

# National Network for Collaboration

## Collaboration in Context

[Main Menu](#)

This CD-ROM training package builds on the belief that effective collaboration is only the *process* to help people and organizations bolster communities to strengthen children, youth, and families. Once it is clear “what” conditions are needed, collaboration can address “how” innovative actions can be mobilized. The Standards of Practice is a concrete resource that offers the best opportunity for the user to “tailor” solutions and strategies to individual community issues as they pertain to children, youth and families.

The focus of a collaboration forms its backdrop or context. For example, collaborations that form on behalf of children, youth, and families are not the same as collaborations that form around other issues like land use. A collaboration is a social group that, similar to other formal systems, can be characterized as being a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. It is also a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem [or issue] can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible. Thus, collaborations can and often form between various organizations for many different reasons. Collaboration offers communities an opportunity to bring together partners from diverse settings (e.g., businesses, schools, government, and social service agencies) to address a specific issue or concern from multiple contexts, providing a comprehensive problem solving approach.

Each community has its own unique culture and within that, several subcultures, each with their own patterns of process and communication. The Standards of Practice serves as a guide for decision makers around issues facing children, youth, families, and communities. It is based on respecting and valuing the community culture, the commitment people have in the quality of life for individuals, their families, and groups working together. For example, communities that form a collaboration to transform their community into one that fosters positive youth development faces many issues such as availability of quality education for all children and youth, quality childcare and youth programs, and adequate housing and employment. Creating programs that focus on the practices set forth in the Standards of Practice will assist collaborations in meeting the needs of children, youth, and families. This CD-ROM offers communities both a process, the development of collaborative efforts, and essential information on best practices relating to children, youth, and families.

[Main Menu](#)