APPENDIX B

Progress Rating Tool

Use the Progress Rating Tool to assess where your community is on its journey to becoming an Early Learning Community and reaching each of the targets. For each level, assess your community's progress on a scale of 1-5:

- 1 indicates you are just getting started, which may mean that completing this Progress Rating Tool is your very first step.
- 3 indicates that you are making progress and have taken action to achieve the target.
- 5 means you are well on your way, which may even mean that you feel you have achieved this level.

Support your assessment by checking off which actions your community has already taken at this level. If you have taken an action that isn't listed, write it in. Then, select or write in action steps you can take to reach new levels, noting your plans in the column to the right. You can use the "notes" sections throughout the Progress Rating Tool to go into more detail on your current status. You can pull those "planned action steps" into your Action Plan in Appendix C.

As you complete the Progress Rating Tool, keep in mind the key considerations of this work: attention to equity, family partnerships and a focus on results.

- Are your efforts benefiting ALL children and families? Are some families, neighborhoods or population groups left out, underserved or disconnected from the rest of the community? Does your leadership group consistently check in on closing gaps in opportunity, access and outcomes? Are the voices of a diverse group of community members helping to informing the work?
- Are parents and families engaged as partners and leaders in improving their own communities? From service providers through the leadership of your early childhood system, are families seen as valuable partners and agents for change?
- Are the leaders of this work keeping an eye on the North Star, "All Children Thrive," and assessing whether your efforts are improving outcomes? Are you consulting the data on a regular basis and adjusting your efforts when needed?

| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 1.1 Local leaders work together across systems with a focus on early childhood. | LEVEL 1 A group of stakeholders committed to early childhood meets regularly to identify areas of overlap and possible areas of future work. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Hold multiple listening sessions across the city or county, using community liaisons to recruit broad participation, to learn what the community wants for children and what their aspirations are for their community. Foster a culture of trust, respect and inclusion to ensure you receive authentic feedback. All members of the community must feel free to share their own opinions, experiences and ideas and feel recognized and accepted for who they are. Activate an existing group of stakeholders or host a community-wide early learning summit to identify partners who would be willing to serve. The local United Way may be able to help identify potential partners. Parents of young children and early care and education providers from the community should be included in this group. Consider who is not at the table and ensure that representation is equitable and inclusive. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Establish regular and open lines of communication between a core group of stakeholders and top community leaders, such as the mayor or county executive. | |
| | | Have each provider and community organization identify how they influence families' lives and identify overlaps and gaps. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 A group of community members and representatives from a wide variety of organizations and institutions are jointly working toward a | After extensive outreach and multiple conversations with a diverse set of community members, develop a shared vision and shared goals among a core group of stakeholders committed to moving the work forward. | |
| | shared vision and common goals. | ☐ Identify a few discrete areas to focus joint action. Create working groups or subcommittees around these areas. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Establish regular and open lines of communication between a core group of stakeholders and top community leaders, such as the mayor or county executive. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Evaluate how different partners' organizational and programmatic strategies and goals intersect. Consider aligning plans across the community to work on shared goals. For example, align the city plan with the school district's plan or the community development plan. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
| | LEVEL 3 A broad group of stakeholders with dedicated leadership and community input works together to promote the healthy development of young children. | Formalize the administration of this group of stakeholders with a coordinator at an existing non-profit – or create an office of early learning or young children at the city or county level. Identify funding for the sustainability of this position or office. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Ensure that the partnership is diverse and representative of the community. It should include regular and routine input from families and sectors beyond early childhood that impact families such as transportation and workforce. Representation should be equitable and inclusive of folks from different backgrounds, neighborhoods, socioeconomic statuses, races and ethnicities. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Sign commitment letters or memoranda of understanding to formalize the partnership and demonstrate each organization or individual's staff, financial and in-kind commitments. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
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| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 1.2 The community | LEVEL 1 The community uses its available resources, including existing f unding streams, to effectively support families and promote healthy | Provide space at publicly owned buildings, such as recreation centers, libraries or school buildings, for providers to deliver services, host parent gatherings and address other community needs. | |
| invests in young children and families | child development. | Use public media, like the local open access channel, and other public assets to get the word out about early childhood development. | |
| | | Put tips for how parents can engage children in brain-building moments, inside utility bills, on the sides of buses and trash trucks, in public transportation stations and depots or on other city owned vehicles. | |
| | | Survey or interview early care and education providers about the resources they have, challenges they face and the supports they could use as they work to improve quality. This could also be an opportunity to connect providers to community supports, services and their elected officials. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Partner with school districts to assess how public education funds are being used and whether they can be used to support early childhood programming within schools and the surrounding neighborhoods. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Engage city or local government departments that are funding programs for healthy and safe communities and strengthening families, such as crime prevention, family literacy or mentoring for school-age children and youth. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 Community and early childhood partners work together to identify points of intersection to use existing funds and resources creatively as well as to find new funding sources. | Consider what assets each partner has (financial and otherwise) and how they might be employed to further common goals. For example, when the school district is hosting trainings or conferences for pre-k teachers, community-based pre-k providers could be invited to attend. Parent leadership groups can be powerful allies to increase parent and family engagement in city or county level planning and initiatives. | |
| | | Learn from service providers about how they "blend and braid" funding to meet family needs, and explore whether there are ways to formalize those strategies or support other programs in making similar innovations. | |
| | | Use business development resources and tax incentives to help early care and education providers better manage the business side of their centers and improve quality. | |
| | | Consider the current needs of the early childhood system and develop an improvement or strategic plan. | |
| | | Engage the philanthropic and business community through public/private partnerships focused on specific issues or neighborhoods, or to fund programs, evaluation efforts or your Early Learning Community efforts in general. | |
| | | Provide technical assistance in a variety of areas, including organizing bulk buying groups and participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program to provide subsidized meals to children in early care and education centers. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | Encourage providers to use a shared services model to reduce or share costs through joint purchasing, staff sharing or centralized administration to ease the administrative burden. Consider how local government could help administer this model. | |
| | | Partner with agencies and providers to write proposals and apply for grants. Use the opportunity to showcase what combined strengths and resources can accomplish. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |



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| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | √ COMPLETED | ACTION PLAN |
| 1.2 (continued) The community invests in young children and families | LEVEL 3 The community's support for early childhood is formalized, and support for the families who need it most (including families with low incomes, families of color, immigrant and refugee families and families with LGBTQ members) is prioritized. | ☐ Identify consistent, dedicated funds for early childhood services, care and education. ☐ Ensure that resident priorities, drawn from a representative group from within the community, drive how funding is directed and how services are provided. ☐ Engage a broader range of community leaders to be champions and advocate for additional financing mechanisms to support early childhood services, care and education. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Develop a coordinated or universal application and/or reporting requirements for city-managed resources to reduce the administrative burden on providers and families. Encourage other public agencies and private funders to do the same. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Create a dedicated source of revenue through a local sales or property tax, or earmark a portion of existing taxes for early learning programs. Establish a developer impact or linkage fee to fund new early care and education centers or | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | seats within existing centers to meet demand created by new development. Other: | |
| NOTES | | | |
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| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 1.3 Community members support and understand the importance of early childhood health, | LEVEL 1 Information about developmental science, early health and learning and parenting is disseminated to the community with messages that are accessible and relevant to members of different cultural groups. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Post information about child development and available services in all city and county buildings and cultural and community centers. Ensure that elected officials and other high level city and county staff understand and talk about the importance of early childhood in speaking engagements both with community members and with other stakeholders such as business leaders and agency heads. Pass a resolution in local government demonstrating community support for early childhood. Host story times in libraries and recreation centers in languages spoken in the community for different age groups with developmentally appropriate books and activities. | |
| learning and well-being | 1 2 3 4 5 L | ☐ Align messaging across agencies and groups to reduce confusion and conflicting messages. ☐ Assess how families are acquiring and viewing information. Optimize online materials for viewing on smartphones. ☐ Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 Families and the entire community are engaged in a conversation about the importance of early childhood well-being and what families need and want to succeed. This should go beyond one-sided messaging. | Host co-created community events, such as a parent night at public housing complexes or a public recreation center, with a focus on child and family well-being. Consider including a "parents and caregivers only" portion where they might learn about brain development and family portions where caregivers can try out activities with their children that promote development and well-being. Working with families to co-create these events will make them more successful. Tip: Providing food and child care goes a long way in allowing families to participate. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Host "film nights" with documentaries and films related to early childhood to spark conversation. Host ongoing trainings for providers from a variety of fields to help them learn about child development, new strategies for encouraging healthy development and how to engage with parents and families, including recognizing parents' expertise about their own children, families and communities. Invite faith-based communities to consider what they can do to support families in promoting healthy child development, including hosting the types of events described here. | |
| | LEVEL 3 Everywhere families go, they receive culturally relevant messages about early childhood health, learning and well-being. | □ Other: □ Promote brain-building moments throughout the community with multi-platform tools such as Vroom and Talk Read Sing. □ Consider who you can partner with to disseminate your message (such as local public radio and television stations) and how and when you already touch families with young children (when they pay bills, at the library, in public housing, at local medical clinics). Encourage businesses to think about how they can post materials in their offices both for employees and customers. For instance, grocery stores can post brain development information or activities on their shopping carts. □ Partner with parent leaders to develop an advocacy campaign that shows the importance of | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | investing in early childhood and how the investment benefits everyone in the community. Reach out to "unusual suspects" or groups that have influence such as seniors, the business community or civic organizations. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 L | Use a "Children in All Policies" or "Children First" approach to promote awareness of how all policies affect children and to endorse the commitment the community has made to children and their well-being. □ Other: | |
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BUILDING BLOCK #1

Community Leadership, Commitment and Public Will to Make Early Childhood a Priority

| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | √ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 1.4 A rich network of informal supports is available for all families | LEVEL 1 Community leaders understand who does and who does not have access to informal supports and what the barriers are to building those informal supports in the community. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 L Just getting started Making progress Well on our way LEVEL 2 The community is rich with opportunities for families to | Conduct a needs assessment and landscape analysis at the neighborhood and district level. Ask community and cultural organizations with strong ties to the community for their insight into opportunities, gaps and barriers for families to build their social connections. Invite parents and caregivers to give their input on needs and opportunities to reduce social isolation through surveys, focus groups or going to door to door. Create a community map of safe places where families can and do gather. If there are places where families could gather but don't – such as an unused playground in a neighborhood park – engage residents to find out what is keeping them from going there and what could be done to get families to start using that space. Other Ask residents what kind of opportunities they would like to see to build social connections, and engage them in co-creating those opportunities. | |
| | make connections. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | □ Create a space for residents to come together to create solutions that will work. □ Use a "snowball" approach where each parent who participates agrees to bring at least one more parent to the next meeting or event. □ Provide community "mini-grants" for neighborhood groups or community-based organizations to carry out community engagement efforts. □ Facilitate connections and information sharing by organizing local groups on social media platforms, online tools or group-messaging programs. □ Other | |
| | LEVEL 3 Mechanisms are in place for all parents and families, especially families who are often more isolated, to make connections with each other. Every neighborhood has safe places for people to make connections. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | □ Create groups for new parents to come together for support in the early months and beyond. □ Establish dad groups to engage fathers in the early development of their children and form connections with other dads in their community. □ Convene parent advisory groups made up of parents and caregivers from different neighborhoods, races and ethnicities. These are the groups that should determine what activities are carried out in their neighborhoods to best engage more isolated parents. □ Support community-based groups to host a series of Parent Cafes or Community Cafes, with residents facilitating the conversation. Parents engaged in planning and facilitating cafes are the best ambassadors to recruit isolated families to join in. □ Establish Family Resource Centers to provide opportunities for parents and caregivers to come together. Consider co-locating such centers with other services including early care and education. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |



BUILDING BLOCK #1

Community Leadership, Commitment and Public Will to Make Early Childhood a Priority

| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 1.5 Community resources for children and families are well known, accessible and easy to use | LEVEL 1 An up-to-date directory is available and accessible for all families to find services and for service providers to refer families to additional services and resources. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | □ Create online and hard copy versions of the directory and ensure that they are updated at least once a year by giving listed organizations and providers an opportunity to edit their contact information and services offered. □ Visit early care and education centers to show providers and families how to use the directory. □ Encourage the local information and referral providers to invest in an easy-to-use mobile interface for their online service directory. □ Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 Non-traditional partners are aware of and use the directory to make referrals. Barriers that prevent families from accessing care are addressed. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Host trainings for partners such as health care providers, clergy members and business owners on how to use the directory and make referrals. Address practices and policies that stigmatize families who seek support. Ask families about sources of stigma and their experiences with different service providers. Incorporate a way for parents and caregivers to rate and/or review the services and resources listed in the directory. Hold listening sessions to learn root causes of the barriers to accessing needed services. Assess language needs among families in the community. Make language services available to families whose primary language is not English, and translate marketing and application materials. Other: | |
| | LEVEL 3 A "no wrong door" approach is used by public service and community organization staff to connect families with appropriate services even if the service isn't available directly through their agency or organization. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Promote implementation of this approach by training support staff who interact with families, such as bus drivers and front desk staff. When possible, streamline application processes for services, using just one application for the different services a family might need. Encourage parents and other family members to become ambassadors in spreading the word about these services, compensating them for their time and expertise. Consider co-locating several social services into one location where families can access the resources they need to be successful. This one-stop shop can promote efficiency, leverage resources and support families. Other: | |



| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 2.1 Families have access to high-quality, basic services that proactively promote and support health, learning and family strengths | LEVEL 1 City or county leadership have a comprehensive overview of the quality of services available throughout the community and whose needs are not being met. | Map the availability of core services (pediatric and family practice clinics, early care and education programs and family support programs such as home visiting providers and family resource centers) in neighborhoods throughout the city alongside numbers of young children in each neighborhood and public transportation options linking neighborhoods to those where more services are available. Include demographic data, like income, race and ethnicity to help identify disparities in enrollment and usage and gaps in access. ☐ Identify tools that service providers can use to assess the level of quality appropriate to a variety of settings to stimulate conversations about quality improvement. Consider elements such as curriculum, professional development, planning time, pay and developmentally appropriate practices. ☐ Come to an agreement on shared language and common outcomes for children and families across child- and family-serving systems. Explore potential frameworks to capture the outcomes all relevant systems can embrace and connect their work to, and adopt the language | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | of that framework across systems. Leverage assessments and surveys already conducted within or around your community. For example, many Head Start grantees and hospitals already do community assessments. Check with these entities to see if they have recent results. Survey or conduct listening sessions with parents of young children to learn about their needs, how they currently access services, what needs remain unmet and what would make accessing services easier for them. Take care to hear from parents in underserved neighborhoods and marginalized populations. Ensure that parents who can't attend a scheduled event have other opportunities to join the conversation such as through Facebook Live or Twitter chats and online surveys. Conduct listening sessions with early care and education providers to determine their needs for additional support for themselves or for the families they serve. As with parents, offer multiple avenues for providers to engage in these conversations. Other: | |
| NOTES | | | |
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| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | √ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 2.1 Families have access to high-quality, basic services that proactively promote and support health, learning and family strengths | LEVEL 2 Leaders, residents and service providers work together to increase access to high-quality services for underserved families. | Establish incentives for service providers (e.g., early care and education, mental health providers or anything else identified in gap analyses) to locate in areas of greater need or to better reach marginalized families, including supporting existing service providers to expand into additional neighborhoods or expand hours of operation to meet families' needs. Establish a cross-sector collaboration of providers in early care and education, health, social services and basic services in areas of most need, so providers may determine standards of quality and align services. Provide incentives or support for deeper collaboration, including cross-referral (with tracking for completion), data sharing and tracking of shared output and outcome measures. Reach out to informal (family, friend and neighbor) child care providers to find out what support they need to provide the highest quality care, and help interested providers move toward licensing. Encourage co-location of programs and services to expand the range of services available in underserved neighborhoods. Promote the importance of "medical homes" for young children, both by educating parents about the benefits of finding a consistent provider for their children, and by supporting health care providers to provide comprehensive services for the children and families they serve. Implement a unified application and/or waitlist for early care and education programs so that parents only have to complete one application and get the first available spot that meets their needs. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | Support early care and education providers in providing professional development to staff. Host citywide trainings for teachers and joint trainings for pre-k and kindergarten teachers. Consider how trainings can be accessible to in-home providers and centers without staff to cover classrooms during the day. | |
| | | Implement high-quality preschool in a way that reaches underserved families and addresses gaps in school readiness. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
| | LEVEL 3 Quality services are available throughout the community and easily accessible to residents of historically underserved neighborhoods. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | □ Invest in the development of an easily accessible service hub, anchored around a public entity such as a library with low-cost rental space available for other services such as a health clinic, child care center, legal aid office or family resource center. □ Develop transportation solutions to help community residents access services located outside of their own neighborhoods. For example, consider using online messaging programs to help small cohorts of families develop plans for ridesharing to early learning centers or libraries. □ Implement full service community schools in underserved neighborhoods, including family support and early childhood services. □ Measure parent and caregiver satisfaction with various programs or agencies. Improving "customer satisfaction" is an important step toward assessing and improving both access and quality. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |



| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | √ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| All children receive routine screening, identification, referral and linkage for risks and needs | LEVEL 1 Providers are trained in administering screenings and know where to refer families when concerns are identified. Populations that aren't receiving screenings are identified and efforts are made to reach them more effectively. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | Survey providers to find out how many, how regularly and where developmental screenings are being conducted to determine which children in the community are less likely to be screened. Ensure that health care professionals, child care providers and home visitors have access to screening tools and are trained on how to administer them and communicate the results to parents and caregivers in a culturally responsive manner. Provide a directory of community resources, accessible to anyone who is administering screenings, to help guide referrals when needed. Identify and engage Child Find and early intervention agencies to assess current services and provide outreach to families. Assess whether stigma is a barrier for some families to accept or seek out screening, and work to reduce that stigma by communicating that screening is for everyone, that screening results will only be used to refer a child or family for additional support and that early intervention can reduce the need for other services later on. Other: Hire and train community liaisons to bring screenings to families who do not participate in formal child care or home visiting programs. Make a variety of culturally responsive screening tools available for parents and informal care providers (family, friend and neighbor care providers) to check out from the library along with instructions for use and a directory of community resources for following up on identified concerns. Educate parents about the importance of developmental screening (and their availability for children covered by Medicaid) and encourage them to seek it out through their pediatrician or other provider. Other: Implement a citywide, countywide or regional phone number or website for referrals for use by providers, parents or anyone administering developmental screenings. Track the number and types of referrals coming from different population groups and neighborhoods within the community, and use that data to focus services and/or outreach on populations identified as unders | |



| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | √ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 2.3 Children and families at risk and those with | LEVEL 1 Early intervention and prevention services are available in multiple settings throughout the community. | Assess the extent to which families are currently able to access early intervention services. Are those services available to everyone who needs them? Are families of color able to access services equally? Are services provided in a way that meets families' needs? Are efforts underway to reduce the stigma of accessing services? Partner with local IDEA Part C early intervention agencies, which should have access to these types of data. | |
| identified needs have timely access to more | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Encourage collaboration between early intervention providers and child care providers so that children of working parents can receive therapeutic interventions and other needed services in the setting where they spend their days, when appropriate. | |
| intensive services | 1 2 3 4 5 | Hold listening sessions or meet one-on-one with system-involved families, or those identified as in need of services, to find out what they want for their families and what supports they need to achieve their goals. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 Support is available for families to advocate for themselves as they navigate through systems. | Ensure that community navigators (or promotoras) are available to conduct outreach, organize activities in select communities and assist families in accessing needed services – in paid positions if possible. | |
| | | Hire parent mentors who have past involvement with the child welfare system to help parents with open cases navigate the system, understand the changes they need to make and access resources. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Translate communication materials into all languages spoken in the community and have interpreters available during events. To broaden your reach, consider using digital outreach as well. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Braid funding streams and services together to meet identified needs of the whole family, not just the child. For example, make it possible for a family support specialist at a family resource center to serve as a resource and referral specialist to help families find quality child care rather than handing them off to another entity for that support. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
| | LEVEL 3 Families experience a seamless system of supports in response to identified needs. | Fund providers to use Family Team Meetings or other family-centric approaches bringing family members, service providers and other key support people in the family's life together to work and plan how best to meet a family's needs. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Empower caseworkers from any system to serve as an advocate and central point of contact for families, including accessing services from other systems and/or for other family members once a relationship is established. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Establish a protocol for warm handoffs from one system to another, for example from a caseworker to a home visitor, so that a trusted provider helps a family access additional services or transition to the next appropriate service when a case is closed | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |



| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 2.4 Families and parents are actively engaged as partners | LEVEL 1 All child and family service providers receive training and support to help them approach parents as partners. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | Give service providers from multiple systems access to training on empathy, effective family engagement methods and/or parent leadership, including content on implicit bias and other potential barriers to family engagement. Employ the providers in your community who specialize in working with parents – such as parenting educators – to train and coach child-oriented providers. When providing training on parent and family engagement, invite parents as co-trainers to model effective partnership, share their personal stories and demonstrate why approaching parents as partners makes a difference. Other: Partner with existing parent leadership groups in your community, either to provide consultation on your processes or to recruit participants for a new advisory group. Check whether there are active parent groups connected to mutual support programs such as Circle of Parents or Parents Anonymous, affiliated with Head Start, schools or places of worship or formed around particular issues such as children with special health care needs. Work with community-based organizations to host Parent Café or Community Café series to | ACTION PLAN |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | engage parents in meaningful conversations about their strengths and needs, and the needs and assets of their community. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Convene child- and family-serving professionals and leaders across sectors to discuss parent engagement strategies and learn from each other. Provide coaching for leadership skill development and opportunities for parents to take action | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | in their own lives and in partnership with other community members. Other: | |
| | LEVEL 3 Parent leadership and resident engagement are the established norm throughout the community, including for government and government funded activities. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Create seats for parents and residents on city or county committees on issues related to early childhood, health care, etc. Require parent representation on decision-making bodies funded through city or county offices, such as the boards of family-serving non-profits. Bring parents together with leaders of neighborhood associations, non-profits and the school system to identify challenges and then take on local projects to help improve the community. Other: | |



| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 2.5 Supports are in place for service providers | LEVEL 1 Professional development and workforce supports are provided across sectors to improve quality and reduce turnover. | □ Identify trainings that are relevant to providers in multiple fields (e.g., training on fostering parent leadership, empathy, trauma-informed care or mandatory reporting for child abuse and neglect), and use those trainings to build and strengthen relationships among providers at the neighborhood or community level. □ Host gatherings or trainings for kindergarten teachers and pre-k teachers in community-and school-based programs to align teaching practices, get to know each other and share information on students, curricula and classroom approaches. □ Disseminate information to providers about career pathways and opportunities to increase their qualifications. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 L J Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | ☐ Host trainings for directors and supervisors in child and family serving programs that focus on issues such as leadership training, adult learning theory and business skills. ☐ Host listening sessions with providers in your community to identify key challenges and connect early childhood providers to community supports, services and locally elected officials. ☐ Connect early childhood providers to information about scholarship and tuition assistance opportunities to help pay for increased educational attainment. ☐ Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 A variety of opportunities are available for providers to get support to improve their practice, meet quality standards and advance their careers. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | □ Provide targeted training, coaching and supports in neighborhoods or population groups lacking access to high-quality care to help providers meet quality standards such as those in a Quality Rating and Improvement System or state licensing requirements. □ Make arrangements for professionals in child- and family-serving fields to get continuing education credits for trainings that improve their ability to compassionately and respectfully serve families. For example, workforce registries can facilitate this for early care and education providers. □ Host site visits and learning sessions for elementary school principals in early care and education centers and pre-k classrooms to help inform them of early learning practices. □ Make infant mental health consultation available to all early care and education providers in the community, so that providers have access to on-site coaching and support to manage challenging behaviors, work with parents and keep children in their classrooms. □ Develop a coaching or mentoring program to support providers as they implement effective practices in their classrooms. □ Increase the community's capacity to serve families in their home languages, both by finding | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | and supporting interested speakers of needed languages to become providers, and by supporting English-speaking providers to learn a needed language in their community. Other: | |



| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | √ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 2.5 Supports are in place for service providers | LEVEL 3 Attention is paid to issues related to the early childhood workforce, including diversity, fair compensation and career pathways. | Develop pathways for parents and caregivers, community residents and program participants to get necessary education and certifications to become professional providers to serve their communities. Work with child and family serving programs and system leaders to develop strategies to increase wages and benefits for providers, such as wage supplements or tax credits. Host a roundtable with providers and post-secondary institutions focused on what competencies are needed and the barriers to credentialing. Work with community colleges and universities to develop and enhance early care and education programs and to ensure that degree programs are accessible to providers already in the workforce. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 Just getting started Making progress Well on our wa | Build the diversity of leadership in the early childhood field through mentoring and targeted professional development to help interested providers from diverse backgrounds advance into program and system leadership roles. Create an articulated career pathway knitting together public and private educational opportunities for caregivers. | |
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| 2.6 Leaders use data to drive change | LEVEL 1 Leaders within and across child- and family-serving systems have agreed on shared language and committed to common outcomes for children and families. | Explore potential frameworks to capture the outcomes all relevant systems can embrace and connect their work to, and adopt the language of that framework across systems. Identify what data is available, whether it is of high quality (including whether it is disaggregated by race, income and other relevant demographic characteristics) and what major gaps in data exist. Develop a data agenda outlining the data you would like to have and who you would need to work with to obtain it. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 L J Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | □ Determine what data can be used to track progress and evaluate community needs, including data from non-early childhood focused sources, such as the US Census, the health system or criminal justice. □ Engage parents and other community residents in the process of arriving at shared language and common outcomes, and enlist their help in determining how to communicate that information to the community. □ Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 Agencies and programs share data with each other to advance their work toward shared outcomes. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Provide a template for Memoranda of Understanding to articulate data sharing agreements among agencies and across systems. Compile data from across systems and programs to identify disparate outcomes among particular neighborhoods, racial groups, income levels or other population groups, and adjust strategies accordingly. Formalize the adoption of a shared outcomes framework by having programs and agencies publicly sign on to it and identify how their work helps children and families meet the identified goals. Consider adopting a universal intake form for child- and family-serving programs and services to facilitate cross-referral and sharing of data and tracking of shared outcomes along with outputs. Share outcomes and data with the community in an accessible, easy-to-understand format. Other: | |
| | LEVEL 3 Data is used to inform quality improvement efforts across sectors to meet identified needs and reach shared goals. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Implement a unique identifier, assigned to each child and used across systems to facilitate data sharing and tracking. Plan and carry out quality improvement efforts across systems with a focus on a particular outcome or indicator, including a focus on closing disparities among demographic groups. Develop a shared database for child and family service providers to contribute to and access, facilitating better cross-system coordination when families are involved with multiple systems. □ Engage community residents in analyzing and interpreting data and developing strategies to reach shared goals. □ Other: | |



| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | √ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 3.1 The built environment promotes safety and allows families to access basic services in their | LEVEL 1 Plans are in place to address neighborhood issues, including safety concerns identified by families as well as access to basic services throughout the community. | Hold community listening sessions to learn about families' needs in a variety of neighborhoods in your community, including concerns they may have about the safety of parks, access to transportation and other components of the built environment. Use asset mapping to identify neighborhoods where families may have a harder time meeting their basic needs because their neighborhood is underserved by public services (like transportation, affordable housing and parks) and/or disproportionately exposed to hazards (like water and air pollution, lead contamination, violence and traffic that endangers pedestrians and discourages walkability). | |
| neighborhoods and beyond | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Promote collaboration across sectors (including health and dental care, housing, public safety, violence prevention and transit) to identify hazards to children and families, and to understand potential linkages to better meet families' needs. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 | Work with farmers markets and vendors to bring fresh produce to communities that lack grocery stories and/or to ensure that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) benefits are accepted at markets. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our | way | |
| | LEVEL 2 Proposals and policies are designed in a way that addresses gaps and concerns identified by residents, with a focus on residents' priorities and desired outcomes. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 Just getting started Making progress Well on our | Use public-private partnerships to expand access to the Internet in public spaces through broadband services or citywide Wi-Fi, or through public institutions like libraries and community centers. Assist service providers in implementing trauma-informed policies and practices to improve the accessibility of basic services and well-being. Strengthen building code enforcement and housing inspection efforts to proactively address health issues rather than relying on tenant complaints for reporting. Leverage existing city inspection processes by including lead paint hazard inspections or consider how to engage healthcare providers to help identify when patients may be living in unsafe housing conditions. | |
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| 3.1 The built environment promotes safety and allows families to access basic services in their neighborhoods and | LEVEL 3 Regardless of neighborhood, families have access to basic services and feel safe in the community, and residents are regularly consulted by policymakers to ensure their needs and priorities continue to be met. | Align policies and strategic plans across sectors to promote safe, healthy environments for children and families, particularly those who are currently underserved by public services and facilities, possibly by using a "health in all policies" approach. Require that public services be trauma-informed and ensure that public spaces are inviting and accessible for all children and families. Engage city, county and system leaders in an exercise to assess what a family living in an underserved area would need to do in order to obtain health and dental care, buy healthy food, get their child to quality early care and education or travel to work in various parts of the city. Try to understand the burden that families and individuals face just by virtue of where they live. | |
| beyond | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | Map and analyze how resources flow into neighborhoods. If there are disparities try to ascertain the root causes. Ensure that service providers are consistently trained on how to best serve communities facing multiple barriers to opportunity, including immigrant and refugee families, families that include LGBTQ individuals, non-English speakers, families involved in the child welfare system and others. Formalize the authentic engagement of parents and caregivers who are representative of the | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | community in planning and zoning decisions, in the design and planning of public services like transportation and in community health strategies. Other: | |
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BUILDING BLOCK #3 Neighborhoods Where Families Can Thrive

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| 3.2 Economic and employment | LEVEL 1 There is an understanding of how public and private investments are currently allocated across the community. | Use asset mapping to identify neighborhoods where economic investment is needed and areas of concentrated disadvantage (i.e., food deserts, areas of concentrated unemployment, areas with high levels of unbanked households, areas with reduced access to affordable high-quality early care and education). Assess the availability and quality of workforce development resources, and analyze how | |
| opportunities are available to all | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | workforce development policies and programs can be adapted to better suit the local job market and better prepare residents (particularly parents and caregivers) to succeed. | |
| avanasie to an | 1 2 3 4 5 | Collect and analyze data on participation in income support programs within neighborhoods, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, and explore local options to increase participation. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 Investments, training and education are targeted to underserved areas, and policies are designed to improve economic mobility and ensure that families are able to meet their basic needs. | Direct public investment toward underinvested neighborhoods to improve access to education and job training, and improve availability of stable jobs with living wages for local families. Work directly with residents to determine what barriers they face to employment and economic mobility, and design solutions accordingly. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Reduce barriers to employment for parents and caregivers by improving access to high-quality, affordable child care and strengthening public transportation systems. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Partner with workforce development agencies, businesses and education and training institutions to develop career pathways for high needs jobs in the region, including retraining for people who are currently unemployed and underemployed. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
| | LEVEL 3 Residents have access to opportunities for economic mobility and stability, regardless of neighborhood. | Apply a two-generation approach to workforce development programs by aligning workforce development policies with policies governing child care subsidies to remove barriers for caregivers seeking further education or training. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Adopt a living wage that allows families to provide for their children, and index it to inflation to reduce income inequality. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Incentivize private investment in underinvested communities through tax incentives and subsidies to businesses that will provide needed services, stable employment and critical benefits like paid family, medical and sick leave to local families. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |

BUILDING BLOCK #3 Neighborhoods Where Families Can Thrive

| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 3.3 Residents feel a sense of belonging and hope within their | LEVEL 1 Community members are supported to make changes in their own neighborhoods to address identified needs. | Offer parent listening sessions or summits at a variety of accessible public spaces frequented by families, including libraries, schools and health centers, to engage families with each other and the community around topics of interest, while also informing providers and policymakers about families' needs and concerns. Develop strong relationships with community groups that can help connect residents to local elected leaders. | |
| neighborhoods and connection to the broader community | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | Openly share information that will allow residents to be more engaged in the decision-making process, including data on how children are faring in the community and information on upcoming proposals. Connect with city departments and local historical groups to learn about the history of neighborhoods and then provide opportunities to advocate for positive change. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | ☐ Offer "mini-grants" for neighborhood groups to make improvements in their communities. ☐ Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 Leadership incorporates and is responsive to voices of community residents. | □ Create compensated decision-making roles for residents (and particularly parents and caregivers) and offer peer-mentoring opportunities to cultivate community leadership and encourage under-represented groups to participate in governance. □ Partner with local community groups, community colleges and others who can provide | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | training, peer support and tools to support and build the skills of parent leaders and activists within the community. Ensure that the voices and feedback of parent and community leaders are incorporated from the earliest stages of decision-making processes, allowing residents to collectively take action | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 L Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | to improve their neighborhood with the support of city leadership. Other: | |
| | LEVEL 3 Leaders and policymakers provide support for community-led organizing, prioritizing resident-led change. | Provide funding and support for neighborhood councils that allow residents to meet regularly, discuss concerns, propose solutions and take action. Implement participatory budget processes that are resident-led, and allow community members' priorities to drive the allocation of discretionary funds in a city's budget. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Formalize parent and resident participation in decision-making by requiring city departments to have strategies in place to incorporate parent and caregiver voice around children's issues and other areas of concern. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
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| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 4.1 Policies that govern child and family services are equitable and | LEVEL 1 Local leaders take families' needs and experiences into account in their administration of federal and state policy. | Use tools like surveys and community listening sessions, to learn about families' needs in your community and their experiences accessing child and family services, including child care supports. Multiple formats to gather feedback and information should be used to reach a diversity of families. □ Fully integrate parents and caregivers and child-serving providers into all relevant committees, task forces and workgroups where policy strategies that impact young children | |
| responsive to families | | and their families are considered. Include stakeholders from different racial and ethnic groups - especially those most likely to be affected or those you are most interested in reaching – in the development of new policies and programs. Determine who is missing and how they can be engaged. | |
| | | Explore how the community can use local discretion in the administration of state and federal resources to best meet the needs of young children and their families, including through the use of waivers and in the alignment of programs that serve overlapping populations. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? | Continuously train child care subsidy intake workers, family service workers and other staff who work directly with families on cultural and linguistic responsiveness, strengths-based family goal-setting and on how to work across service systems to meet families' full spectrum of needs. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 | Track and examine data on access and quality of services by race, ethnicity and other demographic characteristics to inform equitable policies and resource use. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 Administrative and policy innovations are implemented across sectors to ensure that the needs of all children and families are met. | Implement policy and administrative innovations that improve continuity of access to services. For example, communities may be able to use local funds to cover lapses in child care subsidy eligibility to promote stability for children, working parents and child care providers. | |
| | | Implement continuous improvement and feedback loops that include families and service providers to determine what is and isn't working well for children and families. | |
| | | Examine local zoning policies to determine their impact on early care and education centers and adjust city zoning practices to support early care and education providers as business owners. | |
| | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | Establish a linkage and referral system that seamlessly connects families to existing services in the community at the appropriate time. Memoranda of Understanding can be used between agencies and organizations to ensure services are provided seamlessly with a "no wrong door" approach. | |
| | | Facilitate cross-sector convenings (including health, education, housing, etc.) to address data sharing issues and promote cross-sector solutions to the challenges families face. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |



| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN | |
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| 4.1 Policies that govern child and family services are equitable and responsive to families | LEVEL 3 Policies are aligned across systems and are responsive to the diverse and changing needs of families. | □ Create a municipal-level office that is charged with promoting the well-being of families with young children, such as an Office of Early Childhood or a Children's Cabinet. □ Coordinate business processes and data collection strategies across service systems to facilitate data sharing. □ Streamline application and eligibility processes through common applications and data sharing, whenever possible. When possible, notification about eligibility for services such as child care subsidies should be offered proactively to eligible families based on cross-system data-sharing rather than requiring eligible families to navigate complicated application processes to determine their eligibility. | | |
| | The started Making progress Well on our way | Use cross-sector data analysis to identify areas of need, design policy strategies to address those needs and evaluate outcomes in a system that is aligned and responsive to families. Use a racial equity toolkit to assess policies, initiatives and programs. It should help you answer the following questions: "How will this increase or decrease equity? What are the potential unintended consequences? What benefits may result? Do children, families, early educators and providers of color have access, and if not, why?" Other: | | |
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| 4.2 Workplace and other policies support families in raising children | LEVEL 1 Employers are informed about their responsibilities and understand family-friendly policies. Existing rights and legal protections are publicized and well known to both workers and employers. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Assess who in the community currently offers and benefits from family-friendly employment policies (including paid family and medical leave, fair scheduling practices and access to lactation facilities) and who doesn't. Highlight the successes of businesses in the community that are family-friendly employers. Widely disseminate information about current rights and legal protections, including for pregnant workers and shift workers, throughout the community, in workplaces and in public spaces. Ensure working families have access to legal supports and advice to address any infringements upon their rights. Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 Public systems have adopted policies that ensure access to family-friendly work environments. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 L J Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Make sure municipal and county governing bodies serve as a positive example by adhering to best practices in workplace policies, including by offering paid family and medical leave to all employees. Work with the business community to implement family-friendly workplace policies that improve workplace environments for all workers, particularly those who are least likely to have access to paid leave or other protections. Prioritize family-friendly employers when awarding local contracts, rewarding employers that have policies and procedures in place to support their employees' family-related needs. Other: | |
| | LEVEL 3 Employers are supported and incentivized to enact family-friendly employment policies, and strong enforcement of local policies ensures working families are protected. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Implement local ordinances that support family-friendly workplaces, such as requiring employers to use fair scheduling practices, offer paid family and medical leave, comprehensive health insurance coverage and pay living wages to employees in the community. Use tax breaks and subsidies to encourage businesses to adopt family-friendly policies. Incentivize employers to report on how many families ultimately use family-friendly policies and benefits in order to identify any obstacles to utilizing these policies and benefits by race, ethnicity, gender, income or other characteristics. Other: | |



| TARGET | LEVEL AND PROGRESS | ✓ COMPLETED | ADD TO ACTION PLAN |
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| 4.3 Land use and community development policies are designed with consideration for how | LEVEL 1 There is an understanding that land use and development affect children and families, including a recognition that such policies have resulted in underinvestment in some neighborhoods. | Examine how public investments in community development projects are currently allocated across the community, whether residents' priorities are addressed by those investments and how land use policies impact different neighborhoods. Use surveys, listening sessions at public spaces frequented by families and other tools to learn about families' needs and desires for the community and obstacles they face to accessing safe, affordable housing, public transportation, nutritious and affordable foods, health and dental care and other community resources. Use asset mapping to better understand how access to community resources, community | |
| they affect young children and families | HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 | safety and environmental conditions – like affordable housing, public transportation, food, affordable high-quality early care and education, safe pedestrian corridors, safe and accessible public spaces and health care – varies among neighborhoods leading to conditions where some children and families are disconnected from resources and opportunities that are available to those in other neighborhoods. | |
| | | Consider how changes to zoning and building codes can encourage developers to consider the well-being of children and families. | |
| | Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Other: | |
| | LEVEL 2 Cross-sector efforts ensure the needs of young children and their families are met in every aspect of community design, including housing, transportation, food, health and dental care and other important systems that serve families. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | □ Create multi-sector coalitions (that include families) that can help inform more effective and equitable policy development and implementation. □ Consider how public spaces and buildings can be used to co-locate services from different systems that serve overlapping populations, and identify existing policies and regulations that pose barriers to co-located services. □ Designate city or county staff with early childhood expertise to advise decision-makers in public and private systems about how their decisions will impact young children and their families. □ Gauge the success of efforts to make policies more supportive and responsive to families by tracking community listening sessions, monitoring the number of proposals that were driven by resident-identified needs or asking residents to assess the degree to which residents' and parents' voices are actively and authentically integrated into policy development and implementation. □ Other: | |
| | LEVEL 3 A formalized process is in place to take into account the impact on children and families of all land use and community development policies. HAS THE COMMUNITY REACHED THIS LEVEL? 1 2 3 4 5 Just getting started Making progress Well on our way | Formalize the consistent use of child or family impact statements in all land use and community development policies. Ensure that child impact statements and other formal tools also consider disparate outcomes based on race, ethnicity, immigration status, income and other demographic characteristics. For example, if high-quality affordable child care facilities are concentrated in one area of the city, who is disproportionately harmed? Require review of land use and community development plans by city or county staff with early childhood expertise, and include the voice of families in the planning process. Other: | |