

# National Professional Development Center on Inclusion

Helping states achieve an integrated professional development system that supports high quality inclusion

## Creating Participatory Meetings

### **Before The Meeting:**

- Identify a planning team, representing key groups, to plan the meeting.
- Determine key individuals that you need at the meeting keeping the size manageable for maximum participation and interaction.
- Develop agenda and goals for the meeting; in addition, generate questions that you hope are answered by the meeting.
- Determine which constituent groups (e.g., state agency representatives, family representatives) may have insight into certain questions. Identify a small number of representatives of those groups. Prior to the meeting, ask them to develop a collective response to the questions of interest. (Note: meeting convener should provide infrastructure to facilitate the group(s) gathering—reserve meeting room or conference call telephone line.)
- Designate planning team members who will be available prior to the meeting for questions. Provide their contact information.
- Determine if there is information needed from attendees prior to the meeting. Request that information from them and compile in advance for all attendees.
- Develop a list of all attendees including contact information and distribute to attendees in advance of the meeting.
- Distribute agenda including topics/questions to be discussed and logistics to all attendees in advance of the meeting.

### **During The Meeting:**

- Meet in a room conducive to discussion (i.e. all participants can see each other, space for small group work to occur).
- If possible provide networking time with light refreshments and have the planning team focused on meeting attendees and introducing them to each other.
- Provide nametags and table tents to help attendees identify each other and call each other by name. For inclusive atmosphere—do not focus on titles, degrees, etc.—just names. Also, for accessibility—make the print LARGE.
- Keep presentations of information to the group limited to 20 minute blocks of time. Intersperse presentations with small and large group discussion and other activities that allow for reflection and processing of information.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to share feedback (e.g., verbally and in the form of an evaluation tool) at various points in the meeting.

### **After The Meeting:**

- Continue the dialogue with attendees. Solicit afterthoughts, additional insights that came after the meeting.
- Provide notes and documents from the meeting to all participants in a timely manner.
- Summarize feedback about the meeting and make available to all participants.
- Describe how information generated by the meeting participants will be used or is being used.