

Network Basics

Networks consist of individuals, organizations, and groups, that share information, ideas, and resources to accomplish individual or group goals. Networking is a process of acquiring ideas and resources and building power by using or creating linkages. Networks tend to be loose, flexible associations of people and groups brought together by a common interest or concern.

The function of a network is to be the “container” that connects people, organizations, and communities to share information, deepen relationships, coordinate actions, and catalyze systemic change.

The purpose is to provide pathways for engagement across sectors, geographies, organizations, and levels to do more together than could ever be done alone.




The structure of the network is made up of those that are a part of it. No one entity “owns” the network, however, there are different leadership roles distributed throughout. Networks are meant to be equitable for anyone interested in participating. Those participating simply agree on the shared purpose and other co-created network items, engaging as much or as little as they wish.

How a network is different? Networks provide the opportunity to unlock the solutions or opportunities that would otherwise have been missed (e.g., bridging connections between early childhood leaders and an organization that does not normally interact in the early childhood space).

Why networks work:

- Network participants are diverse, bringing different perspectives on the issues and opportunities which opens the door for innovation.
- The factors influencing the problem and the resources and ideas needed to solve it are dynamic and shifting over time, needing a structure that is also dynamic and nimble.
- Attempts to convene conventional stakeholder groups have failed to produce rapid and aligned action, showcasing the need for a new approach.
- Harness the experience and resources of those in the network to develop creative, self-sustaining initiatives
- Networks offer the ability to facilitate fast, high-quality learning due to the communication component of the infrastructure.
- With the removal of a hierarchical structure, networks offer the ability for those who traditionally are not involved to be engaged and feel a sense of belonging.

Roles Within a Network

 <p>Convener</p> <p>An individual organization that has a strong connection to the issues and is dedicated to providing resources towards the network including convening, consultation, scheduling, and communications.</p>	 <p>Network Member</p> <p>Any individual, organization, or group that agrees to the purpose of the Network, recognizes the need for connection and collaboration, and see’s themselves within the change movement.</p>	 <p>Network</p> <p>A voluntary and diverse group of people who represent the varying perspectives held around early childhood issues and opportunities in the state, who are willing to work together (individually or together) to make progress.</p>
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