

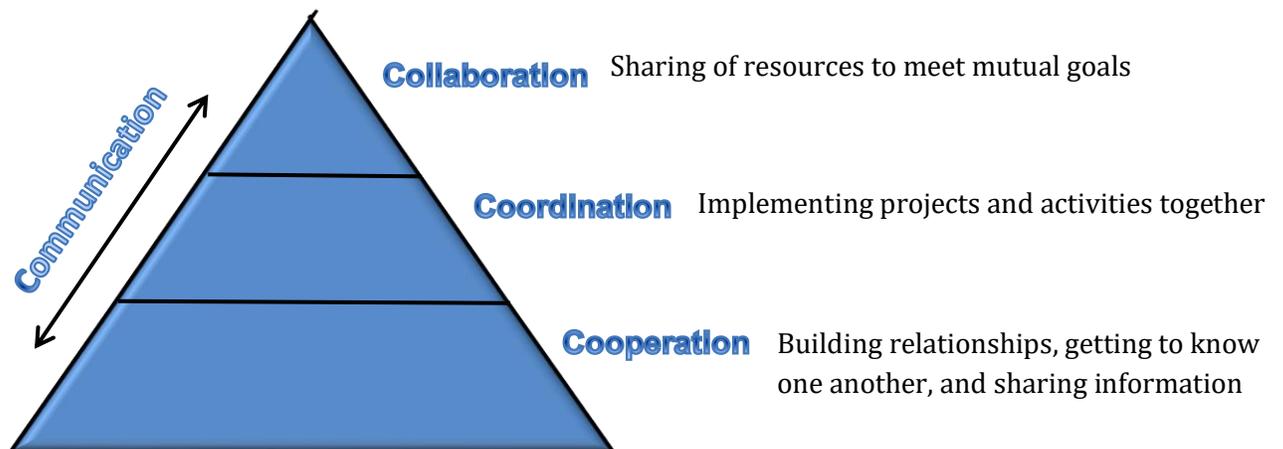
# Tiers of Engagement

Establishing transition policies on how you will collaborate with other early learning programs, schools and community services helps provide continuity for children and families as they move into and out of your program. As a leader, your role is to ensure that your transition policies address a collaborative approach not only within your program, but also with early education partners, schools and community services outside your program.

Developing successful partnerships is a process that takes time – especially when partners are from different systems. Also, collaboration can mean different things to different people.

The **Pyramid of Collaboration** illustrates three levels of collaboration that are important to use in transition policies: cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. These help a program work with external partners toward a common vision of transition based on shared values. Ongoing communication is essential at all levels.

## Pyramid of Collaboration



**Cooperation** occurs when a program informally communicates with external partners to share information that relates to their common interest in supporting transition. These might be short-term or one-time exchanges. When programs cooperate, each maintains full authority over its own operations, and no mandates are placed on another partner.

**What *School Districts* can do to increase cooperation:**

- Reach out by phone or send an introductory letter to the early learning programs in your community
- Provide program information such as website, social media addresses and contact names/phone numbers
- Share registration information and any changes in the process with early learning programs
- Keep families informed of school events by reaching out to early learning programs to share information
- Invite early learning programs and families to open houses and special events
- Attend Pre-K to K transition dialogues offered by your school/community to build mutual relationships
- Share information about program regulations, child outcomes, curriculum and assessment
- Create a “Welcome to our School” booklet for incoming children and share it with early learning programs

**What *Early Learning Programs* can do to increase cooperation:**

- Reach out by phone or send an introductory letter to the school districts in your community
- Provide program information such as website, social media addresses and contact names/phone numbers
- Invite school district staff to open houses and special events at your center
- Attend Pre-K to K transition dialogues offered by your center/community to build mutual relationships
- Share information about program regulations, child outcomes, curriculum and assessment

**Coordination** occurs when a program co-plans and coordinates transition-related activities with other programs. Programs may share resources, but have no binding fiscal obligation.

**How Early Learning Programs and School Districts can increase coordination:**

- Ensure the exchange of information forms are completed
- Make a plan for sharing transition documents for children transitioning from early learning programs into district programs
- Coordinate to plan a tour or open house for children and/or families to visit elementary school/kindergarten class.
- Plan meeting so school district and early learning program staff can meet to share information about curriculum, assessments, etc.
- Plan joint training for Early Learning Program and Kindergarten staff
- Follow-up by phone or email to check/report on children's progress following transition to kindergarten

**Collaboration** occurs when a program works together with other programs toward a common vision based on shared values. Programs may share fiscal and even legal responsibilities (special education and related services). Often programs formalize their partnerships with written agreements or memoranda of understanding. It is important to regularly review these agreements to keep them current.

**How Early Learning Programs and School Districts can collaborate:**

- Organize and co-sponsor large events for families, staff and the community
- Plan meetings for Early Learning Program staff and Kindergarten staff to discuss individual children and share transition packets
- Provide feedback regarding children's progress and the transition process and use information to improve methods
- Conduct meeting to discuss alignment of curriculum, screening, assessment, etc.

**Reference:** [eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov) – *supporting transitions brief*

## **Break-out Activity**

**What is my program currently doing to help transition children?**

**What is my program's vision for Transition?**

**What steps can we take to meet this goal?**

**What challenges do we foresee?**