Children's Ministry "Types" of Leadership Communication
When and how to communicate with the fellow leaders
### Steve Alley

General Guidelines

There should be a "dance" between the CM leaders that will ensure that nobody feels "left out" or "in the dark." Ideally, a CM leader shouldn't "smother" or "micro-manage" the creativity and leadership of another CM leader while still remaining true to his/her position. Here is a picture of the "zones" of the CM leadership team. These "zones" will affect how communications are carried out.

Mutually Shared Zone

This "central core" zone builds the leadership team. It is the zone in which plans are made, issues are solved, prayers are shared, and dreams are formed. It is rich with communication, support, and encouragement. This zone includes:

- Spiritual needs/development of team
- All-team training
- Team development ideas/challenges/plans
- Parent issues (complaints, needs, etc.)
- Vision-related plans or adjustments
- Expectations from Pastor John or Pastor Mike
- Safety or security issues
- All-team programming needs or plans
- Children issues
- Personal needs of leadership team
- Mutual respect, sacrifice
- Over-communication
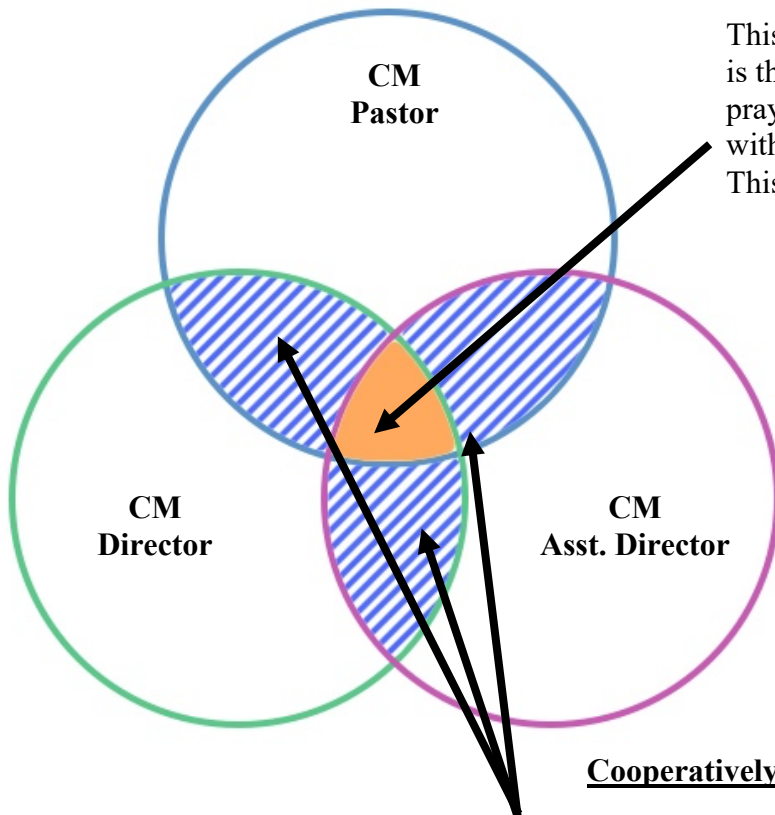
Cooperatively Shared Zones

These zones are areas rich in professional respect, courteous communication, and shared energy. These zones might include:

- Shared programming needs/issues
- "Just so you know" communication
- "What do you think?" questions
- Personal encouragement
- Advice on team issues (when asked)
- Shared energy/support (How can I help?)

The two "types" of healthy communication between the CM leaders are: "**Inform**" and "**Inquire**."

The general rule regarding when to contact or inform another member of the CM leadership team is, "When in doubt, check it out." It is always better to err on too much communication than too little. It is vital that communication goes through the correct channels as much as possible. Each member of the CM leadership team should communicate "to and through" the person under and over him/her directly. To "level jump" in communication can lead to a confusion or "corrosion" of trust.

Most of the day-to-day activities that you will direct will only require that the CM leader over you be **informed**. Some more significant actions or decisions will demand that you **inquire** with the CM leader over you for direction. This process, or "dance" is a two-way process. Each CM leader must also respect the CM leader under him/her by determining the status (Inform or Inquire) of a decision as well. The regular CM staff meetings will serve as a great time to do most of the "informing" or "inquiring."

The definition of a "significant action" or a "significant decision" will be something that is developed over time. Generally, an action or decision is considered "significant" when it involves a major change in operation or personnel.

For the sake of clarity, here is a list of "typical" ministry actions or decisions. The "significant" actions or decisions demand that you **"Inquire"** of the CM leader over you for input or advice and are labeled yellow. The other actions or decisions are labeled green because they are not significant and only demand that you **"Inform"** the CM leader over you. This doesn't mean that you can't ask for input or ideas on the actions or decisions that are green; but you generally don't have to.

Actions or Decisions By Category

"Inform" (let the CM leader over you know what is going on)

"Inquire" (ask for input or advice from the CM leader over you before a decision is made)

1. Team Development
    a. Recruiting
    b. Clearing new volunteers (ministry applications, fingerprinting)
    c. Placing new team members within the team
    d. Training
    e. Apprenticing new team members
    f. Rotation
    g. Movement of team members between or within departments
    h. Team member issues / challenges
    i. Removal of team member

2. Leadership Issues
    a. Establishing new coordinator
    b. Coordinator complaints or ideas
    c. Coordinator removal or leaving
    d. Sub leadership within department (supervisors, etc.)

3. Policies / Procedures
    a. Regular communication regarding existing policies/procedures (training and refreshers)
    b. Establishing of new policies/procedures
    c. Changes to existing policies/procedures

4. Curriculum / Scripts
    a. Re-ordering curriculum or scripts
    b. Shifting curriculum within departments (existing curriculum)
    c. Changing curriculum or scripts (department, program, or whole ministry)
    d. Issues / problems with the curriculum/scripts (complaints, ineffective, etc.)

5. Programming

a. Maintenance/supervision of the existing programs
b. Evaluation of the existing programs
c. Creation of new programs
d. Ending of existing programs

6. Financial Activities
   a. Purchase of regular supplies
   b. Purchase of new supplies (small, classroom or program needs)
   c. Purchase of new furniture or equipment
   d. Program-related expenditures (food, equipment, entrance fees, etc.)
   e. Printing / copies
   f. Reimbursement of team member expenditures
   g. Purchasing of existing curriculum
   h. Purchasing of new curriculum
   i. Proposing new budget
   j. Maintaining and tracking current budget

7. Security Issue
   a. Lost child (deal with issue immediately and get in contact with CM leader over you)
   b. Intruder (deal with issue immediately and get in contact with CM leader over you)
   c. Upset parent who refuses to abide with check-in policies (deal with issue immediately and get in contact with CM leader over you)

8. Facility Uses
   a. Regular service-based room use
   b. Changes to regular service-based room use
   c. Facility or stage repair
   d. Additions to facility or stage
   e. Changes to signage

9. Parent / Child Issues
   a. Upset parents (deal with it right away on site)
   b. Injured child (minor injury)
   c. Injured child (major injury – need for medical attention or transportation to hospital)
   d. Child discipline issue (deal with it right away on site)
   e. Parent comments or suggestions
   f. Injuries
   g. Special needs child issues
   h. Parent support or training

10. Administrative Issues
    a. Communications with the senior pastor
    b. Communications with the associate pastor
    c. Communications with the campus pastor.