



Coös County Early Childhood System Plan

2024-2027

July 2024

BACKGROUND

The Coös Coalition for Young Children and Families wants all children to have healthy futures. This means ensuring a strong foundation early in life for all the growth and development that follows. For more than 15 years, the Coalition has been committed to finding new and innovative ways to effectively serve all children and families in Coös County. Coalition partners share the belief that children and families will have better outcomes when people and organizations work together. (See page 7 for complete list of the Coalition’s Leadership Partners).

SHARED VISION, MISSION, AND PRINCIPLES

The Coös Coalition’s **vision** is to promote a **coordinated, sustainable system of supports** for families and children birth through 8 that centers family experience, and encourages positive social, physical, emotional, and cognitive growth for optimal child development.

The Coös Coalition’s **mission** is to **promote optimal development** for children birth through eight and their families in Coös and surrounding communities.

The Coös Coalition has established **the following principles** toward achieving this vision and mission:

- Blending medical and family support models
- Building collaboration among organizations
- Avoiding duplication and creating efficiencies among systems
- Using and promoting best practice models
- Identifying measurable goals
- Working for shared outcomes
- Developing a coordinated resource service system

COLLECTIVE ACTION

In 2021, the Coalition Leadership Team built on the strength of a decade of established relationships and developed a plan to mobilize a more coordinated system of supports for children and families. The 2021-2024 Coös County Early Childhood System Plan outlined a shared path for collective action that was focused around **Four Goal Areas**: Positive Learning Experiences; Healthy Children & Caregivers; Strong Families; and System Coordination. **Strategies** included a pilot project to improve support for families facing multiple stressors; a closed loop referral system; evidence based practices for social emotional learning; universal child development and caregiver depression screenings; a shared data platform; and collaboration with families, community partners, policymakers, and funders.

As these collective action strategies were implemented, the Leadership Team used a **developmental evaluation** process to assess progress, maintaining a willingness to adapt strategies as implementation progressed. Some of the questions that guided this process included: What is emerging/developing as the strategy takes shape? What seems to be working and not working? What needs more attention or change? What external factors are limiting or reinforcing the successful implementation or impact of this strategy?

STRATEGIES 2024-2027

Building on lessons learned in the first three years, the Coalition Leadership Team invited community partners and family leaders to co-design collective action steps for the next three years. The following **seven strategies** were identified as the most critical activities to build positive learning experiences, promote healthy children and caregivers, support strong families, and improve early childhood system coordination. A strategy map that provides a one-page view of all the goals and strategies can be found in Figure 1 in the Appendix. Progress measures for each strategy were established using SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timebound.



POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Goal: All children and caregivers have access to quality early care and education.

Strategy 1: Deploy a Childcare Tactical Team

Multiple closures of childcare centers in Coös and Upper Grafton counties in recent years displaced over 200 children. In response to this emerging crisis, Coalition partners formed a Childcare Tactical Team in 2023 to design a process for engaging stakeholders from childcare, family, social service, school, healthcare and business sectors. At the initial convening in early 2024, participants reviewed data and identified collaborative ways to increase the number of childcare spaces for working families. Partners were organized into four regions- Coös West, Coös East, Coös North, and Upper Grafton. These regional action teams have developed local childcare solutions plans, and are working toward implementation.

| Measuring Progress: Childcare Tactical Team |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Measure: By June 30, 2027, Childcare Tactical Team’s regional action teams will develop and implement plans to increase the number of high quality childcare spaces for working families across Coös County, measured by annual activities reports. • Outcome Measure: By June 30, 2027, the number of childcare spaces for working families in Coös County will be increased by 300 spaces, measured by comparison to 2024 baseline numbers. |

Strategy 2: Maintain use of evidence-based practices to support social emotional development.

The Coalition will continue to invest in evidence-based social-emotional learning (SEL) curricula for early childhood professionals working with young children and their families. Current training initiatives are focused on Growing Great Kids and Conscious Discipline. The Coalition’s third evidence-based strategy for SEL is the Pyramid Model for early care providers. Adoption of this model is one of the state-approved pathways to a NH State Granite Steps to Quality Step 3 designation.

| Measuring Progress: Evidence Based Practices for SEL |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Measure: By June 30, 2027, Coalition partners will train 90% of staff working with children and families in partner organizations in Growing Great Kids, Conscious Discipline, or Pyramid Model, measured by annual training reports. • Outcome Measure: (GGK/CD): By June 30, 2027, 90% of partner organizations will incorporate the Growing Great Kids or Conscious Discipline model into their services. • Outcome Measure (Pyramid Model): By June 30, 2027, 90% of early care and education settings in Coös County will have Step 3 Granite Steps for Quality designations on the Pyramid Model or other state-approved pathway. |

HEALTHY CHILDREN AND CAREGIVERS

Goal: All children and caregivers have access to quality medical and behavioral healthcare.

Strategy 3: Develop a Behavioral Health Tactical Team

This is a new strategy area for the Coalition that seeks to respond to unmet behavioral health needs for children and adults in the region with innovative, trauma informed, non-clinical responses. This strategy will replicate the process of community level problem solving that has been developed by the Childcare Tactical Team to focus on behavioral health needs. The Coalition will begin by forming a workgroup, which will then build out activities using the Tactical Team process. The goal is to increase availability of non-clinical community resources to support child and family behavioral health.

| Measuring Progress: Behavioral Health Tactical Team |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Measure: By June 30, 2027, the Coös Coalition Behavioral Health Tactical Team will develop and implement non-clinical community responses to the behavioral health needs of children and families across Coös County, measured by annual activities reports. • Outcome Measure: By June 30, 2027, the number of non-clinical community responses to child and family behavioral health needs will be increased by 50%, measured by comparison to 2024 numbers. |

Strategy 4: Maintain universal child development and caregiver depression screenings & referrals

The Coalition has established strategies to promote universal and timely screening for maternal and caregiver depression, as well as yearly developmental screening for children 0-5. Coalition partners will continue to implement, measure, and improve on these practices. This will include supporting the implementation of a closed-loop platform to improve care coordination and access for families identified as needing services.

| Measuring Progress: Universal Screenings |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Measure: By June 30, 2027, Coalition partners will train 90% of partner organization staff who serve children & families in appropriate implementation of ASQs, PHQs, and Edinburg, measured by annual tracking reports. • Outcome Measure (Children): By June 30, 2027, 90% of children served by Coalition partner organizations will be screened for development annually, measured by annual tracking reports. • Outcome Measure (Caregivers): By June 30, 2027, 90% of caregivers served by Coalition partner organizations will be screened for depression annually, measured by annual tracking reports. |

STRONG FAMILIES

Goal: Families are resilient and have concrete supports in times of need.

Strategy 5: Replicate Raising Strong Families pilot program

In Coös county, there is a small group of families with multiple, complex needs who benefit from a wraparound approach to engage and coordinate multiple services. In response to the 2021-2024 Plan, Coalition partners developed a service delivery model using expertise within the leadership group, and piloted the Raising Strong Families program. Lessons learned from the pilot program will be applied to replication efforts in additional locations over the next three years. Additional process and outcome measures for the initial pilot program are being evaluated through a contract with Pear Associates.

| Measuring Progress: Raising Strong Families program |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Measure: By June 30, 2027, 90% of supporting partner organizations will agree that new strategies or activities have been implemented to address service gaps or duplication, measured by annual partner surveys conducted by outside evaluator. • Outcome Measure (Families): By June 30, 2027, 60% of families in the RSF pilot program will have achieved safety/stability for at least 90% of the Protective Factors domain areas, measured by a score of 3.0 or better in the Protective Factors tool. • Outcome Measure (Replication): By June 30, 2027, the Raising Strong Families program will be replicated to increase the number of families served in Coös County by 50%, measured by comparison to 2024 numbers. |

SYSTEM COORDINATION

Goal: Efficient collaboration improves child and family outcomes.

Strategy 6: Implement Unite Us closed loop referral system

This strategy was first established in the 2021-2024 Plan. While many Coalition partners had roles within their organizations to conduct screenings and make referrals to resources, there was no central place to obtain current information about services, and no follow-up process to ensure the services were received. Coalition partners began piloting the Unite Us platform based on statewide adoption of this service, but activities were paused when the State of NH issued a new request for proposals for a closed-loop referral system vendor. Unite Us has now been re-established as the statewide vendor, and Coalition partners will build on the foundational work that was set during the last Plan, with the goals of increasing local adoption of the platform, and ultimately improving care coordination for families.

| Measuring Progress: Unite Us |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Measure: By June 30, 2027, the total number of families receiving services referred through Unite Us will increase annually, measured by comparison to 2024 baseline. • Outcome Measure: By June 30, 2027, the percentage of families within Unite Us reporting they received effective care coordination will be higher than the state average, measured by annual Unite Us family survey data in comparison to the most recently available NH data from National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH). |

Strategy 7: Maintain Early Childhood Connections for kindergarten transitions

Early Childhood Connections activities were first established to bring early care and education professionals, Pre-K and kindergarten teachers together to build relationships and develop activities that would improve transitions for children entering Kindergarten. Over time, six regional groups have been established, as well as regular Summits that bring all the groups together to build networked connections and to provide professional development. The Coalition will continue to strengthen the work of the regional groups and host Summits, with the goal of improving the kindergarten transition for all children and their families.

| Measuring Progress: EC Connections for K Transitions |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Measure: By June 30, 2027, Coalition partners will ensure that all 6 regional workgroups meet 4 times annually, have steady attendance, develop a work plan for the school year by December, and complete at least 2 kindergarten transition activities annually, measured by annual reports. • Outcome Measure: By June 30, 2027, at least 75% of kindergarten parents will report they had all the information and support needed for their child’s successful transition into kindergarten, measured by annual parent surveys. |

COALITION DEVELOPMENT

The Leadership Team has also established four Coalition Development strategic focus areas for 2024-2027. The activities in each of these areas address the core functions and operations of the Coalition, including leadership team, staff support, collaboration with families, data and reporting, coordination, and communications. All of the strategies are focused on the same **goal of continuous quality improvement**. A one-page view of all the Operations activities can be found in Figure 2 in the Appendix.

IMPROVE COALITION OPERATIONS

| Activities | Timeline |
|--|-----------|
| Assess and realign how Coalition work is managed, supported, and advised | Aug 2024 |
| Clearly align consultant contracts and activities with strategy outcome measures | Sept 2024 |
| Continue to strengthen and bolster the Leadership Team’s governance structure | Ongoing |

INCREASE AUTHENTIC FAMILY LEADERSHIP

| Activities | Timeline |
|--|-----------|
| Continue to integrate family leaders in all Coalition strategies | Ongoing |
| Develop and implement process for onboarding new Family Leaders | June 2025 |

IMPROVE DATA AND REPORTING PROCESSES

| Activities | Timeline |
|---|-----------|
| Establish a monthly schedule of reporting on each strategy area (one per month) | Sept 2024 |
| Use data from monthly strategy reports for continuous improvement | Ongoing |

IMPROVE COALITION COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

| Activities | Timeline |
|--|-----------|
| Establish process for sharing content from monthly strategy reports with public using accessible platforms | Sept 2024 |
| Capitalize on opportunities for community engagement among Coalition partners | Ongoing |
| Coordinate policy advocacy efforts by collaborating with child and family policy organizations | Ongoing |

COALITION PARTNERS

The following organizations have signed Memoranda of Understanding as formal Coös Coalition partners, providing staff with decision making authority to serve on the Leadership Team. These signed organization representatives set strategic direction, provide stewardship, and lead continuous development of the Coalition. The Leadership Team serves as the final decision-making body for the Coalition.

The Coalition also has many additional supporting partners and strategic champions who are actively engaged in Coalition workgroups and activities as part of the overall Early Childhood System.



APPENDIX

FIGURE 1: COALITION STRATEGY MAP 2024-2027



Mission: Optimal Development for Children Birth8 and Families



| NH GOALS |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------|---|---|--|--|
| Coalition Goals | <p>All children and caregivers have access to quality early care and education.</p> | <p>All children and caregivers have access to quality medical and behavioral healthcare.</p> | <p>Families are resilient and have concrete supports in times of need.</p> | <p>Efficient collaboration improves child and family outcomes.</p> |
| STRATEGIES | <p>Deploy Childcare Tactical Team</p> <p>Maintain use of evidence-based practices to support social emotional development</p> | <p>Develop Behavioral Health Tactical Team</p> <p>Maintain universal child developmental and caregiver depression screening & referrals</p> | <p>Replicate Raising Strong Families</p> | <p>Implement Unite Us Closed-Loop Referral System</p> <p>Maintain EC Connections for K Transitions</p> |

FIGURE 2: OPERATIONS DEVELOPMENT MAP 2024-2027



Coalition Operations Development Strategy Map

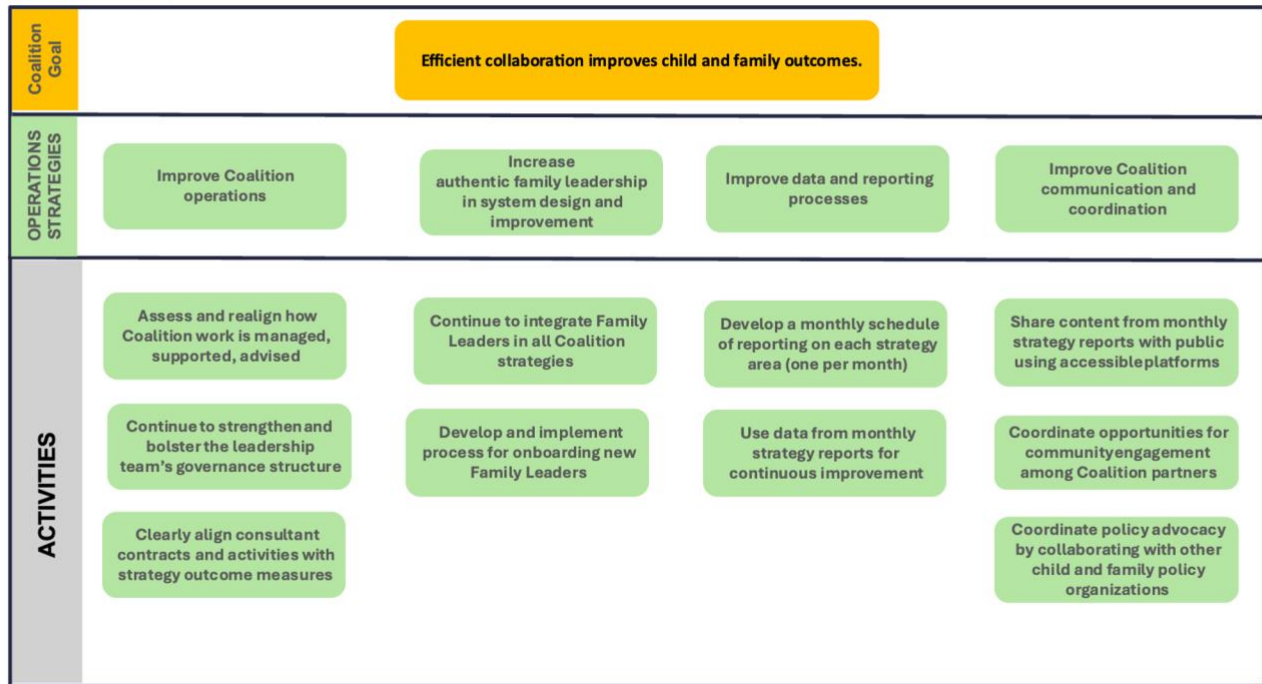


FIGURE 3: LOGIC MODEL

The logic model for the Coös Coalition’s Early Childhood System Plan was established in 2021, and is based on a theory of change that incorporates evidence from Strengthening Families Protective Factors, Social Determinants of Health, Social Ecological Model, and Collective Impact. It has been updated to reflect the 2024-2027 strategies.

