



# Lower Grafton County 2021 Preschool Development Grant Strategic Plan

Submitted by the Community Health Institute / JSI



## Project Team

Victoria Babcock

Rachel Daube

Adriana Lopera

Katherine Robert



## Methods

In December 2021, the Lower Grafton Council for Young Children and Families' Advisory Group developed a strategic plan with a group of stakeholders and community members. The plan was informed by the preceding 6-month needs assessment and developed over the course of three two-hour sessions. The purpose of the strategic planning series was to document a set of goals, objectives, and strategies that LGCYCF should prioritize in the coming years. Additionally, the group identified a set of sustainability-related strategies to document how the work would be overseen and coordinated by the LGCYCF Advisory Group and its to-be-hired coordinator. The strategic planning sessions were attended by active LGCYCF Advisory Group members, stakeholders, and community members totaling 14 to 17 people. Attendees represented general family supports, early education and child care, behavioral health and primary care, caregivers of young children, and community planning.

The virtual strategic planning process was developed and facilitated by the Community Health Institute/JSI, and utilized a variety of modalities and techniques to engage all participants - including time for individual reflection, small and large group discussions, and maximizing the use of technology to emulate activities traditionally completed in person.

The group began its planning work by forming a shared understanding for what LGCYCF's success might look like through an interactive, team-based visioning activity (see Attachments). Upon review and agreement of the "vision of victory", the group then developed a comprehensive list of almost 30 strategies that LGCYCF might consider to reach that vision. Next, the group ranked the 30 strategies according to the likelihood of LGCYCF's ability to implement the strategy successfully. This activity resulted in a final list of strategies that the group organized according to each strategy's potential value to the community and the level of resources required. The strategies which did not rank at the top of the list are documented in the "Long Term Considerations" category at the end of this document.



## 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

In order to implement the strategies included in this plan and ensure integration with the regional preschool development grant work, LGCYCF will prioritize hiring a program coordinator early in 2022. The program coordinator will oversee the administration of LGCYCF and serve as the liaison between the other PDG regional and state partners, and also the local agencies and programs serving families in the Council's footprint. The program coordinator will be primarily responsible for facilitating many of the ongoing sustainability strategies documented in this plan, and guiding LGCYCF's work.

### Ongoing Sustainability Strategies

- Maintain sustainable financial support for a coordinator to oversee implementation of selected strategies.
- Convene on a regular basis; meeting agendas focus on forward action, peer-sharing/learning, and soliciting feedback from all members on LGCYCF's work.
- Maintain regular communication with members and stakeholders to build visibility and awareness of the LGCYCF work and create opportunities to leverage similar efforts across initiatives.
- Regularly review membership composition with a focus on maintaining family engagement and recruiting new partners addressing emerging issues.
- Annually review and revise the strategic plan to make adaptations responsive to shifting needs and available resources.
- Develop an annual "workplan" that responsive to the current active membership and environment.

### Priority Areas for Recruitment and Engagement

Partners have identified the following gaps in active representation in the LGCYCF Advisory Group, and also this planning process. The LGCYCF Advisory Group and program coordinator will focus its relationship building energy on the following groups as this strategic plan moves to action:

- Public schools
- Child care
- Early supports and services
- Various therapists
- Legislators
- Pediatricians





## **Priority Goals, Objectives, and Strategies**

Below are listed all of the goals, objectives, and potential strategies for LGCYCF to prioritize in the next several years. The icons next to the strategies indicate the prioritization category. Strategies were placed into these categories based on the following definitions:



**Quick wins:** Higher value, lower resources/effort; *begin immediately*



**Major projects:** Higher value, greater resources/effort; *begin in the short-term*



**Fill-ins:** Moderate value, lower resources/effort; *implement as time and resources allow*

### **Goal 1: Caregivers receive the support their family needs.**

#### **Objective 1.1: Build awareness of available supportive programming and resources**



1.1.1. Create a centralized directory of family support services that is regularly maintained and updated.



1.1.2. Develop a multi-media awareness campaign (print, digital) that promotes local programs and services and normalizes that all families benefit from support.



1.1.3. Expand outreach partnerships to partners such as home visiting programs, Welcome Baby, Circle of Security, or kinship caregiver groups, to reach new parents and caregivers.

#### **Objective 1.2: Create opportunities for better-coordinated access to program enrollment and support.**



1.2.1. Build capacity for community navigator positions to help generally educate and direct families to resources.



1.2.2. Continue to engage in initiatives, such as the Pyramid Model, that promote coordinated support for children's social and emotional wellness.



1.2.3. Seek resources to provide internet access and/or internet-enabled devices to families with limited access to network connections or equipment.



1.2.4. Engage child care, afterschool programs, pediatric offices, etc. to "host" program staff at high-traffic locations where families may be more likely to engage in brief education or resource coordination support.



## Goal #2: Programs that support families with young children are equipped to provide services.

**Objective 2.1: Provide a networking space for service providers in the region to share updates, knowledge, and problem solve.**



2.1.1. Convene a regular gathering of footprint providers to promote knowledge exchange and resource sharing.



2.1.2. Facilitate conversations to understand areas of need that providers may choose to work on addressing together (ex., developmental screening).



2.1.3. Coordinate training on cross-program collaboration and development, (ex., Boundary Spanning Leadership).

**Objective 2.2: Provide coordinated training opportunities to support a well-trained workforce.**



2.2.1. Coordinate training opportunities for staff working in programs across the footprint on trauma-informed service provision and sensitive communication.



2.2.2. Coordinate training and informational opportunities for staff to learn about evidence-based/informed/best practices.

## Goal #3: Caregivers feel a sense of trust and connectedness with their community, including peers and providers.

**Objective 3.1: Create more opportunities for peer connection through parenting and caregiving groups**



3.1.1. Encourage organizations to onboard and serve as "hosts" for peer engagement and connection opportunities.

**Objective 3.2: Engage diverse family perspective in planning and implementation work**



3.2.1. Create comfortable ways and spaces for families to contribute.



3.2.2. Engage community members from "nontraditional" early childhood groups, such as older adults or employers to ensure a broad perspective on opportunities.



3.2.3. Develop protocols for intake and exit interviews with program participants across the footprint in order to understand what works well and where improvements to systems/services are needed.



3.2.4. Build time and resources for family/caregiver engagement and input into all planning.



## **Additional Strategies for Long Term Consideration**

Below are additional strategies originally developed by the strategic planning group, but de-prioritized relative to strategies included above. These strategies should be considered of equal importance to the strategies included in the final plan, and revisited as resources allow.

### *Communications / Outreach*

- Develop a visual aid to illustrate how and where families might seek supports.
- Produce a suite of regular communication tools (newsletters, podcasts) that highlight community family-oriented events, resource coordination and enrollment events, and other important program information for families with young children.

### *Accessibility*

- Create a common core application to reduce paperwork burden on families that might be shared across agencies.
- Consider implementing different service hours to accommodate families' work schedules.

### *Advocacy*

- Support advocacy efforts on increasing financial support for child care and preschool; more flexible hours, scholarships.
- Support advocacy efforts on increasing financial support for other family support/strengthening programs and workforce development.
- Support advocacy efforts to build internet/mobile bandwidth in the region.
- Support advocacy efforts that highlight the impact of benefit cliffs on families.

### *Promote Family Engagement and Peer Connections*

- Coordinate brief pulse surveys to assess family perception of program communication/sensitivity.
- Develop a cohesive, "branded" approach to peer engagement/interaction in multiple places with various levels of engagement and primary focus.
- Create more low-touch, low-resource opportunities for families to connect peer to peer using community spaces and opportunities creatively, such as Facebook or social media groups, WhatsApp groups.
- Provide "reports" to caregivers on how their input has been incorporated into program work/planning.

