

Vision and Mission

Complete this worksheet with your coalition, posing the questions below and recording ideas and responses.

A vision statement is the coalition’s view of the future, what your community would look like if all of the coalition’s goals were accomplished. It is an ambitious statement, and one that describes how your community will look in the future if you achieve the coalition’s goals.

Build consensus around the coalition’s dream for early childhood in the community and articulate the coalition’s vision statement below.

If your group is large, you may want to brainstorm ideas within the group and then have a smaller committee review what was discussed and develop a draft vision for discussion at a follow-up meeting (the same process may also be useful in developing a mission statement).

Helpful hint: If you have not already thought about WHO should be included in the visioning process, see the document: **Identifying and Mapping Stakeholders** to help you identify people with passion and position related to young children and families. Always be sure to be as inclusive of many different perspectives as possible!

Questions to help your coalition brainstorm the key components of your collective vision:

Key Questions	Coalition Responses
1. If the community were perfect with respect to early childhood, what would it look like?	
2. What is our aspiration for infants, toddlers, and their families in our community?	
3. What should be the results of our efforts?	

Once you have brainstormed and discussed, condense the ideas in to a succinct vision statement. For example:

All families have access to a range of parenting education supports, from the prenatal period to age eight, within a coordinated delivery system, which will positively impact parent-child relationships and family and child well-being.

Our vision is to have an integrated system of voluntary and culturally responsive family-strengthening services available to all pregnant persons and families with children prenatally through age five that:

- *Optimizes child development.*
- *Enhances parenting skills and resilience.*
- *Promotes maternal and infant health.*
- *Prevents costly crisis intervention.*
- *Reduces adverse childhood experiences.*
- *Demonstrates improved educational and life outcomes.*

Our vision is a diverse community in which every family is supported and has access to quality programs and resources for its young child.

A Vision Statement Should

- Define the ideal conditions for early childhood in your community.
- Use short phrases and sentences to convey your community's hopes for its future.
- Clarify the beliefs and governing principles of the coalition.
- Be understood and shared by members of the coalition.
- Be broad enough to cover a diverse variety of perspectives.
- Be inspirational to those involved in the initiative.
- Be compelling to decision makers and the general public.
- Be easy to communicate.

Look at the themes from the brainstormed list above and use this space to create a vision statement draft, below:

Mission Statement Development

This next section can help define what the coalition needs to accomplish in order to reach its vision. *Once again, give everyone involved a chance to contribute; it may be helpful to have smaller groups develop a proposed draft statement.*

Helpful hint: *One helpful way of thinking of the difference between a vision and mission is to think of the **VISION** as the **DESTINATION**, and the **MISSION** as the **HOW** your group will get there.*

Clarifying note: A mission statement functions differently in a coalition – this is not the same as an organizational mission statement. In this case, **the mission statement articulates the coalition’s reason for existence** and communicates the values, purpose, and hopes of the coalition. It should articulate the *what* and *why*; **what your group is going to do** and **why it is doing it**. The mission statement is similar to the vision statement, but more concrete and action oriented. Therefore, it should be developed after the vision statement.

Key Questions	Coalition Responses
1. What is it that we want for children and families in our community?	
2. What are the key things we need to achieve in order to reach our vision?	
3. How are we going to go about reaching our vision?	

An example of mission statements developed by one coalition:

Our mission is to maximize the potential of every child in our region and ensure that every child has access to high-quality early care and education by:

- *Raising awareness about the importance of the early years.*
- *Advocating for greater public-private investment in our youngest citizens.*
- *Encouraging regional collaboration to improve our early care and education systems.*
- *Working with cities to garner the resources and support necessary to improve their current systems.*

And another example of a linked vision and mission:

Vision: The whole community is engaged in preparing children to succeed in school and in life.

Mission: Our Partnership for Early Learning collaborates with partners to ensure that children are supported in becoming ready for Kindergarten.

Mission statements should generally:

- Be concise.
- Be outcomes oriented,
- Explain what the coalition is working to achieve.
- Include the goals of the coalition.