



What's Happening in the Network?

GSC Name: Traverse Bay

Name of Strategy/Project: 5toONE

August 8, 2016

1.) What was the original problem(s) (and associated root causes) that the GSC/GSPC was trying to address with this strategy/project?

5toONE is our way of addressing persistent challenges facing young children birth to 5 by creating a sustainable 5-county system of resources that both provides support and inspiration to all families and addresses the acute needs of families most in need of help; if we do this well, the Traverse Bay region will be the best place in the world to raise kids. 5toONE addresses the 5 early childhood system components, builds the 5 strengths identified in the Strengthening Families Framework in all families, and supports the four Office of Great Start outcomes. There are 3 project goals: (1) Reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect; (2) Increase families' access to quality childcare; and (3) Improve children's kindergarten readiness

2.) What did the GSC/GSPC do to begin addressing this problem (and associated root causes)? What have been your successes so far?

The 5toONE model was created through a *design thinking* process that was constrained by three principles derived from core values of the GSC: (1) The model is sustainable given currently available resources; (2) Parent Voice is involved at all levels of decision-making; and (3) The model is grounded in Strengthening Families. Through a nationally-distributed RFP process we found a team of consultants with expertise in early childhood systems, strategic economic analysis, communications, and architecture to guide the GSC and community partners through an intensive exploration of parent experiences, provider perspectives and community opinion. The result was a surprising redirection of our thinking about how to address the persistent challenges children and families face living in rural communities.

3.) What are/were a few lessons learned from implementation of this strategy/project?

We entered this project planning to build a centralized hub in Traverse City that would serve as a one-stop shop for all families living in the 5-county service area. Our rationale was based on priorities for improving child outcomes and access to providers through co-location of service providers, well-designed facilities to support intensive interventions and inclusive playgroups, a child development lab preschool, and creating a beacon that would help maintain community focus on early childhood. These plans were not, however, shared by parents. From an independent survey of families raising young

children in our 5-county service area, a very different set of priorities emerged that completely changed our thinking. Instead of focusing on a hub, we are instead working on developing local 5toONE Neighborhood Centers in small communities throughout the region and networking these centers with families and providers. The hub will come later, when the region is ready.

Parent Voice is a powerful resource for design and implementation. Our project motto *Engage – Innovate – Sustain* came out of thinking with families about what's really important in raising children and how communities can achieve improved child outcomes with small-scale, local investments. Through our 5toONE work we've learned that *Engage* is not something we do to communities; it is a two-way process of communication and trust-building that leads, finally, to shared understanding and collaborative action. We have come to relish every problem as simply another opportunity to *Innovate*, to use the resources at hand in new ways to benefit children and families. And we have gained confidence that deep, authentic engagement and community-level innovation can *Sustain* programs, activities and networking with permanence.

4.) Who should a peer GSC/GSPC contact if they have questions or want to learn more about the strategy/project? (name, email, phone and preferred method of contacting)

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