

# Learning by Doing

## GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

**First 5 LA Best Start**

DRAFT – FOR USE BY LEARNING TEAMS ONLY  
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Developed by:  
The Center for the Study of Social Policy

# Learning by Doing

## GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### Part One: Introduction

Introduction, Purpose and How to Use this Guide.....	3
Learning by Doing Guidelines.....	4
Learning by Doing Community Partnership Capacities.....	7
Results-Focused Community Partnership Framework.....	8

### Part Two: LBD Guidance

Learning by Doing Stages Overview.....	9
<i>Pre-Readiness:</i> Before Starting Learning by Doing.....	10
<i>Stage One:</i> Choose a Family Core Result.....	11
<i>Stage Two:</i> Gather the Story Behind the Data.....	18
<i>Stage Three:</i> Choose a Target Population.....	22
<i>Stage Four:</i> Identify and Choose Strategies.....	25

### Part Three: LBD Toolkit

Learning by Doing Toolkit.....	41
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# Introduction

Learning by Doing (LBD) is designed to strengthen the ability of Best Start Community Partnerships to achieve results. LBD is an experiential learning process based on the principles of Results-Based Accountability.

LBD aims to:

- Ground Community Partnerships in the Building Stronger Families Framework.
- Engage Community Partnerships in using data and community input to identify and implement results-focused strategies.
- Introduce Community Partnerships to a results-focused process that uses effective questions to move from talk to action, assess progress and apply learning.

Over time, LBD will build the Community Partnerships' capacities to make a difference on the Building Stronger Families Framework core results. First 5 LA will support the Community Partnerships in building a community of practice that promotes learning across the Best Start Initiative and helps move toward collective impact and sustainability.

## Purpose of this Guide

The LBD Implementation Guide is designed to support the consistent implementation of First 5 LA's Building Stronger Families Framework in the 14 Best Start Community Partnerships. It includes an overview of LBD stages, as well as a toolbox of resources that can be used by Community Partnerships during the process.

# How to Use this Guide

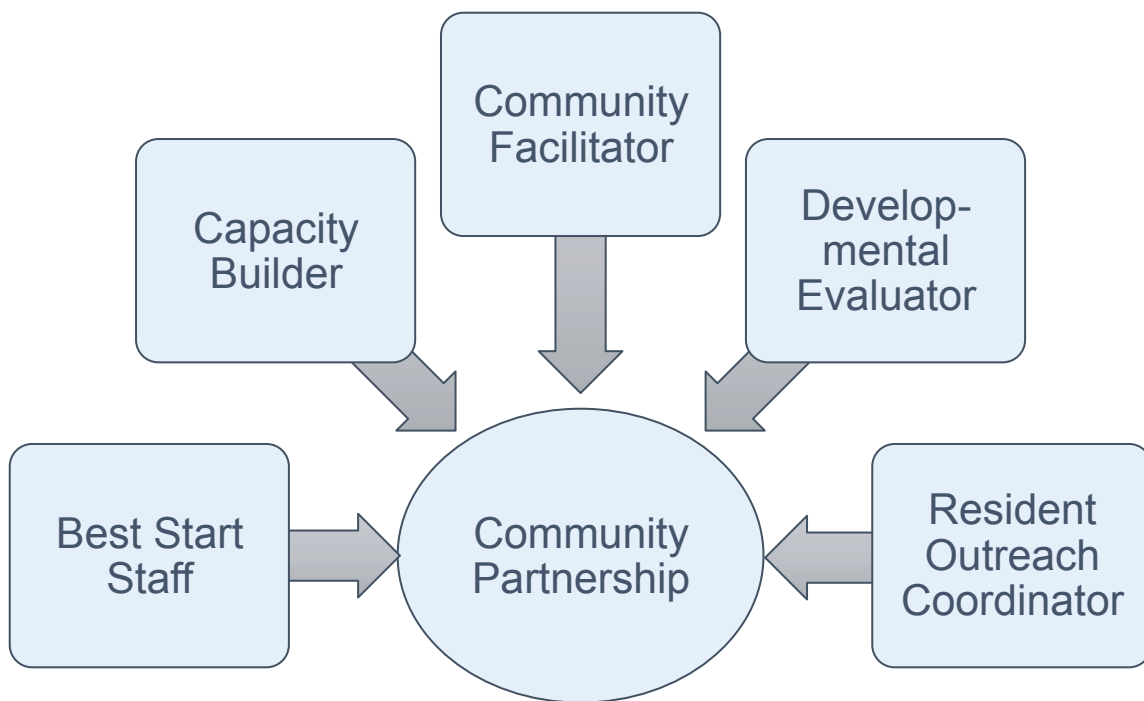
This guide is intended to serve as a planning tool for Best Start Community Partnerships and staff who are leading and supporting LBD. Because each Community Partnership has a unique set of relationships, dynamics and history, the content and tools described in this guide can be adapted to different contexts and flexibly implemented.

While the LBD *stages* are designed to be completed in the order described, users can determine the sequence of *steps* and combination of *tools* that best fit their needs based on their capacities and the timing of their LBD processes. While each LBD effort will require a tailored approach, the expectation is that all Community Partnerships carry out all of the stages and steps contained within this guide to maintain consistency across the Best Start Initiative.

## Guidelines

### 1) The Learning Team

A “Learning Team” of Best Start staff and consultants will support the Community Partnership in planning, co-designing, implementing and evaluating each step of the LBD process. The Learning Team is made up of Best Start Staff, Capacity Builders, Community Facilitators, Developmental Evaluators and Resident Outreach Coordinators.



## 2) The Learning by Doing Workgroup

The LBD process will rely upon the identification or development of a workgroup within the Community Partnership that will actively lead the LBD process. This workgroup can consist of an existing group, such as a leadership group, guidance body or other existing workgroup. It can also be a new group of people. We will refer to this group as the “LBD Workgroup” throughout this guide, though you may refer to this group by another name in your Community Partnership.

The LBD Workgroup is the leader of the LBD process within the Community Partnership. To the extent possible, they should take the lead in planning, facilitating and tracking progress on LBD.

### **LBD Workgroup**

- Leads the LBD Process on behalf of the Community Partnership.
- Provides planning and facilitation support.
- Reflects on process and adjusts as needed.

The Learning Team's responsibility is to *support* the LBD Workgroup in their leadership of the process. That said, the LBD Workgroup may need more support at the beginning of the LBD process and decreased support over time. The idea is that the LBD Workgroup will take greater leadership over the process as they become more familiar with the LBD stages.

### **3) Learning by Doing Decision Making**

Though the LBD Workgroup will take the lead in planning, facilitating and tracking progress of the LBD process, *all critical decisions* will be made at the Community Partnership level. Decisions will be informed by data provided by First 5 LA and input from diverse residents and stakeholders—including members of the broader community.

### **4) Capacity Building Plan and Learning by Doing Checklist**

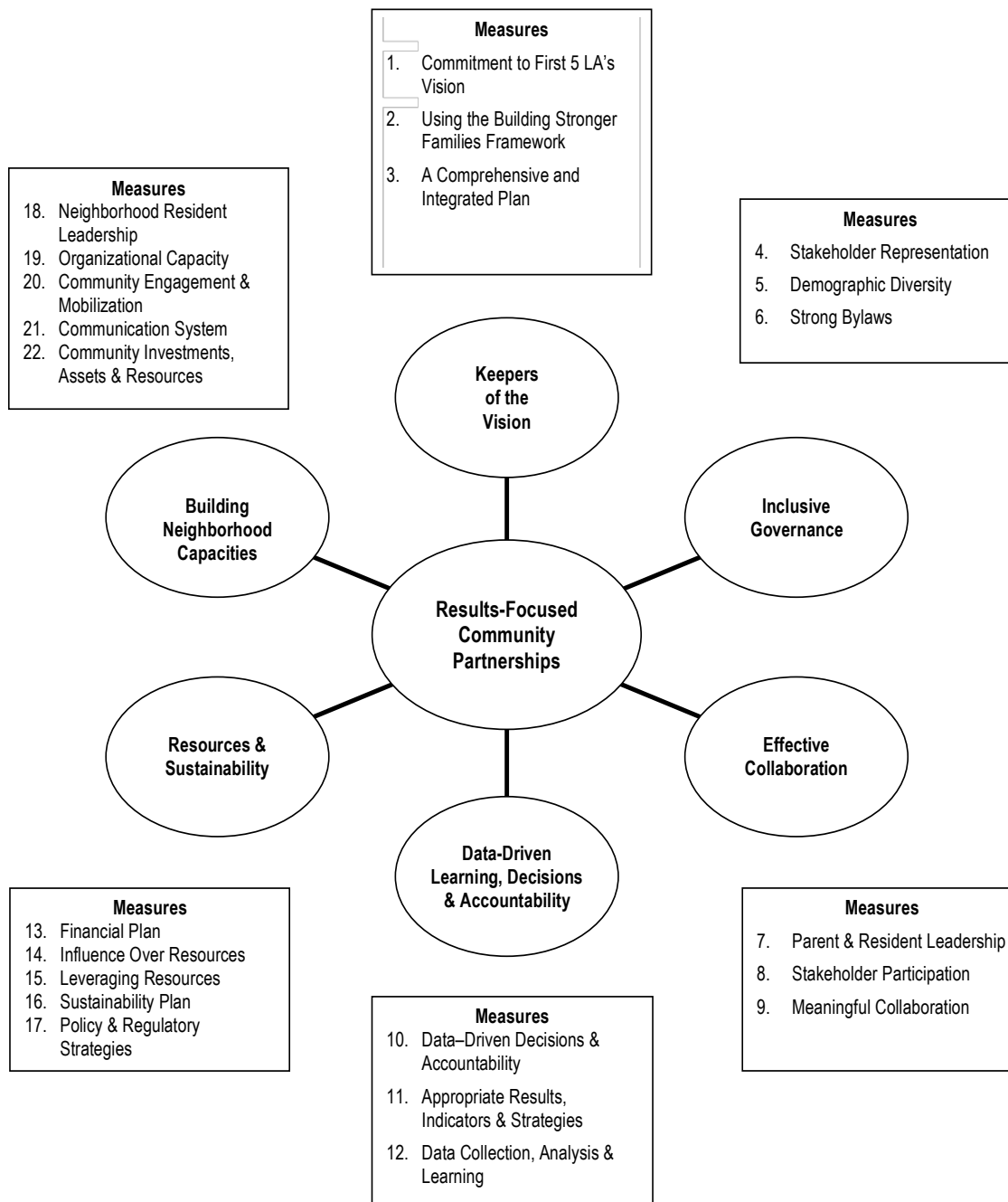
Throughout the process, the LBD Workgroup and Learning Team will develop a capacity building plan, based on the priority Results-Focused Community Partnership Measures, using information from the Community Partnership's Collective Assessment. Please see the LBD Toolkit for the Capacity Building Plan and LBD Checklist.

# Learning by Doing: Community Partnership

## Priority Capacities

<i>Results-Focused Community Partnership Elements</i>	<i>Results-Focused Community Partnership Measures</i>
<b>Keepers of the Vision</b>	2: Using the Building Stronger Families Framework
<b>Inclusive Governance</b>	4: Stakeholder Representation 5: Demographic Diversity 6: Strong Bylaws
<b>Effective Collaboration</b>	7: Parent & Resident Leadership 8: Stakeholder Participation 9: Meaningful Collaboration
<b>Data-Driven Learning, Decisions &amp; Accountability</b>	10: Data-Driven Decisions & Accountability 11: Appropriate Results, Indicators & Strategies 12: Data Collection, Analysis & Learning
<b>Building Neighborhood Capacities</b>	18: Neighborhood Resident Leadership 19: Organizational Capacity 20: Community Engagement & Mobilization

# Results-Focused Community Partnerships: Elements and Measures





## Learning by Doing: Stages Overview



## Pre-Readiness:

### BEFORE STARTING LEARNING BY DOING



The first step to launching LBD is to identify or form a LBD Workgroup within your Community Partnership. Once the LBD Workgroup is in place, it should ask itself the following questions, informed by data from the Collective Assessment.

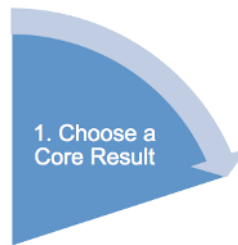
- 1) Do you have the right people at the table to start LBD? Is your Community Partnership representative of the diverse stakeholders and demographics of the community?
- 2) Do you have a decision-making structure that will support LBD decision making? Do your Community Partnership's bylaws specify a clear and accepted decision-making and conflict resolution process?

If the responses are yes, your Community Partnership has the pre-conditions for launching an inclusive and fair community process to achieve results. If the responses to these questions are no, the LBD Workgroup should work with the Learning Team to develop the processes and/or capacity building strategies needed to ensure they are ready to successfully launch LBD.

Required Priority Capacities for Pre-Readiness
<b><i>Inclusive Governance:</i></b> <b>#4: Stakeholder Representation</b>
<b><i>Inclusive Governance:</i></b> <b>#5: Demographic Diversity</b>
<b><i>Inclusive Governance:</i></b> <b>#6: Strong Bylaws</b>

# Stage One:

## CHOOSE A FAMILY CORE RESULT



### Step One: Review the Building Stronger Families Framework.

Before choosing a family core result, Community Partnership members should develop a shared understanding of Best Start's vision: the aspirations it has for realizing a better future for children and families.

**Results** are desired conditions of well-being for people in your community. Results are like the star that guides your community. Always focusing on them helps to ensure that you are heading in the right direction. Identifying clear results that people can measure will help you see if you are making progress over time.

The Building Stronger Families Framework describes six core results aimed at building strong families and promoting family-supporting communities. The core results are intermediate steps towards achieving First 5 LA's vision of children who are healthy, safe and ready for school.

The first round of LBD focuses on one core family result. However, since all the results are interconnected, strategies that focus on one core result will likely make a positive difference on others as well.

The core results are informed by research on the **protective factors**. The protective factors have been shown through research to build family strengths that promote optimal child development and reduce the likelihood of child neglect and abuse. Just like the core results, the protective factors are interconnected.



### ***Family Core Results***

- **Family Capacity** - Knowledgeable, resilient and nurturing parents.



- **Social Connections** - Families participating in positive social networks.



- **Concrete Supports** - Access to services and supports that meet families' needs.



## Community Core Results

- **System of Services and Supports** - Coordinated services and supports that meet families' needs.



- **Shared Vision** - A common vision and collective will to strengthen families.

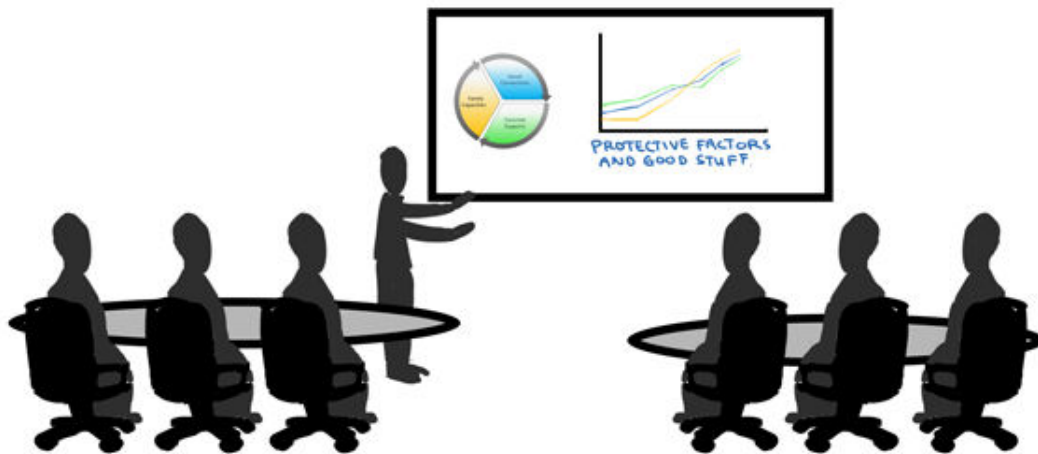


- **Community Spaces and Places** - Social networks and safe spaces for recreation and interaction.



**Step Two: Use an inclusive, data-informed process to choose a family core result.**

From discussions with different people in your community, a picture will begin to emerge of what people want for their children, their families and the community as a whole. The more you talk to each other, the clearer this picture will become. As you think about which family core result to pick, try to include as many voices and types of information as possible.



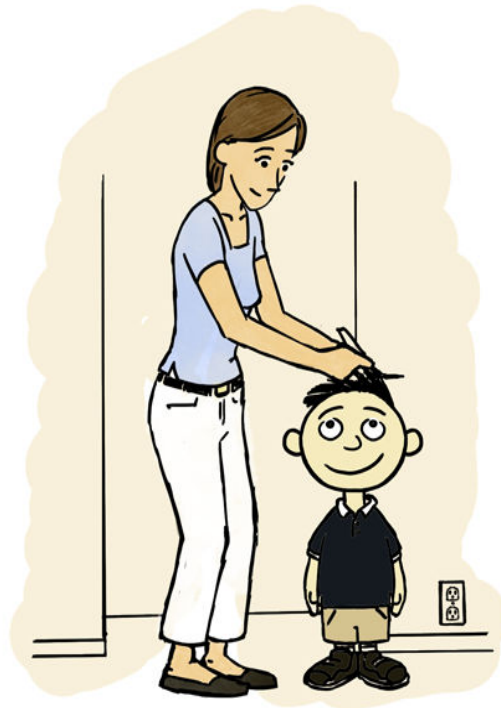
Your process to choose a family core result should be inclusive and focused on data. An inclusive process provides opportunities for diverse residents and stakeholders to share their knowledge, experiences and opinions. It also ensures that you have access to different sources of data, including both community and technical knowledge.

- *Community knowledge* refers to the knowledge, experiences and opinions of residents and stakeholders.
- *Technical knowledge* refers to research and data that often takes the form of statistics and survey results.



### Step Three: Review indicator data related to your family core result.

An **indicator** is a measurement that helps you track progress toward achieving a desired result. In other words, indicators define what success in achieving the result would look like. All indicators have a quantitative, or numerical, component so that you can count or measure whether things are improving or getting worse. Each family core result will come with a small number of related indicators that have been identified by First 5 LA.



Have you ever heard the phrase, “Where there is smoke, there is fire?” Smoke is a sign, or indicator, which strongly suggests that there is or was fire somewhere, even if you can’t see it directly. Indicators are measureable signs that strongly suggest something is happening. If you have chosen indicators that are good predictors of your desired result, you only need to measure two or three of them to track progress over time.

When reviewing indicator data, it is important to look at where your community is now, where your community has been in the past, and where your community is headed in the future—particularly if nobody does anything differently. The direction in which your indicators are moving can help tell you whether you are moving closer or further away from your desired destination.

For instance, think about a child who doesn’t feel well. She has a high fever, aches and pains and a stuffy nose: the indicators of the flu. You take her temperature each day and



observe that the numbers are decreasing. The reduction in her temperature helps tell you that she is moving closer and closer to getting well.

Review the indicators for a closer look. Your Community Partnership has the option of reviewing all of the indicators associated with your family core result or narrowing your focus to a smaller set. Choose *at least* one indicator to review in depth. However, because no one indicator can give you comprehensive information on your family core result, we recommend reviewing two to three indicators or more. The more data you review, the better understanding you will gain of community conditions related to your family core result. Here are some questions to consider when reviewing the data:

- What does this information tell you about families in your community?
- Are you satisfied with current conditions?
- What does your data tell you about whether conditions have gotten better, worse, or stayed the same over time?
- In what direction would your indicator need to move to make progress toward the desired result?
- Are some groups more impacted by this condition than others? In other words, are there differences by race and ethnicity, gender, age, income-level, etc.?
- How does your community compare with other places?

Recommended Priority Capacities for Stage One
<b><i>Keepers of the Vision:</i></b> <b>#2: Using the Building Stronger Families Framework</b>
<b><i>Effective Collaboration:</i></b> <b>#9: Meaningful Collaboration</b>
<b><i>Data-Driven Learning, Decisions &amp; Accountability:</i></b> <b>#10: Data-Driven Decisions &amp; Accountability</b>

## STAGE TWO:

### GATHER THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA

2. Gather  
Story Behind  
the Data



#### Step One: Engage diverse community members to gather input on your family core result.

Examining indicator data related to your family core result helps to explain *what* is happening in your community, while gathering the story behind the data helps to explain *why*. The **story behind the data** identifies what causes and forces have produced current conditions. It provides insight into what issues must be tackled to make progress. It is important that you look at both community and technical knowledge to uncover the story behind the data. Leaving one out will create an incomplete picture.

Gathering the story behind the data will help you learn more from community members about how and why things came to be. The first step will be to develop ideas about how to reach out to diverse residents and stakeholders in your community.

Think creatively about ways to start the conversation. Some people may be more comfortable participating in one kind of conversation than in another, and different types of information will surface depending on the engagement activity. Here are some ways to think about starting the conversation:

- *Parent Cafes, Family Circles, and Story Circles:* Convene people to talk about their experiences with the family core result and what they want for their children, families and community, using a variety of different engagement models.
- *One-on-One Discussions:* Talk with individuals one at a time to bring out their personal experiences with the family core result.
- *Community Surveys:* Develop and distribute a community survey, using door-to-door discussions, telephone or online surveys, or targeting places where lots of people gather. It's important to keep surveys short, to offer translations in residents' languages, and to clearly explain why you're collecting the information.
- *Community Summits:* Along with small gatherings, hold larger community meetings. You'll need a comfortable meeting space, a thoughtfully constructed agenda and a facilitator who can manage questions and answers, discussion and disagreements.

When developing your community engagement activities, think about ways to get everyone involved. Make sure that your outreach efforts engage people who look like the neighborhood as a whole—not just one group. Here are some voices that need to be heard:

- People who represent the racial heritages and cultural backgrounds of the entire community.
- People who reflect the income levels of residents.
- Both men and women.

- All kinds of families, including single parent families, teenage parents and multi-generation households.
- Both longtime residents who have tried to make changes in the past and newcomers who can view the community with fresh eyes.
- People who don't participate in organized community activities and those who are very active.
- People with a variety of experiences in work – residents who own and work in local businesses, who work outside the community, and who are unemployed.
- Residents with different life experiences, such as youth, elders, individuals with disabilities and immigrants.
- People with a range of experiences in the community, such as people who live in different blocks, areas, renters, homeowners and those who live in public housing.

**Step Two: Discuss what has been learned about the Story Behind the Data for your family core result and what additional questions have been raised.**

The story behind the data helps you learn how things developed—how the community reached its present point—before turning to what strategies will make things better. When discussing what you have learned, here are some questions to consider:

- How do community members experience the core result?
- Are things getting better or worse?
- Are there differences by population?
- Are there differences by locations within the community?
- What community strengths and assets are there to draw upon?



- Who and what resources do people turn to for help?
- What do people believe has caused or contributed to current conditions and change over time?
- Where do people disagree and agree on all of the above?

As you think about what you have learned, you are likely to have more questions.

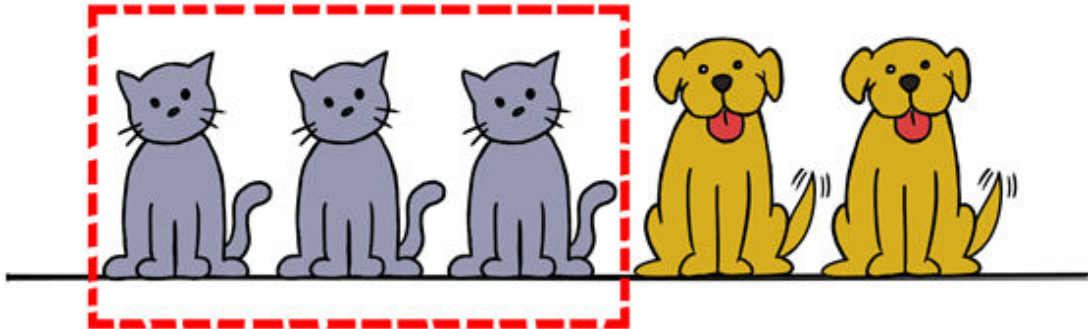
Consider what additional data or community input you want to gather based on what you have heard from diverse members of your community.

Recommended Priority Capacities for Stage Two	
<b><i>Effective Collaboration:</i></b>	
<b>#7: Parent &amp; Resident Leadership</b>	
<b><i>Effective Collaboration:</i></b>	
<b>#8: Stakeholder Participation</b>	
<b><i>Effective Collaboration:</i></b>	
<b>#9: Meaningful Collaboration</b>	
<b><i>Building Neighborhood Capacities:</i></b>	
<b>#20: Community Engagement &amp; Mobilization</b>	

## STAGE THREE:

### CHOOSE A TARGET POPULATION

**Step One: Use an inclusive, data-informed process to choose a target population.**



In this stage, you will choose a **target population**. A target population is a subgroup within a larger population that you will focus your efforts on during this round of the LBD process. Choosing a target population will encourage you to think very specifically about the different types of families in your community as a foundation for taking action. You might think about populations at greater risk and/or more impacted than other groups in regard to a specific condition or problem. You might also think about populations where there are opportunities to build upon assets, promote well-being and prevent a specific condition or problem from occurring.

For Best Start, a target population is more specific than the sub-group of parents in your community with children from zero to five. For example, target populations might be low-income families with children 0-5 in your community or pregnant or parenting teens. Over time, as you go through different rounds of LBD, you will have the opportunity to focus on additional target populations, with the ultimate goal of developing comprehensive and coordinated strategies that eventually reach many populations. Working on multiple populations will eventually add up to improved conditions in your neighborhood over time.

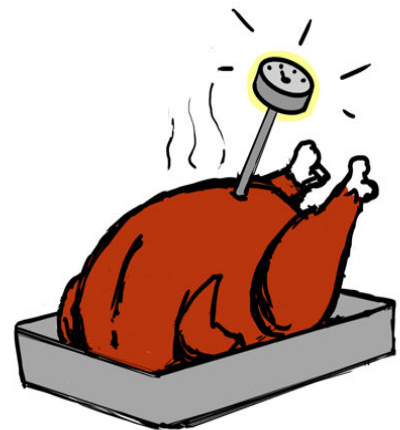
As you think about potential target populations, consider the different populations that you discussed when reviewing your indicator data and engaging diverse residents and stakeholders in your community. To inform your decision, you may want to gather more data and/or break down the information you already have by different factors, such as race and ethnicity, gender, age, income level, family-type, etc.

As you discuss potential target populations, consider what you have learned about the experiences of different families in your community. Think about the existing assets, supports and systems related to your family core result. What types of families are already connected and engaged, and who is being left out? Are there groups that stand out as having particular strengths to build upon? Conversely, are there groups who face particular risks or vulnerabilities?

As you consider the possibilities, look at how assets match up with needs. What resources and capacities need to be developed? Are there organizations or community networks that are particularly effective that you might be able to learn from or work with? What groups are isolated from existing efforts?

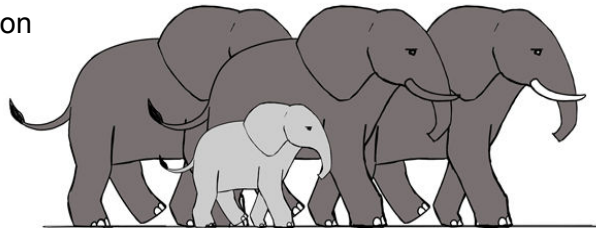
## **Step Two: Consider adding other indicators.**

At this point in LBD, you will have learned a great deal about your family core result, including reviewing data for the indicators that Best Start identified. Your Community Partnership may choose additional indicator(s) to track so long as they meet several important criteria.



According to Mark Friedman, the creator of the Results-Based Accountability planning methodology, an indicator should have the following characteristics:

- *Indicators have **data power**.* Your community should have reliable, consistent and timely data on your indicators and/or the desire and resources to generate new data over time.
- *Indicators have **communication power**.* When the broader community and other stakeholders look at the data, they should understand how the children and families in your community are doing.
- *Indicators have **proxy power**.* A clear relationship should exist between an indicator and your desired result. This helps ensure that you only have to measure a small handful of indicators to know whether or not your community is making progress. Another way of saying this is “*data runs in herds*” – just like a herd of animals. If you know in which direction a few indicators are headed, you can get a good sense of where the others are going too.



It is important to note that indicators are typically measured at the population level and are not intended to track the effectiveness of short-term strategies. However, understanding how indicators relate to the core results in your community is an important step in building your capacity to be results-focused.

Recommended Priority Capacities for Stage Three
<i>Data-Driven Learning, Decisions &amp; Accountability:</i> <b>#10: Data-Driven Decisions &amp; Accountability</b>
<i>Data-Driven Learning, Decisions &amp; Accountability:</i> <b>#11: Appropriate Results, Indicators &amp; Strategies</b>



# STAGE FOUR

## IDENTIFY AND CHOOSE STRATEGIES



### **Step One: Brainstorm strategies about what will work to improve your family core result.**

Moving from talk to action requires focusing on a course of action that will get you to the results you want to achieve. Another name for this path is 'strategy.' A strategy is a high-level statement of a directed course of action to achieve an intended result. In other words, it is a statement of what will be done to move the community from where it is now to where the Community Partnership wants it to be. Consequently, strategies should begin with action verbs (e.g., promote, educate, raise awareness, establish, build, etc.). They should not refer to the impact or outcome that is desired and, therefore, should not begin with words like "increase" or "decrease."

During Stage Four, your task will be to develop strategies that are informed by the knowledge gained about your community, the family core result and the target population during the prior LBD stages and by additional research and learning. Recall that the

Building Stronger Families Framework (BSFF) is based on research about the protective factors, which have been shown to build family strengths that promote optimal child development and reduce the likelihood of child neglect and abuse. By learning about the research and practice behind the protective factors, you can generate ideas about results-focused strategies.

For instance, imagine that your core result is family capacities. When doing research about the protective factors, you learn that one of the most successful ways to build family capacities is to respond to parents' needs in real time. Guided by this information, you might develop a strategy to strengthen the capacity of child care providers to communicate effectively with families about daily parenting challenges—from teething to language development. You can then develop a set of concrete activities by which you can build the communication capacity of child care providers through workshops or educational materials to provide just-in-time parenting support.

Alternatively, imagine that your core result is concrete supports. Guided by research about the importance of making services available in times of need, you could develop a strategy to improve the accessibility of service delivery. Your activities might focus on training early care and learning professional to recognize when families need emergency assistance and to make referrals to high-quality and time-sensitive supports.

Remember that just like the family core results, the protective factors are interconnected. Strategies focused on one result are likely to make a difference on others. For instance, many sites around the country have experienced success with developing parent leadership through activities such as Parent Cafés, which entail facilitated conversations about the protective factors. Parent cafés build *all* of the protective factors. They can be used to strengthen social connections *and* family capacities, which in turn increases

chances that parents will have access to concrete supports when they need it. Moreover, parents who are trained as café hosts develop skills and expertise that can be used in other leadership roles.

As you begin to brainstorm possible strategies and activities, make sure to think about how they will be resourced. There are many strategies and activities that can be implemented with little to no financial cost and thus will not require participating in the First 5 LA funding process or seeking out other resources. Think about what can be done with limited to no funding or by using existing resources differently. In doing so, you will develop creative and inexpensive solutions that are likely to make a difference.

For instance, imagine that your family core result is social connections, and your target population is low-income mothers. When gathering the story behind the data, you learned that low-income mothers felt isolated from their neighbors but were reluctant to seek out formal support groups. You decide to pursue a strategy aimed at building relationships among these mothers so that they connect with each other for support and have people to turn to when they want to share concerns, solve problems and seek advice.

As you think about the type of activities that will make up your strategy, you reach out to local businesses in your community and find a Laundromat that is willing to hold a series of monthly family nights based on the protective factors, with reduced fees for parents. While the family night will be open to all parents, you think that the draw of reduced prices can help you engage mothers who are especially in financial need. Residents in your partnership agree to help lead informal conversations about parenting issues. While holding family nights has a cost to the Laundromat, it will not require much additional fundraising.

Other strategies and activities will require financial support to be implemented. First 5 LA funding for Best Start will focus on **building community capacity by supporting strategies and activities that strengthen the ability of neighborhood residents, organizations and collaboratives—working together—to improve the Building Stronger Families Framework core results.** Examples of community capacity strategies include, but are not limited to, efforts in the following categories:

- **Social Capital:** Social capital describes the quality of an individual's network of friends and families and other people. When a person has high social capital, there is a network of people in the individuals' life that can provide support, information, ideas or resources. The term "capital" comes from the study of economics where it describes a resource (including money) that can make you more powerful and effective in doing your work. When we talk about social capital, we are referring to the people in an individual's life that can take form in community groups, church groups, friendships, contacts, and other relationships that provide access to information, ideas and resources. When a community or individual has a lot of social capital, there is a sense of belonging, participation, trust and safety.
- **Civic Engagement:** Civic engagement refers to an individual's participation in all aspects of community life. This can mean participating in their child's school events, cultural events, local planning committees, and other ways to engage in civic life. Additionally, Civic engagement connotes shaping and directing the decisions being made about their community.
- **Organizational Capacity Building:** Building the "capacity" of organizations means to help organizations like community groups, non-profits or other organizations to function more effectively. While there are many organizational capacity building supports in Los Angeles, Best Start is unique because community residents are integral to leading the charge to help improve the organizations in their community

through identifying organizational capacity building strategies through LBD.

- Community resource mobilization: Community resources are the people, time, money and places that help you get things done. By “mobilizing” resources, resources (i.e., people, money, time, and places) are utilized in a way that they are not currently used. “Leveraging” or “building-on” refers to adding more “people, money, time and places” to existing resources so that they can be more effectively. Lastly, “connecting” refers to linking together the people, money, time and places that are doing similar work so that they can be more effective or achieve greater impact.

Strategies and activities that do not take a community capacity approach will require financial support from other funders. When seeking out other sources of grants and resources, it is important to determine what types of strategies and activities are eligible for support.

First 5 LA’s funding focus for Best Start on community capacity building is distinct from support for direct services, which First 5 LA funds through other initiatives like Welcome Baby. Direct services consist of services, activities, and supports delivered to individuals and/or groups (children, prenatal through age 5, their parents, guardians and/or other family members) to meet an existing need. Examples of direct services include emergency assistance, case management, specialized treatment, and parent education and support groups. Unlike direct services, community capacity building strategies have a particular emphasis on addressing what is causing current conditions and doing so with active resident and stakeholder involvement.

That being said, many direct services can be turned into a community capacity building approach. For instance, imagine that your partnership is focused on social connections,

and your target population is parents of children with special needs. Funding an activity such as a parent support group at a family resource center, facilitated by a professional, would be a direct service because the activity does not build the community's capacity to implement and sustain these activities over time. In this example, if funding were to sunset, the support group would cease to be facilitated by the professional, and there would be no one in the community with the knowledge or skill to continue the group.

However, if you were thinking of the parent support group as an opportunity for capacity building, you could work toward the same result through a social capital strategy by training resident members of your target population to facilitate peer-based support groups. In this example, if the funding were discontinued, the community would be able to continue the support group based on the skills and experience they gained through the training. In addition to training resident facilitators, peer support groups would strengthen relationships between target population members—parents of children with special needs.

If you wanted more parent support groups facilitated by professionals, you could employ a civic engagement strategy where you train residents on how to advocate for more resources to fund professionally-facilitated parent support groups at the family resource center. In this example, the Community Partnership would retain the skills and experience to advocate for their needs being met on other issues impacting families.

When brainstorming capacity building strategies and activities, think about whether your community (or others like it) have relevant experience from which to draw. For example:

- What strategies and activities have been attempted in the past?
- What were the challenges and successes that were observed or experienced?
- What can be built upon and improved?
- What strategies and activities are currently underway?

- Do these strategies and activities match what residents and stakeholders say they want and need?
- Do these strategies and activities fit in with the daily routines of the parents and children you want to reach?
- What kind of data – or evidence – do they have to demonstrate their success?

For instance, imagine that your family core result is concrete supports. When researching existing strategies and activities in your community, you find that a public housing development already conducts a weekly activity: play groups for young children and their parents. Through facilitator guidance, peer learning and hands-on experience, parents learn what they can do at home to support children's learning and healthy development. However, in talking to some of the parent participants, you learn that they do not feel well-equipped to ask for services for their children within public systems. Let's say that parents share that the staff members of the local clinics treat them rudely.

Using a social capital strategy, you decide to work with the facilitator of the play group to engage these local clinic staff members in some of the sessions. Your aim is for families to develop awareness of the concrete supports in their community, for the clinic staff members to learn more about what families want and need, and for both to develop a connection with each other.

You can also add other strategies and activities. For instance, you can use an organizational capacity building strategy to provide a training to clinic staff members on how to deliver services in a more consumer-friendly way. Or you can use a civic engagement strategy to provide training and support to parents so that they can advocate for the local clinics and all other neighborhood service providers to adopt principles by which they will engage families in a friendly way.

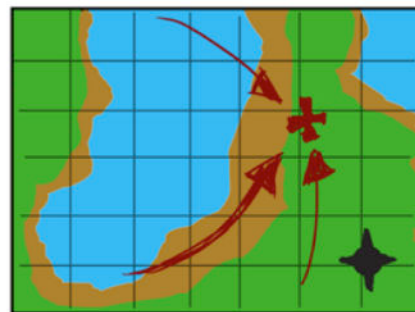
**As you brainstorm strategies, always keep in mind which ideas best fit your community and target population. Think about the daily routines of the families and children you want to reach. Where do they go? Who do they interact with? How can you create an environment in your community that builds upon existing assets to strengthen the protective factors?**

**Step Two: Use an inclusive, data-informed process to choose strategies.**

**When choosing strategies and activities, make sure that diverse residents and stakeholders, including members of your target population, have a chance to give feedback on what strategies will work.** Alignment with your community's values and desires for the future will help your strategies and activities to take root.

For the first round of LBD, you will develop between one to three strategies and a set of activities by which these strategies will be implemented. When choosing strategies and activities, remember these tips:

- *Focus on results.* Be sure that the steps you take are focused on your family core result.
- *It is not only about money.* Include no-cost and low-cost strategies.
- *Do not try to reinvent the wheel.* Build on the strengths and successes of things that work in the community and improve on the weaknesses.
- *Consider the tried, the true and the new.* Include some things that have worked in similar communities, as well as original ideas that excite people.





- *Mix it up.* Include strategies and activities that require people from different groups and parts of the community and with different viewpoints to work together. Be sure that there are opportunities for people of different ages and backgrounds to do things together.
- *Be responsive.* Gather feedback from diverse residents and stakeholders on what you propose to do. They are likely to have ideas and past experience that will inform which strategies and activities are most likely to improve results.

In order to prioritize your strategies and activities, you may want to come up with selection criteria. Mark Friedman, the creator of Results-Based Accountability, suggests four main criteria:

- *Specificity:* Is a specific action described?
- *Leverage:* Will it make a big or little difference?
- *Values:* Is it consistent with your community's values?
- *Reach:* Is it feasible to do within the desired timeframe?

As you discuss the criteria above, consider the capacities, including skills, knowledge, relationships and organizational resources, needed for effective implementation. What activities will make up your strategy? Based on existing resources and funding available, which strategies can you implement right away and which will require more planning and resources?

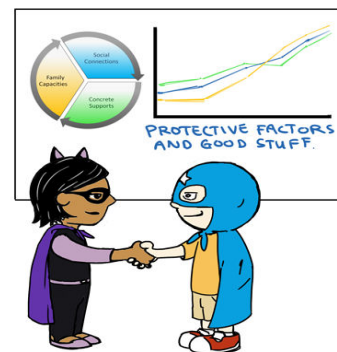
Choosing your strategies and activities is an important step toward improving results. But no matter how thorough and carefully developed your strategies and activities may be, one thing is certain: things change. You will have to make adjustments, change timelines and adapt to changing conditions and unanticipated events along the way.

Before moving to the next step, the Learning Team will meet with its Program Officer (PO) and Senior Program Officer (SPO) to share information about the Community Partnership's proposed strategies and activities, as well other key decision points in the LBD process. The PO and SPO will give the Learning Team real-time feedback on whether the strategies are on track or need more refining. The PO and SPO will share information from the meeting with the Best Start Department Assistant Directors and communicate any additional feedback to the Learning Team.

### **Step Three: Develop quantity performance measures.**

As you work to make progress on your family core result, you will want to know whether your strategies are making a difference. **Performance measures** help you determine how well your strategies are working. Developing performance measures *before* implementing your strategies is one tool that helps make clear what you want to achieve. There are three types of performance measures that you will consider during the course of LBD.

- Quantity: How much did we do?
- Effectiveness: How well did will do?
- Impact: Is anyone is better off?



During step three, you will focus on developing quantity performance measures.

Determining “how much you want to do” for each strategy will encourage you to become more specific about the scope and scale of your efforts, particularly as you set targets, or goals, for what you want your strategy to achieve. For instance, when it comes to scope, are you inviting parents to one event that lasts two hours or to a leadership course consisting of 10 sessions, each lasting 2 hours? When it comes to scale, are you trying to work with 10, 100 or 1000 families?

As an example, imagine you are developing an organizational capacity building strategy to strengthen the ability of Early Care and Education professionals to build family capacities. One of the activities you anticipate will be training childcare workers to deliver real-time parent education based on knowledge of parenting and child development.

The first quantity measure you might discuss relates to scale: how many childcare workers you want to receive training. Developing a target for that number will require doing some research into questions such as how many child care workers currently serve your community.

The second quantity measure you might discuss relates to scope: how many different training sessions you anticipate holding. For instance, would you like to have a one-time only session or a two-month course with sessions every week? To set an informed target, you may consider doing some research into training curricula that currently exist or talk to an expert in the protective factors to help you understand the types of trainings that would be most effective considering the range of material you want to cover.

For each strategy, you will develop performance measures that relate to the different types of activities you want to undertake. For instance, imagine your core result is concrete supports, and you are pursuing a resident leadership strategy. You want to build residents' ability to influence the availability of pre-natal care for pregnant mothers. Your activities might include developing existing resident leaders' ability to serve as effective advocates for prenatal care, as well as creating a pipeline of future resident leaders by developing a public awareness campaign about the importance of prenatal care to healthy child development. Each of these different types of activities will have their own set of performance measures.

Developing performance measures will also help you to think about what role the Community Partnership would like to play in implementation of the activities. For instance, imagine that you plan to implement Parent Cafés as part of a social capital strategy to build family capacities. Your target population is teen parents. You set the goal of holding one Parent Café per month for 6 months (scope), with at least 20 parents in attendance at each session (scale).

After developing performance measures that specify the scale and scope of your activities, you consider what capacities and resources the strategy will require. For instance, Parent Cafés work best with trained facilitator. It is also important to engage stakeholders who have worked with your target population and can help co-design Parent Cafés and recruit participants.

When considering what role the Community Partnership will play in implementation, you decide that you would like resident leaders in the Community Partnership to work with the organization selected to carry out the strategy (i.e., the Contractor) to learn more about how to design and lead Parent Cafés. You would also like one of your most active stakeholders, the leader of a community-based organization who works directly with pregnant and parenting youth, to assist the contractor in recruiting participants. These considerations will help inform your description of what roles will be required for implementation.

#### **Step Four: Initiate the First 5 LA Funding Process and Develop Effectiveness and Impact Performance Measures for Each Strategy**

You will initiate the First 5 LA funding process by submitting a worksheet that will include information generated from the LBD Process to date, including your core result, indicator(s), story behind the data, target population, strategies, activities and quantity performance measures. The worksheet will draw upon this information, as well as any additional research and learning undertaken during stage four, to provide rationales for why the strategies and activities selected are likely to be effective at improving your family core result.

The content of the worksheet will be generated by the LBD workgroup to reflect the decisions made by the Community Partnership. The Capacity Builder is responsible for filling out and submitting the form. First 5 LA will review the worksheet and provide additional feedback as needed to the LBD workgroup. Once the worksheet has been approved, First 5 LA will launch a process to solicit applications to select a Contractor to implement the strategies and activities.

While the contractor review process is being conducted, Community Partnerships will prepare for a facilitated discussion with the selected Contractor by developing the other two types of performance measures: effectiveness – “how well did we do?” and impact – “Is anyone better off?” In addition to the quantity targets identified in step three, these are the measures that will guide the Contractor and Community Partnership in assessing performance.

See the table below for examples of the different types of performance measures.

<u>How much did we do?</u>	<u>How well did we do it?</u>
# Community members served # Activities (e.g. by type of activity)	% Common Measures (e.g. participant staff ratio, workload ratio, staff turnover rate, staff morale, % staff fully trained, % participants seen in their own language, unit cost)  % Activity-Specific Measures (e.g. % timely, % participants completing activity, % correct and complete, % meeting standard)
<u>Is anyone better off?</u>	
# # # #	% Skills / Knowledge (e.g. parenting skills)  % Attitude / Opinion (e.g. toward prenatal care)  % Behavior (e.g. read to their children every day)  % Circumstance (e.g. connected to parents in their community)

Table adapted from Mark Friedman's book *Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough: How to Produce Measurable Improvements for Customers and Communities*. Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2005.

Now consider potential performance measures for the examples of activities associated with the strategies introduced in step three: 1) training childcare providers to deliver real-time parent education based on knowledge of parenting and child development and 2) building family capacities using Parent Cafés.

**Example One:** Training childcare providers to deliver real-time parent education based on knowledge of parenting and child development.

<p><u>How much did we do?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many childcare providers received training?</li> <li>• How many training sessions were conducted?</li> </ul>	<p><u>How well did we do it?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What percent of the childcare providers received the training?</li> <li>• What percent of the sessions were completed?</li> <li>• What percent of providers who received the training rated the experience as useful to very useful on a post-training survey?</li> </ul>
<p><u>Was anyone better off?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What percent and number of providers reported using the information provided with parents in the year after their training?</li> <li>• How many and what percent of parents in these programs reported that the interaction with providers increased their knowledge of child development stages and ability to help their children at each stage?</li> </ul>	

**Example Two:** Building family capacities using Parent Cafés.

<p><u>How much did we do?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many parent café convenings were held?</li> <li>• How many parents attended the convenings?</li> </ul>	<p><u>How well did we do it?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What percent of the planned convenings were held?</li> <li>• What percent of the parents attended the convenings?</li> <li>• What percent of parents who participated were teen parents?</li> </ul>
<p><u>Was anyone better off?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What number and percent of teen parents reported an increase in the number of neighbors they can turn to when they want to share their concerns, solve problems, or seek advice?</li> <li>• What number and percent of teen parents feel they are better able to have a nurturing relationship with their child?</li> </ul>	

The performance measures developed with the Contractor will ultimately serve as a tool that helps the Community Partnership and anyone who contributes to implementation track progress and apply learning. While the Contractor will be responsible for collecting and analyzing performance data, the Community Partnership will also play an active role in reviewing data.

It is important to stress that reviewing performance data is not something that you do once and then forget. Data on each of your performance measures should be collected and reviewed quarterly, or at similar intervals, to be able to make changes over time if necessary. You and your partners will use performance measures to track progress, adjust your strategies as necessary and drive continuous improvement, so that you can make even bigger gains for children and families. You will also utilize data to communicate results to the larger community, contributing to greater public awareness and investment in the work of the Community Partnership and the Building Stronger Families Framework.

<b>Recommended Priority Capacities for Stage Four</b>
<b><i>Effective Collaboration:</i></b> <b>#7: Parent &amp; Resident Leadership</b>
<b><i>Effective Collaboration:</i></b> <b>#8: Stakeholder Participation</b>
<b><i>Data-Driven Learning, Decisions &amp; Accountability:</i></b> <b>#10: Data-Driven Decisions &amp; Accountability</b>
<b><i>Data-Driven Learning, Decisions &amp; Accountability:</i></b> <b>#11: Appropriate Results, Indicators &amp; Strategies</b>
<b><i>Building Neighborhood Capacities:</i></b> <b>#19: Organizational Capacity</b>
<b><i>Building Neighborhood Capacities:</i></b> <b>#20: Community Engagement &amp; Mobilization</b>



# Learning by Doing Toolkit

The toolkit provides resources, which will be updated throughout the process, to help your Community Partnership implement Learning by Doing. These tools are a starting point and are not meant to be exclusive or static. Rather, we encourage Community Partnerships to work in collaboration with their Learning Teams to tailor these tools to meet your specific community context. We also encourage you to reflect on what works well and what needs improvement throughout the LBD process. This will be important to improve the process for your Community Partnership, as well as offer opportunities for learning and sharing with other Best Start Communities. The following documents will be shared with Learning Team members.

## **All Stages**

- A. Learning By Doing Two-Pager: Stages One to Four (Handout)
- B. Capacity Building Plan and LBD Checklist: Stages One to Four (Handout)
- C. Glossary of Terms – Stages One to Four (Handout)
- D. Learning By Doing Data Gallery Walk (PowerPoint)

## **Stage One**

- E. Family Core Results and the Protective Factors (PowerPoint)
- F. Understanding the Protective Factors within the Building Stronger Families Framework (PowerPoint)
- G. Parent Café to Understand the Family Core Results (PowerPoint)
- H. What is an Indicator? (PowerPoint)

## **Stage Two**

- I. The Story Behind the Data (PowerPoint)

## **Stage Three**

- J. Choose a Target Population (PowerPoint)

## **Stage Four**

- K. Transitioning from LBD Stages 1-3, to Stage 4 (PowerPoint)
- L. Understanding Strategies 101 (PowerPoint)
- M. Understanding Strategies 201 (PowerPoint)
- N. Understanding Performance Measures (PowerPoint)