



Connection Through Communication
December 12, 2023, 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Delta Dental Offices, Concord, NH

Meeting Summary

In partnership with local early childhood coalitions, the Early Childhood Regional Leads hosted early care and education collaborators to join the third NH Alliance of Early Childhood Coalitions. The goal was to learn from one another, build connections, and identify opportunities for alignment. Over 65 people attended the event from across the state representing many sectors of the early care and education system.

Welcome, Foundation Building

Keliane Totten, with Pear Associates, facilitated the convening and welcomed the group. She reviewed the agenda and reinforced that the day would be focused on conversations to build connections and promote learning. Group norms for the day were reviewed and participants committed to the agreements.

As a means of establishing a foundation of understanding across all participants, Sarah Fox, the Program Manager of NH Alliance of Early Childhood Coalitions, offered opening remarks. Sarah shared the Alliance vision:

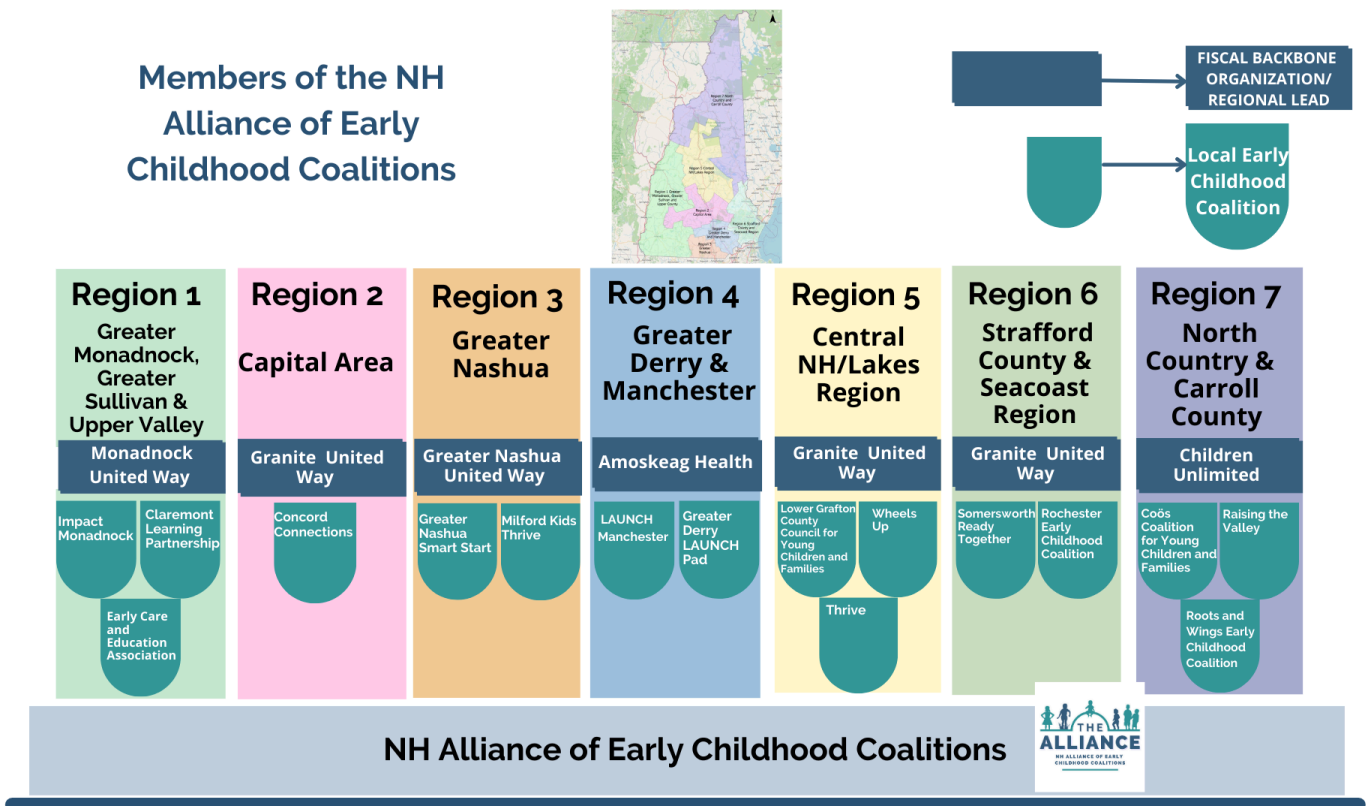
The vision: All families and children have the opportunity to shape and have access to comprehensive and responsive supports and educational opportunities so they are healthy, learning and thriving, now and in the future.

The Alliance fosters collaboration and connection by providing opportunities for members to share and access expertise and best practices with each other and their communities.

Next, a snapshot of the Alliance efforts since the organization was chartered in 2020 were shared. Some of the efforts shared were relationship building activities, hosting early childhood convenings, conducting opportunities for shared learning that focuses on family and partner engagement, creation of a website and Alliance branded communications, submitted a Project LAUNCH grant application, and embarked upon a strategic planning process.

To provide a basis for understanding of the NH Early Childhood Regions, Sarah shared a color coded map outlining the Regions. In addition the Early Childhood Coalitions were reviewed and an infographic outlining the fiscal backbone organizations, regional leads, and local early childhood coalitions broken down by Region.

Members of the NH Alliance of Early Childhood Coalitions



Lastly, Sarah outlined the priority areas identified in the NH Alliance of Early Childhood Coalitions Strategic Plan for 2024 - 2027. The priority areas are as follows:

- Strategic Priority Area #1: Communicating the Importance of Early Childhood
- Strategic Priority Area #2: Using Data for Collective Action
- Strategic Priority Area #3: Funding the Early Childhood System
- Strategic Priority Area #4: Supporting Best Practices

Building Connections - Energizer Activity

Participants were led through a hands-on energizer activity. The facilitator took the group through a step by step process beginning with a paper plate and pen placed on top of their heads and followed with step by step drawing instructions. Laughter filled the room while participants completed a drawing of a snowman scene.

The activity allowed participants to share their artwork with one another and discuss the challenges, the impact of the communication given and communication received, and what would have been helpful. The activity was a segway to a day focused on the impact of effective communication and the exchange of ideas.

Have You Heard?


Shannon Desilets, Program Director for Choose Love New Hampshire, provided an overview of New Hampshire's Strategic Plan for Early Childhood. She provided an overview of the initiative and the full side deck is available: <https://www.nhaecc.org/convening-materials.html>

Next, Hannah Maynard-Yung, Program Specialist, Early Childhood Mental Health & Fast Forward, Bureau of Children's Behavioral Health, and Bethany Warnock, Early Childhood Wraparound Coordinator, NFI North presented information and resources about the Early Childhood Wraparound program. The full slide deck is available: <https://www.nhaecc.org/convening-materials.html>

Following each presentation participants responded to questions from the group.

Panel Discussion

The Alliance was thrilled to offer a four person panel composed of talented individuals who shared their communications expertise and experience with the group. Panel members were Erin Cayer, SAU 8, Nathan Fink, NH Children's Trust, Cora Hoppe, Rochester Child Care Center, Nisa Simila, The River Center.

- Erin Cayer, SAU 8
 - Highlights of SAU 8 Family Communication Efforts
- Nathan Fink, NH Children's Trust
 - New Hampshire Family NOW, A Podcast of NH Children's Trust
- Cora Hoppe, Rochester Child Care Center
 - Personal and Professional Advocacy and Voice
- Nisa Simila, The River Center
 - Social Media
 - Access slides 24-34 of the convening slide deck:  Slide Deck for December 2023.pptx

How Do You Communicate?

Following lunch and networking, participants launched into an afternoon discussion about modes and preferences for organizational and professional communications. Participants were given the option to participate in a quick poll to learn a bit more about communications preferences. The poll results demonstrated that 80% of poll participants rated email as the preferred communication vehicle for receiving early childhood professional development opportunities. The next question asked participants to rate their top three most effective communication tools for promoting services. The top three were social media, newsletters, and websites. The category 'other' was close behind and when participants described what 'other' was, it was clear that in person and word of mouth communication were also front runners.

To further delve into the topic, tables were asked to brainstorm and discuss the following questions:

1. What is the most effective way to communicate with the parents, families, and guardians you work with?
2. What have you found to be an effective way to communicate with parents, families, and guardians who are not yet engaged?
3. What is the most effective method to communicate with partner organizations and referral sources?
4. What information do you need that you are not getting currently?
5. If time allows, please share your preferred sources of information that you read/use often.

Summary of Table Discussion Themes:

What is the most effective way to communicate with the parents, families, and guardians you work with?

- Social media platforms, FaceBook interest groups
- Face to face and in-person communication
- Websites
- Email
- Texting
- Flyers in childcare centers

What have you found to be an effective way to communicate with parents, families, and guardians who are not yet engaged?

- Attending events where the target audience is, going to places where you can meet with families directly
- Build relationships with cultural brokers/ambassadors
- Word of mouth
- Social media platforms
- Email
- Texting
- Websites
- Businesses
- Hospitals and pediatricians
- Community and school events
- Human resource department

What is the most effective method to communicate with partner organizations and referral sources?

- In person networking
- Events, council meetings, networking meetings
- Build relationships with organizations and establish meetings with a clear objective and purpose
- Referral systems (for example, Unite Us)
- Emails, texting, websites
- Host community events to build awareness

What information do you need that you are not getting currently?

- Parent feedback
- How/when/where to share information and events to make it relevant and enough time to plan but not enough time to forget
- Don't know what we don't know:
 - Local vs. Regional vs. Statewide Resources
 - Data Around Dev. Screening
 - Feedback on data reports
- Increased transparency from other regions/State/Federal
- One engaging and reliable place with resources online for families with young children and those working with families and young children

- Program requirements/eligibility information around homelessness
- How to share information within partner organization about programming
- What families currently need
 - in a post-Covid climate
 - So much stress!!!
 - How do we alleviate it?

If time allows, please share your preferred sources of information that you read/use often.


- Browser/Google
- Professional connections
- Family Resource Centers
- The Guard
- Child and Youth Coordination
- Local newspaper
- New England Rural Health Association
- Knowing Where to Go
- New Futures for Legislation
- Social media platforms
- AAP for Children with Special Healthcare Needs
- Alliance for Success
- The Alliance Newsletter
- Podcasts
- ListServes
- Child Care Aware
- Child Care Advisory Council
- NH Connections
- Harvard Center for Developing Child
- NH Connections
- 211
- Monthly local partners meetings
- Early Learning NH
- United Way Organizations
- Multimodal - 3+Hits=Action
- Emails


This brief environmental scan from participants will help inform the Alliance's communication work and in its strategic plan implementation. Additionally, the Alliance will incorporate the listed organizations on its "Alliance Resources" webpage.

Highlights from NH Communication Campaigns


To wrap up the day, Sarah highlighted communication campaigns from NH. The examples demonstrated how video can be an effective tool for sharing information for your organization, for early childhood, as well as

parent and family messaging. Additionally some of the campaigns can be used and shared via participant websites and social media to enhance outreach.

 NH Birth to 3 Video

 New Hampshire Statewide Reading Campaign

[Connection - NH Children's Trust and Family Support NH](#)

 Coos Coalition short film

Acknowledgments:

Thank you to the Planning Committee for making the day possible!

Planning Committee Members:

Sarah Fox, Liz Scruton, Kevin Murphy