Strategies for Partnering with Child Welfare Agencies

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Collaboration between child welfare agencies and Head Start/Early Head Start programs can significantly enhance the well-being of children and families they serve. Across the country, these organizations have formed partnerships to promote safety, stability, and overall support for young children and their caregivers. The lessons learned can apply to other systems building collaborations with child welfare. When these collaborations function effectively, all parties benefit—child welfare agencies, early childhood programs, and, most importantly, the families involved. However, building a strong partnership requires dedication, time, and financial and human resources. Successful partnerships are founded on four key elements:

- A shared vision and purpose, backed by strong leadership
- Strategic planning and open, ongoing communication
- Long-term, consistent engagement among local partners
- Training and professional development opportunities for staff working directly with families in both early childhood and child welfare settings

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