How are We Going to Manage? Designing a Quality Preschool System that Works

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Objectives

• Discuss capacity for achieving change and program improvement

• Outline the components of a Early Childhood System

• Introduce preschool programs working to develop a system
"It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory."

"Change starts when someone sees the next step."

"Change is the only constant."

"Every time I find the meaning of life, they change it."

"If you don’t create change, change will create you."

"There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction."

"Change is inevitable-except from a vending machine."
Forces of Change in Early Childhood

- Accountability Movement
- Program Quality Initiatives
- Push for Universal Preschool
## Managing Complex Change

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Collab</th>
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- Vision + Collab + Skills + Incentives + Resources + Action Plan = **Change**
- Vision + **Collab** + Skills + Incentives + Resources + Action Plan = **Confusion**
- Vision + Collab + **Skills** + Incentives + Resources + Action Plan = **Sabotage**
- Vision + Collab + Skills + **Incentives** + Resources + Action Plan = **Anxiety**
- Vision + Collab + Skills + Incentives + **Resources** + Action Plan = **Resistance**
- Vision + Collab + Skills + Incentives + **Action Plan** = **Frustration**
- Vision + Collab + Skills + Incentives + Resources + **Action Plan** = **Treadmill**

Fullan’s Three Phase Model of Change

- Initiation Phase
- Implementation Phase
- Institutionalization Phase
Develop a Plan

• Identify goals based on needs assessment
  – Specific to each area of need
  – Short and long-term

• Determine methods for meeting goals
  – Consider time, resources, and personnel needed

• Identify a timeline for meeting goals

• Determine methods for evaluating progress

• Consider long-term nature of implementation
  – Establish goals over a multi-year time span
    • Sustainability
Evaluate Preschool Needs

• Seek staff perceptions of ‘State of the Preschool’
  – Needs Assessment
  – Focus groups or interviews
    • Include teachers, administrators, families, board members, and the larger community

• Direct observations
  – Processes and resources
    • Help identify strengths as well as areas of need
Implementation, Evaluation & Future Planning

- Monitor Implementation:
  - Are personnel fulfilling objectives?
  - Are teams meeting short-term goals?

- Evaluate Outcomes:
  - Are students achieving positive outcomes?
  - Are interventions effective?
  - Are staff supported in their efforts?

- Future Planning (Sustainability):
  - Do long-term goals appear to be reachable?
  - Is long-term planning in place to sustain the initial implementation efforts?
  - Will necessary resources continue to be available?
Elements of Sustainable Change

• Representative & Collaborative Planning Team

• Evaluation of organization’s needs
  – Through multiple sources of data

• Data-based decision making

• Establishment of specific goals
  – Keep long-term sustainability in mind

• Building capacity of system and individual

• Ongoing professional development and support

• Monitor implementation
  – Evaluate results frequently
Elements of Sustainable Change
(Cont’d.)

• Shared vision regarding change
  – Stakeholder agreement

• Committed administrative leadership

• Improvement established as the schools mission
  – Financial resources committed to the cause
  – Organizational restructuring

• School goals and professional roles aligned with the change
What is a System?

A system is a collection of parts which interact with each other to function as a whole.
We spend our lives in systems

- Family
- Teams
- Organizations
- Community
- Nation
- Countries
Systems interact in positive and negative ways
To work well all of the parts must be present and they must be arranged in the proper way.
Systems Change

“For every complex problem there is a simple solution…that doesn’t work” (Mark Twain)

Change takes:
- Leadership
- Planning
- Collaboration
- Hard work & smart work
- Courage
- Time

…and even with planning, change is often messy…
Purpose of a System

• A system supports the
  • Organization of improvement efforts
  • Ability to maintain adaptable programs that are able to change
  • Organizes current mandates and support preparation for future requirements and improvement efforts
Elements of a Early Childhood System

- Representative Leadership Team
- Collaborative Planning Process
- Data/Documentation Based Decision Making
- Ongoing Professional Development and Support

Representative Leadership Team

• Team is in place
• Team is comprised of essential key stakeholders
• Families are viewed as an integral part
• Leadership team develops system focus

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”
-Margaret Mead
The Role of the Leadership Team

• Provide Leadership and Vision
• Monitor Compliance with Requirements
  • Ensure Child Well-being/Progress
  • Ensure Appropriate Deployment of Resources/Budget
• Support Staff Knowledge and Skills
• Provide Collaborative Leadership and Planning
Collaborative Planning Process

• Leadership Team engages in a systematic planning process comprised of the following steps
  • Step 1: Define the focus of the work or the problem/gap to be addressed
  • Step 2: Develop an action plan that guides the work of the team and stakeholders to address the targeted goal
  • Step 3: Implement the plan
Collaborative Planning Process Cont...

- Step 4: Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in achieving the targeted goal and revise as necessary

The result of the collaborative planning process is the development of an action plan that guides the work of the leadership team and stakeholders.
Define

Evaluate

Action Plan

Implement

Collaborative Planning Process
Action Plan

• Outline the vision of the program
• Outline goals for continuous improvement
• Outline the current status
• Outline action steps
  - responsible team members
  - resources needed
  - timelines
Data/Documentation Based Decision Making

• A systematic process is in place for:
  a. Gathering comprehensive data
  b. Reviewing and interpreting data
  c. Using data to influence decisions
Ongoing Professional Development and Support

Professional development should:

- Align with the program’s action plan
- Align with State and Federal Initiatives
- Focus on the whole program
- Allow for opportunities to learn, problem solve, practice and reflect
- Provide opportunities for educators to work together
# Focus of Professional Development

<table>
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<tr>
<td>• Beliefs/Attitudes</td>
<td>• Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– If one does not believe in the cause, they are less likely to support its implementation</td>
<td>– Didactic Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>• Conceptual Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Skills and knowledge influence level of self-efficacy</td>
<td>– Modeling and Demonstration Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Understand the need of skill AND belief that one possesses skill are leading predictors to implementing skill</td>
<td>• Skill Acquisition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Simulated practice exercises observed and critique by a facilitator</td>
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<td>• Application of Skills</td>
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<td>– This is achieved when one can successfully apply new skill, concept, or intervention with fidelity</td>
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Early Childhood Systems Model

- Define
- Action Plan
- Evaluate
- Implement

Leadership Team

- Quality
- Ability to Change
- Sustainability

State Support Team Region 8 and Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Research and Training at Kent State University, 2007
Contact Sarah Jackson (sarah@cybersummit.org) with questions or comments
Early Childhood System Rating Rubric

The rubric was developed to support programs in determining:

- Do we have all the elements in place?
- To what degree do we have the elements in place?
- Are there any gaps in our system?
- What areas need improvement?
## Matching Activity

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<th><strong>System Elements</strong></th>
<th><strong>Rubric Items</strong></th>
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<td>Representative</td>
<td>An action plan is used as an organizational tool and focus for the leadership team meetings and tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership Team</td>
<td>A facilitator or point contact has been identified to organize the work of the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Planning Process</td>
<td>Internal and external opportunities are made available to program staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Based Decision Making</td>
<td>The scope of the collection is comprehensive and encompasses a meaningful and purposeful focus for the leadership team and stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing Professional Development and Support</td>
<td>The leadership team has established a shared vision for the system with input from all members</td>
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<td>The perspective, beliefs, and needs of the stakeholders are represented rather than a reliance on personal opinions to influence decisions</td>
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Pair and Share

- What questions do you currently have about an early childhood system?

- Do you see any of the four components of a system in place in your program?

- What benefits do you see for your program in implementing an early childhood system?

- Challenges?
DEVELOPING A LEADERSHIP TEAM
Thinking back…..

• Think about a group/team that you are apart of…
  – What was it like the first time the group met?
  – What made the group successful?
  – What barriers did not allow the group to move forward?
Developing a Leadership Team

“The measure of a good leader is to ensure that no leader is left behind”

• Determine who the desired changes will effect

• Determine who must support the capacity for change
“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

- Henry Ford
Team Process

Working effectively does not just happen, it is developed through a PROCESS

• Forming
• Storming
• Norming
• Performing
• Transforming
Forming

- Getting Acquainted
- Defining Roles
- Developing trust
- Organizing work
- Determining purpose
- Defining problems/goals
- Little accomplished
Storming

- “Me” focus
- Conflicts may arise, competitive, confrontational
- Argues a lot but agree on the real issues
- Collaboration is low
- Tasks may be harder than originally thought
- Focus changes
- Quality improvement receives a lot of resistance
Norming

- A social/casual climate has unfolded
- Develop trust and share resources
- Confronting team issues
- Team leader emerges
- Acceptance of ground rules, individuality of the members and roles and responsibilities
- Cooperate
- Active problem solving
- Energy is spent on projects
Performing

- Sense of commitment
- Self-directed
- Members are resourceful, flexible, and open
- Close and supportive
- Share responsibility for successes and failures
- Can successfully accomplish new tasks w/o falling back into norming stage
- Improvement efforts have been worked into daily routines
- Plan is being implemented with success
Transforming

- Gain insight into personal and team processes
- Understanding and acceptance of each other’s strengths and weaknesses
- Close connection to each other
- Developed strategies for avoiding or resolving conflicts
- Goal or vision has been achieved
- Focusing on new actions and goals to support continuous improvement
Case Study Example #1

• Large program: 12 teachers
  – Early Childhood Education
  – Early Learning Initiative program,
  – Preschool Special Ed
  – Childcare

• New team; new administration and cross program relationships

• Priority Goal: Implementation of program-wide positive behavior support
Case Study Example #2

• Background – 4 Teachers
  - Preschool Special Ed.
• New Team – comprised of representatives of multiple program disciplines
• Goals have ranged from small program improvements and moved into redefining foundational components of the program
Final Thoughts....

- A system leads to possibility

- Development of a system takes time

- Small manageable goals will allow your program to make the largest gains

- It is possible to put a system in place to manage change
Further Information on Early Childhood Systems

Presentation information can be accessed at the following website:
http://www.ehhs.kent.edu/odec/links.htm

For further training and information regarding developing an early childhood system, please contact Sarah Jackson sarahj@cybersummit.org