Rationale for Collaborative Efforts

Melaville and Blank in the 1991 publication of *What It Takes: Structuring Interagency Partnerships to Connect Children and Families with Comprehensive Services* assert that high quality, comprehensive services should focus on interagency partnerships. The authors suggest that interagency partnerships offer opportunities to bring together professional expertise and agency services on behalf of children and their families. In addition, agencies can combine their financial resources to support interagency initiatives. Interagency initiatives can create structures and mechanisms to coordinate already existing services and funding sources, thus creating more effective prevention, treatment and support services for families.

The Wisconsin Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) also recognizes the importance of local coordination and collaboration. The ICC position paper on interagency collaboration identifies basic principles of effective local collaborative techniques [http://www.b3icc.state.wi.us/GuidPrinc.pdf](http://www.b3icc.state.wi.us/GuidPrinc.pdf). These principles stress the need to recognize and build on services already in place in community agencies. The need to involve community providers and families and interagency groups as part of the planning process is considered to be essential for broad based community collaboration efforts. The purpose of the Wisconsin Interagency Coordinating Council, which consists of professionals and parents appointed by the governor, is to advise and assist the lead agency, the Department of Health and Family Services, in developing Birth to Three programs.

The CDD Project fosters collaborative efforts among all agencies that serve young children and their families. Among the agencies involved in this project are: county Birth to Three services, Head Start, child care, public health, and public and private schools. Melaville and Blank (1991) suggest that "...collaborative efforts must result in direct benefits to children and families; express human benefits in terms of dollars saved and costs avoided; and design strategies to share evidence of this success with a wide audience." It is hoped that the CESA 10 Child Development Project reflects the benefits of a truly collaborative project.