



Preconception to Age 5 Network Strategic Framework

2022

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I. Executive Summary

Led by Fresno Cradle to Career (C2C) as the backbone entity, a multiagency collaborative effort produced [The Preconception - Age 5 Blueprint for Funding and Advocacy](#) (Blueprint) to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Fresno County's youngest children and their families. This Blueprint soon gave rise to the Preconception to Age 5 Network (P-5 Network) in 2019. Both the Blueprint and the P-5 Network were intended to be key contributors to Fresno County's ambitious 10-year community investment plan, called *Developing the Region's Inclusive and Vibrant Economy (DRIVE)*. This plan, which was informed by a 300-person steering committee, a long history of place-based collaboration, and an authentic commitment to racial equity, aims to develop an inclusive, vibrant, and sustainable economy for residents in the greater Fresno region through the implementation of three strategic pillars—economic development, human capital, and neighborhood development. A significant subset of the human capital pillar focuses on the preconception to five age range.

The P-5 Network aims to contribute to greater Fresno County's economic mobility and prosperity ambitions. Evidence-based associations between early childhood education investments and economic mobility suggest that commitment to the former leads to the following:

- increases in educational attainment and wages¹
- reductions in negative criminal justice interactions²
- decreases in the need for special education services³
- reductions in chronic disease⁴
- strengthened cognitive and character skills⁵
- greater levels of dignity, agency, and engagement in society⁶

The P-5 Network approached WestEd to support the development of a strategic framework that will strengthen its ability to support the development and education of young children, which often requires stabilizing both family and community dynamics. WestEd entered into the agreement with the commitment to build upon the P-5 Network's success while also guiding the collaborative in exciting new directions and opportunities for growth and sustainability.

¹ Hendren, Nathaniel and Ben Sprung-Keyser. "A Unified Welfare Analysis of Government Policies." Opportunity Insights. July 2019.

² Hendren, Nathaniel and Ben Sprung-Keyser. "A Unified Welfare Analysis of Government Policies." Opportunity Insights. July 2019.

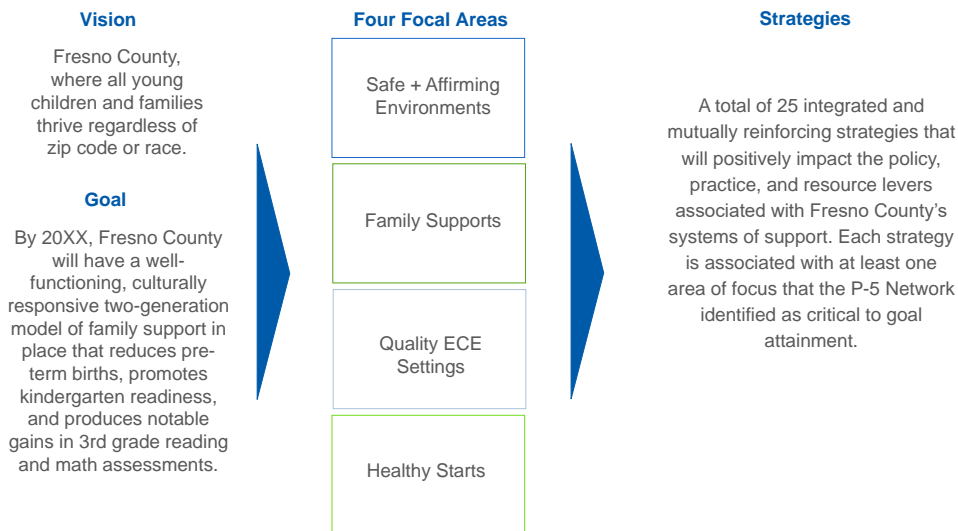
³ Hendren, Nathaniel and Ben Sprung-Keyser. "A Unified Welfare Analysis of Government Policies." Opportunity Insights. July 2019.

⁴ Hendren, Nathaniel and Ben Sprung-Keyser. "A Unified Welfare Analysis of Government Policies." Opportunity Insights. July 2019.

⁵ Heckman. (n.d.). *Invest in early childhood development: Reduce deficits, strengthen the economy.* <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/invest-in-early-childhood-development-reduce-deficits-strengthen-the-economy/>

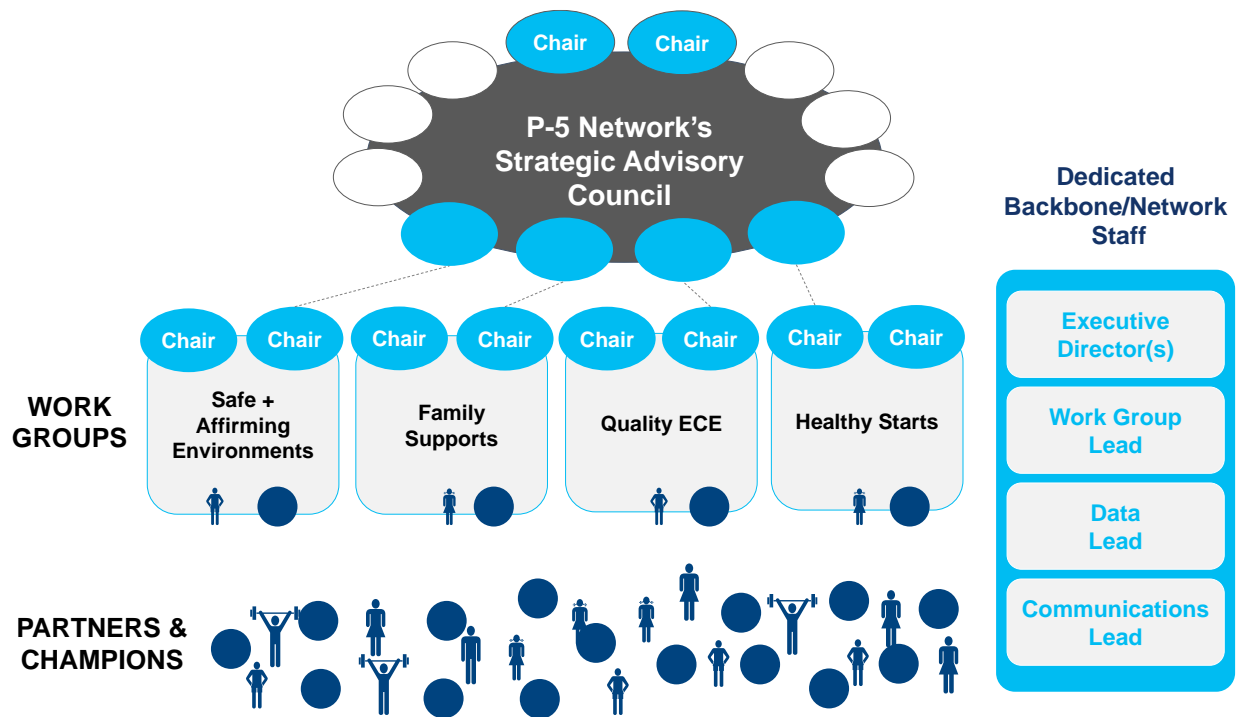
⁶ Heckman, n.d.

To bring this integrated vision to life requires both a refreshed strategy and a new operational model. Specifically, the P–5 Network will reorient around four focal areas that support its goal to establish a well-functioning, culturally responsive, two-generation model of family support that reduces preterm births, promotes kindergarten readiness, and produces notable gains in 3rd grade reading and math assessments within Fresno County by 20XX⁷. The four anchoring areas of work are Safe + Affirming Environments, Family Supports, Quality Early Care and Education (ECE) Settings, and Healthy Starts. As shown in the illustration that follows, each of these focal areas is supported by a set of mutually reinforcing strategies that will positively impact the policy, practice, and resource levers associated with Fresno County’s systems of support.



To guide planning and enable implementation of the new strategic framework, the P–5 Network will reorganize into a larger, more integrated structure consisting of **Dedicated Staff**, a **Strategic Advisory Council**, and **Work Groups**, as well as organizational **partners** and individual **champions**. Together, they will comprehensively facilitate the integrated and inclusive systems of support for families attempting to break the cycle of poverty within Fresno County. The figure below illustrates the described structure:

⁷ To be determined by the P-5 Network following funder calibration. A minimum of eight years should be assumed.



Each part of the structure fulfills a unique and critical role in the walk toward systems change:

- **Dedicated P–5 Network Staff** will facilitate the contributions of all participants in the P–5 Network by guiding vision and strategy, establishing shared measurement practices, mobilizing resources, and supporting aligned activities among partners and champions.
- The **Strategic Advisory Council** will provide **strategic guidance** to dedicated staff and **ambassadorship** for the P–5 Network strategy overall.
- The four **Work Groups**, each **chaired by two members** of the P–5 Network and **supported by dedicated P–5 Network Staff** (e.g., the **Work Group Lead**), will develop concrete **action plans** and help implement those plans.
- Organizational **partners**, who may participate in Work Groups or the Strategic Advisory Council or contribute in other ways, will **commit assets** and **align their activities** around the strategic objectives of the P–5 strategy.
- Individual **champions** will **engage as Strategic Advisory Council participants or advocates for and implementers of** the P–5 strategy.

Activating these strategies and structures will require a phased approach to ensure successful adoption and execution. While a full staging of activities begins on page 23, the near-term sequence is proposed below. Be sure to keep in mind that some activities require more labor hours and/or higher start-up costs than others to complete, so the listing below is the time frame in which the P–5 Network will begin working on the stated activity in earnest.

2022–2024

- ✓ Expand home visitation programming to high-need BIPOC zip codes; offer differentiated spaces to accommodate varying comfort levels with strangers being in homes
- ✓ Promote the safety and well-being of all involved in home visitation through the creation of multilingual practice standards, uniformed protocols to follow if home visits threaten physical safety, and guaranteed access to personal protective equipment (PPE)
- ✓ Lend voice to clean air and agricultural and industrial safety advocacy efforts
- ✓ Shape influencer strategy; identify real life and social media influencers
- ✓ Begin to form new allyships with mid-to-large-sized employers in Fresno County
- ✓ Strengthen career pathways for the ECE workforce by advocating for public policies and funding that increase compensation, promote professional development (PD), and support the recruitment and retention of qualified ECE professionals
- ✓ Expand current efforts around Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) licensure, training, and promotion of prevailing caregiver practices

The road ahead is ambitious, yet attainable. The key to success is understanding that the members of the P–5 Network can go farther together when it comes to securing a future where young children and families in Fresno County can thrive regardless of zip code or race.

II. Context for a Refreshed Strategic Framework

Led by Fresno C2C as the backbone entity, a multiagency collaborative effort produced [The Preconception - Age 5 Blueprint for Funding and Advocacy](#) (Blueprint) to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Fresno County's youngest children and their families. This Blueprint soon gave rise to the Preconception to Age 5 Network (P–5 Network) in 2019. Both the Blueprint and the P–5 Network were intended to be key contributors to Fresno County's ambitious 10-year community investment plan, called *Developing the Region's Inclusive and Vibrant Economy (DRIVE)*. This plan, which was informed by a 300-person steering committee, a long history of place-based collaboration, and an authentic commitment to racial equity, aims to develop an inclusive, vibrant, and sustainable economy for residents in the greater Fresno region through the implementation of three strategic pillars—economic development, human capital, and neighborhood development. A significant subset of the human capital pillar focuses on the preconception-to-5 age range.

The P–5 Network aims to contribute to greater Fresno County's economic mobility and prosperity ambitions. Evidence-based associations between early childhood education investments and economic mobility suggest that commitment to the former leads to the following:

- increases in educational attainment and wages⁸
- reductions in negative criminal justice interactions⁹
- decreases in the need for special education services¹⁰
- reductions in chronic disease¹¹
- strengthened cognitive and character skills¹²
- greater levels of dignity, agency, and engagement in society¹³

A high-level framework was produced to guide the P–5 Network shortly before context shifted and preexisting problems in the P–5 landscape were exacerbated by a global pandemic. This shift in context both reinforced existing and elevated new insights and opportunities for the P–5 Network's consideration. In 2022, the P–5 Network approached WestEd to support the development of a strategic framework that will strengthen its ability to support the P–5 landscape in Fresno County. In a co-creative fashion, the P–5 Network and WestEd built upon the P–5 Network's early success while also guiding the collaborative in exciting new directions and opportunities for growth and sustainability.

⁸ Hendren, Nathaniel and Ben Sprung-Keyser. "A Unified Welfare Analysis of Government Policies." Opportunity Insights. July 2019.

⁹ Hendren, Nathaniel and Ben Sprung-Keyser. "A Unified Welfare Analysis of Government Policies." Opportunity Insights. July 2019.

¹⁰ Hendren, Nathaniel and Ben Sprung-Keyser. "A Unified Welfare Analysis of Government Policies." Opportunity Insights. July 2019.

¹¹ Hendren, Nathaniel and Ben Sprung-Keyser. "A Unified Welfare Analysis of Government Policies." Opportunity Insights. July 2019.

¹² Heckman, n.d.

¹³ Heckman, n.d.

Insights and Opportunities

Embrace a more integrated approach

The compounded needs of many children and families in Fresno County was a recurring theme throughout this strategy-focused engagement. At the same time, many acknowledged a level of fragmentation and siloism among service providers in Fresno County that, at best, underserved children and families. Members of the P–5 Network came to realize that the compounded needs of many residents could best be served by integrated solutions. This new orientation requires the P–5 Network to shift its strategy and approach if the systems of support in Fresno County are to break cycles of intergenerational poverty and truly support economic mobility.¹⁴

“The other thing I would say is, with our 211 data, we see the biggest needs remain survival related – food, housing, utility assistance, and things of that nature. So, when you’re talking about working families, we have to realize which things are top-of-mind day to day.”

—Interviewee

“ACES scores are high in Fresno County. Nobody is ever working on just one issue.”

—Interviewee

Furthermore, renewed value was placed on the two-generation approach to family well-being so that programmatic interventions have a higher probability of sustained success. By simultaneously creating greater stability within the family unit, offering services to caregivers

“How do we power share and shift so that our customers perspectives are deeply embedded in the priorities and resources? It’s a pretty significant shift.”

—Interviewee

in need, improving caregivers’ life and parenting skills, and providing wraparound supports needed by children, multiplier effects are created, allowing children and families to thrive. Such multiplier effects are nearly impossible to achieve when parents and children are enrolled in disparate interventions.¹⁵

Expand the collaborative table

Inclusivity, community engagement, and racial equity are all highly valued levers for systems change within the P–5 Network. And while a healthy baseline has been established in these areas, several people asserted throughout the course of the engagement that ample room exists for increased investment in these areas. Specifically, Fresno’s Residents Council, in collaboration with

¹⁴ WestEd synthesis of interviews, analysis, and planning sessions

¹⁵ Anderson, T., Popkin, S. J., McDaniel, M., Coffey, A., Gold, A., Spauster, P., Gwam, P. Gaddy, M. & Okoli, A. (2021). *Developing two-generation approaches in communities: Final report from Family-Centered Community Change*. Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/developing-two-generation-approaches-communities>

The Children’s Movement, was elevated as an under-realized asset for decision-making, message amplification, and advocacy.¹⁶

“We really have to do a better job of deep engagement with the employer community because there’s only a few examples of ways in which employers are showing up for moms and young kids, but it is in no way close to being an expectation and really a cultural norm in the business community in Fresno County.”

—Interviewee

Similarly, the incorporation of the private sector and public officials into deliberative conversations and aligned P–5-oriented strategies was named as an opportunity for greater impact. Areas of investment where these targets could be most additive take the forms of financial

“Expectations need to be clear so people can get on board. [They] need to think about partners strategically.”

—Interviewee

funding, organizational policy change, and public messaging.

Better harness the power of the partner network

P–5 Network partners had uneven levels of clarity on strategy, roles, and expectations. The Network lacked a unifying “North Star,” or clear goal that the collaborative could align around. With ambiguity around the shared purpose of the Network and questions around authority and accountability, contributions and engagement within the Network often fell short of full potential.¹⁷

However, the vast majority of P–5 Network partners remain committed to the promise of the collaborative.¹⁸ Enhancing the operational structure of the P–5 Network could help to more consistently harness the potential of the collaborative by reinforcing the common purpose, clearing pathways for integrated contributions, and facilitating opportunities for wider collaboration.

“My presumption is that there is a huge dearth of talent within our resident communities who are not plugged into policy discussions despite the fact that their voices can be incredibly valuable. We need to figure out how to tap through their own leadership.”

—Interviewee

Collectively, these insights helped to highlight the need and readiness for exciting shifts in both the P–5 strategy and its operating structure. The shift from explicit program delivery to an integrated, systems-focused strategy is of particular note. P–5 Network partners have reoriented themselves around those areas where they should lead, champion, and support others in making Fresno County a place where all young children can thrive regardless of race or zip code.

¹⁶ WestEd synthesis of interviews, analysis, and planning sessions

¹⁷ WestEd partner interviews and analysis

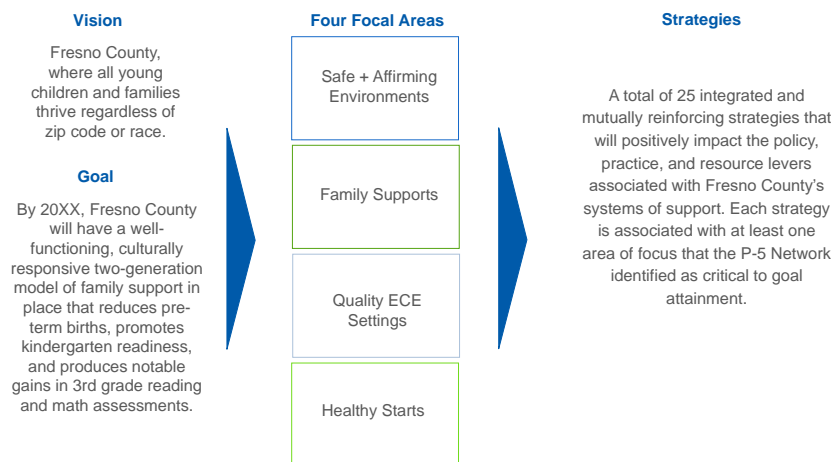
¹⁸ WestEd partner interviews and analysis

III. Strategic Framework

Overview

A canon of research has documented the power of place to impact an individual’s health, academic achievement, public safety, and economic outcomes. For young children in particular, their life course is highly correlated to the socioeconomic circumstances of their birth conditions.¹⁹ Moreover, there is a growing body of research that suggests a mother’s health and well-being years before conception can impact a child’s development.²⁰ Family systems theory suggests that as parents improve their education and get better jobs with higher earnings, they will invest more in their children’s in home learning,²¹ transfer lower levels of stress into the home environment,²² and spend more time interacting with their children,²³ all of which boosts family functioning and healthy child development. The P–5 collaborative has made the evidence-based decision to reduce the predictability birth geography has on opportunity and life success by employing the two-generation approach as a means for addressing the complex challenges associated with economic mobility in Fresno County.

The issues facing the P–5 landscape are clearly complex and multigenerational. As a result, the overarching goal, focal areas, and strategies that make up this strategic framework are intended to be cross-sector in nature, integrated in design, and mutually reinforced through execution.



¹⁹ Chetty, R., Hendren, N., Kline, P., & Saez, E. (2014). Where is the land of Opportunity? The geography of intergenerational mobility in the United States. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 129(4), 1553–1623. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qju022>

²⁰ National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2010). Early experiences can alter gene expression and affect long-term development: Working Paper No. 10. Source. <http://www.developingchild.net>; Haartsen, R., Jones, E., & Johnson, M. (2016). Human brain development over the early years. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 10, 149–154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2016.05.015>

²¹ Oreopoulos and Petronijevic 2013; Kornich and Furstenberg 2013; Yeung, Linver, and Brooks-Gunn 2002

²² Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn 2014; Conger et al. 2002; Yoshikawa, Aber, and Beardslee 2012

²³ Guryan, Hurst, and Kearney 2008; Kalil, Ryan, and Corey 2012

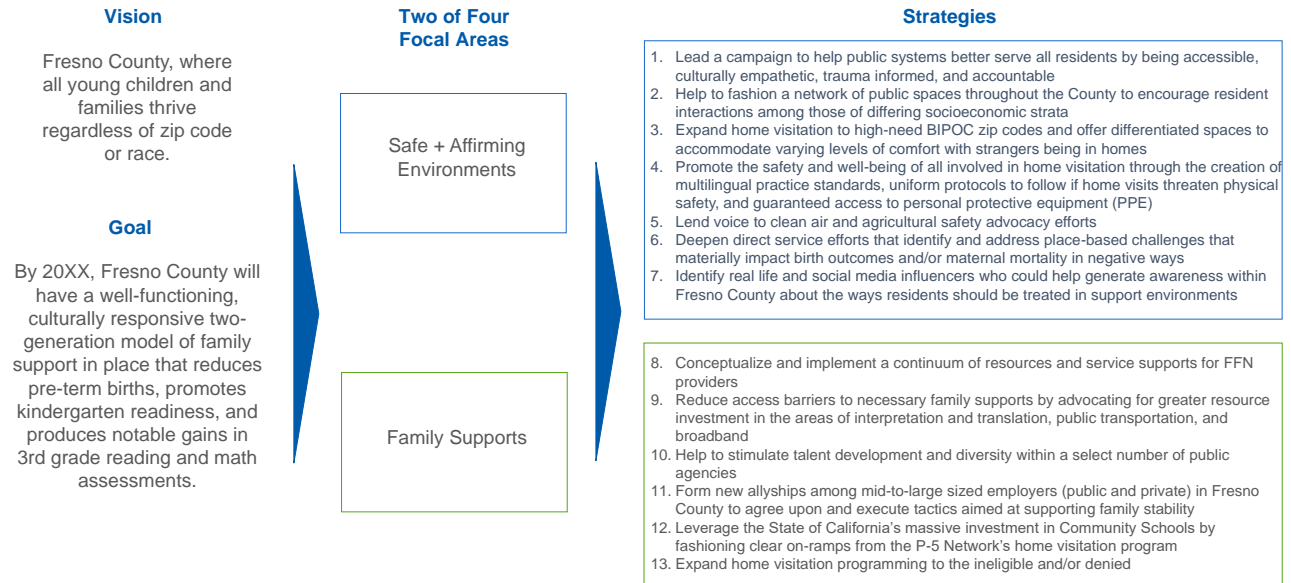
A newly articulated vision for the P–5 Network is supported by one goal to which the entire collaborative will orient. Members of the P–5 Network were drawn to the unifying goal noted above because it can only be achieved through strength in all four focal areas, it explicitly acknowledges the two-generation model being utilized within the P–5 Network, and it ladders the work of the collaborative further into the K–12 arena (which more fully aligns with the preconception-to-age-8 span typically associated with the early care and education [ECE] sector).²⁴

The P–5 Network elevated 25 strategies on which this strategic framework rests. Each strategy is associated with at least one area of focus that the P–5 Network identified as critical to goal attainment. Some strategies already have quite a bit of traction, and others are newly adopted by the P–5 Network.



In the pages that follow, framing detail will be offered for each of the 25 strategies that will be executed, sometimes concurrently, during the 8-year period associated with this strategic framework. The **seven strategies that the P–5 Network designated as a priority are followed by an asterisk (*)** for easy identification. The P–5 Network, through its steering committee and Work Groups, will build on the framing detail below to inclusively create time-bound action plans for each strategy. Strategies are listed according to the focal area to which they are tethered.

²⁴ The two-generation approach is conventionally defined as having intentional and coordinated strategies that lead to parents having support and access to family-supporting wages, children meeting or exceeding developmental and academic targets, and caregivers having the knowledge and tools to fully invest in and support children in meeting those targets.



Safe + Affirming Environments

There are seven strategies that support the Safe + Affirming Environments focal area. Together, they aim to protect the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of caregivers and children as they navigate Fresno’s systems of support. Too often, preventable indignities, disrespect, and cultural incongruence give rise to long-standing barriers that keep individuals from seeking and receiving services from the institutions intended to lessen their burdens. Some of the strategies that follow build on activities already taking place within the P–5 Network today, while others will move the collaborative into new spaces of persuasion and influence. All require an understanding of the chronic levels of compounded trauma and race-based disparity experienced by some in Fresno County in order to have their greatest effect.

1. Lead a campaign to help public systems better serve all residents by being accessible, culturally empathetic, trauma-informed, and accountable.*

This strategy aims to improve individual behaviors and organizational practices by elevating customer and constituent challenges and publicly offering solutions to help resolve them. It requires that the P–5 Network secure professional services from a credible third party to develop and execute a public satisfaction survey on social service agencies and publish the results, potentially in scorecard fashion, at a strategically significant time alongside recommendations for improvement. The P–5 Network should continue this practice in regular intervals (e.g., every 3–5 years). While the survey is being developed and deployed, members of the Work Group focused on Safe + Affirming environments should begin to create tip sheets for frontline staff with social service agencies that the P–5 Network Executive Director(s) can use when brokering partnership opportunities with agency heads.

Early traction exists within this realm since P–5 leaders in the maternal health sector described transforming standards of care in health care to be higher quality, culturally

respectful, and culturally congruent. Examples included the development of the Black Doula and Glow! training curricula. P–5 Network meetings have also been leveraged successfully to build leaders’ collective capacity to implement strategies that center racial equity and community engagement.

2. Help to fashion a network of public spaces throughout the County to encourage resident interactions among those of differing socioeconomic strata

Evidence suggests that “access to safe, high quality green space benefits individuals across the lifespan, enhancing their physical, mental, social and spiritual health and well-being.”²⁵ WestEd’s evaluation of the P–5 Network also revealed the powerful impact that sharing stories and being proximate has on generating empathy and building connections among diverse community members in Fresno County. The P–5 Network can work on this strategy in several ways. First, they can work through formal channels to champion, monitor, and hold accountable the equitable rollout of the Fresno Parks 2050 master plan. Second, members of the P–5 Network can use their creativity to get select property/facility owners to (temporarily) designate (portions of) land and/or facilities for public use in exchange for something of value (e.g., extension of mission, positive press, ability to keynote an event associated with the P–5 Network or Fresno C2C, accelerate an existing neighborhood revitalization strategy, etc.).

3. Expand home visitation programming to high-need BIPOC zip codes and offer differentiated spaces to accommodate varying levels of comfort with strangers being in homes.*

Expansion of home visitation services existed as an aspiration before this strategy engagement began. This strategy should be viewed as a continuation of existing work that will build on the data-driven approach to identifying and targeting certain high-need neighborhoods that was used during the inception of the P–5 Network. It will also build on the culturally empathetic approaches already in practice.

4. Promote the safety and well-being of all involved in home visitation through the creation of multilingual practice standards, uniformed protocols to follow if home visits threaten physical safety, and guaranteed access to personal protective equipment (PPE).

This strategy should also be viewed as a continuation of existing work within the P–5 Network. Throughout WestEd’s evaluation, home visitors discussed how existing safety training could benefit from greater depth and reinforcement. The evaluation also surfaced

²⁵ Townsend, M., Henderson-Wilson, C., Warner, E., & Weiss L. (2015). *Healthy parks, healthy people: The state of the evidence, Parks Victoria*. School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University.

how families appreciated efforts to match them with home visitors who had familiarity with their languages and cultures.

The teased-out strategy should also appreciate that home visitors have a range of mental, physical, and emotional health profiles with which to contend in a public health environment that continues to present recurring challenges. A solid foundation has already been implemented within the Home Visitation Network and, throughout the engagement, was frequently noted as an area deserving of attention. It should also build upon the preexisting work acknowledging and attempting to address the mental, physical, and emotional health needs of public health workers, including home visitors, in the aftermath of a global pandemic. Executing this strategy involves a continuation of work conducted by the existing home visitation Work Group (i.e., the Home Visitation Network) to address and expand supports for home visitors in Fresno County. Finally, as the P–5 Network moves forward, it should incorporate more intensive trauma-informed care and trust-building training between health care professionals and community members.

5. Lend voice to clean air and agricultural and industrial safety advocacy efforts.

Many residents within Fresno County (a) are agricultural workers who are regularly exposed to pesticides and/or (b) live in areas that are proximate to industrial farmland and the significant levels of air pollution it creates. Prolonged exposure to these types of pollutants negatively impacts the life course of parents, children, and the unborn. The P–5 Network should regularly offer its collective voice of support to air and agricultural safety advocacy efforts. This could look like writing joint op-eds, signing onto letters these adjacent efforts send to elected officials, sharing relevant data to shape upstream and downstream messages, and partnering on select events.

Leaders of the Fresno Grows Best Babies Zone initiative have already progressed in this area and may have insights to offer the larger Network. Specifically, these leaders engaged on issues of air quality monitoring (AB617) and a rezoning initiative to reduce air pollution and odor from a rendering plant in West Fresno.

6. Deepen direct service efforts that identify and address place-based challenges that materially impact birth outcomes and/or maternal mortality in negative ways.*

This strategy should also be viewed as a continuation of existing work within the P–5 Network. Leaders in the maternal and child health sector have openly explored adopting a social determinants of health approach to reducing disparities in birth outcomes in Fresno County. Additionally, the Black Maternal Wellness and Innovation Lab’s #RUListeningtoHer campaign brought community members together with public health workers and community leaders to engage in a dialogue about birth justice. Further efforts to deepen direct service efforts should be scoped with scale in mind.

Significant opportunity exists to innovatively leverage California’s massive Community Schools investment to grow aspects of the P–5 Network’s programming. Community Schools generally embrace the types of whole child, evidence-based strategies that could buffer school-aged children from life-altering impacts of losing a mother in child birth or experiencing a chronically depressed mother should a newborn sibling not survive the first months of life or should the mother suffer from untreated post-partum depression.

7. Identify real life and social media influencers who could help generate awareness within Fresno County about the ways residents should be treated in support environments.

An influencer strategy uses trusted or knowledgeable individuals in a niche community to positively position a product, service, or message. Online and offline influencers will be valuable to the P–5 Network, as they come with an established base of supporters and carry notable amounts of credibility and name recognition with targeted segments of Fresno County’s population. They will be able to reach and persuade some Fresno County residents in ways that members of the P–5 Network cannot. The keys to shaping a formal influencer strategy include setting goals around public awareness and persuasion; identifying the target audience; determining which attributes are desired in an influencer; identifying and vetting the public profiles of the influencers identified; documenting terms of engagement; wooing influencers that do not present risk of reputational damage; agreeing to P–5 Network–created message frames and cadence and the platforms from which the P–5 message frames should be asserted; and measuring efforts and outcomes.

Family Supports

There are six strategies that support the Family Supports focal area. Together, they aim to promote and reinforce healthy, stable family structures through equitable and coherent policies and practices offered by service providers in Fresno County. The focus on organizational policies and practices is a meaningful predicate to larger scale systems change. P–5 Network members embraced a phased approach to this proposed work, with a preference for establishing temporary solutions that circumvent existing barriers to family supports while longer term systems transformation plans are being designed and negotiated with social service agency leads.

8. Conceptualize and implement a continuum of resources and service supports for FFN providers.

For many families, the most appropriate choice for child care is a family member or neighbor. This type of child care is often referred to as “informal” or “Family, Friend, and Neighbor” (FFN). It is often believed that FFN child care offers levels of trust, accessibility, affordability, cultural alignment, and flexibility that are harder to find in formal, regulated child care settings. Given this context, there will always be a strong presence of FFN providers in the ECE system. However, these ECE providers may or may not view

themselves as child care providers by profession, which makes efforts to improve quality of care very layered.

This Work Group of the P–5 Network has a number of avenues from which to build on the lessons of others. A few examples include the Build Initiative’s national technical assistance series on [Home-Based Child Care Networks: Supporting Family, Friend, and Neighbor Providers](#) and the [California Child Care Resource and Referral Network’s evidence-based supports](#). Additionally, the P–5 Network should also seek as much detail as they can source from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation about their near [decade long investment in promising community-driven approaches that support FFN providers with tools and resources](#).

The partnership between the Fresno County Office of Education and Central Valley Children’s Services Network is a promising start to including FFN providers in the P–5 Network’s professional development (PD) opportunities since the child care career pathways program has a track for FFN providers; child care leaders described an intentional bridge between the Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP) and the career pathways program for FFN providers; and child care implementers described the resource and referral department as a strength of the collaborative because of the centralized services, track record of connecting families to resources, and preexisting relationships with FFN providers in Fresno County.

9. Reduce access barriers to necessary family supports by advocating for greater resource investment in the areas of interpretation and translation, public transportation, and broadband.

There are many situations in Fresno County where residents who desire support cannot connect with available services within the County due to matters of inaccessibility. Members of the P–5 Network most frequently named suboptimal public transportation, lack of interpretation/translation services, and/or broadband inequities as the biggest access challenges. There are a number of ways to reduce barriers to access in these areas that the P–5 Network can consider:

- **Interpretation/Translation:** WestEd evaluation findings of current P–5 implementation efforts note that P–5 leaders described addressing access barriers by offering child care during social service sessions (paused due to the pandemic), translating materials and presentations into multiple languages, or providing stipends for participation. While this is a respectable start, opportunity exists to offer more in-person interpretation services, to broaden the number of languages in which written materials are translated, and to hire more people from these underrepresented communities who can instinctively leverage their linguistic abilities and cultural identities to support Fresno County families. While this is a resource-intensive endeavor, it is a shorter term investment that could pay dividends. A useful reference might be the interpretation practices used by The Residents Council,

where meetings often include live interpretation. This practice supports meaningful participation from non-English speaking community members.

- **Transportation:** In the short term, heat maps can be developed that pinpoint where public transportation is unreliable or nonexistent. These maps should be superimposed over the neighborhoods the P-5 Network already targets. Where overlap exists, philanthropic dollars should be secured to fund rideshare accounts or procure rideshare gift cards so that parents and caregivers with specific social service needs (e.g., pre- and postnatal care, well-baby visits, etc.) are able to get to their appointments. In the long term, the P-5 Network should leverage philanthropic dollars to outsource a study that quantifies the negative impacts transportation barriers have on Fresno County (e.g., X% of children miss medical appointments, Y% of parents are chronically unemployed, Z% of expectant persons delay seeing a medical professional, etc.).
- **Broadband:** The pandemic arguably worsened the long-standing digital divide. Now, more than ever before, education, employment, social service, and healthcare service delivery is reliant on online mechanisms. The P-5 Network should use its collective strength to join, publicly champion, and periodically reinforce efforts being led by The Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion (FCDI), a cross-sector collaboration being led by Fresno County and Fresno Unified School District.

10. Help to stimulate talent development and diversity within a select number of public agencies.

The networked reach of the P-5 Network positions it well to serve as a positive external stimulant to the talent acquisition pipelines at several public agencies. By increasing the numbers of knowledgeable; empathetic; and racially, ethnically, and linguistically representative staff within social service agencies, organizational policies and practices stand a greater chance of being questioned and changed in ways that yield policies and practices with higher levels of equity and coherence. The P-5 Network should begin to methodically promote position vacancies through the P-5 Network communication channels and strategically encourage strong staff looking to leave P-5 Network partner organizations to consider roles within public agencies. When strong staff from P-5 partner organizations seek such roles, the Executive Director(s) should unfailingly offer to submit letters of support. Perhaps the most recognized place-based model bridging education to economic mobility, Harlem Children's Zone, has a comparable talent development strategy that it has been using for decades.

The need for the strategy is supported by data obtained through the evaluation survey that revealed more P-5 Network collaborators from public organizations identified as White (46%) and spoke only English fluently (56%) than did individuals at private/nonprofit organizations (20% and 39%, respectively). Early traction for this strategy exists within the P-5 Network as leaders across sectors, but especially those in the maternal/child health

sector, reported engaging in hiring practices to ensure that the workforce is reflective of the community being served in terms of race, language(s) spoken, or lived experience relevant to the families/providers served.

11. Form new allyships among mid-to-large-sized employers in Fresno County to agree upon and execute tactics aimed at supporting family stability.

Employers, families, and the community alike will benefit if employers of significant size can align with the P–5 Network on a few family-sustaining principles that can lead to stabilizing employment practices. Conversations should begin around those jolts to families that are either frequent or hardest to recover from. For example, engaging in predictable scheduling practices and guaranteed minimum hours, pooling funds with other employers to offer emergency child care assistance, eliminating degree requirements when they are not necessary for job fulfillment, offering paid sick leave at full salary levels, and removing candidate names and gender identifiers from application materials to minimize bias are all matters to consider. Private sector organizations that engage in opportunity employment practices (like the ones noted) typically build business value through increased retention, easier diversification of staff, and improved brand reputation.²⁶ These relationships will take some time to cultivate; starting this journey in 2023 is highly recommended.

12. Leverage the State of California’s massive investment in Community Schools by fashioning clear on-ramps from the P–5 Network’s home visitation program.

As mentioned in strategy 6 in the Safe + Affirming Environments focal area, significant opportunity exists to innovatively leverage California’s \$3 billion Community Schools investment to grow aspects of the P–5 Network’s programming, like home visitation. Key tenets of the budget should guide the fashioning of clear connections to the home visitation program, such as expanding Medi-Cal coverage for income-eligible seniors with an acknowledgment that many children in the state rely on grandparents for caregiving, supporting maternal health and well-being by providing uninterrupted health care coverage to postpartum parents for a full year so that high rates of preventable maternal mortality that disproportionately impact Black and Indigenous communities are addressed, and advancing family-centered care in Medi-Cal that will support integrated physical and behavioral health screenings and services for the entire family.

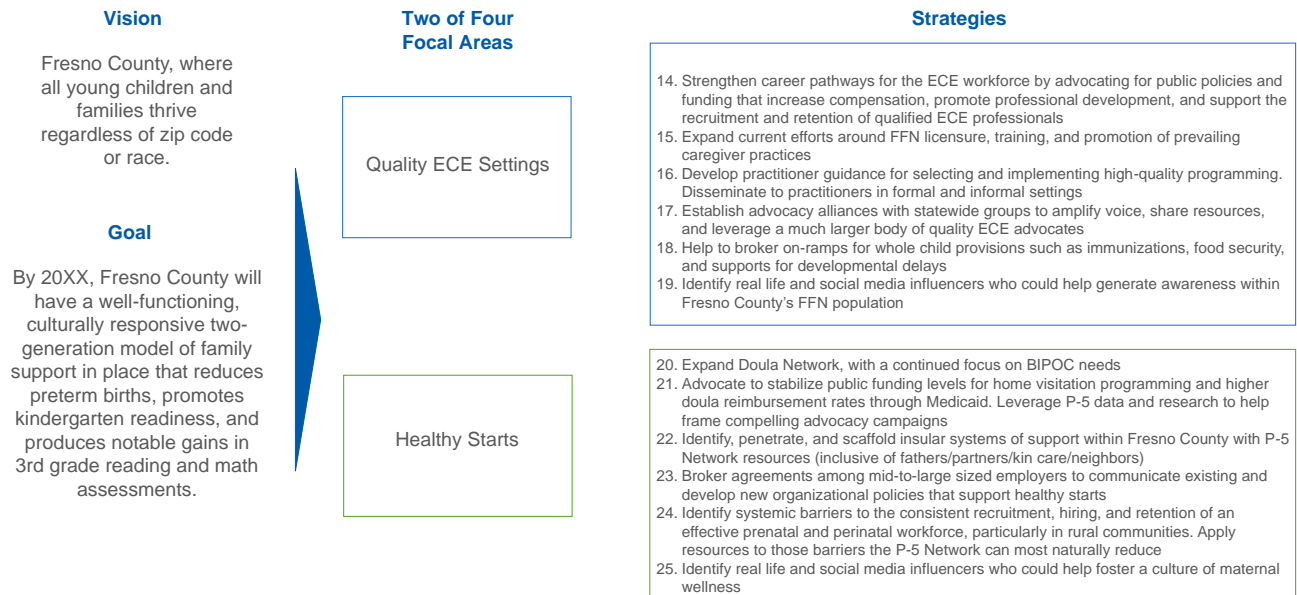
This strategy may require that home visitation leaders make progress on the centralized referral system for home visitation and other service providers in Fresno County before trying to bridge formal connections to Community Schools.

13. Expand home visitation programming to the ineligible and/or denied.

Home visitation programs are generally viewed as both an evidence-based and cost-

²⁶ Opportunity Navigator. (n.d.). *About Navigator*. <https://www.opportunitynavigator.org/about-navigator/>

effective way of promoting infant and child health, preventing abuse, and improving family functioning. However, many who would benefit from the program do not meet the eligibility criteria. The P–5 Network should approach its expansion ambitions in two ways. The first approach is a bit of a ground game. Members of the Family Supports Work Group must work with home visitation leaders to structure an employer-sanctioned and ethical process for capturing and sharing the names and contact information of those who could benefit from visitation services but are ineligible. The Work Group should also determine in what ways it wishes to expand home visitation programs. Options include, but are not limited to, pregnant teenagers, parents who have a child with a disability, families with higher levels of discretionary income, etc. Once both of these foundational activities have been completed, a 1-year pilot should be conducted to surface areas requiring process improvement before the expansion effort is fully actualized. Concurrently, members of the P–5 Network should be seeking ways to open the aperture for families desiring home visitation support through policy and narrative change. A policy-based expansion effort will undoubtedly serve more families and is better positioned for sustainability. Central to achieving policy success will be the reframing of the prevailing narrative about home visitation services (in the minds of potential recipients and policymakers) from a deficit position to one that builds on strengths to promote caregiver and child well-being, positive parenting practices, and family self-sufficiency.



Quality Early Care and Education Settings

ECE supports the critical stage of life when the most rapid phase of human growth and development occurs. Per the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the foundations for cognition, self-esteem, social skills, and perception of the world are established during the first 8 years of life. Quality ECE sets the stage for a successful life. As a result, it is a

focal area of this strategic framework, and there are six strategies that support it. Together, these strategies aim to increase and promote educator and program quality, accessibility, and affordability. Some of the strategies that follow build on activity taking place within the P–5 Network today, while others will move the collaborative into new spaces of persuasion and influence.

14. Strengthen career pathways for the ECE workforce by advocating for public policies and funding that increase compensation, promote professional development (including remote options), and support the recruitment and retention of qualified ECE professionals.*

A stable and qualified ECE workforce is essential to producing Fresno’s *future* workforce and supporting its *current* workforce. As such, members of the P–5 Network will build on an existing body of work that is well underway within the collaborative. In addition to this direct service delivery, the Quality ECE work should begin to capture some of the successes experienced in the Pathways to Quality program or the Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP) in the form of compelling stories or legislative briefs. Participants in the programs emphasized how the programs enabled them to provide quality care, build relationships with children and families, and advance their businesses. Pathways to Quality career pathways participants also spoke about the education-oriented ways in which they used their stipends and how the Zoom-based trainings offered greater levels of accessibility. CCIP participants offered compelling messaging about how the materials provided to them were used to support their business operations.

Stories are key to evidence-based policy formation. Most humans are wired to process quantitative and qualitative data in ways that comport with their own mental models of the world. Well-framed stories of impact help policymakers make sense of the facts and become a mechanism by which the P–5 Networks can shape mindsets and actions around this issue. Once done, these stories of impact can inspire and inform policy recommendations, and both should be matched to and targeted at policymakers with interests in and an outsized relationship to the issue of ECE career pathways.

15. Expand current efforts around FFN licensure, training, and promotion of prevailing caregiver practices.*

The intent of this strategy is to manage the cognitive, developmental, and physical risks to which children can be exposed in unregulated environments. This strategy builds upon an existing body of work within the P–5 Network. Early expansion efforts should focus on codifying the offerings that already exist and promoting them to new FFN caregivers. The Quality ECE Work Group should develop a simple segmentation plan that groups FFNs with similar defining characteristics (e.g., grandmothers/abuelitas, settings with five or more children, rural neighbors, etc.) and then tailors cultivation strategies specific to that FFN segment.

The WestEd evaluation conveys that providers found it most helpful to have support with business-related functions (e.g., filling out licensing paperwork; receiving one-on-one coaching and guidance about licensure regulations and requirements; securing essential materials, like wipes, beds, and PPE supplies). The Quality ECE Work Group should also improve upon existing resources for obtaining licensure by, for example, creating videos and/or framing sheets that help familiarize FFN providers seeking licensure with group size and ratio requirements, age-appropriate health and safety training, how to become and maintain status as a Red Network provider, and how best to map educational offerings to appropriate developmental stages.

16. Develop practitioner guidance for selecting and implementing high-quality programming. Disseminate to practitioners in formal and informal settings.

While there is no single definition of ECE quality, the Quality ECE Work Group should fashion a short list of quality components that should be universally present in ECE settings throughout Fresno County and wed itself to facilitating broad understanding of this short list among ECE practitioners and policymakers. Doing so will help to facilitate consistency in both the understanding and delivery of ECE quality.

Components of the short list should be both evidence-based and foundational. Possible considerations include broad learning and development goals, caregiver/educator engagement with child(ren), caregiver/educator training/awareness building, intentional observation and/or assessment, physical space recommendations, and incorporation of physical activity. Once the guidance is constructed, establish a two-pronged dissemination strategy that penetrates the realms of ECE practitioners and policymakers. More collaboration with Early Stars, the QRIS in Fresno County, may prove fruitful in the fulfillment of this strategy.

17. Establish advocacy alliances with statewide groups to amplify voice, share resources, and leverage a much larger body of quality ECE advocates.

Throughout the State of California, ECE advocates are influencing public policy at all levels of government. When advocates ally with one another, they create enhanced opportunities for learning, speak to legislators in one amplified voice, and amass larger numbers of foot soldiers to carry out advocacy agendas. By the end of 2023, the Executive Director(s) of the P–5 Network should aim to broker solid relationships with three ECE advocacy organizations—perhaps two that are state-based and one that is a national organization, like the [Alliance for Early Success](#). Local initiatives like the Fresno County Office of Education–housed Child Care and Development Local Planning Council and the Fresno Early Stars program may also offer natural synergies for advocacy alliances.

The members of the P–5 Network should collectively begin to familiarize themselves with the tenets of ECE advocacy by referencing [toolkits produced by The Ounce](#) and [Every Child California](#). It is important to establish explicit agreement on the issues that members

of the P–5 Network feel most comfortable using its social capital to endorse and advocate. It is worth noting that P–5 child care leaders, within the context of the evaluation, described an aspiration to have local input impact statewide policy in the areas of child care subsidy eligibility criteria, workforce development strategies that support bilingual learners, and data collection metrics required by state funding sources. Historically, leaders of the P–5 child care initiatives partnered with a state assembly member to pilot new eligibility criteria for child care subsidies.

18. Help to broker on-ramps for whole child provisions such as immunizations, food security, and supports for developmental delays.

Core parts of good strategy are being clear on what you *will not* do and knowing when to *yield to others* who are better positioned to meet certain needs. While the P–5 Network is not best positioned to directly provide children and families with wraparound supports, many members are well suited to systemically refer children and families to other organizations in Fresno County. Continue to make progress on the cross-sector integrated referral data system as one way to increase cross-sector alignment, coordination, and effectiveness via consistent referral processes across organizations. The P–5 Network can also lend its voice in support of organizations leading work of this nature when funding opportunities arise.

19. Identify real life and social media influencers who could help generate awareness within Fresno County’s FFN population. Once influencers are identified, contract their services and supply them with strong content that is aligned with the goal of the P–5 Network.

Once again, an influencer strategy can be used to penetrate insular social networks. Online and offline influencers will be valuable to the P–5 Network, as they come with an established base of supporters and carry notable amounts of credibility and name recognition with targeted segments of Fresno County’s population. They will be able to reach and persuade some Fresno County residents in ways that members of the P–5 Network cannot. The keys to shaping a formal influencer strategy include setting goals around public awareness and persuasion; identifying the target audience; determining which attributes desired in an influencer; identifying and vetting the public profiles of the influencers identified; documenting terms of engagement; wooing influencers who do not present risk of reputational damage; agreeing to P–5 Network–created message frames and cadence and the platforms from which the P–5 Network message frames should be asserted; and measuring efforts and outcomes.

Healthy Starts

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), parents are the frontline public health workers, and supporting parents and caregivers should be viewed as a critical public health

priority. The Healthy Starts focal area is oriented around the equitable provision of services affecting the physical, psychological, and behavioral health of mothers and young children. There are six strategies that support the Healthy Starts focal area. Some of the strategies that follow build on activity taking place within the P–5 Network today, while others will move the collaborative into new spaces of persuasion and influence.

20. Expand the Doula Network, with a continued focus on BIPOC needs.*

The Doula Network aims to improve “maternal and infant health by providing every birthing person with access to informational, physical, and emotional support by doulas during pregnancy, birth and postpartum.” Research shows that “doula-assisted mothers are four times less likely to have a baby born with low birth weight, two times less likely to experience a birth complication involving themselves or their baby, and significantly more likely to initiate breastfeeding.”²⁷ To date, the Black Doula Network has been consistent in the implementation of its racial equity–centered approach to care and authentic engagement with community members. The work of the Black Doula Network has only informally interacted with health systems, and in the near future, the Black Doula Network will be poised to formally integrate into hospital systems.

Formal expansion into hospital systems can take many paths. The Black Doula Network can aim to reframe birth as experiences that transcend pure medical procedures, and this reframing can assist in brokering Doula-friendly hospital policies and practices that have the potential to also benefit birthing persons without doulas. Alternately, expansion plans can feature the shaping of an agenda that increases provider referrals to doula services so that more pregnancies and births benefit from doula care.

Any expansion plan should be augmented to include strategically messaged data-rich stories of impact and promise.

21. Advocate to stabilize public funding levels for home visitation programming and higher doula reimbursement rates through Medicaid. Leverage P–5 data and research to help frame compelling advocacy campaigns.

A meaningful foundation already exists for this strategy since several leaders within the P–5 Network contributed to advocacy efforts that supported SB65, the California Momnibus Act, which aims to close racial gaps in maternal and infant mortality rates by strengthening the Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review Committee; improving data collection in the Fetal and Infant Mortality Review process; creating a fund to support the midwifery workforce, upon appropriation from the Legislature; establishing a stakeholder workgroup to implement

²⁷ Gruber, K. J., Cupito, S. H., & Dobson, C. F. (2013). Impact of doulas on healthy birth outcomes. *The Journal of Perinatal Education*, 22(1), 49–58. <https://doi.org/10.1891/1058-1243.22.1.49>.

a Medi-Cal doula benefit; and reducing CalWORKs paperwork requirements for pregnant women.

Members of the P–5 Network should invest a considerable amount of time in detailing this strategy and should gather inspiration from [Prosperity Now's Keys to Successful Advocacy](#) resource. It delineates the approach for budgetary advocacy from other types of advocacy efforts.

22. Identify, penetrate, and scaffold insular systems of support within Fresno County with P–5 Network resources (inclusive of fathers/partners/kin care/neighbors).

Fresno County is peppered with social insularity caused by geographic, technological, and linguistic barriers. These barriers give rise to a heightened dependence on personal relationships and easily accessible social networks. Members of these insular social circles often structure autonomous systems of support among and for themselves that rarely incorporate information that originates outside of their systems of support.

The Healthy Starts Work Group should identify three insular systems within Fresno County of notable size and attempt to map personal connections between them and the P–5 Network. In instances where P–5 Network relationships exist, those individuals should be tasked with introducing P–5 Network–produced materials in ways that tie the promoted practice to behaviors employed by someone within the insular system. This is advisable because people within insular systems tend to make use of the decisions made by those with whom they are socially connected rather than information provided by institutions.²⁸ In instances where personal relationship do not exist, then the strategic use of influencers and/or birth justice advocates is advised.

23. Broker agreements among mid-to-large-sized employers to communicate existing and develop new organizational policies that support healthy starts.

Similar to its sister strategy listed under Family Supports, children and families in Fresno County will greatly benefit if employers of significant size can align with the P–5 Network on a few family-sustaining principles that can lead to healthy starts to life. Emphasis should be placed on proactively providing clear and accessible communication about employer benefits that support a child's healthy start to all employees. This strategy should also attend to emergency child care needs, offering paid parental leave (over and above the state's partial payment of wages for bonding time, which is upwards of 6 weeks).

24. Identify systemic barriers to the consistent recruitment, hiring, and retention of an effective prenatal and perinatal workforce, particularly in rural communities. Apply

²⁸ Hautsch, Nikolaus; Klotz, Stefan (2001) : Estimating the Neighborhood Influence on Decision Makers: Theory and an Application on the Analysis of Innovation Decisions, CoFE Discussion Paper, No. 01/04, University of Konstanz, Center of Finance and Econometrics (CoFE), Konstanz, <https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:352-opus-6690>

human and financial capital to those barriers that the P–5 Network can most naturally reduce.*

Similar to the rest of the country, the prenatal and perinatal workforce in Fresno County is both strained and operating below sustainable levels. However, this workforce is critical to ensuring that babies in Fresno County have healthy starts to life, so it is important to remove barriers to a healthy talent management pipeline. The Healthy Starts Work Group should begin their analysis by surveying the individuals currently employed in Fresno County’s prenatal and perinatal workforce. Survey questions should inquire about satisfaction with, and opportunities tethered to, workload, work conditions, scheduling, compensation, opportunities for professional development and advancement, and the culturally empathetic model of care.

At least one talent management practice is in place for this particular strategy. The Black Wellness and Prosperity Center holds listening sessions with doulas to learn about their needs. Apply the learnings from these listening sessions to further support doulas in practice.

25. Identify real life and social media influencers who could help foster a culture of maternal wellness in Fresno County. Once influencers are identified, contract their services and supply them with strong P–5 Network–created content.

Yet again, an influencer strategy can be used to build awareness and shift behavior. An influencer strategy uses trusted or knowledgeable individuals in a niche community to positively position a product, service, or message. Online and offline influencers will be valuable to the P–5 Network, as they come with an established base of supporters and carry notable amounts of credibility and name recognition with targeted segments of Fresno County’s population. They will be able to reach and persuade some Fresno County residents in ways that members of the P–5 Network cannot. The keys to shaping a formal influencer strategy include setting goals around public awareness and persuasion; identifying the target audience; determining which attributes are desired in an influencer; identifying and vetting the public profiles of the influencers identified; documenting terms of engagement; wooing influencers who do not present risk of reputational damage; agreeing to P–5 Network–created message frames and cadence and the platforms from which the P–5 Network message frames should be asserted; and measuring efforts and outcomes.

Proposal for Sequenced Strategies

While there is no one way to deploy the strategies contained in this framework, the following sequence is offered for consideration. The proposal considers which strategies already have building blocks in place within the P–5 Network, which strategies have headwinds to leverage within the community, and where priority preference exists.

The proposed sequence for initiating activities is as follows:

SHORT TERM (2022–2024)

- Expand home visitation programming to high-need BIPOC zip codes; offer differentiated spaces to accommodate varying comfort levels with strangers being in homes
- Promote the safety and well-being of all involved in home visitation through the creation of multilingual practice standards, uniformed protocols to follow if home visits threaten physical safety, and guaranteed access to PPE
- Lend voice to clean air and agricultural safety advocacy efforts
- Shape influencer strategy; identify real life and social media influencers
- Leverage the state’s massive investment in Community Schools by fashioning clear connections to the home visitation program
- Begin to form new allyships with mid-to-large-sized employers in Fresno County
- Strengthen career pathways for the ECE workforce by advocating for public policies and funding that increase compensation, promote PD, and support the recruitment and retention of qualified ECE professionals
- Expand current efforts around FFN licensure, training, and promotion of prevailing caregiver practices

MEDIUM TERM (2025–2026)

- Lead a campaign to help public systems better serve all residents by being accessible, culturally empathetic, trauma-informed, and accountable
- Help to fashion a network of public spaces throughout the County to encourage resident interactions among those of differing socioeconomic strata
- Deepen direct service efforts that identify and address place-based challenges that materially impact birth outcomes and/or maternal mortality in negative ways
- Conceptualize and begin to implement a continuum of resources and service supports for FFN providers
- Reduce access barriers to family supports by advocating for greater investment in the areas of interpretation and translation, public transportation, and broadband
- Expand the Doula Network, with a continued focus on BIPOC needs
- Advocate to help stabilize public funding levels for home visitation programming and higher doula reimbursement rates through Medicaid
- Identify, penetrate, and scaffold insular systems of support within Fresno County
- Broker agreements among mid-to-large-sized employers to communicate existing and develop new organizational policies that support healthy starts

LONG TERM (2027 & Beyond)

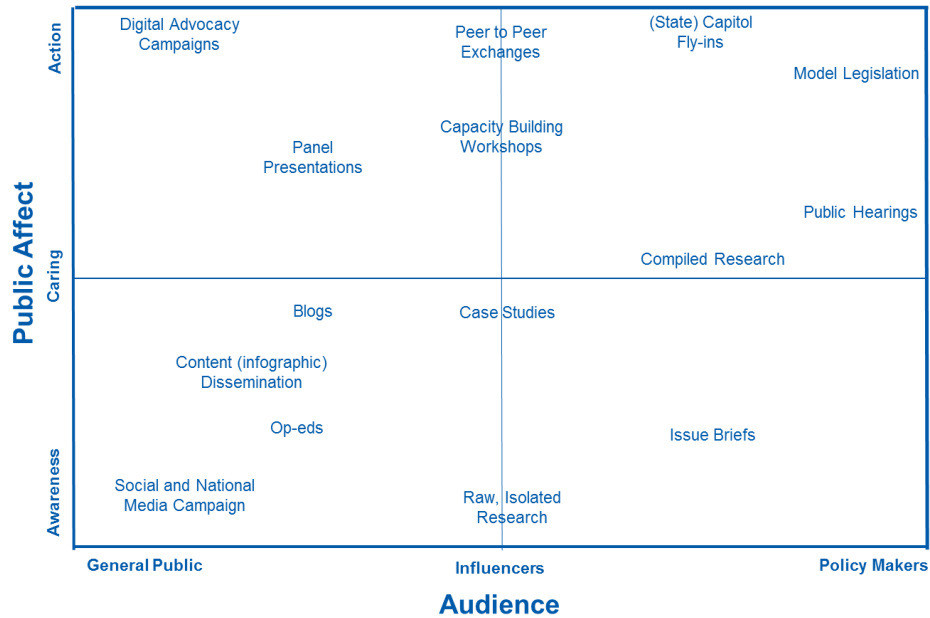
- Stimulate talent development and diversity within a select number of public agencies
- Expand home visitation programming to the ineligible and/or denied
- Develop practitioner guidance for selecting and implementing high-quality programming
- Establish advocacy alliances with statewide groups
- Help to broker on-ramps for whole child provisions such as immunizations, food security, and supports for developmental delays

Increase Public Support and Participation

Cultivating a strong, highly energized base of support is integral to the work ahead. Securing such support is predicated on successfully amassing and communicating a base of evidence to get a critical mass of people to both think and care more deeply about the relationship between ECE and economic mobility. While this work is generally new to the P–5 Network, the time is opportune to push forward given the needs and challenges the coronavirus pandemic made starkly visible to all.

The P–5 Network must focus its efforts on growing public support for both the “*what*” and the “*how*” of strategic communication (i.e., having compelling content and ensuring it is heard). This two-pronged approach will require the P–5 Network to play the lead role in developing evidence-based messages and unifying calls to action while also crafting effective dissemination campaigns that leverage compelling channels to reach varied audiences. It requires dedicating time and attention to identifying active supporters who already exist within Fresno County, devising tactics that will attract and amass additional supporters who will readily respond to calls for action, and sizing the level of engagement the P–5 Network has with these supporters on an ongoing basis. These supporters will become the P–5 Network’s grassroots advocates, and this grassroots advocacy will serve as the linchpin for reducing many of the systems barriers currently experienced by children and families in Fresno County.

Matching the right tactics to the desired audience and affect will be key to successfully executing this strategy. Messaging should be calibrated to reach a broad range of audiences spanning from policymakers to the general public. The illustration below maps the set of activities that P–5 Network staff can pursue to move to the general public, offline influencers, and policymakers along the continuum of awareness to caring to action.



Additionally, it will be important for the P–5 Network to establish a stable of resident champions to elevate both the vision and the promising developments arising in Fresno County’s P–5 Network.

Embracing a continuous improvement orientation is a hallmark of successful public relations and advocacy. Being intentional about reflection is a core part of the process. The P–5 Network can refine its influence over time by considering, and periodically revisiting, the following questions:

1. What are we learning about what **makes an effective message**? What messaging tends to lead to action by parents and caregivers? Other targets? Why?
2. To what extent is **“connected issue” research** helping to build the case for P–5’s strategy? Which “connected issue” research commands the greatest degree of interest from policymakers? The general public? Why?
3. What are we learning about how **audiences respond to advocacy calls to action**? Which elicit the most responsiveness? Why?
4. What are we learning about **newly formed alliances** that amplify our voice with state and local officials?
5. How effective has the crosscutting **influencer strategy** been at introducing residents to the P–5 Network? At changing **targeted behaviors**?

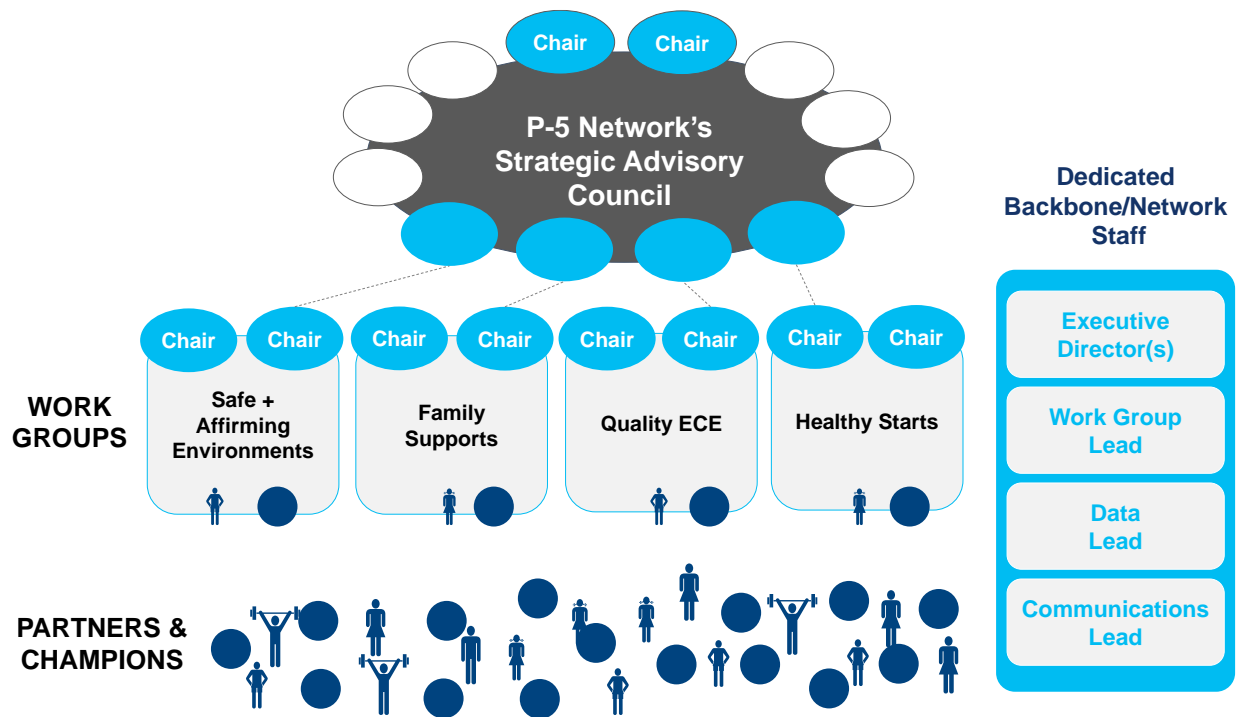
Chapter IV: Operating Implications

Successfully operationalizing this strategic framework requires both significant commitment and reorientation by the P-5 Network. Members of the P-5 Network will have to embrace and faithfully execute against this framework that materially shifts the collaborative’s primary method for impact, the composition of its members and allies, and how it implements strategies in order to step into its new vision to make Fresno County a place where all young children and families thrive regardless of zip code or race.

Implications for the P-5 Network

	From		To
WHAT	Individual organizations offering direct programs and services to the community as the primary method of impact	▶▶	P-5 Network aligning, integrating, and leveraging partners’ programs, services, assets, and networks to improve the quality of P-5 services, reduce structural barriers to receiving services, and increase demand for prekindergarten slots
WHO	Relying on a segment of the P-5 Network (e.g., the “choir”) to drive and message the P- 5 advancements in Fresno County	▶▶	Engaging new allies that work on or benefit from investments in the P-5 arena to expand the P-5 Network’s reach and impact ; this includes parents, public sector leaders (including those from adjacent fields), and corporate executives
HOW	Partners focus on a narrow band of work that aligns with their organizations’ explicit missions; engagement in adjacent and/or interdependent issues is rare	▶▶	Catalyzing partners to engage around the central goal of the P-5 Network in an integrated fashion such that the strategies associated with each focal area are being implemented in interorganizational and cross-sectoral ways

To guide planning and enable implementation of the new strategic framework, the P-5 Network will reorganize into a larger, more integrated structure comprising **Dedicated Staff**, a **Strategic Advisory Council**, and **Work Groups**, as well as organizational **partners** and individual **champions**. Together, they will comprehensively facilitate the integrated and inclusive systems of support that families attempting to break the cycle of poverty within Fresno County need.



Each part of the structure fulfills a unique and critical role in the walk toward systems change:

- **Dedicated P–5 Network Staff** will **facilitate the contributions of all participants** in the P–5 Network by guiding vision and strategy, establishing shared measurement practices, mobilizing resources, and supporting aligned activities among partners and champions
- The **Strategic Advisory Council** will provide **strategic guidance** to staff and **ambassadorship** for the P–5 strategy overall
- The four **Work Groups**, each **supported by the Work Group Lead**, will develop concrete **action plans** and help implement those plans
- Organizational **partners**, who may participate in Work Group or on the Strategic Advisory Council or contribute in other ways, will **commit assets** and **align their activities** around the strategic objectives of the P–5 strategy
- Individual **champions** will **engage as Strategic Advisory Council participants or advocates for and implementers of** the P–5 strategy

Activating these strategies and structures will require a phased approach to ensure successful adoption by the movement.

Dedicated P–5 Staff

Based on the new strategic framework, the P–5 Network will eventually be staffed by four or five key positions that collectively facilitate the Strategic Advisory Council, Work Groups, partners, and champions toward meeting the strategic goal of establishing a well-functioning, culturally responsive, two-generation model of family support that reduces preterm births, promotes kindergarten readiness, and produces notable gains in 3rd grade reading and math assessments within Fresno County by 20XX. Universal skills for the dedicated staff are articulated below and immediately followed by specific responsibilities and job functions.

Each of these roles should have the following skills:

- steadfast commitment to the goal and vision of the P–5 Network
- demonstrated commitment to achieving equity and addressing disparities
- ability to build collaborative relationships across multiple sectors to achieve systems change
- experience facilitating meetings of cross-sector stakeholders to achieve greater collaboration and action
- comfort with planning work and managing multiple priorities in a context of change and ambiguity and adapting to changing needs or momentum
- familiarity with and appreciation for systems thinking
- excellent written and verbal communication skills

Executive Director(s)

- provide strategic guidance around goal and vision attainment
- secure commitment to strategy and corresponding metrics among partners
- manage relationships with funders, elected officials, and organizational leads of partnered and allied organizations (including Fresno C2C)
- ensure that ongoing process improvements are informed by the guidance of the Strategic Advisory Council
- engage and energize Dedicated Staff, the Strategic Advisory Council, partners, funders, and new allies to the P–5 Network

- act as the Chief Ambassador for the P–5 Network to key organizations, industry leaders, media, and influencers to garner new allies and opportunities
- develop and oversee the annual fundraising plan
- inform influence strategies and help to cultivate online and offline influences
- ensure monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and in use to track progress

Data Lead

- manage relationships with funders, key influencers, new allies, and partners
- support the Executive Director(s) with fundraising and strategy
- seek out opportunities for alignment with other efforts and connected issues
- recruit new partner organizations to fill gaps
- create opportunities for and among partners to contribute to strategic objectives such as featuring Active Schools in their activities and events
- manage data entry, gift processing, proposals, and reports for funders
- track activity across Work Groups to ensure synergies and avoid duplication of efforts
- facilitate the Practitioner Needs & Offerings Work Group along with its co-chairs

Communications Lead

- develop, implement, and evaluate the P–5 Network’s communications plan
- guide the creation of crisp and evidence-based message frames
- inspire partners to adopt P–5 drafted messaging
- develop tailored case statements for potential new allies and collaborators to support table expansion and advocacy-related calls to action
- seek out opportunities for alignment with adjacent causes and efforts
- identify key target audiences and relevant communication channels
- convene partners, new allies, and key external stakeholders through annual conferences and additional special events, including roundtables, panels, etc.

- facilitate earned media coverage
- refresh social media presence and execute an engaging social media strategy
- produce and manage print/electronic communication (e.g., news releases, reports)
- refresh and manage the webpage
- measure and evaluate the level of engagement and penetration of communication deliverables over time

Work Group Lead

- co-create agendas with Work Group chairs and prepare material
- identify and source data needed to make decisions
- cross-pollinate insights across Work Groups
- identify areas of overlap/coordination between Work Groups
- communicate how the P–5 Network is progressing on its shared indicators
- create Work Group reports for the Executive Director(s) and steering committee
- connect Work Group to others in the community

It is recommended that the P–5 Network phase its transition into the described staffing model while multiyear funding is being secured. While all four roles are important, it may be prudent to prioritize filling the Work Group Lead and Executive Director position(s).

Strategic Advisory Council

The Strategic Advisory Council (“Council”) will function as an independent advisory body for the P–5 Network composed of cross-sector leaders and revered community members. The Council’s key responsibilities include providing strategic guidance to P–5’s Dedicated Staff, advising on strategy implementation, determining which adjacent efforts to champion, and galvanizing new allies and resources for the cause. The Council will also monitor the progress of Work Groups and Dedicated Staff toward the common, integrated goal. The Council will partner with the Executive Director(s) to determine staff and resource needs to ensure sustained momentum.

The Strategic Advisory Council should ultimately be a representative body composed of 20–25 committed persons. All members should feel passionate about the cause and commit to urgency. Council members should hold positions of formal and informal power/influence and be willing to

participate in regular P–5 Network meetings (ideally monthly, including several in-person meetings per year). The Strategic Advisory Council will be led by as many as two co-chairs and will reserve a seat for one co-chair from each Work Group to ensure continuous communication and to keep all boats rowing in the same direction.

Strategic Advisory Council co-chairs will have additional responsibilities:

- **advising the Executive Director(s)** on development and implementation of the strategies
- **contributing to agenda and content development** for each Council meeting by serving as thought partners to Dedicated Staff and contributing content expertise
- **advising on key decisions** that do not require the full Council and/or that cannot wait for the next meeting of the full Council
- **assisting the Executive Director(s) with recruiting members** to the Council and new partners for the movement
- **leveraging network connections to support the fundraising** needed to implement specific strategies developed by the Work Groups
- **acting as ambassadors** for the movement by identifying areas for collaboration with other organizations, seeking input from Fresno County and state policy influencers, and building visibility for the cause

Work Groups

Work Groups will support the four focal efforts anchoring P–5's strategy—Safe + Affirming Environments, Family Supports, Quality ECE, and Healthy Starts—by providing suggestions for strategy refinement and development, actively supporting implementation of their part of the strategic framework, and pursuing continuous improvement opportunities. The content on the next page offers an overarching scope of work for the Work Groups, but opportunity and responsibility should be reserved for each of the Work Groups to shape its own detailed scope of work.

Work Groups should be composed of 7–12 cross-sector members whose areas of focus are aligned, collaborative, and action-oriented. Work Group members will most likely come from organizations that are formal partners, but this should not be a hard and fast requirement. In addition to committing time every month for meetings, Work Group members from partner organizations should have authority to make decisions and commit (some) resources on behalf of their employer.

For each Work Group, it will be important to have cochairs so that P–5 Dedicated Staff do not shoulder the full responsibility of Work Group facilitation. Ideally, each Work Group will be led by two cochairs—one of whom also sits on the Strategic Advisory Council and can commit between 2 and 5 hours per month for the following responsibilities:

- **ensuring alignment with the shared agenda**—including reporting to the Strategic Advisory Council on achievement of strategic objectives and using data to measure progress on strategic objectives and for the development of future strategies
- **cultivating inclusive and equity-oriented spaces for collaboration**—including seeking diverse membership, fostering inclusive norms, making space for relationship development, and engaging new perspectives from adjacent sectors
- **contributing to the development of the agenda and content** for each Work Group meeting—including serving as thought partners to P–5 Dedicated Staff and helping contribute content expertise
- **facilitating discussions and decision-making in meetings**—including speaking up if the conversation stalls, encouraging multiple perspectives, and reporting out on smaller group discussions

The following guidance is intended to inform continuous improvement efforts within the P–5 Network at key junctures the strategy’s implementation. Please only view this guidance as one variable to consider alongside the many others that will arise over time.

Operationalize the Strategy

Now is the time to begin staging the transition from the P–5 Network’s current operational structure to one that can better facilitate the integrated strategy contained in this framework. This includes establishing a **Strategic Advisory Council** and **four Work Groups** focused on the focal areas of Safe + Affirming Environments, Family Supports, Quality ECE, and Healthy Starts and expanding the decision-making table. Additionally, the P–5 Network will begin to develop and execute the **communications campaign** to get stakeholders within Fresno County and beyond to understand and support the refined strategy. In this period, the P–5 Network is encouraged to **add critical staff to support the proposed work such that the backbone roles are completely realized**. Together, the Dedicated Staff of the P–5 Network will lay the groundwork for moving forward with the strategies identified in this strategic framework. Initial steps include **establishing performance measures** upon which clear milestones and effective messaging will be built, making decisions and working in aligned fashion based on shared information and resources, identifying key organizations and collaboratives with whom to partner, and developing messages and materials capable of leading a broad coalition of supporters to changed behavior.

Capitalize on Opportunities for Systems Impact

View opportunities for influence as central to delivering an impactful strategy. A key priority will be influencing the “**grasstops**,” such as policymakers and private sector leaders, to enact policies, allocate resources, and adopt practices that enable conditions that reduce preterm births, promote kindergarten readiness, and produce notable gains in 3rd grade reading and math assessments. Similarly, the P–5 Network will need to consistently engage Fresno County’s “**grassroots**” through refreshed messaging, compelling digital advocacy campaigns, and a cadre of online and offline influencers so that there is clear and coordinated demand for systems changes.

Practice Emergent Tactics

The P–5 Network should continually assess its progress and fine-tune implementation of the strategies over time. **A more in-depth period of pause and reflection is recommended at the 4-year mark in 2026.** At that time, the P–5 Network will be encouraged to evaluate the outcomes that it has achieved, codify the structures and strategies that have worked best, and define new objectives in order to reflect the current context. This proposed period of pause could also include refreshing the talent associated with the P–5 Network (backbone staff, Work Group Leads, and key champions and partners).

Prioritize Group Learning

Dedicate time and space to insight generation and group learning within the P–5 Network. The goal is to **surface, analyze, share, and leverage strategy implementation lessons.** Simple facilitation tactics that could support learning within the P–5 Network include the following:

- **Biannual Reflection Summits** — dedicated time, twice a year, for the entire network to pause and reflect on what they are learning in service of their theory of change and broader strategy as a team. These conversations should be data rich, convened in person, and include explicit conversation about implications for how the P–5 Network progresses.
- *I Like, I Wish, I Wonder* Protocol — a basic method for surfacing insights and guiding learning conversations. It can be used within the Work Groups or in larger P–5 Network convenings at quarterly or monthly intervals.
- *Simplified After Action Reviews* — for larger efforts, debriefing in response to these questions: (a) What went as expected, and why do we think it did? (b) What did not go as expected, and why do we think it did not? (c) Given what we have concluded, what should we do differently in the future?

Continued investment in **site visits** should also be viewed as a strong group learning opportunity that will yield new insights, promote collaboration, engage communities, and keep leaders within the P-5 Network proximate to the complex challenges the P-5 Network aims to resolve.

Appendix

A: Strategic Framework Methodology

The strategic planning process encompassed the following five phases, with all but the Performance Measures phase of developing performance measures being professionally supported by WestEd, a national professional services provider that is reimagining solutions that foster a more equitable society by focusing on the most demanding and enduring challenges in education and human development.



Over the course of the engagement, the WestEd team employed a mixed-method research methodology, conducting interviews, surveys, and small-group data-gathering sessions. WestEd analyzed data collected through these methods to inform the strategic options considered by the P-5 Network.

Strategic Planning Contributor List:

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B: Cost Analysis Methodology



Week 1

Determine the depth of strategies and develop a list of potential methods for implementation for each



Week 2

Confirm methods for each implementation strategy and outline cost features for each method



Weeks 3-4

Develop cost features interview protocols and schedule interviews



Week 5

Conduct interviews and disseminate questions



Weeks 6-7

Data analysis and final cost features summary



Weeks 8-9

Finalize cost model and templates



Week 10

Engagement with Leadership

Cost Analysis Contributors List:

To be added (in late January)