

11. ELCAA: Getting Buy-in and Moving Forward

Communication with your boss, bosses, or board is a key part of your Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis (ELCAA). Their buy-in will help you do a more thorough ELCAA and implement the good ideas it inspires. Here are some helpful hints:

Sell your boss on the value of taking time to do an ELCAA. Highlight the benefits of making connections with potential partners, of getting feedback from stakeholders, of developing your own skills in asset analysis that may help the library do a more general analysis, and of positioning the library more firmly as expert on early literacy. Provide the full scope of what you intend to do.

Desensitize for your boss by talking early, and when nothing is imminent, about the changes that may need to be made. Mention that we can expect to identify changes that need making, including possibly policies. Try finding out if the library as an organization is prepared to change, and how you might help facilitate changes. What would be an expected time frame to implement changes? Is the boss/board gung-ho to transform, or is there some fear and/or reluctance? This knowledge will help you figure out how to communicate and how much to expect.

Talk about the ELCAA and your progress often! Provide regular updates in written form also; if you're not the director, your boss can cut and paste from them to share information with board. You might make these updates in your monthly report, or in ad hoc written reports with a diplomatic note suggesting that your boss may want to share this information with the board.

Make sure your boss knows which community agencies you're reaching out to, and what connections you're making for the library. Bosses do not like surprises, and your boss may be able to help you with some connections.

Keep a log for this project. Include the contacts you make, the relationships you initiate, the new information you gather - anything you're doing that helps the library. This will help you when you are finished and need to summarize your results for the State ELCAA evaluation (see handout 13 "Template for an Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis")

Share successes from incremental changes you make. Have your boss witness the successes if possible. If not, take photos or videos and share those.

Tell stories. What are you observing that backs up the data you're gathering? What are you observing from the changes you've made?

Express enthusiasm and pride - enthusiasm about making the library's service to young families even better, pride in the small accomplishments along the way. Sharing those allows other staff, administration or board members to share that pride and feel good about the library (and your accomplishments) too.

Enjoy the journey!