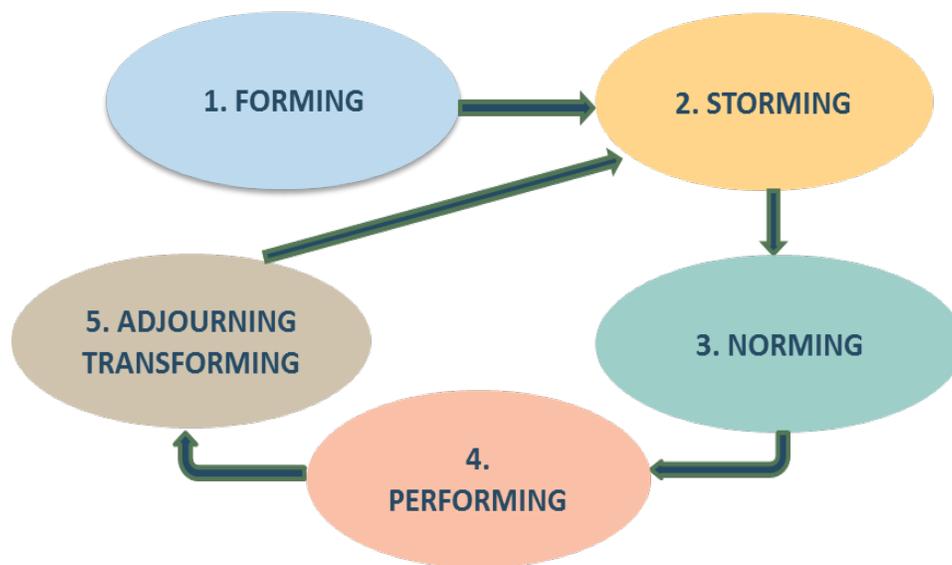
Coalitions or teams do not necessarily move or progress in a straight line through developmental stages, as shown in the infographic below. They often cycle through several different stages multiple times.

Teams can stagnate at a stage for a while and then move quickly through the next. As long as leaders recognize these stages of development, they are able to respond appropriately to help the group remain focused on its goals and move forward toward the performing stage.

Governance

Governance refers to the means by which authority and accountability for certain functions is allocated. A governance model places authority within an entity or entities for activities including decisions around budgeting and managing resources (such as fiscal responsibilities and personnel); management of data; and developing, implementing, and monitoring policies, programs, and regulations. Governance similarly necessitates allocation of accountability--for finances, workforce, program quality, and the individual child or student—for an entity or entities. In an ideal world, authority and accountability are assigned in an efficient manner to ensure purposeful oversight of the enterprise.

In this guide, early childhood governance refers to a State's organizational structure and its placement of authority and accountability for making program, policy, financing, and implementation decisions for publicly funded early

learning programs for children from birth to age 5. Careful and deliberate assessment of a State's early childhood governance structure is an integral step in reducing fragmentation, uneven quality, and inequity in programs and services. Early childhood systems in states have different governance models for making decisions; enforcing those decisions; and being held accountable for tasks, outcomes, and functions associated with building, implementing, and sustaining a system. As states assess their current form of governance, the work frequently calls for collaboration and integration of programs across existing organizational structures that have had separate lines of decisionmaking authority in the past. A willingness to examine how the governance structure serves the mission, and what changes might be put forward to best support mission, is an important issue in the states.

This section starts with an overview of existing governance models, discusses the relationship between systems building and governance, and ends with tips related to planning for and implementing governance change.

Early Childhood Governance Models

Examples of three types of early childhood governance models—coordination; consolidation; and new independent agency structures—are provided. Other variations on these models, and other models, are possible but these represent the major approaches across the states.

Coordination. In most states, programmatic authority for early childhood is spread across multiple agencies that are expected to collaborate with each other, often through formal structures. This is the most prevalent approach to early childhood governance and may occur in many ways such as through formal agreements across agencies, a governor's coordinating office, and/or a children's cabinet. For example, in Nebraska, the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services co-lead the State's early intervention program and, through a memorandum of understanding, also share planning and administration of quality funds from CCDF. Multiple States—including Delaware, Illinois, New Mexico, and Wisconsin—are using interagency strategies for the governance of early learning activities.

One formal structure sometimes used to address coordination is the creation of a designated unit within the governor's office responsible for leading collaboration. In Illinois, for example, the governor created a Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development to coordinate the work of the State's Early Learning Council and to support efforts to improve and expand programs and services. Ohio's Early Education and Development Office resides within the Governor's Office of 21st Century Education to work with and coordinate the early childhood work of interagency teams and the state's Early Learning Council.

Consolidation. In a consolidation model, the state brings together the primary early childhood programs into one agency. Often this focuses on two primary sources of state funding for early education and care such as child care and state preschool, which are frequently blended and braided with federal Head Start funding (and special education funding) by individual programs.

For example, California, Maryland, and Michigan have consolidated child care funds and state preschool into the state education agency (SEA). In all three States, the State's Head Start collaboration office is also housed within the SEA. While California has administered child care in its state education agency for many years, Maryland and Michigan have made changes more recently. In Maryland, the State transferred all early care and education programs to the SEA in 2005 and created within the SEA the Division of Early Childhood Development. Michigan's new Office of Great Start at the SEA, created by executive order, opened in October 2011 and oversees programs related to the CCDF, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), state prekindergarten, Head Start collaboration, and parent education. Other states have taken steps to build the SEA leadership in early childhood. Minnesota recently formed the Office of Early Learning in its SEA to oversee early childhood work. In fiscal year 2012, state law in Florida established the Office of Early Learning within the SEA; this new office administers the State's school readiness system, the Voluntary Prekindergarten program, as well as Florida's ECAC.

Another example is Pennsylvania, which consolidated all of child care, state preschool, home visiting, and early intervention Part C and Part B, into a single office with a single staff that is affiliated with both the SEA and the human services agency. In 2006, Pennsylvania centralized early learning and child development programs,

previously governed by both the SEA and the Department of Human Services (then known as Public Welfare), in the Office of Child Development and Early Learning as a single organization that is part of both the Departments of Education and Human Services (previously Public Welfare). The office is responsible for the financing, planning, implementation, and monitoring of child care, Head Start, Pre-K, home visiting, and IDEA Parts B and C, initiatives previously overseen by more than two separate state agencies.

New Independent Agency. Finally, several States have created wholly separate state agencies tasked with authority over many of the State's early childhood services and programs. One State to go this route is Massachusetts, with state legislation in 2005 that created the Department of Early Education and Care, which has authority over and accountability for early education and care and afterschool services for families. In Washington, the governor-established State Department of Early Learning serves as a cabinet-level state agency for initiatives previously scattered across several departments. And Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning (Bright from the Start) is responsible for the State's child care and early education. The most recent State to create a new agency is Connecticut, which passed legislation in 2013 to create the Office of Early Childhood. This agency oversees family support, child care licensing, and all quality programming and is scheduled to incorporate Part B and Part C over time.

Governance and Systems Building

Early childhood leaders and experts have long noted the need for increased collaboration and coordination among policymakers, regulators, funders, and service providers at the federal, state, and local levels to remedy the fragmentation that has been an unfortunate characteristic of the field for years. Segmentation, redundancies, and inconsistencies persist today even as progress has been made. Moving beyond coordination and collaboration to pursue more comprehensive and strategic systems building efforts is recommended by experts to secure the field's efficacy, sustainability, and growth into the future.[7] Systems building is the process "that transforms the discrete pieces of direct services and infrastructure into a coherent early childhood system."[8] On goal is to advance improved outcomes for children and families through governance providing "an orderly and comprehensive assemblage of interrelated administration and programs that provide equitable, accessible, comprehensive, and quality services for young children."[9]

> A foundational component for creating and sustaining a coordinated, comprehensive ECE system is governance, which provides sufficient legal authority and accountability to compel both its development and continual improvement in service of the needs of children, families and community.

Although discrete programs and services may be able to operate and even advance in its absence, system governance is key to joining a collection of segmented programs into one coherent system that "works in a way that is greater than the sum of its parts."[10] Governance provides the unifying structures, processes, and policies that empower the system to function in a consistent, effective, efficient, and sustainable manner.[11]

Delineating functions and goals. Early childhood experts have advised systems builders to first delineate the functions and goals that governance serves in systems building work before determining and establishing the structure though which governance will work. In other words, "form should follow function."[12] This means that

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[7] Kagan, S. L. & Kauerz, K. (2012). Looking forward: Four steps for early childhood system building, In Kagan, S.L., & Kauerz, K. (Eds.), *Early childhood systems: Transforming early learning* (pp. 283-302). New York: Teachers College Press (Columbia University).

[8] Stebbins, H. (2012). How do we get there from here? Financing the transformation from a collection of programs to an early childhood system. In Kagan, S.L., & Kauerz, K. (Eds.), *Early childhood systems: Transforming early learning* (pp. 171-182). New York: Teachers College Press (Columbia University).

[9] Kagan, S. L. & Kauerz, K. (2012). Looking forward: Four steps for early childhood system building, In Kagan, S.L., & Kauerz, K. (Eds.), *Early childhood systems: Transforming early learning* (pp. 283-302). New York: Teachers College Press (Columbia University).

[10] Goffin, S.G., Martella, J., & Coffman, J. (2011). *Vision to practice: Setting a new course for early childhood governance.* Washington, DC: Goffin Strategy Group.

[11] Kagan, S. L. & Kauerz, K. (2012). Looking forward: Four steps for early childhood system building, In Kagan, S.L., & Kauerz, K. (Eds.), *Early childhood systems: Transforming early learning* (pp. 283-302). New York: Teachers College Press (Columbia University).

[12] Goffin, S.G., Martella, J., & Coffman, J. (2011). *Vision to practice: Setting a new course for early childhood governance.* Washington, DC: Goffin Strategy Group.

states must first conceptualize and define their goal for their early childhood work. "The process must start with agreeing on some definitions—of what "early learning" for children entails and what a "system" represents."[13] Once the system has clear parameters, the form and function of governance can be explored and decisions made about the current approach and/or improvements to it.

State and local context. There is no "one size fits all" approach to state ECE governance. Decisions about the best form of governance need to be informed by "state and local context, existing patterns of governance, strengths of the governorship and the legislature, and the history of collaboration that has characterized early care and education service delivery in that particular State."[14] "There is no single answer to the question: What governance structure can create an early learning system and manage the system efficiently and effectively? What works in one State and for one systems building purpose may not work in another State, or in the same State for a different systems building purpose."[15] The point is to design and implement a governance approach that can maximize government effectiveness and efficiency in achieving the state's goals for its early childhood system and services.

Quick Tips for CCDF Administrators

This section provides tips for CCDF Administrators who are exploring different governance options in their states, or are being called upon to support planning and vetting of potential governance change. These tips are followed by advice about implementing governance change.

Governance planning tips

- Deepen understanding of governance structures and options, thinking through the pros and cons within the state environment.

- Understand all facets of the ECE landscape—policy, financing, implementation, and stakeholders—in order to objectively evaluate opportunities and options around governance.

- Understand the rationale and interest in governance and the end purposes in mind in assessing options and opportunities.

- Examine the desired role of the CCDF Administrator in the governance planning process and identify how to use knowledge, insight, and partnerships most productively to ensure the governance change is focused on shared goals and metrics.

- As appropriate, use a strategic communication plan to keep stakeholders, decisionmakers, and staff informed, especially about proposed changes required to be in compliance with the new governance structure.

Bruner, C., Stover Wright, M. Gebhard, B., & Hibbard, S. (2004). *Building an early learning system: The ABCs of planning and governance structures.* Des Moines, IA: State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network.

[12] Kauerz, K. & Kagan, S. L. (2012). Governance and early childhood systems: Different forms, similar goals. In *Kagan*, S.L., & Kauerz, K. (Eds.), *Early childhood systems: Transforming early learning* (pp. 87-103). New York: Teachers College Press (Columbia University).

[13] Bruner, C., Stover Wright, M. Gebhard, B., & Hibbard, S. (2004). *Building an early learning system: The ABCs of planning and governance structures.* Des Moines, IA: State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network.

[14] Kauerz, K. & Kagan, S. L. (2012). Governance and early childhood systems: Different forms, similar goals. In *Kagan*, S.L., & Kauerz, K. (Eds.), *Early childhood systems: Transforming early learning* (pp. 87-103). New York: Teachers College Press (Columbia University). See also, Dichter, H. (2015). State systems building through governance. In Dichter, H. (Ed.), *Rising to the Challenge: Building Effective Systems for Young Children and Families,* a BUILD E-Book. Boston: BUILD Initiative.

[15] Bruner, C., Stover Wright, M. Gebhard, B., & Hibbard, S. (2004). *Building an early learning system: The ABCs of planning and governance structures.* Des Moines, IA: State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network.

Governance implementation tips

- Communicate with staff about the plan for operationalizing governance change. Offer opportunities for engagement and feedback. Even if there is not much to share, communicate that. In the absence of information, staff will often assume the worst, and morale can begin to suffer before any change occurs.

- Maintain an open mind and collaborative spirit when engaging partners and stakeholders during the governance change process so that conversations and opportunities for future collaboration are cultivated and facilitated. Change is a constant and cannot be controlled, however, the response to change can be controlled. Creating a thoughtful, productive, strategic response to change is paramount to systems building in ECE.

Decisionmaking

Decisionmaking is a thought process that results in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several alternative possibilities. Every decisionmaking process produces a final choice that may or may not prompt action. Ultimately, decisionmaking is the process of identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of the decisionmaker(s).There may not always be a "correct" decision among the choices with the available information. Nonetheless, decisionmaking is about selecting the best logical choice from the available options.

Effective communication eases the implementation of critical decisions. The more participants in a decisionmaking process understand their roles and expectations, the more effective they can be at assisting with, and carrying out, the decision. When in the decisionmaking process, consider all the alternatives and weigh the positives and negatives of each option. Attempt to forecast the outcome of each option and determine what outcome is best for that particular situation. While most public decisions are made and communicated in a very deliberate and measured way, some decisions (individual or community) are less consciously made based on intuition, prior experience in the environment, available information, emotions, assumptions, and biases that may not exist at a conscious level.

> **Effective Public Decisionmaking**
>
> Effective public decisionmaking requires attention to group process, transparency, and ethical considerations. When faced with significant decisions, leaders often convene a diverse group of advisors who represent many perspectives and information sources. The group is likely to include a variety of stakeholders including regulators, funders, trustees, various staff, and consumers. The group must acknowledge competing commitments within the group. In public decisionmaking, where the results may become material for media stories, it is especially important to remember ethical issues such as confidentiality and conflict of interest.

Decisionmaking Styles and Approaches

Members of public decisionmaking groups must master conflicting obligations, competing values, complexity, and social responsibility. There is often no easy or right or wrong answer. As the collaborative leader of the group, the state leader helps the group decide the most effective decisionmaking style given the circumstances. Outlining the various roles of the group in the decisionmaking process and helping members understand their responsibilities for decision results will help them determine the most appropriate decisionmaking style for the

situation. The chart provides an overview of different decisionmaking styles and information about advantages and disadvantages of these approaches.

Decisionmaking Approaches[1]

Democratic Approach: Leader gives up ownership; the group votes.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Allows each individual within the group to participate	May limit individual or group responsibility
May distribute power and may lead to greater synergy	Lesser efficiency
Can yield a fast decision	May yield "group think" (noncritical analysis and assessment)

Autocratic Approach: Leader controls and makes decisions.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Can yield a fast decision	May have negative effects on morale
Leader is responsible	May not lead to appropriate buy-in that might impair commitment and execution
Greater efficiency	
	May ignore valuable ideas and insights

Consultative Approach: Leader invites participation but makes decisions.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Leader is responsible	May take more process time
Group is involved	May not lead to buy-in from group members who must commit and implement decisions
May lead to more positive morale	
	Lesser efficiency
May lead to greater synergy	

Consensus Approach: Leader gives up control; group buy-in.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Group is responsible	Lesser efficiency
Group commitment	Complete involvement
May provide for equal power between group members and leader	May yield "group think" (noncritical analysis and assessment)

Steps in a Decisionmaking Process

Although there are many approaches or variations to the decisionmaking process, regardless of which approach the leader takes, the process itself includes the following steps:

1. Define the issue or problem to be solved. Is the matter urgent, important, or both? If complex, break into workable pieces. Establish criteria for success or evaluation.

2. Gather all the data and facts and understand causes. Identify different or competing interests related to the issue or explanations for the root of the problem.

3. Develop alternative possible options and solutions.

4. Evaluate alternative solutions. Consider and compare the pros and cons of each option.

5. Select the best option. The selection will be based on agreed upon criteria for success and processes (i.e., majority vote or consensus). Consider various analysis methods such as risk analysis, cost/benefit analysis, and force field analysis, as well as various values and ethical considerations. Avoid "group think" in an effort to reduce conflict.

6. Develop an action or implementation plan with tasks, dates, and responsibilities. Explain your decision to those involved and affected, and follow up to ensure proper and effective implementation.

7. Evaluate the process and outcomes.

Conflict Resolution

In any partnership or systems change effort, conflict will occur at some point in the endeavor. CCDF Administrators may want to be aware of their role in facilitating and managing conflict when it happens, and be prepared to have a conflict resolution plan as one of their tools for effective communication.

Conflict resolution refers to methods and processes involved in facilitating the successful resolution. Conflict occurs when at least two interdependent parties or factions reflect real or perceived incompatible goals, scarce rewards or resources, and interference from the other party or faction in achieving goals. It involves both feelings and facts. At its root, conflict is about differences and arises with disagreement about information, processes or methods, goals, or values. A wide range of methods and procedures for addressing conflict exist; including but not limited to negotiation, mediation, diplomacy, and creative peace-building. Conflict can have positive results, such as improved decisionmaking and products.
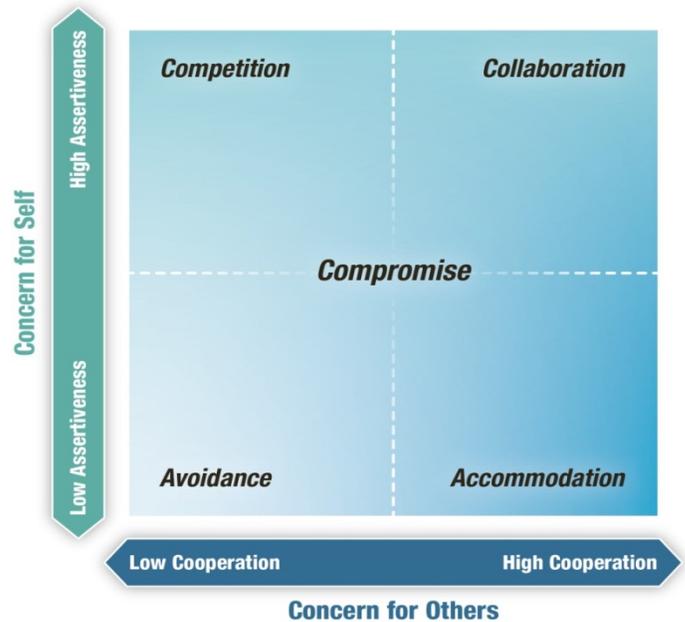
Sometimes it is helpful to define what kind of conflict is occurring. Conflict occurs at different levels, each with increasing difficulty in resolution:

1. **Facts or data**: differing information. This is the simplest conflict to resolve by filling in the missing information that caused the misunderstanding.

2. **Processes or methods**: this occurs when individuals or groups disagree on *how* to proceed.

3. **Goals or purpose**: this occurs when there is disagreement on direction for the group.

4. **Values**: this conflict is the most difficult to mitigate and is often based on cultural assumptions or basic meaning. Sometimes conflict at this level is addressed by *"agreeing to disagree,"* respecting the differences, and learning to trust the good intentions of the other.

A classic model for framing conflict is to look at one's style of responding to conflict and the styles represented in the group. Based on two variables, assertiveness (regard or concern for self) or cooperation (regard or concern for others), theorists Kilmann and Thomas identified five conflict response styles:[16]

- Avoidance

- Accommodation

- Compromise

- Competition

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[16] Kilmann, R., & Thomas, K. (1975). Interpersonal conflict-handling behavior as reflections of Jungian personality dimensions. *Psychological Reports* Vol. 37, #3 (pp.971-980).

- Collaboration

An individual may tend to use one style more readily than others. Depending on the circumstances of the conflict, any of these responses may be appropriate. Each yields different results. Avoidance and accommodation provide ways to appease aggression or postpone conflict, buying time. Competition may be appropriate at times, but offers a "win-lose" solution. Compromise and collaboration offer approaches for "win-win" solutions, but require negotiation and lengthy candid conversation to define issues.

Should the conflict be protracted, it is probably wise to bring in an outside facilitator or mediator to guide any conversation leading to resolution. Sometimes, conflicts must just be managed rather than resolved whereby participants learn to live with and respect the differences.

Public Private Partnerships

The State Highlights of Public Private Partnerships give examples of successful early childhood public private partnerships, from concept to implementation.

- Principles

- The Case for Government

- The Case for Business

- The Case for Philanthropy

State Examples provide additional guidance.

Resources

Change Management

The 8-Step Process for Leading Change **(2015), by John Kotter.**
This is a practical guide for leading and managing change, created by a prominent thought leader.

Diffusion of Innovations**, 5th edition (2003), by Everett M. Rogers.**
An influential classic about how innovations take hold and become institutionalized. This web site contains some open-source material (accessed November 9, 2015).

Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing: Understanding the Stages of Team Formation **(n.d.), by the Mind Tools Editorial Team.**
Bruce Tuckman's model describes the stages of becoming a team—transitioning from a group of strangers to a united group with common goals.

Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change**, 3rd edition (2009), by William Bridges with Susan Bridges.**
This is a practical guide for understanding and managing the change process, created by a prominent thought leader. Several open-source materials are available on the William Bridges & Associates Web site.

Governance

Early Childhood Governance: Choices and Consequences **(2015), edited by Sharon Lynn Kagan and Rebecca E. Gomez.**

This compendium of articles covers the following areas: defining governance, current status of early childhood governance, governance and systems building, and the future of early childhood governance. Authors include policy analysts as well as government leaders. The table of contents provides a list of open-source articles in the book.

Early Childhood Systems: Transforming Early Learning **(2012), edited by Sharon Lynn Kagan and Kristie Kauerz.**
This compendium of articles on governance is divided as follows: context, subsystems, transcendent system-building processes, snapshots, and looking to the future. The authors include policy analysts as well as government leaders.

A Framework for Choosing a State-Level Early Childhood Governance System **(2013), by Elliot Regenstein and Katherine Lipper.**
This paper provides an overview of three recently established governance structures.

Schools of Thought: A Taxonomy of American Education Governance **(2015), by Dara Zeehandelaar and David Griffith, with Joanna Smith, Michael Thier, Ross Anderson, Christine Pitts, and Hovanes Gasparian.**
This study creates a taxonomy of state education governance systems, classifying them by three components: the degree to which decisionmaking authority lies at the state versus the local level, the degree to which decisionmaking authority is distributed among many institutions versus consolidated in a few, and the degree to which the public can participate in the policymaking process. (Each component consists of approximately 12 discrete indicators.) States are scored on each component, then combined into eight "governance types" named for the characteristics they have in common with some of history's most famous political leaders and theorists. Qualitative data explore how different approaches to governance constrain or facilitate the work of schools and districts on the ground.

Selecting an Approach to Governance: Choices and Considerations Related to Form, Function, and Durability **(2012), by Rebecca E. Gomez, Sharon Lynn Kagan, and Shibani Khanna.**
Prepared for a nonprofit organization in Houston, this paper has two parts: "Part I: Cross-State Analysis," and "Part II: Individual State Case Studies."

"State Systems Building through Governance" **(2015), by Harriet Dichter.**
This article, which is part of the BUILD Initiative's e-book, Rising to the Challenge: Building Effective Systems for Young Children and Families, looks at governance reforms and lessons learned from the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge.

Understanding Governance of Early Childhood Development and Education Systems and Services in Low-Income Countries **(2013), by Pia Rebello Britto, Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Jan Van Ravens, Liliana A. Ponguta, Soojin S. Oh, Roland Dimaya, and Richard C. Seder for the UNICEF Office of Research.**
This exploratory study identifies key governance mechanisms of health, education, and protection systems that are linked with improving equity, access, and quality of early childhood development in Cambodia, Laos, and Kenya. The report presents country-level data from interviews, focus group discussions, and content analyses, addressing seven broad areas of the early childhood development (ECD) systems explored: service goals and implementation, key aspects of governance, governance of ECD financing, quality of the services provided, historical and ideological understanding of ECD, sociopolitical understanding of governance and finance, and understanding of how policies and guiding documents inform service implementation. The report also includes a cross-country analysis of emerging themes and key findings.

Vision to Practice: Setting a New Course for Early Childhood Governance **(2011), by Stacie G. Goffin, Jana Martella, and Julia Coffman.**
This study, which is based on interviews with state leaders and other leaders about governance, covers lessons learned, observations, and potential directions for the future.

Public-Private Partnerships

[Achieving Kindergarten Readiness for All Our Children: A Funder's Guide to Early Childhood Development from Birth to Five](#) **(2015), by J. B. Pritzker, Jeffrey L. Bradach, and Katherine Kaufmann.**
This paper, produced by a philanthropist, provides recommendations for philanthropic investment in early childhood. Recommendations cover such topics as continuous quality improvement; screenings and referrals; provider training, professional development, and compensation; financing mechanisms and advocacy for public funding; information dissemination; and fostering innovation.

[The Potential and Limitations of Impact Bonds: Lessons from the First Five Years of Experience Worldwide](#) **(2015), by Emily Gustafsson-Wright, Sophie Gardiner, and Vidya Putcha.**
This study from the Brookings Institution provides an overview of impact bonds, including definitions of the concepts, key players, and structuring of impact bond transactions; a comprehensive inventory of all 38 active social impact bonds (contracted as of March 1, 2015), as well as some of the social and development impact bonds in the development stage; and an inventory of key policy actions and legislation to support the impact bond ecosystem. The report also includes analysis of the stakeholder motivations, key facilitating factors, and biggest challenges faced in the 38 social impact bond transactions; a critical examination of 10 positive claims made about impact bonds based on the 5 years of experience worldwide; and an analysis of the potential of impact bonds and possible derivatives, with a particular focus on developing country contexts. Impact bonds related to early childhood services are included in this document.