

Promoting Developmental Screening in Yakima County, Washington: A Case Study of Cross-Sector Collaboration

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Objective: Developmental screening of infants and young children increases early identification of developmental delay and disability and creates an opportunity to connect families with other community resources. Ensuring screening for all children requires collaboration across the medical, educational, childcare, and family resource sectors. This study examines the approach and activities of a collaborative community work group in Yakima County, Wash.

Methods: Since 2010, the Yakima County Developmental Screening Work Group has convened to formulate a countywide plan for universal developmental screening. The work of this group was examined through key informant interviews, review of meeting minutes and grant-related documents, and direct observation. The effectiveness of their approach was evaluated using the framework of Collective Impact, a model for cross-sector collaboration.

Results: Identified strengths included community engagement, utilization of community champions, minimal competitiveness, common motivation, and continuous communication. Recognition of the need for backbone support and clear outcome measures was addressed by hiring an individual to provide over-arching support for the

group's activities. Remaining challenges include integrating each sector's efforts into a unified plan, developing common metrics for partner accountability, and planning for sustainability.

Conclusions: Cross-sector collaborations are well-suited to address complex social issues, such as early intervention, but face pragmatic and ideological challenges that isolated interventions do not. Monthly meetings were integral to building relationships between the medical and childcare sectors, improving cross-sector communication, and minimizing competitive attitudes. Steps to augment backbone support, sustainability, and measurement will promote and document the group's success, as well as better inform similar collaborations in neighboring counties and at the state level.

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