

Continuum of Collaboration

- Another way we can clarify the definition of the term “collaborative consultation” is to consider individual relationships with teachers as being on a continuum of reciprocity and trust.
- At one end is *co-activity*, which is the same as adult parallel play. You spend time with similar activities or in shared space, but seldom exchange ideas, explain plans, or seek each other for support or feedback.
- On the second point is *cooperation*. You arrange schedules, discuss some possible goals that revolve around communication in general rather than specific students or teaching strategies. You might be cautious or not really share your personal views or opinions. You are agreeable to sharing general information, but hesitant to share materials, equipment, or time. You may still be suspicious of the other’s motives.
- The third point along the continuum is *coordination*, which is characterized by group cohesion, where you discuss specific students, share personal opinions, and discuss instructional strategies. You begin to take risks in accepting the other’s perspective or suggestions. You begin to trust each other as your joint activities prove successful and minimally inconvenient. You have clearly defined responsibilities, but you do not role-release or assume each other’s responsibilities.
- The last point is *collaboration*, which is characterized by informal networking, and a high degree of respect and trust. You have defined the necessary roles and alternate in taking the lead as appropriate to the situation. You have a sense of mutual ownership and responsibility to the entire program. You expect and welcome new ideas. The “expert” is difficult to identify as you exchange roles and work together. Data-keeping and program-tracking have become natural and essential parts of the process.