

# HOW TO LEAD A COMMUNITY THROUGH STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

This agenda is for mayors and members of their cabinets, school superintendents and other school leaders, city council members and county supervisors, leaders of community organizations, library and museum directors, leaders in higher education, community philanthropists, and any other decision makers who focus on families and young children. To build more advanced systems for family engagement and early learning,

these leaders may find it useful to think of their community as moving through various stages of development. Within each of the four action steps in the following pages, we have provided information for communities at the very beginning (“Getting a Good Start”), for those who are already testing new approaches (“Making Progress”), and for those who have achieved enough to promote and build on their successes (“Sharing with Others and Scaling Up”).

## Getting a Good Start

1. Form an initiative with the backing of key champions from policy, practice, philanthropy, and research.
2. Conduct community needs assessments by neighborhoods or subgroups.
3. Seek out parents in high-need areas for their expertise; include them on leadership teams and committees.
4. Reach consensus (among community leaders, educators, parents, and caregivers) on where to focus efforts and how to measure success.

## Making Progress

5. Create a plan to collect evidence of success.
6. Pilot an approach (or multiple approaches) and collect evidence of impact in community organizations (libraries, schools, nonprofits, etc.).

## Sharing with Others and Scaling Up

7. Share results widely and discuss next steps with families, educators, and other stakeholders.
8. Promote and enact policies (including financial and professional supports) that will sustain efforts over time.
9. Share lessons with leaders of other communities.

## FOUR INTERLOCKING ACTIONS TO HELP COMMUNITIES PRIORITIZE

**Take stock** of family engagement offerings and online connectivity with an eye toward equity and diversity.

**Develop professional learning programs** that build corps of **media mentors**.

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**Create a continuous cycle of improvement** using research and evaluation.

**Invest in physical infrastructure** that promotes connectivity and meaningful participation.