



# Guidance to Plan, Implement & Sustain Community Hubs

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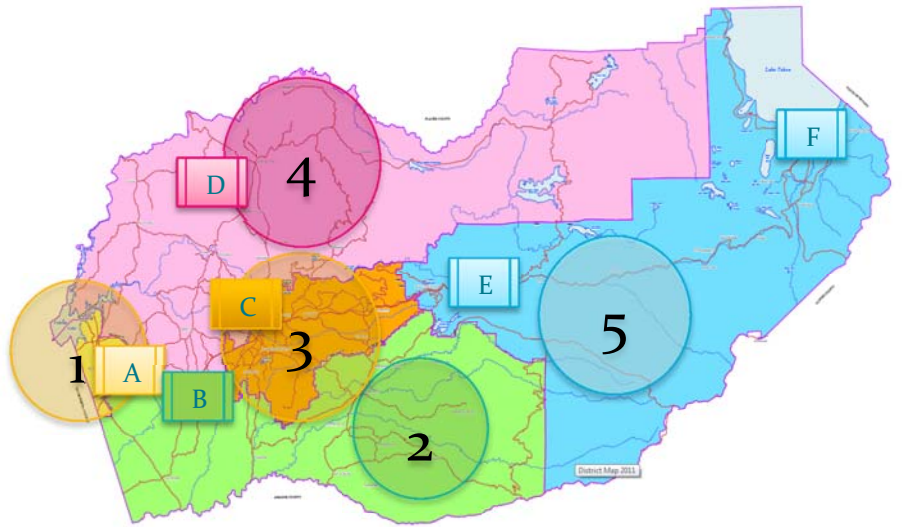


## Background

The First 5 El Dorado Children and Families Commission is committed to improving the lives of children 0 through 5 and their families by promoting, enhancing, and developing comprehensive early childhood systems through collaborative partnerships, early care and education, health, and community services. Since its inception in 1998, the Commission has effectively partnered with libraries, school districts, public health, other agencies, and community-based organizations to improve outcomes for children. The promise of early childhood as a key to the future is rooted in research, with opportunities to impact the academic success, health, and overall wellness throughout the lifespan beginning in the first few years of life.<sup>1</sup>

First 5 El Dorado Commissioners and staff have always taken a regional approach to planning and service delivery, recognizing that different areas in El Dorado County have unique resources and needs. The Commission is now in the process of planning “Community Hubs” where local leadership and neighborhood resources are leveraged to help all children and families reach their potential.

County libraries currently exist in each of the five supervisorial districts in El Dorado County and are the planned sites for Community Hubs. The focus for Community Hubs is prevention– through early identification of developmental issues, targeted assistance, and efficient service delivery for children birth through 5 and their families. Prevention services can be delivered to families through both mobile outreach and connection to direct services through the Hubs, reaching children and families in the neighborhoods where they live and work. Hubs do not just provide or connect people with services. They can help strengthen and connect a community providing opportunities for people to work together and support each other in new ways.



*Figure 1. El Dorado County Supervisorial District Boundaries shown with Library Locations A. Oak Ridge Joint Use Library, El Dorado Hills; B. Cameron Park Branch, Cameron Park; C. El Dorado County Library, Placerville; D. Georgetown Library, Georgetown; E. Pollock Pines Library, Pollock Pines; and F. South Lake Tahoe Library, South Lake Tahoe.*

<sup>1</sup> For example: (Heckman, *The Economics of Human Potential*, n.d.) (Heckman, *Invest in Early Childhood Development: Reduce Deficits, Strengthen the Economy*, 2012) (Center for Youth Wellness, 2014) (The National Academies, 2000).

## Community Hubs as an Innovative Approach

“Community Hubs” have been implemented in countries across the world. There is no single definition, because Community Hubs are locally driven and vary in function and structure. However, most share common attributes that set them apart from other traditional models for service delivery and coordination. Most Community Hubs are:

**Collaborative.** Built into the concept of the Hub is community – people get together to work, learn, and grow through supportive relationships. Foundational to community must be a belief and understanding that people can help and serve one another in both formal and informal ways. Knowing that one person, leader, or organization cannot solve all social problems in a community, relationships are key at every level, from partnerships among organizations to individual relationships formed by participants.

**Relevantly Placed.** Examples of Community Hubs include schools, libraries, hospitals, and neighborhood centers. While less common, a Community Hub can also be virtual – lacking a physical space but providing an online network of people and resources. When a Hub has a physical space, it should be centrally located or convenient for people in the community to access via public transportation.





**Reflective of the Community Served.** Language, culture, and circumstances should be considered in all aspects of planning, and may influence the makeup of leadership, staffing, programming, space design, communications, and service strategy.

**Responsive to Local Needs.** Within governmental boundaries (e.g. counties and cities) there can be major differences in the opportunities, conditions, and experiences of sub-populations and within neighborhoods. Hubs are local and provide for consideration of the unique assets and needs of the people and the area in which they reside.

**Person Centered.** People are at the heart of the Community Hub. Community Hubs differ from single services in that they foster more effective, accessible, and coordinated services and actively work to take down silos. While many service systems have been designed to meet a specific need using narrowly defined service criteria, a Hub offers an opportunity to understand and support individual and family strengths and needs comprehensively.

**Adaptive.** Community Hubs must be able to continually address their own strengths and challenges. In startup phase, this requires piloting approaches, assessing successes and failures, and quickly making changes toward improvements. Longer term, commitment to change is also important so that the Hub reflects emerging community needs. Prescribing the results, or “what” to be achieved, and guiding principles is important, however, it can be useful to avoid prescribing a specific method for service delivery so that sites have flexibility to experiment with strategies and firmly establish those with the most meaningful results.

### Community Hubs Can Exist As...

-  Physical Locations
-  Mobile Services
-  Virtual & Online
-  Hybrid Model

Several large-scale initiatives have helped Community Hubs develop across the globe. Many initiatives have publicly shared their framework, guidance, and lessons learned that can be leveraged in El Dorado County.

<b>Examples of Hubs Across the World</b>		
<b>Where?</b>	<b>What?</b>	<b>Why?</b>
<p><b>US – State of Oregon</b></p> <p>Early Learning Hubs</p>	<p>Early Learning Hubs use a collective impact model. Primary responsibilities of Hubs are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop a common vision and strategic agenda across five sectors: early learning, health, human services, K-12 education, and private sector partners.</li> <li>➤ Bring these sectors together to align strategies and resources, and pursue collaborative initiatives.</li> <li>➤ Engage parents and families so that Oregon’s early learning vision and agenda is guided by family voice.</li> <li>➤ Coordinate services, communication and data sharing across sectors.</li> <li>➤ Measure and evaluate progress through shared indicators.</li> </ul>	<p>Early Learning Hubs make “supports more available, more accessible, and more effective for children and families, particularly those who are overrepresented in the opportunity gap and underrepresented in services.” Early learning hubs do not directly provide services.</p> <p>Three statutory goals provide a unifying focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ An early learning system that is aligned, coordinated, and family centered</li> <li>➤ Children that arrive at kindergarten ready and supported for success</li> <li>➤ Families that are healthy, stable, and attached</li> </ul> <p><i>Oregon’s Early Learning Division</i></p>
<p><b>US – State of Massachusetts</b></p> <p>Early Childhood Resource Centers &amp; Birth Through Third Grade Learning Hub</p>	<p>Early Childhood Resource Centers make early care and education materials and resources available to the larger community, especially parents and child care providers. The Birth Through Third Grade Learning Hub shares state and community strategies and tools.</p>	<p>Early Childhood Resource Centers facilitate the accessibility of early childhood materials. The Birth through Third Grade Learning Hub is working to close the achievement gap.</p> <p><i>The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care; The Birth through Third Grade Learning Hub.</i></p>
<p><b>US – Several States (NY, OH, Washington, D.C.)</b></p> <p>Schools as Community Hubs</p>	<p>Schools as Community Hubs (Hubs) connect residents, students, and their families to resources and supports within their neighborhood.</p> <p>Hubs strive to collaborate with area partners to offer an integrated and impactful array of services, supports, and opportunities that lead to a better neighborhood.</p>	<p>The central objective of schools acting as Community Hubs in these states include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Engaging more families and parents in the education of their children and the development of their neighborhood</li> <li>➤ Developing stronger communities</li> <li>➤ Achieving better academic outcomes for students</li> </ul> <p><i>Unlocking Opportunities: Using Schools as Community Hubs for Students and Families</i></p>

<b>Examples of Hubs Across the World</b>		
<b>Where?</b>	<b>What?</b>	<b>Why?</b>
<b>US – Center for Disease Control</b>	The Community Health Improvement (CHI) Hub is a collaborative workspace created to enhance CHI processes across the country.	Public Health Districts across the country are engaging in coalition driven planning processes focusing attention on social determinants of health (e.g. poverty and educational attainment). Resources assist planners in targeting vulnerable groups, while promoting understanding of the community context (e.g. food and housing security) in which these groups reside. By doing so, communities are able to highlight factors that “help make the healthy choice the easy choice” for communities. The ultimate goal is to provide a data-driven, digital workspace to harmonize the efforts of multiple stakeholders working toward community health improvement and sustainability.”  <i>Community Commons</i>
<b>Canada</b> Community Hubs	Community Hubs act as service centers in different communities in order to serve the needs of various population groups, including children.  In these buildings, community members can find basic health care, social services, other locally-specific programs and services, as well as access to community spaces.	Community Hubs in Canada deliver coordinated public services to ensure these services better meet the needs of children, youth, seniors, and others.  <i>Community Hubs Advisory Group, Ontario, Canada</i>
<b>Australia</b> Community Hubs	Community Hubs use a place-based and citizen-centric approach to linking families and their preschool children to support services, learning opportunities and the wider community.	Hubs bring local information and services spanning education, health, community and settlement into a familiar and friendly place. Often, this is a primary school or other community space that is already part of everyday life for families and their children.  <i>Community Hubs Australia</i>

## The Open Door of the Library

First 5 El Dorado and El Dorado County Libraries have a long-standing history as effective partners. Through the First 5 Ready to Read @ Your Library initiative, thousands of children in El Dorado County birth through age 5 attend storytimes and related activities annually, strengthening early language and literacy in a way that is simple, fun, and flexible for families.

Libraries in El Dorado County are leading the way in providing excellence and innovation to promote early learning and development. As early childhood partners they are part of a national and international movement to shift libraries from 'quiet spaces' to vibrant community centers for knowledge and connection (Chung, 2015) (Valdes, 2007). As sites for El Dorado's Community Hubs, libraries are valued by community members (Pew Research Center, 2013) and a source of knowledge and expertise on early literacy and language development. Other ways that libraries are supporting children and families:

- Storytimes are provided at every library branch within the county and fulfill an important role in helping young children develop the early literacy skills needed to be ready for school. Age level storytimes support children in different developmental stages and expose participants to a variety of early learning skills laying the foundation for later reading. The library has reached out to underrepresented populations by offering storytimes in the evening and on the weekends, to individuals with special needs, and to English language learners. Library staff are trained in best practices in presenting, assist other early learning programs in libraries, and have received state and local recognition for the early literacy services offered to the community.
- El Dorado County Libraries are active participants in Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, providing professional development to early care and education providers. Early Childhood Literacy Specialists are bringing California Preschool Learning Foundations and frameworks to life through "Early Literacy on the Move". Specialists are currently serving 36 family child care homes by delivering a series of ten site visits, providing modeling and mentoring, and offering materials to enrich the program environment.
- Library staff in El Dorado County are one of nine Brazelton Touchpoint pilot sites in the state. The Touchpoints Network "encompasses early childhood educators, early interventionists, health care, public health, and social service providers. Many of these providers have participated in professional development programs and offerings. They share a commitment to listening to what families need and supporting their discovery of what is best for their children. The Touchpoints Network engages in projects to promote knowledge development, including special applications to support practice change for professionals working with young children and their families." (Brazelton Touchpoints Center, n.d.)

Public Libraries are  
Welcoming



Among Americans that had ever used a library, 94% said that based on their own experiences, they would say that "public libraries are welcoming, friendly place." (Pew Research Center, 2013)

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Ready to Read**  
**Connections**  
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In fiscal year 2014-15, libraries served 2,304 children birth through 5, and 1,740 adults and family members. This corresponds to more than 27% (one in four) of the County's children birth through 5.

- The Family Place Library model is foundational for all El Dorado County Libraries. Family Place Libraries™ are “a network of Children’s librarians nationwide who believe that literacy begins at birth, and that libraries can help build healthy communities by nourishing healthy families.” (Family Place Libraries, n.d.)
- El Dorado County Libraries are active participants in the California State Library’s Early Learning with Families (ELF) 2.0 initiative. ELF 2.0 seeks to expand the notion of libraries as community pillars that support and nurture early childhood development by sharing knowledge of welcoming spaces, enriching programming, and prized library resources and collections. Library staff have assisted other California libraries to develop early literacy programs and serve as guest speakers and presenters at state and local conferences.

## Readiness for Change

The timing for Community Hubs is right. Many leaders across the county are taking steps in the same direction to assist communities to be more productive, more stable, and to better utilize existing resources. Bringing together these partners across sectors to achieve a common goal has the potential to leverage resources, accelerate momentum, and result in changes that are stronger than any one partner could make alone.

Examples of projects taking place that demonstrate county readiness for collaborative, cross-sector work include:



### Leadership and Experience

- **The First 5 El Dorado Children and Families Commission** is committed to the implementation of Hubs. The Commission has utilized a research-backed framework for school readiness, built capacity for data collection and evaluation, and effectively partnered with organizations and agencies within the county including El Dorado County Office of Education, El Dorado Public Health, El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency, Barton Community Hospital, and Marshall Medical Hospital.
- **The El Dorado Community Foundation.** The Community Foundation’s leadership is committed to Hubs including assistance in developing countywide infrastructure.

### Aligned Activities

- **El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.** In a June 2015 meeting, the Board of Supervisors approved the addition of a new countywide strategic plan goal titled “Healthy Communities.” The draft definition of this goal is “Improved health, well-being, and self-sufficiency of El Dorado County communities.”

*John Kania of the Tamarack Institute has provided 3 key ingredients of readiness for a collective impact project (Kania J. , n.d.). These include:*

1. An Influential Champion - An individual or small group who command the respect necessary to bring CEO-level cross-sector leaders together and keep them actively engaged over time
2. Adequate Financial Resourcing - Adequate financial resources to last at least two to three years and generally involving at least one anchor funder to support needed infrastructure and planning
3. A Sense of Urgency for Change - A new opportunity or crisis that convinces people that a particular issue must be acted upon now and/or that a new approach is needed



- **Women’s Fund El Dorado.** Established in 2007, and part of the El Dorado Community Foundation, the Women’s Fund El Dorado (WFED) focuses on practicing collective philanthropy to accomplish their three tenets—giving, gathering, and granting. Each year, pooled money coming primarily from yearly dues goes into grant-making for the community, with members voting on a yearly basis on a focus for giving. In the past seven years, the members of the WFED have donated more than \$300,000 to the community. The Women’s Fund recently sponsored a ‘Bridges Out of Poverty’ training. Bridges Out of Poverty provides “concepts, workshops, and products to help employers, community organizations, social service agencies, and individuals address and reduce poverty in a comprehensive way. Bridges brings people from all sectors and economic classes together to improve job retention rates, build resources, improve outcomes, and support those who are moving out of poverty.” (Aha! Process Inc., n.d.)
- **Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health (MCAH).** As part of its 5 year strategic plan to increase access to health care, decrease substance use and domestic violence and increase mental wellness among El Dorado residents, the MCAH Program has identified Community Hubs and mobile outreach to at-risk socially isolated communities to achieve improved health outcomes for children and families.

#### *Cross-Sector Collaboration*

- **Community Strengthening Groups.** Community Strengthening Groups in El Dorado County’s Western Slope, Georgetown Divide, and South Lake Tahoe have been working to assess needs and promote solutions for children and their families. First 5 El Dorado supports community strengthening groups in their efforts.
- **El Dorado County Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).** El Dorado County QRIS is working to expand the number of high quality settings for parents to choose from, resulting in a countywide program for all licensed early care and education programs. The El Dorado RTT-ELC Consortia’s success is built upon collaborative leadership, a shared vision for quality, and leveraging multiple funding streams. The Consortia is a subcommittee of the El Dorado Early Care and Education Planning Council. Using the QRIS matrix (shared definitions for quality), eight federal, state, and local early childhood funding streams have been leveraged to provide key quality elements; provider outreach, incentives, on-site support, and administration.



## Getting Started

It has been said that “a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step” (Lao Tzu). The table below outlines the process and practices that can help Community Hubs become a reality. This process integrates both learning from other Hub initiatives as well as principles of Collective Impact.

<p><i>Convene, &amp; Engage</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify the community leaders that will drive the process forward.</li> <li>➤ Bring together key stakeholders as a steering committee and build a strategic plan.</li> <li>➤ Identify a lead agency to serve as facilitator and organizer.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Communicate &amp; Promote</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establish a mission, vision and guiding principles.</li> <li>➤ Develop a process for decision making that is clearly communicated with community partners.</li> <li>➤ Develop a communication plan to guide this work through planning, implementation and long term sustainability.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Study, Deliver, &amp; Refine</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assess community needs, with a focus on local and neighborhoods assets and issues.</li> <li>➤ Identify potential strategies for service delivery that leverage resources and address needs.</li> <li>➤ Set up systems to collect, analyze and report data.</li> <li>➤ Evaluate and report progress on the strategic plan, adjusting strategies to meet local need.</li> </ul>

# Plan

## *Identify and Convene*

A core planning group that can make critical decisions about the function and structure of the hubs is needed. The core planning group is well served by engaging influential champions such as potential funders, representatives of community-based organizations, consumers, and policy makers in the planning process.

## *Agree on the Process*

In working to address large-scale change, partnerships and cross-system collaboration are needed. In order to accomplish something together, it helps to make agreements about aspects of the process including meeting timing, decision-making protocols, roles, and communication preferences. A single facilitator or ‘backbone organization’ can be extremely helpful in organizing and keeping the process on track.

## *Determine or Validate Needs*

Understanding the issues within communities is important context for developing the plan. Reviewing available data and collecting new information on community needs may be necessary to inform the planning process. A summary document that can be updated through time, such as a community profile, can be a helpful tool in documenting the initial conditions and current conditions.

## *Develop a Shared Foundation*

After a core group has been formed, a foundation must be set. Together they can develop a vision, define a set of foundational values, and establish standards and criteria that will guide the success of the initiative.

**Shared Mission & Vision.** The mission statement describes the core purpose for the existence of Hubs. The specific vision of the Community Hubs program describes a meaningful and also ambitious future for the community after the Community Hubs has been successfully implemented.

**Shared Values.** The core group and its partners should develop a set of foundational values that represent the ideals upheld by people engaged in Community Hubs planning and operations.

**Goals, Objectives, Metrics, and Other Foundations.** After developing a vision and defining a set of foundational values, the core group and its partners can define specific and measurable short-term, medium term, and long term outcomes. A theory of change/action or logic model can be helpful in clarifying and summarizing what is most important in terms of process, outcomes and impact.



In Collective Impact work, the importance of a ‘**backbone organization**’ has been underscored. This concept can be useful in the work to develop the Community Hub. By designating one organization as the lead to hold together cross-sector partners, the system can more easily transition from fragmentation to collaborative efforts (Turner, Merchant, Kania, & Martin). The backbone organization supports and facilitates all aspects of planning and assists development of “a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants.” (Kania & Kramer, 2011)

*Make and Document other Critical Decisions*

In addition to the foundational elements, specific aspects of operations need to be determined and documented. While existing infrastructure may be leveraged for the Hubs, discussion and documenting each element of the business plan (social profit plan) helps to clarify and communicate decisions made. It is likely that the core group may widen to invite additional input and expertise on specific areas of the plan.

Some of the key decisions that will likely need to be made through planning include:

**Effective Governance.** What governance structure best supports the vision and values? Determining how to balance centralized decisions versus local decisions should be clearly defined.

**Locations.** Where are the most critical locations to begin work? Consider assets, need and readiness in identifying sites for first phase of implementation.

**Space Improvements.** What, if anything, is needed to make the space operational? Considerations related to the physical space may include any new accommodations needed.

**Policies.** During planning, existing policies or legislations may need to be considered. For example, limitations on data sharing may be a concern that must be addressed at a policy level. Or, it may be important to have Hubs formally recognized. Changing policies takes time, so starting during the planning stage is important.

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**Tips & Tricks**  
**Drafting the Plan**  
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Start with the end in mind. Developing a template for a plan that states the shared agreements and decisions of the group can be an effective strategy for staying on course and documenting explicitly each decision as it is made (without creating lots of interim materials).

## Implement

A well-written plan provides the springboard for implementation. Steps, timing, and persons responsible can be managed, with each task a step toward making the vision a reality. Throughout implementation, convening, assessment, and communication continue to be important.

**Strong Leadership and Intentional Culture.** The right leadership matters. Leaders (governance, management, and staff) help to motivate staff and volunteers, keep operations running smoothly, and foster an environment where new ideas and improvements can flourish. Consider strategies to develop a pool or pipeline of leadership.

**Administration and Management.** Plans for administration must address the day to day activities of staff and volunteers.

**Data (Monitor and Evaluation) For Learning and Improvement.** During planning, areas for evaluation should be identified. However, it may not be feasible to collect all data in the early stages of startup. Starting with basic information, Hubs can begin to use information to guide decisions.

**Communicate.** During implementation, it is important to continue outreach and engagement to attract families, as well as communicate with stakeholders outside of the Hub. Success stories and lessons learned can be ways to share information from evaluation.

## Sustain

In the long run, Community Hubs will change and develop, with accomplishments made and new challenges to address. Continued attention to results (rather than specific programs or service delivery types) keeps focus on the community and what is truly important. Periodically revisiting the foundational elements (vision, mission, goals and values) is an important step to stay relevant and make progress. Other key elements of sustainability include:

**Key Champions.** Effective leadership plus visible champions in the form of business, political, media and/or other community leaders that help to share and promote the initiative.

**Strong Internal Systems.** Internal functions – governance, finance, human resources, evaluation, and others – are reliable and effective.

**Strategic Financing.** A long-term perspective is taken to financing activities and cultivating multiple diverse sources of revenue to maintain financing at sufficient levels.

**Broad Base of Community Support.** Community members show solid support through volunteerism, donations, advocacy and other forms of involvement.

## Key Practices

Regardless of which lifecycle stage a project is in, the following practices are likely to be needed.

### Convene & Engage

The action of convening alone can lead to powerful outcomes even without a shared plan. Bringing together partners regularly throughout the planning process and engaging stakeholders throughout the life of the Hub is important. While many voices can make for more challenging decision processes, diverse backgrounds and viewpoints working toward the same purposes lead to shared leadership and ownership of community ‘wins’ as well as needs. Some considerations for convening:

**Diversity.** Do we have the right people at the table?

**Leaders.** Do we have enough formal and informal leaders in the community? If not, how can we grow and encourage leadership?

**Effective Processes for Decisions.** What are our agreements in planning and later in governance and management about how decisions will be made?

**Opportunities to Develop Relationships.** Are there new connections, networks, and relationships developed as a result of the process?

**Opportunities to Self-Define Roles and Strengths.** Have we provided conversation and flexibility about the ways individuals and groups engage?

### Study, Deliver & Refine

At each life-cycle stage of the initiative, information can be used to plan, modify, and improve.

**Understand Assets and Strengths in Communities.** This requires a focus on local issues, and, new data collection may be needed. Assets and strengths provide important information

about what is ‘going right’ in the community and may help to identify opportunities for stronger results leveraging communities themselves.

**Identify Needs and Opportunities in Communities.** Again, using a local focus, collect and synthesize data about what is happening with a focus on assets and missed opportunities. This will include quantitative data (for example, the percentage of children ready for kindergarten at entry at a school) as well as qualitative information (information about the challenges faced by families, schools, and children in kindergarten transition).

**Agreeing on the Data to Collect and Review is an Important First Step.** Data collection and reporting should be part of the initial planning steps as well as during the program lifecycle (implementing, sustaining).

**Study Existing Models & Make Smart Choices.** Across the nation and even abroad, communities are innovating and sharing what works. Before implementing a service model, determine whether evidence-based strategies exist and whether they are appropriate for use. This attention to evidence-based strategy shouldn’t rule out innovations, but it is important to openly and objectively pilot innovations, improving them or eliminating them if they are not having the desired results.

### Communicate and Promote

Communication – at all stages, is important.

**A communication plan helps to plan messages, target audiences, timing, and methods for communication.** Strategies such as social media, online newsletters, and presentations can reach different intended audiences with the intended information.

**Utilize existing tools.** Many organizations have published materials to help with communication around a collaborative action.



## Critical Issues and Considerations

In any endeavor worth taking, there are challenges. Some of the critical issues for consideration are noted here, along with strategies to address them.

**Engagement in Planning.** Bringing together the right group of stakeholders and engaging them in a process can be challenging. People from different organizations, agencies, and backgrounds often have different priorities, making this task more challenging than convening a group from a single program, agency, or funding stream. Bringing the right people together is important, but it is not always clear in the first steps who should be at the table, and once they are there, how to make key decisions. Often public processes rely on ‘input’ – gathering some information about an action being considered. While there is a time and place for this type of outreach, engagement is much deeper, and may take considerable investments of time to build trusting relationships and establish effective working relationships.

- Ask, [who is missing?](#) Take steps to invite partners that should be but are not represented.
- Effectively facilitated processes (meetings) can help with engagement, especially when they include strategies to open communication as well as move toward decisions.
- Understand and address barriers to engagement. For example, engaging families in leadership roles such as advisory boards may require assistance with child care.
- Provide multiple pathways for people to get involved in ways that are personally meaningful.
- Create safe spaces for real conversations about what matters.
- Provide regular and open communication that supports transparency.

**Community Engagement at the Hub.** While libraries already attract families, new strategies will be needed to both connect people to the hubs and to mobile outreach. The best strategies may result from planning steps, or be achieved through innovative approaches at the site. To begin, it will be important for communication materials and approaches to be provided in languages spoken at home, accessible to people with limited literacy, or both. Details such a décor or art, furnishings, and accessibility are important to making the hub site both accessible and welcoming to its target population. To include families with young children as leaders and volunteers, providing services such child care during meetings may be needed to reduce participation barriers.

**Learning from Successes and Setbacks.** Many Community Hubs have found it necessary to try different approaches to bring people in the door. Helping people to understand that this is a place for them and that they can both benefit and contribute may take innovative approaches and persistence. In Community Hubs in Australia, [case studies](#) provide examples of challenges and lessons learned. Reviewing these briefs, as well as documenting participants’ experiences, helps to formalize learning about what works, and keeps the organization moving in the right direction.

**Sustainability.** In planning a new endeavor, proper engagement leads to energy and resources. However, not enough organizations plan for sustainability from the beginning, and when challenges come later, the project can be at risk. Planning for sustainability includes consideration not just of funding, but solid foundations of operations, partnerships, communications, and more. A strong plan can help to proactively address potential long term issues, integrating opportunities for cost sharing and developing diverse revenues, risk management, and communications systems.

## Measuring Success

Shared goals and metrics are a powerful, unifying element that can align people and organizations toward desired results. Monitoring and evaluation should be a priority for Hubs, helping to provide information about what is working well, improvements needed, and information necessary to generate or continue motivation among direct service providers, funders, and others.

First 5 currently [evaluates its programs and services](#) using a Results Based Accountability framework, with [primary indicators](#) measured and reported, and efforts focused on 'turning the curve.' Among these indicators, school readiness is paramount, signaling that circumstances in the child's life have positioned him/her to be ready for school and that he/she is likely to be on target by third grade.

As the Hubs move forward, aspects of the current evaluation will continue and serve as guideposts. Other evaluation questions may also become important to consider. Planning the evaluation should be part of the overall planning, so that the questions, approaches, reporting, and timing are agreed upon.



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**Lessons from Oregon**  
**A North Star**  
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Oregon has worked to develop Early Learning Hubs and is documenting lessons learned and successes. Kindergarten readiness has been a guiding focus, or according to one participant, "Our North Star." Kindergarten readiness at the community level can't be accomplished by a simple strategy or one organization. It takes a community. This goal – of helping more children be ready – has helped to keep partners in Oregon focused and engaged.

Among participating schools, 81% of kindergartners entering last year in El Dorado were considered to have the skills needed for entry.



What would it take to ensure ALL children were off to a great start at school?



**First 5 El Dorado**  
Guidance to Plan, Implement  
& Sustain Community Hubs

In the table below, suggestions for evaluation questions, measures, and data collection are shown. Note that many aspects of evaluation are already in process through the work of First 5 El Dorado County. The following outline can be further developed through the planning process, with greater specificity added, resulting in an actionable evaluation plan.

Level	Potential Evaluation Question	Measures	Data Collection	Currently Collected and Reported?
Family / Community	Are conditions improving in the goal areas identified by First 5 El Dorado Children and Families Commission?	First 5 El Dorado <a href="#">Primary Indicators</a>	Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KSEP*)  Family Surveys Pre-K Observation Forms	Yes. Results reported annually and <a href="#">available to the community</a> .
Family / Community	What is happening as a result of our work? What are the results of these efforts in the lives of children and families?	Changes since starting Hubs	Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KSEP*)  Longitudinal data tracking; qualitative inquiry (interviews, focus groups)	Partial. Some information may be collected by individual partners but not systematically.
Programming / Services	Are our strategies having the desired results? What needs to be improved to reach greater performance?	Performance Metrics	Progress Compared to Targets (e.g. number of participants, percent reporting high levels of satisfaction)	Yes. Current programs and services have mechanisms to collect and report data on services provided, satisfaction, etc.
Community / System	What changes are occurring through the process of planning and implementing Hubs?	Partners (Numbers, levels of engagement; milestones achieved in planning hubs)	Interviews Outcome Gathering	No. Information is not systematically collected.
System / County	Are there returns on the investment of Community Hubs?	Costs (Investments) Estimates of Returns (Literature, other evaluation data)	Budget Information Literature Review Data from other Evaluation Questions	No. Estimates on savings through prevention have been identified through the literature.

## Recommendations

Based on the guidance in this brief, the following steps are recommended to plan and implement the Community Hubs.

1. Self-identify as or identify one or more backbone organizations<sup>2</sup> that can:
  - a. Guide vision and strategy
  - b. Support aligned activities
  - c. Establish shared measurement practices
  - d. Build public will
  - e. Advance policy
  - f. Mobilize funding toward establishing Community Hubs in El Dorado County.
2. Develop funding for a planning process that will result in a business plan for Community Hubs.
3. Begin work to collect and compile information to inform the planning process on community strengths and needs. This should include a focus on local conditions as defined by the supervisorial districts.
4. Bring together key partners from across sectors to assist with envisioning and supporting the plan, utilizing a collective impact framework.

### **Suggested Elements for El Dorado's Community Hubs Plan**

- a. Mission, Vision, Values
- b. Goals & Objectives (Shared Metrics)
- c. Governance and Administration
- d. Service Delivery
- e. Physical Space
- f. Management, Staffing, and Volunteers
- g. Marketing & Communications
- h. Evaluation
- i. Risk Management
- j. Financial Plan
  - i. Budget
  - ii. Strategic Funding
- k. Implementation Schedule
- l. Partners / MOUs

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<sup>2</sup> See Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact (Turner, Merchant, Kania, & Martin).

## Resources

Many documents and sources were used to develop this resource. Please see some of the most useful toolkits followed by a bibliography.

### Toolkits

Topic	Resource	Notes	Access
<b>Governance &amp; Shared Decision Making</b>	2008. Public Interest Strategy and Communications. <i>Community Hubs: governance, partnership and community inclusion strategies for collaborative and co-located initiatives.</i>	5 examples of different governance models for Community Hubs in Canada.	<a href="http://clients.websiteondemand.ca/publicinterest/images/reports/HubGovernanceReport_F_11Jul08.pdf">http://clients.websiteondemand.ca/publicinterest/images/reports/HubGovernanceReport_F_11Jul08.pdf</a>
<b>Guidance and Tools for a Community Hub, Start to Finish</b>	Online. Community Hub Toolkit.	Developed in the UK, the toolkit provides guidance for “multi-use, community run and led building enabling a range of services to improve the quality of life for the whole community.”	<a href="http://www.powyscommunityhubs.co.uk/community-hub-toolkit.html">http://www.powyscommunityhubs.co.uk/community-hub-toolkit.html</a>
<b>Needle-Moving Collective Impact Guide: Community Collaborative Life Stages</b>	Online. Guidance and key questions for planning a collaborative project.	Questions and strategies for each stage in the process.	<a href="http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Revitalizing-Communities/Community-Collaboratives/Guide-Community-Collaborative-Life-Stages.aspx#.VcInjflVhBc">http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Revitalizing-Communities/Community-Collaboratives/Guide-Community-Collaborative-Life-Stages.aspx#.VcInjflVhBc</a>
<b>Information on Sustainability</b>	Online. Free And Low-Cost Resources For Promoting Sustainability.	Provides research reports useful in further understanding the essential elements of long-term sustainability of community initiatives to serve children and families.	<a href="http://socialent.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/sustainability-resources.pdf">http://socialent.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/sustainability-resources.pdf</a>
<b>Community Organizations Partnership</b>	Online. Partnerships: Frameworks for Working Together	Developed by the National Resource Center, the toolkit provides guidance on how to establish partnerships among community organizations.	<a href="http://strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/guidebooks/Partnerships.pdf">http://strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/guidebooks/Partnerships.pdf</a>
<b>Collective Impact Readiness</b>	2011. Wholonomy Consulting. <i>Building Capacity for Collective</i>	Toolkit presenting 5 different types of collective impact	<a href="http://www.wholonomyconsulting.com/PDF/Collective_Impact">http://www.wholonomyconsulting.com/PDF/Collective_Impact</a>

Topic	Resource	Notes	Access
	<i>Impact Toolkit Series: Collective Impact Readiness Assessments.</i>	readiness assessments and how to put them into practice.	<a href="#">Readiness Assessment October.pdf</a>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	2012. Community Places. <i>Community Planning Toolkit: Community Engagement</i>	Toolkit providing “guidance on the issues to consider when planning and designing community engagement.”	<a href="https://earlylearningcouncil.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/community-engagement-guide.pdf">https://earlylearningcouncil.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/community-engagement-guide.pdf</a>
<b>Growing Leaders for Collective Impact</b>	A Guide for Strengthening the Collective Impact of Your Leadership Development Work	A “how to” with strategies for building community leaders.	<a href="http://www.leadershiplearning.org/system/files/Leadership%20and%20Collective%20Impact%20oGuides_092512_FINAL_o.pdf">http://www.leadershiplearning.org/system/files/Leadership%20and%20Collective%20Impact%20oGuides_092512_FINAL_o.pdf</a>

### Case Studies

- <http://www.powyscommunityhubs.co.uk/case-studies.html> – Presents three Community Hub pilot projects in the UK
- <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/aboutdept/pages/Aboutdept/schoolhubs/> – Presents six schools as Community Hubs case studies in Australia
- <http://www.communityhubs.org.au/resources/find?category=1> – Presents multiple case studies of several hubs and their community services in Australia

### Useful Websites and Resources

- Strengthening Nonprofits – <http://strengtheningnonprofits.org/>
- Stanford Social Innovation Review – <http://www.ssireview.org/>
- Powys Community Hubs – <http://www.powyscommunityhubs.co.uk/index.html>
- Oregon’s Early Learning System – <http://oregonearlylearning.com/>
  - Tools and Resources for Early Learning Hubs- <http://oregonearlylearning.com/technical-assistance-info-resources/>
- Community Commons (CDC) - <http://www.communitycommons.org/>
- Community Hubs (Australia) - <http://www.communityhubs.org.au/>
- Early Childhood Resource Centers (Massachusetts) - <http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/parent-and-family-support/early-childhood-resource-centers.html>
- Early Childhood Resource Center - <http://www.ecresourcecenter.org/>

**Commission Indicators**

<b>Commission Goal</b>	<b>2012-17 Primary Indicator</b>	<b>Tool</b>
Children enter school physically and emotionally healthy, ready to learn.	# and % of children in the county scoring 33 and above on KSEP	Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP) and Pre-K Observation Forms
Children 0-5 have timely well-child visits.	# and % of children receiving timely well-child visits	Client Satisfaction Survey
Children 0-5 have semi-annual dental visits.	# and % of program parents report taking their child (ages 1 through 5) to the dentist every six months	Client Satisfaction Survey
Parents of newborn children are confident in caring for their child.	# and % of program parents report improvements in confidence in caring for their child	Client Satisfaction Survey
	# and % of program parents reporting having resources they need	Client Satisfaction Survey
Parents of children 0-5 use positive strategies to guide and teach their child.	# and % of parents that monitor child's development	Client Satisfaction Survey
	# and % of parents report using positive strategies to guide and teach their child	Client Satisfaction Survey
	# and % of parents report knowing normal behavior for my child's age level	Client Satisfaction Survey
ECE provider caring for children 0-5 knows how to provide high quality ECE services.	# and % of licensed early care and education programs report knowing how to provide high quality ECE services	Community Partners Survey
Parents of children 0-5 know how to choose high quality ECE services.	# and % of parents report the early childhood education program where my child attends regularly shares information about quality (such as child and program assessments, curriculum, staff education and training)	Client Satisfaction Survey
Children 0-5 are cared for in high quality environments.	# and % of licensed early care and education programs are tier 3 and above on the quality rating matrix	H5Q Rating Matrix

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<b>Commission Goal</b>	<b>2012-17 Primary Indicator</b>	<b>Tool</b>
Children 0-5 are read to on a daily basis.	# and % of parents report that they or another family member reads with the child each day	Client Satisfaction Survey
Community partners report increased knowledge of parenting and child development, an understanding of early childhood community resources and understand the referral process.	# and % of community partners report improved ability to assist parents with parenting and child development	Community Partners Survey
	# and % of community partners report improvements in knowledge of early childhood community resources	Community Partners Survey
	# and % of community partners report improvements in knowledge of community referral process	Community Partners Survey

Convening Tool: Considering Who Should be at the Table

<b>Role</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Potential Names and Contact Information</b>		
		Name	Contact	Specific Ask
<i>Users and Beneficiaries</i>	Families and community members that may use and benefit from the Hub.			
<i>Advisors</i>	People that through their experiences and community have knowledge that can contribute to successful implementation.			
<i>Funders</i>	People that can support the initiative and help to guide the vision and make operational the plans.			
<i>Key Decision Makers</i>	People in leadership positions including elected and appointed.			
<i>Informal Leaders</i>	People in the community that are looked to for information and leadership, regardless of whether they hold an official position. This may include members of the faith-based community, advocates, or business leaders.			
<i>Current Staff or Volunteers</i>	People that may play a role in providing services, either as an employee, partner, or volunteer.			

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