**Action Planning Workbook for Sustainability**

Although there are myriad challenges associated with institutionalizing a new approach – especially an approach involving multiple partners who have come together to change system practice – considering how to sustain the work from the outset is essential. Sustainability planning cannot wait until results are in and any initial financial investments start running out or key leaders of the approach transition out. Sustainability planning is not a separate activity sequenced after implementation. The critical elements of effective implementation are the same as those for sustainability planning: engaging partners, garnering resources, and tracking impact to ensure positive outcomes are being achieved. Beginning the conversation about sustainability early increases the opportunity to engage diverse partners in the work and to plan for success from the start. It also opens the door for sharing ownership, information, and investment in sustainability as well as implementation.

[*Sustaining New Approaches in Child Welfare*](http://www.cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/body/Sustainability-final-508-compliant.pdf)describes a framework for thinking about sustainability from first prepared by the Center for the Study of Social Policy as part of the Quality Improvement Center for Research-Based Infant Toddler Court Teams. It is a framework based on the key elements necessary for sustainability – a common vision, collaboration, resources, data and continuous learning, financing, and policy and legislation. Most often, when those implementing innovations think about sustainability, they focus on financial sustainability – how to cover costs associated with a pilot or demonstration effort. However, sustainability involves more than just finances. Sustainability includes the collection of data and leveraging of collaborations, resources, and policy and legislation that support shared goals and a common vision.

The *Action Planning Workbook* – which includes six worksheets – is a tool that can be used to put the Framework for Sustainability into practice regardless of how large or small the effort, approach, program or systemic change is that a team is hoping to sustain. The *Action Planning Workbook i*s intended to:

* **facilitate conversation** with the broad team to build on knowledge and resources that exist across the system. Each worksheet includes building blocks and guiding questions to support conversations and problem solving related both to implementation – what is needed to ensure success now – and sustainability – what will be needed to promote success in the long run.
* be a **“living-document”** revisited as needed in the planning process to ensure that strategies utilized for sustainability are successful and adjusted as needed. Continuous learning and review of available data is just as important for implementation as sustainability – and only through continuous quality improvement and continuous learning processes will teams understand if they are 1) achieving the desired results and common vision for families and 2) successful in their sustainability efforts.

**ACTION PLANNING WORKBOOK FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

**Worksheet 1: COMMON VISION**

**Worksheet 2: PRIORITY ACTIVITIES - DATA**

**Worksheet 3: COLLABORATION**

**Worksheet 4: RESOURCES**

**Worksheet 5: FINANCING**

**Worksheet 6: POLICIES, REGULATIONS and LEGISLATION**

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| Worksheet 1: Common Vision |
| QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER* What will success look like at the end of implementation? What are you trying to achieve?
* How will systems, providers and partners work and act differently? What is the anticipated culture change in how systems, providers and partners operate?
* What are the key components of the approach that you think are necessary to achieve success?
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| NOTES TO TAKE HOME |
| Worksheet 2: Priority Identification - Data |
| BUILDING BLOCKS* Data – quantitative and qualitative
* Key partners with whom you have current working relationships

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER* What are the barriers to implementation?
* Where are there gaps in your services?
* What does your data tell you?
* What do your partners have that can inform your knowledge of strengths and barriers?
* What data are you missing?
* What areas, challenges, or opportunities for improvement do you need to address first?
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| Worksheet 3: Collaborations |

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| BUILDING BLOCKS* Key partners with whom you have current working relationships
* Ways these current partners are already engaged in the work
* Leadership

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER* How do you intend to strengthen existing collaborations (your building blocks)?
* What current programs, initiatives and projects in the community complement your work? How?
* Who do you need to engage in the work for this to be a success? What are the challenges in engaging these partners (conflicting missions, administrative policies, etc.) and how can they be overcome?
* How can you leverage the natural leadership positions of certain individuals (child welfare directors, advocacy organization representatives, etc.)?
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| NOTES TO TAKE HOME  |
| *Time Period:* | *Collaborations:* | *Champions:* |
| Long-term |  |  |
| Current |  |  |
| Next Steps |  |  |

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| Worksheet 4: Resources |
| BUILDING BLOCKS* Resources current partners are bringing to the table
* Community resources you are already tapping into

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER* What current services are available in the community to support the common vision?
* What training resources are available for the development of new practitioners/providers and expansion of services?
* What are the specific resource gaps that need to be filled?
* Who in the community has the greatest potential for filling the gap? Consider adding to collaborations
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| NOTES TO TAKE HOME |
| Long-term |  |
| Current |  |
| Next Steps |  |

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| Worksheet 5: Financing |
| BUILDING BLOCKS* How the project is currently financed
* Strength of collaborations with partners who might increase commitment to funding

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER* What components of the work will need new funding in order to be sustained?
* What relationships can be developed with state and local public agencies to increase their commitment and funding for this work?
* What current positions and resources can be reallocated or restructured to maintain the key positions that support the initiative?
* What other existing federal grants or funding streams in your jurisdiction could be used/developed in new ways to support aspects of this work?
* What private partners (foundations, universities, etc.) are providing or could be engaged to provide financial support?
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| NOTES TO TAKE HOME |
| Long-term |  |
| Current |  |
| Next Steps |  |

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| Worksheet 6: Policy, Regulations, Legislation |
| BUILDING BLOCKS* Existing policies, regulations and legislation that supports the common vision or aspects of it.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER* What changes to existing policy (big “P” and little “p”) would strengthen or reinforce this work?
* What state policies and programs need to be explored in order to understand how they can be tapped to garner additional resources for this work? Are there existing policies that support the work, but bureaucratic barriers exist in sustaining practice change?
* How do the work and outcomes of the intervention address current state or local policy priorities and concerns in your site?
* Are there opportunities (policy windows) that are open or are likely to open in the near future or the upcoming legislative session? How can these opportunities be tapped?
* How does the state-local relationship support or create a barrier to sustaining the approach?
* How can you create legislative champions for this work?
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| NOTES TO TAKE HOME |
| Long-term |  |
| Current |  |
| Next Steps |  |