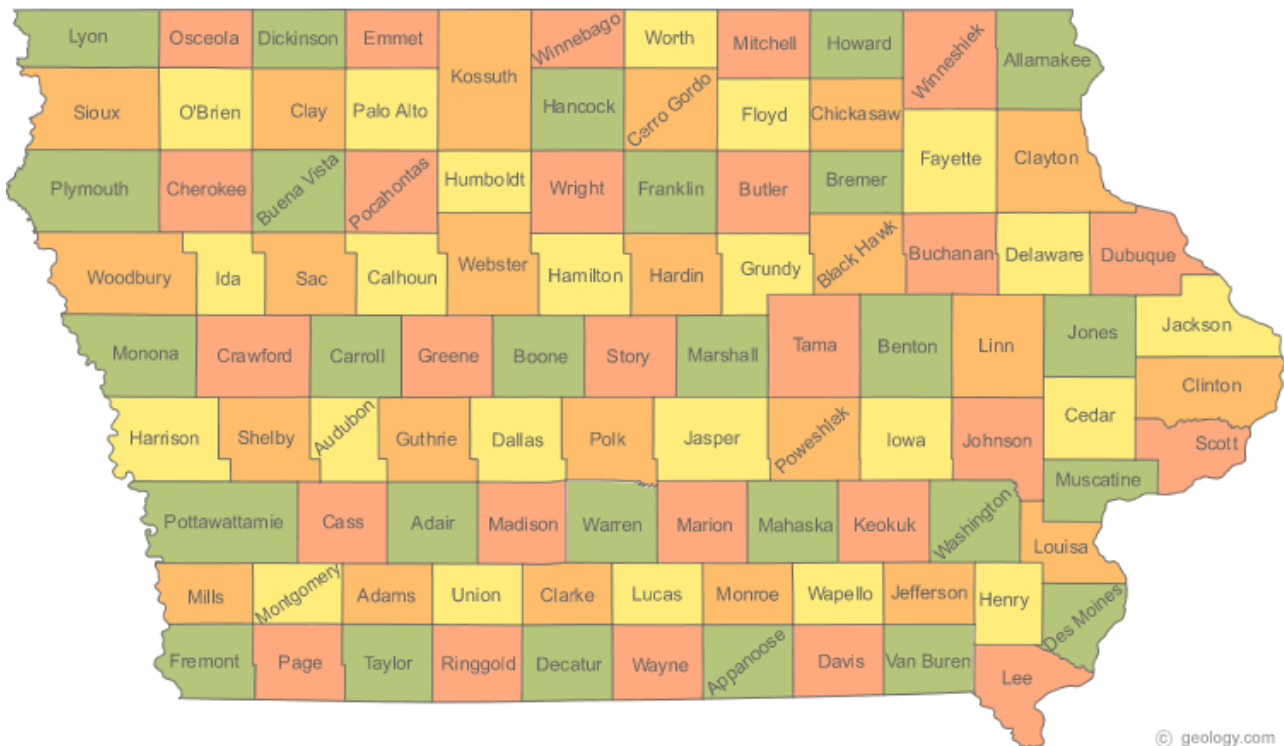


Community Empowerment Merger Guide



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Introduction to the Merger Guide

As local Community Empowerment Area (CEA) Boards consider the task of changing their boundaries, there are many challenges that will lie ahead. This Merger Guide was developed to provide CEA boards guidance that includes examples and ideas that can assist Empowerment areas as they explore and initiate the merger process.

Overarching guidance can be found within [The Community Empowerment Board Toolkit](#) located on the Community Empowerment web site, http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/tools/tool_kit_doc.html. This toolkit is a publication developed to provide communities with ideas and resources to assist in the organization and ongoing activities of Community Empowerment Boards. Because the long-term goal for CEA Boards is to become the point in the community for developing and coordinating services that will lead to improved results for young children and their families, the toolkit offers guidance on practical issues such as

- [Developing Community Commitment - Section 3](#),
- [Developing an Effective Board - Section 4](#), and
- [Developing and Implementing a Community Plan - Section 5](#).

The most current guidance from the Iowa Empowerment Board regarding local CEA boundary change is found in [Tool U](#) which is located on the Community Empowerment web site, as well as in the Appendix of this Merger Guide.

Technical Assistance

The Community Empowerment Technical Assistance Team is available to serve as a resource as you move forward through the process. The five identified goals of the technical assistance system are:

1. To provide assistance to community empowerment areas in: planning; policy development; assuring quality effectiveness; funding; resource, results, and performance accountability; evaluation; and communication.
2. To promote, sustain, and expand community collaboration and planning partnerships and effective utilization of resources.
3. To promote leadership in the development of a comprehensive, integrated early care, health and education system and promote implementation of strategies through the efforts of Community Empowerment.
4. To share information and promote research/evidence-based practices in early care, health and education programs and services.
5. To develop and promote community capacity and leadership.

The [technical assistance plan](#) in its entirety is available on the Community Empowerment web site. To access technical assistance through the merge process, contact the Office of Empowerment, shanell.wagler@iowa.gov.

Community Empowerment Lean Design Event Recommendation

Through the Empowerment Lean process conducted by the Department of Management, with a broad group of stakeholders, several recommendations were developed to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of Community Empowerment at the state and local level.

One of the recommendations was to redefine Community Empowerment Areas, with an overarching goal to reach 30-38 Community Empowerment Areas. The following are criteria that were developed to support the goal.

Criterion #1: A local CEA consist of no more than four counties.

Criterion #2: Single-county areas must have a child population (ages 0-5) greater than 5,000.

Criterion #3: Based on the ability of an area to meet all the criteria, any CEA can choose to redefine their boundaries.

Criterion #4: All Community Empowerment Areas must have contiguous county borders.

2010 legislation through SF 2088 supported this criterion to be implemented July 1, 2011.

Getting Started...

I. Initial Conversations with Board Members about Merging with another CEA

The concept of merging Community Empowerment Areas can be very complicated in many aspects. Volunteer board members may have to forge new relationships with other CEA Board members and community providers. Community Empowerment Coordinators/Directors are given the responsibility to develop a new local early childhood system while continuing to focus on the existing early childhood system. This process may be complex as it will involve the formation of a new entity, not one CEA taking over another. Staff for the merged area will need to be identified, and new boundaries may change the compass of providers. Since this is a new process for Community Empowerment at the state and local level there is not a set procedure to initiate this process or definite structure as it may look and work differently from area to area.

Initial conversations should begin with an open conversation based on the possibilities of merging with one or more CEA's. The initial conversations may include input from community providers and community members. If a CEA board determines they would like to initiate discussions with other identified CEA boards then they may give the Coordinator/Director and/or the Chairperson the authority to contact the identified CEA(s) to discuss the possibilities of a merge.

When the board decides to explore a merger with another CEA, the Board should address the following questions about their own Board.
--

What are the CEA Board's strengths?

What are the CEA Board's weaknesses or challenges?

What are the possibilities of other CEA to merge with? Are there CEA that naturally rise to the top?

Are there any existing relationships amongst CEA board members or partnerships with providers outside of the current boundary lines of the CEA?

Are there geographic considerations or specific demographics that will promote or create a barrier to the merger?

II. Conducting an Assessment

It is recommended that CEAs considering a merger should conduct an assessment in conjunction with the CEA's that they have identified. The assessment should focus on the similarities and differences that currently exist between the CEAs.

Assessment could include but is not limited to the following components:
--

Vision/mission

Basic demographics of the CEA

Board membership/board recruitment

Current practices of handling disputes between the board and providers
--

Board structure (including advisory structure)
--

Priorities

Indicators

Request for Proposal process
Funded programs and services with funding amounts and purpose of services
Community Empowerment Area staff (including roles and responsibilities, hours worked, funding used, etc)
Fiscal Agent
Past history of Community Empowerment Area (AR review and designation process outcomes)

III. First Meeting with other CEA(s) to Discuss Merging

This meeting will serve as an exploratory meeting to determine if any or all of the identified CEA(s) have a sincere interest in a merger. Matter you may choose to consider as you prepare for the meeting is listed below.

- Open meetings criteria?
- Should the meeting be advertised?
- Where should the meeting take place? A neutral location? Rotate meeting sites?
- Who should be involved in the meeting?
- Does the meeting start with coordinators and small committees of each board or the entire boards?
- Who will facilitate the meeting?
- Who will be the note taker?
- What does the agenda look like? (Examples of agendas are found in the Appendix)
- What is the role of the CEA board chairs?
- What is the role of the CEA Coordinator(s)?
- What would a merged CEA look like?
- Who will take the leadership role and be responsible for any follow-up?

Ideas for discussion at meeting-

- Review of Assessments – discuss the similarities and differences identified through the assessments.
- Ground rules in the merging process (Example found in the Appendix)
- As boards begin to work together it is important to make decisions based on a consensus of the participants. Agree to disagree, but keep moving forward.
- Key concepts each CEA wants to maintain
- How will children and families be better served by this merge?
- Take home messages

IV. Second Meeting with other CEA(s) to Discuss Merging

This meeting serves as a point for CEA(s) to determine if they are interested in moving forward on exploring a merged CEA.

- Development of timeline- (Examples found in the Appendix)
- Development of committees for merger process

Timelines

It would be beneficial to develop a timeline that includes detailed information regarding each of the activities identified by those in attendance that also indicates who will be responsible for each of the identified activities and seeing to it that timeframes are met and outcomes are collected. Board members from all of the participating CEAs should be in agreement with timelines.

Committee Structures

One key in building relationships between the participating CEAs is the development of joint committee structures that include members from each of the participating CEAs. The committee structure should include no more than two to three board members from each area in order to keep the group size manageable. Consistency of members at each meeting is critical, as it will save time that could be wasted on efforts to bring new members up to speed. Committees formed can be beneficial in establishing and nurturing relationships among the merged board members. Some examples of committees could be structure and process, marketing and strategic planning.

It may also be beneficial to form an Administrative Structure Committee to discuss fiscal agent, insurance issues, employer of record, employee needs for new merged CEA, and job description.

A key component for any committee is the development of a purpose statement. This will assist committee members in understanding their roles and responsibilities.

Each committee should be assigned specific tasks to work on that have been identified by the merging Boards. It is the responsibility of the committee to work on and provide input and recommendations to the larger groups.

Examples of Activities for Committees

Structure and Process Committee

Reviewing Early Childhood Board Structures. Board members, coordinators and community partners will need to have a discussion pertaining to the existing structures within each board. It may be helpful to conduct a SWOT analysis on current board structures and future needs of the new merged areas. (Examples of other multi county CEA is included in Appendix).

This Committee could also address issues such as but not limited to membership, county representatives, board member selection and application, board member qualifications, conflict of interest, location, dates and time of board meetings.

Marketing Committee

The marketing committee could be responsible for the creation of the name and logo for the newly merged empowerment area and the development of a marketing plan that would promote the merged CEA within the local communities and at the state level.

Public Forums

Public input will be a key element in moving the merger process forward and venues such as public forums or focus groups would allow community members to voice their opinions. The purpose of the forums is to gather feedback about a potential Empowerment board merger. Community input will assist the local empowerment board to become successful in constructing their new early childhood system, pledging that families with children ages 0 - 5 will be successful.

A few questions to think about in regard to hosting public forum meetings are: who will facilitate the meetings; how will you market and promote the public forum; who will be the record keeper; what questions should be asked, and how will follow-up will be provided.

Strategic Planning Committee

The Strategic Planning Committee could discuss identified needs and gaps of each area and formulate potential priorities and indicators for discussion. This committee could also develop and prioritize action steps the merged CEAs could put into place that would address each of the identified priorities.

This committee could take a lead on developing a new “combined” community plan. As identified needs, gaps, strengths are identified, this committee could review and make recommendations for necessary items in the plan.

Possible steps for this committee would be to review the current plans for current areas. Reviewing the community plan guidance found on the State Empowerment Web site would be important, http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/files/redesignation/community_plan.pdf. This group could pull together necessary parts to then share.

V. After the Initial Meetings

Because the process to merge CEA boundaries cannot be accomplished in two meetings, the following are next steps.

- Once the CEA boards have determined with whom or how they will move forward, an action item must occur at each of the board’s meetings as to their intent.
- Identify the process to move forward, utilizing [Tool U](#).
- Determine the responsibilities/duties of each board as the process continues.
- Determine the schedule and format of on-going meetings.

Retreat Process

Another format that could be used to bring multiple CEA boards and community providers together would be to host a retreat. A retreat could have the potential to provide the foundation for the development of timelines, activities and further action. The retreat could also focus on the review of assessments, development of a purpose statement and strategic planning.

Managing Difficult Situations

Each CEA brings their own identity to the process, and with this diversity comes a wider array of views and perspectives. When entities come together, some level of conflict is inevitable.

It is important to remember that conflict is a necessary and useful part of organizational life. Appropriate levels can stimulate and heighten attention. Bold solutions come from conflict as people search to satisfy diverse sets of interests. An absence of conflict results in hampered creativity. On the other hand, conflict can be dysfunctional. It has the potential to spend energy actually reducing the effectiveness of the process. Conflict can also raise stress and create an untrusting and paranoid situation.

There are two presentations available on the Community Empowerment web site that offer assistance in dealing with difficult situations, [*Facilitation Skills*](#) and [*A Discussion in Board Ethics*](#). Another recommended resource is the book, "The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution" by Dudley Weeks, Ph.D. This book is well written, easy to understand and full of good information. Additional resources can be found within the Appendix of this guide.

VI. Considerations for Staffing a CEA Board

The newly formed board must determine how their work will be accomplished to meet statutory requirements. Many boards have created a position of CEA Coordinator.

The Office of Empowerment, in collaboration with Empowerment Coordinators, is in the process of developing core competencies and a sample job description that could assist boards in the selection of staff. This information should be used by local CEAs to establish expectations and requirements of an Empowerment Coordinator. The board will also need to determine whether the Coordinator will be an employee of the board or contract for services. This is an important decision and many factors should be considered (i.e., CEA coordinator is hired as a board employee then the board will need to discuss benefits, performance evaluations, etc.).

Other items the board may choose to request in their search for a CEA Coordinator:

- Portfolio of candidates' work that may include sample documents such as Empowerment Annual Report, Empowerment Executive Summary, Community Plan, trainings the applicant(s) has attended related to early childhood, board development, background and experience with Community Empowerment, marketing materials that were developed for early childhood related boards, and letters of recommendations from prior board members or service providers.
- Description of involvement in committees at the state level through Early Childhood Iowa and Community Empowerment and local level committee participation.

VII. Changing/Selecting a Fiscal Agent

Iowa Code Chapter 28.7

1. A community empowerment area board shall do the following:

a. Designate a public agency of this state, as defined in section 28E.2, a community action agency as defined in section 216A.91, an area education agency established under section 273.2, or a nonprofit corporation, to be the fiscal agent for grant moneys and for other moneys administered by the community board.

Roles & Responsibilities

- Clearly communicate the roles and responsibilities of the Local Empowerment Board in relationship to the roles and responsibilities of the fiscal agent. One of the difficulties of fiscal agent services for community empowerment is tracking the carve outs, interest earned, and carry forward. It is often more complex than fiscal agents want to provide considering the amount of administrative funds available to pay them. Most coordinators end up having to do this themselves and attempt to reconcile the bottom line with the fiscal agent which leaves room for errors. If you will expect the fiscal agent to do this, you will need to walk through the empowerment budget and year-end financial report formats prior to making any agreement.
- Understanding that the CEA board is the entity in total control of the funds. Fiscal agents need to understand they are a pass through with responsibilities of course. They do not get to judge how the funds are used and to whom they go.
- Willingness to administer different types of funds, state, federal, private, or other.
- Is the entity willing to work with you on generating reports – monthly and year end; are they willing to work with the state fiscal year; the manner in which Empowerment reports the fiscal year spending can be totally different than how the fiscal agent reports their yearly spending. This can make additional work for the Coordinator.

Audit Procedures

- Review the potential agency's previous financial audits (2-3 past years) and any findings listed. Many agencies will have "findings" but you would want to think through how have they been dealt with and how they could impact your program.
- Discuss accounting software and independent financial audits.
- Will the empowerment funds be included in their agency audit or will you have a separate audit?
- Will you want a full audit or a fiscal review?
- Determine the estimated cost and build it into the fiscal agent fee.

Internal Controls/Procedures

- Conduct an in-depth review and discussion of potential fiscal agents' internal controls and segregation of duties. Who reviews bills, who approves bills, who signs checks, who mails checks...Look for any and all potential "loop holes" for misuse or misappropriation of funds – even unintentionally.
- Bank account - Will the fiscal agent deposit the funds into their agency general account or a separate account? A separate account for the empowerment funds is recommended. Also ask the bank to mail the CEA board a copy of all monthly bank statements.

Is it an interest bearing account, can you place any funds in a short term CD to gain higher interest, what is the FDIC on the account?

- How often will they write checks – twice/month, weekly, on request?

General

- Search for a neutral entity

- Are they open to an empowerment board writing grants and utilizing their (the fiscal agent's) tax ID number to do it. Is it required to go before them every time a grant opportunity comes along? If so, and the grant has a quick turn around, you could miss a great opportunity.

Note: The new language for the Early Childhood Iowa Initiative, SF 2088, 2010, does require additional fiscal oversight measures be adopted by the Department of Management in consultation with the ECI State Board. These shall include: reporting, regular audits of fiscal agents, and fiscal and performance reviews of the programs, contracts and services of area boards – SF 2088, 256I.5, 1.

More information will be provided as it becomes available to local boards.

VIII. Insurance

Liability insurance is encouraged for all CEA boards. Iowa Code Chapter 28.6(5) states that “[a] community empowerment area board is a unit of local government for purposes of Chapter 670, relating to tort liability of governmental subdivisions. “

Iowa Code Chapter 670.2, states “Liability imposed. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, every municipality is subject to liability for its torts and those of its officers and employees, acting within the scope of their employment or duties, whether arising out of a governmental or proprietary function. . . . “

Promise Partners (Pottawattamie County) recently had a representative from Silver Stone Group present to them regarding their insurance policies. It was recommended that a board maintain their Director's & Officer's policy for at least 5 years after they disband in the event that claims are filed against them.

For additional guidance regarding liability insurance, refer to [Tool I](#) of the Community Empowerment Tool Kit.

IX. Transition Period

Guidance for the transition process of Community Empowerment Areas as it becomes available based on the outcome of the 2010 Legislative Session.

Community Empowerment Merger Guide

Appendix

Draft

Examples Included:

- Checklist Template for Merger.....pg. 12
- Meeting Agendas.....pg. 14
- Timelinespg. 14
- Community Empowerment Assessments.....pg. 15
- Ground Rules for Meetings.....pg. 18
- CEA Board Membership.....pg. 19
- CEA Board Guiding Principles.....pg. 20
- Chronological Checklist When Switching Fiscal Agents.....pg. 24
- Sample Letter of Intent to Merge.....pg. 26
- Process for Community Empowerment Boundary Change – Tool U.....pg. 28
- Conflict Managementpg.30

Appendix

Checklist Template Timeline for Merging Community Empowerment Area Boards 3/19/10

Activity	Timeframe	People Involved	Necessary Steps	Date Completed
Conduct assessment with neighboring boards	Winter/Spring 2010			
Identify persons to be a part of a workgroup or identified committees to be with meetings with neighboring boards.	Winter/Spring 2010			
Determine facilitators and note takers at meetings				
Host public forums to gather community input				
Workgroups should discuss develop data about impacts from the merge				
Ensure that local board meeting minutes reflect discuss and any action taken.	Winter/Spring 2010	Local Board members		
Submit letter of intent to ECI Board	Due by September 1, 2010			
Develop a plan for meeting next steps for merge.				
Identify members to serve on workgroups: community plan, board bylaws, board membership				
Submit Application for Designation packet to EC Coordination Center	February 1, 2011			

*Developed by Office of Empowerment

Timeline Example

Draft Timelines-

- One year prior to merger- notify the Office of Empowerment about conversations and possible partnerships
- Nine months prior to merger- send letter of intent to the Office of Empowerment with official boundary change proposal
- Six months prior to merger- Iowa Empowerment Board reviews boundary requests and accepts or denies

Draft Plan of Action

- Gather input to questions; workgroup is formed – this would seem to go before the public forums in my mind.
Timeline: 18-12 months prior to merge of areas
Who: Empowerment coordinators, board chairs to form workgroup?
- Gather community input through public forum(s) (either respective counties or together)
Timeline: One year prior to the merger of areas
Who: Empowerment coordinators, board members and community partners
- Local Empowerment Boards agree to a partnership
Timeline: Nine months prior to the merger of areas
Who: Local empowerment boards
- Review and define options of fiscal agent and record of employer
Timeline: Six months prior to the merger of areas
Who: Board Chairpersons or designee
- Assign duties to existing empowerment coordinators and board members (community plan, board by-laws, transition plan, board matrix, request for proposal).
Timeline: Six months prior to the merger of areas
Who: Board Chairpersons and selected committee
- Build new board with prospective board members
Timeline: Nine to six months prior to the merger of areas
Who: Designated committee (appointed by the chairpersons)
- Draft Empowerment coordinator job description, expectations, location, etc
Timeline: Nine to six months prior to the merger of areas
Who: Board Chairpersons or designee
- Conduct interviews for Empowerment Coordinator and/or staff
Timeline: Six to three months prior to the merger of areas.

*Adapted from the examples from Warren/Adair/Dallas/Madison

Agenda of First Meeting*

Exploring Partnerships Agenda

- I. Introductions
- II. Merger of CEA
 - a. Criteria for establishing Community Empowerment Areas
 - b. Office of Empowerment deadline – April 1, 2010 Letter of Intent
- III. Review of Board Information
- IV. Potential of this Partnership
 - a. Advantages
 - b. Disadvantages
 - c. Unchartered Territory??
- V. Next Steps
 - a. How do you want to move forward?

*taken from the Warren, Adair, Madison and Dallas meeting

Merger Agenda*

- I. Introductions and welcome (10 minutes)
- II. Overview from September 29th partnerships meeting (10 minutes)
- III. Partnership commitment (10 minutes)
 - Review state timeline (see below)
 - Public input from each respective county by the way of forums or other venues
 - Logo/Name of New Area
 - Formation of committees and timelines
 - Processes committee (structure, by-laws, board membership, etc)
 - Nuts and bolts committee (vision, priorities, indicators, community plan)
 - Operations committee (staffing, job description(s))
 - Fiscal committee (fiscal agent, board insurance, record of employer)
 - Transition committee (transition plan, implementation, etc)
- IV. Action steps 0(45 minutes)
- V. Take home message (10 minutes)
- VI. Next meeting and location

*taken from the Warren, Adair, Madison and Dallas meeting

Board Retreat December 7, 2009 Agenda

9:00-9:30 Welcome, review of agendas and introductions

9:30-10:20 Early Childhood Overview
 Why early childhood
 State and local picture

10:20-10:30 Break

10:30-11:15 Vision and Mission

11:15-11:30 Community Plan
 Required Documents
 Review handouts

11:30-12:00 Working Lunch
 Review data for indicator and priority work

12:00-1:30 Community Plan
 Small group work (indicators and priorities)
 Report back to large group

1:30-3:00 Bylaws

3:00-3:30 Wrap up and next steps

*taken from Henry and Washington

Example of Empowerment Assessments*:

Early Childhood (EC) Funding

<u>CEA</u>	<u>Admin</u>	<u>FY 10 EC Total</u>

School Ready (SR) Funding

<u>FUNDED PROGRAMS</u> – Based on FY09 Annual Reports		
<u>CEA</u>	<u>EC</u>	<u>SR</u>

<u>CEA</u>	<u>Preschool</u>	<u>Family Support 0-5</u>	<u>Quality</u>	<u>Admin</u>	<u>General Aid</u>	<u>FY 10 SR Total</u>

<u>CEA</u>	<u>Coordinator</u>	<u>0-5 Pop. Total and each county separate</u>	<u>Board Membership/Committees Meeting frequency</u>	<u>Fiscal Agent</u>

*Adapted from the examples from Ida

	CEA	CEA
<i>Vision</i>		
<i>Mission</i>		
<i>Priorities</i>		
<i>Indicators</i>		
<i>0-5 Population by County within the Empowerment Area (Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2008 Estimates)</i>		
<i>Overall Population by County within the Empowerment Area (Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2008 Estimates)</i>		
<i>SFY'09 Funding expenditures</i>		
<i>Number of school districts within the Empowerment Area.</i>		
<i>Number of voluntary 4-year old preschool programs within the Empowerment Area.</i>		
<i>Centers/Preschools with QRS ratings by county</i>		
<i>QPPS Verification/validation</i>		
<i>Board composition</i>		
<i>Board meetings</i>		
<i>Board Committees</i>		
<i>Advisory Committee</i>		
<i>Redesignation</i>		
<i>Distance from county communities to Board meeting location.</i>		

* Adapted from the example from Corner Counties

Example of Ground Rules:

Code of Conduct in the CEA Decision Making Process

As potential partners in Empowerment, we must work together to develop, implement and maintain services to children and families in a responsible manner.

Public Service is a public trust. We must earn and maintain this trust by conducting ourselves in a manner that reflects the following principles:

Professionalism

We will conduct ourselves in a professional manner in dealing with other agencies, boards and the public.

Fairness and Reasonableness

We will be open-minded, impartial and consistent in our interactions with other agencies and the public to ensure all actions and decisions are free from bias and are not arbitrary or capricious. We will treat people equally and with tolerance.

Knowledge

We will remain knowledgeable of applicable law, regulations, scientific and technical advancements with affect the delivery of early childhood programs in a responsible manner.

Honesty

We will be truthful, straightforward and candid in all dealings.

Timeliness

We will strive to provide other agencies and the public with timely responses regardless of whether those responses are favorable or adverse.

Accountability

We will be decisive in all actions and accept responsibility for any of our decisions and resulting consequences. All decisions and recommendations will be based on fact and properly documented.

Respect

We will treat others with dignity, courtesy, compassion and sensitivity.

** Prepared by Elizabeth Stanek for Adair, Dallas, Madison, and Warren County Explore Partnerships meeting*

Board Membership Examples:

Prescriptive memberships such as:

Example: Together for Families (T4F)

Agency Representative (7)	1 health services
2 child centered services	1 education
1 human services	Board of supervisor from each county
1 social service	Consumer/parent from each county
1 juvenile court services	

Example: Partnership 4 Families

The membership of the board may include members with interest in education, health, human services, business, faith and the public good. Members may include the following; a school district, county, local board of health, hospital, charitable funding group, human service organization, substance abuse, community action agency, etc.

Structure includes Partnership 4 Families Governance board that makes all decisions and four county early childhood task force committees. Information flows from each of the counties through the Early Childhood task forces to the Partnership 4 Families Board.

Example: LAKES Community Empowerment Area Board Structure

Examples of committees are Administration, Nominating, Grant Review, Assessment of Community Process, Community-wide Indicators, Programs/Services for Strategies, Collaboration (Community Partners, Communication, Commitment), Community Empowerment Area Board Structure and Operation.

Example: HAWC

Board Structure: The HAWC Partnerships for Children board is made up of 19 voting members.

-Ten members are citizen representatives consisting of two representatives from each of the four counties, plus a religious sector member and a business sector member.

-Four elected officials. An elected official is designated from each county.

-One education representative from area schools. A school representative is designated from each county. Of the four school representatives, one is selected as the voting member. In the event of a vacancy or absence of the voting member, another school representative may act as an alternate.

-One public health representative. A public health representative is designated from each county. Of the four public health representatives, one is selected as the voting member. In the event of a vacancy or absence of the voting member, another public health representative may act as an alternate.

-One preschool/child care center representative. A preschool/child care center representative is designated from each county. Of the four preschool/child care center representatives, one is selected as the voting member. In the event of a vacancy or absence of the voting member, another preschool/child care center representative may act as an alternate.

-Two standing members: Department of Human Services and Juvenile Court Services.

Board Principles



Guiding Principals for Membership of the
Partnerships 4 Families Board

13 members 2 non-voting

Staggered 3 year terms

Members shall reside or work in Audubon, Carroll, Greene or Guthrie County

Membership must include a representative from:

- ◆ business
- ◆ consumer
- ◆ education
- ◆ faith
- ◆ health
- ◆ human services

The Board will seek to rotate these designated positions through out the counties. Ex, when an education representative leaves the Board a new education representative will be sought from a different county.

County Representation:

The Board will strive to have representation from each of the counties that coincides with the counties population. Ideally it would be 2 members from Audubon, 3 members from both Greene and Guthrie and 4 members from Carroll County. Due to designated positions rotating through the counties membership may fluctuate occasionally.

The Board will look for representation from all areas of the counties, taking into consideration the smaller communities, school districts and rural areas.

Parent

The Board will strive to have one parent of a child 0-5 on the Board from each of the four counties. A parent could also be one of the designated representatives.

Ex the faith representative could be a parent of a child 0-5.

The P4F Board will try to engage persons from the following professions:

- ◆ law enforcement
- ◆ public health
- ◆ schools
- ◆ county board of supervisors

From the Partnerships 4 Families By-Laws

Section 1. Qualifications. The Board shall consist of a membership of thirteen voting members. All members of the Board shall reside or work in Audubon, Carroll, Greene or Guthrie County. Criteria for selection of candidates will provide for fair representation of the counties

served. The Board shall comply with federal, state, and local laws which prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, race, disability, creed, or national origin.

Section 2. Selection of Members. A majority of the members of the Board shall be elected officials and members of the public who are not employed by a provider of services to or for the Board. Membership shall include at least one local representative from each of the following areas: business, consumer, education, faith, health, and human services. The fiscal agent and the Board appointed contact will be non voting members of the Board. Thus making the Board comprised of fifteen members.

The membership of the Board may include members with interest in education, health, human services, business, faith, and the public good. Members may include individuals who are employees or who receive compensation from any of the following: a school district, a county, a local board of health, a hospital, a charitable funding group, a human service organization, a religious institution, an area education agency, law enforcement, an area substance abuse agency, a community action program, a city, a business organization, a labor organization, a service club, a business, human service consumers, a private community-based organization, a neighborhood association, a child care resource and referral service, a library, and others as determined by the Board.

Section 3. Compensation. Members shall serve without compensation. Members may be reimbursed for child care or travel if funds are available.

Section 4. Orientation for New Members. Prior to the first regular meeting following their appointment, new members shall be provided with copies of the legislation (or summary), bylaws, annual reports, and other documentation that would be useful to Board members in carrying out their duties. The Chairperson (or designee) will be responsible for orientation. A mentor from among the continuing Board members will be assigned to each new Board member and will assist with the orientation.

Section 5. Absences. Three absences in one year shall result in member's removal from the Board. Exceptions shall be subjected to approval by the officers.

Section 6. Vacancies. Although not mandated, the Board may choose to fill any vacancy on the Board because of resignation, death, long-term illness, disqualification or removal after at least 30 days' notice of the vacancy. The Chairperson (or designee) is charged with recruiting applicants to fill vacant positions and with submitting a slate of candidates to the Board. The Board votes on these candidates.

Section 7. Elections & Terms. The Board as identified in Article III, Section 2 shall be elected for staggered three-year terms, which will commence in July. Board members shall elect individuals to replace members who have served their term. The Secretary will maintain a record of terms.

Section 8. Resignations. Resignations shall be submitted in writing to the Chairperson of the Board at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting.

“Draft”

Guiding Principles for Membership of the Empowerment Board (Dallas, Madison, Warren)

Membership

There shall be 13 voting members.

Members shall reside or work in Adair, Dallas, Madison, or Warren County

The majority of board membership shall be a citizen representative, refer to state tool EE http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/files/toolkit_tools/tool_ee.pdf for citizen definition.

Terms

Board membership terms shall be staggered 3 year terms.

Representation

Membership must include at least one representative from the following:

- ◆ business
- ◆ consumer
- ◆ faith
- ◆ education
- ◆ health
- ◆ human services

County Representation:

Ideally membership would consist of 3 members each from Adair, Dallas, Madison and Warren County and 1 at large representative for a total of 13 voting members. The Board will look for representation from all areas of the counties.

Board Member Application And Selection

A potential Board member shall submit a Board membership application to Empowerment Director and/or his/her designee. Upon receipt of an application for membership, the Empowerment Director and/or his/her designee shall submit the application to the Board at its next regular meeting, or at a special meeting if the call of the meeting includes notification that the application for membership is to be considered at that time. The Board will then vote on the application, and a simple majority of those present and voting, providing a quorum is present, will be sufficient to elect the applicant to membership which shall take effect immediately after the vote.

Board Membership Qualifications

All members of the Board shall reside or work in Adair, Dallas, Madison or Warren County. Criteria for selection of candidates will provide for fair representation of the counties served. The Board shall comply with federal, state, and local laws which prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, race, disability, creed, or national origin.

Board Member Resignation

Any member may resign from the Board at any time by submitting a letter of resignation to the Board, with resignation being effective at the time of the next regular meeting of the Board, or at such other time as may be set forth in the letter of resignation subsequent to the next meeting of the Board. Resignation shall not automatically absolve the member of any responsibilities associated with membership prior to the meeting of the Board at which said resignation is tendered. The Board may, however, absolve the member of responsibility for carrying out other

obligations of membership not fulfilled prior, or subsequent to, the time the resignation is submitted or received.

Board Member Removal

Failure to attend three consecutive meetings may result in expulsion. For good and sufficient reasons, including but not limited to failure to abide by all of the governing rules of the Board, a member may be expelled from membership. Action to expel a member may be commenced by any member of the Board at any meeting by stating the reason for commencing such action, and supported by one other member of the Board then in attendance. If a majority of the Board agrees with the decision to commence expulsion proceedings, the expulsion of the member will be placed on the agenda for the next regular Board meeting, or at the next special Board meeting, provided that the call of the meeting includes notification that the matter of expulsion of the member is to be considered at that time. Before final action is taken, the member recommended for expulsion, or the member's representative, shall be given an opportunity to appear before the Board and show cause why the member should not be expelled.

Conflict of Interest

A member of the Board, or significant other/family member, who may derive any intentional personal benefit, profit or gain, by reason of membership on the Board or for services contracted from the Board, shall disclose such interest to the Board and abstain from appropriate voting. The member's abstention from the vote and the reason for it will be recorded in the meeting minutes. Every Board member shall be required to sign a conflict of interest statement annually and/or when new Board members are approved. The conflict of interest policy is available and on file for Board members and the community.

Compensation

Board members shall serve without compensation. Members may be reimbursed for child care and travel expenses if funds are available.

Orientation

Prior to the first regular board meeting following their appointment, new members shall be provided with copies of the legislation (or summary), bylaws, annual reports, and other documentation that would be useful to Board members in carrying out their duties.

A Chronological Checklist When Switching Fiscal Agents

** provided by Dubuque County and based on experiences in that area:*

Notes: Although this checklist could be used chronologically, some of the steps are ongoing throughout the process. Many steps should be applicable to any area changing fiscal agents. However, be aware that Dubuque County Empowerment had become a nonprofit organization and was moving to becoming its own fiscal agent.

- **Ended Duties of Previous Fiscal Agent** – Once we knew that the relationship was ending, we seriously considered timing of ending the arrangement. Accounting for enough time for final work, we aimed for as close as possible to when the new fiscal agent would take over. We also evaluated what responsibilities we wanted the prior fiscal agent to cover as last tasks (we kept these as minimal as possible). We then worked with our Finance Committee to temporarily assume some tasks during the interim (only tasks that did not involve handling funds, deposits, checks, etc., since we wanted to maintain appropriate lines). We notified our program providers and contract holders of potential delays in payments and new procedures pending. We gave providers a final deadline for vouchers under the current system. In our area, we were changing agents right at year end. That is ideal timing, if possible. During the transition time, we kept close watch over check writing and bank statement activities in case of any concerns. We already do this regularly; however, during this period, we significantly increased the frequency since transitions could cause problems.
- **Changeover of Bank Accounts** – We worked closely with a bank representative to identify all uncashed checks on our old accounts: to track down uncashed checks or void as appropriate (see below); and keep old accounts open long enough to process any last checks. Note that there are Iowa laws concerning uncashed checks as unclaimed property. Contact the Iowa Treasurer's Office for more information. We also removed our old fiscal agent from the signature card ASAP, and made arrangements for the new signors to take over.
- **Start Up of New Accounts** – Again, we worked with a bank representative to open new accounts; make changes to ensure that our new set up (i.e., balance limits and account types) would meet FDIC requirements for coverage (our old accounts didn't); and complete any paperwork needed. Note that we were committed to ensuring that our accounts were fully covered under FDIC in case of any problems. As a result, this meant that we now are earning less interest than before (for us, we had to have one noninterest bearing account to qualify). Be aware that if changing to a fiscal agent that is a large organization and that places their accounts plus Empowerment accounts at the same bank, it is possible that Empowerment funds will not be covered by FDIC.
- **Changeover of Electronic Deposit Set Up** – We worked with Tami Foley and other state representatives to get our auto deposit arrangement changed. This took longer than expected. Due to some issues, we ended up with first quarter payments being sent in paper form. Tami was excellent to work with and did reminders and follow up for us. However, we found that ultimately the responsibility rested on our shoulders to find and work with the right state representatives to make this happen. Because we were a nonprofit becoming our own fiscal agent, the steps in the flow sheet on the Empowerment web site (for making this change) didn't reflect everything we needed to do. Start this step as soon as possible.
- **New Invoice Process** – We redesigned our vouchers with new fiscal agent info and shared this with all programs/contract holders. We also reviewed our voucher submission and payment process to determine any needed changes. Additionally, we reviewed Open Records Laws to ensure that we were meeting all requirements. One issue that we are still grappling with is storage and retrieval of past records held by our previous fiscal agent. Our

area ended up with nine large boxes of files still sitting in a corner. This is not the best space saving method, and it also is not secure for sensitive information (e.g., like social security numbers of contractors or credit card account numbers). We have looked into electronic file storage companies, but quotes are significantly high. That said, electronic storage would be the option of choice, if possible.

- **Monthly Financials** – We reviewed the software used for accounting, reports, etc., and selected a new program. We also redid the format of the monthly financial reports and changed all account numbers. Tasks here were time consuming, but once they were set up, things started running smoothly.
- **State Arrangements and Contracts** – We worked with the Office of Empowerment to get the new fiscal agent info to them. We also executed a new fiscal agent contract and took the opportunity to review using guidance from the latest tool from the State Office. We usually do that once a year under normal circumstances (unless something changes).
- **Insurance** – We took great care in ensuring that we had an appropriate fiscal agent bonding policy in place immediately. We also asked our insurance agent to review our needs and other policies to make sure our organization was covered in case of any risk and then change any policies, if necessary.

Sample Letter of Intent to Merge

To: Iowa Community Empowerment Board
From: XX Community Empowerment Area Board and YY Community Empowerment Area Board
RE: Letter of intent to merge

Date:

Dear Iowa Empowerment Board and Staff,

It is the intention of *XX CEA* and *YY CEA* to utilize Tool U as adopted by the IEB and to merge into one Empowerment Area. XX and YY are requesting your support and approval to move forward in this process.

A proposed merge between XX and YY is not an adverse response to conversations of restructuring from the LEAN Design event. It is a purposeful conversation and intention to be proactive. It is also a practical relationship that works best for our communities.

How will a merge between XX and YY Empowerment increase efficiency?

- XX and YY will increase efficiencies by pooling resources. Empowerment members recognize that there is strength in numbers and that each county can learn from one another.
- Coordinator expenses can and have been reduced by staffing one coordinator for both counties. Travel time and salary to attend meetings in Des Moines is no longer a two-person expense. XX was able to reduce the coordinator expense in their budget by \$3,700.00 as a result of YY sharing costs.
- Utilizing one fiscal agent has already put efficient and accountable fiscal practices into place. YY implemented a new contract for FY10 to retain fiscal services from the same organization that has provided high quality services to XX for 3 years.

Why does a merge make sense for XX and YY Co Empowerment?

- XX and YY counties are similar in size and demographics. The absence of unbalanced populations across county lines will minimize conflict and challenges in funding decisions as well as program transitions.
- Local Public Health Departments are critical partners for both Empowerment areas. Longstanding relationships have existed between the Public Health agencies and collaborative funding efforts are already in place through the Fluoride Varnish Program. XX County Public Health currently contracts with each empowerment area to provide fluoride varnish services to preschoolers throughout the counties. Collaboration also exists for multiple early childhood system building efforts through the Maternal Child Health program. Child Care Nurse Consultants are provided by each Public Health with funding from the Empowerment Areas.
- XX and YY took steps in May 2009 to share coordinator services cutting costs for both counties. A formal boundary change will reduce time needed to complete two sets of required reports and paperwork and will increase the time available to focus on system building that will benefit all children 0-5 in the new larger empowerment area.

XX and YY board members are aware of the challenges and changes before them and are empowered to lead the way. A successful merge will provide positive momentum for all empowerment areas facing changes in the next few years. Your recognition of this positive step

is appreciated. Your support will validate that local control is not a false pretense, but it is and will continue to be the foundation of Iowa Community Empowerment.

Sincerely,

Name
Program Coordinator
XX/YY Empowerment

Name
Chairperson
XX County Empowerment

Name
Vice Chairperson
YY County Empowerment

Process for Community Empowerment Area Boundary Change *Revised – 5/09*

Local community empowerment boards may want to change boundaries to either merge with other community empowerment boards or break into a smaller geographic area.

To promote quality and efficiency, the Iowa Empowerment Board encourages single county, rural boards to merge. However, the Iowa Empowerment Board does not encourage larger, multi-county boards to break apart and become smaller boards.

Any community empowerment board(s) considering a boundary change must use the following process:

Step 1. A thorough discussion between the Community Empowerment boards that are considering a boundary change must happen before submitting a letter of intent. The Iowa Empowerment Board must receive a letter of intent from the impacted Community Empowerment board no later than September 1st.

The letter of intent must include:

- Minutes of all Community Empowerment board meetings, including public forums and committee meetings, where there were discussions of a boundary change.
- A justification for requesting the boundary change. The justification must provide supporting documentation describing why a boundary change is in the best interest of children 0 - 5 and their families who live in the impacted areas.
- Documentation describing how the boundary change improves efficiency and effectiveness in the impacted areas.

The rationale for a boundary change must be compelling in order for the Iowa Empowerment Board to move to Step 3.

Step 2. The Iowa Empowerment Board will review the letter of intent and attached documentation at the next scheduled meeting to determine if the Community Empowerment board's request to change boundaries has merit.

- If the Community Empowerment board's request does not include documentation of thorough discussions about a boundary change, including public forums and committee meetings, with all impacted parties, the request does not move to Step 3.
- If the Community Empowerment board's request does not provide compelling evidence of the positive impact for children and families that will result from a boundary change, the request does not move to Step 3.
- If the Community Empowerment board's request does not provide compelling evidence of the potential efficiencies and effectiveness created by a boundary change, the request does not move to Step 3.

The Iowa Empowerment Board may form a subcommittee of its members to review the letter of intent and documentation and make a recommendation to the full Iowa Empowerment Board. The Board will seek legal counsel guidance for assistance.

Approved by Iowa Empowerment Board 10-07-2002/Updated 5/09

If the Iowa Empowerment Board determines that the Community Empowerment Area board's request meets all of the guidelines outlined above, the request moves to Step 3.

Step 3. The State Empowerment Team assigns a staff member(s) to the areas requesting a boundary change. The State Empowerment Team will provide technical assistance and/or mediation services to the impacted Community Empowerment Area board(s.)

As part of the technical assistance, the State Empowerment Team will explain implications of a boundary change, including fiscal resources and the designation process.

Step 4. The Office of Empowerment must receive an Application for Designation from the newly defined Community Empowerment Areas based on the boundary change no later than February 1st.

The application must include the following:

- A. A new Community Plan(s) that clearly describes the new geographic area.
- B. A board member matrix(s)
- C. Board bylaws
- D. A Transition Plan that describes:
 - Board operations through June 30th
 - Grant distribution through June 30th. Note: The Community Empowerment boards impacted must return all carry-forward funding to the Office of Empowerment.

All designation application documents must meet requirements in Iowa law and set in policy by the Iowa Empowerment Board.

Step 5. After receiving an application, the State Empowerment Team reviews it and completes a designation site visit. Based on the application and site visit, the State Empowerment Team provides a designation recommendation to the Iowa Empowerment Board.

Step 6. At the next scheduled Iowa Empowerment Board meeting, board members review the recommendation and decide on the request for designation.

Step 7. If the Iowa Empowerment Board approves the designation request, new boundaries are effective July 1st.

Techniques for Managing Conflict

It is important when dealing with conflict to be aware of the level of concern of each party. If the conflict is severe, then productivity of the effort may drop. If there are pieces of the conflict that are irrational, arriving at the best outcome will be difficult. In order to move to a solution that is good for all you must know where everyone is at the outset.

If there is mistrust between the parties, this is a challenge. Begin building trust by gathering information and then sharing it incrementally. Ask a lot of questions. Talking is not always sharing and each party must feel their views are valued. The process must be fair and ethical, and the information shared, accurate.

One of the biggest mistakes in negotiating conflict is not giving enough time to the effort. Often both sides begin with their feet firmly planted and then they realize as they work through the issues, they can come to an agreement.

There are four ways to handle a conflict.

1. Accommodation – just give in
Utilizing this strategy is easy. The conflict ends quickly. Often relationships are preserved and the other party may even remember to return the favor someday. It is unreasonable, however, to expect this too often.
2. Pressing – my way or the highway
This strategy becomes a test of wills waiting to see who will give in first. Threats, promises or arguments are used with little concern for the other party. There are times when this strategy would be appropriate, especially when compromise would be detrimental.
3. Avoidance – take no action
This is the most common response to conflict. Often those that choose this strategy think that the problem or situation may go away, or if the circumstance changes, a better option will appear. Sometimes it is chosen out of sheer exhaustion. Avoidance can be a good strategy if the conflict is trivial and neither party is that concerned with the outcome, or the cost is too high or risky. There is a risk, however, in avoiding the conflict too long. Those within the conflict may also view avoidance as indecisive, ineffective, or a sign of poor leadership thus jeopardizing the outcome.
4. Negotiation – working together to develop an outcome
This is a process that often involves time. Each party wants something that is to some extent under the control of the other. It will take compromise and collaboration to reach the final outcome. The first principle of negotiation is to realize that you may not reach an agreement on everything. Each party should go into the process with a target or goal. It should be challenging yet attainable, thus motivating both sides toward an agreement.

Preparing is key to success in handling these difficult situations. Following are ways to prepare for the task.

1. Each party should determine their goals, and even their bottom line, before beginning the meetings.
2. Think about those things likely to come up in the conversations.
3. Develop your perspective on the importance of those issues.
4. Learn the number of people that will initially be involved.
5. Determine timelines.
6. Determine the questions to gather information prior to and during the meeting.

Refer to other sections of the Merger Guide for additional preparation steps.

What's Your Conflict Management Style?

Instructions: Listed below are 15 statements. Each strategy provides a possible strategy for dealing with a conflict. Give each a numerical value (i.e., 1=Always, 2=Very often, 3=Sometimes, 4= Not very often, 5= Rarely, if ever.)

Don't answer as you think you should, answer as you actually behave.

- _____ a. I argue my case with peers, colleagues and coworkers to demonstrate the merits of the position I take.
- _____ b. I try to reach compromises through negotiation.
- _____ c. I attempt to meet the expectation of others.
- _____ d. I seek to investigate issues with others in order to find solutions that are mutually acceptable.
- _____ e. I am firm in resolve when it comes to defending my side of the issue.
- _____ f. I try to avoid being singled out, keeping conflict with others to myself.
- _____ g. I uphold my solutions to problems.
- _____ h. I compromise in order to reach solutions.
- _____ i. I trade important information with others so that problems can be solved together.
- _____ j. I avoid discussing my differences with others.
- _____ k. I try to accommodate the wishes of my peers and colleagues.
- _____ l. I seek to bring everyone's concerns out into the open in order to resolve disputes in the best possible way.
- _____ m. I put forward middle positions in efforts to break deadlocks.
- _____ n. I accept the recommendations of colleagues, peers, and coworkers.
- _____ o. I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself.

Scoring: The 15 statements you just read are listed below under five categories. Each category contains the letters of three statements. Record the number you placed next to each statement. Calculate the total under each category.

Style				Total
Competing/Forcing Shark	a. _____	e. _____	g. _____	_____
Collaborating Owl	d. _____	i. _____	l. _____	_____
Avoiding Turtle	f. _____	j. _____	o. _____	_____
Accommodating Teddy Bear	c. _____	k. _____	n. _____	_____
Compromising Fox	b. _____	h. _____	m. _____	_____

Results: My dominant style is _____ (Your **LOWEST** score)
 and my back-up style is _____ (Your second Lowest score)

Conflict Management Styles

The Competing Shark

- Sharks use a forcing or competing conflict management style
- sharks are highly goal-oriented
- Relationships take on a lower priority
- Sharks do not hesitate to use aggressive behavior to resolve conflicts
- Sharks can be autocratic, authoritative, and uncooperative; threatening and intimidating
- Sharks have a need to win; therefore others must lose, creating win-lose situations
- Advantage: If the shark's decision is correct, a better decision without compromise can result
- Disadvantage: May breed hostility and resentment toward the person using it
- Appropriate times to use a Shark style
 - when conflict involves personal differences that are difficult to change
 - when fostering intimate or supportive relationships is not critical
 - when others are likely to take advantage of noncompetitive behaviour
 - when conflict resolution is urgent; when decision is vital in crisis
 - when unpopular decisions need to be implemented

The Avoiding Turtle

- Turtles adopt an avoiding or withdrawing conflict management style
- Turtles would rather hide and ignore conflict than resolve it; this leads them uncooperative and unassertive
- Turtles tend to give up personal goals and display passive behavior creating lose-lose situations
- Advantage: may help to maintain relationships that would be hurt by conflict resolution
- Disadvantage: Conflicts remain unresolved, overuse of the style leads to others walking over them
- Appropriate times to use a Turtle Style:
 - when the stakes are not high or issue is trivial
 - when confrontation will hurt a working relationship
 - when there is little chance of satisfying your wants
 - when disruption outweighs benefit of conflict resolution
 - when gathering information is more important than an immediate decision
 - when others can more effectively resolve the conflict
 - when time constraints demand a delay\

The Accommodating Teddy Bear

- Teddy bears use a smoothing or accommodating conflict management style with emphasis on human relationships
- Teddy bears ignore their own goals and resolve conflict by giving into others; unassertive and cooperative creating a win-lose (bear is loser) situation
- Advantage: Accommodating maintains relationships
- Disadvantage: Giving in may not be productive, bear may be taken advantage of
- Appropriate times to use a Teddy Bear Style
 - when maintaining the relationship outweighs other considerations
 - when suggestions/changes are not important to the accommodator
 - when minimizing losses in situations where outmatched or losing

- when time is limited or when harmony and stability are valued

The Compromising Fox

- Foxes use a compromising conflict management style; concern is for goals and relationships
- Foxes are willing to sacrifice some of their goals while persuading others to give up part of theirs
- Compromise is assertive and cooperative-result is either win-lose or lose-lose
- Advantage: relationships are maintained and conflicts are removed
- Disadvantage: compromise may create less than ideal outcome and game playing can result
- Appropriate times to use a Fox Style
 - when important/complex issues leave no clear or simple solutions
 - when all conflicting people are equal in power and have strong interests in different solutions
 - when there are no time restraints

The Collaborating Owl

- Owls use a collaborating or problem confronting conflict management style valuing their goals and relationships
- Owls view conflicts as problems to be solved finding solutions agreeable to all sides (win-win)
- Advantage: both sides get what they want and negative feelings eliminated
- Disadvantage: takes a great deal of time and effort
- Appropriate times to use an Owl Style
 - when maintaining relationships is important
 - when time is not a concern
 - when peer conflict is involved
 - when trying to gain commitment through consensus building
 - when learning and trying to merge differing perspectives