


Cross-Sector Support for Families


Lessons from Within Our Reach


Interagency Collaboration Strengthens Families


Shifting child welfare frameworks away from a reactive, punitive approach toward a preventive, public health approach requires engaging the entire ecosystem of child and family services. By employing a cross-sector strategy that centers the voices of parents and families, we can respond to community priorities and invest in upstream supports that reduce child maltreatment and strengthen families.


Healthy Child and Family Ecosystems Include


- **Parents and Families**


Parents are vital partners in co-designing long-term solutions. Child welfare systems have traditionally cast parents in antagonistic roles. We must acknowledge and address the barriers of this harmful history to instead empower parents as leaders of reform.
- **Community Agencies**

Community agencies increase the capacity of communities to provide needed resources, reduce isolation, and strengthen parental resilience. Because families are often afraid of coming to the attention of CPS, community agencies must build trust and offer concrete supports without the threat of punitive action.
- **Law Enforcement**

To minimize punitive, reactive responses and facilitate access to community supports, law enforcement is a key partner in shifting child safety incidents from a “crime lens” to a public health lens.
- **Policy Makers & Advocates**

By shifting funding and focus toward upstream supports, policymakers and advocacy groups can develop a policy framework that targets preventative factors to reduce child maltreatment.
- **Media**

Media has a role to play in shifting the public narrative on child and family well-being away from reactive coverage to focus instead on protective factors through solutions-oriented storytelling
- **Practitioners**

All professionals, from educators to doctors to direct care workers, that support children and families should be trained in preventative factors, providing children and families access to resources while working to prevent unnecessary CPS involvement.
- **Child Protective Services**

Child Protective Services should be positioned as one component of a larger system of shared responsibility for keeping children and families safe. The primary goal should be to strengthen family supports early on, ensuring CPS resources are reserved for situations requiring formal intervention.

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Consider...

Community Agencies

Law Enforcement

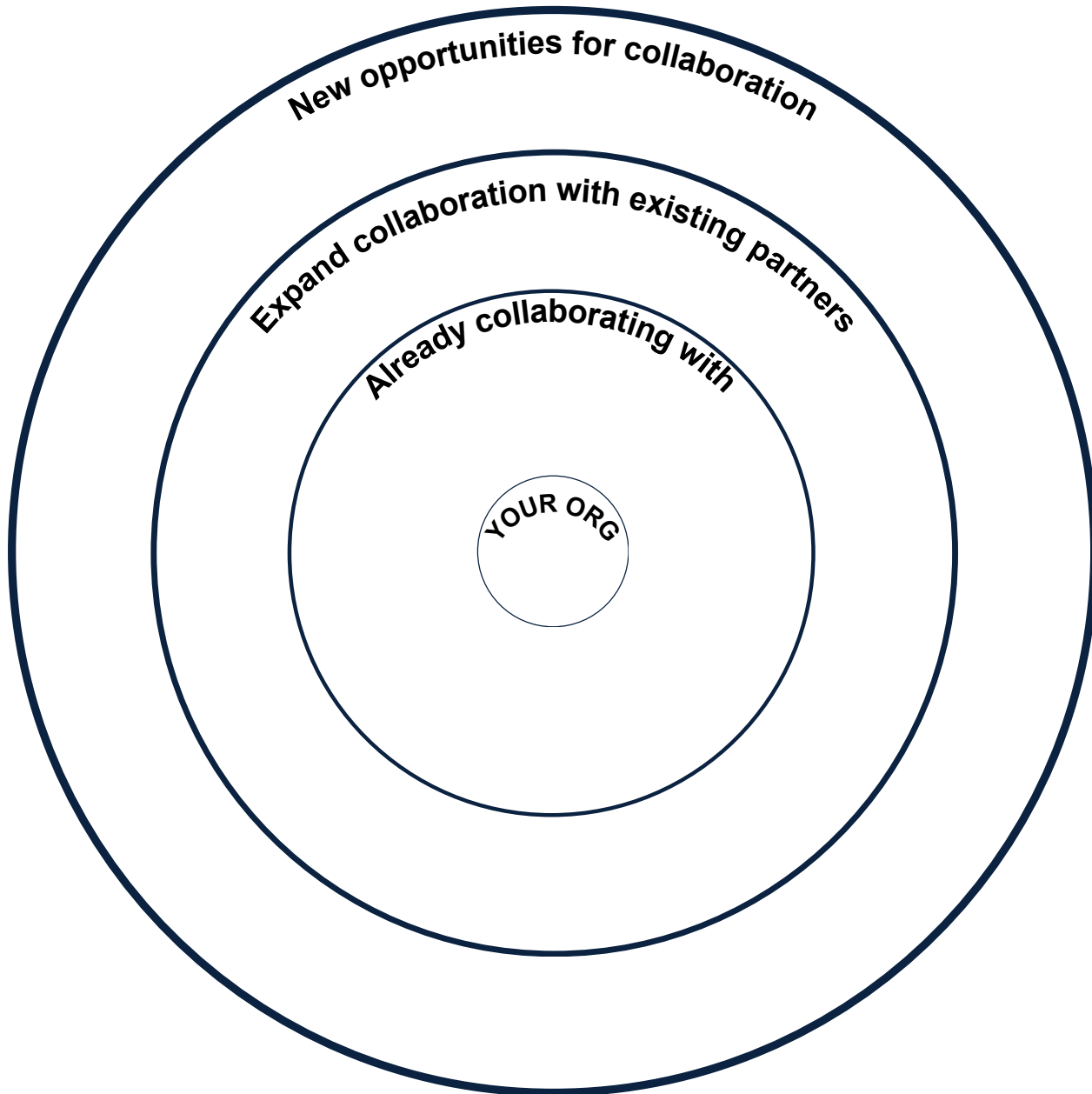
Schools & Educators

CPS

Media

Policymakers & Advocacy Groups

Who else?



Collaboration Mapping

Reflect on your current partnerships. On the diagram, record:

- Who are you already collaborating with?
- What opportunities do you see for expanded collaboration or new partnerships?
- How would this align with your mission and impact your services?
- Are there any major sectors that you aren't partnering with? If so, why?
- What is one step you will take today to expand your cross-sector collaboration?