



Partnerships and Collaboration

Successful Project LAUNCH leaders at all levels expand their organization's capacity to promote young child wellness by creating partnerships with other organizations.



Forming Partnerships in Project LAUNCH

By tapping the strengths and resources of others who share their child wellness goals, **Project LAUNCH leaders can create new or expanded services, eliminate unnecessary duplication, provide increased access to data, and build the skills of all partners.**

While partnerships can range in strength from simple cooperative arrangements—such as agreeing to publicize each other's activities—to full-blown collaborations that involve joint funding of an evidence-based service, all are based on respect, trust, and a shared vision.

The Project LAUNCH team at SAMHSA has led the way for this work by collaborating with a broad variety of partners at the federal level. In fact, the Project LAUNCH concept grew out of a cross-agency committee that included the [Health Resources Services Administration \(HRSA\)](#), the [Administration for Children and Families \(ACF\)](#), and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). This committee continues to provide ongoing guidance to Project LAUNCH.

In addition, Project LAUNCH staff members continually work to expand both Federal and private partnerships with organizations and agencies that share the project's mission of promoting the well-being of young children and their families. For example, they look to develop and expand partnerships with the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) and the U.S. Departments of [Education](#), [Housing and Urban Development](#), [Justice](#), and [Labor](#). Private partners include the [National Center for Children in Poverty](#), the [Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs](#), and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).

Project LAUNCH councils, experts, and coordinators follow SAMHSA's lead in utilizing many of the steps typically used in other non-profit and government partnership-building activities. For example, they:

- **Identify potential partners.** Two of Project LAUNCH's requirements position grantees for partnership activities. First, all programs must establish child wellness councils made up of members of the early childhood community who value supporting child wellness efforts. Second, conducting the environmental scan of related programs and services allows Project LAUNCH programs to identify potential new partners with similar missions and values.

- **Clearly define and articulate their message.** Project LAUNCH's increasing visibility draws interest in partnership opportunities from representatives of the early childhood community. To capitalize on this interest, many Project LAUNCH leaders conduct presentations and informational sessions at state, tribal, or community meetings or conferences. By sharing their mission and strategic goals, LAUNCH leaders help potential partners determine if collaboration with Project LAUNCH offers a strategic advantage for their organizations. [Project LAUNCH marketing materials](#) can help with these efforts.
- **Identify the costs and benefits of the partnership.** While Project LAUNCH leaders enter into partnerships to enhance or expand the services they provide, most benefits come with associated costs in the form of contractual payments, staff time, and agreements to share space or materials. For example, local Project LAUNCH programs may contract with community agencies to conduct a parent training program, sharing costs for services and supports during the grant period. This sharing provides local programs with the joint benefit of expanding services in the short run and exploring arrangements that might be sustainable beyond the end of the grant.
- **Assist their own organization in modifying operations to accommodate the partnership.** In the process of negotiating partnership arrangements, councils, experts, or coordinators often agree to make adjustments in their own organization's operations. For example, local programs may agree to adopt the same developmental assessment or parent training programs used by partnering agencies in order to expand the reach of best practices in the community. State council and experts may agree to develop a common consent form. Even if the Project LAUNCH negotiator has the authority to agree to the change, he or she often must demonstrate the benefits of the agreement to their own council members to allow the partnership to move forward.