

Elgin Partnership for Early Learning Charter

Section I Reason for Undertaking the Collaboration

The city of Elgin, schools, community organizations, faith community and stakeholders are committed to the goal of having all our community's 12,000 children from birth to age five arrive at appropriate learning milestones before entering kindergarten.

Many of the young children in Elgin have not had access to high quality early learning and child development experiences and therefore are unprepared for success in kindergarten.

Previous initiatives in the Elgin community have addressed the wide differences in experiences and skills of young children and the complexity preparing children for kindergarten yet have not involved comprehensive systems changes.

In May 2011, the Elgin Child and Family Resource Center, the YWCA Elgin, United Way of Elgin, U46 Schools, Gail Borden Public Library, YWCA Child Care Resource and Referral Agency and the Grand Victoria Foundation began investigating how to bring together various community stakeholders to develop a coordinated plan for leveraging all the existing efforts and identifying future needs for supporting the development of all children from birth to age 5 in getting them prepared for success in school and in life.

This stakeholder group, the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning, began work to intensify the impact of local efforts that prepare children for kindergarten by integrating the partners' expertise and resources into a unified community plan.

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning adopted an approach called collective impact to leverage commitment to sustainable outcomes on shared goals and activities by a broad, diverse collaboration of partners. The principles of collective impact include: share main ideas and common messages widely to reach all families and community members; agree on and implement outcome measurement related to child and community progress; choose and jointly act upon activities to promote the community goals; communicate frequently; and, provide support to maintain the collaboration approach.

Therefore, the Steering Committee of the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning initiative hereby establishes this Charter detailing the governance structure under which the collaboration will operate.

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning (EPEL) was formed as a collaborative community partnership to ensure the healthy growth and optimal development of young children in the context of their families through local systems development in Elgin; the collaborative work brings together early childhood care and education providers, community based organizations, education, government, health care, social services and the broad array of community stakeholders. The following ideas describe the foundational beliefs which provide a basis for the work of EPEL.

Vision: Engage the whole community in preparing children to succeed in school and in life.

Mission: The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning collaborates with partners to ensure that children are supported in becoming ready for kindergarten.

Purpose:

- Ensure a shared vision for young children in the Elgin community is clearly held, broadly disseminated and acted upon
- Support awareness and access for families to quality child development and early learning experiences
- Coordinate efforts across all birth to five programs to increase impact and efficiency
- Support quality improvement and capacity building of birth to five professionals and organizations
- Respond to Elgin community data about strengths, needs and gaps

Section II Structure

A. EPEL Collaboration: Role

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning Collaboration serves as a broadly representative stakeholder body who acknowledge the community-wide impact of ensuring all children in Elgin are equipped to succeed in school and life and embrace their ability to bring skills and resources to the issues in anticipation of working together. The role of the Collaboration is to inform and advise the priorities of the EPEL annual work plan and longer term strategic plan, advance the impact of EPEL by facilitating connections and supporting the implementation of work, and to spread common messages on positively impacting the health and development of children and families.

EPEL Collaboration: Membership and Responsibilities

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning Collaboration membership includes multiple levels of participation; stakeholders that are Collaboration members fall into several categories:

Tier I – Executive Committee members, Subcommittee members, Parent Council members. Individuals and organizations in Tier I represent those who are critically involved in systems serving young children and their families including schools, hospitals/health care, social services, early learning and child care programs, family support programs, government, faith based community, higher education and issue area funders.

Tier II – Community stakeholders invested in the work of the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning from a less direct perspective. These stakeholders may include elected officials, business leaders, chamber of commerce and community members.

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning is committed to holding a quarterly Collaboration meeting. At the quarterly Collaboration meeting, members will engage in discussion on the progress of EPEL, specific issue areas will be brought to the members for input, and tools for shared activities and participation in EPEL will be advanced.

Responsibilities of Collaboration members include:

- Attending the quarterly meeting;
- Joining Subcommittee(s) as appropriate;
- Being informed on issues specific to the Elgin community and voicing these issues in a constructive manner with the goal of advancing systems change;
- Keeping informed on EPEL communications;
- Offering connections to important resources that may advance the work of EPEL;

- Advancing the value of collaboration work and the importance of focusing on young children with broad stakeholder audiences.

EPEL Collaboration: Decision -making Process

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning Collaboration is an advisory only body, offering expertise, information and strategic guidance that the EPEL Executive Committee, Subcommittees and staff will integrate into the overall direction of the collaboration effort. Collaboration members have an active role in the work of EPEL through volunteering on subcommittees or electing to serve on the Executive Committee.

B. Executive Committee: Role

The EPEL Executive Committee is charged with:

- setting strategic direction for the work by advising on key aspects of the project, providing a community perspective on key considerations, and acting as a sounding board for project deliverables
- tactical and operational oversight of the implementation of work plans covering project goals, alternatives, and strategies and the implementation of benchmarks against which to measure progress
- ensuring the long term success of EPEL

Executive Committee: Membership and Responsibilities

The EPEL Executive Committee will have up to 13 voting members, be reflective of the diversity of the community and collaboration and be comprised of stakeholder groups and systems serving families of young children. Membership will consist of one representative from each of the following organizations or stakeholder entities:

- Gail Borden Public Library
- Grand Victoria Foundation
- Kane County Health Department AOK
- Parent Council Representative
- U-46 School District
- United Way of Elgin
- EPEL Collaboration Director (ex officio)

Two representatives from each of the following systems serving the Elgin community:

Health, Mental Health, Nutrition
 Early Learning and Child Development
 Family Support and Leadership

One at-large seat to be named by the Executive Committee membership

Executive Committee members will serve for renewable, three year terms.

Responsibilities

- Meet at least 6 times per year
- Participate actively in resource development to support the work to achieve the goals of EPEL
- Provide input into the hiring and firing of the EPEL leadership position.

- Maintain an Internal Review Committee for the purpose of offering input and support for supervising and evaluating the performance of the Collaboration Director; this Committee will be made up of three Executive Committee members, including a standing seat for the chief executive of the fiscal agent.
- Approve, monitor and evaluate the annual and long term strategic plans for EPEL
- Approve the establishment of new subcommittees
- Approve the annual budget
- Approve any expenditure exceeding the annual budgeted amount by more than \$1,000
- Approve any grant requests of over \$10,000 per year that are submitted to any unit of government, organization or foundation to support the work of EPEL
- Each member will serve in one subcommittee or liaison role, linking the work of EPEL in the community back to the Executive Committee

Executive Committee: Decision-making process

The Executive Committee is primarily advisory. In those areas where it has decision-making authority, members will strive to reach agreement by consensus. Through consensus, we are not only working to achieve better solutions, but also to promote the growth of community and trust.

Any act ratified by a consensus of the Executive Committee shall be the act of the Collaboration. At a point where consensus cannot be reached, the Executive Committee will call for a vote, according to steps outlined in the Operating Procedures.

Executive Committee members commit to education and training on the role of consensus decision making, as well as sharing this decision making model through leadership development activities with the Parent Council, Subcommittees and the Collaboration members at large. Additional information on consensus decision making is available at <http://www.consensusdecisionmaking.org/>

C. Parent Council: Role, Responsibilities, Membership and Decision-making

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning is committed to ensuring an authentic parent and family voice in the work of collaborative systems change to improve outcomes for all young children in Elgin. To that end EPEL is striving to build and implement a Parent Council structure that will embody the following purpose:

- Serve as a referent and constituency group for EPEL, giving the Collaboration a means to better understand the desires and needs of all parents and families in the Elgin community;
- Assist in building public support and will for early childhood investment through advocacy and education activities at the local and state level;
- Support and engage in the work of EPEL;
- Strengthen the civic engagement of parents in the community, on behalf of young children;
- Educate policy-makers on the importance of investing in the first five years of life and the essential role that parents and families play in the lives of young children.

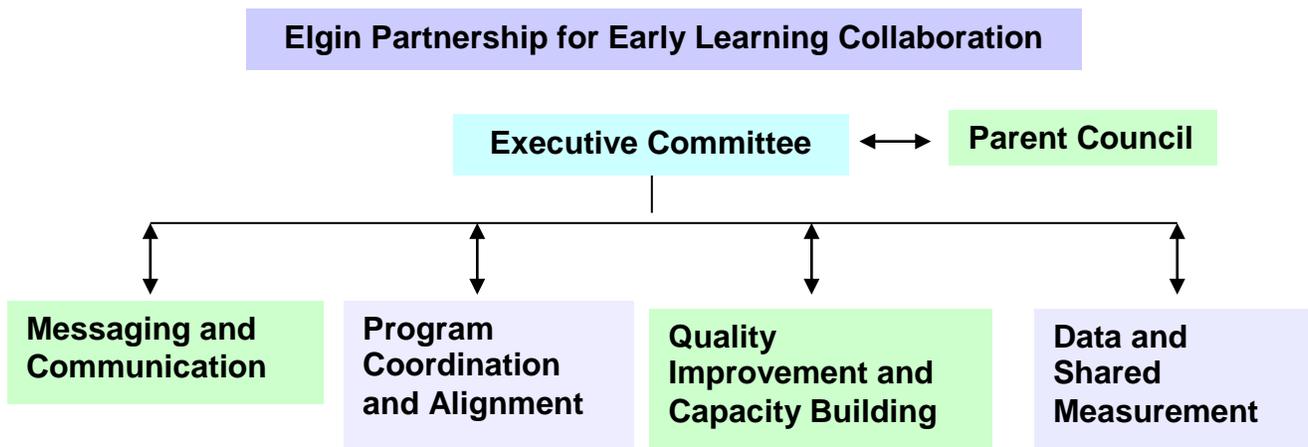
D. Subcommittees: Role, Responsibilities, Membership, and Decision-making

A subcommittee structure maximizes participation in the collaboration work of EPEL. Subcommittees of 6-10 will implement the strategies and work of the goals and purpose of EPEL. The subcommittees should reflect the full range of early childhood care and education providers, community based organizations, government, and the broad array of community stakeholders.

The formation of each subcommittee will include a clear charge for the work. Subcommittees are charged with guiding the implementation of strategic and operational priorities of the collaboration. The charge will be translated into a work plan for the subcommittee including the expected outcomes, activities, timeline, persons responsible, measurement plan and reporting intention. The members of the subcommittee are responsible for the deliverables laid out in the work plan.

Subcommittees will have at least one Executive Committee member and one Parent Council member in their membership and will report to the Executive Committee at least quarterly. Subcommittee reports may include recommendations to the Executive Committee and requests for approval by the Executive Committee.

The structure of the relationship between the Collaboration, the Executive Committee, the Parent Council and the standing Subcommittees:



Section III Operating Guidelines

The operations of the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning are further delineated in the Operating Procedures document, a companion to this Charter.

Section IV Administering Organization

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning requests that the United Way of Elgin act as the fiscal agent for the collaboration.

Personnel

All employees of the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning will be employees of the fiscal agent, accountable to and subject to the Human Resources Policies and Procedures of the organization.

The Collaboration Director of the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning will report to the chief executive of the fiscal agent and be responsible to the Executive Committee. An Internal Review Committee of EPEL will be created, made up of three members from Executive Committee, including a standing seat for the chief executive at the fiscal agent. The Internal Review Committee is charged with supporting the fiscal agent in supervising and monitoring the Collaboration Director on behalf of EPEL.

Financial

Elgin Partnership for Early Learning will maintain appropriate financial controls and ensure that funds are expended in a manner consistent with the annual budget and with the budgets or funding restrictions of the fiscal agent.

The Executive Committee of Elgin Partnership for Early Learning is committed to, and responsible for, sustaining the collaboration through resource development.

This Charter remains in effect until June 30, 2015, at which time the Executive Committee will review the Charter. The Charter will be reviewed annually in June from that point forward.

The Charter of the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning will undergo annual review each June by the Executive Committee. The Charter remains in effect as long as it serves the needs of the collaboration and appropriate revisions can be made to support the functioning of the Charter.