Becoming an Early Learning Community is an ongoing process, where there are always opportunities to make progress. Remember to keep three critical considerations in mind in all your work:

**Equity**

Becoming an Early Learning Community requires that elected officials, advocates and business and civic leaders include and listen to people who have historically been left out of the decision-making process and those who face barriers to accessing services. Your action plan should include whatever changes are necessary to better meet the needs of all families in your community.

**Family Partnerships**

Service providers and system leaders in an Early Learning Community welcome parents as partners and as experts on their own children and families. Approaching parents as partners is critical to improving the programs and services they participate in, the neighborhoods they live in and their communities as a whole.

**Focus on Results**

Keeping a focus on results means clearly defining your goals from the beginning, identifying and gathering the data that will show whether you are achieving those goals and modifying your strategies as needed over time. We define an Early Learning Community’s goals in three broad categories:

- Pregnant women and young children are healthy
- Children are ready to succeed in school
- Children live in safe, stable and nurturing families and communities

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**Building Blocks for An Early Learning Community**

**Community leadership, commitment and public will**

- Target 1.1: Local leaders work together across systems with a focus on early childhood.
- Target 1.2: The community invests in young children and families.
- Target 1.3: Community members support and understand the importance of early childhood health, learning and well-being.
- Target 1.4: A rich network of informal supports is available for all families.
- Target 1.5: Community resources for children and families are well-known, accessible and easy to use.

**Quality services that work for all young children and their families**

- Target 2.1: Families have access to high-quality, basic services that proactively promote and support health, learning and family strengths.
- Target 2.2: All children receive routine screening, identification, referral and linkage for additional risks and needs.
- Target 2.3: Children and families at risk and those with identified needs have timely access to more intensive services.
- Target 2.4: Families and parents are actively engaged as partners.
- Target 2.5: Supports are in place for service providers.
- Target 2.6: Leaders use data to drive change.

**Neighborhoods where families can thrive**

- Target 3.1: The built environment promotes safety and allows families to access basic services in their neighborhoods and beyond.
- Target 3.2: Economic and employment opportunities are available to all.
- Target 3.3: Residents feel a sense of belonging and hope within their neighborhoods and connection to the broader community.

**Policies that support and are responsive to families**

- Target 4.1: Policies that govern child and family services are equitable and responsive.
- Target 4.2: Workplace and other policies support families in raising children.
- Target 4.3: Land use and community development policies are designed with consideration for how they affect young children and families.