



SMART BEGINNINGS SHENANDOAH VALLEY
STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2012

Smart Beginnings Shenandoah Valley (SBSV) is a regional coalition focused on ensuring positive early childhood care and education opportunities are available to all children, age birth to five years old. SBSV has as its vision: *A diverse community where every family is supported and has access to quality programs and resources for their young child.* Its mission is to help all children enter school healthy and prepared to succeed. This regional coalition serves the following jurisdictions: the Counties of Augusta, Page, Rockingham, and Shenandoah and the cities of Harrisonburg, Staunton, and Waynesboro. The seven jurisdictions are organized into the following four localities:

- Harrisonburg-Rockingham (H-R)
- Page
- Shenandoah
- Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro (SAW)

Smart Beginnings Shenandoah Valley recognizes the interconnectedness of these localities with families often living and working in more than one of the above communities and receiving services from another. While there are common regional characteristics, each community is viewed as uniquely individual in their own right.

To address this, SBSV utilizes a multi-tiered organization structure that maintains a regional viewpoint, through the work of the Leadership Council, as well as a local viewpoint through the use of Locality Teams. The Leadership Council is comprised of five representatives from each of the four localities totaling 20 members. These individuals are senior level decision-makers from across the region representing the areas of business, local government, justice, public education, and governmental agencies. Their focus includes strategic planning, resource sustainability, and public awareness about the importance of early childhood development and its impact on the economic and social health of this region.

The local viewpoint is maintained through Locality Teams comprised of individuals representing agencies, child care providers, parents, higher education, public schools, Head Start programs, and others who have an interest in ensuring needs of children age birth to 5 and their families are met in the community. They provide the local visibility and implement local efforts identified in the Strategic Plan.

The 2010-2012 Smart Beginnings Strategic Plan addresses the findings from the community assessment completed in the fall of 2009. The plan is built around three regional **priorities** determined by the Leadership Council. These priorities are broad regional goals that relate directly back to findings in the community assessment. **Strategies** are also included and were identified at the annual 2010 Early Childhood Leadership Summit, involving over 125 representatives from across the region. They are regional and define the priorities. These strategies are achieved through **action steps**. Action steps may be regional or locality-specific and are differentiated in the responsibility section of the plan.

The 2010-2012 priorities identified for Smart Beginnings Shenandoah Valley to address from 2010-2012 include the following:

- **Priority 1: Maximize access and usage of available community resources and services for families with young children.**

Community Assessment Findings: A community-wide lack of knowledge regarding existing, available resources for families with young children was repeatedly cited as an issue in all localities. Parents reported a lack of access while agencies reported services as underutilized. Regionally, a lack of available mental health services for young children was repeatedly listed as a concern..

- **Priority 2: Provide families of young children with resources to ensure school readiness.**

Community Assessment Findings: Parenting classes are currently offered in each locality. However, assessment findings indicate a need for parenting programs that emphasize early childhood development, as opposed to school-age or adolescent aged children, as well as a need to increase participation in classes. Regionally, parents report not participating in classes due to lengthy class series or a perceived stigma of classes only being relevant “to parents who aren’t good parents.”

A second need identified in the community assessment relative to families was to increase the number of three and four year old children enrolled in quality yearly education programs.

- **Priority 3: Equip child care providers with resources to ensure quality care and school readiness.**

Community Assessment Findings: While Provider trainings are offered throughout the region, assessment findings indicate a need for increased opportunities for collaboration with public schools, increased QRIS rated sites, and increased selection of trainings offered at times in which they can attend.

Priority 1: Maximize access and usage of available community resources and services for families with young children.

Purpose: A strong early childhood system exists throughout the Shenandoah Valley to ensure families have resources to support their child in entering school healthy and ready to learn.

Ready Communities			
Strategy 1: Initiate new methods to disseminate quality information and resources to all sectors of the community.			
Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures
<p>Compile regional resource guide and disseminate in community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect existing guides. • Ensure updated information. • Compile into 1 regional resource. • Explore IT options for dissemination. • Distribute and publicize guide through a variety of media. 	<p>SBSV Coordinator Locality Teams Local public schools</p> <p>SBSV Coordinator James Madison University</p> <p>SBSV Coordinator Locality Teams Coalition partners Media partners</p>	<p>Nov. 2010 - May 2011</p> <p>Ongoing (explore I/T options)</p> <p>Summer 2011 (distribute)</p>	<p>Resource guide in hard copy and available electronically</p> <p>Number of links to resource guide placed on partners' websites</p>
<p>Create connections with businesses, child care centers, schools, and agencies to distribute information about services in the community for families with young children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile list of businesses in each community with contact information and number of employees • Meet with local businesses to develop individualized plan for collaboration and disseminating information to employees and customers • Continue to foster collaboration with centers, schools and agencies across the region for information distribution 	<p>Locality Teams Local United Way offices Chambers of Commerce Rotaries</p> <p>SBSV Coordinator Leadership Council members Locality Teams</p> <p>SBSV Coordinator Leadership Council Locality Teams</p>	<p>Sept. 2010 (list of businesses)</p> <p>Oct. 2010-Mar. 2011 – business meetings</p> <p>May 2011 (partners distributing info)</p>	<p>12 business plans developed (3/ locality)</p>

<p>Develop PA campaign to educate all community sectors about the importance of early childhood development and using available community resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Family Fairs in each locality • Work w/ local TV station for media campaign • Print media campaign • Develop Speaker's Bureau • Explore social networking options (i.e. Facebook) 	<p>Locality Teams Local partners</p> <p>SBSV Coordinator Steering Committee Media rep Public Awareness Team</p> <p>SBSV Coordinator Public Awareness Team Locality Teams</p> <p>SBSV Coordinator Steering Committee Leadership Council</p> <p>SBSV Coordinator Steering Committee</p>	<p>June 2011</p> <p>June 2011</p> <p>June 2011</p> <p>Oct. 2010 – speakers identified</p> <p>Jan. 2011 – consistent presentation material developed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>4 Family Fairs (1/ locality); evaluation cards; number of attendees</p> <p>2-3 commercials produced and aired</p> <p>Written plan developed; number of flyers/brochures distributed</p> <p>8 speakers identified regionally with materials for 5 different presentation topics; 4-6 presentations provided by Bureau Options evaluated and implemented accordingly</p>
<p>Early Childhood Leadership Summit</p>	<p>SBSV Coordinator Steering Committee Summit Planning Team</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Event evaluations Attendance roster</p>
<p>Business Leader Reception</p>	<p>SBSV Coordinator Leadership Council Steering Committee</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Attendance roster Increased # of business partners</p>

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Purpose: A strong early childhood system exists throughout the Shenandoah Valley to ensure families have resources to support their child in entering school healthy and ready to learn.

Ready Communities			
Strategy 2: Strengthen infrastructure for Smart Beginnings Shenandoah Valley			
Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures
Identify additional members from each locality	SBSV Coordinator Leadership Council	Summer 2010	List of potential members representing region
Recruit additional members to complete full council of 20	SBSV Coordinator Leadership Council	September 2010	Full council w/ 20 members 50% business representation
Quarterly Council Meetings	SBSV Coordinator Leadership Council Chairperson	Quarterly beginning in October 2010	Meeting evaluations 60% attendance rate at meetings
Pursue funding to sustain local SBSV initiatives	Leadership Council Steering Committee SBSV Coordinator	Ongoing	Funds secured for initiatives

Priority 2: Provide families of young children with resources to ensure school readiness.

Purpose: Families understand the importance of quality preschool experiences and maximize enrollment in local public and private programs.

Ready Children			
Strategy 1: Increase preschool opportunities for children in the region.			
Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures
Identify number of 3 and 4 year olds not enrolled in public or private preschools.	SBSV Coordinator Local VPI and Head Start Enrollment Coordinators Healthy Families reps Child Care Providers (centers, faith-based, FDH) DSS reps Refugee Resource Ctr	October 2010	Master list of stats including age of children, total # of children on wait lists, point of contact
Identify providers who accept sliding scale or DSS subsidy	SBSV Coordinator JMU student intern DSS Resource and Referral offices	December 2010	Completed list
Implement webpage with provider info and number of available slots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop webpage format Introduce webpage to providers and local resource/referral agencies Provide protected access to providers to enter information IF they have openings Establish alternative method for accessing information (i.e. 211, Resource and Referral agencies) Advertise webpage to parents through partners (i.e. if child is waitlisted for HS or VPI, link to private providers webpage is provided in letter as an option for parents to pursue) 	SBSV Coordinator Locality Teams Head Start representative VPT representative 211 staff Resource and Referral offices	September 2010- April 2011	Webpage design; number of providers participating; increased enrollment of 3-4 year olds in preschool

<p>Increase scholarships for children to attend private preschools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify preschools to participate and acceptable cost of 1 year of preschool • Identify scholarship sponsors 	<p>SBSV Coordinator Shenandoah Locality Team Greater Augusta Locality Team</p>	<p>Ongoing through June 2011</p> <p>Scholarships available for 2011-2012 school year</p>	<p>3 scholarships offered in each locality</p>
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Priority 2: Provide families of young children with resources to ensure school readiness.

Purpose: Parents utilize parenting techniques that support positive social and emotional development in their young child to ensure school readiness.

Ready Families			
Strategy 2: Increase parent education opportunities.			
Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures
Identify and implement parent education curriculum regionally	SBSV Coordinator Locality Teams Coalition partners with focus on parent education and mentoring	October 2010- curriculum identified Ongoing- implementation	- curriculum identified - curriculum implemented - # of parents participating in classes - Evaluation cards
Provide parenting education classes to teen parents with young children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify community programs directed to teen parents in each locality (teen mothers as well as teen fathers) focused on parenting education Identify level of utilization of community programs Consider support group format 	SBSV Coordinator Locality Teams Providers of teen parent education programs	January 2011	Completed list Data points Surveys/interviews
Where need exists, explore methods of increasing the number of teen parents (mothers and fathers) reached, i.e. class offered through local high schools, rec centers, etc.	SBSV Coordinator Locality Teams Coalition partners	Summer 2011	Number of suggested sites Number of teens served
As appropriate, determine best model for delivering teen parent classes – curriculum, etc. – and seek funding for implementation	SBSV Coordinator Locality Teams Teen parents Coalition partners	Fall 2011	Program and materials funded
Implement teen parent program	Locality Teams Coalition partners	January 2012	Number of teens enrolled in program

Priority 2: Provide families of young children with resources to ensure school readiness.

Purpose: Families acquire the knowledge and skills needed to establish healthy eating habits.

Ready Services			
Strategy 3: Provide opportunities for nutritional education and dissemination of information related to improving.			
Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures
<p>Collaborate with local agencies to survey parents of children birth to 5 about current nutritional knowledge levels and family nutritional habits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify available survey or develop survey Determine methods to distribute survey Distribute survey Compile results 	<p>SBSV Coordinator Locality Teams Home visiting partners Child care providers VPI and Head Start programs Extension offices Child Care Connection Family Resource Center</p>	<p>Fall 2010</p>	<p>Number of surveys completed</p>
<p>Compile results of survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share info w/ Locality Teams and partners Determine focus of workshops 	<p>SBSV Coordinator</p>	<p>February 2011</p>	<p>Survey data</p>
<p>Determine available community resources – trainers available, workshops/curriculum available</p>	<p>Locality Team Community partners</p>	<p>Jan. – June 2011</p>	<p>Workshop (s) identified</p>
<p>Provide workshops</p>	<p>Locality Team Community partners</p>	<p>Beginning Summer 2011</p>	<p>Number of participants in workshops</p>
<p>Collaborate with nutrition partners to develop plan for dissemination of information</p>	<p>Locality Teams Partner agencies SBSV Coordinator</p>	<p>Jan. – June 2011</p>	<p>Plan developed Number of flyers distributed</p>
<p>Partner with local extension offices to provide Super Pantry workshop in each community</p>	<p>SBSV Coordinator Locality Team Extension Office</p>	<p>2011-2012</p>	<p>4 workshops offered regionally Number of participants</p>

Priority 3: Equip child care providers with resources to ensure quality care and school readiness.

Purpose: Children participate in quality early learning opportunities prior to entering school which result in improved school readiness.

Ready Schools			
Strategy 1: Facilitate collaboration between public and private early childhood teachers/providers.			
Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures
Encourage private providers and school systems to use regional transition to kindergarten documents	SBSV Coordinator School system reps Head Start reps	Ongoing	- Number of parent resource guides distributed - Number of end of year assessment sent to receiving schools
Continue to publicize a regional kindergarten registration date	Transition to Kindergarten (T2K) team School system reps Head Start reps	Annually in the spring	Number of children registering for kindergarten during registration week
Establish and implement method for private providers to visit schools with rising kindergartners	T2K team School teachers School principals Private providers Head Start reps	Spring 2011 and then annually	Number of visits scheduled Number of children visiting
Facilitate a network of service providers of children ages 0-3 to enhance communication and coordinate services	Infant/Toddler Connection Part B & C reps Hand in Hand Child Care Connection Family Resource & Referral Center	Fall 2010	Number of participants Evaluation cards
Encourage joint professional development opportunities centered on the Foundation Blocks and purchased curriculum involving private and public early childhood teachers to promote a common core of instructional practices for all young children.	Public preschool directors Private preschool directors Private preschool staff	Fall 2010	Number of participants Evaluation cards
Provide access and training to private preschool teachers wishing to utilize available PALS pre-K assessment kits and encourage end of year assessment information to be shared with public schools	SBSV Coordinator T2K Team School representatives Private preschool teachers/providers Child Care Connection	Training – Fall 2010 Assessment completion – Spring 2011	Number of participants sharing assessment information Survey participants Survey schools

Priority 3: Equip child care providers with resources to ensure quality care and school readiness.

Purpose: Children participate in quality early learning opportunities prior to entering school which result in improved school readiness.

Ready Services & Ready Children			
Strategy 2: Initiate new methods of provider training opportunities.			
Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures
Initiate computer access to private providers to participate in online training courses	T2K team Locality teams Child Care Connection Private center directors School systems	Summer 2011	Number of providers accessing online trainings
Develop and implement a standard orientation training for all new child care providers (including centers, family day home, Family Friend, and Neighbor) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine structure and hours of training Incentive for providers to participate Topics of program Continuing education credit 	DSS SBSV Coordinator Private center directors Public school reps Head Start reps Child Care Connection Family Resource & Referral Center	Begin Fall 2010 with 1 st session offered Summer 2011	Number of participants Offered 2-4 times throughout region
Explore offering college credit classes relative to early childhood development	SBSV Coordinator Steering Committee Leadership Council reps Blue Ridge Community College rep Lord Fairfax Community College rep	Fall 2010 – initiate conversation	Meetings w/ local community college representatives
Develop child care trainings that can be offered in local high schools and through Vo Tech programs for high school students interested in entering the professional child care field	SBSV Coordinator Steering Committee School System reps including principals, curriculum supervisors, etc.	Fall 2010 – initiate conversation	Plans resulting from meetings with identified partners
Increase the number of private centers participating in the Star Quality Initiative (QRIS)	SBSV Coordinator Steering Committee	Fall 2010 and ongoing	Number of sites receiving QRIS rating
Increase local VPI and Head Start classrooms to participate in Star Quality Initiative (QRIS)	SBSV Coordinator Steering Committee School System reps Head Start partners	Ongoing	Number of sites receiving QRIS rating