

# *Essential Steps in Early Learning Coordination and Collaboration that Support Migrant Preschool Children*





# Introduction

High quality early learning experiences provide an educational foundation for our youngest learners that can set the stage for all future learning events and experiences. Yet early learning programming and support can look vastly different from one community, county, and state to the next. Creating a collaborative early learning system that has the ability to access, leverage, and maintain best practices for supporting the school readiness of our nation's preschoolers is imperative.

*The early years of life matter because early experiences affect the architecture of the maturing brain. Children begin learning as soon as they are born, and their brains are built from the bottom up. The benefits of positive early experiences build, one on top of another, as "skill begets skill." Early experiences literally shape how the brain gets built: a strong foundation in the early years increases the probability of positive outcomes. A weak foundation increases the odds of later difficulties.*

## **New Hampshire Department of Education- Statement on the Importance of Early Learning**

These early experiences become even more critical for some of our most at-risk children; migrant preschoolers. Migrant families that are employed in agriculture and fishing industries are required to move from location to location in order to maintain employment. Agricultural work is traditionally low-paying, hazardous, and requires long hours each day when a crop is in season. For the children of migrant families, it is not uncommon to move into and out of a school system several times per year, creating disruptions in a child's education. Entry level kindergarten data shows that migrant children enter kindergarten with greater opportunity/achievement gaps than almost any other group of children (Washington State WaKIDS 2014-2015 Data).

Knowing how vital early learning experiences are, and how important it is to work to create an educational system that supports continuity for all children, especially migrant children, early learning collaboration around systems of support for migrant preschoolers has become an issue of fundamental importance.

This document was developed by the Early Learning Coordination (ELC) and Collaboration Task Group, consisting of task group members from the states of Idaho, Missouri, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Washington. The intent of this tool is to serve as a guide to support early learning collaboration efforts, specifically those focused around the needs of migrant preschool children.



Increasing Levels of Involvement

### ***Support Early Learning Collaboration Through Integrated Coordination***

All stakeholders work together in an integrated manner to ensure that strong partnerships are in place to support migrant preschool children. High quality school readiness and transitions practices are in place for migrant families and children, with common action plan work taking place across a state. Data shows increases in school readiness for migrant preschool children. Stakeholders are connected and leveraging resources from a national to local level.

**Level 5**

### ***Support Early Learning Collaboration Through Local to National Collaboration and Action***

Entities ensure that districts, early learning partners and community partners are strongly connected and working together to build on existing action plans. Efforts and information move smoothly between state and local work groups. Information is shared at a national level. Data is shared and examined regularly. Action plans are updated based upon new data finding. Regional organizations help local entities link to established school readiness resources, including the Preschool Initiative Clearinghouse.

**Level 4**

### ***Support Early Learning Collaboration Through Unified Action and Leveraged Resources***

Entities work together (community, district, early learning, governmental, state) to develop and implement collaboration strategies such as shared professional development and shared data. Examination of data occurs to determine need and inform action plans for improving school readiness. Members are able to borrow and leverage resources from other members to increase the overall capacity of the work.

**Level 3**

### ***Support Early Learning Collaboration by Building Capacity***

Local/regional/state or national entities connect regularly and have strong working relationships with partners (community, district, early learning, governmental) who can assist with early learning collaboration. All partners know the roles and responsibilities of the other partner organizations and agencies involved. Partners agree to work together towards the common cause of increasing activities that support migrant preschool children.

**Level 2**

### ***Support Early Learning Collaboration Through Meetings***

Organizations come together at gatherings (local, regional, state or national level) to share strategies and actions they are doing individually that support school districts, early learning programs and child care providers who serve migrant preschool children.

**Level 1**



As entities work together on early learning collaboration efforts, the process of initial and upfront planning is critical. Collaboration involves determining where practices are currently, identify next steps, establishing goals, and determining the desired results. The bullet points below are offered as examples of questions that collaboration teams may consider as they move through this work.

This document provides five different levels of collaboration practice. It is important to keep in mind that, in order to move up through the levels of collaboration, your group must first meeting the requirements of the previous levels. For example, to be considered a Level 4, your group must first have met the suggested requirements of Levels 1,2 and 3.

### **Determine Current Practice**

- What types of collaboration are you currently involved in?
- How involved are other early learning partners with your current collaboration efforts around migrant students and migrant preschool-aged children?
- Is there need for more intentional support of early learning collaboration efforts within your current scope of work?
- What could be different for the migrant preschool-aged children in your region/state if collaboration efforts were operating at a level four or five?

### **Identify Next Steps**

- Determine the support and resources needed.
- Think through the process including potential partners. Establish short and long term goals, desired outcomes, strategies, and action steps.
- Consider what role programs, relationships, activities, and partnerships can play in helping migrant preschool- aged children arrive at school ready to succeed.
- Hold multiple conversations with collaboration partners to determine how to best facilitate school readiness action for migrant preschool-aged children within your region/state.

## Establish Goals

- Develop full support of this work from community partners, which includes verbal and written commitments of resources.
- Ensure that goals help give increased access to early learning resources and materials.
- Ensure that agreed upon goals help support increased school readiness for migrant preschool-aged children.
- Ensure that agreed upon goals help give migrant families increased access to early learning resources and materials and help support families in their ability to support their own child's school readiness.

## Potential Results of Collaboration

- There is improved alignment between early learning programs, community programs and school districts that all work to support school readiness for migrant preschool-aged children.
- Communities are more aware of challenges that migrant preschool-aged children face and how to support their school readiness.
- More migrant preschool-aged children have access to high quality early learning programs or supports prior to entering kindergarten.
- More migrant preschool- aged children experience positive transitions into kindergarten.
- Decreased opportunity and achievement gaps are evident.

Level 1	Support Early Learning Collaboration Through Meetings
Collaboration Type:	<b>Example Strategy:</b> Come together as a collaborative group with a common interest and investment in supporting migrant preschool children and their families. Share strategies and actions.
Local Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify stakeholders; define these stakeholders broadly as organizations that serve migrant children, youth, families, parents, and grandparents (early learning programs, school districts, health care providers, local human services, libraries, churches).</li> <li>• Identify service organizations that may be interested in collaborating (Kiwanis, Rotary).</li> <li>• Identify local growers and agricultural organizations that may be interested in collaborating.</li> <li>• Meet regularly, ensuring that all partners are informed of supports that are in place for migrant preschool children and their families.</li> </ul>
Regional Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify stakeholders; including those that have a regional impact (coalitions, regional service organizations).</li> <li>• Engage school and community-based partners.</li> <li>• Determine how regional collaborations will be informed and influenced by local, state, and national action.</li> <li>• Meet regularly, ensuring that all partners are informed of supports that are in place for migrant preschool children and their families.</li> </ul>
State Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify stakeholders; including those that have state-level influence and impact on policies and educational practices.</li> <li>• Convene school readiness “task force” team that address statewide readiness issues with a specific lens on migrant students.</li> <li>• Determine how regional collaborations will be informed and influenced by local, state, and national action.</li> <li>• Meet regularly, ensuring that all partners are informed of supports that are in place for migrant preschool children and their families.</li> </ul>
National Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify stakeholders (Head Start, NAEYC, CDC, Affordable Health Care); including states that represent low-high populations of migrant students and low-high levels of quality programming and supports for migrant children and families.</li> <li>• Determine how national collaborations can inform and influence local and state action.</li> <li>• Meet once per year, ensuring that all partners are informed of supports that are in place for migrant preschool children and their families.</li> </ul>

# Action Plan Template

If your group has determined that you are at a Level 1 in collaboration practices, next decide whether you are at a “Developing, Approaching or Meeting” stage for Level 1. Provide evidence or examples of your current practice and list next steps.

Activity Description: Developing	Activity Description: Approaching	Activity Description: Meeting
<p>A few stakeholders have been identified and periodic meetings are taking place but several types of potential stakeholders (early learning programs, school districts, health care providers, local human services, libraries, churches, services organizations, growers) are absent or not participating currently.</p>	<p>Regular meetings are taking place but several types of potential stakeholders are not participating currently or all stakeholders are participating but meetings are not currently happening on a regular basis.</p>	<p>A majority of potential stakeholders are participating in regularly occurring meetings.</p>
List Evidence and Examples	List Evidence and Examples	List Evidence and Examples
List Next Steps	List Next Steps	List Next Steps

Level 2	Support Early Learning Collaboration by Building Capacity
Collaboration Type:	Example Strategy: Create a shared vision and mutual accountability in promoting actions that support migrant preschool children and their families.
Local Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand each stakeholder’s role in supporting collaboration efforts.</li> <li>• Stakeholders keep each other informed about struggles and successes of migrant children and families in the local area.</li> <li>• Agreed actions are taken to further support children and families, with cross-sector partnerships occurring to support those actions.</li> <li>• Collaborate with and promote local programs such as ACES that help to support the social and psychological needs of students who are highly mobile, living in poverty, and may also be experiencing varying levels of trauma.</li> </ul>
Regional Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand each stakeholder’s role in supporting collaboration efforts.</li> <li>• Regional stakeholder’s share common and unique struggles and successes of migrant children and families that are representative of their local area.</li> <li>• Host collaborative trainings and conference, encourage multi-program walk-throughs that allow for observations of curriculum planning and implementation.</li> <li>• Agreed actions are taken that unite a region in similar work that best support migrant children and families.</li> <li>• Collaborate with coalitions or other programs that may already be supporting programs such as ACES that help to support the social and psychological needs of students who are highly mobile, living in poverty, and may also be experiencing varying levels of trauma.</li> </ul>
State Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand each stakeholder’s role in supporting collaboration efforts that reach across the state.</li> <li>• Identify struggles and successes of migrant children and families, and pockets in the state where efforts should be focused.</li> <li>• Host collaborative trainings and conference, encourage multi-program walk-throughs that allow for observations of curriculum planning and implementation.</li> <li>• Work closely with regional and local entities to ensure actions are supportive of communities and that communities have access to resources that can help support state action.</li> <li>• Advocate for programs such as ACES that help to support the social and psychological needs of students who are highly mobile, living in poverty, and may also be experiencing varying levels of trauma.</li> </ul>
National Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand each states role in supporting collaboration efforts that have national impact.</li> <li>• Identify struggles and successes of migrant children and families, and pockets in the nation where efforts should be focused.</li> <li>• Work closely with state level education agencies and policy makers to ensure actions are well supported, well received, and are supportive of work already taking place within a state.</li> <li>• Help fund programs such as ACES that help to support the social and psychological needs of students who are highly mobile, living in poverty, and may also be experiencing varying levels of trauma.</li> </ul>

# Action Plan Template

If your group has determined that you are at a Level 2 in collaboration practices, next decide whether you are at a “Developing, Approaching or Meeting” stage for Level 2. Provide evidence or examples of your current practice and list next steps.

Activity Description: Developing	Activity Description: Approaching	Activity Description: Meeting
Stakeholders are learning about each others roles in supporting migrant children and keeping each other informed of common struggles/success of migrant children and families.	Stakeholders understand each others role in supporting migrant children and families. Agreed actions are being developed.	Stakeholders understand each others role in supporting migrant children and families. Agreed actions have been developed that include cross-sector work.
List Evidence and Examples	List Evidence and Examples	List Evidence and Examples
List Next Steps	List Next Steps	List Next Steps

Level 3	Support Early Learning Collaboration Through Unified Action and Leveraged Resources
Collaboration Type:	Example Strategy: Stakeholders work together to develop collaborative strategies based on shared examination of data and shared identification of action items. Resources are leveraged and combined to further promote collective action.
Local Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine data to develop shared understandings and identify crucial areas of action as it relates to early learning, school readiness and family connection for migrant preschool-aged children and their families.</li> <li>• Develop a plan of action that includes school readiness and PreK-12 pathways, and develop common messaging that supports areas of need.</li> <li>• Connect with community partners and early learning programs to understand critical issues for migrant preschoolers as it relates to early learning and school readiness.</li> <li>• All stakeholders work together to leverage and share resources.</li> <li>• Work as a local community to ensure pathways exist for migrant preschool children to access quality preschool and that pathways exist for migrant families to easily access resources.</li> </ul>
Regional Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine local and regional data to develop shared understandings and identify crucial areas of action as it relates to early learning, school readiness and family connection for migrant preschool-aged children and their families.</li> <li>• Develop a plan of action that includes school readiness and PreK-12 Pathways, and supports areas of need across a region, develop a common message around the work that can be shared at both a state and local level.</li> <li>• Connect with local and state entities to better understand critical issues for migrant preschoolers as it relates to early learning and school readiness.</li> <li>• Connect regional entities (both community and LEA) to support students as they move within a state.</li> <li>• All stakeholders work together to leverage resources that can be shared at both a local and regional level.</li> </ul>
State Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine regional and state data to develop shared understandings and crucial areas of action around the state.</li> <li>• Develop a statewide plan of action that includes school readiness and PreK-12 Pathways, and develop common messaging around the work.</li> <li>• Connect with regional entities to better understand critical issues for migrant preschoolers as it relates to early learning and school readiness.</li> <li>• Connect across states (both community-based programs and LEA) to support students as they travel across states to ensure students and families are immediately welcomed and connected to resources.</li> <li>• All stakeholders work together to leverage resources that move the entire state forward in a unified plan of action.</li> </ul>
National Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine state data to develop shared understandings and crucial areas of action around the nation.</li> <li>• Develop a national plan of action that includes school readiness and PreK-12 Pathways, and common messaging around the work.</li> <li>• Connect with state and regional entities to better understand critical issues for migrant preschoolers as it relates to early learning and school readiness.</li> <li>• Improve national databases such as MSIX to ensure PreK-12 pathways exist.</li> <li>• All stakeholders work together to leverage resources and policies that move the entire nation forward in a unified plan of action. Ensure action plans are supportive of state needs and existing state resources.</li> </ul>



# Action Plan Template

If your group has determined that you are at a Level 3 in collaboration practices, next decide whether you are at a “Developing, Approaching or Meeting” stage for Level 3. Provide evidence or examples of your current practice and list next steps.

Activity Description: Developing	Activity Description: Approaching	Activity Description: Meeting
<p>Examination of data is occurring that results in common messaging around areas of need for migrant students and migrant preschoolers.</p>	<p>Examination of data occurs that results in common messaging and developed action plans. Sharing of resources takes place and the development of a PreK-12 pathway for migrant students has begun.</p>	<p>Examination of data occurs that results in common messaging and developed action plans. Resource are leveraged and shared. PreK-12 pathways for migrant students exist that include more migrant-eligible preschoolers accessing high quality preschool.</p>
List Evidence and Examples	List Evidence and Examples	List Evidence and Examples
List Next Steps	List Next Steps	List Next Steps

Level 4	Support Early Learning Collaboration Through Local to National Collaboration and Action
Collaboration Type:	Example Strategy: Stakeholders use data and leveraged resources to build on existing action plans. School readiness efforts are in place for migrant preschool children and information and resources move smoothly between state and local groups.
Local Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine data and identify areas of success or continued need as it relates to existing action plans. State groups are kept current on local progress.</li> <li>• Data loops exist between schools and early learning programs. Data systems and records exchange agreements exist to support migrant students beyond kindergarten.</li> <li>• Ensure districts and early learning partners are working together on school readiness goals/actions for migrant preschoolers.</li> <li>• High quality transition plans are in place that support the unique needs of migrant preschoolers and their families.</li> <li>• Community organizations and service organizations are aware of the unique needs of migrant families and contribute resources to promoting better equity and access for those families.</li> <li>• PreK to 12 Pathways exist for migrant students that include local to state agreements on partial credits for courses, graduation policies, and equitable representation in highly capable courses.</li> </ul>
Regional Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine data and identify areas of success or continued need as it relates to existing action plans. Local and state stakeholders participate in action plan updates.</li> <li>• Data loops exist between schools and early learning programs; regional entities host data events that encourage the collaborative examination of that data. Data systems and records exchange agreements exist to support migrant students beyond kindergarten.</li> <li>• Districts and early learning partners across a region are working together on school readiness goals/actions for migrant preschoolers.</li> <li>• High quality transition plans are in place across a region that support the unique needs of migrant preschoolers and their families.</li> <li>• Regional entities work with local entities to help in continuing to leverage resources.</li> <li>• PreK to 12 Pathways exist for migrant students that include local to state agreements on partial credits for courses, graduation policies, and equitable representation in highly capable courses.</li> </ul>
State Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine state and regional data and identify areas of success or continued need as it relates to existing action plans. Ensure state action plans are connected and supportive of regional and local action plans.</li> <li>• Support regional and local entities (resources, venues) as they host data events that encourage the collaborative examination of that data. Encourage the use of data systems and records exchange agreements exist to support migrant students beyond kindergarten.</li> <li>• Statewide school readiness goals/action plans exist for migrant preschoolers.</li> <li>• Statewide high quality transition plans are in place that support the unique needs of migrant preschoolers and their families.</li> <li>• State agreements exist regarding PreK-12 pathways that include statewide agreements on partial credits for courses, graduation policies, and equitable representation in highly capable courses.</li> </ul>
National Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine state data and identify areas of success or continued need as it relates to existing action plans.</li> <li>• National groups are highly aware of levels of action that exist from local to state.</li> <li>• Statewide school readiness goals/action plans/transition plans are shared at national events.</li> <li>• Resources continue to be provided to states as states continue work on action plan items.</li> </ul>

# Action Plan Template

If your group has determined that you are at a Level 4 in collaboration practices, next decide whether you are at a “Developing Approaching or Meeting” stage for Level 4. Provide evidence or examples of your current practice and list next steps.

Activity Description: Developing	Activity Description: Approaching	Activity Description: Meeting
<p>Regular examination of data exists with data shared out to community groups, schools and early learning programs.</p>	<p>Regular examination of data occurs that includes data loops between grade levels and programs such as early learning and kindergarten. School readiness goals are being defined that include high quality transition practices. Information is regularly shared out to the community.</p>	<p>Regular examination of data occurs that includes data loops between grade levels and programs such as early learning and kindergarten. Data systems and records exchange agreements exist that support students from preschool through grade 12. School readiness goals are defined that include high quality transition practices. Local to state agreements exist on partial credits, graduation practices, and equitable representation of migrant students in highly capable courses. Information is regularly shared out to the community.</p>
List Evidence and Examples	List Evidence and Examples	List Evidence and Examples
List Next Steps	List Next Steps	List Next Steps

Level 5	Support Early Learning Collaboration Through Integrated Coordination
Collaboration Type:	Example Strategy: Local to national stakeholders work together in an integrated manner to further school readiness outcomes for migrant preschool children. Kindergarten entry data shows progress on existing action plans.
Local Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stakeholders work together in an integrated manner to continue partnerships already in place that support migrant preschool children.</li> <li>• Increased access to high quality early learning programs and family engagement practices are realized for migrant preschool children and their families.</li> <li>• Kindergarten entry data shows improvement on migrant children’s school readiness outcomes.</li> <li>• PreK -12 Pathway data shows more migrant students are graduating on time with more access to programs such as highly capable programs.</li> <li>• All local work is linked to regional, state and national work.</li> </ul>
Regional Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stakeholders work together in an integrated manner to continue partnerships already in place that support migrant preschool children.</li> <li>• Increased access to high quality early learning programs and family engagement practices are realized for migrant preschool children and their families.</li> <li>• Kindergarten entry data shows improvement on migrant children’s school readiness outcomes.</li> <li>• PreK -12 Pathway data shows more migrant students are graduating on time with more access to programs such as highly capable programs.</li> <li>• All regional work is linked to local, state and national work.</li> </ul>
State Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stakeholders work together in an integrated manner to continue partnerships already in place that support migrant preschool children.</li> <li>• Increased access to high quality early learning programs and family engagement practices are realized for migrant preschool children and their families.</li> <li>• Kindergarten entry data shows improvement on migrant children’s school readiness outcomes.</li> <li>• PreK -12 Statewide Pathway data shows more migrant students are graduating on time with more access to programs such as highly capable programs.</li> <li>• All state work is linked to local, regional and national work.</li> </ul>
National Collaborations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stakeholders work together in an integrated manner to continue partnerships already in place that support migrant preschool children.</li> <li>• Increased access to high quality early learning programs and family engagement practices are realized for migrant preschool children and their families.</li> <li>• Kindergarten entry data shows improvement on migrant children’s school readiness outcomes.</li> <li>• National data shows more migrant students are graduating on time with more access to programs such as highly capable programs.</li> <li>• All national work is linked to local, regional and state work.</li> </ul>



# Action Plan Template

If your group has determined that you are at a Level 5 in collaboration practices, next decide whether you are at a “Developing, Approaching or Meeting” stage for Level 5. Provide evidence or examples of your current practice and list next steps.

Activity Description: Developing	Activity Description: Approaching	Activity Description: Meeting
<p>Stakeholders are continuing to work together on action plans and goals.. Data loops and records exchange agreements continue to exists. Work is linked from a local to national level</p>	<p>Stakeholders work together in an integrated manner. Increased access to high quality early learning programs and family engagement practices are realized. Work is linked from a local to national level</p>	<p>Stakeholders work together in an integrated manner. Increased access to high quality early learning programs and family engagement practices are realized. Migrant students are entering kindergarten school ready and increased graduation rates are realized. Work is linked from a local to national level</p>
List Evidence and Examples	List Evidence and Examples	List Evidence and Examples
List Next Steps	List Next Steps	List Next Steps



# Resources to Promote Collaboration Work

London, S. (2016). *Building Collaborative Communities*. Downloadable at <http://www.scottlondon.com/articles/oncollaboration.html>

ACT For Youth Center of Excellence.(2016). *Community Collaboration*. Downloadable at [http://www.actforyouth.net/youth\\_development/communities/collaboration.cfm](http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/communities/collaboration.cfm)

Smock, K. (1999). *Building Effective Partnerships: The Process and Structure of Collaboration*. National Housing Institute. Downloadable at <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/105/smock.html>

# Resources Used to Inform this Document



Getting School Ready Action Team. (2011). *Levels of Participation in Early Learning*. SOAR.

Ferguson, C., Jordan, C., & Baldwin, M. (2010). *Working Systematically in Action: Engaging Family & Community*. Austin, TX: SEDL.

Finch, P., Sullivan-Dudzic, L., & Brophy, M. (2012) Making a Difference: 10 Essential Steps to Building a PreK-3 System Leadership *Rubric*. Yakima, WA.

Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Approaches*. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington.

Public Policy Research Institute. (2008). *Working Across Boundaries: Principles of Regional Collaboration*. University of Montana.

\*Many thanks to the Preschool Initiative Early Learning Coordination and Collaboration work group

# Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the Preschool Initiative Early Learning Coordination and Collaboration Work Group for the creation of this document.

For more information, please contact Preschool Coordinator, Michele Cheney.  
[Michele.Cheney@esmail.org](mailto:Michele.Cheney@esmail.org)

