

Comox Valley

Early Years Collaborative

Communications Framework



We acknowledge the K'òmoks First Nation and thank them for welcoming us to live, work and learn within their ancestral lands.

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Our Collaborative

Since 2015, the Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative (Collaborative) has actively contributed to local communities as a network of individuals and organizations committed to improving the lives of children and families across the Comox Valley.

The Comox Valley lies on the traditional territory of the K'òmoks First Nation including their present reserve land and includes three municipalities of Courtenay, Comox, and Cumberland surrounded by several rural centres of Black Creek, Royston, Miracle Beach, Union Bay, Denman and Hornby Islands.

Historically, the Collaborative was built on the collective work of the Early Years Inter-Agency committee, the Parenting Committee, the Father Involvement Network, the Perinatal Advisory committee, the School District No. 71 Early Learning Committee and the Family Literacy Outreach committee. The Collaborative now works in close partnership with the Council for Indigenous Early Child Development and the Comox Valley Community Health Network.

Membership in the Collaborative is open to anyone interested in our work.

Our Purpose

The Collaborative collectively engages, educates and informs our communities to enhance early years supports and services for children (conception to age 8), their families and the Comox Valley.

Our Vision

The Collaborative shares a vision where all children and families are supported and thrive in the Comox Valley.

Purpose of Communication Strategy

Good communication will strengthen our relationships with people and help us achieve our outcomes. The purpose of this framework is to provide guidance for effective communication with Collaborative members and the public to:

1. Form a **strong and unified voice** for the Collaborative in our community
2. Create a **shared identity** that recognizes the various supportive and complementary roles Collaborative members play
3. Address the **needs of children** (conception – age 8) in our community
4. Form a stronger collective voice in attracting **funding** to our community for healthy early childhood development
5. Strengthen **community relationships** to build trust among the Collaborative
6. Achieve excellence in **communication** and **build awareness** of the Collaborative

Who We Talk To

Participants in the Collaborative are individuals and organizations that are committed to improving the life chances for the children of the Comox Valley. Participation in the Collaborative is open to anyone interested in our work.

Some examples of people and organizations in the community that we communicate to are:

- People who live and/or work in the Comox Valley
- Networks & Coalitions
- First Nations Health Authority
- K'òmoks First Nation
- Other First Nations organizations
- Multi-cultural groups
- Representatives of Early Years groups
- Health & Human Service agencies & professionals
- Non-profit organizations & service groups
- CV Division of Family Practice
- Local Government (CVRD & Municipalities)
- School District 71
- Government Ministries
- North Island College
- Economic Development, business groups & owners
- Spiritual Groups
- 19 Wing Comox Canadian Forces Base

How We Communicate

When communicating we will:

- use clear and plain language
- avoid violent language
- be transparent and share relevant and meaningful data and strategies
- be inclusive by ensuring that all of our communications are accessible, appropriate, respectful, and accommodating of all diverse abilities
- listen
- be responsive in following up on inquiries and concerns

Messaging

When Collaborative participants communicate, we will use our accompanying Key Messages document.

1. In our messaging we will consistently:
 - discuss the role and importance of early childhood development
 - discuss the role and importance of reducing childhood vulnerability
 - discuss the role and importance of families and caregivers
 - refer to emerging research
 - emphasize collaboration & community engagement
 - explain the Collaborative's values & initiatives
 - promote our partnerships & supporters
 - explain how investment in the early years promotes healthy communities
 - focus on diversity & inclusion
 - focus on accessibility & universal design
 - address how stigma & discrimination can be barriers to early childhood well-being
2. In all our messaging we will use plain language. Plain language is communication our audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. ([Plain Language Guidelines from the BC Government](#))
3. We encourage our community partners and Collaborative participants to use plain language, as described above, when communicating with each other as a way to fully embrace inclusionary practices.
4. All Collaborative participants identify themselves as part of the Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative.

What We Communicate About

In talking with each other, we focus on:

- announcing Collaborative sponsored activities
- sharing announcements of Collaborative connected activities
- creating message content useful for Collaborative participants to share with the community
- sharing Collaborative and partner success stories
- topics related to the Collaborative initiatives, e.g. Connections Project; Childcare Action Plan; Valley Families
- topics that address local research for early years

Where We Communicate With Each Other

Talking with each other face-to-face is viewed as the most powerful and essential way to communicate. However, face-to-face communication is not always possible, so we will also use online communication tools.

Face-to-face

- Collaborative Meetings
- Working Group Meetings
- Training/Learning Events
- Public Events
- Partner Meetings
- Presentations

E-mail

- Research Papers
- Invites to Public Events
- Collaborative Announcements (meeting agendas & minutes)

Social media

- Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community-Organization/Comox-Valley-Early-Years-Collaborative-108800223992465/>)
- Valley Child Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/valleychild.ca/>)

Website

- Collaborative Website (<https://www.cveyc.ca/>)
- Valley Child Website (<http://valleychild.ca/>): online resource for parents and service providers in the early years

Print resources

- Posters/Pamphlets
- Press Release/Newspaper Articles

Why We Communicate

Our communication objectives outline the various ways we want to engage and work with people in the community. They are based on a spectrum of engagement that was developed by the International Association of Public Participation¹. Collaborative participants will engage with the Collaborative in different ways. Sometimes they will actively participate in the work we do, other times they may just be informed about what we are doing. Their level of engagement may change over time.

Each of the objectives listed below is tied to a measurable outcome we will use to make sure our communication strategy is working.

The term “participant” references any group or individual involved with the Collaborative.

1. Inform

Inform means to provide balanced and objective information. Participants will be informed about Collaborative meetings, special events, news stories, new research, and success stories using email.

2. Consult

Consult means to obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives or decisions. Participants have an opportunity to be consulted on policy or planning.

3. Involve

Involve means to work directly with participants throughout the process to ensure concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. Participants have an opportunity to be involved with a Collaborative initiative or special event at least once a year throughout its process via a committee or working group, and/or through direct participation in a workshop or an event.

4. Collaborate

Collaborate means to partner in each aspect of decision-making, including development of alternatives and identification of preferred solutions. Participants have an opportunity to collaborate face-to-face in committees and working groups at least once per quarter on a variety of our Collaborative initiatives.

5. Empower

Empower means to place decision-making in hands of the Collaborative. Participants are actively engaged at least bi-monthly in decision-making on Collaborative initiatives.

1. These levels of engagement come from the spectrum of engagement adapted from the International Association for Public Participation’s “Spectrum of Public Participation,” which can be accessed on their website at <http://iap2canada.ca/page-1020549>.

Implementation Plan

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Measurement Frequency
Inform	Via email, Facebook, website, meetings	Collaborative Leadership Team (LT) and Coordinator	At least bi-monthly
	Strategic Planning Event	Collaborative LT and Coordinator	Every 3 years
Consult	Bi-monthly meetings on relevant Collaborative initiatives	Collaborative LT and Coordinator	Bi-monthly
	Include space for consultation with participants/community (e.g., Children’s Charter, Professional Development, Connections Project Steering Committee)	Collaborative LT and Coordinator, Working groups/subcommittees	As needed
Involve	Issue open invitation to all participants/the community for special projects/events (e.g., Resource Fair, Valley Families, Connections Project)	Collaborative Coordinator, working groups/subcommittees	Annually & as needed
Collaborate	Recruit people for working groups, committees, and initiatives from participants/the community	Collaborative participants form working groups/subcommittees	As needed
	Combined partner meetings/initiatives (e.g., Valley Families, Kindergarten Transition)	Partner leads (e.g., SD71, ECE Community, NIC) and Collaborative Coordinator	Annually
Empower	Recruit additional Collaborative participants as needed to ensure diversity and inclusion	Collaborative participants	Annually & as needed
	Collaborative meetings and working group/subcommittee agendas include substantive decision making & Collaborative action	Collaborative participants, working groups/subcommittees	As needed

How We Know It's Working

Annually, in April, we will review the implementation plan to determine how well we are doing.

Examples:

- Meetings/Presentations hosted
- Posters/pamphlets
- Newspaper articles
- Radio/Television
- Meetings & presentations attended
- Number and diversity of participants attending meetings
- Social Media Analytics – Facebook (# of posts and interaction)
- Website Analytics (i.e., Google Alert to measure frequency of mentions)
- Invitations to workshops/conferences/presentations/meetings
- Number of volunteers
- Letters of support – written/received
- Grant applications – submitted/supported
- Amount of funding received
- What's been achieved with what funding
- In kind donations

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the funding support of the Comox Valley Community Foundation; Island Health; and the Ministry of Child and Family Development that makes it possible to do our work.

