Section II: Implementing the Kentucky Model

A. Setting the Stage

The Kentucky Model includes three interrelated core components: 1) a redesigned family services structure; 2) ongoing identification and recruitment of Head Start parents and other community residents to take part in leadership development and training; and 3) the establishment and support of local Community Action Groups to implement a resident-driven primary prevention agenda. These three program components are built on a foundation of vision, partnership, and an openness to organizational and community change. Before implementing the model, your Head Start organization must be ready to adopt new roles in strengthening families and facilitating change in the community.

Articulate a Vision: Know What You Want

As a first step, it is important for your grantee agency and program leadership team to agree upon and articulate your own vision and desires, to identify explicitly your interest in participating in Free to Grow. While this vision will likely be expanded upon, enhanced and adapted as you forge partnerships with other community-based organizations, it is important that your leadership team be committed and clear about what you hope to accomplish before moving ahead with program implementation.

Implementing the Kentucky Free to Grow model will require redesigning the way in which your Head Start's family services are structured. It will also require your agency to play a visible and active role in facilitating change in the local community, following an agenda established by Head Start parents and neighborhood residents. Both endeavors are more likely to be successful if everyone in your agency and community sees their work together as central to achieving your goals. Consistent support from you and your leadership team will help pave the way for effective program implementation. Clarity about your shared vision helps to ensure good working relationships with program partners and collaborators.

As a first step toward implementation, your agency's leadership should discuss and develop consensus about the following questions:

- Why does your Head Start agency want to incorporate Free to Grow?
- Why do you think this Free to Grow model is your organization's best route toward meeting Head Start's goals? What will it add to your current program?
- Who do you think are the potential partners in your community for implementing Free to Grow? What kinds of relationships, if any, do you currently have with these stakeholders? Who do you know who might help you bring these potential partners to the table?
- What do you hope to get out of implementing the model?
- Are you prepared to support transforming the way long-established services are provided? In what ways?
- What can your agency contribute in implementing the model (e.g., extent of staff time, meeting support, training expertise, specific resources such as meeting space, copying, or transportation)?
- What is the target area on which you plan to focus? Why?

Your answers will enable you to communicate clearly as you solicit input from other Head Start staff, Policy Council members, as well as potential partners, collaborators, and community members. Their input will be critical in a number of ways. First, staff, Policy Council members and potential partners may differ from the perspectives of your agency's leadership and will help you shape a more effective program; and second, including everyone in the program development process can help foster widespread support and buy-in for the changes that will need to be made in your agency or in the structure of services within your community.

Getting Started: Adapting the Kentucky Model As Your Own

A critical part of the visioning process is creating the "fit" between the Kentucky Model and your agency and community. Many of the steps outlined in the agency assessment section of this manual are designed to help you to facilitate this fit. While your community will inevitably adapt the model to best suit your context, your adaptation should stay true to the overall goals and objectives of the program.

Identify Partners: Build and Maintain Relationships

Partners and collaborators are an integral part of the Free to Grow model. As you begin to build the structure to support Free to Grow in your community, identify potential core partners. These core partners will work closely with you in the planning, governance and implementation of the program. In choosing these partners, seek out those who are willing to:

1) work toward shared objectives;
2) provide support and capacity to your agency in implementing program strategies;
3) provide human and/or financial resources;
4) help leverage power or facilitate access to local decision-makers; and
5) participate actively in community problem-solving.

In some cases, these will be organizations or individuals with whom you have collaborated in the past and have already established relationships. However, previous collaborations may have focused primarily on service delivery or linkages for referrals. Your Free to Grow partnerships, however, will focus on increasing the capacity of individuals and communities to advance a community-action agenda that they have helped to shape.

Form Partnerships

After identifying core partners and introducing them to the Free to Grow model, meet with them individually and collectively to clarify each party's vision for the program, roles, expectations, and desired results. A sturdy partnership is built upon a shared vision. Together, your Head Start agency and its partners should explore the questions that guided the Head Start leadership in articulating its vision for the Free to Grow program. Make sure that each partner articulates its self-interest in participating in Free to Grow. The foundation for a partnership rests on both parties agreeing that they are committed to the goals of the Free to Grow model and that their involvement in the project will be mutually beneficial. In other words, all partners need to know that they are "on the same page." Clarify roles and responsibilities, and determine a governance structure for your project. In the early stages of program planning, it is critical that the leadership of partner agencies is involved in discussions and agreements about how you will move forward together. As implementation takes place, other representatives of partner organizations may be more actively involved in actually carrying out program activities.

Thinking About Relationships Differently

In many of the programs that first implemented Free to Grow, participating Head Start agencies had a diverse array of partnerships with various organizations and municipal officials within their communities. Many discovered, however, that there was a big difference between asking a local community relations police officer to come into their centers to do presentations on community safety and trying to help residents negotiate changes in the structure of policing policies at the neighborhood level. Said one Head Start Director, "We really needed to learn to think about our relationships differently—moving away from sponsoring an activity or workshop together—to working together to bring about real systematic change."

Critical Partners for Implementing the Kentucky Model

While the constellation of partnerships used to support Free to Grow implementation will necessarily be distinctive in each community, the Kentucky Model requires a few key core partners to carry out its program strategies. These include:

- *Parents and other community residents:* Parents and other community residents lie at the heart of the Kentucky Model's efforts. Bring them in early in the program planning process.
- *Local expertise/support in case management and family support practices:* If your executive team does not have expertise in case management, identify a local mental health organization or child and family guidance program that can provide assistance in building staff capacity and assisting HS staff in carrying out new family service roles.
- *Local expertise in community-based approaches to prevention or community-building:* A local community action organization or coalition that has expertise in prevention focused community action helps facilitate building staff and resident capacity to support Free to Grow's community strengthening strategies.
- *Local schools:* Schools provide linkages and support to parents beyond the years in which they are engaged in Head Start, expanding the pool for identifying community leaders. In addition, many of the Kentucky Model's prevention activities, particularly those that incorporate alternative activities for young children, often benefit from school-based support for their implementation.
- *Local police department officials:* Strong working relationships with local police are critical for many of the environmental actions related to reducing the impact of alcohol and drugs that are central to this model. Identifying those individuals within your police department who are committed to working with community members, and engaging them in program planning will set the tone for the work you hope to accomplish together.

Establish Communication Mechanisms Among Core Partners

In the program's planning and start-up phases, Head Start and partner agency leadership need to meet regularly to establish the foundation and operational structure for the program's implementation. As implementation moves forward, developing mechanisms for ongoing communication about program developments, changing roles and needs, and meaningful involvement should be established. In practice, working relationships with partners will become fluid, with informal modes of communication regarding relevant implementation issues often becoming the norm. At the same time, creating tools to keep all partners apprised of program status and upcoming activities helps to support their active engagement in program outcomes.

Share Resources

Shared program planning and program implementation should be reflected in shared resources. As you and your partners define roles and responsibilities for core partners, determine how and if resources can be shared to support and cement these commitments. If a family service agency or child guidance program will assist with training Head Start staff in case management, a contractual relationship clearly itemizing expectations and deliverables will help begin to define the parameters of your working relationship. If a local community-building organization will provide technical support in community-based strategies, providing funding to cover staff training time helps to build accountability and acknowledge that the partnership is valued. Don't forget to build in resource support for parents and residents engaged in program implementation. This support can come in the form of child care and transportation reimbursement, as well as per diem payments for carrying out community assessment activities, program administrative support or data collection.

You may not be able to appropriately share resources with partners such as police officers or municipal officials, whose engagement in the program should reflect their responsibilities to the public they are hired to serve. At the same time, your willingness to share resources to serve their self-interest can be shown in a variety of ways. In Kentucky, for example, Free to Grow collaborated with the police department on a project to distribute refrigerator magnets with an anonymous hotline number to all community residents, with the project covering the costs of the magnet production.

Be Clear About the Money

When Free to Grow first got underway in Owensboro, early press reports about the grant gave many local organizations and residents the impression that there was a lot of money to be shared. As one Free to Grow staff member remembered, "Everyone—community people, agency people—all wanted a piece of it." While program dollars were shared with key partners to implement Free to Grow model components, lack of clarity at the beginning about how monies could be used left lingering feelings of resentment. "We realized that we should have communicated better with everyone," shared a program partner from a local foundation, "to let them know that, while the grant monies were not insignificant, there certainly wasn't money available to build new treatment facilities. Being proactive about this up front would have really helped."

Identify Potential Collaborators

While most of your early efforts will focus on the identification of core partners, once these relationships are established, begin to build relationships with other stakeholders to inform them of the efforts you are about to undertake in the community. Convene an introductory breakfast or lunch meeting of key local players and potential collaborators, including high-level representatives of the local government, Chamber of Commerce, clergy, and judicial, education, health care, and human services systems. Provide an overview of Free to Grow, its goals and objectives, the model and its programmatic components. Identify the ways in which Free to Grow may help to support their work and possible avenues for collaboration. Begin to assess those in the community most likely to be interested in collaborating as the project moves forward. These individuals are good candidates for the program's Interagency Advisory Council. Nurture these relationships through the start-up phase of the project so that as the program identifies issues for action, those whose support will be critical to their successful implementation are already allies.

The line between program partners and collaborators can, over time, begin to fuse as key stakeholders not originally part of the program partner team become increasingly engaged in activities that are specific to their self-interest. This development and evolution of relationships is natural to the community-building process. It is important to recognize that everyone does not have to be at the table at the same time. However, if you have not built relationships with the relevant community stakeholders and they do not understand the goals and objectives of Free to Grow's work, you will not be able to bring them to the table when their assistance and support is needed.

Envision Outcomes: Know Where You're Going

In implementing programs that center on family and community change, it is common for agency managers and staff to focus on the process used to deliver services and the level of participation in program activities. Monitoring the number of community events sponsored in a year or the number of residents participating in coalition meetings are examples of using participation levels as indicators of program activity.

However, to implement Free to Grow effectively, your program team will need to specify the outcomes desired. Knowing the desired outcomes provides an organizational compass that enables you to plot and refine the roadmap to your desired destination. While many of the broad overall outcomes of your Free to Grow program will mirror those outlined in Kentucky's logic model, the specific context of your families and communities will require that you establish local outcomes to fit your specific situation.

As your program team begins to conduct the family services and community assessments described in the following sections, be sure to clarify the particular short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes that will guide your work. Program staff and partners should work together to devise your own preliminary logic model, refining it as your family and community primary prevention priorities are articulated and specific areas for family intervention and community action are identified.

Defining desired outcomes from the outset will help you identify problematic issues more quickly while also helping to determine whether your efforts are still on target. Outcomes for the family-strengthening component should indicate what kinds of specific changes you expect to see in family functioning as a result of the program. Use the Family Partnership Plan (see Appendix G) to gather "baseline data" on the current strengths and needs of your Head Start family population. This baseline will help you to identify the percentage of families in your program who might require intensive case management, as well as the most pressing needs of your Head Start population as a whole. In this way, you will be able to identify the most appropriate outcomes and focus your work accordingly.

Specific community-strengthening outcomes will begin to emerge as program participants complete their preliminary community assessment and identify priority issues for action. These outcomes should reflect a concrete, measurable impact on your community's critical risk factors, and should be realistic within the time frames delineated for them. For example, while community residents may hope to see a long-term reduction in drug-related crimes within their target community, an outcome such as this should be broken down into shorter-term, achievable benchmarks.

Your program may want to solicit the assistance of a local community evaluation group in defining and refining realistic community outcomes. Area colleges or universities may be able to help you to identify local researchers with expertise in community development evaluation. The Free to Grow National Program has also developed a listing of national groups which can serve as resources in this process (see Appendix A for contact information).

Using Baseline Data to Guide Outcomes

As the Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow program began its family services restructuring process, the Family and Community Services Team Manager asked all family services staff to fill out the new Family Partnership Plan for the families that had just completed their first year in the Head Start program. In this way, the program discovered that a large percentage of the families they served were underemployed or cycled in and out of jobs. This information put staff on notice to pay particular attention to improving outcomes on employment-related support in the next program year.

Prepare Your Agency and Partners for Change

Residents who participate in shaping and making decisions about their community are at the heart of the Kentucky Model's community-strengthening components. The Leadership Development Training teaches individuals the skills required to assess, identify, prioritize, plan, and address local issues of concern. The Community Action Groups provide a mechanism for these leaders, working in collaboration with a broader pool of community residents as well as community stakeholders to put those skills into action.

Defining Realistic Community Outcomes

Free to Grow is one of many national programs that seek to strengthen the neighborhoods in which young children are being raised. But, as anyone who has worked in communities knows, creating significant measurable change at the community level is a difficult task. Community-building experts around the country have been engaged in a dialogue about how we can more effectively define community outcomes. One strategy has been to focus community action work on more narrowly defined outcomes that build upon each other—by closing down specific drug houses in neighborhoods one by one or seeking to engage a growing circle of liquor outlets in reducing minors' access to alcohol. Such a strategy assumes that increasing numbers of smaller successful community-level interventions will gradually result in broader, measurable change.

As target area residents become more informed about and competent in advocating for change in your community, they may pose solutions that differ from "the way things are usually done."

As community residents exert more influence and begin to play a larger role in decision-making, traditional power dynamics in your community may begin to change, requiring parties on all sides to learn new ways of interacting with one another. Local stakeholders may find themselves falling into more traditional patterns of consigning residents to advisory roles, while residents, not necessarily trusting of working collaboratively, may seek confrontational approaches to solving problems. A willingness to listen, share issues openly, and reach consensus together is critical to developing the kinds of relationships between stakeholders and community members that can move the program's agenda forward.

Community Action at Work: Two Illustrations

In the first two years of the Kentucky Free to Grow program, residents sought to change the historically poor relationship between the West End community and the police department. After sponsoring a pilot community policing initiative, the Free to Grow program worked to support neighborhood residents' efforts to gain a funding commitment from the City Council to institutionalize community policing. While residents flooded the mayor's office with over 600 letters in support of the program, the head of the local family foundation that partnered with the Head Start program quietly met with dozens of influential political and business leaders in the community urging their support. Ultimately, funding for community policing was allocated and integrated into the city's budget. To this day, it is not clear whether, within the political context of Owensboro, residents' efforts would have been acknowledged without the behind-the-scenes support of their program partner.

Two years later, residents' attempts to better understand sentencing and parole guidelines for repeat drug offenders led the Community Action Group to request a meeting with an influential judge in their community. Concerned about the meeting request, the judge called the Executive Director of the agency, a long-time acquaintance, seeking reassurance. While it was clear that the judge was uncomfortable with the situation, the director assured him that the group's inquiry was part of a well reasoned approach to addressing a legitimate community concern. He backed the Community Action Group and instructed the Free to Grow staff that they should not squelch their efforts but should keep him well informed of their progress.

B. Getting Down to Work: Creating a Program Infrastructure

Once your agency has clearly stated its program vision and identified key program partners, the actual work of building an organizational infrastructure that will implement the program must begin. While the key components of the Kentucky Model can be implemented by many Head Start sites, the staffing, supervision and integration of the model into each program needs to be adapted to fit the size, geographic catchment area, and current organizational structure of your agency. Consequently, a thorough agency and community assessment is a prerequisite to implementation. Once this assessment is completed, staffing and training to support each program component can take place. You should expect assessment, staffing and preliminary training for the revised family services structure to take up to one program year, while start-up activities for your community strengthening work will commence more quickly. The Program Start-up Chart in Appendix D clarifies the timing and relationship between various implementation steps. You may find it useful to refer to this chart as you review the specific steps detailed below.

Assess Your Organizational Capacity to Support Family and Community Partnerships

The Kentucky Model's family- and community-strengthening components are strongly integrated with one another. Their successful implementation requires strong working relationships among staff who are assigned to work primarily on the program's community-strengthening strategies, such as facilitating the leadership development training or supporting the Community Action Groups, and those working on family-strengthening strategies. If your agency is not currently structured in a way that would support this integrated approach, you may want to consider carrying out some internal organizational restructuring before you begin Free to Grow implementation. While this integration may require some significant up-front effort, it may ease program implementation in the long run.

Examine the staffing structures that you currently have in place to support revised Performance Standards in the area of Family and Community Partnerships. Is the same management team member responsible for Family and Community Partnership program components? If not, who is responsible for making sure that your program carries out Performance Standards related to Family Partnerships? For Community Partnerships? What kinds of linkages currently exist among them? Does your agency have staff members whose job responsibilities fall specifically in the area of community partnerships or who spend the majority of their time working with community partners? Are there any staff who are currently working on community development or community advocacy efforts? Answering these questions will help you to determine where Free to Grow "fits" within your current organizational structure. It should also help you to determine the supervisory structures that will support program implementation within your organization.

Assess Your Current Family Services Structure

For your program to implement the revised family service structure that is part of this Free to Grow model, Family Advocates in your program will need to have the time to provide individualized support to each of the families in their caseloads, as well as additional time to provide intensive case management to their highest-risk families. Ideally, Advocates' job responsibilities should focus primarily on family support, and each Advocate should have responsibility for no more than five or six families requiring intensive case management.

In most cases, these requirements will necessitate changes in your family service staffing patterns. Before you can begin to make a realistic assessment of what these changes might look like or the staff required, you and your staff must first answer the following question: What percentage of the families that you currently serve fall into the category of "high-risk?" The Family Partnership Plan (see Appendix G) can be used as a tool to help you estimate this number. The end of a program year is probably the best time to conduct this kind of assessment. The steps include the following:

- Program staff fill out the Family Partnership Plan retrospectively on the families with whom they have worked over the past year.
- Score the plans according to the level of risk.

- Once all plans have been scored, determine the percentage of the families that you served in the past program year that fall into the highest-risk category. This number should give you a rough idea of what the average percentages you might expect in each program year.
- Based on this estimation, calculate how many high-risk families are in each of your current Family Service Workers' caseloads.

If your current organizational structure gives your Family Service Workers multiple responsibilities—for health, parent involvement and family services—workers will need smaller caseloads or modified responsibilities so they can meet their responsibilities within the new organizational structure. In the Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow program, agency leadership established a new position called Program Assistant. The Program Assistant relieves Family Advocates of health-related responsibilities such as bringing children's health records into compliance, assisting families with medical and follow-up appointments, and doing all data input related to health tracking (see Job Descriptions, Appendix F). The creation of this position allowed the agency to accomplish two goals simultaneously. First, it modified Family Advocates' job descriptions so that their primary responsibility was in the area of family support. In addition, the distinctive job responsibilities of the Program Assistant provided an alternative position for staff members whose temperament or skills were not appropriate for the revised Family Advocate position.

To determine what kind of structure might work best in your agency, ask yourself the following questions:

- What tasks are Family Service Workers currently responsible for?
- What is your current family/staff ratio among family service workers?
- How is your program structured geographically? Do your family service workers currently serve families in more than one location?
- What other staff do you already have in place who work with Family Service Workers in supporting, educating or conducting outreach to families?

Once you have made these determinations, use the following guidelines to help you consider your restructuring options:

Engage Your Whole Staff in the Family Services Assessment Process

"It's really important that everyone get involved in the assessment process," says the Family and Community Services Team Manager at Audubon. "After all, it's their jobs and their organizational environment that are going to change. And the more that you can engage staff in the assessment process, the more likely they will be to understand the principles around the restructuring process, and to own it."

- If Family Advocates have only family support responsibilities, the Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow site determined that they could carry caseloads as high as 60 and still successfully provide intensive case management services to up to five or six families each (or about 10 percent of their case load). If you intend to maintain Family Advocates in multiple roles, their caseloads will need to be considerably lower, depending upon the scope of their other responsibilities.
- In Kentucky, Program Assistants hired to support the Family Advocates carry a caseload 100. Because of Kentucky's broad geographical catchment area, this has meant that in small counties that serve only 30 or 40 families, Program Assistant positions are often part-time. If you decide to create a new staff position, as the Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow program did, allow staff members to self-select which new role they would prefer to the greatest degree possible.
- If your Head Start program already has low Family Service Worker to family ratios (such as 1 to 35 or 40), it is unlikely that you will need any additional staff support to implement the revised family service structure.
- If the percentage of high-risk families served by your program is extremely high (over 25 percent) Family Advocates' caseloads will need to be reduced even further than the above ratios to accommodate higher levels of intensive case management services.

Once your assessment efforts have been completed, job descriptions for any modified or new positions should be drawn up. You may want to use Kentucky's Family Advocate and Program Assistant job descriptions (included in Appendix F) as a model. If your current internal job description formats differ substantially from those used in Kentucky, consider adapting their formats to better meet your own internal organizational procedures. These job descriptions should be reviewed by existing staff, policy council members, and all members of your program management team. The aim is to ensure input from all levels of your organization and promote buy-in before changes are put in place.

With the great diversity among Head Start programs, there is no "cookie-cutter" formula that can be applied to this assessment process. While the principles outlined above are intended to assist your assessment efforts, your management team's understanding of your current agency context, staffing patterns, and staff roles and responsibilities are ultimately the most important tools to use in making these determinations. After you have pilot tested your revised service structure, you may need to make additional adaptations in order to achieve program outcomes.

STAFF YOUR HEAD START PROGRAM TO IMPLEMENT FREE TO GROW

Supervisory Structure

With your organizational assessments in place, you can begin to develop a staffing structure that will support Free to Grow program implementation. Decide which management team staff member will bear primary responsibility for supervising program work. What other staff members will collaborate with the designated person to support program implementation? How will the Head Start and Agency Director be kept engaged in tracking and supporting implementation?

Staffing Your Restructured Family Services Component

With this decision made, use the assessment of your current family services structure to determine the number and type of additional staff members that will be needed to implement the new service delivery model throughout your agency. Will you need additional Family Advocates? If so, how many? Do you intend to create a position similar to the Program Assistant described above? If so, how many Program Assistants will you need?

If your agency will need to hire a significant number of additional Family Advocates to restructure your family services component, consider using Head Start "quality" dollars to pay for additional staff members. If your agency is particularly large, you may want to consider "phasing in" the new service structure, focusing on those communities with highest need first, and gradually expanding as funds permit.

If you need to hire Family Advocates, seek candidates with experiences and background that provide them with a good foundation to implement a strengths-based approach to working with families. While all Family Advocates will receive intensive training, supervision and support, candidates should exhibit the following general qualities:

- ▲ strong communication and listening skills;
- ▲ willingness to be part of a learning organization;
- ▲ flexibility and adaptability to changing situations and needs;
- ▲ strong organization and time-management skills;
- ▲ ability to work as part of a team;
- ▲ open-mindedness; and
- ▲ ability to prioritize tasks and work independently.

You Can't Do It Without the Director

While most of the original Free to Grow sites assigned daily supervision responsibilities of Free to Grow to other members of their management team, in the most successful sites, Head Start Directors stayed actively engaged in monitoring program operations. Their leadership was critical for building buy-in among staff members, negotiating and maintaining program partnerships, assessing program progress, and guiding mid-course corrections in implementation. Even the strongest program directors were unable to move the program's work forward without the Head Start Director's leadership. As one program director put it, "There's just no substitute for leadership and vision from the top of the organization."

Staffing the Community-Strengthening Components of Free to Grow

Most Head Start agencies will need to hire at least one staff member to support Free to Grow's community-strengthening work. This staff member, called the Community Development Specialist in the Kentucky Model, is the individual primarily responsible for supporting the implementation of the leadership development training and the facilitation of the Community Action Groups. He/she works in collaboration with program leadership to maintain relationships with program partners and build linkages with key community stakeholders. The Community Development Specialist also serves as the key link between the Family Advocates and the community work—providing training and support in community development principles, and assisting Advocates to participate in outreach, recruitment and assessment activities. (See Job Descriptions in Appendix F.)

The Community Development Specialist will also need part-time administrative support to carry out his/her responsibilities. Your agency will need to determine whether this support can be provided by an existing staff member or whether an additional person will be required.

In program start-up, your community-strengthening efforts will focus on one target area. If your Head Start program serves a number of neighborhoods, counties or communities, your agency may require additional staff to support expansion of the community-building components of this program across your catchment area. In Kentucky, the program created a position called a Community Support Assistant to provide local support to training and Community Action Group activities in each community served. (See Job Descriptions in Appendix F.) These individuals, usually hired from the local community, work in collaboration with other Head Start staff within their area to integrate the program's family- and community-strengthening activities.

Filling the Community Development Specialist position is one of the most critical decisions your agency will make during the program start-up period. This individual should have a background in program and community development, be able to work both collaboratively and independently, and must be skilled at building relationships. Because the Community Development Specialist is responsible for overseeing the leadership training and community coalition activities, he or she should have very strong facilitation and group work skills. Candidates should also grasp and feel comfortable with the substance abuse prevention goals of the project. Perhaps most importantly, the Community Development Specialist must have a deep and abiding respect for and commitment to the community and the residents with whom you will be working.

If you plan to implement community-strengthening strategies in more than one site, Community Support Assistants should be hired three to four months before the projected start-up in a new site. This "lead time" will give the Community Support Assistants time to begin to build the necessary relationships at the community level to support implementation activities.

Expand the Community Work Gradually

While the Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow program successfully integrated its intensive case management activities across all 16 counties simultaneously, leadership realized that they would need to take a more phased-in approach to community-strengthening activities. "The community work is hard," shared the Head Start Director, "and requires staff to focus and provide extensive time, dedication and support to families and other residents engaged in the Community Action Groups. You need to put the structures in place in one community before expanding to another, because every one is going to be different than the last."

Choose Your Staff With Care

The Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow program struggled with a number of changes in program leadership and key staff. The changes, attributable to a variety of causes (including a "poor fit," changes in organizational structure, and individuals choosing to go back to school), interrupted the program's momentum at times and disrupted relationships that were building slowly. At least one key team member and a partner believe that careful screening at the beginning might have minimized the program's upheavals. The Family and Community Team Manager emphasized the importance of finding a "good fit": "The first thing I would look for is the philosophy match. There are a lot of skills I can teach people, but I can't teach them about caring, or that all people have strengths … You can't teach that. It has to be there. If it's not there, it's not going to be a good thing for either the prospective employee or the program."

Make Sure Everyone Understands Program Principles

The AACS Head Start director advises that clarifying primary prevention as a way of strengthening Head Start families—in contrast to the more commonly understood notion of secondary intervention—is critical. He explains that, "It is the thing that helps Head Start directors and key Head Start management integrate this for future implementation. Really grasping what primary prevention is about will help them see this as a refinement of what they're already doing, not something new that's just being tacked on. It would have helped our program if we'd paid a bit more attention to this."

Create a Foundation: Understand Key Concepts

Built squarely on the conceptual foundation of primary prevention, the Kentucky Model emphasizes risk and protective factors. The concepts permeate all aspects of the program, from determining which families need intensive assistance to formulating issues for community action. Understanding them reveals the logic that drives the model and unifies what may seem to be disparate components. These concepts are the underpinnings that will both shape the new program components and reshape the family services program that you already have in place.

If these concepts are new to your Head Start program and its partners, devote some time to introducing and absorbing them. Staff members of your agency, Head Start, and your program partners will find it much easier to support and implement the program once they grasp it conceptually.

Arrange a series of orientation sessions on primary prevention and the risk/protection framework for all Head Start and partner agency staff. Many local substance abuse prevention programs provide training on these principles, and may be called upon to assist your agency in conducting this session. The National Free to Grow program has also developed orientation training materials that can be adapted by your program staff to meet your training needs.

C. Conducting Staff Training and Providing Technical Assistance

Building staff capacity to understand and implement Free to Grow's revised Head Start program structures is perhaps the most essential element in program implementation success. It is important not to underestimate the time that staff training and follow-up support will take, and to make sure that program managers continually assess and respond to staff needs throughout the training and early implementation period. To facilitate this process, the Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow program divided preliminary training and technical support activities into three modules:

- a two-day core training on the basic principles of community development and Free to Grow's specific community-strengthening strategies;
- a five half-day session core training in the basic principles of a strengths-based approach to case management that concludes with the development of a new family services mission statement; and
- six to eight half-day training sessions on implementing the revised family service structure, including integrating community-strengthening principles into the Family Advocate role.

These preliminary training modules should take place during your planning year and should be timed so that you can begin to implement your new organizational structure at the beginning of a program year. They are intended to provide Head Start staff with the core skills needed to begin program implementation. But these core modules form only the foundation of the staff development that supports program implementation. Follow-up training and technical support sessions (described below) are designed to create an ongoing "learning environment" within your organization that continues to build staff capacity. Each of the core training and support activities is described briefly below.

1. Core Training in the Principles of Community Development

Free to Grow's community-strengthening activities constitute the most significant departure from Head Start's traditional program components. While many Head Start programs have taught parents advocacy skills in relationship to their children's educational needs, the broader community-development-focused skill base that is critical for Free to Grow's success is often quite foreign to Head Start staff. Thus, all Head Start staff should participate in core community-development training sessions that introduce them to Free to Grow's community-building approach and to the specific community-strengthening activities that are part of the program model.

The newly hired Community Development Specialist should work in collaboration with agency leadership to determine the most effective strategy for orienting the entire Head Start staff to these concepts. Orientation sessions should be interactive and should allow staff to participate in some of the skill-building activities that are part of the program. Past experience indicates that two to three days of orientation for each staff member is ideal. If your staff is small, you may choose to invite everyone to a single orientation retreat. If your staff is too large to conduct this kind of hands-on training in one group, focus preliminary efforts on training staff from those catchment areas that have been chosen to implement community-strengthening activities first.

The Community Development Orientation training sessions should be conducted early in the program-planning year. Doing so will allow the Community Development Specialist to complete outreach and recruitment for the first round of leadership development training in the first six months of the project. Thus, resident engagement in the early phases of the program's community-strengthening components can begin while the extensive training required to start up the family services component of the program is ongoing. While this time table means that family- and community-strengthening activities will roll out on slightly different tracks during the program planning and assessment year, it will also give your agency a jumpstart on its community work, which generally requires a longer time frame in order to achieve measurable outcomes (see Appendix D).

2. Core Training in the Principles of Case Management

All current and newly hired Family Services staff and program management should participate in this five-session core training. Designed to introduce staff members to the basic principles of a strengths-based approach to case management and to build buy-in among staff for the new family services approach, the training covers topics such as goal-setting, family assessment, strengths-based versus deficit approaches to family support, giving and receiving effective feedback, and resistance and coping skills.

If possible, try to take staff away from your agency to conduct the core training. Many current staff members may be concerned about the changes about to take place within your agency, and creating a pleasant and informal training environment can ease concerns as well as increase the likelihood that staff will feel comfortable expressing them openly. If your own senior staff members do not feel comfortable conducting these training sessions, program partners or other community-based programs that utilize a case management approach may be able to help facilitate the training sessions.

As a closing activity for the training, engage your family services staff in developing a new mission statement to guide their work. Staff engagement in this process will help you to assess their understanding and emerging ownership of the new service approach. Building this buy-in early on in the training process is important because it encourages individuals to feel committed to the organizational changes taking place. It will also assist staff in communicating your new family services approach to the Head Start families with whom they work, as well as with other agencies in the community with whom you collaborate.

In your mission statement, focus on answering the questions: What do we do? and Why do we do it? AACS Head Start's Family Services program adopted the following statement:

> *Today's families have much to handle in the basic task of day-to-day living. Thus, it is no surprise that there is a great need for supportive services that aid families in daily living, crisis situations, and everything in between.*
>
> *It is the aspiration (mission) of Audubon's Head Start Family Services to create, provide, and utilize services with families in a manner that fosters health, strength, and overall well-being.*

3. Specific Training in the Revised Family Service Structure

Once core training has been completed, half-day training sessions outlining the specific components of the revised family service structure must take place. These sessions cover the actual "nuts and bolts" of the new service delivery system and introduce staff to the tools they will use to support their work. Training areas should include the following:*

- the roles and responsibilities of Family Advocates—similarities and differences from old responsibilities;
- the roles and responsibilities of Program Assistants—relationship to the work of the Family Advocates;
- the qualities of a strong Family Advocate and Program Assistant;
- how to fill out the Family Partnership Plan, interpret categories, and determine family service level;
- documentation and progress notes: develop concrete goals and behavioral objectives, track and document interventions;
- guidelines for family interventions;
- assessment of family interventions;
- thinking about families within communities/the Family Advocate's role in community-building activities;
- Identifying and recruiting families for leadership development training; and
- eliciting community information during the family assessment process.

It is a good idea to spread out these training sessions over a number of months, incorporating them into existing in-service training structures when possible, so that staff members have an opportunity to integrate new guidelines gradually. Bi-weekly training workshops allow staff to ask questions between sessions, discuss new procedures with colleagues and formulate questions. Be sure to allow time to address these questions during each workshop, and to clarify differences between old and new procedures.

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* Documents that support the implementation of the Kentucky family services structure are contained in the Appendix of this manual. Further support in designing these training sessions can also be sought directly from the staff of Audubon Area Community Services in Owensboro, Kentucky.

D. Restructuring Family Services

1. Develop a Program Brochure

Once preliminary training is completed, preparations should begin for implementation. To start up your new service delivery structure, prepare a simple program brochure describing Family Advocacy services to families, what to expect from Family Advocates and what the relationship is likely to bring. The brochure should include the mission statements of both the Head Start agency and the Family Services program; relevant addresses and phone numbers; and a place for families to note the name of their Family Advocate. Brochures should be distributed to new families during registration sessions as well as during Advocates' first home visits.

In the early stages of implementation, it is probably best to design the brochure internally so that adaptations can be made if needed.

2. Begin Using the New Family Partnership Plan and Implementing the New Service Delivery

As the first program year of implementation begins, Family Advocates should begin using the Family Partnership Plan and five-level system for assessing and intervening with families. Program managers should be available to help Advocates determine whether they are applying the scoring system accurately. They should also help Advocates as they begin to develop individualized intervention approaches for their caseloads.

In the early stages of implementation, availability of the supervision team is critical. In Kentucky, the Team Manager, the Family Specialist, and the Family and Community Specialist are readily available by phone (or e-mail) if a Family Advocate is seeking help in addressing a family need. Supervision team members may also model home visits, one-on-one interviews, or family assessments using the Family Partnership Plan for Family Advocates. The Team Manager also meets regularly at Head Start centers with the Local Area Manager, Family Advocates, and other staff. All of these strategies ensure that Family Advocates have opportunities to hone their skills in the context of the Free to Grow model and under the guidance of experienced family providers.

Moving from Theory to Hands-On Implementation

As AACS Head Start staff transitioned to their new service delivery structure, Family Advocates tried to figure out how to make the five-tiered service structure work on the ground. Workers wanted to know exactly how often they should be in contact with families at each service level. Program leadership worked with staff to help make specific decisions regarding the scope and type of support that each family would need. To simplify the transition process, program leadership and Family Advocates agreed that Advocates should interact, in person or by phone, at least once a week with those families that were assessed to have the greatest level of need. Supervisors also dedicated extra time to helping Advocates develop case management action plans for these high-risk families.

It is unlikely that Advocates can carry out their new job responsibilities within the time frame of a typical Head Start classroom day. Family Advocates' schedules must accommodate the availability of parents, which may entail working in the late afternoons, evenings, or weekends. If your Head Start program is unionized and currently places limitations on workers' schedules, it may be necessary to negotiate flex- or compensatory time provisions to more effectively meet families' needs.

3. Conduct Baseline Assessment of Families; Articulate Intervention Levels and Triage

As Advocates begin to use the scaled Family Partnership Plan, an assessment will be completed for each family and an intervention level determined. While these intervention levels are intended merely as guidelines to help frame an Advocate's approach, they also establish a baseline that should be used to gauge family progress over the program year. The service levels are also intended to help Advocates recognize those families in need of intensive case management services

Levels of Intervention: Using the Family Partnership Plan

The Family Partnership Plan is a tool that Family Advocates can use to assess the strengths, capabilities, and needs of families. Together, families and Family Advocates assemble information about family members' education, employment, housing, transportation, social services, special needs, family wellness, medical care, family finances, basic needs (food, clothing, emergency assistance), child care, parenting, and discipline. Based on the responses, the plan helps Family Advocates determine a level of service needs for each family.

The family service delivery system outlines appropriate levels of services for Family Advocates who assess the strengths and needs of families. The system is a dynamic one that recognizes that the needs of families—and therefore the most helpful responses to those needs—change and fluctuate over time. The system is not intended as a substitute for individualized professional judgement, but as an aid in determining the appropriate intensity of services. The chart on page 46 outlines the five service levels and the descriptors for each.

as well as those who may be strong candidates to participate in the program's leadership development training and Community Action Groups.

Once Advocates have completed their initial assessments, program supervisors should follow through to see that all families scoring in the highest risk category receive priority for support. The Community Development Specialist should also meet with Advocates to identify those families that should be referred to the program's community-strengthening activities. The Advocate should arrange for the Community Development Specialist to meet these families, either individually or in a group to provide additional orientation and overview in these activities.

The Community Development Specialist should work with the Family and Community Partnership management team to facilitate the training sessions on the Advocates' revised responsibilities in the area of community-building. As the individual primarily responsible for the implementation of the program's community-strengthening activities, he/she can utilize these training sessions to begin building relationships with the Family Advocates. The Community Development Specialist should also take time to review again the core activities of the Leadership Development Training and Community Action Groups so that Advocates can more effectively recruit Head Start parents for participation.

Family Advocates' Role in Community Development

The Kentucky Model creates changes in Head Start's family services that go beyond crisis intervention and referral. This new approach encompasses an intensive case management system and a multifaceted assessment process, carried out primarily by the Family Advocate. Perhaps the most dramatic change in Family Advocates' work, however, is their role in the program's community-strengthening components. Advocates refer Head Start families to participate in the Leadership Development Training and the Community Action Group.

In Owensboro, Family Advocates also conduct interviews with community residents and share the stories they have gleaned with the Community Development Assistant and members of the Community Action Group. They may also attend community group meetings to stay aware of and help staff activities.

In this way, Free to Grow challenges Family Advocates to learn about and view community involvement, participation, and development as integral facets of family services.

Audubon Area Head Start: Family Services Description Guide

Considerations	Service Level One	Service Level Two	Service Level Three	Service Level Four	Service Level Five
Known, Observed, Expressed Needs	Few needs observed. Family is able to meet own needs with little or no outside help.	Needs are minimal. Family requires help with needs only on occasion.	Extended need noted in at least one area. Moderate assistance is required to meet needs.	Extensive needs noted in two or more areas. Needs may be basic in nature; frequent assistance is required.	Numerous needs noted which require active, intensive support. Likely “crisis” level of functioning and/or safety needs noted.
Family Strengths; Goal Work	Family recognizes and uses strengths and capabilities.	Family recognizes strengths, but does not appear to use them consistently.	Some recognition of strengths, but family requires consistent support to make use of strengths.	Rarely acknowledges strengths. Consistent obstacles prevent family from using strengths.	Family requires ongoing support to develop/use strengths. Consistent difficulties deter family from strengths focus.
Parenting Skills	Enhanced parenting skills with self-directed supervision of children.	Basic parenting skills are in place; supervision of children is appropriate.	Some basic skills; however, methods and supervision are inconsistent.	Skills not apparent. Supervision of children is not consistently adequate.	Requires assistance with the most basic parenting skills. Supervision of children is a safety concern.
Community and Family Supports	Strong network of support exists outside of Head Start staff.	Adequate network of support is present; may include staff.	Adequate support network is available, but is not used effectively.	Support not available on a consistent basis or family requires assistance accessing support.	Absence of support or need for numerous supports that include professional services.
Risk Factors	No risk factors noted, or are being handled effectively. No suspected violence.	Minimal risk factors present. No violence or history of violence.	At least two risk factors present that require assistance. History of violence.	Several risk factors present or suspected. Recent violent situations. Assistance required often.	Numerous risk factors noted/suspected. Ongoing assistance needed. Current violent behavior or history of violent behavior.
Life Concerns	Able to manage or resolve any difficulties without “outside” assistance.	Recognizes difficulties and can resolve them with self-initiated help.	Recognizes difficulties and makes attempts to resolve. Requires aid in seeking help.	Some recognition of difficulties and, inconsistent attempts at resolution. Help needed often.	Rarely recognizes difficulties. Few or ineffective attempts at resolution. Likely needs several avenues of help.

A Family Advocate Perspective on the New Service Structure

"… At first it was pretty intimidating to think that we were going to have to think about community issues as well as family issues. But as we started to talk to families about what was going on in their lives, I realized that what's going on in the community deeply affects [them]. I must have four or five families who live in these trailers that are rented out by this guy who lives in town. He lures them in by setting up these "rent-to-buy" situations. And he really overcharges them. And if they're one day late with their rent, he evicts them and starts all over with another family. And if we want to help these families, we really should be doing something to bring this guy's business practices out into the open, and see if there's some way that we can legally stop him. That would help our families, but it would also help the community."

4. Compile Baseline Database of Family Partnership Plans

As Advocates complete their Family Partnership Plans, the information from the plans should be entered into a database for later analysis.* As Family Action Plans are implemented, the baseline data contained in the Family Partnership Plans will be used to assess family and program progress.

The Family Partnership database should be structured so that information regarding the number and type of family contacts can be entered and analyzed. Contact sheet information should be entered into the database throughout the year so that an analysis of the relationship between the scope of interventions and family progress can be made at the end of the program year.

5. Conduct Follow-Up Training and Supervision

Follow-up training and supervision are an integral component of the Kentucky Model's family services structure. To continue to enhance Advocates' skills, the Management team conducts monthly full-day training and supervision sessions. Many of these training sessions are content-focused, and include training in areas such as alcohol and drug abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence and dysfunctional family dynamics. The leadership also works to devise training sessions that reflect the particular needs and interests of staff members.

As program implementation moves forward in your agency, engage family services staff in a dialogue to determine training needs. Ask staff directly: "What do you think you need to learn more about?" "What are the things that still confuse you?" "What are the issues coming up for the families you're working with that you feel most incapable of handling?" "What resources do you need to do your work?"

Encourage program partners to assist with follow-up training. Their interactions with your staff members can provide an important time for building networks and for eliciting information about needed resources within the communities that you serve. In addition, the relationships that emerge can often assist Advocates with transitioning Head Start families to other support systems when their children graduate from the program.

The Need for Support is Ongoing

AACS's Family and Community Services Team Manager recognizes that, even after familiarizing staff with the methods of delivering Family Advocacy services and a year of training on substance abuse-related issues, staff still need support. "At the moment, because so much change has happened, the need for training outstrips the ability to provide it. But as management gives people what they need and what they ask for, and keeps them informed, the need will keep decreasing." Still, she sees the need for "training, training, training!"

"You can't underestimate its value," she continues. "Training that involves managers and Family Advocates, including the open communication that characterizes it, allows the team to grow, support one another, and provide excellent family services, resulting in a successful program."

* A simple database can be developed using software such as Microsoft Access to track Family Partnership Plan information. This database should be linked to your program's core recordkeeping files where family demographic information is stored so that information can be analyzed together. Staff members at Audubon Area Community Services in Owensboro, Kentucky can be contacted for further information on how these databases were created and maintained.

6. Provide On-Site Technical Assistance and Support

While ongoing training sessions help build staff capacity, there is no substitute for hands-on technical assistance and support. If your Family Advocates work out of different locations, be sure to have program leadership meet regularly with them at their sites, soliciting feedback and answering questions about the new system. Use these sessions to identify those staff members who appear to be having difficulty adjusting to the new system so that they can be provided with special support. Incorporate case conferences into these meetings. This way, Advocates can learn intervention strategies from one another and receive feedback on their most difficult cases.

7. Conduct Quality Assurance Case Reviews

While on-site meetings will help you to assess how staff are adjusting to the new system, record reviews are critical for objectively assessing whether staff are integrating the new approach into their work. In the early stages of implementation, record reviews can help determine whether the Family Partnership Plan has been filled out correctly and whether the action plans being drawn up for families fit the needs identified in the action plan. The reviews also allow supervisors to evaluate Advocates' interventions to determine if they are helping to achieve desired outcomes.

Case record review should be a collaborative process between the Family Advocate and his/her supervisor, allowing the Advocate to learn from the review process. Record review also informs the performance evaluation process, providing a formal structure for assessing how well an individual Advocate is doing with the new system.

8. Assess Family Outcomes: How Did You Do?

The supervision and technical support structures built into the first year of implementation provide a mechanism for ongoing assessment and adjustment. However, to more objectively assess how the new system has worked, Advocates should use the Family Partnership Plan to reassess each family at the end of the first year of implementation. These plans should be entered in the database so that an analysis of outcomes can be made.

The database should be structured to allow your program to assess progress on three levels: 1) by individual family; 2) across families within the program; and 3) by individual Advocate. Family progress can be assessed as a whole (i.e., Did this family build overall strengths, as reflected by an improved level rating?) or within individual domains (i.e., Did this family reach their educational goals for the year?) By analyzing results for all the families in your program, you can learn where your program made the most progress and those areas in which staff need additional support to improve family outcomes. The analysis of family progress in relationship to family contacts can also provide you with a better understanding of what kinds of interventions appear to be most successful in helping families reach their goals.

Share a summary analysis of program-wide trends across key areas with all Family Advocates. This process will allow Advocates to better understand the impact of their work, and to problem-solve areas that require improvement. The outcome of your summary analysis should also inform your decisions regarding ongoing training and staff development, as trends can indicate in which areas your staff need assistance and support.

Being a Family Advocate Isn't for Everyone

As AACS Head Start integrated their revised family service structure across their Head Start program, it was clear that the newly defined responsibilities of family service workers (called Family Advocates in the new system) weren't for everyone. "Some staff members just weren't prepared to make the transition," shared the Family and Community Services Team Manager. They did not feel prepared to work more intensively with families. "We worked hard to move those staff members who felt uncomfortable with the new system, or who weren't performing well after the first year into other positions within the program. It was better for them, and for the families that we work with."

To help staff members identify their strengths and weaknesses, encourage them to review the analyses of their caseloads. You will find that some staff members feel most comfortable working with families on areas with which they are most familiar, such as family management practices or educational goal-setting, while paying less attention to areas in which they are less experienced, such as mental health or substance abuse treatment support. Staff should pay particular attention to analyzing outcomes for their highest-risk families so that key areas of need are not overlooked by Family Advocates providing support to these families in the future.

Don't expect your first year of implementation to be perfect. The new family services structure requires major changes, including significant shifts in roles and responsibilities, and the need for adjustments and modifications is inevitable. Even when there are bumps in the road, don't forget to celebrate milestones in the journey and to acknowledge the hard work of staff members, partners, and all other participants.

E. Implementing the Community-Strengthening Components

The two community-strengthening components of the Kentucky Model—leadership training and community action—support and build upon one another, creating a renewing pool of leadership to implement the program's primary prevention activities. Implementation of these components is something like a spiraling web, with new Head Start parents and other community residents engaged with each successive round of activity. These individuals are bolstered in their efforts by the program's linkages and collaborations with key neighborhood and municipal stakeholders, who work with residents in their efforts to improve the community context in which their children are growing up.

Many of the early implementation steps that you have taken have begun to lay the foundation for your community work. You and your program leadership have already identified preliminary partners and collaborators within your community with whom you intend to work. Your Head Start staff has been introduced to the program's key principles, and your Advocates have received additional training in their specific role in implementation. The steps outlined below detail the specific activities that support start-up and implementation of the leadership development and community action components of this model.

A word on timing. As this manual indicated earlier, the start-up and implementation of the program's community-strengthening activities precedes the implementation of the revised family services structure by a number of months. (See Start-Up Chart in Appendix D.) Ideally, the first round of leadership training should take place in the late winter to early spring of your planning year, so that your Community Action Group can complete community assessment activities by the end of the planning year. This timetable means that Family Advocates may not be as involved in your first round of outreach and recruitment of parents and community members for leadership development training and community action work. Rather, the Community Development Specialist and program partners will take greater responsibility for recruitment during program start-up. At the same time, jump-starting the community strengthening activities in this way will allow the program's work to get off the ground more quickly.

1. Establish the Interagency Advisory Group to Support Community-Strengthening Activities

One of Free to Grow's underlying goals is to give the families of young children a voice at the decision-making tables within their communities. Thus, Free to Grow seeks to build collaborations between residents and community stakeholders. In most communities, this process requires that both residents and stakeholders learn new skills—new ways of listening and communicating, new ways of interpreting "facts," new ways of framing community priorities. The leadership training activities described below seek to provide residents with core skills that will help them "come to the table" more effectively—with knowledge and understanding of how to assess and analyze those issues most crucial to them.

To better prepare community stakeholders to effectively engage with residents, partnering and collaborating agencies should be asked to join a Free to Grow Interagency Council. Meeting bi-monthly, the Council should be used to inform those agencies with whom you are partnering about the project's current work and to engage them in the process. Thus, for example, as the project begins, the Council can serve as a forum to introduce the principles of the Leadership Development Training and to solicit the assistance of program partners in identifying and recruiting local residents for participation. In the project's later stages, the Council can serve as a forum for soliciting input for the community assessment process or for helping residents to identify potential local funding streams that might be relevant to a project in which they are engaged.

This Council should be facilitated by the Community Development Specialist in close collaboration with Head Start and partner agency leadership. In the early stages of implementation, the Head Start Director and other agency leadership should participate in the Council meetings to convey their support and commitment to the program's work. The Community Development Specialist should also review the agenda of the Interagency Council meeting with program leadership, so that they can make a determination regarding when their attendance is critical to leveraging influence regarding particular priorities of the project.

Where the "Real" Work Gets Done

While the Interagency Council proved important as a way to keep agency representatives apprised of the work of the Community Action Group, the Council was never really intended to be a "roll up your sleeves and get involved" kind of body. "The Interagency Council usually had representatives from too many different organizations to really get something done," shared the program director. "The real work happened before and after the meeting sessions, or in separate meetings with key players whose participation was instrumental in moving particular issues forward."

2. Plan Your Leadership Development Training

The cycle of community strengthening begins with the identification, recruitment and training of Head Start parents and other community residents in the core principles of community development. The leadership development training provides an opportunity not only to build residents' skills, but to begin the process of group building so critical for successful community action. Divided into 10 workshops, the leadership training covers the following topics:

1) Introduction (of Free to Grow, meaning of prevention, risk and protective factor concepts)
2) Principles of Community Action (principles, active listening, interviewing skills)
3) Learning About Ourselves and Our Communities (exploring personal values, attitudes, and beliefs)
4) Communication and Leadership Skills (communication styles and skills, the relationship between leadership and power)
5) Effective Meetings (components of effective meetings, agendas, and tools for evaluating effectiveness)
6) Group Facilitation (meeting facilitation analysis, evaluation, and practice, including consensus building)
7) Visioning Community Change (analysis of community strengths and changes, and envisioning ideal community)

8) Community Mapping (mapping community boundaries, resources, and risk factors)
9) Defining Issues for Action (public health model, policy, identifying action issues)
10) Moving Issues to Action (assessment and research strategies, identifying partners, developing action strategies)

Training workshop materials, including training objectives, workshop outlines, exercises and follow-up activities can be found in the companion training manual *Building Leadership for Community Development.* The manual also includes detailed training tips, facilitation guides and supporting handouts.

In practice, leadership training group members complete the first eight training sessions first. These three-hour sessions are structured to take place weekly, with homework assignments between workshops to give participants the opportunity to practice key skills. Once the first eight training sessions are completed, graduates form the core of the Community Action Group, which works with staff and community stakeholders to carry out a community assessment to determine priority issues for action. Once priority issues are defined, sessions nine and ten of the training cycle are used to provide the framework for community action. While this break in the training cycle may seem unusual, experience has shown that group members are better able to grasp the concepts related to defining issues to take action once they have identified concrete community issues.

3. Conduct Outreach and Recruitment for Leadership Development Training

Ideally, at least 20 to 25 participants should be recruited for your first cycle of leadership development training. Your Head Start program and partner agencies are the primary targets for your recruitment activities. When recruiting, remember that the time lag between the initial contact for recruitment and the beginning of your training cycle should not be too long—no more than six to eight weeks—or recruited participants will grow disinterested, get involved in other activities, or drop out due to lack of momentum. Thus, it is important that you plan your recruitment efforts carefully before you solicit participants.

Step 1. Develop Incentives and Rewards for Participation

Completing the entire training curriculum is preferable for participants if they are to reap the full benefits and become prepared to involve themselves in leading community efforts. However, retaining participants in a training program of this length may prove a challenge. Prior to recruiting participants for the training, establish a program of nonmonetary incentives and awards to motivate recruits to complete the entire training. These may include awards (goods or services donated by local businesses, for example), plaques, or recognition events. In addition, you may choose to draft a "letter of agreement" to be signed by both the trainee and a Free to Grow program representative in which both parties commit to fulfill their obligations.

Engaging Workfare Parents in Your Leadership Training Program

While the Kentucky program's implementation was not heavily impacted by changes in welfare laws, other Free to Grow sites found that these changes required looking creatively at ways to include families affected by welfare reform in Free to Grow activities. Some Free to Grow sites negotiated successfully with their local social services departments to create Free to Grow work/ training slots called Community Advocates within their Head Start organizations. Providing participants with employable skills such as community assessment, data entry, phone follow-up, and other administrative skills related to implementation, has allowed some parents to use Free to Grow to help them transition to the work force.

Step 2. Recruit and Select Training Participants

In recruiting training participants, look for individuals who demonstrate experience or potential as community leaders. According to the criteria developed by the Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow for community leaders, individuals should:

- have strong informal community ties;
- follow through on assigned tasks;
- be passionate about the work of strengthening the target community;
- live in or have an interest in the community;
- be able to represent the diverse community's opinion as well as his/her own personal views;
- be able to represent Head Start and other community residents; and
- if a Head Start family member, have a Family Partnership Plan assessment that places them within the two highest-functioning levels

You may choose to develop a Leadership Training Application form which asks potential participants basic questions about their past engagement in the community and solicits information about why they want to be part of the program.

Family Advocates are the richest source from which to identify potential trainees within the Head Start program. Through their systematic assessment of families' needs, the Family Advocates are able to identify appropriate families to participate in the leadership development training. Other Head Start staff can also assist with recruitment, particularly those who have worked closely with your Policy Council and its supporting Committees. Parents who have been involved in these activities are often strong candidates for the leadership training program.

Don't forget to recruit former Head Start parents for the leadership development training. Recently graduated parents, or those whose children are moving on to the school system in the coming year can often be stronger candidates than those parents just entering the Head Start program due to the experiences they have had within your Head Start program. In addition, recruitment of former Head Start parents broadens your community base and provides potential linkages to the parents in your neighborhood's schools—a key source of other parents for program participation.

Community and partner organizations will also be able to identify target area residents who meet the criteria for the training. The individuals with the most established relationships with other organizations, such as the Community Development Specialist, the Community Support Assistant, or your Head Start director, should request that they identify potential participants as well as other contacts who are able to identify additional potential trainees.

Step 3: Interview Potential Participants

All potential participants for the leadership development training should be interviewed before they are accepted to participate. The purpose of this interview is to allow staff to assess whether candidates who have been referred meet the criteria for program participation. Program staff should be on the look-out for individuals who seem to be confrontative or angry or appear to have a particular political agenda which they strongly voice. While anger can often be an appropriate response to the problems experienced in many communities, an individual whose anger is not positively harnessed can create a difficult challenge for a group. The non-partisan nature of the Community Action Group's work requires that individuals are able to separate their political views from their group involvement.

Don't be afraid to turn down applicants who don't seem to have the kinds of qualities that you're looking for among your core leadership group. Remember that the members of your Community Action Group will be interacting with officials within your community and may be involved in negotiating potentially sensitive issues. You don't want to find out "after the fact" that the potential candidate you thought might be a good team player is disrupting Community Action Group meetings and misrepresenting the group's agenda to community leadership.

Also, use caution in recruiting individuals who are in recovery from alcohol or drug addiction. Individuals whose lives have stabilized often have strong passion that can bring depth and commitment to their work. Yet, individuals who have only recently entered treatment or who have not yet addressed some of the

A Family Advocate's Reflections on Recruiting

"A lot of us had a hard time with the idea that not everyone should be invited to be part of the leadership training for the Community Action Group… And then our experiences in the first couple of years really showed us that you've got to have strong people as the core group, or they're not going to be able to make things happen. There's plenty of opportunities for everyone to be involved when the group is working on an action—like signing petitions or writing letters, or coming to a community meeting. But your leaders have to be really committed."

underlying issues of their addiction may not be good candidates for community advocacy work.

4. Carry Out Logistical Planning for the Leadership Training

Establish dates, times, and locations for holding the training sessions. Program staff should canvass potential participants for optimal days or times and should note the limitations that child care, employment, education, or other obligations place upon participants. They should also consult a calendar to minimize potential conflicts or interruptions, such as holidays, major community events, or school requirements, during the training period. The training should be scheduled at a time maximizing the number of accepted applicants able to participate.

Arrange for the training to take place in the target area and to be easily accessible. Be sure to provide support for training sessions to maximize participation. Child care is critical for parents of young children. On-site child care is the most cost-effective option if your program has the space and staff to provide the range of care needed. Child care stipends may be more appropriate if participants have too many children to provide on-site care, or if many participants have infants. If your program is in a rural area, transportation to the training site may also be a crucial service. It is also a good idea to provide some sort of light meal or snack for participants during the three-hour workshop.

5. Develop a Training Team

Among the most important objectives of the leadership development training sessions are to begin the process of group-building and to model effective group practice to training participants. The sessions also serve as the basis for building a strong working relationship between the Community Development Specialist or Program Assistant responsible for facilitating the Community Action Group and its core members. For this reason, it is critical that group facilitation be done only by those highly skilled in group process. Ideally, you will have selected a Community Development Specialist with these skills, who can serve as the primary facilitator for the leadership development training. If your Community Development Specialist is not a skilled group leader, he/she should co-facilitate the training sessions with other individuals who are.

Even if your Community Development Specialist has strong group work skills, you may choose to use co-facilitators to implement the training. Co-facilitators can provide added expertise, as well as an additional perspective, as the group participates in the training's experiential activities. The Community Development Specialist should assess the knowledge and expertise required for each workshop and identify key individuals from within your Head Start program and the community who can conduct the training. For example, a local health policy advocate might be an appropriate facilitator for the session on "Defining Issues for Action," while a social worker with extensive group work experience might best co-lead the session "Group Facilitation."

Program staff should confirm the commitments that trainers make to conduct specific training sessions prior to the start of the training program. They should also establish a time to review the content of the session, discuss workshop objectives and activities, and answer any questions that the co-trainer may have. If your program is going to use multiple people to conduct the training sessions, you may want to set up a general orientation session for all trainers prior to the first session so that all co-facilitators understand the overall structure and goals of the training and are better able to integrate their session into the training as a whole.

Documenting In-Kind Partner Support

Free to Grow community-strengthening activities provide a variety of opportunities to document in-kind contributions by community partners. The contribution of training time by community partners or others, along with any donations of meeting space or other goods or services, can fulfill the Revised Performance Standards' mandate for in-kind donations by community partners. In addition, as the program's community action projects move forward, the assistance of community partners with implementation of program activities also meets community in-kind requirements.

6. Conduct the Leadership Development Training

With all of the above preparations in place, you are ready to run your training program. Before beginning, check to make sure that:

- a training space has been reserved for the required dates and times;
- the room can comfortably accommodate the number of participants expected;
- the room is structured to allow for interaction among participants (i.e., chairs can be rearranged in circles, not bolted down in lecture style);
- selected participants have all been notified of the training;
- trainees are aware of the expectation for their participation and have made a commitment to attend the entire training (this expectation should be reiterated and a commitment should also be elicited at the first workshop);
- workshop co-facilitators have agreed to participate and have been notified of the sessions to which they are committed;
- Support services have been decided upon and arrangements have been made for the first session, with clear understanding about who is responsible for making similar arrangements for all future sessions.

To allow you to later analyze the impact of the program's community-strengthening components on participants, ask each training participant to fill out the baseline "Parent Assessment Form" during the first training session. This assessment form provides basic demographic information and community participation data on each of the training group members. It will also help you to see changes in participants' community engagement behavior over their period of involvement in the program. This information can be entered into your program's database using the software provided with this manual.

Bear in mind that, despite your best efforts at accommodating schedules and securing commitments, some participants will probably drop out after the training program has begun. Your staff should contact those individuals to find out why they stopped coming and try to draw them back. Family Advocates may also be able to help you to find out why an individual parent has chosen to stop attending the training sessions. If a participant misses a session but wants to continue with the training, try to arrange an individualized "make-up" session for him/her. After the first round of training, these "make-up" sessions can be conducted by training graduates, who can help fellow residents catch up on missed skill sets. If a participant does decide to drop out, review any concerns they raise. This information will help you to better tailor the next training cycle.

Reflections by a Participant in the Leadership Development Training

"Our community is pretty rural, and so when it was time to "walk" our community, we figured that we had to do it by car… And it was really interesting because someone would identify a particular corner as a "hot spot" and other people in the group would go, "What? I didn't know there was anything going on there?" And someone else would say, "But haven't you seen the drug dealing there – where are your eyes?" People often don't know what they're looking for. We have a truck stop in our community, and it doesn't look so bad, but when we went out and started to talk to people who live around there, we found out that there was a lot of prostitution and drug dealing going on—so the activity really helped us to look at the community through a different set of eyes, and I must say that some of what we saw scared us. But it also made us want to do something about it, because this is where we're raising our kids."

7. Evaluate Your First Round of Leadership Development Training

As you complete your first round of leadership development training, take time to evaluate how the first cycle went. Ask yourself:

- Were you able to recruit an adequate number of appropriate participants? What sources were better than others?
- Did you meet the goals you set for the numbers of people completing the training? What factors affected the dropout rate of participants? Can you change the program in some way to increase the number of people who attend consistently?
- What kind of feedback did you get from program participants?

Beginning to See Change

The changes in individuals that grow out of the Leadership Development Training are often apparent even without formal data collection. The Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow's Community Development Specialist noted that participants who formerly lacked the skills or confidence were newly able to advocate for their needs. "What seems big to me," she explained, "is seeing someone advocate for their child in some kind of difficult situation in school, or if they have to go downtown and talk to somebody, just being able to do it, to not flake off because of the way they're being treated."

A Community Action Group Member's Perspective on Recruiting

"We're always trying to identify new people to get involved—because lots of times, even if people want to stay involved, something happens and they need to spend more time with their family or they start working a new shift and can't attend meetings or they just get busy with other things. I think that the majority of the group has almost completely turned over since the beginning of the project. That doesn't mean that the people who first started the group aren't interested—they're still out in the community lending support to what we do. And the more people who have participated, the better people understand what we're trying to accomplish."

- ▲ What skills seemed to be the easiest for participants to grasp? Which ones seemed the most difficult? What kinds of follow-up and support should we do in areas where group members seemed to have the most difficulty?

8. Reach out to Community Leaders on an Ongoing Basis

The process of outreach and recruitment of community leaders is ongoing. With each step of the community-strengthening process, additional individuals with leadership capacity will be identified and drawn into the program's work. These individuals may be identified through the community interviewing and assessment processes described below, or through individuals' participation in action campaigns taken on by the Community Action Group. As individuals are identified, they will join the Community Action Group's work, either by becoming regular members or by participating in various activities sponsored by the program.

In addition, each new Head Start program year brings with it a new potential leadership pool. As new families join the Head Start program and are assessed using the Family Partnership Plan, the strongest families should be referred to the program's leadership development and community action work. In this way, over the program's evolution, greater numbers of families of young children will become engaged in primary prevention work to strengthen their communities.

9. Conduct Ongoing Leadership Development Training to Support Activities of Community Action Group

As implementation moves forward, the emerging pool of leadership becomes a fluid one, in which some individuals join the Community Action Group's work before participating in leadership development training while others receive training before officially joining the group. The ongoing structure of outreach and recruitment creates challenges for follow-up leadership development training. While, ideally, all individuals who join the Community Action Group would be best served by participating in a cycle of leadership development training, some individuals attracted to the Community Action Group may not have the time to attend training sessions. In addition, it is important that leadership development training not impede the progress of any ongoing community action. Thus, subsequent rounds of leadership development training should be modified to allow newly recruited members of the Community Action Group to participate while supporting the efforts of any current action campaign.

Each program will develop its own rhythm for scheduling leadership development training cycles, with some programs opting to conduct two or more cycles of training each year and others conducting only one. To engage newly referred Head Start parents in the program's community-strengthening work, your program should schedule at least one cycle of training each year dedicated to bringing Head Start parents into your community work. These Head Start parents can be joined by other community residents who have recently been engaged in the program's work—either through community assessment or community action activities.

To more closely link the ongoing work of the Community Action Group with the leadership development training activities, the Community Development Specialist should review the training curriculum and determine appropriate adaptations of exercises to the current activities of the group.* The companion training manual provides a more detailed discussion of how these adaptations can be made, with examples of suggested modifications. The goal here is to "teach off the action"—allowing a fluid relationship to develop between resident capacity-building and community action—so that each project provides an opportunity both to teach new skills and address significant risk and protective factors within the community.

Listening to the Community

Why does being "community-driven" matter? The Kentucky Community Development Specialist, herself a community resident and graduate of the Leadership Development Training, puts it this way: "Some agency people have the perception that they know what's going on in the community, that they know what the problem is. Maybe they think that people don't care about their community or just want to sell drugs. They may be certain that they know the truth, until they talk to the people in the community and find out that what they're thinking isn't actually true. I don't think agencies realize how they come across to people or families in the communities that we're trying to have this major impact on. Many times, people's encounters with these agencies haven't been very good, and they don't end up trusting them. We make this way harder than it needs to be."

10. Establish the Community Action Group

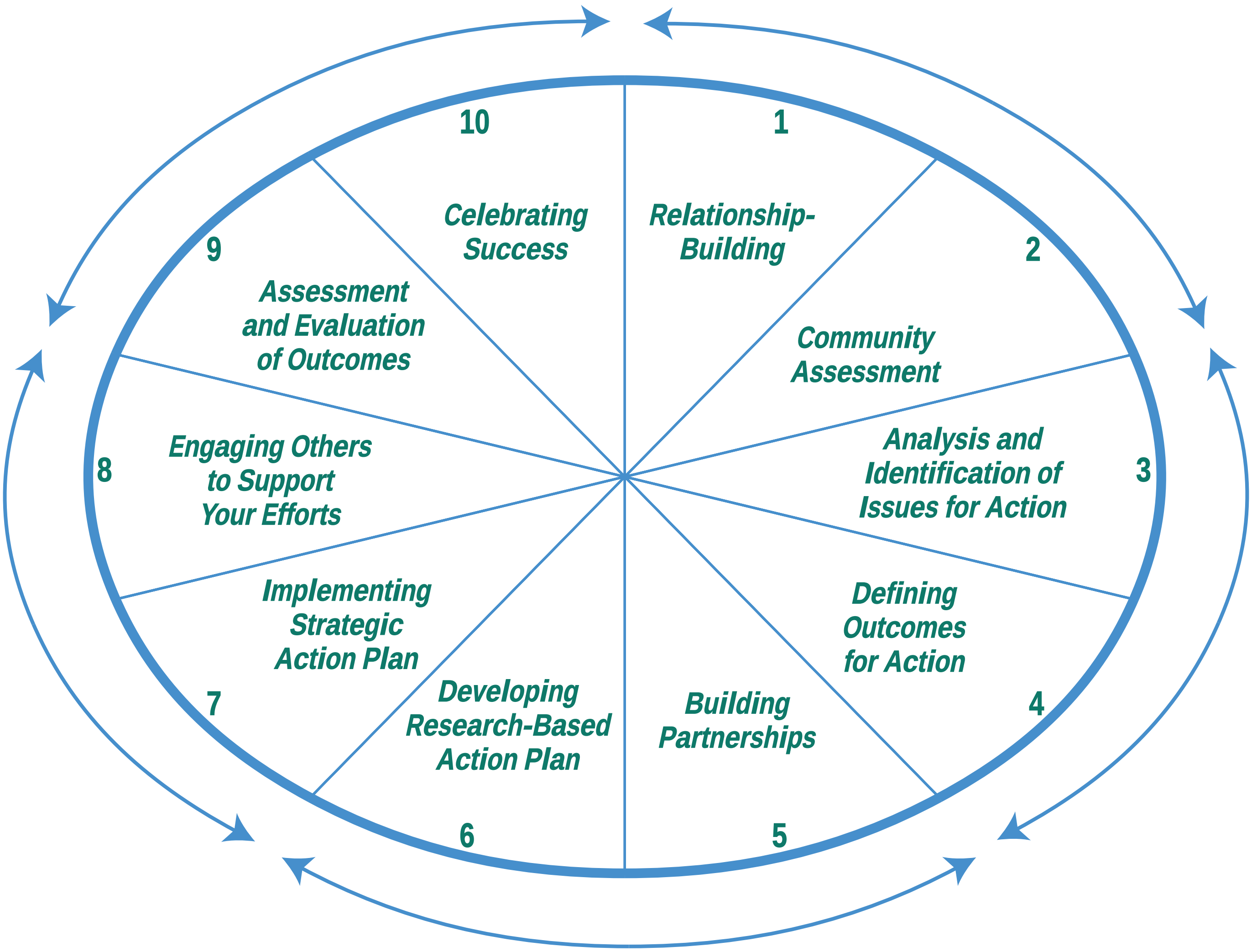
With the first cycle of leadership development training completed, you are ready to establish your Community Action Group. Leadership development graduates will form the core of your group. The Community Action Group is facilitated by your Community Development Specialist, with assistance from other Head Start staff assigned to work on the program's community component. Staff members support the Community Action Group by helping to coordinate and set up meetings and any meals, child care, and transportation that will be provided during them; helping members lead meetings; and recording and distributing minutes and meeting notices.

Staff also play a critical role in guiding and facilitating the community assessment and issues analysis process, providing linkages to partner agencies, and acting as a liaison between the larger Head Start structure and the members of the Community Action Group. They help residents understand and interpret information they receive from the community by discussing that information in the context of the program's risk/protection framework. They also oversee outreach and recruitment activities to identify potential new group members, working with existing members to engage interested residents.

The Community Development Specialist plays the lead role in facilitating substantive discussion among the Community Action Group members. Although the members provide the content for discussion, the Community Development Specialist assists them in formulating research questions, strategies, and community action plans, ensuring that they respond to the Community Action Group's mission, and helping to keep the work on track. In addition, the Community Development Specialist serves as a liaison between the family- and community-strengthening components by scheduling and facilitating regular staff meetings with Family Advocates. The meetings are a forum through which she/he informs the Family Advocates about any community component developments and receives information gathered from the Family Advocates through their community-oriented family interviews.

The Community Development Specialist also acts as a liaison between the Free to Grow Community Action Group and other Coalition groups and committees in the community. The Community Development Specialist's participation on behalf of Community Action Group members keeps the program a visible presence in area-wide efforts relevant to the group's work. As the Community Action Group matures, group members should be encouraged to take over these liaison roles, strengthening residents' ability to

* See companion training manual, *Building Leadership for Community Development*.



collaborate with other organizational initiatives taking place within the community.

The work of the Community Action Group is cyclical, following a core set of steps that build upon one another to support the implementation of a community change agenda. These steps are based upon the principles of community organizing, and are summarized in the chart above. It is important to understand that while the steps in the community action process tend to follow one another, they are not necessarily sequential, and groups may move back and forth from one stage to another while working on one action campaign.

As the Community Action Group begins to meet, staff should work with group members to begin to develop and implement group guidelines. Items to be addressed include:

- establishing group and meeting ground rules;
- deciding upon leadership structure, including meeting documentation;
- determining regular meeting day, time, and location;
- establishing procedures for meeting preparation/set-up/clean-up and devising a system for assigning these responsibilities; and
- articulating a mission for the group.

Group and Meeting Ground Rules

The group should generate and agree upon meeting rules that promote respectful and productive sessions. Typical rules might include: only one person speaks at a time; use "I" statements when expressing opinions; make sure each meeting has an agenda and keep to it; and make decisions by consensus (or majority vote).

Leadership Structure, Including Meeting Documentation

An agreed-upon structure lends order to meetings. Groups may opt for varying degrees of formality. Some may choose a consistent chairperson, recording secretary, and other positions, while other groups may want to share leadership responsibility by rotating the chairperson role among the members on a regular basis.

The proceedings of each meeting must also be recorded in minutes to be distributed to the group members. Initially, a Head Start staff member may take notes and write meeting minutes for distribution. However, over time, this function should be assumed by the group members. It may be helpful for one member of the Community Action Group to take notes during each meeting to begin building the skills necessary to take over this function.

Meeting Day, Time, and Location

Setting a regular meeting schedule increases the likelihood that members will attend consistently. If Community Action Group members know that there is a meeting every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at the Head Start Center, they will be able to organize their responsibilities so that they are able to attend. Group members should consider other commitments—such as employment, training, education, child care—before deciding on a meeting time. Holding each meeting in the same location, if possible, also minimizes confusion and helps to promote regular participation. Meeting locations should be central, accessible, and, particularly if meetings will be held in the evening, safe.

Meeting Preparation, Set-Up, and Clean-Up

Each meeting will require a certain amount of preparation, set-up, and clean-up. Tasks—including setting up refreshments, preparing an agenda to distribute, and having sign-in sheets available—may be shared by group members. Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow developed a "Meeting Responsibilities" chart which specifies individual tasks, the person responsible, resources needed, blocks and barriers, and start and completion dates for each task. This kind of tool may be useful for your group.

Defining a Mission

As with the family services component, a mission statement for the Community Action Group provides the rationale and overall goal for the group's efforts. It communicates the essence of the group's purpose to others and serves as a touchstone for members, providing a focus for their work.

While the group may not be ready to craft a succinct mission statement at its first meeting, it should do so early on, when the group has begun to coalesce and is narrowing in on priority issues. The Community Development Specialist should guide this discussion, ensuring that the Coalition's mission is congruent with and reflects that of Free to Grow. Focus on answering the questions: What do we do and why do we do it? For example, Owensboro's Community Action Group adopted the following mission statement: "We are dedicated to bringing residents together to work with community leaders on neighborhood issues and strengthen the community in which we live, so that we can prevent our children from abusing drugs and alcohol as they grow older."

Strengthening Communities by Strengthening Neighborhood Bonds

When residents of a Free to Grow area come together with a common commitment to improve life in their own community, change begins to simmer almost immediately. It may not be obvious at first in the larger indicators of community health or distress—like the crime rate or incidence of drug sales—but can be perceived by Community Action Group members in the ways they relate to their neighbors.

One Community Action Group member, who did not know any of her fellow members prior to her involvement in Free to Grow, says that "I know that I would feel comfortable calling up any of the people in the group and saying 'Something's going on.' I think that's important, to know that you're able to call on somebody if you need them, and you know they're going to be there. I've seen other members do the same thing. I think we're all that way."

11. Build Relationships with Other Community Residents

During the leadership development training, participants learn one of the primary tools of community relationship-building: one-on-one interviewing. As your Community Action Group begins to form, group members should use this tool to begin to get to know a broader spectrum of people who live in their community. Over the first two months of the group, members should try to conduct one-on-one interviews with approximately 20 to 30 residents each. These interviews can be done door to door, in community gathering places, such as shopping malls, or at community-sponsored meetings. These interviews will establish Free to Grow's presence in the community, build new relationships, and yield information about how local residents perceive their community and its strengths and weaknesses. The work of doing one-on-one interviews should be continuous, providing a direct means of reaching out and listening to the community. As the Community Action Group identifies priority issues for action, members should continue to conduct interviews to get input from residents regarding target issues and continue to build a base of support for the group's efforts.

Building relationships with other community members is not a one-time activity. As Community Action Group members get to know other neighborhood residents, they should determine individuals' willingness to be interviewed again and possibly be drawn into the program's activities. Through this relationship-building process, residents and staff will begin to identify other potential community leaders as well as individuals within the neighborhood who might be interested in assisting the group on particular issues. Ongoing interactions with community residents will help to build the trust that is necessary for them to feel comfortable sharing their real concerns with you. While this kind of community outreach is time consuming, it is critical to building the network of support that your group will need to successfully engage in community action.

12. Invite Residents to Assess Community Priorities

As your group begins to build relationships with other residents at the community level, the stories they collect through their one-on-one interviewing will begin to provide them with an understanding of these issues of greatest priority to the neighborhood. During their early Community Action Group meetings, members should share these stories with one another, summarizing and analyzing the issues that emerge repeatedly in their discussions with neighborhood residents. As members continue to conduct one-on-one interviews, they should begin to ask open-ended questions about those issues that appear to be of greatest concern. Thus, for example, if early rounds of community interviews reveal serious concerns about the sale of alcohol to minors, members should begin to incorporate open-ended questions about this issue into subsequent interviews. This process will allow group members to begin to gather a more detailed community assessment of key issues, which will provide a frame for later work.

As Community Action Group members complete their first round of one-on-one interviews, residents who were interviewed, program partners and community stakeholders should be invited to participate in a community-wide meeting designed to lay the groundwork for a more thorough community-wide assessment. Hold the meeting at a central community location and at a time that is likely to be convenient for the greatest number of community residents. During the meeting, share some of the findings from the one-on-one interviews and ask for feedback from the par-

Make Sure Your Assessment Captures the Relevant Prevention Issues

The range of issues that will emerge from a community meeting can vary widely. A well facilitated meeting that keeps the program's overall prevention goals and objectives clear will help meeting participants focus on themes relevant to these issues. As the community brainstorms, probe around issues that reflect key risk or protective factors, working to have residents be concrete enough that the information collected is not so generic as to be useless. If there appear to be key prevention issues that do not come up in preliminary discussions, the group facilitator may want to ask some open-ended questions to solicit input regarding them.

ticipants. Ask participants to brainstorm regarding other key issues of concern within the community. Record all of the issues raised, trying to help participants be as specific as possible about their concerns.

13. Conduct Community Assessment

Using the information gained through the one-on-one interviewing process and the community meeting, the group should begin to devise a strategy for conducting a more thorough community assessment on the issues raised. This assessment should be designed to assist your group in clarifying its action agenda and building support for its work. For that reason, the assessment strategy should, to the greatest degree possible, engage residents, partners, and other key community stakeholders in the assessment process. In addition, the tools used to carry out the assessment should reflect the issues that have emerged from the community.

There are a number of action-research approaches used throughout the country to conduct a community assessment of this kind. Many of the Free to Grow sites have used an assessment approach called the Community Engagement Process, an approach designed by Philliber Research Associates and Cornerstone Consulting. The specific steps of this process are outlined below. Your group may choose to use this approach or another more suited to its needs. The assessment process should take place within a

Learning About Your Neighborhood

"Until we went out into the community door to door, I don't think that I really realized how many old people there were in our neighborhood who were really isolated. You would knock on their doors to ask them if they would be willing to answer a few questions about the community, and the next thing you knew, they were inviting you in. It's clear that they are really lonely, and just want someone to talk to. There should be something that we can do to link them with the younger families that live in the neighborhood that would benefit everyone."

The Community Engagement Process

The Community Engagement Process (CEP) is a means of gathering quantitative data about the perceptions of community residents in the target area while simultaneously building relationships among community residents and key stakeholders, imparting marketable skills, and mobilizing the community.

The CEP, as applied in Free to Grow, is based largely on the work of Philliber Associates and Cornerstone Consulting, two consulting firms that have been influential in promoting community research and assessment that is designed, implemented, and analyzed by community residents. The main steps are outlined below.

- The process begins when the community group establishes a date and time for and publicizes a meeting of concerned community leaders and residents to brainstorm questions about local concerns. The concerns raised during the brainstorming exercise are then converted by Philliber Research or Cornerstone into a quantifiable survey instrument. This survey instrument is reviewed and modified by community residents before being used. While the survey instrument is being developed, local residents are recruited to be paid surveyors and sign an agreement to participate in training and surveying activities. Surveyors are generally paid slightly over the minimum wage.
- Prior to conducting the survey, the dates and times of surveying as well as the target area for surveying are determined. Local staff provide area maps, and arrange child care, food and beverages for the surveyors during the survey period.
- Over a concentrated period—in most cases, three days—community resident volunteers are paid to administer the survey to a random sample of approximately 300 to 500 target area residents. The data gathered through the survey are tabulated and entered by the community resident workers.
- Once the survey is completed, data are analyzed by the research team and summarized in a series of simple charts for resident review. Community members, partners, and stakeholders are invited to review survey results and participate in developing community priorities for action.

relatively short time frame—with no more than three months committed to the preliminary process. While broad-based community assessments can often take much longer, because this assessment is action-focused, its structure should not detract from building momentum towards taking action. Resources to assist you in your community assessment process are included in the bibliography of this manual.

14. Analyze Community Assessment to Identify Key Risk and Protective Factors

With the community assessment program completed, your Community Action Group is ready to analyze its findings and choose issues for action. These steps are perhaps the most critical in the community-building process, and it is essential that staff work closely with the group to adequately analyze assessment results within the program's guidelines. Poised on the brink of action, community groups can, without guidance, choose issues for action that are unachievable (too broadly defined for substantive action to be taken), idiosyncratic (reflective not of the key issues raised, but of the particular interests of one or two group members), or inappropriate (falling outside of the primary prevention objectives of the initiative).

Using the risk/protection framework that was introduced during the leadership development training, the Community Development Specialist and other Free to Grow staff should work with Community Action Group members to analyze their assessment results. What are the primary risk factors within the neighborhood that were uncovered during the assessment process? What are the primary protective factors? Which risk factors were of the greatest concern to the families of young children within your community? Which protective factors could potentially be put in place to address some of these risk factors? Which protective factors already exist within your neighborhood?

Take time during the analytic process to let Community Action Group members review the assessment results carefully. Are some issues more pressing to certain ethnic groups within your community? Are some issues of concern to the families of older children but not to the families of younger children? Are certain areas of your neighborhood more concerned about particular issues than others? (e.g., Is open drug dealing of greater concern on some blocks in the neighborhood than others? Is access to child care a bigger concern on one side of the neighborhood than the other?)? This slow and careful analytic process will help Community Action Group members gain a deeper understanding of the impact of particular issues across the community, and will help them later when prioritizing issues and targeting other residents for engagement in action campaigns.

15. Choose Priority Issues for Action

With the community assessment analyzed, your Community Action Group is ready to choose key issues for action. The group should work to reach consensus on how to move forward. It is unlikely that only one issue will emerge as the single priority within your community. Similarly, Community Action Group members may have distinctive passions regarding the issues raised through the assessment process. If there is strong passion to work on more than one issue, try to guide group members to agree to address one issue before moving to the next. If your group is large enough and appears to have strong support from the community, you may choose to work on a couple of issues, with sub-committees forming to address different priorities. To avoid dissipating the new group's energy and efforts, choose only one or two issues initially.

The Community Development Specialist should help the group determine both short-term and longer-term priority issues for action. Short-term issues are particularly important at a group's beginning, so that members can experience early success and be encouraged to continue their work. The Community Development Specialist's role is particularly sensitive at this point in the group's development. As a facilitator, the CDS should work to guide the group, but not direct it. Staff need to help keep the discussion on track and reflect back to members' observations of group dynamics and comments that may have been overlooked. However, the work of the Community Action Group should be driven by the community and its representatives rather than the staff of the agency (see sidebars).

Community-Driven or Agency-Driven?

As the Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow program got off the ground, the staff organized several activities, such as a block party and a neighborhood clean-up drive to mobilize community participation. Although area residents did join in, their involvement was not sustained. Perhaps more importantly, there was no apparent lasting effect of the activities. Upon reflection, the Free to Grow staff and partners recognized that these activities were staff driven rather than chosen and implemented by community members. As a result, the activities did not represent a significant change from how things had been done previously. While allowing community residents to drive the process of community change may require restraint and patience on the part of agency staff accustomed to implementing and directing programs, it promises to pay off in results.

In thinking about her experience, the AACS Head Start Administrative Services Team manager and former Free to Grow director said, "You have to be patient and you can't get overexcited. You have to fight the tendency to go back to that staff driven approach, that 'I'll do it for them, I'll go meet with the police chief or whatever, because it will move the process a little faster.' I still find myself doing that." She continued, "It's also been hard to get other agency folks to see the benefits because it's slow, and it's different from the way folks are used to doing things. As part of the Coalition group, we don't all get together and decide what's right for this community and then go paint houses or build an after-school center. As the facilitator, it's Free to Grow's role to help empower the residents that live in the community to be part of the decision-making process. It's grassroots with community residents doing it, so it's slow. But I believe wholeheartedly that we're on track toward making a sustainable change in the community."

16. Articulate Outcomes to Guide Community Action

With key issues chosen to guide the Community Action Group's work, the Community Development Specialist should use the final two workshops of the leadership development training to help group members more clearly define their issues, and to assist them in framing outcomes to guide their community action work. These outcomes should be concrete and specific, and group members should be able to clearly link their desired outcomes with the program's overall goals. For example, if Community Action Group members choose to work to increase the availability of child care within their communities, staff should work closely with them to help them to frame this issue within a risk and protective factors framework (i.e., that the group seeks to increase the availability of child care to strengthen family stability and increase social supports for parents). This process reinforces the underlying program goals and helps program participants to contextualize their efforts within a broad primary prevention agenda.

17. Engage Partners in the Community Action Group's Efforts

As the Community Action Group members move through the process of developing strategies to address a chosen issue, they will identify individuals or organizations that care about the issue and would be likely to work together toward a shared goal. "Non-traditional providers," such as individuals active in religious institutions or other neighborhood leaders, may be among them. Others may be Free to Grow partners who have had a stake in the overall project since its beginning. These individuals and organizations are the community group's allies on the issue and partnerships with them will help move the work forward.

The program will already have relationships with potential partners through the Free to Grow Inter-Agency Council. Or a particular issue chosen by the Community Action Group may require building relationships with stakeholders that the program or agency does not know. The group should consider any risks of working with potential partners, such as whether or not working with them will alienate others, if they have a perceived self-interest in the issue, or if they will share the power of decision-making easily with residents. Be certain that any partners brought to the issue do not alienate other members of your Community Action Group.

Partners may help the Community Action Group pursue its chosen strategies in a number of ways, including:

- increasing community support through their networks and relationships;
- contributing resources (such as printing, transportation, funds, etc.);
- mobilizing large constituencies;
- gaining access to specific power holders;
- sharing understanding of complex policies or policy-making processes; and
- offering access to the media.

As agency and organization representatives become involved in advancing the community group's agenda, some tension may arise between the professionals and community residents. Be sure to maintain a climate in which community residents continue to participate and feel comfortable expressing their views and desires. It is not unusual for partnering stakeholders or community leaders to want to take credit for victories achieved at the local level. While this may be inevitable, make sure that any media coverage or community-wide meetings clearly link the group's accomplishments to residents' work.

Some Reflections on Building Partnerships Between Residents and Stakeholders

From a member of the Hancock County Community Action Group:

"This isn't a community where school leadership are really used to having a lot of resident input…. But when a group of students got interested in trying to close down the high school smoking lounge, I guess some of them thought that was a positive thing, and then they didn't mind when we offered to work with them. I think it also helped that one of our members is on the school board, so we didn't seem as threatening. We tried to address some of the school's concerns up front—by offering our help in monitoring the halls, and by suggesting a smoking cessation program…. But even an issue that seems as simple as this—that we shouldn't be encouraging teenagers to smoke—can be pretty controversial…."

From a member of the Christian County Coalition:

"It's really frustrating sometimes—I mean, we've been trying to get the Housing Authority to put up additional playgrounds—and then they go out and put one in a spot that if they'd asked any of us, they would have known was a bad place. It's isolated, and there's a big ditch nearby so it's dangerous for the little kids, and it's near an alley way that has all kinds of drug dealing and hanging out going on. No wonder it was vandalized before they barely had it up. I know we're supposed to be working together with them, but honestly, I'm not sure they really want to listen."

When Partnerships Really Begin to Work

In the summer of 1995, the Mayor and Police Chief announced that the city of Owensboro would be adopting the pilot community policing program that had been sponsored by Free to Grow. The 4th Shift Policing Program, as it was called, would be funded by city dollars. Buoyed by this victory, the members of the Free to Grow Community Action Group met with community police officers to discuss ways to improve communication between the police and the residents. Officers suggested distributing community refrigerator magnets throughout the West End with the phone number of an anonymous tips hotline. Free to Grow group members worked with officers to make the message on the magnet more "user friendly" and then spent days knocking on doors. More than 1,000 magnets were handed out. As one group member shared, "We used the magnets as an opportunity to build relationships with other community members, to let them know what we were doing, and to get a feeling for how people were feeling about the police. And we even got a few more members out of the process." Police officers reported that calls to the hotline increased dramatically.

18. DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN BASED ON RESEARCH

Once your group has delineated a series of outcomes to guide its preliminary work, group members, working in collaboration with partners, may need to conduct additional research in order to begin their work. Doing thorough research is critical to developing a well informed understanding of an issue, and the players and factors that influence it. During the research phase, the Community Action Group should investigate background factors contributing to the issue, so that the group can formulate its long-term, intermediate, and short-term goals. The research phase should identify individuals, organizations, and institutions in the community that have knowledge of the identified issue. Information about the nature of the issue and its potential influences and solutions should be gathered through these knowledgeable community entities. The Community Action Group might also gather information from agency and governmental officials, as well as community residents affected by the issue. Other potential collaborators that could help support the group's efforts will often emerge during this phase of the work.

The Coalition should consider the following questions to determine the kind of research to pursue:

- What statistical information would be useful to them and why?
- What information do they need about current programs or policies that would help them understand the issue better? How might partners/collaborators help gain this understanding?
- What financial or budgetary information affects the issue that they have chosen?
- What information might they need from community residents that would assist them in analyzing the issue more completely?
- Where or to whom does the group need to go to gather this information?

The research process should not be protracted or extensive, but should be sufficient to gather the information that the group needs to take action. Often, one action leads to additional research, which leads to additional action. This evolving process informs the community action work, allowing the group to refine its strategies and activities as the complexities of an issue are more clearly understood.

The Research Process: An Owensboro Example

Three years into their work, the Owensboro Community Action Group identified as a priority issue illegal alcohol and drug sales, particularly to minors, at and around a neighborhood bar. In discussing the issue, they wondered whether the bar had a liquor license, who monitored licenses and infractions, and what could be done to rein in such activity. The group members learned that the local Alcoholic Beverage Control board holds the regulatory and enforcement authority related to liquor sales. Collectively, the Community Action Group members generated an extensive list of questions for members of the board, which they posed at a meeting scheduled at their request. As strategies related to reducing drug sales around the bar evolved, the group's activities led to later meetings with the prosecuting attorney and a local judge to ascertain information regarding probation and parole guidelines.

The Power of Knowledge: A Community Member's Perspective

"After the group started working with the police, there were a couple of major drug busts on the West End. But [many] of the people who were arrested were right back on the streets again. We were getting really frustrated and didn't know what to do. And then the police approached the group and asked us for help. They were feeling frustrated too, because repeat offenders were getting shock paroled, and they thought we might be able to do something. We started to ask to meet with the prosecuting attorney's office and with some of the judges. They were very polite, but I never felt like they really took us seriously… [So we started] to collect information on some of the people who had been arrested… their past records and the status of their cases… That research made a lot of difference because when we talked to people after that, they couldn't ignore the facts."

The research process should also determine which persons or institutions have the authority to address the issue chosen. Free to Grow staff should help group members stay focused on the purpose of their research, making sure that they gather enough critical information but do not prolong their investigation over an unnecessarily prolonged period.

Although research will be conducted in a non-confrontational manner, the community group members may begin to observe threatened, defensive, or angry reactions to some of their research activities. As the Community Action Group approaches local individuals, organizations, or institutions that hold authority with the aim of gathering information about a community concern, the group may accurately be perceived as challenging the status quo. It is crucial that the Community Action Group be explicit about its mission and direct about its research objectives.

It is also critical that the agency leadership be informed about the Community Action Group's research subjects and activities, since they may have ties to local decision-makers and power-holders. The directors' and partners' ties could help group members gain needed access for research. At the same time, they may well lead to the directors and partners absorbing some disgruntled response to the Coalition's perceived challenges. If they are not aware of the Coalition's activities, program leadership may be taken by surprise and therefore less able to lend effective support.

19. Develop a Strategic Plan

A strategic plan should guide your Community Action Group's research and assessment activities, as well its efforts to define roles for partners. Of course, a strategic plan cannot be carved in stone. As new information comes to light and events unfold at the local level, it will need modification. Nevertheless, group members need to develop and understand the core components of their strategy before moving into action.*

During your preliminary research work, your group may have uncovered some gaps between the expressed values of powerful community entities and their practices, policies, or funding priorities. It is critical that the Community Action Group identify and examine such contradictions, and attempt to rectify them with the strategies it formulates.

The following questions can help your group identify its strategies:

- What would you like to see happen?
- How might you resolve the issue?
- Based on the research, how might you achieve that goal?
- What strategies could you use to move the issue forward?
- How will you know if you are moving in the right direction with your actions?

The process of developing strategies can often bring together a large number of community members, public officials, and other organizations concerned with the issue. These diverse players may have distinctive perspectives on how to move forward. As your group attempts to build consensus, the following criteria can be used to assess each element of your strategic plan:

- Can you really implement the proposed strategy?
- Have you chosen the correct individuals or organizations to help you address the issue?
- Do the strategies give power to the group working on the issue?
- Do the strategies also further your organizational goals?
- Are the strategies within the experience of the group? Are they comfortable with them?
- Are your group leaders experienced enough to carry out the strategies?
- Will people enjoy working on or participating in them?
- Will they play positively in the media?

The AACS Head Start program Strategy Chart (included in the Appendices) provides a format that members of the Community Action Group can use to summarize their strategy. The summary should include:

1) goals: long-term, intermediate, and short-term;
2) organizational considerations: resources to put in, anticipated benefits of projects;
3) parties affected (stakeholders): who cares about the issue, who stands to lose or be upset if goals are attained;
4) power-holders: primary and secondary contacts; and
5) strategies: steps to carry out overall plan.

* A detailed example of a strategic plan is contained in the companion training manual, *Building Leadership for Community Development.*

20. Engage Other Residents to Support Your Agenda

As work on a particular issue moves forward, Community Action Group members should build in mechanisms to engage a broader group of residents in their efforts. As noted earlier, ongoing one-on-one interviews related to the identified issue can be used to both inform residents of the group's work and solicit their input and perspective on the issue. Community-based meetings throughout the action campaign can be used to mobilize residents in support of the group's work. These activities help to lend credibility to the group's agenda, allowing members to move successfully to leverage power in negotiations with community stakeholders.

21. Take Action

As your Community Action Group gathers information, builds relationships with partners, and considers strategies to address identified priorities, an action plan will begin to emerge. Working with staff members, the Community Action Group should begin to decide the following:

- ▲ What kind of action will they take in relation to the identified issue?
- ▲ Who will carry out these actions?
- ▲ When will the actions occur and for how long?
- ▲ What resources will be needed to carry out the actions?

While group members should be responsible for planning and carrying out the action plan, program staff should provide support, assist with coordinating activities, and facilitate the action process. An additional Strategy Chart is useful for organizing and monitoring the implementation of tactics, the individuals responsible for them, needed resources, and progress.

During implementation of the action plan, it is important to be aware of and attuned to the political environment within which the group is working. Although Community Action Group members themselves may not be able to influence those in power to create change, the group's partners or agency leadership may have relationships with other members of the community who wield more weight, and should use those relationships to their best advantage.

This is also the stage of the community development process when the actions of Community Action Groups are most likely to reverberate politically. The group's actions are likely to be visible—either through media coverage, public meetings, or other manifestations—and will aim to create lasting structural change. Because the group's actions may challenge the status quo, they may also challenge those who hold the power to keep policies, programs, and funding priorities as they have been. The Community Action Group and its members, Free to Grow, the Head Start agency, Free to Grow partners, and other entities that have joined in working on the issue may be subjected to efforts to discredit them or block their efforts. It is, therefore, particularly important that all parties involved are aware of the group's goals, understand that the strategies and actions are based on thorough research, and support the group's efforts.

Moving Into Action

"When the Coalition does set up something—an action or a research meeting—it is so awesome to see community residents pulling it off," says the Kentucky Head Start Free to Grow Community Development Specialist. "After being in the background, helping people get ready, I get nervous when the meeting's actually going to happen. But it's pretty awesome to see them in action. You cannot help but feel this excitement go through the room. And then a public official or agency representative asks, "Who was that?" and you say, "A community resident." Because they get up and introduce themselves as concerned residents or parents or whatever, but they always introduce themselves and take some pride in being part of the Head Start Free to Grow initiative."

21. Assessing Community Outcomes: How Did You Do?

When the community group's action plan is completed, the group should reflect on its experience to evaluate what happened. Coalition members should discuss questions such as:

- ▲ Did we do what we said we would?;
- ▲ Did our actions accomplish the outcomes that we set to guide our work?;
- ▲ What went right? What went wrong?
- ▲ What might we do differently next time?
- ▲ How did group members feel about the process of the work?
- ▲ How might we change the process as we move forward?
- ▲ Where do we go from here?

Free to Grow's Impact: A Police Officer's Perspective

"When Free to Grow first started down on the West End, we didn't even respond to calls from the neighborhood. The police hated going down there—people would throw bottles at us and tensions were high. It's a whole different story now. We respect the community more and they feel better about us—and Free to Grow is responsible for that. By pushing for community policing, the program really helped to change things, and the staff and residents who have been involved have really built bridges between the community and the police. Now we come to the residents when we need their help, and they feel like they can come to us."

Free to Grow's Impact: A United Way Director's Perspective

"Free to Grow doesn't often get credit for being behind some of the changes that are happening on the West End, but if you look closely, you can see that their work has really made a difference. When the Alcohol Beverage and Control Board started to carry out sting operations, no one said that Free to Grow was responsible, but if they hadn't requested meetings with the officials and questioned them about things that they saw on the West End, it probably wouldn't have happened. And would the City Manager have approached a group of residents after the recent shooting on the West End before Free to Grow began working? I'm not so sure."

Program staff should help the group evaluate their work. During the assessment process, they should work to ensure that the group's ground rules are adhered to when members offer any criticism of the process. They should also work closely with group members as they begin to determine the group's next steps, helping members to move back to their analysis of their assessment to determine other priority issues for action.

As implementation moves forward, program leadership should also take time to more objectively assess the impact of the program's community-strengthening work. While many impacts at the community level cannot be observed for two or three years, some changes in participants' behavior, as well as the surrounding community can be seen earlier. Questions to consider include:

- Is the Community Action Group stable or growing? Is it acting with greater self-sufficiency in moving its action agenda forward?
- Do community residents exercise increased leadership?
- Is there preliminary evidence of greater resident attachment to the neighborhood?
- Is there preliminary evidence that partners and community stakeholders act responsively to the prevention priorities identified?
- Has the community-strengthening component made a difference in the target area?
- How do you know? What evidence do you see?
- Which community risk factors have been reduced or protective factors increased during the time the community action work has been ongoing?
- Are the same changes evident in similar communities during the same period?

Anecdotal evidence, while an insufficient basis for evaluating the success of the community-strengthening component, may offer an immediate view of the impact that Free to Grow has on the lives of participating individuals, families, and communities. Increases in the self-assurance, assertiveness, and skillfulness of Coalition members may signal a greater capacity for leadership and effective community mobilization in the target area.

Baseline community participation data collected on members of the Community Action Group can also be compared to later participation levels to help determine changes in community leadership and engagement. Your baseline community assessment data can also be used to draw comparisons within the target community after a number of years of intervention.

Your program may want to enter into a relationship with a graduate school or research group within a local university to more accurately evaluate the impact of its community-strengthening interventions. This collaboration can provide important information for modifying or strengthening program management, as well as compelling documentation of the impact of your efforts.

Success on a Smaller Scale: Seeing Coalition Members Become Community Leaders

When assessing whether the Community Coalition has succeeded in achieving its goals and projected outcomes, it is essential to look at the results of its community actions. But the effect can also be discerned on a smaller scale in the transformation of Coalition members from residents with shared concerns into powerful forces for change in their neighborhood.

A Community Support Assistant in Owensboro witnessed significant changes in both the Coalition group and its individual members, even within her first six months of working with Free to Grow. "To see the personal growth—the self-confidence, the self-esteem—within the members themselves is impressive," she explained. "I've seen two or three people's confidence level really grow from one meeting to the next. To see them able to present themselves in a very professional, very straightforward and honest way, where they're not intimidated by city or county officials, or even other community residents, that's been a big accomplishment. They met with the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, the probation and parole departments, the Circuit Court judge, and the Commonwealth Attorney. They're getting very good at refocusing themselves, and have really garnered some excellent information about how substance abuse and the judicial system all work together, and who is responsible for what."

She went on, describing how "it's something to see that level of confidence get to the point where you have some very proud people: proud of the things they're able to accomplish for their community, proud of the work they're doing, proud of their involvement with the Coalition. And really wanting to be involved—not just because it's something to do or because they think it brings some kind of prestige—but because they see the purpose, they understand the reason why the Coalition even exists."

23. Celebrate Successes

While evaluation and assessment are important to strong program implementation, don't forget to celebrate victories, both big and small. Community-building takes hard work over an extended time period, and taking the time to celebrate steps along the way provides affirmation and support to program participants. Coalition and staff members should put aside time during the program year to celebrate together as the community action process moves forward. Group victories on major issues should also be celebrated with the community as a whole, to thank them for the work they have done and to strengthen the group's base for future work.

F. Conclusion

The Kentucky Model described in this manual requires a commitment to assuring the well-being of young children *in* Head Start *and beyond*. The keys to successful implementation are persistence, open lines of communication, a willingness to improvise and—when the inevitable setbacks occur—a sense of humor.

This manual has tried to unpack the toolbox that has proven useful and effective in Kentucky. As you use it, try out those tools. See how they feel and how they do the job. You will surely want to use some, discard others, modify some and add your own.

Many of the steps that go into a successful program are intangible. No manual can anticipate or provide guidance for the specific conditions of particular communities. No handbook can dictate strategies for dealing with the emotional and political resistance that usually meet efforts to change the status quo. In the final analysis, people and the communities they form are—thankfully—diverse, idiosyncratic, and unique. We can provide guidelines, but the work of Free to Grow will always require creativity, spontaneity, and continuous improvement.

We wish you all the best as you apply the Kentucky Model in your community. We welcome your feedback and suggestions, so that we can strengthen both the model and the manual that describes it. Please send us your suggestions, or contact us at ls273@columbia.edu.