



Sharing Staff Roles and Responsibilities Across Sites: Lessons Learned from Intensive Shared Service Alliances

Many ECE organizations across the US are engaged in Shared Service initiatives, using a variety of approaches. Organizations new to Shared Services often want to understand the range of possible approaches, and specifically how organizations share staff. The purpose of this white paper is to document the shared-staffing strategies used by seven different Shared Service Alliances. Each organization is different, but all share staff roles and responsibilities across sites in order to deliver sustainable high quality early care and education.

Background on Alliances Interviewed

[Childcare Nashville](#) (Nashville, TN) began as a collaboration of 12 independent child development centers, whose directors meet regularly to create shared management opportunities. From this collaboration, Childcare Nashville developed and now offers certain shared services to 30 additional programs in Middle Tennessee. All of these programs work with The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, which houses the hub office and serves as the fiscal agent for grants. The Childcare Nashville office is staffed with a Director (management, planning, partnerships, funding), a Marketing Manager (marketing, customer service), and a project assistant (miscellaneous projects).

[Chambliss Center for Children](#) (Chattanooga, TN) is a large child care center, which provides management services to 10 additional sites (centers and classrooms in public schools). Each contract site has its own nonprofit status, board of directors and separate banking account. The board of each participating center hires the Chambliss Center to provide all management/support services, and management staff is shared.

[Early Connections Learning Centers](#) (Colorado Springs, CO) is a multi-site network of centers, community classrooms, and a network of “affiliated” family child care homes. Most of the services discussed below are provided to ECLC centers; family homes can purchase some support services from a menu of offerings.

[Seacoast Early Learning Alliance](#) (Concord, NH) began as a collaboration of 10 child care centers and statewide expansion to another 25 programs began in early 2013. Seacoast contracts with a third-party management services firm to provide services to member centers. Early Learning NH serves as the fiscal agent of Seacoast and provides part time staff support. The part time Seacoast Project Director is the Executive Director of one of the Seacoast member programs.

[Shared Solutions Alliance](#) (Lorain, OH) is a program of the Child Care Resource Center, a child care resource and referral agency, which provides back-office business management services to independent centers and homes. Members are required to commit to quality criteria, and are provided with a common online business management platform.

Sound Child Care Solutions (Seattle, WA) is a consortium of six child care centers, with centralized services provided by the “casita” or hub. Centers who join the consortium dissolve their legal status and become chapters of SCCS. Each center operates independently; central office staff provides financial, purchasing, professional development, mentor teachers, substitute pool, HR and other support functions.

The Community Group (Lawrence, MA) is a multi-program organization whose services include early childhood and school age education and care; K-8 public charter school education; parent engagement and leadership development; family education; child care resource, referral, and financial assistance/voucher management; educator training and professional development; and managing the turnaround of low-performing district public schools. Their early childhood and after-school programs consist of 9 centers, all of them located in or in close proximity to public schools, and a 52-member Family Childcare System.

The chart below summarizes key characteristics of the 7 organizations. More detailed information is available through the links above, and in the Appendix.

	Childcare Nashville	Chambliss Center for Children	Early Connections Learning Centers	Seacoast Early Learning Alliance	Shared Solutions Alliance	Sound Child Care Solutions	The Community Group
# sites	12	11	8	35	7	6	9
# FCC homes	0	0	20	0	2	0	52
# children	1500	700	600	4000	500	450	1000
Approach	Collaboration sponsored by community foundation	Umbrella nonprofit with independent centers	Multi-site nonprofit network	Collaboration contracting with third party management services firm	CCR&R providing financial management and TA	Nonprofit consortium	Multi-program non-profit
Shared staff:							
Marketing and Enrollment	✓		✓		✓		✓
Billing and Fee Collection		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Food/USDA Food Program	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Purchasing/Discounts	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fiscal Oversight		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Quality Assurance		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Professional Development		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Supervision of Directors		✓	✓			✓	✓
HR, Recruiting and Subs	✓	✓	✓	✓	Developing	✓	✓
Children’s Health Supports		✓	✓				✓
Maintenance		✓	✓	✓			✓

How Shared Staffing Works

The following describes how the shared work gets done – the degree to which activities are centralized, and the roles and responsibilities of the shared staff – for each organization.

Marketing and Enrollment

Childcare Nashville employs a Marketing Manager at the central office. The Alliance developed a joint marketing website, with provider profiles, search capability by age and zip code, and a “Schedule a Tour” button. The Marketing Manager is responsible for maintaining an aggressive web strategy to drive traffic to the Alliance website. After the tour(s), parents enroll directly with the center.

Early Connections Learning Centers employs a 2-person Enrollment Department, which is the first point of contact for a family. The staff first gathers enrollment information (e.g. ages of the children, if there is a specific site they are interested in, qualification for child care subsidy, Head Start/Early Head Start, or PreK, etc.). The family is then given a choice of options where a slot is available for their child. The parent or guardian contacts the site(s), goes on a tour, and makes sure that the location is the right fit for them before completing the enrollment process. Once a site is selected, the parent or guardian meets with Enrollment Department staff to complete the paperwork, including child care subsidy and partnership applications (if applicable), and walk the family through Alliance-wide policies and procedures (e.g. required medical records, rates, late fee policy, etc.). Even if a family is interested in a particular site, they must work with the Enrollment Department to register their child. This also works in reverse – a family may show up at a center and take a tour and then meet with the Enrollment Department to complete paperwork.

The Enrollment Department maintains up-to-date information on vacancy rates in each site, via reports from the administrative assistant at each site and regular phone calls to site-based staff. Enrollment targets are identified for each site and by classroom. The site director, as well as the VP of Finance and the VP of Center Operations, review enrollment/vacancy data weekly to make sure that the centers stay on track relative to their targets.

Seacoast Early Learning Alliance – Great North Advantage developed a joint marketing website for Seacoast members with provider profiles, search capabilities by age and zip code and a “Contact Program” button.

Shared Solutions employs an Alliance coordinator that assists programs with enrollment. The Alliance uses a joint marketing website with provider profiles. Providers using the child care data management system, OnCare, have an enhanced feature on their profile that allows parents to search openings in their programs and schedule tours online. They will be working towards an online system to manage the enrollment paperwork with families in the near future. Once the alliance is fully recruited, an optimized web strategy will be implemented and maintained by the Alliance coordinator. The Alliance coordinator can also pull reports and monitor Alliance enrollment through OnCare.

At *The Community Group* marketing and enrollment is a combined effort. Family financial eligibility intake takes place at the central office, and child development information is collected at the center. In both cases, the staff person works with the family to fill out forms, input data into the EZCare system, and ensure the family understands the enrollment process and required paperwork. Central staff also works with home-based providers to stay fully enrolled, and, when providers go on vacation, central staff work with parents to identify openings at other network providers. The director of each child care center is responsible for ensuring that vacancies are

filled from the state wait list; however, the central office contacts parents and schedules intake when there is large turnover or when new contracted slots become available.

Billing and Fee Collection

The Chambliss Center centralizes all billing and fee collection. The Finance Department employs 2 full-time staff. All bills are prepared by the Finance Department, and parent fees are collected at each site by Chambliss management staff, which oversees the ten contract sites. Center personnel are not involved in fee collection or any other management function.

Early Connections' Finance Office manages all billing and fee collection. The Center Directors are not involved in fee collection. They have full access to enter child data and view child files on ProCare (the automated child management system), but they do not have access to any billing information. Early Connections feels strongly that center directors should be focused on the needs of the child and on building positive relationships with families, and not issues regarding money. Bills are generated by ProCare, which parents see when they check in their children each morning. Bills are generated on Monday, and due on Friday for the next week. About 25% of parents use automatic debits from bank accounts or credit cards; the remainder must deposit their check or cash into a locked collections box at each center by Monday (for that week). A Finance Department staff person stops by each center every day and empties the payment box. A late fee is charged if full payment is not submitted on time. The Finance Department assesses late fees and keeps track of accounts receivable.

An interview with the VP of Finance indicated that the impact of this approach has been very positive: "Our bad debt write-off is down to about 1% (it was as much as 10%). In the past parents would cut deals with the director (for example, they'd give an excuse and ask the director to waive last week's tuition, or say that because they were only 5 minutes late would she waive my late fee) but they can't do that anymore. Our Finance office is very strict about charging late fees and being firm with families if they do not pay. Our Enrollment Department goes through all of these policies at the time of enrollment, so families know exactly what will happen if they don't pay. Our finance staff is fantastic. We are not cold-hearted. It is called being kind but firm. That said, we will discharge families if they don't pay....but honestly the only families that we have had to let go had very large arrears over a long time."

The impact of moving from decentralized to centralized fee collection, which occurred in 2009, was minimal: "There was more push-back from the directors than from the families. A few of the directors were worried that they would lose touch and that they had better relationships with families and would get the money. But it really didn't take too long to make the change; it was really pretty smooth transition once we got it started. We focused on clear communication and follow-up; we gave all the families business cards and said here is the number to call if you have questions."

Child care subsidy, Head Start, and PreK billing are also done centrally at Early Connections. The child care subsidy is complicated because it must be linked to the state's CHATS time and attendance swipe card. (Apparently implementation of CHATS has not been easy. Early Connections has had to pay for Administrative Assistants to sit at sites with large numbers of children who receive child care subsidy, in order to make sure parents swipe the child in and out so Early Connections will be paid. This is an unfortunate added expense.)

The Early Connections Finance Department has 3 full-time staff:

- Billing Specialist – bills tuition for parent fees and all third party funders. ProCare automates as much as possible, but substantial reconciliation is required because of time and attendance on CCAP. The Billing Specialist also provides billing for off-site family child care homes if they purchase this tier of support.
- Accounting Specialist – coordinates payroll and all accounts payable (ADP is used for actual payroll processing¹)
- Finance Assistant – travels to centers to collect fees from locked boxes, tracks arrears and sends out collection notices, works out payment plans with families who are behind. She is the main contact with families; they all know her by name.

Shared Solutions providers using the child care data management system, OnCare, have access to an integrated system called Tuition Pay Direct (TPD). TPD allows parents to make tuition payments via ACH or credit card using a web-based portal. All payments are made using a shared merchant account that Shared Solutions manages for the Alliance members. Payments are distributed to Alliance members electronically on a weekly basis.

Sound Child Care Solutions centralizes billing only for government funds. Parent billing and fee collection is currently done at each center; however they are moving to centralize billing with the use of ProCare software.

The Community Group central office collects all parent fees for centers and home-based providers. Approximately 10% of parents pay electronically, through direct bank-account debit. Central office closely monitors late payments, resulting in almost no uncollected fees. Site directors use EZCare for child and family information; central office accesses EZCare data for billing (parent fees and state billing).

Food and CACFP Management

Childcare Nashville takes a collaborative approach to food preparation and planning. Their “Cooks Academy” uses the concept of a common menu and shared training across all sites, coupled with group purchasing and software tools to better manage food cost and administration. The resultant savings allows the centers to invest in higher nutritional menus.

The Chambliss Center centralizes CACFP administration and uses ProCare to automate the system. Chambliss staff engages in a similar process of verifying meal delivery and attendance as Early Connections (see below). The staff person who manages the Food Program at the Chambliss Center spends approximately 2 hours per month, and 1 week per year, per site on CACFP paperwork.

Early Connections centralizes CACFP management for all sites. They use ProCare to automate the system. “Our parents check in on ProCare (via fingerprint) when the child arrives, so there is a ProCare attendance log that identifies the exact meals for which the child is present. Regulations require that we verify every child is delivered a meal. So teachers verify the meal counts at the

¹ A 20% discount on ADP services is available via the national shared services website, www.ECSharedResources.org.

site (on paper forms). The Administrative Assistant at each site reconciles the teacher meal counts with the system attendance counts, and these reports get sent to the central office.” The Early Connections HR Department does CACFP billing and orders the food.

Shared Solutions recently began serving as a CACFP sponsor for centers, in addition to their agency’s sponsorship of family home providers. Programs that join the alliance receive a CACFP claim audit to determine if they might benefit from CACFP sponsorship (to date, every audit has shown a benefit). They are working on an administrative link between Minute Menu, which providers use to input Food Program data, and OnCare, the web-based center management system they have provided to each of their Alliance members.

Sound Child Care Solutions centralizes CACFP management for all sites and food services for the three smallest sites. Central office staff is responsible for CACFP billing and reporting. Three SCCS sites share a cook.

The Community Group central office manages the food program for their centers as well as for family child care providers in their network. Home-based providers fill out and submit the claim; TCG receives the funding and disburses it to the providers.

Purchasing/Discounts

Childcare Nashville offers members access to the ECESharedResources.org web portal for purchasing discounts. In addition, through their collaborative food planning effort called Cooks’ Academy, they have developed common menus and jointly identified two food vendors to provide food items at a reduced rate. However, all purchasing is done at the center level.

Early Connections uses Early Learning Venture’s (ELV) customized version of the ECESharedResources.org web portal for all purchases, so they get those discounts across sites. Purchase of office supplies is done by central business office; purchase of classroom supplies is done by each site director (they have a budget). Center directors also have a small budget for activities with families. There are 2 sites with cooks and they purchase their own food but from the same vendor (a FoodSource Plus vendor); the other sites use catered food from Revolution Foods (thanks to financial assistance from ELV at the Merage Foundation.) The 2 cooks meet every other month to plan menus.

The Seacoast Early Learning Alliance has contracted with a third party management services firm, Great North Advantage, which provides discounted liability insurance, audit, maintenance, janitorial, heating fuel, trash removal, HR, and legal services. Discounted heating fuel and property and auto insurance are also offered to member employees. Seacoast members also receive discounts through the ECESharedResources.org web portal. One of the vendors, FoodSource Plus, helped the Alliance work with a regional food distributor that has saved three centers as much as 25% in food costs (more than \$53,000 annually combined).

Shared Solutions has developed a relationship with a local computer company that in turn provides a free technology audit to centers that includes recommendations for improving and upgrading their systems. The company will work with programs to develop a budget and timeline around improvements. Shared Solutions is able to purchase hardware equipment and services from this company at reduced rates as well.

Sound Child Care Solutions does central purchasing of business and financial services, such as the audit, accounting and legal advice, benefits and insurance.

The Community Group centralizes some but not all purchasing. While office supplies are typically stocked centrally, each site orders its own classroom supplies, through a common vendor with negotiated prices for the entire agency. TCG is examining centralizing all purchasing at some point in the future.

Fiscal Oversight

The *Early Connections* VP of Finance is very focused on the “Iron Triangle”. To track fee collection, she runs the following reports in ProCare each week:

- Account aging (located under Reports/Standard Reports/Account Aging/Primary Accounts @ 7 Day Aging.) This is just a quick tool to help monitor how collections are going, amounts that will get sent to a 3rd party collections company soon, and how the finance assistant is doing in working with parents to collect.
- Enrollment (located under Reports/Standard Reports/Family Data/Classroom Schedule/Schedule Summary – Weekly) to get a good feel for where there are vacancies and if they are meeting targets. The VP of Finance probably doesn't look at this every week, but the Enrollment Department staff does, and they use it to create an internal enrollment spreadsheet to track the FTE's and compare it to the budgeted goal for enrollment by classroom. “We want to see by classroom how we are doing compared to what we've budgeted, and how our partnership (HS/EHS/ CPP) slots are doing compared to our budget assumptions.”
- Weekly Actions report submitted by center directors/admins (described below). Both the VP of Finance and the VP of Center Operations view these reports.

Shared Solutions begins its work with a center or family home provider by conducting a business scan, which covers the full range of practices of the center, including a cost analysis by classroom. The results of the scan are shared with the center, and plans are developed to address issues that are flagged in the scan. The Alliance then helps each center to install and understand use of the OnCare web-based center management system. While each center does their own bookkeeping, they all use OnCare to manage accounts. Alliance staff monitors financial and enrollment data across all centers and works with center directors to manage their budgets more effectively. They are also exploring the use of Staff 88's Labor Management Tool, which has potential for monitoring and streamlining a center's biggest expense, but does require initial technical assistance for proper use and maximum value.

Sound Child Care Solutions uses a combination of centralized and decentralized approaches to financial oversight. Each center is responsible for managing their budget, and therefore has authority and responsibility for almost all income and expenses. For example, centers authorize payments on invoices but the central office pays the invoices. The Finance and Operations Manager monitors budget information and sends financial reports and payroll information to each director. The financial health of each center is the director's responsibility, but the centers work closely with the Finance and Operations Manager to solve problems and ensure strong performance.

The Community Group central office works with each site to establish an annual budget and reviews statements monthly, including tracking: enrollment, slots billed and fees paid.

Quality Assurance

The Chambliss Center site directors are also responsible for quality assurance. The difference is that their directors are hired centrally (by Chambliss) and typically oversee 2 sites (because sites are small) spending 50% of their time in each. The Chambliss Center uses Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD.

Early Connections is very clear that the job of the site director is to coach, mentor and stay on top of quality programming in the centers. Center directors must do at least 1 classroom observation each month, 1 coaching for every staff person a month based on the observations, monitor Teaching Strategies GOLD child assessments and generally supervise classroom teachers. Classroom teachers must do 2 home visits and 2 parent conferences per year for each child enrolled in their classroom. All centers use the same curriculum (Storybook Journey) and the same child assessment tool (Teaching Strategies GOLD.) *Early Connections* also has a Curriculum & Assessment Director who reviews lesson plans, stays on top of GOLD assessment data and helps to supervise directors. She has schedules of teachers' planning time, so she can easily see when it's best to stop by and visit. "One of the biggest challenges our directors face is helping staff intentionally link assessments and teaching. So our curriculum coordinator is coaching the directors to coach the teachers..."

Shared Solutions operates out of a resource and referral agency (Child Care Resource Center). In Ohio, resource and referral (R&R) agencies are contracted to support ECE providers in increasing the supply and quality of ECE services. The R&R agency is also responsible for providing supports around the State's QRIS system that includes technical assistance for receiving an initial rating, rating maintenance or rating advancement, QRIS-approved professional development, and reliable assessments for research-based purposes (ERS, PAS, ELLCO, CLASS).

Shared Solutions Alliance members are required to have a quality rating in order to be a member. Programs that are quality-rated are already required to have an annual quality improvement plan. As part of their Shared Solutions membership, they are asked to add to these QI plans based on results from the business scan. By leveraging the core R&R services with the services of Shared Solutions, member programs receive technical assistance that wraps around the entire business.

Sound Child Care Solutions' mission is strongly focused on quality, with a commitment to quality required to join the consortium. While Laura McAlister, Director Supervisor, "oversees" quality as an area of responsibility, in actuality the consortium addresses quality collaboratively, with job-embedded professional development, communities of practice, and ongoing training in "Pedagogical Leadership," including at least one annual full-day training for all staff. As one staff member explained, "We're a team – we work together." Central staff includes a mentor teacher, who travels to each site to mentor and coach staff and provide support for (re)accreditation. The substitute pool allows for consistency for children when teachers are out.

The Community Group's mission is to provide high quality programs that address whole child development and support families. Curricula, assessments and professional development are aligned across all TCG early childhood settings and K-12 programs. TCG maintains an Alliance-wide

culture of the “virtuous circle”: accountability, high expectations, and great teaching, with data (such as formative assessments) used to inform instruction. TCG maintains a centralized database that allows for collection, analysis and sharing of assessments and other relevant data across all programs, in order to determine child and family strengths and challenges.

Professional Development

At *The Chambliss Center*, professional development is the responsibility of the director, most of whom are responsible for two sites. Chambliss also conducts Alliance-wide training when it makes sense logistically and financially.

Early Connections centralizes all professional development (PD). Each staff member participates in an annual appraisal process and they have to create a personal PD plan as part of that appraisal. The center directors oversee the PD planning and appraisals, but this information is shared with the VP of Center Operations. Early Connections offers at least 6 trainings a year that are open to all staff that wishes to attend; every staff person gets the schedule of trainings. All Early Connections sites close for one day in November so they can get 8 full hours of PD in that day. “We also try to do one college class at our location per semester. When we first started pushing our staff to go to college they were intimidated. So we learned that if we can get a cohort of at least 12 people the college would come to us and deliver the course. We also have some 30min-1hour ‘training kits’ that directors or staff can check out to do on their own or to do in a staff meeting...if there is a specific, short-term training goal.”

These Early Connections PD activities are augmented by two efforts aimed at building community and helping site staff work as a team:

1) Teacher Representative meetings – one Teacher Representative from each center attends 6 meetings a year, focused on a specific topic—such as lessons plans or a policy or procedure.

“When we have changes that need to be incorporated into each classroom sometimes that doesn’t get filtered down to staff so it really helps when central staff shares this information directly with the teacher reps. I typically ask them to interview their colleagues, come to the meeting with suggestions, then I listen and I make sure to later on implement changes based on what I heard. I think it’s really important to not only listen and communicate; but to respond so that staff know you are really listening and that you care.”

2) Learning communities, broken up by age group – these are quarterly meetings of role-alike staff (e.g. all the infant teachers; toddler teachers, and so forth) which are facilitated by a person who is recommended by the teachers. “Management doesn’t run these meetings (although they attend); volunteers facilitate them. Sometimes these groups are focused on activities in the classroom; sometimes it’s an issue teachers are struggling with. They get to choose. One group wanted to go on field trips to visit other classrooms within Early Connections. This has really helped to build teamwork among staff across sites. The infant teachers are great; they are constantly emailing back and forth and sharing ideas.”

3) Director meetings – these meetings are held every other Friday and include all site directors. The first Friday is general business discussions and the second is a training that is relevant to their position.

As noted above, most activities are focused on Early Connections Centers; however some PD

activities are also offered to the home-based Alliance network. For example, training/work time on Teaching Strategies GOLD includes both teachers and home providers. And any evening trainings are open to both home providers and classroom teachers.

Seacoast conducts Alliance-wide training when it makes sense logistically and financially. A Seacoast Task Force is currently coordinating with the local Community College's Business Training Center to provide a college credit course later in 2013 to Seacoast members at a discounted rate.

Shared Solutions enhances the professional development work of the Child Care Resource Center that is required of all programs that participate in Ohio's QRIS. The CCRC helps programs develop PD plans, and coordinates a calendar of trainings, conferences, and a 15-month CDA academy, and is approved to facilitate Ohio's Administrator credential (rolling out fall of 2013). Shared Solutions works to identify training needs that are in common among its members and then tries to obtain and offer financial support to offset costs to member programs.

Members of Shared Solutions will have dedicated study groups on topics such as Creative Curriculum, Conscious Discipline, and Mind in the Making, etc., which will be coordinated by the CCRC. Shared Solutions members also participate in Alliance meetings to network, share ideas, problem solve and advise the Alliance Coordinator on services needed/wanted.

Sound Child Care Solutions manages professional development centrally, through a coordinated and systematic approach. Each employee has a professional development plan. Teachers and staff receive mentoring, coaching and coursework. A mentor teacher supports each center. Monthly teacher groups from each center examine and carefully analyze the teaching and learning process, deepening and strengthening their practice and sharing what they have learned with their peers. SCCS conducts at least one annual full-day training for all staff. Professional development is managed centrally by a combination of the Professional Development Specialist, the Mentor Teacher, and the Director Supervisor.

The Community Group aligns curricula, assessments, and professional development across early childhood, charter public and district public school programs. Joint professional development includes collaborative planning and learning, peer observations, weekly team meetings within each center, and bi-weekly joint meetings across all sites. TCG maintains a private You Tube channel where teachers post videos of themselves teaching, to encourage discussion and feedback; this forum is widely used across programs both for performance improvement as well as program development. At least twice a year, family providers in the TCG network train alongside other TCG early childhood teachers.

Supervision of Site Directors

The Chambliss Center site directors work as a team and are supervised, and evaluated annually, by the CEO and central office management staff. Teachers and other site staff are supervised, and evaluated annually, by the site directors.

Early Connections has a complex and multi-faceted approach to supervision. Every week directors write reports regarding what they are doing in the classroom, how they are coaching a teacher, and what enrollment looks like at their site – essentially an overview of what they are doing and

how things are going. The VP of Center Operations and Finance both review these reports weekly, to track their respective work. As noted above, the Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator is in regular contact with the Center Directors. Additionally, the VP of Center Operations visits each center at least once a month. “I have a checklist I go through and each month I look at something different (some NAEYC issues and some Early Connections requirements). I sit down and meet with the director.”

The Learning Community meetings (described above) are another way that teachers can share information with the VP of Center Operations. The Enrollment Department also conducts random parent phone calls every quarter and asks *How is it going? What can we improve? What are you concerned about?* The Enrollment Department also calls new parents 2 weeks after they enroll (*How is it going? Do you have any questions?*) All of this information is shared with the VP of Operations and feeds into a complete picture of how Directors are doing. She also does a formal evaluation each year “based on the NAEYC 10 standards. It’s very long...and we are talking about changing it.”

At *Sound Child Care Solutions*, supervision of the directors is primarily the responsibility of the Director Supervisor (see “Quality Assurance” section above).

Human Resources, Recruiting and Subs

Childcare Nashville conducts joint recruiting on their Alliance website. Staff recruitment is ongoing and resumes are reviewed and screened by central staff before sending appropriate resumes on to site directors who have indicated an opening.

The Chambliss Center centralizes hiring and other Human Resource supports, but it is somewhat complicated because the off-site centers are independent non-profits that negotiate management contracts with Chambliss. When they first began the management contract process Chambliss created an Alliance-wide career ladder and wage/benefit structure for new hires, linked to education and experience, and asked the board of each participating center to endorse it. Then, over time, as new staff people were hired or opportunities to adjust wages occurred, they worked to align wages. However, this is still a challenge since some sites have greater resources to provide annual increases than others; and Head Start teacher salaries are dictated by the Head Start grantee; so wages are not always comparable across sites. Benefit packages are the same at all sites, however. This includes: health, retirement, paid annual/sick leave and discounts for employee child care. Employees with children are eligible for a discount in any Chambliss site, so staff often enroll their child(ren) in a partner site rather than the center where they are employed.

Hiring and Human Resources is also centralized at *Early Connections*. All staff members are on the same wage ladder and all have access to the same benefit plans. “When we advertise, the HR department runs the ad and coordinates interviews at the centers. Substitutes are also centralized. Right now we only have a few substitutes, and HR is managing them. Our need for substitutes is largely met by ‘center floaters’ (extra onsite staff), who may also be shared across sites (see below.) But if we have a staff person who needs to attend a professional development event or we have a maternity leave situation then we will pull in a substitute. “

Early Connections centers also share staff across sites. The VP for Center Operations explained it

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this way: "...this morning I got an email from a director who said 'I need someone today from 2-6...can you help?' and we got an email back from a director at another site saying 'Yes I can help; I have an extra staff person in that time slot I can send over.' We don't have issues about folks competing. We make it clear, when we hire staff, that they work for Early Connections not a specific site. So the teachers and other staff move across centers all the time. And directors are used to that. We also have teachers that transfer to another Early Connections site for personal reasons—they don't get along with staff in the site where they are currently working or just don't feel comfortable with the director or whatever—they aren't necessarily a bad teacher; they just need a different environment."

Seacoast Early Learning Alliance has just begun advertising for substitutes to be part of a shared substitute pool. A committee of Seacoast members will interview candidates and keep an updated spreadsheet of available subs, which will include hours available, qualifications, age group experienced with, and geographic area they can work in.

Shared Solutions is investigating the use of the online tool Staff 88 to manage a sub/staff-sharing network. The model is under development, with interested Alliance members driving the work.

Sound Child Care Solutions has a mixed approach to HR. Center directors make most HR decisions including hiring, firing, and salaries. The consortium's HR Generalist is responsible for benefits administration (including health insurance), which is common across sites, and any HR issues not resolved at the centers. The Professional Development Specialist oversees the Relief Squad, consortium-wide shared 'floaters', which serves as a substitute pool and often becomes a feeder for center employment.

The Community Group centralizes all HR functions. Employees are pooled across the entire portfolio – charter schools, child care, and central office personnel – for benefits. HR maintains a list of eligible substitute teachers that is accessed by child care programs.

Children's Health Supports

The Chambliss Center has a social services department that can offer support, on an as-needed basis, to off-site centers.

Early Connections has a nurse that is shared by all their sites. She is responsible for maintaining all health records and screenings, tracking immunizations, etc.

Maintenance

The Chambliss Center has centralized maintenance staff. Additionally, the Chambliss Volunteer Department helps coordinate volunteers for a range of tasks at off-site centers.

Early Connections contracts out all their facilities needs. Directors submit work orders to the VP of Center Operations, who coordinates with the contracted company.

Seacoast, through its relationship with Great North Advantage (GNA), is able to provide member centers with quick access to contractors such as electricians and plumbers, at a reduced price. In addition, GNA negotiated a discount with a cleaning vendor, allowing some centers for the first time to be able to afford outside cleaning help; the more centers who sign a contract with the

vendor, the greater the discount provided. GNA provides each Seacoast member an annual indoor and outdoor health and safety inspection.

The Community Group centralizes maintenance across all sites. The supervisor in the central office allocates a maintenance staff of 6 people across locations, usually with one “floater.”

Resources

Profiles and more information about each of these alliances is available on the Opportunities Exchange “Current Alliances” page at <http://www.opportunities-exchange.org>. The website also contains many Shared Services tools and resources. In particular, the following may prove to be helpful:

The Chambliss Center for Children:

[Governance Structure](#)

[Job descriptions](#)

[Video](#)

Seacoast Early Learning Alliance:

[Governance Structure](#)

[Video](#)

Sound Child Care Solutions:

[Multi-media tool](#)

We welcome your feedback and questions.

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