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Strengthening social and
emotional health

***Alignment, Access, and
Articulation:***

***Using Participatory Action
Research to coordinate
professional development
delivery systems***

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Introduction

Early Education Professional Development (EEPD) in Rochester, New York

- Received an ECEPD grant from the US Department of Education, 2004-2007
- Collaboration among committed agencies
- Built an infrastructure

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Participatory Action Research (PAR)

- **Stakeholders have a real-world problem to solve**
- **Cyclical process of reflection, planning, action, and observation**
- **Permits mid-course correction**
- **Collaboration is key**

Kemmis S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The action research planner* (3rd ed.). Geelong, Australia: Deakin University.

Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2001). *Handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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Social capital

- **Bonding social capital:** connections among groups with similar values, styles, social/cultural contexts, missions, and goals
- **Bridging social capital:** connections among groups with different values, styles, social/cultural contexts, missions, or goals

Putnam, R.D., & Feldstein, L.M. (2003). *Better together: Restoring the American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Straus, D. (2002). *How to make collaboration work: Powerful ways to build consensus, solve problems, and make decisions*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

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Early childhood community builds on its assets

- **Early Childhood Development Initiative—** collaborative of 20-25 early childhood organizations and networks
- **Social capital—**common values, styles of interacting, missions and goals
- **History of community-based planning and assessment**

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Community uses PAR to achieve its goals

- **Reflection:** Identify concerns, define a goal
- **Planning:** Identify steps to achieve goal
- **Action:** Implement plan
- **Observation:** Analyze data, evaluate outcomes

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Reflection: Stakeholders identify issues at community conference

- **What are the gaps in professional development? What's missing?**
- **What barriers stand in the way of an integrated system of professional development?**
- **What would you do to improve the professional development system if you had the financial resources?**

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Planning: Participants identify priorities. EEPD proposal and community goals are aligned.

Goal #1. Access
 Early Childhood practitioners have access to information on professional development

Goal #2. Articulation
 Create an integrated system of professional development from entry level to B.A. degree

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Action: Community defines steps to achieve its goals. Implementation takes place through EEPD grant.

Goal #1. Access

- Create Early Educators Professional Development Institute (EEPDI)
- Create EEPDI website listing current professional development opportunities
- Create 1-credit community college course: "Seminar in Professional Development"

Goal #2. Articulation

- Create an integrated system of professional development from entry level to B.A. degree
- Mentor entry-level practitioners
- Develop coursework leading to NYS Infant/Toddler credential
- Create AA degree in early childhood
- Create articulation agreements between 2-year and 4-year colleges

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Goal #1. Access

- **Observation: Analyze data, evaluate outcomes**
 - At the end of six months only 15 people had accessed website for PD information.
 - Most practitioners attend in-service training at their own child care centers
 - Most practitioners are not aware of EEPDI website
 - Enrollment in "Seminar in Professional Development" is growing
 - Year 1: 14 participants
 - Year 2: 53 participants
 - Year 3: 118 participants

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Goal #1. Access

- **Reflection: Identify concerns, define new goals**
 - Need for personalized PD plans
 - Need for information directly at the centers
- **Action: Implement new plan**
 - Publicize "Seminar in Professional Development"
 - Discontinue PD updates on website
 - Redefine role of EEPDI
 - Updated course list distributed to urban not-for-profit child care centers
 - Career planning support for Head Start staff

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Goal #2. Articulation

- **Observation: Analyze historical data, evaluate outcomes**
 - Colleges and the early childhood community both support professional development
 - Community college offers minimal coursework on early childhood, despite appeals from early childhood community
 - Colleges and the early childhood community have different styles of interacting, culture, context and expectations of learners

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Goal #2. Articulation

- **Reflection: Identify concerns, define new goals**
 - Early childhood community must create bridging social capital
- **Action: Implement new plan**
 - Create Higher Education Committee with representation from 9 area college
 - Convene Early Childhood representatives and college faculty
 - Follow lead of community college faculty liaison

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Goal #2. Articulation
 Outcomes: New courses aligned with research and standards

- **Early Literacy Series**
- **Infant-Toddler Development Credential**
 - Developmental Practices
 - Observing and Assessing Young Children
 - Understanding Differences Among Families and Cultures
- **Program for Infant-Toddler Caregivers (PITC)**
- **Working with Behaviorally Challenging Children**

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Goal #2. Articulation
 Outcomes: Integrated system of professional development

- **Community college offers an AA degree in liberal arts with concentration in Early Childhood**
- **Community college offers college credits for active CDA credential**
 - 8 credits for active CDA if learner takes college's 2-credit class in early childhood issues and matriculates
- **Higher Ed committee meets three times a year to discuss current issues**
 - Certification standards for teachers working with children birth-2nd grade
 - Alignment of course work with NAEYC, US Department of Education, NY State regulatory standards and "Core Body of Knowledge"

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Take home lessons

- **Change is a cyclical process**
 - Make use of data and research
 - Reflect on concerns and make mid-course corrections
- **Collaboration is critical**
 - Build on bonding social capital
 - Increase bridging social capital
- **When devoted individuals pool their resources and come together for the common good, their impact can be enormous**

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