



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2029

439 Devlin Road, Napa, CA 94558 | 707-252-8931 | www.childstartinc.org

Table of Contents

- 3** Message from the Executive Director
- 4** Our Vision, Mission and Values
- 5** Our Story
- 7** Our Strategic Planning Process
- 9** Circles of Involvement
- 10** Our Strategic Directions
- 11** How Child Start Will Get There
- 12** Acknowledgements



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Message from Executive Director **JUAN CISNEROS**

On behalf of Child Start, I wholeheartedly invite you to review and use any part of this strategic plan for your own purpose and to your advantage. Whether you are a Child Start employee looking to be strategic in your daily work, or you are a community member looking to see how local non-profits are engaging in long-term planning processes, this document is yours to use however you would like...just don't leave it untouched on the shelf or, in today's world, saved in a vast list of digital files.

In reflection, I am pleased that a significant part of the planning process helped us learn more about each other, including what was important to staff at all levels, our governing bodies, and community partners. Cross-functional teams were engaged in honest and very real discussions about what is trending internally and externally, including threats to Child Start, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses. Additionally, teams were asked to think BIG, ensuring Child Start is transformative in its approach, leading and innovating in the early care and education industry. Further, teams took deep data

dives to understand agency and community needs and completed robust root cause analyses. Lastly, and most importantly, it became clear throughout the process that the Child Start team is ready to focus on building an agency culture that is anti-racist, technologically savvy, relationship-oriented, and willing to share power with all partners, including enrolled parents, staff, and community members.

I am grateful for the trust, commitment, and tireless work that all team members displayed over the six-month planning process. I am impressed by the team's ability to take varying perspectives and create one unifying vision and strategic direction for Child Start. I am excited about the opportunity and desire to cultivate a diverse and inclusive workforce. Above all, I am hopeful that the outcomes we realize in the next five years go beyond expectations, create global impact, and effect meaningful change for children, families, staff, and communities.

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OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION

A community in which everyone has an inherent right to health, education, and opportunity that creates global impact.

MISSION

Child Start supports the education, social and emotional development of children, ages 0-5, by providing high quality, comprehensive and family-focused early childhood services in partnership with the community

VALUES STATEMENTS

*belonging
collaboration
change agents
respect
learning
engagement
accountable
creativity
culture*

We promote children's sense of self-worth and belonging.

We establish strength-based partnerships with all families.

We are community leaders in collaboration to achieve high standards of quality.

We treat each other and others with respect.

We focus on improvement: self, team, agency, and community.

We create an atmosphere that promotes fun, humor, and relationships.

We are accountable.

We foster a safe place innovate, make mistakes and ask for clarity.

We are committed to an anti-racist culture that widely opposes racism, discrimination, and disproportionality of all forms.



WE ASKED ...

What type of vision for Child Start resonates more with you?

WE HEARD ...

A vision that values inclusivity, and inspires us to make a difference in our communities and have profound impact.

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OUR STORY

Child Start has been providing early childhood education and family development services to approximately 1,000 children annually since 1965, first as Napa Valley Head Start, then expanding to become Napa-Solano Head Start in 1995, and finally in 2000, becoming Child Start. Over the past 58 years, Child Start has been recognized as an early childhood education leader throughout Napa and Solano Counties and has spearheaded several initiatives to benefit and improve the overall wellbeing of children and families.

1965 Head Start services begin in both Napa and Solano counties

1995 Napa Valley HS changes to Napa-Solano HS to expand into Solano County

2000 Napa-Solano HS becomes Child Start, Inc., a nonprofit public benefit corporation with 501(c)(3) status

2001 Child Start becomes the third agency in California to administer the Raising-a-Reader program

2002 Awarded its first EHS grant to serve 64 infants and toddlers

2016 Child Start becomes one of the first agencies in the country to be funded for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

2017 Overhaul of the E/HS program through Designation Renewal System

2022 Child Start launches a new era of leadership with a new executive team

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OUR STORY

Today, Child Start provides school readiness and family support services to approximately 1,000 children across Napa and Solano Counties in its Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care Partnerships, State Preschool and General Child Care programs.

- **Head Start (HS)** – preschool-age children served across 20 centers located throughout Napa and Solano Counties.
- **Early Head Start (EHS)** – infants and toddlers are served through a combination of center-based and home-based program options.
- **Child Care Partnerships (CCP)** – infants, toddlers and preschoolers served through a variety of contracted family child care homes, and private child care centers.
- **State Preschool (CSPP)** – preschoolers children served through a wrap-around model with HS services.
- **General Child Care (CCTR)** – infants and toddlers served through a center-based wrap-around model with EHS services.

Child Start is also the administrator for the national Raising-A-Reader program (RAR). Through funding from the Napa Valley Community Foundation and the First 5 Commission of Napa County, as well as support from the Napa County Office of Education, Child Start was successful in becoming the third agency in California to join the national RAR program. Another example of its foresight in improving outcomes for families is the widespread implementation of the Triple P parenting education program. Triple P stands for Positive Parenting Program and provides parents with a toolbox to become more confident and effective parents.



WE ASKED ...

Parents to rank eight areas of need to describe their present situations.

WE HEARD ...

That our families are facing higher levels of food insecurity, are under-employed, and lack adequate social support systems.

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STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Over a six-month period (July through December 2023), Child Start embarked on a five-year strategic planning process that considered its successes, challenges and opportunities over the previous five years. Key to the new strategic plan was understanding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the massive wildfires, and regulatory changes on the agency, as well as on the children, parents, and community that Child Start serves. As such, Child Start embarked on an ambitious and determined agenda to create a five-year strategic plan that not only asked the hard questions but also moved the organization forward despite the obstacles that past challenges presented.

Focused Question

Child Start developed the following focus question to guide its work:

Over the next five years, how will Child Start remain fiscally sustainable to allow the agency to programmatically thrive, inspire and be an innovative leader in creating positive child, family, community and staff outcomes?



WE ASKED ...

How well does Child Start work within the community?

WE HEARD ...

That Child Start is very well involved within the community, and that it has become a key player in shaping the communities it serves.

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FIVE-STEP PLANNING PROCESS

Design & Context

- Identify central, critical issues to frame the five-year strategic plan.
- Analyze data to bring insights about competencies, challenges, and choices.
- Asks the question: **What is the context?**

Five Year Vision

- Create a 5-year practical vision to anchor HSEL's future and a mission that guides implementation.
- Codify hopes and aspirations for the future of the organization.
- Asks the question: **What is possible?**

Barriers & Roadblocks

- Identify barriers and roadblocks that get in the way of moving toward our vision.
- Surfaced barriers act as windows of opportunity to reveal solutions.
- Asks the question: **What gets in our way?**

Strategic Directions

- Focus on overarching, catalytic changes to set the direction (pillars of focus).
- Overcome impending perceptions, habits, or outmoded patterns.
- Asks the question: **Where are we heading?**

Strategic Plan

- Builds on the successes and lessons learned over the past five years.
- Designed to promote continuous improvement and accountability.
- Provides a roadmap that allows the program to **move forward boldly**.



CIRCLES OF INVOLVEMENT

CORE TEAM

Coordinates the process to develop the plan (Design & Context)

External Consultant (Breakwater Associates LLC), Executive Director, Deputy Director, Chief Financial Officer, Human Resources/Fiscal Director, Program Operations Director, Program Services Director

DESIGN TEAM

Reviews, analyzes, and identifies trends to set the direction of the plan
(Design & Context / Strategic Directions)

Core Team; Regional Program Managers, ERSEA/ Data Systems Manager, Family Services Manager, Health/Nutrition Manager, Facilities Manager, Accounting Manager, IT Manager, Community Outreach Specialist, HR Specialist, Family Services Specialist, Center Directors

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

Provides input and shapes the vision of the plan
(Five-Year Vision / Barriers & Roadblocks)

Core Team; Design Team: Policy Council Representatives, Board Members, Family Advocates, Administrative Staff, Home Visitors, Lead Teachers, Associate Teachers, Teacher Aides, EHS Caregivers, Food Service Workers, CCP Partners

CHAMPIONS

Acts as leaders, authorizers, and advocates of the plan (Strategic Plan)

Board of Directors, Policy Council



WE ASKED ...

How involved are employees in setting Child Start's goals and objectives?

WE HEARD ...

That most employees have traditionally been moderately involved.

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OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Child Start took the lessons learned, insights, and implications or opportunities identified across data trends, paradigms, and approaches to craft its future. Overall, the strategic directions and the intended outcomes are rooted in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). The foundation in DEIB ensures that Child Start builds a foundation to advance equitable inclusion of diverse people and communities across its services. Of utter importance is that all individuals that come into contact with Child Start feel acknowledged, valued, and respected.

Where Do We Want To Be In Five Years?

1 Health of the Agency

By leveraging resources, Child Start would have met the needs of its diverse community through innovative programming led by staff who are reflective of the children and families served.

2 Fiscal Sustain- ability

Child Start would have taken steps to ensure income diversification, implemented strategic and financial planning, and developed sound administrative and financial systems.

3 Building Resiliency

Child Start would have built a solid foundation of developmentally appropriate practices that empowers children, families and staff to adapt well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or other significant sources of stress.

4 Collaborative /Empathic Leadership

Child Start would have implemented human-centered approaches that inspire staff and are based on a foundation of communication and transparency, using individualized strategies for increasing work efficiency and productivity.



WE ASKED ...

How important is diversity to Child Start?

WE HEARD ...

That diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are overwhelmingly important and serve as a foundation for the work that is carried out by Child Start.

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HOW CHILD START WILL GET THERE

The strategic planning team advanced its work by developing agency goals that were grounded in the root cause analysis. The process led to the establishment of five agency goals that will remain constant over the next five-year period.

1 Health of the Agency

Child Start will foster an organizational culture of inclusivity, belonging and innovation that attracts, values and retains a robust ECE workforce.

Child Start will cultivate and sustain meaningful and impactful partnerships to support all children, families, staff, and communities affected by disparities and insufficient resources in Napa and Solano Counties.

2 Fiscal Sustain- ability

Child Start will achieve long term fiscal sustainability by building a pipeline for diversified funding sources that honor our mission.

3 Building Resiliency

Child Start promotes and develops resiliency in children, families, and staff to allow them to thrive in the face of life changing experiences.

4 Collaborative /Empathic Leadership

Child Start will create anti-bias and anti-racist environments that draws upon the diverse skills, expertise and perspectives of all partners to deliver outcomes that matter.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As designed, the strategic plan will serve as the foundation that will keep Child Start at the forefront of providing high-quality early childhood education services throughout both counties. It will serve as the basis for innovative practices that produce positive outcomes for children, families, staff, and communities over the next five-year period.