Community Implementation Guide
A Framework for Community Action

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MAKING CHILDREN A NATIONAL PRIORITY: Community Implementation Guide

INITIATING

IMPLEMENTING

INVIGORATING
Introduction

“Imagine an America where every child is healthy and safe and where all children develop to their potential,” invites the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) in Making Children a National Priority: A Framework for Community Action. The framework presents a set of organizing principles designed to challenge communities to think and act in ways that ensure that all children are safe, healthy, and thriving.

Although most children, youth, and families in America are doing well despite the challenges confronting them, a significant proportion remain at risk of harm. Society denies too many children of color, recent immigrants, and children in impoverished families and communities meaningful opportunities for healthy development.

The extent to which all of America’s children are healthy, safe, and thriving will depend, in large part, on actions taken in local communities. We have learned that our existing formal service systems cannot provide all or even most of the nurturing, education, and support that children need to become healthy, vital, contributing members of society. Communities, with their unique networks of informal and formal associations, play a vital role in addressing complex problems that neither government agencies nor the private sector can hope to resolve alone.

Helping children grow into healthy, resilient adults requires that partnerships of citizens, parents, professionals, and policymakers implement comprehensive, collaborative approaches. This is a tall order that thousands of communities across America have taken on.
Purpose
The purpose of this Guide is not to offer a rigid prescription for community change, but rather to provide ideas, resources, and tools that can add value to communities’ efforts to

• foster a long-term, community-wide commitment to nurturing children and youth;

• engage families, youth, neighborhoods, service systems, and other stakeholders in collaborative partnerships;

• assess community assets and needs;

• determine how well children’s universal needs are being met;

• build community capacities;

• establish sustainable funding and action strategies;

• document successes; and

• use performance monitoring to improve results.

The Guide builds on current knowledge from many community-based initiatives and highlights a variety of promising, practical approaches to developing and sustaining comprehensive community-based initiatives. It is not a comprehensive manual, but it functions as a sourcebook pointing the way to what we consider to be the best available community action resources.

This Guide is the first in a series of CWLA publications that will promote shared community leadership and mutual community responsibility in meeting the needs of every child. It is a practical companion to the monograph, Making Children a National Priority: A Framework for Community Action, which presented guiding principles and concepts.2

The Six-I Community Action Model
The process of community action is best envisioned as spiraling, rather than linear, because community partnerships frequently move forward on several fronts simultaneously, only to turn back to address unresolved issues from new perspectives. For purposes of clarity, we present the Six-I Community Action Model, which includes six community action phases in order, but we realize that they are not strictly sequential.
These community action phases are based on the rich experiences of many community-based initiatives described by diverse analysts and advocates. What makes them unique is that they incorporate Framework concepts and principles into tools and resources that communities can apply to their efforts to meet the universal needs of children.

Following this Introduction, Chapter 1 provides an overview of the key elements of CWLA’s Framework for Community Action, including guiding principles and the five universal needs of children. It discusses the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to community action aimed at improving children’s lives.

Chapters 2 through 7 each focus on one of the six community action phases, describing the purpose and tasks of the phase and including an array of implementation tools, such as checklists, surveys, and diagrams. The text also includes recommended resources for further exploration. We will apply Framework concepts to community action efforts throughout each of these chapters.

Chapter 8, “Selected Community Initiatives,” describes 27 promising community initiatives. These efforts show how concepts can be transformed into actions that benefit children, families, and communities. For each initiative highlighted, many more community success stories are not included.

The Appendix includes several worksheets and other implementation aids that were too lengthy to include in the chapters on community action phases.

**Intended Audience**

The primary audience for this Guide is people in facilitative and leadership roles who are deeply committed to community action as a way to improve the well-being of children and youth. These people include neighborhood leaders, faith community leaders, elected officials, planners, consultants, and staff in community organizations and public and private agencies.

**How to Use this Guide**

You can use this Guide to develop and implement new initiatives or to enhance existing initiatives. Readers will be at different stages in their community action efforts, so please consult those sections that are most relevant to your goals and concerns. Although we encourage you to read the entire Guide, it is designed to enable you to skip around to sections of greatest interest.

Throughout the Guide, we have made efforts to avoid prescriptive statements. Instead, we provide summary details and examples. Please use or modify the material and resources presented here to better fit your community and complement your existing collaborative efforts.
The Guide contains references to relevant publications, organizations, and community initiatives, giving you many options for further exploration. You can also find additional information regarding CWLA’s Framework for Community Action as well as a guide to resource organizations on CWLA’s website at http://www.cwla.org/whowhat/Framework.htm. The resource organizations section of the website contains a list of organizations that can provide information, technical assistance, training, or funding to assist communities engaged in comprehensive initiatives to support children, youth, and families. The site includes websites and contact information for each resource organization, as well as a brief description of its mission and services.

This Guide is a sourcebook for community action and a resource for community education, professional development, or self-study purposes. Whether you are a novice or a highly experienced practitioner, we hope that you will find it useful.
CWLA’s Framework for Community Action is a set of organizing principles that challenge all of us to make children a national and community priority. The Framework’s major concepts include its vision, the five universal needs of children and youth, its guiding principles, and the roles that key groups of people in any community can play as they work individually and in partnership to ensure bright futures for all children.

The Vision: Safe, Healthy, and Thriving Children

The Framework envisions an America where every child is healthy and safe and develops to his or her fullest potential with the support of a nurturing family and a strong community. The Framework’s ambitious vision is grounded in respect for the diverse communities where children and families live and echoes the goals of many national, state, and community-based initiatives being organized in behalf of children.

Transforming this vision into reality requires embracing it with the commitment to achieve measurable, positive outcomes that reflect the needs of children and families in their communities.

Children’s Universal Needs

At the heart of the Framework is a set of five universal needs that are closely interrelated and that must be met for our children to be safe, healthy, and thriving. They include:
• “The Basics”: At the most fundamental level, children require proper nutrition, economic security, adequate shelter and clothing, education, and primary and preventive health and mental health care.

• Relationships: Close, nurturing relationships with parents, kin, and other caregivers allow and encourage children and young people to grow and thrive. Caring relationships with community members, including neighbors, coaches, teachers, and faith community leaders and members, strengthen social and relationship skills, improve self-mastery, and enhance self-esteem. Good relationships among children and youth themselves reinforce healthy behaviors and increase positive learning opportunities.

• Opportunities: Providing a childhood full of experiences and opportunities that motivate and equip children to succeed is the collective responsibility of individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities. Children and youth need opportunities to develop their talents and skills, to contribute to their families and communities, and to make positive connections to their cultures, traditions, and spiritual resources. Children with early indications of physical, cognitive, or emotional disabilities must be provided with early assessment and intervention, to prevent later, more serious problems that can unnecessarily limit their long-range potential.

• Safety: Keeping children safe from abuse and neglect by their caregivers, as well as from witnessing or being victimized by family, school, or community violence, makes it much less likely that they will become either victims or perpetrators of such violence in the future. By also protecting children from the harms of discrimination, media violence, Internet victimization, environmental toxins, and accidental injury, we increase their likelihood for success.

• Healing: When we are unable to protect children, we must do all that we can to ease the impact of the harm they have suffered. Helping children and youth to heal involves ensuring their immediate and ongoing safety; supplying immediate and continuing emotional support; assessing the need for and providing medical, mental health, and other needed services; and, in some cases, making amends through restorative justice practices.3

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The Five Universal Needs of Children

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<td>Meet Basic Needs</td>
<td>Ensure Nurturing Relationships</td>
<td>Provide Opportunities for Optimal Development</td>
<td>Protect from Harm</td>
<td>Ease the Impact of Harm</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Equality</td>
<td>• Nurturing relationships with parents, kin, and other adults and children</td>
<td>• Opportunities for early childhood development, development of school-age children, and positive youth development</td>
<td>• Protection from family violence, school and community violence, media violence and Internet victimization, discrimination, accidental injury and death, and environmental toxins</td>
<td>• Protection, care, and support in response to trauma as well as ongoing protection, care, and support</td>
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<td>• Economic security and stability</td>
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Every child and youth possesses all of these needs, whether they live at home, on the streets, or in a juvenile detention facility. To meet these needs for all children and youth in a community requires that many people participate in multifaceted, comprehensive approaches guided by a common set of principles.

Parents, agencies, systems, neighborhoods, and communities can use the five universal needs as an organizing principle to think comprehensively about children’s well-being, build bridges between programs and systems, strategize improvements, and measure progress.

**Guiding Principles**

Nine core principles guide the *Framework for Community Action:*4

• **Supporting families:** Children grow best in families. By supporting families in nurturing their children, professionals and community members can help to ensure that parents, other relatives, and caregivers have the skills and resources to raise healthy and well-adapted children.

• **Promoting prevention:** Providing help to children and families to prevent problems before they occur is a sound social and fiscal policy. Programs and practices that nurture and protect children in their earliest development, that prevent abuse and neglect, and that detect and intervene at the earliest possible indication of risk should be available to all families.

• **Advancing social justice:** All children, regardless of gender, ability, economic status, and ethnic, racial, spiritual, and cultural background, have an equal right to have their universal needs met. All community partners can advocate for the ideals and values of social justice both locally and globally.

• **Working collaboratively:** When people come together, collective capacities emerge that individual partners do not possess. Communities can harness this synergy to solve shared problems and work toward the common good.

• **Respecting and valuing diversity:** Diverse cultures, traditions, and perspectives are sources of strength and creativity that community partners can draw upon to nurture healthy families and children.

• **Building capacity:** By recognizing and nurturing the assets and strengths of children, youth, families, and communities, we tap into sources of energy and creativity that have the greatest potential for meeting children’s needs and encouraging their optimal growth. Consciously developing individual, group, and community capacity strengthens everyone.
• **Nurturing leadership:** Leadership requires dedication, passion, and a willingness to take risks. It cannot be conferred simply by election or appointment to a position of authority, but rather comes from those willing and able to inspire and guide others to get things done in behalf of families and children.

• **Using evidence-based strategies:** Applying knowledge of factors and strategies that contribute to or impede healthy human development can help community partners to design and implement policies, practices, and programs that are effective in helping children to thrive.

• **Measuring results:** Using clear outcome measures to guide and evaluate our efforts increases the likelihood that our work will result in positive results for children, youth, and families.

**People in Partnership**

People are at the heart of a community’s ability to ensure safety and well-being for all children. Everyone has a stake in the healthy development of children, and all of us must work together as partners to protect and nurture children. These five groups of people working in partnership can ensure futures filled with positive potential for all children:

• **Parents, caregivers, and families:** Healthy families and supportive parents are crucial to children’s well-being, shaping their values and behaviors in enduring ways. Communities must encourage and support caregivers in meeting the needs of their children and youth. Communities also benefit from parents’ participation in and leadership of community initiatives dedicated to raising healthy, thriving children.

• **Children and youth:** Recognizing that children and youth are resilient, with many assets and strengths, community partners can work with them to nurture their talents and to provide them with opportunities to serve and transform their communities.

• **Neighbors and members of communities:** All adults must share the responsibility for nurturing and supporting children and families in their communities. As coaches, mentors, neighbors, employers, and members of faith communities, people can help to ensure children’s healthy development and safety. By working together as members and leaders of community-based collaboratives, community residents can support comprehensive strategies that will strengthen families and help all children reach their full potentials.
- People working in service agencies, institutions, or systems: Professionals, natural helpers, and volunteers who work for public service agencies have specialized skills and talents essential to the success of community partnerships’ work in behalf of children and youth. They can also act as conveners, catalysts, and facilitators for a wide range of community change efforts.

- People who influence laws, traditions, culture, and society: Elected officials and other policymakers, business executives, and spiritual, social, and scientific leaders all exert considerable influence on how our communities shape and support the growth of children and youth. These individuals can ensure the safety and well-being of children by supporting community-based initiatives that encourage local creativity and accountability.

In the next six chapters, we will apply these major Framework concepts to each of the Community Action Phases.
When is the right time to begin a comprehensive community initiative or to broaden a successful single-issue community initiative to a more comprehensive effort? What are the benefits of taking a comprehensive approach? Who should lead and facilitate the effort?

**Purpose and Key Activities**

The purpose of the Initiating phase is to assess community readiness for a comprehensive initiative to improve child well-being and engage diverse stakeholders in the effort. Key initiating activities include:

- assessing the community’s readiness to begin a comprehensive initiative to improve child and family well-being or to broaden an existing initiative;
- creating a community leadership team to design, steer, and support the initiative; and
- explaining the rationale for taking a comprehensive approach.

**Assess Community Readiness**

Community action initiatives addressing child well-being sometimes develop in the wake of tragedy, but most emerge in response to welcome changes in the political, cultural, economic, or demographic character of a community. Any significant change, whether positive or negative, presents a challenge to the status quo that can unify and motivate community members and provide an opportunity for healthy reassessment. Many comprehensive community initiatives related to child well-being evolve from single-issue efforts that are successful.
When deciding if the time is right to launch a comprehensive initiative or broaden an existing initiative, gauge the community’s readiness to embark on this challenging enterprise. Consider the factors that foundations often evaluate when determining whether to fund comprehensive community-based reform efforts:

- community leadership,
- commitment,
- stability,
- management and professional capacity, and
- the availability of political, social, and financial resources focused on the initiative.6

As you work to assemble a community leadership team, you will develop a better sense of your community’s readiness.

Create a Community Leadership Team

A well-balanced and committed community leadership team is needed to design and steer the initiative. The team should include committed sponsors of the effort, one or more neutral facilitators, and team members who reflect the diversity of the community. This box will help you create your leadership team.

Engage Committed Sponsors

Sponsors get the ball rolling, generate interest, recruit partners for the initiative, and set up and chair the first few meetings. They will continue to play an active role in coordinating or funding the effort.

A standing collaborative, a community group, a public or private agency, an elected official, or any combination of these may sponsor the effort. In most cases, it is best to build on what is already in place and working. The most successful sponsors:

- have a positive image in the community,
- are seen as neutral,
- have the ability to build trust, and
- are able to inspire commitment.

Questions to Ask When Creating the Team

When assembling the community leadership team, keep in mind the following questions:7

- What is “the community”—a neighborhood, set of neighborhoods, the city, the county, or the region?
- Who do we need to get things done?
- What is the makeup of the community demographically, culturally, and in terms of values and perspectives?
- Who can speak with authority on the challenges we are seeking to meet?
- How can we ensure that families, youth, and other consumers of public services are represented?
- Who do we need to help us raise funds and obtain other resources?
A realistic assessment of these attributes is vital. If you as a potential sponsor do not embody all of these qualities, consider inviting others who complement your strengths to serve as cosponsors or consider participating as a partner rather than as a sponsor.

Public child welfare agencies may not be the best sponsors, because they often do not have a positive community image. They can, however, be wonderful partners, bringing valuable skills in areas such as training, advocacy, grants management, evaluation, and problem solving.¹

**Choose Skilled, Neutral Facilitators**

Engaging one or more facilitators who are skilled, committed, and neutral is of utmost importance to the success of the initiative. The facilitators work closely with the sponsors to design and manage the community initiative. Perceived neutrality is vital because an external facilitator who is not an employee or contractor of one of the partner organizations and who is not seen as having a strong bias or a vested interest is usually:

- more free to consistently set limits as needed with all partners,
- more able to use humor to neutralize tension,
- more easily trusted by group members,
- seen as more credible and fair, and
- more able to ask difficult questions and intervene fairly in conflicts and turf battles.

Interview potential facilitators and check their references to ensure that they possess the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to design, facilitate, and manage the effort.

Search your community for skilled facilitators who are perceived as neutral. If money is a problem, consider swapping the services of a skilled facilitator from your agency or community for the services of a skilled facilitator from a nearby community.

Another option is to call on the skills of an expert facilitator from another city or state. The expert can either cofacilitate with a local facilitator or coach him or her on site and by phone. This approach builds local capacity by enabling the local facilitator to learn new skills.

**Recruit Community Leadership Team Members**

If the community leadership team is a new group, aim for recruiting 12 members, keeping it small to ensure that relationship building and group decisionmaking are more easily facilitated. Team members can recommend additional people to recruit at the first meeting, and you will engage many
more people in the initiative as it develops. If the leadership team is a standing collaborative group, assess the need to add new partners to better address the challenges of the new initiative. Either way, ensure that the team includes at least one member from each of the following Framework for Community Action “people and partnerships” groups:

- **Parents, caregivers, and families:** Parents and other family members are natural advocates for their children. They, more than anyone else, have the determination and dedication needed to improve their children’s lives. If given the opportunity and necessary supports, they have the potential to be strong advocates for all children. When organized and empowered, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other family members can form a strong constituency and can contribute as full partners in planning and implementing efforts to make children a community priority.

- **Children and youth:** Youth are the best at articulating how they feel and what they need. Recruit youth to the community leadership team who reflect the diversity of the community, bringing varied perspectives and opinions. Approach them as equal and respected partners who can bring invaluable contributions to the partnership. Contact leaders of school- and community-based youth groups for recommendations. Meet with these groups to listen to their ideas and concerns and discuss the initiative.

- **Neighbors and community members:** Neighbors and members of congregations, civic associations, and service organizations can also contribute to the community leadership team. Many people are willing to help but need concrete information regarding how to do so. They also need to feel comfortable that they will be regarded as equal partners, not as second-class citizens or token representatives. It may take some time to build relationships with them, gain their trust, and convince them that the proposed partnership will be mutually beneficial.

- **People in service agencies, institutions, and systems:** Representatives from many private and public agencies, institutions, and systems can make significant contributions to the effort. Consider only executives and others with decisionmaking power as community leadership team partners in the early stages of the initiative. Only they can make commitments of human, fiscal, and material resources from their organizations. As the initiative progresses, others from different levels of these agencies and organizations can participate.

  Heed the advice of Michael Winer and Karen Ray:

  *Our first thought is usually to invite the biggest, oldest, or richest organizations. They can be very helpful and they are often in the middle of most major activities in the community. But because of this, they are sometimes part of the problem. So, choose carefully. Choose those organizations that can be part of the solution.*
People and Partnerships: Skills and Resources

All of the people listed below are involved in meeting the needs of children in the community. Draw from these groups as you assemble the leadership team. Broaden their involvement throughout the initiative by tapping their passion, skills, and resources.

- **Parents, Caregivers, and Families**
  - **Potential skills and resources:** Leadership; immediate access to residents; knowledge of community residents, assets, resources, and problems; grassroots connections; and voting power.
  - **Whom to consider:** Parents, foster parents, kin caregivers, and child care providers.

- **Children and Youth**
  - **Potential skills and resources:** Leadership; immediate access to residents; knowledge of community, residents, assets, resources, and problems; grassroots connections; energy; creativity; and spirit.
  - **Whom to consider:** College students, high school students, juvenile delinquents, foster youth.

- **Neighbors and Community Members**
  - **Potential skills and resources:** Leadership; immediate access to residents; knowledge of community, residents, assets, resources, and problems; grassroots connections; and voting power.
  - **Whom to consider:** Members of neighborhood watch groups, neighborhood associations, neighborhood collaboratives (e.g., Family to Family), cultural or folkloric centers, community centers, fraternal clubs, sports groups, fellowships, hobby clubs, or civic improvement groups (i.e., Kiwanis, Lions Clubs, Girl Scouts).

- **People in Service Agencies, Institutions, and Systems**
  - **Potential skills and resources:** Leadership; in-kind resources; skills and knowledge about community members, resources, and local problems; technical skills and substantive knowledge; control or input regarding allocation of funds; and community networks.
  - **Whom to consider:** Employees of criminal justice agencies, planning agencies, schools, public and private social services, parks and recreation departments, courts, cultural or folkloric centers, public housing or transit agencies, public health services, mental health and counseling services, community development agencies, the United Way and similar agencies, and community centers.

- **People Who Influence Laws, Traditions, Culture, and Society**
  - **Potential skills and resources:** Leadership; capacity to make and enforce laws and regulations, funding, communications, expertise and special focus, fundraising experience, volunteer networks, positive social forces, special programs and services, goods and services, business skills, technical skills, research, and jobs.
  - **Whom to consider:** Mayors and other local chief executives; council members or other local legislators; churches, synagogues, and other faith-based groups; university faculty; retail merchants; corporation executives; foundation executives; service industries workers; landlords or other real estate owners; and media figures.
People who influence laws, traditions, culture, and society: Consider elected officials and other policymakers, business and foundation executives, and spiritual, social, and scientific leaders in the community for inclusion as community leadership team partners. They can often bring considerable skills and resources, different perspectives, and media attention to the effort.

Target business leaders who have shown an interest in children’s issues in the past or whose businesses serve children and families. Likewise, consider well-known and well-respected religious leaders and government officials. Some who may not have the time to become deeply involved can be selectively engaged in ways that most enhance the initiative.

Use the Community Partners Worksheet to help you list each potential partner in the effort (see the Appendix, Tool 1). As you list each partner, consider what he or she could bring in terms of skills, resources, passion, commitment, and credibility. Also take into account what he or she stands to gain from participating in the effort. For example, potential gains for business leaders include increased productivity through better community supports for their employees who are parents, increased probability of a competent future workforce, personal satisfaction, and positive publicity.10

Considering both sides of this equation increases the chances of a mutually beneficial experience that can result in higher levels of commitment and success. Complete the columns of the Community Partners Worksheet as a way to think through and document these important issues.

Identify needed supports to enable parents, youth, and other citizens to participate in the community leadership team. Plan for and let potential partners know of the availability of transportation, child care, and reimbursement for participation in team meetings and other activities. Ask them to identify other resources that would enhance their participation.

Begin making personal contacts or asking others who know the person to make the initial connection for you. Meet face-to-face with potential partners. A phone meeting is fine if you know the person well. Make a list of points to cover and questions to ask as you meet with each potential partner (see box on next page). You may also want to design a handout such as Health, Safety, and Well-Being for All Children and Youth (Tool 2) for future reference.

Before finalizing the invitation list for the first community leadership team meeting, look it over to assess the balance of skills, resources, diversity, passion, commitment, and credibility represented in its members:

• Is there at least one member from each of the four Framework categories of people?

• Is the list reflective and inclusive of the community?

• Are each of children’s five universal needs addressed by at least one person in the group?
Do these people, as a group, have the potential to get the job done?

Don’t wait, however, to assemble the perfect set of partners before you begin. At the first team meeting, ask the team who is missing and who needs to be invited to future meetings.

**Explain the Rationale for Taking a Comprehensive Approach**

As you work to involve people in beginning a new effort or expanding an existing one, they will inevitably ask why a comprehensive approach is needed.

The Framework asks us to look broadly at children’s needs to consider the economic, physical, spiritual, and social factors that influence their well-being. It also asks that we look comprehensively at the complex mix of individual, agency, and community assets that collectively meet children’s needs.

Taking such a comprehensive approach can be daunting. Looking broadly at all the factors that contribute to child well-being as well as involving diverse stakeholders will likely be messier, take longer, demand more patience, and require that professionals move beyond the safety of their expertise to venture into uncharted waters.

It can be easier to focus on meeting one need at a time, such as education or health, and communities have certainly had success using this approach. As the Annie E. Casey Foundation discovered after years of community work, however, “outcomes for children and families living in...communities will change only when we look at each community comprehensively. Answers must take into account a community’s economic, social, political, and environmental realities. And answers must acknowledge that the problems are interrelated.”

Involving only professionals in change efforts can also be easier than addressing the various cultural and power issues that involving family mem-

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**Key Points for Meetings with Potential Partners**

- Present a broad vision of what the initiative is meant to accomplish. Be broad enough to include the perspectives, skills, and opinions of all potential partners. Give them materials such as the Health, Safety and Well-Being for All Children and Youth tool (Tool 2) to further explain the proposed effort.

- Explain the reasons for taking a holistic approach. Stress that comprehensively examining child well-being does not mean that you will tackle all aspects of it at the same time. Rather, understanding the big picture and seeing the interrelationships between different factors will enable the community to develop a more thoughtful and strategic plan.

- Solicit their ideas about the proposed initiative and what they see as its potential benefits for children, families, the community, them, and their organization. Listen carefully and spend the most time on this point.

- Answer any questions they have and discuss any concerns. Be prepared to address two common and valid concerns: “We’re already doing this,” and “We tried this once and it didn’t work.”

- Partners will need to commit significant time and energy to the collaboration to develop effective communications and comfortable working relationships critical to its long-range success. Be clear about your estimates of the initial and ongoing commitment required for leadership team participation.

- Discuss who else is involved and what they bring to the table.

- If they are interested in being a partner, ask what they see as the major assets that they could bring to the effort. Assets can include knowledge, skills, strengths, and resources ranging from creativity, to negotiation skills, to meeting space, to fiscal support.

- If they are not interested in being a partner, discuss alternative ways they can support the effort now and in the future.

- Ask if they need any further information and commit to providing it.
bers and other nontraditional partners can raise. However, broader participation is required to:

• empower people who have not been previously involved in community-level problem solving;

• create relationships between people from various backgrounds, disciplines, sectors, and levels; and

• bring people and organizations with a sufficient range of knowledge, skills, and resources together so the group as a whole can achieve the breakthroughs in thinking and action that are needed to understand and solve complex problems.\(^\text{12}\)

Each stakeholder brings a unique perspective on children’s needs to the group and, more important, brings a part of the solutions that the community develops together.

The community action approach described in this Guide looks at the many facets of child well-being and involves many in the community in creating a shared future vision and in thinking comprehensively and acting strategically. The community doesn’t tackle everything at once, but prioritizes where to start and considers how one action affects others.

Taking a comprehensive approach requires courage, perseverance, and skill. Yet solutions abound! Many have found innovative and effective ways to “make villages whole”\(^\text{13}\) so that they can better support families in rearing healthy, thriving children.
Invigorating

How can the newly formed leadership team build trust and commitment among its members? How can the leadership team best equip itself to guide the initiative? What essential elements of an initiative increase the likelihood of its success and sustainability?

Purpose and Key Activities

The purpose of the Invigorating phase is to build trust and commitment, to define direction, and to sow the seeds of sustainability. Key activities involved in Invigorating are:

• building a strong foundation for the initiative through the development of leadership team working agreements, mission and goals statements, structure, process design, and infrastructure resources; and

• sowing the seeds of sustainability by focusing on learning, leadership, and public engagement.

Build a Foundation of Trust and Commitment

Collaboration is a demanding endeavor. The need for diverse stakeholders also creates the need to overcome barriers of language, race, culture, and socioeconomic status so that team members are all equals in pursuit of mutual goals. Activities completed during the first several leadership team meetings can build a strong foundation for the initiative by creating a climate that regards all partners as equals, encourages candor, focuses on strengths and capacity building, and stresses mutual accountability.
Throughout these team activities and throughout the initiative, address issues of language appropriateness for language minorities and community members with limited English proficiency. Provide translations and interpretation as needed, and be sure that community members with limited literacy have access to needed information.

As the Families and Work Institute stated:

*To be successful, stakeholders need a leader’s help—and time—to get to know and trust one another. This requires creativity, flexibility, the ability to compromise, a willingness to acknowledge that collaboration and change are never easy, and frequent check-ins of assumptions to be sure that everyone is speaking the same language.*

The community leadership team can begin to build trust and commitment among its members while engaging in the following activities. The products developed also form a strong foundation for the initiative and set its future direction.

**Develop Working Agreements**

Over the first few meetings, team members should develop working agreements that include:

1. **Ground rules that address behavior and attitudes in team meetings.** Once developed, distribute to partners and post them at meetings.

2. **A decisionmaking process describing how team decisions will be made.** For example, the team may want to decide important issues by consensus and to explore members’ opinions on issues by polling (asking each partner to vote or state an opinion). See the Consensus Decision Making tool (Tool 3) for a description of what it takes to reach consensus and a description of the flow of a consensus decisionmaking process.

3. **A conflict resolution process to address how conflicts regarding values, policies, or practices are identified and resolved.** The team must learn how to make constructive use of conflict as a catalyst for generating innovative options and articulating shared interests.

Have the team discuss and struggle with the contents of working agreements before introducing examples. Although you don’t want them to totally reinvent the wheel, struggling with their thoughts before drawing from examples can result in a more meaningful process that builds investment and commitment. Be sure that all written documents are clear and easily understandable.

Avoid “word-smithing” by the entire leadership team. Discuss team documents, develop them through individual and committee work between meet-
Sample Ground Rules for Meetings

- Listen to each other as allies.
- Respond to each other respectfully and candidly.
- Constantly return to the group’s mission and common goals to clarify priorities and reaffirm commitments.
- Keep your eyes on the prize. Focus on the results for children, youth, and families.
- Share power, responsibility, and accountability.
- Avoid finger-pointing and blaming—fix the problem, not the blame.
- Focus on capacity building at the individual and group levels. Identify learning needs and build knowledge and skills.
- Don’t make turf an issue. Everyone has more than enough work to do.
- Keep it simple. Speak plainly. Avoid professional jargon. Explain acronyms. Ask if you don’t know.
- Check your ego at the door.
- Frame and name barriers in realistic yet hopeful ways.
- Stay strategic. Look for root causes in organizational structures and systems.
- Keep a historical perspective—remember how long the problem or barrier has been there. This helps to develop patience and a realistic timetable for change.
- Be creative and ingenious in seeking solutions.
- Celebrate each success, no matter how small.

Source: Adapted from Katharine Briar-Lawson.

Sample Conflict Resolution Process

When conflict arises:

- Revisit the destination. Ask, “If we want to achieve these results, what must we do about this conflict?” Then determine which issues the collaboration must resolve to do its work.
- Decide who will facilitate the process for resolving the conflict. Ask a group member or a third party facilitator, mediator, or arbitrator to lead the group. Or hold an outside session just for those directly involved in the conflict.
- Separate the conflict from concepts of right and wrong. Such separation helps the group avoid personalizing the issues, since some people tend to view conflict as a threat to long-held beliefs.
- Make sure everyone is heard. Limit those who talk and invite the participation of those who do not. (For example, give everyone the same amount of poker chips, and when they have used up their chips, they cannot speak again.)
- Don’t burn bridges. Remember, everyone must continue working together during and after the conflict. So create rituals for healing and forgiveness. Don’t forget humor.

Develop Mission, Values, and Goals

The development of leadership team mission, values, and goals will build commitment and define direction. Over their first several meetings, team members should:

- create a mission statement that provides a concise explanation of the broad outcomes the collaborative aims to achieve and is inclusive of the key concerns of all partners;
- determine values or guiding principles to guide team processes and decision-making. Once developed, distribute the values to partners and post them at team meetings. Review the Framework’s guiding principles in Chapter 1 of this Guide as an example of a values statement; and
- set goals that flow from the mission statement, describe the team’s direction, and articulate what it wants to accomplish in organizing and guiding the work involved in upcoming community action phases.

Design the Process

The leadership team should discuss and approve the design of the community action process to give its members a clear scope of the work and their part in it. The next four chapters of this Guide propose a broad design, but each community will need to create its own.

The process design can be displayed as a process map that includes goals, outcomes, timelines, major phases, events, and activities. The process map offers a high-level perspective on the entire initiative. The details will emerge in the team’s committee action plans. The entire team should review and revise the process map at each meeting.

Create the Leadership Team’s Structure

Form follows function. The structure chosen for the leadership team should be one that supports the implementation of its process design and the achievement of its desired outcomes. Consider forming leadership team committees to share the work, disperse leadership, and expand opportuni-
ties for community participation. Each committee should be composed of team members and other community members who bring relevant skills, interest, and energy. Potential committees include:

- Community assessment (Inquiring)
- Visioning (Imagining)
- Planning (Innovating)
- Public engagement
- Research and evaluation
- Finance and resources
- Training and leadership development

The core leadership team should provide primary leadership for the initiative; coordinate, support, and oversee the activities of the committees; and be responsible for sustaining all initiative efforts.

**Supply Needed Human Resources**

Carrying out an ambitious initiative to improve child well-being will require a great deal of effort by a great many people. Ask each team member and later, each committee member, to complete an Expertise and Resource Inventory (Tool 4) that details their expertise and includes information on other potential resources in the community. As the design process unfolds and the committee action plans evolve, you can draw on the inventory information to determine what team members can provide and what additional expertise and resources you will need to find in the community.

You may also need paid technical assistance in certain process and content areas if team members and volunteers do not have needed expertise. Professional consultants can provide vital support to community-based initiatives in areas such as process management, community assessment, staff and volunteer training, leadership development, performance measurement, and program evaluation.

Whenever possible, employ local people in any paid staff and consultant positions. By employing community residents across the range of professional and paraprofessional roles that are part of a community change initiative, public service agencies, institutions, and funders can invest directly in a community’s economic well-being.  

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Committee Checklist</th>
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<td><strong>Composition:</strong></td>
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<td>- Ensure that at least two leadership team members are on members of each committee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Have a leadership team member chair or cochair each committee.</td>
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<td>- When two committees are charged with closely related functions, ensure that they share two or more members, at least one of whom is a leadership team member.</td>
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| **Coordination:**    |
| - Have committee chairs meet regularly to coordinate their work. |

| **Action Planning and Implementation:** |
| - Have each committee develop an action plan that includes goals, measurable objectives, tasks, timelines, people responsible, needed resources, and a budget. |
| - Have committee chairs bring action plans to the leadership team for discussion and approval. |
| - Have committee chairs report their progress to the leadership team on a regular basis. |
Community-based collaboratives can also make use of intellectual capital in the form of outside experts, foundation advocates, and funders who have sufficient credibility and neutrality to provide political cover, assist the collaborative in keeping long-range goals in mind, and help ensure that key leaders stay at the table.\(^\text{16}\)

**Balance Process and Action**

Balancing process and action is a vital element of a successful initiative. Initiatives need process to develop relationships, mutual understanding, and thoughtful decisionmaking, and action to get things done. Too little attention to action can result in frustration and slow progress, whereas too little attention to process can result in action that is misguided and reactive.

The Pew Partnerships found that:

> partner groups faced the dilemma of pace...deciding how to channel the natural energy and enthusiasm that accompany new beginnings. Partner groups were faced with the need to both invest in new learning and relationship building because of the long-term aspects of their civic change commitment and to produce some quick results or early wins in order to gain credibility.\(^\text{17}\)

During the first several leadership team meetings, resist the tendency to jump to simple solutions for complex problems, however, be sure to build in some “small wins” through learning opportunities and take action through the development and application of simple solutions to simple problems.

**Sow the Seeds of Sustainability**

Community initiatives require a long-term infusion of energy, resources, and leadership. To successfully mobilize communities in behalf of children and their families, it is “critical that community mobilization leaders consciously incorporate strategies for maintaining the momentum of their efforts from the very beginning.”\(^\text{18}\)

The Finance Project described a sustainability framework consisting of eight components that can help ensure that community initiatives survive and thrive:\(^\text{19}\)

- **Vision:** Having a clear notion of how the initiative’s efforts will affect the lives of children, families, and community members.
- **Results orientation:** Demonstrating successes through measurable outcomes, particularly interim indicators.
- **Strategic financing orientation:** Identifying resources needed to sustain activities and strategies to obtain them.
- **Adaptability to changing conditions:** Adjusting to changing social, economic, and political trends in the community, and anticipating and overcoming barriers or threats.
• **Broad base of community support:** Building a broad base of people in the community who find the initiative vital.

• **Key champions:** Obtaining the support of business, faith community, government, and other leaders who are willing to use their power to support and stabilize the initiative.

• **Strong internal systems:** Establishing strong fiscal management, accounting, information and personnel systems, and the governance structures to support them.

• **Sustainability plan:** Clarifying where partners want the initiative to go in the future.

Pay attention to these eight key aspects of sustainability as you design and implement the community initiative. Periodically, the leadership team can use them to assess progress and identify areas that need strengthening.

Community initiatives are most likely to result in safe, healthy, and thriving children, youth, and families if they sow the three major seeds of sustainability—learning, leadership, and public engagement—during the Invigorating phase and develop them in each of the subsequent phases of the initiative.

**Become a Learning Organization**

The Aspen Institute encourages community partnerships to become “learning organizations,” in which all stakeholders collaborate in “collecting, analyzing, and using information to plan activities, evaluate the organization’s performance, understand the community’s assets and needs, and share emerging lessons.” Supporting individual and group learning is the surest way to develop capacity and confidence in team members and among the community members who become actively involved in the initiative or simply learn about it.

As MDC, Inc., found through years of community building research and practice:

> **Regardless of the issue, community, or system where we work, we must always help people overcome the illusion that the answer to their problems lies outside them rather than in them. The surest way we have found to cultivate this rare but invaluable belief in self is to work with teams much as a coach works with an athlete or a musician: teaching technique, testing its application through actual performance, and systematically encouraging self-assessment and self-criticism to help people see how far they have come under their own power.**

Learning activities strengthen leadership team members’ skills and knowledge and build their collective capacity to get the job done. They can also “contribute to more powerful connections among people, ideas, and opportunities.” Get used to the notion that we all have a lot to learn and
that we can learn from each other. Stress the importance of learning from the successes and failures of the group. Set up opportunities for formal training, mentoring, and other informal learning opportunities. Learning activities can include:

- skill-building sessions on listening, negotiation, conflict resolution, assessment, problem solving, and evaluation skills;
- presentations by partners on their community, their organization, or issues important to them, followed by team discussion;
- presentations by others in the community and from other communities on relevant topics of interest to the team;
- site visits to other communities to learn what they are doing; and
- skill-building sessions on competencies needed to implement each community action phase.

All participants in community change, whether they are policymakers, administrators, public service professionals, community workers, residents, parents, or youth, must “change the way they think, work, and act, both independently and collectively.” Everyone in the community can learn from the effort. Ongoing activities such as holding workshops, reading, and mentoring can sharpen the skills and increase the knowledge of everyone involved in the initiative.

**Cultivate Leaders**

Sustainable and successful community-based initiatives rely on the presence of an active pool of leaders (rather than one charismatic leader) who can ensure continuity and serve as holders of institutional memory. Leadership comes from many sources, including individuals in recognized positions of authority as well as those working in and outside formal public systems. “Commitment, persistence, and the ability to recognize and assess emerging opportunities matter more than formal position in carrying forward on reforms.”

Yoland Trevino described the essence of her job as Director of the Vaughn Family Center in the San Fernando Valley, California, as “unleashing human capital.” She emphasized that:

> communities have diamonds in the rough waiting to be discovered. Communities have leaders waiting for an opportunity. People volunteer their gifts when their gifts are recognized and valued. Leaders come in all shapes and from all walks in life. Leadership needs to be cultivated and unleashed.”

**Community Leadership Development Strategies**

- Promotion of problem-solving skills
- Engagement of participants as facilitators
- Creation of advisory boards
- Encouragement of role modeling
- Availability of assertiveness training
- Establishment of mentoring opportunities
- Encouragement of family leadership opportunities
- Offer of targeted leadership training

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation describes a community leadership model that “inspires hope and commitment in individuals who wish to become more involved in community issues while developing communication, planning, and organizational skills.”26 The model combines a community orientation with empowerment and relies on “learning by doing.”

The leadership team should actively recruit and cultivate leaders. Succession planning for emergent leaders will increase the sustainability of the initiative.

Engage the Public

Effective, ongoing mass communication strategies are key to long-term support. If families, communities and organizations clearly understand their stake in the change process, their long-term support will be more forthcoming.27

According to Jean Johnson, Senior Vice President of Public Agenda:

Public engagement entails drawing the public into the communications process—encouraging them to weigh a range of choices and allowing them the time to deliberate and reach their own conclusions. In this “two-way street” model, the public grapples with issues, and is not passive. Public engagement requires greater time and energy on behalf of leaders and experts, but it gets to the root of what democracy is about.28

The leadership team’s Public Engagement Committee should develop and continuously refine a communications plan to provide compelling information to varied audiences, including parents, youth, business, labor and civic leaders, elected officials, and taxpayers. To engage public interest and influence public will, the team should explain the challenges they are addressing, the solutions they are framing, and the results they are seeking.29

A phased approach to public engagement can both educate citizens and invite their participation by defining specific ways they can get involved. Use the Public Engagement Planning Matrix (Tool 5) to plan oral, written, and interactive communication strategies throughout all phases of the initiative.

There is no one right message or method. The leadership team should tailor communications strategies to the unique concerns and resources of the community. Start by listing the overall goals of the communication effort. Then list various audiences you want to inform, influence, and inspire. Use the Framework’s five groups of people from the People in Partnership section in Chapter 1 of this Guide as a place to start. Develop messages for each audience by asking “What do we want them to think and do?”

**Messaging Tips**

- Be simple, clear, and succinct
- Be relevant
- Be memorable
- Use the most meaningful data to tell a compelling story
- Include anecdotes to tell the human side of the story
- Clearly define what you are for, not just what you are against
- Balance bad news and good news
- Describe a demonstrated solution
- Explain what people can do to help
Establish core messages for use with all audiences and tailor additional messages for each audience. Be sure that additional messages you develop will not be offensive to any of the other audiences. Design attractive and colorful print materials using pictures and other graphics. Ads, pamphlets, and posters should be strategically placed depending on their target audience. Translate materials into languages used in the community and ensure that community members with limited literacy have oral and visual access to needed information.

Recommended Resource on Process Mapping


Recommended Resources on Sustainability


Recommended Resources on Community Leadership Development


Recommended Resources on Public Engagement


Inquiring

How well are children, youth, and families faring in the community? What community resources, both informal and formal, meet their needs? What do community members value and believe is most needed?

Purpose and Key Activities

The purpose of the Inquiring phase is to gather and analyze community assessment information that will inform upcoming community visioning, planning, and implementation activities. Key activities in the Inquiring phase include:

• establishing assessment goals,
• determining assessment scope and methods,
• analyzing the information, and
• communicating the findings.

Establish Assessment Goals

Bruner, Bell, Brindis, Chang, and Scarbrough proposed six goals of community assessment:30

1. Establish a baseline of information on...important child and family outcomes that can be used as a basis for setting goals, defining tasks, establishing responsibilities for accomplishing goals, targeting resources, and measuring progress.

2. Prepare an inventory of a community’s available resources including strengths and potential sources of solutions in both formal and informal support systems.
3. Create a deeper understanding of how existing services do—and do not—meet the needs of children and families, including the identification of gaps and barriers to effective service delivery on both a community and a neighborhood level.

4. Provide a comprehensive picture by piecing together bits of information across agencies and disciplines, a process that allows planners to create a composite and holistic picture of child and family needs and experiences.

5. Enhance an understanding of cultural groups in the community by breaking down documented information according to culture, language, and neighborhood groups.

6. Forge a consensus about the community’s needs by soliciting the views and broad-based participation of people within the community, particularly the potential consumers of any new services.

Document the intended goals of the community assessment and keep these purposes firmly in mind as you develop the assessment plan. See Tool 6, Community Analysis, for a comparison of how community analysis differs from traditional needs assessment in its goals, information collected, techniques, and uses.

**Determine Assessment Scope and Methods**

Be clear about the questions you want the assessment to answer. Consider gathering information in the following three broad areas:

- child and family well-being,
- community assets, and
- citizen priorities and values.

Collecting information in these three areas can be done simultaneously or in a phased manner, sequencing data collection and communication to maximize community education and participation.

**Child and Family Well-Being**: Determine the current level of child well-being in the community by reviewing local data on selected child and family outcome indicators. Start by defining “child well-being” specifically, using the Five Universal Needs of Children chart (Tool 2) as a basis for the leadership team’s discussion. Modify the chart to suit your community by adding, removing, and relabeling needs, or by changing need categories.

Next, choose which local outcome indicators you want to review. Much of these data are available from public and private sources in the community, so new data gathering is usually not necessary. National or state data may also be available on the same outcomes for comparison purposes. Tool 7, Sample Key Outcome Indicators for the Five Universal Needs of Children, lists relevant outcome indicators for which national data are available, as well as the data sources.
Community Assets: Determine what formal and informal services and resources for children and families are available in your community, how well they match needs, and how accessible, coordinated, and cost-effective they are.

One of the most powerful tools for mobilizing communities is mapping community assets. By documenting the strengths on which a community’s future can be built, stakeholders can galvanize and sustain motivation for the work to be accomplished. Mapping the capacities and assets of associations, institutions, agencies, and local businesses can help enlist all of these groups as participants in and contributors to community building.

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute provides many examples of asset-mapping tools that have been designed and used by a variety of communities.31 W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Six Steps of Effective Community Mapping (Tool 8) outlines a process for community resource mapping and lists practical uses for community resources maps.

Consider using CWLA’s Parenting Rich Communities Design, which contains information on promising programs and practices that support parents in meeting children’s five universal needs and is a tool to organize information on what resources are available in the community.32

Citizen Priorities and Values: Determine what community members think about how children in their community are faring, what is working in meeting children’s needs, and what values and goals should be sought. The team can gather residents’ views, concerns, and goals via individual or group interviews, focus groups, written or phone surveys, or community forums. Gather information from youth and adult service consumers as well as front-line service providers.

Tool 9, the Oklahoma Community Survey, is the instrument workers use to survey the residents of rural communities in southeastern Oklahoma regarding how well the community meets the universal needs of its children. It may be helpful for your community as well.

Consider Available Resources
You can plan the scope of the inquiry more realistically once you determine what human, material, and financial resources are available from the leadership team and the community to gather, display, and analyze the information. The key is “finding the balance between available resources and truly necessary information to collect.”33
Consider asking for volunteer help or developing a contract with a local university or researcher to provide data analysis and to consult with the leadership team or committee on various aspects of the assessment. Also consider hiring someone with the requisite skills to coordinate the community assessment.

**Use Data Gathering for Public Engagement and Capacity Building**

Involving residents in collecting and analyzing such information transfers expertise to communities, ensures citizen involvement in setting agendas for community building, and provides access to information that might not readily be shared with outside experts.

Community residents can collaborate in and even take leadership of baseline assessments of how well their community is meeting children's needs. Skill-building sessions can increase their capacity to respond to the immediate needs presented by this initial assessment and to the ongoing needs for information collection and analysis that will arise throughout the initiative.

Also keep in mind that “data gathering is used to build relationships and ownership for the effort. This is a strategy. Who you ask for information and how you present the data to our constituencies is just as important as the information itself.” Whenever gathering information from citizens, whatever the method, be sure to let them know how you will report and use the information how they can access any written materials resulting from its analysis.

**Develop a Community Assessment Plan**

Once the scope and methodology are decided, the assessment committee should develop a community assessment plan for review and approval by the leadership team. Consider a phased approach to data collection that includes an outreach plan to encourage community participation in the assessment.

**Analyze the Information**

Present the data for analysis as simply as possible because information overload saps energy. As you display the data for presentation, think ahead to how you will report the data and findings. Use charts and tables, as well as text.

Work with the leadership team and the assessment committee to extract meaning from the information collected. As you analyze the data, link them to the questions they were meant to answer. Dodson and Thomasson advise that you “disaggregate data by race, gender, geography and income to reveal how well the needs and challenges of people in different circumstances are met.”

As the team analyzes the initial data, more questions will arise that will require additional and potentially advanced data analysis. Again, limit the scope to what is necessary to know, rather than what would be merely interesting to know.
As the leadership team and committee members discuss and draw meaning from the interrelationships among the data, record their shared conclusions. Use the facts and the conclusions to fuel community awareness, education, and participation.

Communicate the Findings

Consider a phased approach to communicating the findings of the community assessment. A phased approach will take longer; however, it can result in higher community involvement in the process:

- When you have finalized the findings regarding child and family outcomes, present them along with an invitation to citizens to become involved in upcoming information gathering efforts, such as surveys, public forums, focus groups, community mapping, and interviews.
- As the team assembles information about children’s well-being and the community’s assets, strengths, and needs, it is essential to get the message out to inspire the allegiance and commitment of diverse citizens.
- When the team has finalized the findings regarding resources, gaps, needs, and consumer satisfaction, it should present them with an invitation to become involved in the imagining or community visioning process.

The team can use the community information collected during the Inquiring phase in a number of ways to benefit the community, such as:

- Develop a community profile that includes demographic data, outcome data, and resource data.
- Create a report card composed of child and family outcomes and update it annually.
- Assemble an electronic community resource directory and make it accessible to community members.

Recommended Resources


Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. (1993). *Building community from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community’s assets*. Chicago: ACTA.

How can you generate excitement and energy by painting a picture of a community’s desired future? How can you involve community members in developing a statement of “our vision” that shows where they want to go and what they will be like when we get there?”

**Purpose and Key Activities**

The purpose of the Imagining phase is to involve the community in imagining a shared vision of its future that is inspiring, easy to communicate, and broad enough to encompass diverse perspectives. That vision will guide the strategy development in the upcoming Innovating phase. Key activities of the Imagining phase include:

- designing and implementing the visioning process,
- documenting the vision, and
- publicizing the vision.

**Design and Implement the Visioning Process**

The design of your visioning process will depend on the skill of your facilitators and the time and resources you have available. You can complete the visioning process through intensive work over a couple of days of concurrent events or over several weeks of diverse events. In either case, involve a wide array of community members and employ a team of skilled facilitators.

Be sure that someone takes detailed notes during each visioning session. You may also want to employ volunteer or paid artists to draw images that come to mind during the visioning sessions.
The visioning process involves reviewing the past, touching briefly on the present, and leapfrogging forward to a desired future. It does not get bogged down in the details of moving from the present to the future. That work is done in the upcoming Innovating phase.

**Include Three Major Components**

Large-scale community visioning processes usually include the following three major components:

- **Past Review**
  - Explore the history of the community through methods such as storytelling or a key events timeline.
  - Identify themes, strengths, problems, and the evolution of values and assumptions over time.
  - Discuss what has been learned.
  - Decide what values, weaknesses, and assumptions to leave behind because they are no longer of use.
  - Choose what values, strengths, and assumptions to take forward because they continue to be useful.
  - Performing the River of Culture exercise (Tool 10) is very effective for examining the history of a community.

- **Present Snapshot**
  - Explore current conditions using brief, visual methods to present the data collected in the Inquiring phase on outcomes for children, youth, and families; community assets; and citizen priorities and values.
  - Do an environmental scan of current external trends that may affect the community’s ability to care for its children and families or complete a traditional SWOT analysis, drawing out community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

- **Future Vision**
  - Describe a desired future using stories, images, metaphors, and discussion. Include desired outcomes for children, youth, and families framed by the five universal needs of children, community assets, and values.
  - Exchange visions and identify common themes and ground.
  - Define new values and assumptions.
  - Develop a shared future vision that the facilitators will later blend with those from other groups and translate into a vision statement.
Imagining it is years from now, tell stories about how the vision was accomplished to set the stage for strategizing during the upcoming Innovating phase.

Invite Broad Participation

Broad participation in the visioning process will increase the visibility of the effort and inspire greater involvement in community action. It will also strengthen bonds between neighbors and bridges between different segments of the community as people share their dreams and listen to the dreams of others.

Encouraging diverse individuals to imagine a positive future and weaving those ideas together into a whole will greatly enrich the vision statement. As Marvin Weisbord observed, “Each of us is a repository of experiences, skill, knowledge, gossip, new developments, old techniques, war stories, legends, myths, colorful characters. More, we all have visions and aspirations, sometimes only half-formed, for what we want most.”

Offer community members a wide variety of opportunities for visioning. Widely publicize options that appeal to a broad range of people—from children to elders—through brochures, mailers, flyers, radio and TV spots, and door-to-door invitations delivered by volunteers. Hold sessions in accessible places in the community, such as schools and community centers. Offer free transportation, child care, and refreshments.

Document the Vision

A vision is a picture of the future you seek to create, described in the present tense, as if it were happening right now. An effective vision statement is a clear and brief declaration of a positive future. The more richly detailed and visual the image is, the more compelling it will be.
After all the visioning meetings are completed, the facilitators can develop a vision statement by synthesizing the shared future visions created by community members. Limit the vision statement to one sentence. In addition to the vision statement, leaders can create an even briefer focus statement or slogan that “captures the intent of the vision and the imagination of the group.”

For example, the Framework envisions that “every child in America will be healthy and safe, and will develop to his or her fullest potential with the support of a nurturing family and a strong community.” The Framework slogan is “Making children a national priority.”

A metaphor, drawing, or other image symbolizing the vision can also be a powerful tool for communicating it. Often, people conceive these images during visioning sessions, so it is important to note them in session minutes. Selectively use other vision-related material, such as a list of new values or assumptions and a list of current and future situations, to publicize the vision and to use in the upcoming Innovating phase.

Publicize the Vision

Use the various communications methods shown in the Public Engagement Planning Matrix (Tool 5) to publicize the vision statement, slogan, and accompanying graphic and text materials. Be sure to link the vision materials back to the community assessment information publicized earlier and forward to the next phase. Also discuss how community members can become involved in the upcoming Innovating phase.

Recommended Resources


Innovating

How can the leadership team hone in on the issues that most affect children’s well-being? How do they choose the most powerful strategies to address these issues? How do they evaluate the effect of the initiative? What financing strategies can help to support the initiative?

Purpose and Key Activities

The purpose of the Innovating phase is to move from thinking comprehensively to acting strategically by choosing priority issues related to child well-being and developing action plans to address them. Key activities in the Innovating phase include:

• choosing priority issues,
• developing action teams,
• establishing action plans,
• creating a learning-oriented evaluation plan,
• developing financing strategies, and
• publicize the plans.

Choose Priority Issues

Now is the time to think comprehensively and act strategically. Following the visioning process, the leadership team, its committee members, and all facilitators should meet to review and synthesize the work produced in the Inquiring and Imagining phases.
After thinking comprehensively about the learning thus far, the group should strategically select a small set of priority issues on which to focus first. These priority issues, known as “trendbenders,” are ones that, if addressed, will measurably improve the community’s performance in meeting children’s needs. Trendbenders are “leverage points...places where you can create long-term sustainable impact by concentrating your energies, talents, and resources.” Use Tool 13, Guide to Selecting “Trendbenders,” to lead the group through the process.

**Develop Action Teams**

Create an action team for each of the three or four priority issues. Each action team will develop and implement an action plan to address its priority issue. Ask leadership team members to work on an action team for the trendbender that most reflects their passion or captures their imagination. Also, ask the team members to draw people from the community to serve on the teams. Ensure that each action team:

- identifies one or more chairpersons,
- has a skilled facilitator,
- builds a team that can get the job done,
- includes membership that reflects the community,
- includes at least one member who is also a member of the leadership team, and
- develops working agreements (see the Build a Foundation of Trust and Commitment section of the Invigorating Chapter).

**Establish Action Plans**

The major work of each action team is to develop an action plan for the design and implementation of an initiative that addresses their trendbender.

**Choose Evidence-Based Strategies and Activities**

One of the most crucial elements of the action plan is the list of strategies and activities whose implementation will have a major effect on improving child well-being. Strategies are broad approaches, and activities are programs, interventions, actions, and services that carry out the strategies. Be sure to begin with some small activities that are likely to succeed. These “early wins” can build a sense of achievement, rally team spirit, and publicly demonstrate a success.

Most action teams develop a range of strategies, including very specific approaches to particular problems as well as broader ideas that encompass all parts of the community. The five types of strategies most often employed in community building initiatives are:
modifying policies, such as agencies changing categorical funding policies or eligibility requirements;

• providing information and enhancing skills, such as through leadership training;

• changing the consequences of efforts, such as by providing incentives for community members to volunteer;

• modifying access, barriers, and opportunities (e.g., offering community residents jobs connected to the community building effort); and

• enhancing services and supports, such as starting a family strengthening program.

The impulse to focus solely on improving direct services is often difficult to resist, because implementing model programs is often a much more familiar remedy for social ills than is policy analysis, public education, or advocacy for comprehensive reforms. A blend of different types of strategies, however, is most likely to produce real and lasting changes in outcomes for the greatest proportion of children and families. 50

Gathering information on evidence-based strategies and activities can be a time-consuming and technically difficult enterprise. Action teams must commit to information gathering and should seek technical assistance if necessary. Several national organizations, such as the ones listed in the box above, are rich resources for information on what works to promote child, family, and community well-being.

Choosing Indicators

The teams can document the progress of community building initiatives using a combination of interim indicators (road signs) and long-range or ultimate indicators (final destinations). If interim indicators are favorable, community partnerships can celebrate these successes and demonstrate that they are pursuing the best route toward achieving their desired outcomes. This can also reduce the possibility that they will be prematurely criticized for falling short of their long-range goals. 51
Create a Learning-Oriented Evaluation Plan

A learning-oriented community evaluation is one that provides continuous feedback to the collaborative, so that members can contribute to and benefit from it directly. In this way, evaluators can help practitioners and community residents “become more reflective, to extract theory from their daily experience, to learn from their experience, and thereby to improve” their community-building capacities.

Develop Financing Strategies

Given that “finding funding to invest in human capital is almost always a matter of allocating scarce resources among competing priorities,” it is vital that the leadership team finance committee reaches consensus about the best and most efficient ways to finance the action plan strategies. The Finance Project and the National Center for Service Integration offer the following strategies that state and local governments, public service agencies, foundations, and their community partners have successfully used to finance comprehensive community services and supports:

- Make better use of existing resources.
- Maximize federal and state revenue.
- Create more flexibility in existing funding categories.
- Build public-private partnerships.
- Create new dedicated revenue streams using taxes, fees, lottery proceeds, fundraising, or investment income.
- Redeploy funds from higher- to lower-cost options if effectiveness is not compromised.
- Leverage private sector and foundation dollars to cover start-up costs.
- Refinance through greater use of federal entitlement programs.

Best Indicator Criteria

- Reflect something fundamental to your specific vision, values, objectives, and scope
- Make linkages and reveal systemic relationships
- Are valid and have understandable relationships
- Change over time
- Have data available
- Are interesting and exciting
- Are affordable and accessible


Tips for Developing Learning-Oriented Evaluations

- Involve participants directly in the process.
- Know your audience.
- Develop some strong baseline evidence that supports your strategies and outcome definitions.
- Focus on appropriate, feasible goals and document intermediate outcomes.
- Document some results as quickly as possible.
- Be descriptive.
- Be graphic.
- Translate written materials and ensure that verbal communication is in languages used by community members.
- Communicate in oral and visual methods that reach community members with low literacy levels.
- Make sure the evaluation is telling people at least a few things they did not already know.
- Be open about shortcomings.
- Share and discuss findings as the work progresses.
Invest new funds in prevention-oriented services likely to produce positive outcomes.

When funding streams are fragmented, or “siloed,” so are services and decision-making processes. Most analysts agree that federal, state, and local governments, and the public agencies they fund, can better meet the needs of children by creating more flexibility in existing funding categories. Key strategies include:

- **Pooling:** Combining funds from several agencies or programs into a single funding stream.
- **Coordinating:** Aligning categorical funding from a number of agencies and funding streams to support community-based initiatives.
- **Devolving:** Delegating authority for allocating funds from higher to lower levels (e.g., from state to community-based agencies or organizations).
- **Decategorizing:** Removing narrow eligibility requirements or other rules that restrict how groups can spend funding.

Community-based initiatives that use a variety of creative funding strategies and demonstrate positive effects on the lives of children and families are most likely to survive and prosper.

**Publicize the Plans**

When the teams have finalized the action plans, use the various communications methods shown on the Public Engagement Planning Matrix (Tool 5) to publicize them. Include specific information on how community members can become involved in implementing the action plans through volunteering, donating, and other methods.

**Recommended Resources for Evaluation**


**Recommended Resource for Financing**

Implementing

What kind of support will the action teams need to implement their action plans? How can the leadership team use data on indicators for continuous quality improvement? How can the community deepen and sustain its commitment to improved child well-being?

**Purpose and Key Activities**

The purpose of the Implementing phase is to manage the implementation process in a way that creates results, increases learning, and sustains efforts. Key activities of the Implementing phase include:

- refocusing and restructuring the leadership team,
- managing the implementation process,
- communicating results, and
- deepening the commitment.

**Refocus and Restructure the Leadership Team**

During implementation, the main focus of the leadership team shifts from designing and implementing the process to supporting and coordinating the work of the action teams. Tasks may include:

- developing emerging leaders on the action teams,
- providing skill-building sessions for action team members,
- assisting action teams in recruiting new members,
redefining roles in existing partnerships and developing new partnerships based on what is needed to implement the action plans,

explaining how the emerging leadership team initiatives will complement and add value to existing community initiatives,

exploring development and financing strategies for the emerging action team initiatives, and

requesting periodic progress reports from each action team.

The leadership team needs to evolve an operating structure that is able to support and sustain the initiatives the action teams are implementing as well as provide for the its organizational needs. Many different structures can work and the new structure will continue to evolve over time as learning increases and as action plan implementation takes unexpected twists and turns. Together We Can offers the following principles to consider as you develop the organizational structure needed to effectively manage the implementation:

- Do not have more committees than you can manage.
- Use ad hoc working groups that take on a task and then dissolve them.
- Open committees to a broad array of interested people to take the burden off collaborative members and spread the collaborative’s vision and strategy throughout the community.
- Expect that the structure will continuously change to respond to the environment where the collaborative is working.
- Worry if the structure is not changing—you may be getting stuck in your ways.

The main leadership team committees will likely remain, but their focus will broaden to support and coordinate the work of the action teams.

**Manage the Implementation Process**

Implementing community action strategies requires an open, inclusive public engagement process and willingness to take risks and learn from missteps. By

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**Key Operating Structure Questions**

Ayre, Lough, and Norris of Community Initiatives offered the following set of key operating structure questions:

- How are the initiatives’ needs during the implementation phase different from or similar to the needs that the team had during the planning phase?
- What are the messages (values translated into actions) that you want to send to the stakeholders and the community through the operating structure you create? For example, what types of structures send messages of inclusion, accountability, and participation?
- How will your operating structure not only reinforce the values represented in your vision statement, but also help you reach that vision?
- What are the assets you have to work with when creating and sustaining this operating structure? How can you get what you do not have?
- What implications will your implementation operating structure have for your current successes (e.g., current committees that are productive, large community gatherings, and established partnerships and financial support)?
carefully monitoring the effects of change efforts, learning to celebrate successes, and adapting to changes, community partnerships can effectively manage the implementation process. In doing so, they will retool strategies and revise goals in light of new insights gained from their implementation experiences.

**Use Indicators to Monitor and Improve Efforts**

Throughout the Implementation phase, use data on indicators to help those doing the work learn from one another and become more effective. The Families and Work Institute\(^6\) states that indicators can:

- help decisionmakers as they allocate resources for services;
- cut or diminish red tape and bureaucratic micromanagement;
- promote strategic thinking and planning;
- provide information for future planning;
- assure funders that investments are leading to results; and
- mobilize community support from public, private, and nonprofit organizations and individual citizens for action in behalf of children and families.

**Celebrate Successes**

To sustain their momentum, local partnerships must learn to recognize progress even when it comes in unexpected guises. Every milestone achieved is worthy of recognition, and you should celebrate every success!

Celebrating accomplishments gives team members recognition and visibility and can result in their renewed energy and commitment. Celebrate both small and large achievements—the development of team working agreements, the completion of an action plan, the completion of a leadership development program, or the awarding of a grant or contract.

Celebrations can be shared events, announcements in the local media, or small gifts such as t-shirts, hats, buttons, or pins imprinted with a special message or logo. Be creative—design a celebration that will be meaningful to participants.

**Adapt to Change**

Community initiatives are complex and challenging to sustain. Partners must cultivate patience, willingness to take risks, and respect for diverse views and values, and collaboratives must be prepared to commit to the process for the long-term. Changes in an initiative’s vision, mission, objectives, strategies, and action plans are not signs of failure but rather of a healthy capacity for learning and growth on the part of community partners.

Partnerships should continue to ask whether all the right people are involved as their community-building initiatives evolve. As goals and strat-
Strategies shift, the participation of different individuals or groups may become more or less vital. At the same time, the team should preserve continuity of membership as much as possible so that it can nurture mutual trust and preserve knowledge and experience. Individuals or groups can serve as “vision keepers,” maintaining the partnership’s momentum by keeping the community vision focused over time.61

Communicate Results
Throughout the implementation process, continue to get the message out about the community initiatives you are developing and implementing. Emphasize early wins and tell success stories regarding new partners and funding resources acquired, services delivered, and progress made. Focus stories on individual volunteers and on individual children and families helped by the efforts. Always tie the success stories back to the vision statement.

As the initiatives develop, continue to invite broad community participation in their implementation. Be specific about the different ways citizens can participate. Continue to bring attention to meeting the needs of children and families by updating the report card or community profile on an annual basis.

Deepen the Commitment
Community building has shown impressive results in a number of communities across the country, sparking enthusiasm for its broader application, particularly in impoverished inner-city and rural areas. We have also learned how difficult it can be to “implement complex community-change strategies and to acquire the capacities and resources to make them work effectively.”62

A panel of community-building practitioners, researchers, foundation representatives, and federal and local officials convened by the Development Training Institute recommended that community building supporters take six steps to deepen their commitment to the work:63

1. Government and private sector institutions already involved in community building should expand their efforts and find new ways to collaborate.
2. Local governments should make developing partnerships with community builders a high priority.
3. Supporters should strengthen or establish community-based intermediaries to support community building interests in all major metropolitan areas.
4. National supporters should substantially strengthen their community-building training and technical assistance capabilities and enhance public awareness of their importance.
5. Federal and state governments should play strongly supportive roles as partners in community-building initiatives.

6. All supporters should patiently nurture community building in neighborhoods.

As the initiative enters its prime, sustainability should be a focus. Remember to grow the seeds of sustainability mentioned in the Invigorating phase. Also, periodically discuss answers to the questions raised in Tool 14, Questions for Sustainability Planning, to keep the initiative strong and effective.

**Conclusion**

Giving all of America’s children the opportunity to grow up healthy and strong will take the talents, hard work, and long-term commitment of individuals and groups from all walks of life. We must be tenacious, optimistic, and willing to invest ourselves and our resources in this vital work. By working together to build healthy communities and strong families, we can create an America where every child has the opportunity to grow up safe, resilient, and thriving. CWLA hopes that this Guide will be of benefit to you in that endeavor.

Please visit our website at http://www.cwla.org for the latest on our resources, efforts, and services that will help you make children a national priority.
As this Guide is a tool to help you imagine and implement initiatives to improve the lives of children and youth in your community, these selected community initiatives show what community collaborations can accomplish. This chapter includes brief summaries of 27 community initiatives, naming the partners, highlighting the focus of the work, and outlining methods of measuring outcomes. In each case, a CWLA member agency was involved as a sponsor or stakeholder.

Although CWLA cannot endorse these collaborations or vouch for their excellence, we thought it crucial to provide real examples of how people and organizations working in communities can work together to meet children’s universal needs. The initiatives reflect the many methods of addressing community concerns while putting theory to practical use. Although only a few of these initiatives address child well-being comprehensively, all of them involve multiple community stakeholders addressing the needs of children and families. These initiatives serve as examples in the effort to empower communities and improve the lives of children.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs FACE and Baby FACE programs**

- **Parents as Teachers National Center**
  2228 Ball Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146
  Contact: Susan Stepleton, President/CEO
  314/432-4330, sue.stepleton@patnc.org

- **Purpose:** To support families with children (prenatal care to age 8) with school- and home-based programming, including education, skill building, and help finding employment.

- **Target population:** Families
The Bureau of Indian Affairs, in collaboration with the Parents as Teachers National Center, National Center for Family Literacy, and the High/Scope Research Foundation, designed the Family and Child Education (FACE) program as a collaborative family support model. Established in 1990, the program is now in 32 bureau-funded schools serving American Indian families and their children (prenatal care to age 8) both at home and at school. In 2002, Baby FACE programs were created in 60 additional bureau-funded schools to use the home-based component of FACE with families of children from prenatal care to kindergarten entry.

Both programs establish home and school partnerships, increase parents’ ability to foster child development, detect potential learning problems early, and reduce family problems that interfere with growth. The FACE program also provides parents with motivation, skills, and help in furthering education or finding employment.

Workers conduct external evaluations each year to measure positive changes in parent, child, and family outcomes. FACE and Baby FACE are expanding their programs, serving thousands of children and families each year.

**Caroline County Family Support Center**

Friends of the Family

1001 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21002

Contact: Margaret Williams, Executive Director

410/659-7701, mwilliams@friendsofthefamily.org

**Purpose:** To provide family and child support services in Caroline County, Maryland.

**Target population:** Parents and families

Friends of the Family is a nonprofit group that the Maryland state government and private foundations created and supported to provide funding, staff training, technical assistance, resource development, and quality assurance for community-based initiatives. One such initiative, the Caroline County Family Support Center, is one of 32 family support centers that Friends of the Family has helped establish throughout the state.

The county superintendent of schools was a strong advocate for development of the Caroline County Family Support Center to help ensure that all children could enter kindergarten ready to learn by supporting and nurturing parents. The federal Early Head Start program, with a target population of pregnant women and children from birth to age 3, and a Maryland school-readiness initiative, focused on children from birth to age 5 provide funding for the family support center. The center serves pregnant and parenting adolescents, families with low incomes and low-birth-weight babies, youth who dropped out of high school, and people who are unemployed or underemployed.
The Caroline County Early Head Start Family Support Center offers services at the center and at homes, including developmentally appropriate child care, adult education and employment services, peer support, health education and referral, developmental assessment and referral, and service coordination and outreach. Participation is voluntary, and workers treat parents as equal partners. As partners, they create goals tailored to families’ strengths and needs while measuring success by tracking progress toward individual goals. The center also examines the extent to which children meet developmental milestones and whether they are receiving any assistance to meet these goals.

**Children's Services Council**

1919 Flagler Drive, West Palm Beach, FL 33407  
Contact: Tana Ebbole, CEO  
561/655-1010, tana@cscpbc.org  
*Purpose:* To coordinate family and children systems to improve quality of service and efficiency.  
*Target population:* Families

Residents and local leaders of Palm Beach County have been working for several years to create integrated, comprehensive service delivery systems for families with young children. They created independent local tax districts to fund the Children's Services Council, which is committed to prevention and early intervention services, and the Health Care District, which is focused on maximizing the health and well-being of residents in the community by addressing health care needs and planning for access to and delivery of services.

Using these locally managed funders, Palm Beach County stakeholders encourage collaborations to blend many fragmented funding streams to support coordinated systems of care. Palm Beach County hopes to achieve efficiency, accountability, and effectiveness in providing services for children and families by coordinating federal, state, and local funding streams.

Palm Beach County stakeholders created two model partnerships. The Maternal Child Family Health Care Alliance links health care providers, consumers, funders, and other community members to offer access to broad-based care for women from every socioeconomic group. Home visits and social support services are offered to ensure families receive assistance. The School Readiness Coalition, formed in 2000, gathers agency representatives to create an integrated system of early care and education for children from birth to age 5 to prepare for school. Evaluations of both programs suggest they have achieved some positive results.
Collaboration for Public Water

Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency  
116 Buckhorn Lane, Buckhorn, KY 41721  
Contact: Charles L. Baker, President/CEO  
606/398-7000, charlie.baker@buckhorn.org  

Purpose: To organize the community to incorporate and provide needed services for children and families.  

Target population: All community members  

For many decades, children and families from rural communities neighboring the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency (PWCA) in Buckhorn, Kentucky, wished for safe drinking water. In the mid-1990s, the Kentucky state park system was confronted with constructing a costly replacement for its aging surface water treatment plant, which served an area park. PWCA, like others in this Appalachian area, relied on well water that the Environmental Protection Agency had determined was contaminated with barium. Barium removal is a difficult, expensive process that most families in the region cannot afford.

PWCA, the state, the county school system, and the federal government’s Corps of Engineers at the Buckhorn Dam collaborated to develop a solution to their collective water problems. They concluded it would be less expensive to develop a water system that serves everyone than to maintain a more appealing short-term patchwork approach. The group also learned that to purchase treated water from the nearby city of Hazard, Buckhorn would have to incorporate as a municipality. Incorporating required obtaining signatures from two-thirds of Buckhorn-area residents. As a result of extensive outreach to citizens by the partner organizations, more than 90% of area residents signed the incorporation petition.

Since 1998, Buckhorn has purchased water services from Hazard, providing children and families with safe, fluoridated water and significantly benefiting their dental and general health. Residents and partner agencies also discovered many other unanticipated benefits of becoming a city, including eligibility to apply for a variety of state and federal grants. Buckhorn obtained several grants for construction projects that benefit Buckhorn’s children and families, including a Montessori preschool and a new playground at the local school.

Commission on Children and Families

Washington County Commission on Children and Families  
155 N. First Avenue, MS 5, Hillsboro, OR 97124  
Contact: Carol Wire, Director  
503/846-4491, carol_wire@co.washington.or.us  

Purpose: To engage the community in providing services and supports for children and families.  

Target population: Communities and families
The government created the Washington County, Oregon, Commission on Children and Families (CCF) in response to legislation establishing a statewide system of citizen commissions charged with improving quality of life for children and families at the county level. CCF members represent all community stakeholders, including businesses, consumers, educators, and human service providers. CCF created a comprehensive community plan, engaged the community in support of children and families, and helped develop an easily accessible, seamless system of services and supports for children and families.

CCF documented the status of children and families in Washington County and involved hundreds of citizens, clients, businesses, nonprofit groups, and government organizations in developing a comprehensive plan. This plan articulated three desired outcomes: to make sure children and families are healthy, are able to meet their needs, and are economically secure; to make people feel safe in their communities; and to invest in education and build a community of creative lifelong learners. CCF is strongly committed to preventive, strengths-based approaches.

Based on best practices, CCF sets priorities and funds services through a competitive bidding process. The success of programs and strategies CCF funds is measured by setting clear targets and regularly examining results and intermediate outcomes. CCF frames its goals with state-level benchmarks and works to achieve these outcomes in Washington County.

Community Change for Youth Development

Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County
6698 68th Avenue North, Pinellas Park, FL 33781
Contact: James E. Mills, Executive Director
727/547-5000, jmills@jwbpinellas.org

Purpose: To promote positive youth development opportunities in communities.

Target population: Youth and communities

In 1996, Public/Private Ventures, a nonprofit research and development corporation, implemented a national demonstration project and site for a community-driven youth development initiative. Because the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County was interested in strengths-based neighborhood initiatives and positive youth development activities, Public/Private Ventures selected Pinellas County to implement the Community Change for Youth Development (CCYD) demonstration project.

CCYD is a community planning initiative focusing energies and resources on developing long-term positive youth environments that respect the unique qualities of a community and the needs of its youth. CCYD is based on five core concepts: adult support and guidance, appropriate social and recreation activities during free time, youth decisionmaking in positive peer groups, work as a developmental tool, and help during periods of change or crisis.
CCYD wishes to increase developmental opportunities and support to youth in the neighborhood. It has delegated a community body with decisionmaking authority for staff, budget, and provider selection. Workers measure outcomes quarterly. The Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County has sustained the program and provided technical assistance for more than six years while accomplishing several key objectives, including community empowerment, involvement of youth in decisionmaking, and establishing a stable, long-term funding base and 501c(3) status.

**Community Schools**

The Children’s Aid Society  
105 East 22nd Street, Suite 908, New York, NY 10010  
Contact: Jane Quinn, Assistant Executive Director for Community Schools  
212/949-4954, janeq@childrensaidsociety.org  

*Purpose:* To provide comprehensive services for optimal child development in conjunction with school programming.  

*Target population:* Children, families, and communities  

In 1992, the Children’s Aid Society’s Community Schools initiative began in response to a city-wide assessment that revealed the Washington Heights area in Manhattan, New York, was the most underserved area in public support programs. Subsequent focus groups and surveys revealed that residents wanted recreational, social, educational, and medical services for children and families. The Children’s Aid Society united with the New York City Board of Education and other key stakeholders to create public schools that offer a wide array of extra supports and enrichment services to children, families, and the broader community of Washington Heights.

The groups forged partnerships with schools, families, residents, businesses, and other community resources to promote children’s optimal development and learning. The Community Schools initiative objectives are removing barriers to children’s learning and development, expanding learning opportunities, stabilizing and supporting families, engaging caring adults in the lives of children, and building social and economic capital at the neighborhood level. Core programs include before- and afterschool programs, summer camps, parent involvement programs, social services, and community-building events. Fordham University evaluators documented that the Community Schools initiative has achieved improvements in academic achievement, student and teacher attendance, school climate, parent involvement, school safety, and student-teacher relationships.
Core Values for Children & Families

Council for Children
229 S. Brevard Street, Suite 202, Charlotte, NC 28202
Contact: Larry King, Executive Director
704/372-7961

Purpose: Research and establish the core values expressed by children and families in the community.

Target population: Families and children

At the Council for Children’s 20th annual meeting in 1998, the board of directors lamented the absence of community-wide standards for raising happy, healthy children. Therefore, they created the Core Values Collaborative Team to determine what the Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, community believed necessary to help children achieve their full potential.

The team, initially composed of 10 public and private human service agencies, conducted a series of focus groups to construct a community-wide survey. They used the community response to this survey to develop eight core values for Mecklenburg County’s children and families. Listed in increasing priority, the core values are: family support, education, health care, safety, emotional well-being, economic stability, community activities, and community support.

The Core Values Implementation Team, which has expanded to include corporate and citizen group representatives and other key community leaders, is now engaged in the second phase of the process. This team is creating best practice service continuums for each core value and comparing these ideals to what exists in the county. The team develops strategies to address recognized gaps. The team is also planning to establish community-wide child outcomes to monitor and regularly report progress in actualizing the core values of the Mecklenburg County community.

Devereux Kids

12575 58th Street North, Suite 153, Clearwater, FL 33760
Contact: Marcie Biddleman
727/538-4198, mbiddlem@devereux.org

Purpose: To increase the safety and well-being of children and families through community involvement.

Target population: Children, families, and communities

Established in 1999, Devereux Kids was formed to increase the safety and well-being of children and families in their neighborhoods by training parents and community residents in building relationships and other commu-
nity organizing skills. Devereux Kids focuses on community facilitation (collecting information on the status of children and families in a variety of ways), community learning (teaching that everyone has a part, and every part makes a difference), and community involvement (encouraging involvement of parents, community residents, faith communities, and other grassroots organizations).

The primary goal of Devereux Kids is to expand the community’s capacity to help children and families flourish in their neighborhoods. The evaluation of the core training initiatives suggests that most participants believe they have succeeded in achieving one or more of their post-training goals and that they continue to apply skills and are involved in their communities.

**Every Child**

Medically-Related Wrap-Around Services  
6401 Penn Avenue, Suite 300, Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
Contact: Susan Davis, Executive Director  
412/665-0600, everych98@aol.com

Purpose: To support families with children who have special medical needs.

Target population: Families and parents

Twelve years ago, designers initiated the Medically-Related Wrap-Around Services program to assist parents of infants and children who are born with or developed special health care needs. Although foster and adoptive parents receive monetary and other supports to care for children, birthparents or kin in Pennsylvania received nothing. The Every Child group strives to avoid adoptive or foster care placements of these medically fragile children by providing birthparents with resources, skills training, and other types of support in caring for their children.

Participation in this private, nonprofit program is voluntary. Public and private sources provide funding for the services. Parents may be referred by hospital staff, social service agencies, or family support centers, or they may request services themselves. Program staff members develop individualized, family-centered plans that may include family therapy, parent skill building, advocacy with medical and other service providers, and enhancement of community support for these families.

The program has had a 90% success rate in transitioning children from hospitals to homes and 90% success in keeping children with birthfamilies. Parents show increased skills, education, and job training opportunities, and medically fragile children have consistent preventive and rehabilitative care and need fewer visits to emergency rooms.
Families and Communities Together

County of Orange Social Services Agency
1200 Main Street 170C, Santa Ana, CA 92865
Contact: John Webb, Program Manager
714/480-6419, jwebb@ssa.co.orange.ca.us

Purpose: To provide comprehensive services to families and support communities.

Target population: Children, families, and communities

Designers created Families and Communities Together (FaCT) in 1994 in response to federal family preservation and support legislation. A steering committee of more than 50 leaders representing community agencies, parents, youth, and faith-based organizations developed a five-year plan to provide family-friendly, community-based, outcome-driven services.

FaCT is creating safe, supportive communities where children grow in stable, nurturing families and have opportunities to achieve their full potential. FaCT provides support services to children and families through community-based partnerships by operating 26 family resource centers (FRCs) that provide a comprehensive array of social and health services to families. Each FaCT-funded FRC is unique to the community or neighborhood served. FaCT promotes a variety of strategies to support safe and healthy homes and communities, including supporting prevention efforts; increasing accessibility of health care, mental health services, and child care; helping families obtain resources; strengthening parenting skills; helping students in school; and building the capacity of communities to address needs of youth and families.

An external evaluator monitors program progress and provides quarterly and annual reports. FaCT continues to be successful due to the commitment of community stakeholders, ongoing training and technical assistance provided to FRCs and their partners, and FaCT’s diverse funding support.

Family Support Initiative

Children’s Friend & Service
153 Summer Street, Providence, RI 02903
Contact: Seena Franklin, Director of Program Quality and Planning
401/276-4300, sfranklin@cfsri.org

Purpose: To provide model preventative and support services for children and families.

Target population: Children, families, and communities

Created in 1995, the Family Support Initiative began as a small-scale operation with two family support centers. Since then, it has expanded to include three
comprehensive home visiting services and a child care center. The initiative’s goals are to provide children with preventive services and opportunities for a better start in life and develop a model of family support services in Rhode Island. The initiative targets children from birth to age 6 and their families, as well as pregnant woman and their families living in neighborhoods surrounding three central Rhode Island cities with high concentrations of low-income families.

Many individuals and agencies involved in the initiative contribute to the project’s success, including citizen volunteers, local schools, adult education providers, health care providers, and parents. Key elements of the initiative include home visiting services, parenting education, case management, crisis intervention, emergency assistance, and counseling. The initiative also provides parental support and education groups and linkages to health care, transportation, child care, and recreational activities.

Workers evaluate the initiative annually, using information from families’ formal service plans, intake and exit program surveys, and staff and parent focus groups. They also use standardized outcome measures and complete pretest-posttest tools, such as the Parenting Stress Index and Child Well-Being Scales. In addition, they use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire with the children every two months. These tools result in outcome-oriented, quantitative, and qualitative evaluations. Many families have received services; made measurable progress on health care, developmental outcomes, parenting skills, and education; and decreased parent stress.

**FRIENDS Project**

**Portsmouth School Department**
Portsmouth High School, 50 Alumni Drive, Portsmouth, NH 03801
Contact: Heidi Chase, Project Coordinator
603/436-7100, h.chase@portsmouth.k12.nh.us

**Purpose:** To increase social opportunities and interactions for children with disabilities.

**Target population:** Children with disabilities

The Portsmouth school district established Finding Relationships in Every Neighborhood for kids with Disabilities on the Seacoast (FRIENDS) in 2000 to improve social relationships of children with disabilities in the school system and community. The district formed the FRIENDS task force, composed of parents, staff, and community members, to organize social and skill-building opportunities for children and adults with disabilities in the community.

FRIENDS provides opportunities for people with disabilities to comfortably interact with peers through various activities, teaches people with disabilities the skills to build and sustain friendships, and builds capacity in com-
munity organizations to create and foster environments for social connections and community involvement for people with disabilities. Fundraising, creating afterschool clubs, supporting participation in existing activities and clubs, and increasing community involvement are all key elements of the program.

FRIENDS has monitored progress using pre- and postprogram tests of individuals. The tests demonstrated that 87% of the disabled participants increased social interactions and 67% reported feeling happier.

**Juvenile Crime Prevention Partnership**

Washington County Juvenile Department
222 N. First Avenue, Hillsboro, OR 97124
Contact: Janice Ashe, Program Coordinator
503/846-3780, janice_ashe@co.washington.or.us

*Purpose:* To help at-risk youth and juvenile offenders through support services.

*Target population:* Youth and communities

In 1998, the Public Safety Coordinating Council and the Commission on Children and Families of Washington County, Oregon, convened a joint subcommittee comprising a range of service-providing partners, including schools, nonprofit social service agencies, and the county juvenile department. This committee developed a plan to reduce juvenile crime through a comprehensive continuum of community- and school-based programs to build on existing afterschool and other primary prevention programs. In 1999, the Oregon legislature allocated funds to support the Juvenile Crime Prevention (JCP) plans developed by counties statewide.

Youth ages 10 to 17 are eligible to participate if they have three or more of the following delinquency-related risk factors: antisocial behavior, poor family functioning, school failure, substance abuse, or negative peer associations. Schools, community agencies, and justice system agencies use the Oregon JCP Risk Screen to determine whether a youth is at risk of becoming or continuing to be delinquent. Less than one-third of youth have been arrested before their referral. Interventions are based on research-supported best practices and are designed to provide culturally appropriate, multisystemic, individualized, skill-based services for youth and their families. The JCP collaboration has expanded the capacity and expertise of participating community providers, and community dialogues sponsored by JCP have involved many adults and youth in planning effective and responsive programs.

More than 1,000 youth and their families have been served by JCP’s voluntary program. The JCP partnership has succeeded in reducing participants’ risk factors and rates of recidivism compared to their previous delinquency history and risks of criminal behavior.
LexLinc

Lexington Local Investment Commission
P.O. Box 22504, Lexington, KY 40522-2504
Contact: Wanda Faircloth, Executive Director
859/381-1302, wfaircloth@lexlinc.org

Purpose: To strengthen child and family support services.

Target population: Children and families

The Lexington Local Investment Commission (LexLinc) is a private nonprofit group founded in 1988 as a partnership of local citizens, the Kentucky State Cabinet for Families and Children, and the Department for Social Services of the Lexington-Fayette urban county government. The initial motivation was to create a local organization that could implement federal welfare reform policy initiatives.

LexLinc is concerned about all children and families in the county and has involved a diverse board representing business, state and local government, human service professionals, neighborhood partners, families that benefit from public services, and civic and community activists. LexLinc also convenes a provider cabinet to support its work.

LexLinc has organized several action teams to meet goals: The community involvement team works at the grassroots level to ensure that work is community driven, Data and Outcomes Measurement focuses on outcomes and data collection, Professional Development provides access to training and information, and Public Awareness and Advocacy informs the community about LexLinc and its activities.

LexLinc has been able to help forge neighborhood partnerships become a foundation for county-wide efforts. By forging collaborations and encouraging resource sharing, LexLinc has achieved tangible results, such as vans for transportation to programs, and intangible ones, such as increased trust by grassroots organizations.

Mental Health Connection

Lena Pope Home
3131 Sanguinet Street, Fort Worth, TX 76107
Contact: Ted Blevins, Executive Director
817/731-8681, tblevins@lenapopehome.org

Purpose: To make services and supports available to people with mental illnesses.

Target population: People with mental illnesses

In 1999, after a man with mental illness shot 15 people, killing 7, in Fort Worth, Texas, the community came together to ask: “What can we do to
prevent such a catastrophic event from ever happening again?” Beyond more security and gun control, most agreed that the best solution was to establish a county-wide mental health system available to every person seeking help. The North Texas Behavioral Healthcare Network, originally a group of five agencies, expanded to become the Mental Health Connection (MHC), a membership organization of more than 60 nonprofit, for-profit, and public agencies with a stake in improving service delivery to people who are mentally ill. A summit of key participants assessed mental health services in the county and defined 10 key issues that MHC has continued to address through the work of its subcommittees and with the help of elected officials.

MHC networks mental health and allied agencies and helps make services and supports accessible to mentally ill individuals. It also fosters maximum use of technology, engages in legislative advocacy, actively educates the public about mental illness, and works to obtain stable and adequate funding for mental health services. MHC has accomplished many of its goals and continues to expand collaboration through developing a strategic plan for mental health services that will increase access, reduce mismatch of services, and meet demand.

**Mesa County Early Childhood Partnership**

Mesa County Department of Human Services  
P.O. Box 200000, Grand Junction, CO 81502-5035  
Contact: Janet Rowland, Public Information Officer  
970/256-2453, janet.rowland@mcdss.co.gov

*Purpose:* To provide health and other support services to children and families.

*Target population: Children and families*

The Mesa County Early Childhood Partnership began in early 1999 as a result of the community’s heightened concern for child safety following three child abuse deaths. Under the leadership of the Mesa County commissioners, community members created a partnership to establish and sustain a resource-rich community for all families so that children will have the opportunity to grow and develop in safe, nurturing environments.

Concerned citizens and leaders from 17 agencies formed six committees to tackle key community issues: medical and dental care, prenatal care, quality child care, parent education, social and emotional well-being, and public relations. Each committee sets specific goals and monitors and evaluates progress. Partnership efforts have increased enrollment in medical and dental coverage, the proportion of pregnant women making prenatal visits, availability of quality child care, and opportunities for parent education. Having more affordable and accessible quality mental health services improves the social and emotional well-being of children and families.
Neighborhood Family Centers

Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County
6698 68th Avenue North, Pinellas Park, FL 33781
Contact: James E. Mills, ACSW, Executive Director
727/547-5000, jmills@jwbpinellas.org

Purpose: To use community resources to support and provide services for children and families.

Target population: Families

In 1991, designers initiated Neighborhood Family Centers (NFCs) to integrate comprehensive strategies that strengthen families. This approach acknowledges the profound influence of neighborhoods on the lives of children and families and encourages active participation in community improvement.

Since 1991, the group has created 11 NFCs in high-risk, low-income communities in Pinellas County, Florida. Each center provides nine core services: parental support, family literacy services, job counseling, child development activities, linkages to health care, outreach, child care for participants, facilitation of community meetings, and youth development. NFCs may also provide other services consistent with priorities determined by residents.

Evaluations focus on social and human capital development, assessed by examining measures of family cohesion, academic achievement, and other assets and risk factors. Youth participating in NFC programs are engaging in less risky behavior and showing greater achievement in school, such as more interest in reading and greater school readiness. Parental involvement in their children’s education has also increased.

Ohio Partnerships for Success

Division of Subsidies
Ohio Department of Youth Services
51 North High Street, 6th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215
Contact: Linda Modry, Chief
614/728-3485, Linda.Modry@dys.state.oh.us

Purpose: To ameliorate child and adolescent behavior problems.

Target population: Children and youth

Partnerships for Success (PfS) began as a comprehensive strategic initiative supported by funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and Ohio. With a change in governors and a shift in OJJDP’s approach, designers created PfS to sustain counties’ research-based, data-driven efforts to respond more effectively to child and adolescent behavior problems.

Administratively housed in the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS), PfS is supporting the 5 original pilot counties in implementing com-
prehensive strategies and helping 10 new counties develop comprehensive plans for promoting positive child and adolescent development. ODYS, in partnership with the Center for Learning Excellence at Ohio State University, has created an academy dedicated to enhancing counties’ capacity to plan and implement PfS endeavors. The academy offers a variety of training and technical assistance opportunities to participating counties. In addition, the 5 pilot counties serve as mentors to the 10 counties in the planning phase.

One of PfS’s key goals is to make data collection and formal evaluation easier for counties. The academy has developed a data collection template, conducts on-site evaluation trainings, and is constructing a website to facilitate information sharing.

**Primary Colors**

*Hamilton County Tennessee Department of Social Services*

317 Oak Street, Room 215, Chattanooga, TN 37403

Contact: Marguerite Chambers, Program Manager
423/209-6837, margueritec@mail.hamiltontn.gov

**Purpose:** To forge child and community-member partnerships that support children and promote positive development.

**Target population:** Children and communities

Formed in 2000, Primary Colors was a collaborative effort of seven diverse organizations to improve behavior and academic achievement of children and to reduce delinquency, dependency, and neglect in a high-risk area of the community. The groups involved in this effort include the 28th Legislative District Community Development Corporation, the Hamilton County government, the Fortwood Center, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and the Tennessee Commission on Children, Youth, and Families.

Primary Colors helps establish partnerships for a positive effect on children, such as parents and parent educators, counselors and unruly students, the university and students interested in professional development opportunities, community agencies and resources, and state and community efforts to reduce juvenile delinquency.

As a result of Primary Colors, acting-out behaviors have lessened at an elementary school. Parents have also increased their attendance rate at group sessions and are more accepting of educators making home visits for parenting education.

**Programa Hispano**

*Coastal Behavioral Healthcare*

3830 Bee Ridge, Sarasota, FL 34233

Contact: Christine Cauffield, President/CEO
941/927-8900, DrCauffield@aol.com

**Selected Community Initiatives**
Purpose: To reach out to youth at risk of violence and substance abuse and provide preventive services.

Target population: Youth and families

When substance abuse and gang violence in Sarasota, Florida, increased among Hispanic residents, community stakeholders including law enforcement agencies, the Hispanic/Latino Coalition of Sarasota County, and the Florida Department of Children and Families collaborated to find solutions. Programa Hispano strives to improve the lives of Hispanic clients by providing a cultural and linguistic bridge to necessary social services.

Programa Hispano targets at-risk Hispanic youth and reaches out before violence and substance abuse become a problem. Program staff aim to improve young people’s connections with family, positive peer interaction, problem-solving skills, self-esteem and self-discipline, commitment to development, and academic achievement. The program also works to increase parental knowledge about child development, community services, and consequences of drug use. Programa Hispano offers individual, group, and family therapy sessions; provides referrals to service providers; teaches methods to stop substance abuse; and offers assistance and information regarding recreational activities for youth as alternatives to gangs and substance abuse.

Workers assess clients of Programa Hispano and assign them a Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) score at intake and discharge. Those who have completed the program to date have scored an average of 20 points higher on the 100-point GAF scale at discharge than intake.

Roca

101 Park Street, Chelsea, MA 02150
Contact: Molly Baldwin, Executive Director
617/889-5210 ext. 221, Fax: 617/889-2145, info@rocainc.com

Purpose: To provide opportunities and services for at-risk youth to develop into successful adults.

Target population: Youth

Roca began in 1988 as a local mental health agency program dedicated to helping pregnant teens develop into successful adults. Since then, with generous support from individual, community, corporate, and foundation donors, Roca has expanded. It now addresses the educational, health, social, and prevocational needs of at-risk children, youth, and families in multicultural, multilingual urban communities of Chelsea, Revere, Charlestown, East Boston, and Lynn, Massachusetts. Each year, Roca works intensively with 1,300 children while reaching out to an additional 15,000.

Roca has a vision of young people as thriving leaders for positive change in their communities. People from Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cambodia, the Car-
ibbean, Central and South America, Cuba, Nigeria, Morocco, the Sudan, and many other regions join with native-born community residents to lead change in their communities. By building relationships with faith-based communities, health care centers, public agencies, neighborhood businesses, corporations, and foundations, Roca works to promote systemic changes to benefit children, youth, and families.

Roca is continuing to build capacity to engage in process and outcome evaluations with the support of the Surdna and Edna McConnell Clark foundations. Many young people who chose to become involved in Roca programs have improved school achievement, chosen positive alternatives to gangs, and developed a sense of belonging and responsibility to their communities. Some youth have become directors or staff of Roca programs.

**Santa Barbara County Children’s Scorecard**

KIDS Network of Santa Barbara County  
c/o Department of Social Services  
218 West Carmen Lane, Suite 208, Santa Maria, CA 93458-7774  
Contact: Hedy Damery, MA, Interagency Network Coordinator  
805/614-1990, hdamery@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

*Purpose:* To assess communities on quality of supports and services for children and youth.

*Target population:* Communities and community leaders

The Santa Barbara Children’s Scorecard was a joint project of University of California, Santa Barbara, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education; the KIDS Network; and the County of Santa Barbara’s Children & Families Commission. They developed the scorecard to track and measure the county’s progress in improving outcomes for children and youth.

Shortly after the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors created the KIDS Network in 1991, it held community and network meetings to determine which indicators of children’s well-being are important to track and explore methods of building on existing data collection systems. The resulting scorecard is intended to inform the community, build consensus, and inspire leadership around a shared vision to enhance the well-being of all children and youth in the county.

As the scorecard has been published for nine years, community partners can examine longitudinal trends to pinpoint areas of greatest concern. In 2002, several elected officials wrote about how the scorecard helps in setting priorities and making decisions about services and supports for children and youth. The scorecard has become a point of reference for citizens and professionals alike and has received national attention. The scorecard team has helped other California counties develop scorecards, recently helping the county’s Adult and Aging Network develop a scorecard for its target population.
St. Lucie County Hand in Hand

St. Lucie County Shared Services Network Executive Roundtable
250 NW Country Club Drive, Suite 232, Port St. Lucie, FL 34986
Contact: Christine Epps, Project Coordinator
772/871-5880, dkids@bellsouth.net

Purpose: To promote best practices in providing a continuum of services for children and families.

Target population: Communities

The Shared Services Network Executive Roundtable is a network of policymakers and other stakeholders who have created an infrastructure for effective problem solving and system change. Designers formed the St. Lucie County Executive Roundtable in October of 1994 to accomplish systemic change that results in improved outcomes for youth in schools and the community.

The executive roundtable continues to follow a comprehensive plan for reducing juvenile delinquency and violence that it developed in 1996. It is called the St. Lucie County Hand in Hand. Priority from this executive body is given to four selected risk factors: family management, early academic failure, low neighborhood attachment, and early and persistent antisocial behavior. The solution to reducing juvenile delinquency and violence in the community is to reduce these four risk factors and enhance protective factors. Executive roundtable members encourage agencies to use research-based programs that have the highest probability of reducing these risk factors and enhancing the protective factors in youth.

The current work of this executive body includes the completion of a community resource assessment that has been instrumental in identifying significant gaps in how agencies serve youth. As a result, executive roundtable members have committed themselves and their agencies to policies, activities, and best practices that will fill these gaps, improve the system of care, protect youth, and build quality of life for youth and families.

Teach Me 101

Dare Family Services
265 Medford Street, Suite 500, Somerville, MA 02143
Contact: Marybeth Kennealy, Public Relations Coordinator
617/629-2710, marybeth@darefamily.org

Purpose: To provide services that promote positive youth development and prevent delinquency and crisis.

Target population: Youth

In 1994, Dare Family Services, an organization providing foster care for abused, neglected, and traumatized children, established Teach Me 101. Dare created the program to assist families by providing intensive guidance and
counseling to prevent family separation. The creators designed Teach Me 101 with extensive input from parents, church and community leaders, and community agencies. Strong partnerships and collaborations with parents, schools, teens, and the community continue to help this program succeed.

The target population for Teach Me 101 is inner-city youth from two of Boston’s poorest communities. The goals of Teach Me 101 are keeping youth in school, educating youth about the harmful effects of drug and alcohol use, and involving youth in character-building projects to lessen interest in sexual activity and abusive and illegal behaviors. Activities include one-on-one mentoring, afterschool programs in music and art, tutorial services, and job readiness training. Boys and girls groups meet weekly to address a variety of issues and construct strategic plans for educational and economic success. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help youth during crises. Youth receive mentoring and development services in a setting sensitive to culture and language differences. Many children and youth in the community have received counseling, family counseling, advocacy, referrals to other services, help with employment, and academic tutoring.

The #1 Question: Is It Good for Kids?

Children and Families of Iowa
1111 University Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50314
Contact: Cindy Hickman, Director of Development
515/288-1981 ext. 321, chickman@cfiowa.org

Purpose: To raise awareness of the needs of children and promote actions to meet those needs.

Target population: Communities

The #1 Question initiative began in 2001 as community leaders in Des Moines, Iowa, convened and discussed whether appropriate decisions were being made in behalf of community children. A coalition of supporters, advocates, and community and corporate leaders organized themselves to raise awareness about children’s issues and ask the question: “Is it good for kids?”

The initiative’s goal is to raise awareness about the concerns of children in the community and to improve these children’s lives. The program targets community members interested in the well-being of children, including schools, neighborhood members, employers, and nonprofit and for-profit organizations. The #1 Question has developed media campaigns and informational presentations, and it sponsors and promotes child-friendly events. The project created a growth chart for the community using statistical evidence to document the needs of children and assess how well the community is responding to those needs. Working together, partners in this initiative are able to raise awareness and measure community success.
**Success by 6**

United Way of America  
701 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314  
Contact: Allyson Cline, Director  
703/836-7112, ext. 262, Allyson.Cline@uwa.unitedway.org

*Purpose:* To ensure communities help young children develop healthily.

*Target population:* Children, families, and communities

Success by 6 began in 1988 as a local United Way initiative committed to fostering healthy development of children ages 6 and younger. United Way of America adopted the initiative in the early 1990s. It has since grown to be the largest national network of public-private partnerships focused on developmental needs of preschool children.

More than 350 local Success by 6 initiatives are led by collaborations representing all sectors of the communities. These groups develop outcome-focused strategic plans based on community assessments. Local partners establish governance structures that clearly define roles and responsibilities. A majority of local initiatives are lead by corporate leaders who provide resources and enhance credibility of the work.

Local communities develop their own outcome measurement plans and tools to accomplish their goals. Many communities benefit from evaluation partnerships with local universities and have demonstrated that systemic support for child-friendly policies and practices improves developmental outcomes for children.
### Tool 1

**Community Partners Worksheet**

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# Neighbors and Other Community Members

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### People Working in Service Agencies, Institutions, and Systems

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People Who Influence Laws, Traditions, Culture, and Society

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Tool 2

Health, Safety, and Well-Being for All Children and Youth

CWLA believes that all children and youth have five interrelated needs that must be met if they are to be safe, healthy, and thriving. Every child and youth possesses the following needs, whether they live at home with family members, in a juvenile detention facility, or on the streets:

- **“The Basics”:** At the most fundamental level, children require proper nutrition, economic security, adequate shelter and clothing, education, and primary and preventive health and mental health care.

- **Relationships:** Close, nurturing relationships with parents, kin, and other caregivers allow and encourage children and young people to grow and thrive. Caring relationships with community members, including neighbors, coaches, teachers, and faith community leaders and members, strengthen social and relationship skills, improve self-mastery, and enhance self-esteem. Good relationships among children and youth themselves reinforce healthy behaviors and increase positive learning opportunities.

- **Opportunities:** Providing a childhood full of experiences and opportunities that motivate and equip children to succeed is the collective responsibility of individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities. Children and youth need opportunities to develop their talents and skills, to contribute to their families and communities, and to make positive connections to their cultures, traditions, and spiritual resources. Children with early indications of physical, cognitive, or emotional disabilities must be provided with early assessment and intervention, to prevent later, more serious problems that can unnecessarily limit their long-range potential.

- **Safety:** Keeping children safe from abuse and neglect by their caregivers, as well as from witnessing or being victimized by family, school, or community violence, makes it much less likely that they will become either victims or perpetrators of such violence in the future. By also protecting children from the harms of discrimination, media violence, Internet victimization, environmental toxins, and accidental injury, we increase their likelihood for success.

- **Healing:** When we are unable to protect children, we must do all that we can to ease the impact of the harm they have suffered. Helping children and youth to heal involves ensuring their immediate and ongoing safety; supplying immediate and continuing emotional support; assessing the need for and providing medical, mental health, and other needed services; and, in some cases, making amends through restorative justice practices.

Together, communities can meet these needs for all of their children, but they cannot do this all at once or quickly. They must take a broad look at the current state of children’s well-being, have a mutually developed vision for their future, create a thoughtful plan, and have the resources, talents, energy, commitment, and hard work of lots of people to make the vision a reality.

### The Five Universal Needs of Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“The Basics”</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Healing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet Basic Needs</td>
<td>Ensure Nurturing Relationships</td>
<td>Provide Opportunities for Optimal Development</td>
<td>Protect from Harm</td>
<td>Ease the Impact of Harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equality</td>
<td>• Nurturing relationships with parents, kin, and other adults and children</td>
<td>• Opportunities for early childhood development, development of school-age children, and positive youth development</td>
<td>• Protection from family violence, school and community violence, media violence and Internet victimization, discrimination, accidental injury and death, and environmental toxins</td>
<td>• Protection, care, and support in response to trauma as well as ongoing protection, care, and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Economic security and stability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Proper nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Adequate housing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• A healthy start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Health and health care coverage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tool 3

Consensus Decision Making

Consensus means that all members of the group agree that the decision is the best one for the group as a whole at that time. Consensus does not mean that all individuals share the same opinion. It often takes longer but the time is worth spending because it is a synthesis of everyone’s perspectives and intelligence. The decision that emerges out of consensus represents the whole and everyone takes responsibility to carry it out.

It takes:

- **Collective Spirit.** Consensus works when you put the interests of the group above your own, understanding that what is good for the group as a whole benefits everyone.

- **Self-Discipline.** Do not dominate airtime or sit back without voicing your ideas. Never assume that your ideas are not as important or be invested in your idea as the only possible outcome.

- **Respect.** Assume everyone is trying their best, has good reasons for holding the perspective that they do and that together everyone will come up with a workable way to move forward.

- **Good Listening.** Trust that every concern raised will result in a better conclusion. Listen with a spirit of learning, curiosity, and finding what is true. Be open to discovering that another approach better.

- **Cooperation.** Look for ways that differences can complement each other or at least coexist. Avoid an either/or mentality that says only one approach is possible.

- **Struggle.** Explore the impact of different approaches. Make decisions that empower the group without disempowering any individual. Avoid trivializing and putting down other perspectives. Remember you can disagree and respect one another. Don’t agree for the sake of “harmony,” “efficiency” or peer pressure. Agree when you agree.

- **Being Principled.** Blocking consensus should only be done for principled reasons. You believe the decision is fundamentally counter to the principles the group stands for, i.e., harmful to the group and/or community. Be to the point; do not make speeches and openly participate in finding alternative approaches.

- **Patience.** It is important to exercise patience. Consensus takes time because each person’s concerns and ideas are important. Time spent is time saved in not having to resolve conflicts that would arise later.

- **Responsibility.** Each person needs to be responsible to voice their opinion, participate in discussion and actively carry out the decision.
Tool 3 Continued

Flow of Consensus Decision Making Process

Background (present)

- What decision needs to be made
- Motivation (why)
- History
- What are the aim?
- What is at stake
- What are the known options

Discussion

- Exploration of the issues, different approaches and opinions
- Synthesize the spirit of the discussion

Proposal

- A participant incorporates views into a concise recommendation for action

Discussion of Proposal

- Take up questions to clarify
- Express and explore issues about the proposal

Make Friendly Amendments

- Proposal can be modified or withdrawn (with the consent of the one who put it forward)

Test for Consensus

- Restate proposal including any amendments. Then call for readiness to move forward. If there are concerns then as if there are:
  - A. Strong concerns/non-support (“I don’t see the need for this but can live with it.”)
  - B. Reservations/objections within consensus (“I think this might be a mistake but I can live with it.”)
  - C. Standing aside (“I can’t do this but I won’t stand in the way of others doing it.”) If there are a significant number of any of the above, then there is unreadiness in the group. You need to decide for your group what that number is.
  - D. Blocks. People should only block when the proposal violates their moral and/or ethical convictions and they think it will harm the group or community. If the proposal gets blocked, ask the ones who are blocking for their objections and possible solutions. Try to incorporate solutions or suggestions from others into a revise or new proposal. If there is still unreadiness, it may be good for the one who is blocking to work with the presenter of the proposal outside of the meeting (along with other interested parties) to see if they can come up with a workable alternative or compromise proposal to bring back to the group.

Consensus Reached

- Show agreement with voice or gesture. Again repeat the decision that has been reached. It should be written down along with any concern, reservation, or stand aside.

Decision Implemented

- Establish who will do what when and if particular support it needed. Then write it down.

# Tool 4

## Expertise and Resource Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>AFFILIATION (IF APPROPRIATE):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHONE/FAX:</td>
<td>E-MAIL:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS:</td>
<td>CITY/STATE/ZIP:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1. Areas of Expertise. Please identify areas where you can help support the collaboration.

- [ ] Administration/Computer
- [ ] Artistic/Creative Projects
- [ ] Data Analysis
- [ ] Facilitation
- [ ] Public Relations/Publicity
- [ ] Fundraising
- [ ] Speaking
- [ ] Writing
- [ ] Planning Celebrations
- [ ] Evaluation
- [ ] Member Recruitment
- [ ] Other (Please be specific)

### 2. Who Is Missing? Please list any government officials, media personalities, business owners, school board members, or others that you know and believe might support this project. (Please include contact information.) Also consider individuals who might not have the time to commit to ongoing work, but who would lend their support and influence for special circumstances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>PHONE/FAX</th>
<th>E-MAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

### 3. Time. Approximately how much time can you devote to this project over the next (6 months/year/school year)?

What is the best day for you to attend meetings?
What is the best time of day for you to meet?

### 4. Special Considerations. Do you have any special considerations that we should be aware of as we schedule meetings (e.g., preferred locations, child care needs, access for persons with disabilities, other)?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Thanks for being a part of this collaborative community policing effort.

*Source: Collaboration Toolkit.*
## Tool 5

### Public Engagement Planning Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Initiating</th>
<th>Invigorating</th>
<th>Inquiring</th>
<th>Imagining</th>
<th>Innovating</th>
<th>Implementing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Announce the initiative</td>
<td>Invite participation; share progress</td>
<td>Invite participation; share assessment information; share vision statement and other products</td>
<td>Invite participation; share action plans; mobilize commitment</td>
<td>Invite participation; share progress and learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td></td>
<td>share learning</td>
<td>data and analysis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Written</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Interactive**
  - Visits
  - Interviews
  - Booths at community events
  - Focus groups
  - Community forums
  - Town meetings
  - Other

- **Written**
  - Newsletters
  - Newspapers
  - Church bulletins
  - Surveys
  - Other

- **Oral**
  - Public service announcements
  - Video/television
  - Speeches
  - Government proclamations
  - Other
## Tool 6

### Community Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Needs Assessment</th>
<th>Consensus Organizing Institute Community Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose and Focus</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify needs or problems</td>
<td>Understand history and characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify issues</td>
<td>Identify assets and strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on problems</td>
<td>Find out who is who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather data to help agency develop programs</td>
<td>Find out how community works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather data to help agency raise resources</td>
<td>Develop and understand relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand dynamics and politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify issues around which people may organize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Information Gathered</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data (demographics, numbers)</td>
<td>Data and stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the nature of the problem or need</td>
<td>Information about key problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data about prevalence of the problem</td>
<td>Information about people's self interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas about solutions</td>
<td>Information about contributions people can make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas about what types of services are needed</td>
<td>Information about assets, energy, and motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information about connections and relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Techniques for Collecting Information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some &quot;no contact&quot; methods, such as examining census data</td>
<td>Extensive community contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May have limited community contact</td>
<td>One-on-one conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Community meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community meetings</td>
<td>Focus groups with leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Relationship building (repeated contact with same people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Surveys developed with residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents are “subjects” of study</td>
<td>Residents are active participants and guides in analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and shape programs</td>
<td>Build relationships and social networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals use information and create agendas</td>
<td>Get residents involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge not necessarily transferred to community</td>
<td>Empowerment and knowledge transferred to community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community change, momentum, and motivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Comparing the community analysis to other tools. (May 2001). Consensus Organizing Institute.
## Tool 7
### Sample Key Outcome Indicators for the Five Universal Needs of Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>NATIONAL DATA SOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Basics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Security</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of eligible children who participate in relevant feeding programs, such as Women, Infants, and Children; school breakfast or lunch; and food stamps</td>
<td>Forum on Child and Family Statistics, America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, <a href="http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/">http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of children living in households experiencing food insecurity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of suicides of youth ages 10–14</td>
<td>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics (CDC NCHS), Division of Vital Statistics, <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/dvs/mortdata.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/dvs/mortdata.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Healthy Start</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of legally free children waiting to be adopted</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (HHS ACYF), <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/dis/index.htm">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/dis/index.htm</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**APPENDIX**

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**IMPLEMENTING • INNOVATING • IMAGINATING**
### Key Outcome Indicators for the Five Universal Needs of Children

Sample Worksheet—Use this worksheet to list which child and family outcome data are most relevant for review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>NATIONAL</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>LOCAL</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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Tool 8

Six Steps of Effective Community Mapping

Often, communities have limited understanding of their resources. By mapping a community’s strengths—including its intellectual, physical, and financial capital—you can determine whether the current service system is using all available resources. This important work requires careful planning and the willingness of organizations to go beyond traditional methods.

There are six steps to effective community mapping:

1. Involve diverse stakeholders in the process. Staff, individuals from the private/public sector, and of course, community members can all benefit from mapping.

2. Create a forum where stakeholders can learn about and help shape the mapping process. Make certain stakeholders realize that identifying community capacities and assets is the first step toward community revitalization.

3. Set up a planning team to inventory the community’s public (formal) and private (informal) support systems. Enlist team members who either are or want to be connected with community issues. Involving community members will improve the quality of data collection and create opportunities to develop “change” strategies. Perhaps most important, build understanding for multiple perspectives: Giving all voices equal time and respect will create and maintain trust.

4. Take stock of informal public systems—assets and capacities largely under neighborhood control and influence. These might include the talents of residents; individual businesses; home-based enterprises; personal income; life experiences; and commitment to community. Local resident-controlled associations and organizations are also considered informal systems. These may include: social action groups; self-help groups; social service collaborators; citizens’ associations; and associations of businesses, financial institutions, and other organizations centered around cultural activity, communications, or religion.

5. Consider formal systems: assets located within the community but largely controlled by outsiders. They may include: private and nonprofit organizations (such as institutions of higher education, hospitals, and civic organizations); public institutions and services (public schools, police and fire departments, libraries); physical resources (vacant spaces as well as energy and waste resources); and welfare expenditures, public capital improvement expenditures, and public information.

6. Put the resources map to use. Consider the following questions:

   - Who will lead the community-building process?
   - What kinds of community-wide research, planning, and decision-making processes can advance the rebuilding of a neighborhood?
   - How might the neighborhood build useful bridges to resources outside the community?
   - Who else can use this information to help improve conditions in the neighborhood?

Tool 9

Oklahoma Community Survey

Background

The Child Welfare League of America is seeking the opinion of citizens in southeastern Oklahoma on the community and social influences that affect the lives of our children. We invite you to participate by contributing your thoughts and comments. We will use the information you provide in planning the development of an improved system of mental health, substance abuse, and social services for children and families living in southeastern Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Centennial Commemoration Commission sponsors this project. To participate, complete the following survey and mail it to: Child Welfare League of America, McAlester Office, 10 South 3rd Street McAlester, OK 74501.

—Thanks for your participation!

Need for Safety and Stability

Children need safety and stability to ensure their healthy development. For this survey, the word children means a person younger than 18 years old. Please answer the following five questions based on your experience in your community. For this survey, the word community means the town or county in which you live. Use the following guide to answer. Circle the number provided.

1 = True for Most Children  2 = True of Some Children  3 = Not True for Most Children

1. In my community, children have their basic needs for food, housing, medical care met.  
2. In my community, children have close and stable relationships with parents or other adults in their lives.  
3. In my community children are protected from violence in their lives. For this survey, violence means physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, school violence, or drug-related and community violence.  
4. When children and their families need help with an emotional, behavioral, or social problem, a reliable system of mental health, substance abuse, social service, or volunteer organizations responds.  
5. In my community, children can participate in programs that help develop their full potential, such as day care, preschool programs, afterschool programs, clubs, and recreation.

Family Conditions

Listed below are 15 descriptions of family conditions that can affect the development of children. Please rate the effect of each condition on the healthy development of children in your community using the following guide. Write the number in the space provided.

1 = Very Serious Effect  2 = Some Effect  3 = Little or No Effect

Poverty  Parent unemployment  Poor housing conditions  No family health care  Parental drug or alcohol use or drug dealing  
Divorce  Parent incarceration  Domestic violence  Physical abuse of children  
Sexual abuse of children  Neglect of children  No church attendance or spiritual development  No child care  
Being from a different culture or not speaking English  Parental emotional problems or mental illness

Continued
### TOOL 9 Continued

#### Child Behaviors and Conditions

Listed below are descriptions of 15 behaviors of children or conditions children may live in that might harm their development. Please rate the effect on the healthy development of children in your community using the following guide. Write the number in the space provided.

1 = Very Serious Effect  
2 = Some Effect  
3 = Little or No Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children have poor school attendance or poor school behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children engage in sexual activity or become pregnant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children smoke or use tobacco</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children use alcohol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children use drugs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children have emotional or behavioral problems</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children commit or attempt suicide</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children affiliate with gangs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children do not attend church or have spiritual development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are victims of violence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children have poor supervision from parents or caregivers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are from a different cultures or do not speak English</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children have emotionally disturbed or mentally ill parents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children have parents who abuse alcohol or drugs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children lack recreational opportunities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Community Response

Listed below are descriptions of 20 services or programs that communities often provide to children and their families. Please rate what your community does that improves the safety, stability, and development of children using the following guide. Write the number in the space provided.

1 = Does Very Well  
2 = Does Okay  
3 = Needs Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal care for expectant parents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home visits to newborns and their mothers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care and preschool programs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting classes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good neighboring and watching out for each other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child abuse prevention programs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public assistance to children from families in poverty</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool programs, organizations, or clubs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church-based youth groups</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal services to children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs that teach respect for others</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug use prevention programs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquency and gang prevention programs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy and AIDS prevention programs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative schools or drop-out prevention</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and sports programs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health counseling programs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug and alcohol counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster care or group care for children who cannot live at home</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation counseling for delinquent offenders</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Families Seek and Get Help

Every family is different about how they seek help. Described below are eight places or organizations where families might seek help with a social, emotional, or behavioral problem. Please rate, from your experience, which places families are most likely to seek and receive help from in your community. Use the following guide and mark your rating in the space provided.

1 = Most Likely  2 = Somewhat Likely  3 = Not Likely

- Family
- Neighbors or friends
- Church/spiritual leader
- Local school (teacher, counselor, or principal)
- Local law enforcement/courts
- Private nonprofit agencies or charities
- Public or government (city, county, or state) agencies
- Tribal social service agencies

Use of New Resources

The Center for Services to Children and Families Project is interested in improving conditions for children and their families throughout all southeastern Oklahoma. If additional public and private resources were to become available, we would like to know how you would recommend those resources be used. Below is a description of four ways that new resources could be used. Read all four descriptions and then rank your priority using the following guide and mark your rating in the space provided.

1 = My Highest Priority  2 = My Second Priority  3 = My Third Priority  4 = My Lowest Priority

- Prevention—Teach children and parents how to avoid trouble
- Early intervention—Get involved with children and families when they first need help
- Target new services to children and families who are having problems in school and the community now
- Expand and improve specialized programs for children with the most severe behavior problems

About You

You are almost done. To help us understand the survey results better, we have a few questions about you. Circle either yes or no.

Do you have children in your home younger than 18 years old?  Yes  No

Have you received services for a child or family social, emotional, or behavioral problem in the past three years?  Yes  No

What is the ZIP code for your community? _______________

Would you like to attend a meeting in your community to learn more about this project and provide further comments?  Yes  No

If you answered yes, please provide your mailing address. We will send you a postcard notifying you of the time and place of the meeting nearest you. Your name and information will not be shared with any other organization.

NAME: ________________________________

ADDRESS/CITY/STATE/ZIP: ________________________________

PHONE/E-MAIL: ________________________________

What other comments do you have on the needs of children and families in your community?

(If you need more room, attach your comments.)

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
Tool 10

The River of Culture

Every community has a culture shaped by the experiences, values, and vision of its collective membership. The culture is affected by factors such as past and present members, community values, and the community’s policies and leadership. Just as with families, change is more successful when it is approached with consideration of the culture and the deeply held values and beliefs of community members.

The River of Culture is a community assessment and intervention tool that uses the ritual of storytelling. It is a process to examine a community’s history and culture—its traditions, oral history, myths, heroes, slogans, and practices. The river is organized around principles of empowerment, valuing strength and diversity. It is a process that allows individuals to join together, look at the past, and focus on strengths to build on the future.

The River of Culture tool compares a community’s culture to a river—ever moving, ever changing, taking twists and turns, with churning rapids and calm, shallow pools. Each individual in the community is likened to a tributary both influencing and affected by the community’s culture.

The River of Culture Process Notes

1. Ask people in the group to arrange themselves around the perimeter of the room in chronological order based on when they joined the community. Ask for who joined the community the longest time ago and put them at the start of the line. Ask for who joined the community most recently and put them at the end of the line. Ask everyone else to fill in the space between.

2. Walk around the perimeter of the room and break the group into small groups of 8 to 10 by when they entered the community.

3. Ask each group to choose a scribe who will record the group’s discussion by drawing and writing on the river when the group presents. Use water metaphors, such as dams, sharks, and rapids.

4. Give the group 40 minutes to discuss the questions on their handout that relate to the year they joined the community (“back then”) and to decide how they want to present their discussion the larger group in 5 to 7 minutes.

5. At the start of each group presentation, each person in the group will put their name and when they started with the community on the river.

6. As the group presents, the scribe will draw and write on the river.

7. After all groups have presented, lead a discussion of themes and values.

8. Mark the place in the river that is the present moment and draw a sailboat with a large mast on that spot.

9. Discuss what should be left behind as the community moves into the future. What no longer serves the community well? Share it, then throw it away (you can put trash can in center of room or have a bonfire outside).

10. Discuss moving forward, and what hopes and strengths the community should take forward into the future. Draw or write on a sticky note and put it on the ship’s mast.
The River of Culture Participant Handout

The year that you joined the community:

1. What were the most critical issues facing the community?

2. What was it like to be a child or youth in the community?

3. What was it like to be a parent in the community?

4. Who in the community were heroes for children and families? Why?

5. What was your dream for your contribution to the community?
Tool 11

Future Search Methodology
This methodology usually requires four or five sessions each lasting half a day.

Day 1, Afternoon

Focus on the Past
People make timelines of key events in the world, their own lives, and in the history of the future search topic. Small groups tell stories about each timeline and the implications of their stories for the work they have come to do.

Focus on Present, External Trends
The whole group makes a “mind map” of trends affecting them now and identifies those trends most important for their topic.

Day 2, Morning

Focus on Present, External Trends
Stakeholder groups describe what they are doing now about key trends and what they want to do in the future.

Focus on Present
Stakeholder groups report what they are proud of and sorry about in the way they are dealing with the future search topic.

Day 2, Afternoon

Ideal Future Scenarios
Diverse groups put themselves into the future and describe their preferred future as if it has already been accomplished.

Identify Common Ground
Diverse groups post themes they believe are common ground for everyone.

Day 3, Morning and Early Afternoon

Confirm Common Ground
Whole group dialogues to agree on common ground.

Action Planning
Volunteers sign up to implement action plans.

Source: Future Search Network, 4700 Wissahickon Ave., Suite 126, Philadelphia, PA 19144, USA; 800/951-6333 or 215/951-0328; fax 215/849-7360; fsn@futuresearch.net.
Old Assumptions

- We need strong leaders to take care of us and make decisions for us.
- Citizens are powerless to change the main systems that affect their lives.
- Citizens outside our personal circles need to take care of their own problems by themselves.
- If we had enough time and money, new laws and better enforcement, we could fix any problems.
- If citizens gained the right job skill, they could have long-term security.

More Valid Assumptions for the Future

- Leaders can be developed everywhere to create the conditions for citizen responsibility and democracy.
- Citizens can make and influence choices, take responsibility for the consequences, and learn.
- Citizens can use their talents and work together to vastly improve the whole community for all citizens.
- Citizens can be deeply motivated to understand and take action on complex problems with very little money.
- The changing nature of work requires the resources and availability of lifelong learning for all citizens.

Tool 13

Guide to Selecting Trendbenders

- Collect your working materials:
  - Any products the stakeholder group has produced (e.g., Vision Statements, ... SPOT [strengths, problems, opportunities, and threats] analysis, Assessment work and Assets)
  - Flip chart paper, prepared template and stickies
  - Markers and masking tape

- Review the products from your community learning activities one document at a time (i.e., results from SPOT Analysis, ... Focus Groups, and so on). Use stickies to capture key themes and trends on a graphic template. Table teams of 5–8 people are ideal for this activity.

- Discuss, analyze and synthesize the results of your earlier work until your table team can identify 1–2 clear messages or themes that capture the community's current situation as determined from each learning activity. Use the prepared template, stickies and chart paper to record the table team’s work. Feel free to make notes on the template, move things around on stickies and record the “best thinking” of the team.

- Once themes have been identified in each of the circles, put your themes together and look for possible trendbenders. The more you discuss the information and the further you get into this process, the clearer that significant trendbender ideas will become.

- It’s difficult to estimate how much time your table teams will need to complete the work of identifying themes from each product. Each table team is expected to develop 2–3 possible trendbender ideas by the end of the meeting.

Tool 14

Questions for Sustainability Planning

- How do we want to view our initiative five years from now?
- How do we want others to view it five years from now?
- How do we define sustainability? Continuing unchanged, or evolving in specified directions?
- What elements of the initiative must be continued in order to maintain the integrity of our original vision and purpose?
- Who are our key internal and external stakeholders?
- Do our goals and activities complement, duplicate or conflict with other policies, programs or projects?
- What is the most likely avenue for continuing all or part of our initiative?
- What level of financial resources do we need to continue all or part of our initiative?
- How can we get the message out about our positive outcomes and fiscal accountability?

Source: Institute for Educational Leadership. (2001). Building sustainability in demonstration projects for children, youth and families, toolkit number 2 (pp. 4–5). Washington, DC: Author. This tool was produced with a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.
Endnotes


2 Ibid.

3 Ibid, pp. 5–6.


6 Ibid.


16 Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Information on Future Search is available from http://www.futuresearch.net/index.cfm.


48 Ibid (p. 145).

49 Ibid.


62 Ibid, p. 100.

Imagine an America where every child is healthy and safe and where all children develop to their potential. This Community Implementation Guide is a practical companion to the Child Welfare League of America’s monograph, Making Children a National Priority: A Framework for Community Action. It builds on current knowledge from many community-based initiatives and highlights a variety of promising approaches to developing and sustaining comprehensive community-based initiatives.

The Guide offers practical help to foster a long-term, community-wide commitment to nurturing children and youth; engage families, youth, neighborhoods, service systems, and other stakeholders in collaborative partnerships; and help communities meet children’s needs in a very real way.