

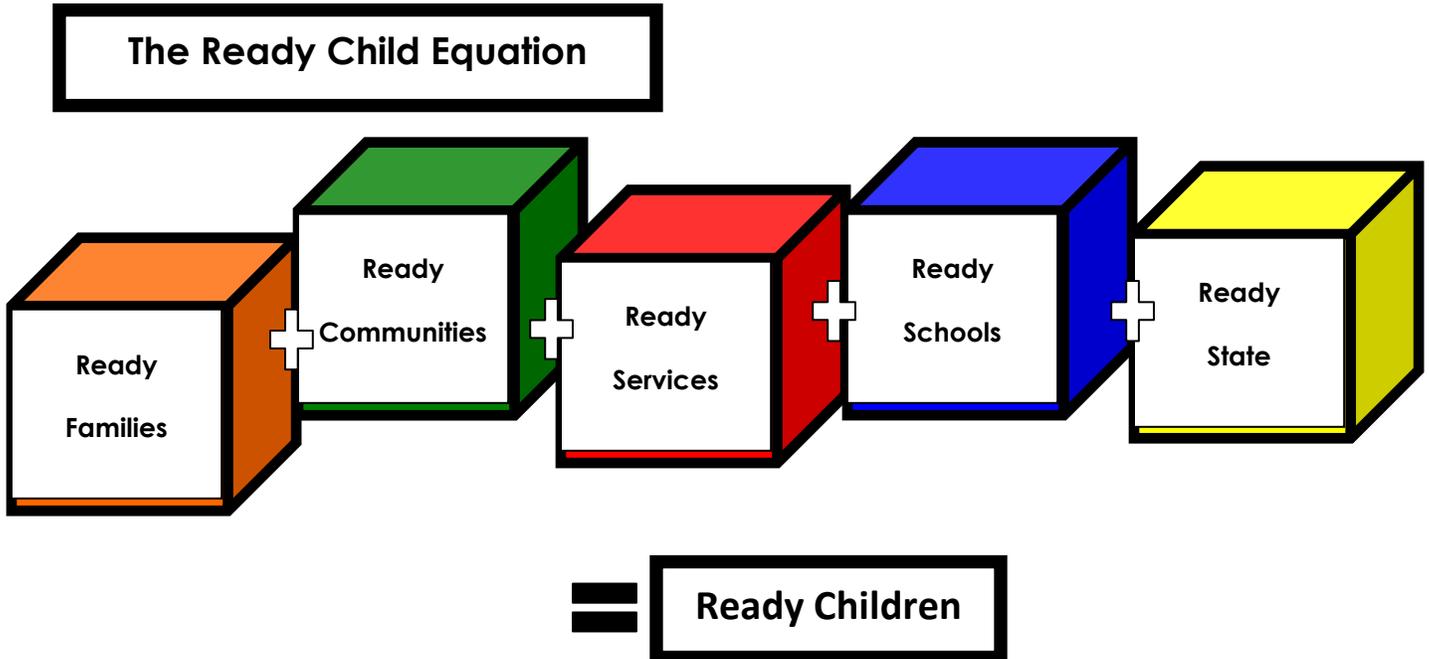
Early Childhood Coalition

Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Mission: With the focus on the whole child, we promote community collaboration to network resources and streamline services in support of the health, safety, care and education for children ages 0-8 and their families in the greater Helena area.

Vision: Safe, stable, nurturing relationships lead to resilient children, strong families, and stable communities.

Tag Line: The Early Childhood Coalition (ECC) of Greater Helena: investing in the very young!



Early Childhood Coalition Functions:

1. To network within Coalition membership
2. To raise community awareness of Early Childhood
 - a. Linking families
 - b. Marketing
3. To streamline services by reducing barriers
4. To identify existing resource and services to determine gaps, overlap, and utilization.
5. To advocate for children 0-8 and their families.

Early Childhood Coalition (ECC) 2013-2018 Goals, Objectives and Strategies

GOAL 1: BUILD, SUSTAIN, AND IMPROVE AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

Objective 1: Develop an annual budget and raise funds for early childhood system operations.

Measures: An annual budget is developed, and funds and in-kind resources are secured each year.

Strategy 1: The Board develops an annual budget and approach for funding.

Strategy 2: A financial management system is determined and implemented.

Strategy 3: Maintain the equivalency of 1.0 FTE *ECC* coordinator.

Strategy 4: Identify and pursue long-term marketing funding.

Strategy 5: Pursue funding through combination of *ECC* member contributions, grants and in-kind donations.

Strategy 6: Track and evaluate success annually.

Objective 2: Maintain *ECC* operations.

Measures: Develop an operations framework. Track level and type of operations sustained each year.

Strategy 1: Determine and implement a sustainable framework for *ECC*'s function as a collaborative effort, including space, services, and staffing.

Objective 3: Develop, recruit, and expand *ECC* collaboration through its membership.

Measures: Track the number of participants in *ECC*, those actively engaged, and additional members to *ECC* in areas that are identified as needed (e.g. medical professionals, business leaders).

Strategy 1: Use work plans and *ECC* meeting time to effectively engage members.

Strategy 2: Integrate *ECC* and collaboration into the policies and actions of member organizations.

Strategy 3: Use relationships and outreach to engage medical, business, justice, and other underrepresented community sectors in *ECC*.

Objective 4: Promote and support collaborative training and professional development opportunities for early childhood professionals.

Measures: Track training needs that are discussed and identified. Track the number of cross-trainings held and those who participated.

Strategy 1: Use ECC as a means of communicating, networking, and promoting training across organizations.

Strategy 2: Identify gaps in professional training available and work together to find trainers and funding to fill those gaps.

GOAL 2: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT MESSAGING AND MARKETING TO PROMOTE A FOCUS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD.

Objective 1: Develop and implement clear community wide messages on the importance of early childhood.

Measures: Track and record messages developed by the ECC. Track the number of times ECC members use the messages, the methods employed, and any feedback on how those messages were received.

Strategy 1: Develop a user-friendly early childhood and ECC “brand” and message.

Strategy 2: Develop and use messages will highlight issues critical to healthy early childhood development.

Strategy 3: Develop and use messages aimed at reducing barriers to accessing services.

Strategy 4: Promote the consistent use of common messages across the community.

Objective 2: Identify, implement, and evaluate targeted marketing.

Measures: Track the number and targets of marketing efforts. For each marketing effort, develop and evaluate measures of success.

Strategy 1: Pilot marketing projects that encourage the use of a full range of services.

Strategy 2: Evaluate messages and marketing campaigns for effectiveness.

Strategy 3: Identify and sustain effective marketing efforts.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE INVESTMENTS THAT SUPPORT THE WELL-BEING OF OUR YOUNGEST CHILDREN.

Objective 1: Research, identify, pursue, and secure funding for early childhood infrastructure and services.

Measures: Track contacts, opportunities identified, and funds and in-kind support secured.

Strategy 1: Build relationships with local, state, and federal entities and individuals interested in funding early childhood.

Strategy 2: Use ECC to investigate, support, and pursue funding and capacity building opportunities.

Strategy 3: Research the feasibility of a County mill levy. If a campaign is feasible, develop and pursue a strategy to pass a county mill levy for early childhood funding.

Objective 2: Advocate for policies and funding that support high quality early childhood infrastructure and services.

Measures: Track contacts, bills and rules supported, funds allocated, and policies improved.

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a community approach for advocacy at the local, state, and federal level.

Strategy 2: Build support for early childhood changes at local, state and federal levels

GOAL 4: INCREASE ACCESS AND USE OF SCREENING, PREVENTION, AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

Objective 1: Increase parental ability to access services, starting prenatally.

Measures: Track the number of screenings and events held, along with the number of participants. Track referrals to appropriate services. Track *Family Matters* referrals or suggestions to parents.

Strategy 1: Use ECC meetings and committees to raise early childhood community awareness of existing program services, bottlenecks, and models that are meeting with success in improving access.

Strategy 2: Determine feasibility of a mobile health and screening van. If feasible, develop and implement a plan to add a mobile health and development screening van for the community.

Strategy 3: Use community events and resources as an opportunity to increase parental knowledge of services and how to access them.

Strategy 4: Promote more opportunities for parents to access high quality parenting classes and materials, starting prenatally.

Strategy 5: Maintain a *Family Matters* resource center.

Objective 2: Increase awareness and use of prevention and early intervention programs to address identified early childhood concerns in the community.

Measures: Track the number times prevention or early identification programs are discussed in ECC, messaging and marketing efforts that promote prevention and early intervention services, and changes in the rate of referrals to prevention and early intervention services over time.

Strategy 1: Raise awareness within ECC about prevention and early intervention programs, eligibility, and how best to connect people to the appropriate services.

Strategy 2: Collaborate to effectively provide prevention and early intervention services.

Strategy 3: Support prevention and early intervention programs and approaches that promote healthy, stable families.

GOAL 5: IMPROVE THE UNDERSTANDING OF AND SUPPORT FOR HIGH QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION FOR ALL.

Objective 1: Raise awareness, build support, and advocate for high quality child care and early education.

Measures: Track the number times high quality care and early education is discussed in ECC, tools and information distributed through Family Matters, and messaging and marketing efforts that promote high quality child care and early education.

Strategy 1: Use ECC networking resources for communication and coordination about high quality care and education; sharing information and models to help families.

Strategy 2: Support efforts by Child Care Partnerships, child care, preschool, and schools to ensure broad understanding of and support for high quality care and early education.

Strategy 3: Promote collaboration between schools, parents, preschool, child care, and other early childhood services to ensure development of the whole child.

Objective 2: Promote and advocate for high quality early care and education.

Measures: Track ECC priorities and decisions in the areas of high quality early care and education, track policies and funding support pursued and the outcomes. In the long-term, work with partners to see changes in the level of quality child care.

Strategy 1: Support efforts to encourage quality, licensed child care through local, state, and federal level programs (e.g. STARS to quality for child care)

Strategy 2: Support efforts to expand high quality, affordable preschool.

Strategy 3: Support efforts to provide sufficient, high quality, affordable child care.

Strategy 4: Support efforts to address gaps in access to high quality early care and education.

Strategy 5: Collaborate to identify and address child care and early education gaps in the community.

Strategy 6: Support local school districts' school readiness efforts (e.g. screening, home visits, summer prekindergarten school).

Work Plans and Annual Review Process

Work Plan:

Each ECC committee and the Board will create an annual work plan to guide their work, and to clearly communicate to the rest of the ECC and the community where priorities are. The work plan is also a tool for accountability, since the activity level is how ECC moves towards its goals.

Each committee will come up with a work plan, taking into account the following:

- 1) Priority goals and objectives identified in an annual review process.
- 2) The capacity of the committee to address those priorities
- 3) Ensuring that progress can be measured in a fairly straightforward way

Each committee, coordinator and Board is responsible for their own activities, but continues communication and partnership is essential to success. The Board and coordinator are also responsible for ensuring that the individual committee plans work together and that all functions of the collaboration are addressed.

Activities for the Board, committees, and coordinators are each listed in the work plan, with information on:

- Board, Committee Name, or Coordinator
- Members or Coordinator
- Work Plan Year

Each part of the work plan has the following components:

- Goals and objectives that these activities fulfill
- Activities for this committee
- Time frame for each activity
- Responsible Parties
- Measures of Success
- Targets
- Current status of activities, updated regularly (not started, ongoing, specific date, completed)

Each committee will be responsible for keeping on track, measuring success, and reporting back to the entire ECC.

In addition, the Board and the coordinator will work together to create a coordinator work plan, using a similar format.

It is suggested that each committee report on progress, measures and challenges at each full ECC meeting.

These work plans comprise the work of the ECC. The ECC work plan, in its entirety, will be available to all members of the ECC.

Annual Review of Strategic and Work Plans

ECC members will review both work plan progress and the strategic plan each year.

First, each committee and the Board will be responsible for providing the following:

- A summary of the activities completed.
- A synopsis of measures of success and changes in the community from these activities.
- A brief assessment of what went well and what was difficult
- What was learned and suggestions for new activities for next year

It is recommended that ECC devotes one of its full meetings to a discussion of what happened in the last year, as well as suggestions for new activities for the following year.

Taking into account this information, the Board shall:

- Identify areas where the group has accomplished a lot and areas that are in need of additional focus in order to work toward ECC's goals and objectives.
- Use the measures of success to evaluate progress
- Evaluate whether any strategies in the strategic plan need changing. In rare cases, changes or additions to the objectives may be needed, based on progress and learning accomplished.
- Make appropriate changes to the strategic plan.
- Identify areas and activities that would be useful for committees to pursue, and give that information back to committees in order to formulate a new work plan.

A brief "State of ECC" will be written by the coordinator each year, to highlight accomplishments, show measures of success, and highlight priority areas for the coming year. This will be available to all ECC members.

ECC Decision-Making Filter for Project Opportunities

The ECC may, from time to time, have opportunities or projects that come up for consideration at times other than during a yearly review process. When possible, the ECC will:

- 1) Propose a new idea, project or opportunity. These proposals can come from the committee level, in the general ECC meetings, the coordinators, or from the Board.
- 2) All proposals must then go to the Board for a decision as to whether to add the idea to the ECC's work.
- 3) The Board may delegate decision-making to the coordinator(s) or executive committee, if time is limited.

The Board will use the following filtering questions and criteria to determine if the project or opportunity is something ECC should take on.

- 1) **What goal(s) and objective(s) would this opportunity help meet?** (If it does not help meet a goal or objective, then the project is tabled. Modifying objectives may be considered at annual reviews.)
- 2) **What is the measure to evaluate whether this is successful?** How will we know whether this project would help us meet one or more goals and objectives?
- 3) **Do we have the capacity (time, people, money, skills)?** If not, but this is the best use of our time, is there something else we should be doing first?
- 4) **Is this the best use of our current resources?** Are there other options we should be considering?

The Board can:

- 1) Decide immediately if the project is simple enough, the outcomes are well-understood, and current capacity exists; or
- 2) Determine what kind of questions must be answered to decide and set a deadline for getting those answered, and then make a determination.

Any project that is adopted must have a strategy or strategies give an overview of how the project will be accomplished. A matrix of the project will be developed as follows:

Project X meets the following goals, objectives, and strategies:

Then, for each project, add in to the appropriate committee and/or coordinator portion of the work plan.

The Board is responsible for ensuring this project is integrated into the appropriate committee activities and completed.

