

SUMMER 2019

# **STRONGER TOGETHER MISSOURI**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS  
OUTREACH & RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE**

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# PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

**“***If evidence matters, we must care how it gets made.***”**

**THANK YOU** for taking a critical step in enhancing Missouri's Early Childhood System by agreeing to assist with engaging community stakeholders in the revision of Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan! This guide is intended to support you as you support the state's outreach and recruitment efforts for the Strategic Planning listening sessions happening across the state!

Like the current Early Childhood Strategic Plan emphasizes, we believe that procedures, programs, and policies informed by research are the most effective. We care about the evidence, which means we are deeply invested in how it gets made. Community voice is essential to the successful revision of Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan, and we need your help in ensuring that community stakeholders are aware of their opportunities to engage in the revision process.

This communication guide is intended to serve as a resource for those interested in spreading the word about community engagement opportunities. The guide includes informational resources and ready-to-share messages in the form of tailor-made flyers, email communications, and social media posts. We believe that you know your communities best, including knowing which messaging strategies are most likely to resonate with them, so please use any of the following communications in whatever ways are most helpful to you (even if that means modifying them to better meet your needs)!

# STRONGER TOGETHER MISSOURI PROJECT PRESS RELEASE

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT: [HTTPS://DESE.MO.GOV/QUALITY-SCHOOLS/EARLY-LEARNING/PDGB-5](https://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/early-learning/pdgb-5)



Missouri families with children age birth to 5 who participate in early learning programs in the state will benefit from a \$6.5 million grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) received word of the award on January 24th 2019.

The grant will be used to fund the Stronger Together Missouri project, which aims to implement a comprehensive, statewide, birth-to-kindergarten-entry needs assessment and to update the state’s Early Childhood Strategic Plan to enhance long-term sustainability in early childhood services.

“We are proud and excited about the partnership among the Governor’s Office, the Missouri Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education, Health and Senior Services, Mental Health and Social Services, the Missouri Head Start State Collaboration Office, and the Missouri Foundation for Health that brought this grant to reality,” said Governor Mike Parson. “The grant will allow Missouri to offer even stronger services to our youngest students and their families.”

Information gathered from the needs assessment will be combined with information from the statewide **Quality Assurance Report initiative** to identify areas in need of intervention to maximize parental choice and knowledge of early learning programs, share best practices, and improve the quality of **Early Childhood Care and Education system**.

“Collaboration among state partners is key to effectively serving our students and families,” said Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Margie Vandeven. “Access to high quality early learning opportunities will help prepare every student for success in school and in life.”

The effort to submit this grant was made possible in part by support from Missouri Foundation for Health. If you have questions, or would like more information about the Preschool Development Grant, please send us an email at [webreplyimprece@dese.mo.gov](mailto:webreplyimprece@dese.mo.gov).

# MISSOURI EARLY CHILDHOOD STRATEGIC PLAN

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT: [HTTPS://DSS.MO.GOV/CBEC/PDF/STRATEGIC-PLAN.PDF](https://dss.mo.gov/cbec/pdf/strategic-plan.pdf)

## **Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan**



**Missouri  
Coordinating  
Board for Early  
Childhood**

*Developed in  
partnership with the  
Early Childhood  
Comprehensive System*

COORDINATING BOARD FOR  
EARLY CHILDHOOD 

Missouri's current Early Childhood Strategic Plan is available in its full-length form here. It is not included in this guide because we wanted to keep this resource relatively brief. Instead, we have included an infographic summary of the plan's key components (see the next 2 pages). The page numbers provided in the infographic correspond directly to the pages in the full plan so that readers can easily access more information about topics of interest.

# Missouri Early Childhood Strategic Plan

**Vision:** All young children in Missouri are safe, healthy, and capable of reaching their full potential.

**Mission:** To ensure that Missouri's early childhood programs and services are comprehensive, coordinated, accessible, adequately funded, and of the highest quality to meet the needs and to promote the well-being of all young children and their families.

## Guiding Principles

- 1 Early childhood is the life period of most intensive development where both positive and negative factors have the greatest impact.
- 2 Effective programs for young children respond to the totality of a child's development, not just one aspect.
- 3 Children with disabilities or other special needs are best served in natural environments and inclusive programs, rather than separate, clinical, or disability-focused settings.
- 4 Family involvement and engagement is essential to meeting the needs of young children; effective early childhood programs invite and support parents as fully engaged partners in the design and delivery of services.
- 5 High quality programs that are informed by research are the most effective.
- 6 Practices, programs, and professionals are culturally responsive, inclusive, and accessible to all children.
- 7 Investments in prevention and early intervention are the most cost-effective use of public funds.
- 8 The coordination of programs and services across the state, communities, and agencies results in administrative efficiencies, greater impact of services, and more convenience for families.

# Missouri Early Childhood Strategic Plan: Summary of Outcomes & Goals



## Governance & Leadership (p. 3)

The governance and leadership structure of the early childhood system will support a coordinated, comprehensive system that values accountability and incorporates family leadership at all levels.

## Financial Resources (p. 3)



Funding from federal, state, and local sources will sustain a comprehensive, collaborative, accessible early childhood system that encourages and supports cross-departmental collaborations.



## Quality Assurance & Accountability (pp. 3-4)

The early childhood system will use federal and state standards, evidence-based practices, and reliable data to inform planning and policies and ensure families can access data and reports.

## Public Engagement (p. 4)



The public, including advocacy groups, policy makers, and stakeholders, will be actively engaged and invested in the well-being of all children and families and the early childhood system that supports them.



## Family Support (p. 4)

The early childhood system will support the basic needs of all children and families and promote continued family stability by supporting and enhancing protective factors in families.

## Parenting Education (p. 5)



Supportive and nurturing family environments for young children will be enhanced by integrating parenting education into the early childhood system, including education about children's development and school readiness.



## Early Childhood Programs (pp. 5-6)

The early childhood system will support programs, services, and professional development opportunities that are accessible, high-quality, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all children, families, and providers.

## Health & Social-Emotional Development (pp. 6-7)



The early childhood system will support health services that are coordinated, accessible, and family-centered to ensure that the needs of all children and families, including their mental, social, and emotional health needs, are met.

# EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Greetings!

I'm reaching out to share the exciting news that the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is launching the Stronger Together Missouri (STMO) Project, a \$6.5 million dollar grant awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services to enhance early childhood services across Missouri.

As part of the STMO project, Missouri will undergo a rigorous process of revising its current Early Childhood Strategic Plan, and project leaders are requesting the community's assistance. Social Grove, a Missouri-based consulting group hired by STMO leadership, will be leading the strategic planning aspects of the project, including facilitation of 20 regional listening sessions across the state. These sessions will allow for early childhood stakeholders, including caregivers and service providers, to be directly engaged in the revision process by providing space for them to use their voices to shape Missouri's Early Childhood System.

Social Grove is seeking your help in recruiting caregivers and service providers for children age 5 and under to provide feedback about the current strategic plan, including their ideas about what's working well and where there are opportunities for growth and improvement. Participants in the process can share their ideas in a variety of ways, including via a quick survey and/or live or virtual participation in a community listening session.

If you know of folks in your personal or professional networks who would benefit from this opportunity, please share the following link with them so that they can learn more about how to get engaged: [https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bBeSrRMzBxuplQx](https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bBeSrRMzBxuplQx).

The Social Grove team is available to answer any questions you or others might have about this opportunity, and they welcome your ideas about how to most effectively engage families and providers in this process. If you have questions or are interested in helping plan a listening session in a community near you, you can contact Social Grove by phone at (417) 850-1814 or by email at [stmoinfo@socialgrove.org](mailto:stmoinfo@socialgrove.org).

Thanks for your support in helping to ensure a bright future for Missouri's kids!

Kindly,  
Signature

# INTRODUCTORY POSTS

**Option 1:** Did you know that Missouri has an Early Childhood Strategic Plan? The plan outlines the state's vision, mission, guiding principles, and priority areas for young children and their caregivers across the state. Are you wondering if the plan aligns with your needs or the needs of the children you care for? If you're interested in sharing your thoughts about the nature of early childhood in Missouri, please **click here** to learn more about how you can help revise Missouri's current strategic plan and make a positive difference in the lives of Missouri's children!

**Option 2:** Join your community in strengthening Missouri families and creating a social and educational environment in which Missouri children can thrive! Our state is working to revise its Early Childhood Strategic Plan, and we need your help! Are you a caregiver or service provider for any child age 5 or under in the state of Missouri? Would you be willing to share your thoughts about the nature of early childhood in our state, either in-person or via a quick survey? **Click here** to find out more about how you can use your voice to positively impact Missouri's children!

**Option 3:** Missouri is currently in the process of revising its Early Childhood Strategic Plan. Leaders in early childhood initiatives will be traveling to several communities across Missouri to meet directly with caregivers and service providers of children age 5 and under to learn more about how the state's strategic plan could be improved. Would you be willing to share your thoughts about the nature of early childhood in our state, either in-person or via a quick survey? **Click here** to find out more about how you can use your voice to positively impact the future of Missouri's kids!



# REMINDER POSTS

**Option 1:** Let your voice be heard! Missouri is revising its Early Childhood Strategic Plan, and we're getting peoples' opinions on what they want for early childhood. What is Missouri doing well, and how could it improve? **Click here** to learn more and share your thoughts.

**Option 2:** You can influence policy in your state! Other people are speaking up, are you? We're getting peoples' opinions from your area on Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan. **Click here** to share your ideas and to get engaged in the effort to improve early childhood in our state!

**Option 3:** Make Missouri a better place for children! Missouri is updating its Early Childhood Strategic Plan and we want your input! **Click here** to share your ideas and make a positive difference in the lives of Missouri kids!

**Option 4:** Make a difference in the lives of Missouri children by learning more about the state's Early Childhood Strategic Plan. With just a single click and 10 minutes of your time, you have a chance to change Missouri for the better! **Click here** to learn more.

**Option 5:** If you care for children ages 0 to 5 in Missouri, you're eligible to help revise Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan! **Click here** to learn more about the revision process and to tell us more about your thoughts on about Missouri's Early Childhood system.

# REMINDER POSTS

**Option 6:** Interested in Missouri early childhood policy? You can learn more about Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan and how you can assist with revising it by **clicking here**. Use your voice to positively impact the future of Missouri's kids!

**Option 7:** Help us understand what works and what doesn't work in Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan. Learn more about the plan and tell us what you think online or in-person by **clicking here**.

**Option 8:** Do you want to improve early childhood care and education in your community? You can help revise Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan in-person or online. **Click here** to share your ideas and learn more about opportunities near you!

**Option 9:** Don't be left out of the conversation on early childhood care and education in Missouri! **Click here** to share your thoughts on Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan and to learn more about how you can attend a community listening session near you to keep the conversation going!

**Option 10:** Who knows what your kids need better than you? **Click here** to share your thoughts on Missouri's Early Childhood Strategic Plan online or in-person.



**THANK YOU  
FOR SUPPORTING  
MISSOURI'S KIDS!**