



Strategic Plan Framework

JULY 1, 2014 - JUNE 30, 2019



Our Vision

The McCormick Center will be the nationally recognized leader in the preparation and ongoing professional development of early childhood leaders. The McCormick Center's programs will be noted for rigor, responsiveness to participants' needs, direct application to the daily world of program administration, and balance of high-tech and high-touch approaches to learning.

The McCormick Center will serve as an important catalyst for change in transforming individuals, organizations, and external systems to better respond to the needs of children and families. As we implement initiatives that strengthen the leadership capacity of early childhood educators, the McCormick Center serves as a model for promoting collaboration with different funding sources, education and human services agencies, professional development organizations, and institutions of higher education.

We envision a world where every early childhood leader has the knowledge and skills to administer high-quality programs that nurture lifelong learning in children, promote healthy child development, strengthen families, and create a great place to work for staff.

Our Mission

The McCormick Center is dedicated to building the leadership capacity of the early childhood workforce. The activities of the McCormick Center encompass four areas:

- **Professional development** to increase the knowledge and competency of early childhood leaders.
- **Evaluation** to measure and improve the quality of early learning programs.
- **Research** to enhance the knowledge base of key workforce and professional development issues.
- **Public awareness** to promote greater understanding of the critical role of early childhood leaders in the provision of quality services for children and families.

Strategic Priorities

July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2019

Our Strategic Priorities represent the key areas we believe need our focus to ensure that children thrive. A detailed work plan has been implemented for each of the strategies identified below. Updates on the work plans will be shared quarterly with all staff at the McCormick Center's center-wide meetings. In the interim, progress will be monitored by the McCormick Center's Leadership Team.

KEY INDICATOR 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERS DEMONSTRATE QUALITIES OF EXCELLENCE

Early childhood leaders implement best practices after participating in the McCormick Center's leadership development initiatives.

Strategy 1.1: Strengthen and expand leadership development initiatives

- Strengthen and expand initiatives that link to family child care credentialing and degree programs.
- Strengthen and expand initiatives that link to technical assistance credentialing and degree programs.
- Strengthen and expand training opportunities on program quality assessment tools.
- Develop professional development linking leaders with teaching and learning.
- Refresh and revise current training initiatives and develop an updated business model for all training initiatives.

Strategy 1.2: Expand the reach of current leadership development initiatives

- Build out consultative professional development services to states.
- Develop initiatives related to organizational development, change management, and continuous quality improvement that meet cross-sector needs.
- Develop a universal McCormick Center online professional development platform.
- Offer leadership development in Spanish.

Strategy 1.3: Systematize evaluation measures of leadership development

- Develop and implement an evaluation plan for the McCormick Center.
- Develop a theory of change for McCormick Center leadership development initiatives.
- Adopt a cross-organizational data management system.

Strategy 1.4: Convene leaders in the field to foster network connections

- Build face-to-face and online opportunities for practitioners to come together.

KEY INDICATOR 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS SUPPORT EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

State early childhood professional development and quality rating and improvement systems utilize the McCormick Center as a resource for supporting excellence.

Strategy 2.1: Strengthen and expand use of evaluation tools or adapt tools to best meet needs of diverse audiences

- Develop a plan for the expansion of the *Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (ECWES)*.
- Develop an approach for how the *Program Administration Scale (PAS)* fits into different administrative models in early childhood education.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan for our evaluation tools.
- Review McCormick Center data and create a research agenda on the tools.
- Expand the capacity to assess and train on the *PAS*, *Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS)*, and *ECWES*.
- Review and recommend changes to the tools in preparation for future editions.

Strategy 2.2: Strengthen and increase consultative services to decision makers within state early childhood systems

- Strengthen and expand intentional key partnerships.
- Target decision makers in states awarded federal *Preschool Development/Expansion* grants.

Strategy 2.3: Increase professional qualifications and administrative competencies of early childhood leaders

- Strengthen and expand public policy and public awareness efforts.
- Expand and disseminate the evidence-base about professional qualifications of early childhood leaders and effective administrative practices.
- Link McCormick Center professional development initiatives to college credit.

Strategy 2.4: Strengthen quality monitoring and expand technical support work.

- Capitalize on Illinois assessment work to inform models of quality assessment nationally.
- Expand and disseminate the evidence-base about technical support work linked to quality assessment.

KEY INDICATOR 3 ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Strengthen technology capacity to allow for innovation, including expansion of our online professional development initiatives.
- Strengthen the organization's professional development cross-function; Develop systems that support growth of professional development initiatives and ensure consistency of quality across all McCormick Center professional development initiatives.
- Strengthen and expand the marketing function.
- Continue to ensure the financial stability of the McCormick Center.



LEADERSHIP [M]ATTERS.

ABOUT THE McCORMICK CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP

AT NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

At the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, we empower individuals to build the leadership and management skills they need to create and sustain exemplary programs for young children. Through professional development, evaluation, research, and public awareness, we promote best practice in program administration. By working with states, professional organizations, and directly with early childhood practitioners, we raise the bar on program quality. Because, when it comes to early childhood education, **leadership really does matter.**

Founded in 1985, the McCormick Center builds on National Louis University's 128-year history of accomplishments in the field of early childhood education. From its founding as a vital force in the kindergarten movement of the 1880's, NLU has remained rooted in educational progressivism and dedicated to advocacy for children and social change. The McCormick Center is committed to these same ideals.

To learn more about the McCormick Center,
visit McCormickCenter.nl.edu

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