

Cooperation, Coordination and Collaboration

Networking: Loose community linkages where exchanges of information and rapport building takes place. Examples include the first time personnel from community agencies come together to talk about programs or services, such as a children's council meeting. Other opportunities include phone calls, letters, brief introductory meeting, exchange of brochures, etc.

Communication: Agencies or programs share information at meetings on a regular basis.

Cooperation: Two or more programs operating autonomously yet working together to avoid duplication of services. Examples might include agencies that refer parents to other agencies or agencies working side by side during child development screening days.

Coordination: Programs work together on projects. Examples of coordination include parents from service provider agencies attending parent education nights; health providers offering off-site health screenings for children at preschool sites.

Collaboration: Involves programs joining together to work toward a common goal that could not be achieved by a single agency acting alone. Resources, power, information and authority are shared and/or have formal written agreements. Examples would be shared building costs; partnering on grant funded projects; Memorandum of Understanding for transitioning children to kindergarten.

(parts adapted from Empowering Families, Portage Project, CESA 5)

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

The purpose of making goals “smart” is to make you successful. Going through the process of analyzing your goals will help ensure what you plan is accomplished and that anyone who reads your goals knows what will happen and when. Some goals are more difficult than others to make “smart”. You may have to decide if your goal is more of a vision than a goal. Other times it is easier to make the action steps under a goal “smart”. Anyway you use it, this is a template that will help you provide clarity and action based plans whether personal or organizational.

Specific: Goals need to be well defined. Using words such as direct, organize, coordinate and lead ensure the goal is action oriented. We sometimes set goals that are so loose, it's nearly impossible to judge whether we hit them or not. For example, a statement like “I want to improve myself” may be a place to start but what does it mean, physically, mentally, intellectually, etc.? The specificity of the goal points you in the direction you want to go. A more specific goal would be “I want improve my computer skills”.

Measurable: When goals are measurable, you can tell when they have been achieved. It will also help you access the next step if they are achievable. Following the example from above, we can add, “I want to take ten computer classes.” We now have a specific number to measure and can tell easily if it has been achieved or not.

Achievable: Goals need to be reasonable and achievable. Is taking ten computer classes what I really need to do? Set up your goals for success. Although over a time span you might be able to take ten classes, what is achievable right now? Our example might turn to “I will take two computer classes this year”.

Relevant: Goals need to be relevant to either your organization’s overall plan or philosophy. How do the computer classes fit in either to your own personal plan or organization plan? You may have always thought computer programming would be fun but if your job requires you to use a certain software program, you may need to look at your short term and long term strategies to see if your goal fits with what you need to achieve now. Our example could become, “I want to take an Excel and Windows 7 class this year”.

Time Based: Goals need to have a time frame. Having a set amount of time will give your goals structure. Some people spend a lot of time talking about what they want to do, someday. But without an end date there is no sense of urgency, no reason to take any action today. Having a specific time frame gives you the impetus to get started. It also helps you monitor your progress. Continuing with our example, the final goal could be “I want to take an Excel class in February and Windows 7 class in June of this year”.