



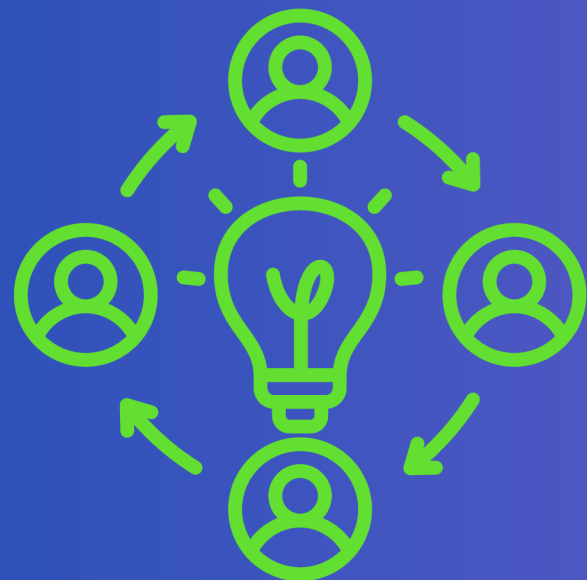
COLLABORATION: Your Competitive Edge



WELCOME!

Please use the sticky notes provided to complete the statement:

In regard to my job role _____, If I collaborated more with other child care providers, I could _____.



For example:

- "find new ways to manage staffing challenges."
- "trade ideas for classroom activities or policies."
- "feel more supported during stressful times."
- "learn how others are handling similar situations."



AGENDA

 **INTRODUCTION &
OPENING REMARKS**

 **PEER SUPPORT &
MENTORSHIP**

 **HOW TO CONNECT WITH
OTHER PROVIDERS**

 **BREAKOUT SESSION**

 **CREATE YOUR
CONNECTION PLAN**

 **PRESENTATION
CLOSING**

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THE POWER OF SHARED PERSPECTIVES

“In childcare, collaboration is about more than just surviving as a small business. The work we do is emotionally heavy, and carrying the weight alone can feel overwhelming. Building strong connections with peers gives us a trusted network to lean on, a place to share perspectives, and the reassurance that others understand the unique challenges we face. Collaboration fuels resilience, reminds us we are not alone, and ultimately strengthens the entire field.”



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SHAPING SUCCESS TOGETHER: A PERSPECTIVE ON COLLABORATION



“Collaboration in Early Childcare allows us to grow as a community of like-minded individuals, united by a purpose greater than running small businesses alone. Through collaboration, we elevate the field of Early Childcare in Montana by sharing knowledge, supporting one another, and striving toward common goals. This work is built on trust, intentional partnerships, and a commitment to best practice. Together, we create a stronger foundation for children, families, and providers across the state—demonstrating that when we come together, the impact of our efforts extends far beyond our individual classrooms and centers.”

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**“PEERS GIVE YOU
SUPPORT, ASSISTANTS
GIVE YOU PRESENCE”**

Play N Learn K-Prep
Program Coordinator



Nikki

Kid Country CDC
Director



Ashley

Play N Learn Academy
Program Coordinator



Shelby



CHILDCARE IS DEMANDING

- **You don't have to face things alone**

Between the demands of licensing, staffing, and burnout, you can feel alone and defeated but you don't have to do it alone.

- **Peer Support**

Sometimes, a quick check-in with another provider is the difference between feeling stuck and moving forward. We have all been through many of the same challenges and could assist others with those challenges as well.

PEER SUPPORT: WHAT IS IT?

Peer support is often seen as a chance to vent your troubles but that is not the case at all! Peer support is a chance to collaborate strategically with somebody who has shared experiences.

This strategic collaboration could look like:

1. Swapping job descriptions, policy templates, and procedural guidelines
2. Role playing through difficult parent or staff conversations
3. Helping a peer to lift morale with fresh ideas
4. Reduces isolation

BENEFITS OF PEER SUPPORT

- Create accountability and clarity in decision making
- Sharing financial resources and “wins” (e.g., grants & hiring tips)
- Decreased turnover, increased compliance
- Confidence and emotional relief from knowing “you are not the only one”
- Professional growth through shared ideas and experiences

“These are tangible outcomes of connection—not just feel good moments.”



BUILD YOUR NETWORK

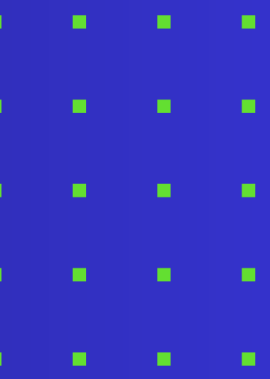
**GETTING TO KNOW
OUR AUDIENCE**

**INTERACTIVE
BREAKOUT SESSION:
COLLABORATION IN
CHILDCARE
LEADERSHIP**



OTHER WAYS TO CONNECT

- Join or start a peer group
 - E.g. PEAK, Zoom chats, weekly coffee conversations
- Set up a “policy swap” or provider shadow day
- Attend conferences with the intention to connect, not just learn!
- Use social media groups with clear boundaries



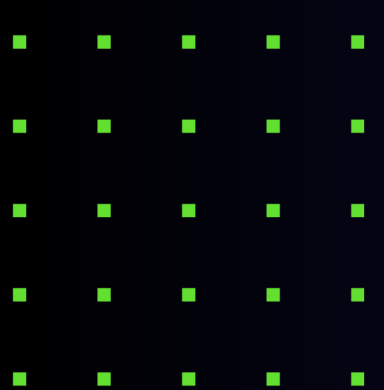
TIPS FOR CONNECTIONS



- Be Consistent! Relationships take time to grow
- Share generously while remaining professional
- Choose partners you trust and respect
- Keep your goals solution focused
- Be intentional
- Start small
- Be honest and vulnerable
- Respect confidentiality
- Stay open to feedback

CREATE YOUR PLAN

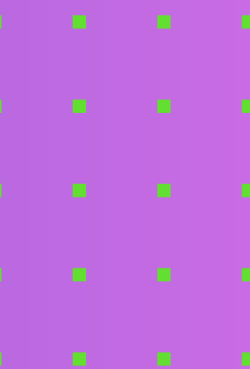
Please take a few moments to complete your reflections handout at this time. Please reflect on who you would like to connect with and where you may need support in your business. Also be considering what you may be able to offer as support in return.



CONNECTION CARDS

- Please take the time to write your contact information on a few cards (on tables)
- Please be sure to turn your cards in, as we will be creating a connections binder.

Open Discussion



CONTACT US FOR SUPPORT

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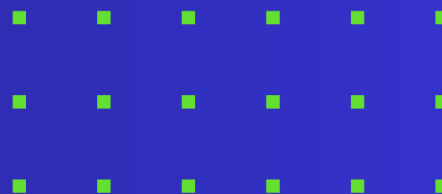
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THANK YOU

**“Your greatest business tool might not be a system,
or a policy-It might be a person”**



Look around-your next support partner may be sitting right next to you. Isolation is a business risk. Let's build better, together!
