



Carol Munro, Consultant
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INTRODUCTION

This document was commissioned by the Office of the Provincial Advisor to Children First, with the goal of assisting community initiatives that may not have experience in planning and potentially establishing a common format for strategic planning for early childhood development initiatives in communities around BC.

There is no one perfect strategic planning model. Each organization ends up developing its own nature and model of strategic planning, often by selecting a model and modifying it as they go along. This Guide illustrates one way in which strategic plans are commonly created and draws from considerable research on the topic, as well as the experiences of the writer.



Tip: A common format for strategic planning for ECD services around the province could result in an ability to identify provincial trends and areas where province wide investment is indicated.

1. ABOUT STRATEGIC PLANNING

1.1 Overview

Strategic planning is a management tool, period. As with any management tool, it is used for one purpose only: to help an organization do a better job - to focus its energy, to ensure that members of the organization are working toward the same goals, to assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. In short, strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. (Adapted from Bryson's Strategic Planning in Public and Nonprofit Organizations)

A word by word dissection of this definition provides the key elements that underlie the meaning and success of a strategic planning process: The process is strategic because it involves preparing the best way to respond to the circumstances of the organization's environment, whether or not its circumstances are known in advance; nonprofits often must respond to dynamic and even hostile environments. Being strategic, then, means being clear about the organization's objectives, being aware of the organization's resources, and incorporating both into being consciously responsive to a dynamic environment.

The process is about planning because it involves intentionally setting goals (i.e., choosing a desired future) and developing an approach to achieving those goals.

The process is disciplined in that it calls for a certain order and pattern to keep it focused and productive. The process raises a sequence of questions that helps planners examine experience, test assumptions, gather and incorporate information about the present, and anticipate the environment in which the organization will be working in the future. Finally, the process is about fundamental decisions and actions because choices

must be made in order to answer the sequence of questions mentioned above. The plan is ultimately no more and no less than a set of decisions about what to do, why to do it, and how to do it. Because it is impossible to do everything that needs to be done in this world, strategic planning implies that some organizational decisions and actions are more important than others - and that much of the strategy lies in making the tough decisions about what is most important to achieving organizational success.

Strategic planning can be complex, challenging, and even messy, but it is always defined by the basic ideas outlined above - and you can always return to these basics for insight into your own strategic planning process. ¹

1.2 Why do Strategic Planning?

A Strategic Plan allows you to:

- Create a mission statement that defines your purpose and corresponds directly to your core programs and activities.
- Determine common goals and procedures and ensure that everyone in your organization shares ownership of these
- Decide on the resources required to achieve your goals, including finances, personnel and outside expertise
- Choose timelines that are realistic
- Take action
- Evaluate your progress.

1.3 Components of a Basic Strategic Plan

The main elements of a strategic plan are:

- An assessment of the current state of affairs – internal and external (SWOT)
- Mission statement.
- Vision and values statements.
- Strategic goals. These are statements of how you will carry out major segments of your mission.
- A description of the means and strategies that will be used to achieve the goals
- Processes for documenting, communicating and evaluating the plan.

1.4 Getting Ready for Strategic Planning

Getting ready to create your strategic plan involves a few basic steps:

1. Reaching agreement that a strategic plan is needed

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2. Deciding who will be on the planning committee. Try to make your planning group as inclusive of the various stakeholders as possible. Your stakeholders likely include (not limited to) parents, childcare/daycare providers, Public Health, your school district, municipal folks who provide children's programming and child and family serving non profits.
3. Deciding on whether or not to hire a consultant to facilitate the process. You might consider hiring a consultant if:
 - You haven't done strategic planning previously
 - Previous strategic plans were not successful
 - You think that an inside facilitator will not be sufficiently objective
4. Updating and reviewing previous plans – and deciding what needs to be brought forward
5. Assembling and reviewing other information that needs to be considered to ensure sound decision making. This might include results of stakeholder surveys; needs assessments; progress and evaluation reports; research on best practice, community demographics, asset maps, EDI results, etc.



Tip: One of the difficult aspects of this work is understanding and applying what is already known. Take the time to synthesize and interpret the information you have before engaging in the planning process. Ensure that the planning team has time to review the information you have collected in step 5 (above).

6. Allocating adequate time for the planning process. The number and length of meetings needed will depend upon whether you have done planning before, how many strategic issues you face and the ability of your group to devote time to planning. Attempt to complete your strategic planning in 2-3 months at most, or you will lose momentum. Schedule your meetings no less that 2-3 weeks apart.

Here is an example of a strategic planning schedule:

- a. A half-day session where you review and discuss background information (from steps 4 and 5 above) and create or update your mission, vision and values and conduct a SWOT exercise (Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, Opportunities).
- b. A 3 hour session (soon after the first session) where you identify and prioritize the strategic issues/goals
- c. A 3 hour session where you design strategies to achieve your goals.

This will get you to a place where your planning group or your staff can create a document that can then be used to establish an operating plan which details how the strategies will be implemented (activities), the resources required for implementation, who will do the work and by when.



Tips: Plan your dates well in advance and ensure that members of the planning group are committed to reviewing the background information prior to the planning sessions and of course to attending all sessions. The completion of the foregoing steps should result in your strategic planning work plan!

If you are not contracting with a consultant to conduct the process, ensure that someone is assigned to lead the process and document each step.

2. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

2.1 Creating your Mission Statement

The first step in developing your strategic plan is creating (or reviewing) a Mission Statement. A Mission Statement is critical because it enables all members of your organization to share the same view of your purpose. Your Mission Statement should at least define who you are (the name of your organization), what you do and for whom and the geographical area in which you operate. For example:

The Ourtown Early Childhood Development Committee promotes and supports community engagement in improving the health and well-being of children (prenatal to age 6) in Ourtown.

Or

“The Parent and Tot Community Hub is a non profit agency providing social services and recreational activities for pre-school children and families in Yourtown.

Your Mission statement need not describe *how* you do things or what your values are.

When crafting your Mission Statement, bear in mind the goals of Children First which are to:

- Recognize and link the multiple services and supports that a community has to offer;
- Facilitate bringing community-based service providers together to ensure there is a comprehensive, integrated system of services for children and their families;
- Connect families and their children to the services, at the appropriate time;
- Connect research and community experience through the support of a multi-discipline research group.



Tip Divide your planning team into small groups and ask each group to develop and refine Mission statements that state only who you are, what you do and for whom, and where you operate. Post the statements on a flip-chart and work to consensus. If you already have a Mission Statement, review and update it if indicated as part of your strategic planning process

2.2 Creating your Vision Statement

While a Mission Statement focuses on your organization's present state, a Vision Statement focuses on the future and articulates an image of the successful accomplishment of your Mission. Your vision statement is the inspiration and framework for your strategic planning.

Ask your planning group to develop their vision of the ideal future in your community, related to your Mission – encourage them to ask them to answer the question “What will our community look like when our work is done?”

Here is an example of a Vision Statement:

We envision a future where the community:

- *Shares responsibility for supporting and investing in the future of all young children and their families.*
- *Promotes and respects diversity and the equal rights of all children*
- *Ensures that all parents/caregivers/families of young children have access to the necessary supports, resources, skills, information and services to meet the physical, emotional and cognitive needs of their children.*

When you are crafting your Vision Statement, remind the planning group that Children First takes a community development approach where each initiative is empowered to build community ownership. So it could be expected that your vision would have some focus on building social capacity (your community's internal potential to accomplish what it needs to do).

2.3 Articulating your Values (or Guiding Principles)

Values are traits or qualities that are considered worthwhile; they represent the core priorities in the organization's culture. Value statements define how people want to behave with each other in the organization. They are statements about how the organization will value its constituency – internally and externally. Values are sometimes called Guiding Principles.

Ask your planning group to establish 4 to 6 core values from which the organization should operate. Here is an example of a Values Statement:

In our interactions with each other and the community we will share responsibility and will be:

- *Inclusive*
- *Respectful*
- *Creative*
- *Family Centered*
- *Community driven*
- *Collaborative*



Tip: Keep your Mission, Vision and Values statement simple, so that people remember them and they become part of your organizational culture. Review your Mission, Vision and Values statement annually. Ask yourselves and your stakeholders if they are still valid and revise as indicated. When conflict arises over priorities or you are faced with difficult decisions, go back to your Mission, Vision and Values for guidance.

2.4 Assessing your Current Situation

Strategic planning should include some assessment of your environment – both internal and external. One efficient way of assessing your current situation or environment is to conduct a SWOT exercise. This involves a simple exercise, where the strategic planning group creates lists of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization (internal aspects) and threats and opportunities (external forces) facing the organization. Your SWOT analysis will provide you with a framework with which to identify the critical or strategic issues – those that have the most impact on your situation.

If your planning group is small and not representative of the diversity in your community, consider gathering SWOT information from other stakeholders – including staff of agencies involved with the initiative, funders, parents and community partners. This can be done through telephone interviews, online or paper and pencil surveys or small group meetings. If you decide to do this, you could take an additional step of gathering feedback on your existing or planned Mission, Vision and Values statements. (See survey example -Appendix A). Once you have lists of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, group these into logical topics, so that your data is easy to present.

Next conduct a face-to-face SWOT with the planning group. This can be a simple brainstorm: Post “Strengths” on a flipchart and record participant observations and so on. When this is done, the planning group can compare the outcomes of the brainstorming session to the data you have collected from other stakeholders.

At the end of this process you will have a base of information which will help you to identify the most important issues your organization needs to deal with in the planning process.

2.5 Identifying Strategic Goals

At this point in the process you have:

- Updated and reviewed previous plans – and decided what needs to be brought forward
- Assembled and reviewed other information that needs to be considered
- Created or updated your Mission, Vision and Values statements
- Completed your SWOT



This is a lot of information – but don't worry – you have achieved a base of knowledge that will help you to work through the remaining steps and the important issues will become apparent to your planning group!

Your next step is to identify the strategic or critical issues.

Because Children First has identified 7 core activities, it is suggested that your planning group works to identify the strategic issues within the framework of these core activities:

- Working Together
- Spreading the Word
- Research
- Planning
- Advocacy
- Allocation (See Appendix B for more information on the core activities)

Under the heading of each core activity, the planning group can now identify the strategic issues. At this point frame the issues as questions. The following are examples under the heading of each core activity.

Working Together: Your SWOT showed that you don't have adequate participation from the Aboriginal community – so the strategic question is “How can we enlist the participation of more Aboriginal people in our initiative?”

Spreading the Word: A number of items on your previous marketing/ communications plan have not been accomplished. There just hasn't been enough time or enough resources – so the strategic question might be “How can we increase resources to accomplish our marketing goals?”

Research: Your SWOT showed that although you have conducted various research activities, you are not using the results – so the strategic question might be “How can we ensure that our planning and priority setting uses out research?”

Planning: A needs assessment showed that families are having difficulty accessing your early screening program – so the strategic question might be “How can we make our screening program accessible to all families in our community?”

Advocacy: Your ECD committee hasn't considered what it's role is in the area of advocacy - so the strategic question might be “How will we decide what our role is in the area of advocacy?”

Allocation: You have identified a continuum of services that are appropriate to your community, but the current funding for early childhood services and supports is still being allocated to old contracts or short term projects in your community – so the strategic question might be “How can we work together and with our funders to re-allocate funding to our community's priorities?”

When all the strategic questions have been identified, the planning group can make decisions about which issues are most important. A strategic plan can extend to 5 years, however in a changing and uncertain environment, a 2-3 year plan will likely serve you well.

Facilitate to gain consensus on the most important issues, then prioritize these and turn the strategic questions into goal statements.

You may find at this stage that issues that were identified under one core activity now seem more related to another, or arise in one way or another under two headings.

Example: Under "Allocation" you identified a need to move away from competitive bidding and under "Working Together" you identified a need to develop a Memo of Understanding between local ECD service providers. These two goals could be collapsed into one and at this point, having considered issues under each of the core activities, you no longer need to categorize the goals.



- **Tips:** Don't set too many goals (no more than 5) – remember that each goal could result in a number of strategies and each strategy will require a number of actions.
- Deal with issues that you can do something about. Goals that are too broad will bog you down and goals that are too narrow do not warrant your attention.
- Focus on building on your strengths, resolving weaknesses, exploiting opportunities and avoiding threats.
- Goals should be clearly articulated so that people outside your organization can understand them. Review the wording to ensure that all members of the planning group understand the goals.

2.6 Creating Strategies

The next step is to create strategies (sometimes called objectives) for each goal. These are statements of the approaches you will take to achieve your goals. Strategies are short concise statements that are realistic, can be time limited and are measurable. For example, "raise \$10,000 more in the annual campaign" would meet these requirements as long as the \$10,000 number is realistic. On the other hand, "improving our image within the community" would not be an objective because it doesn't have a time limit and would be difficult to measure.

Examples:

You have a goal of "broadening community involvement" in your initiative. You might develop the following strategies or objectives to achieve this:

1. Achieve involvement of the local business in promoting child friendly businesses

2. Increase participation of daycare/preschool providers in committee meetings from 3 to 8
3. Achieve involvement of a multicultural planning group with representation from at least three ethnic minorities.

Your goal is to “use research to guide our planning and priority setting”. You might develop the following strategies to achieve this:

1. Identify the research we have on hand
2. Identify and fill any gaps in our research (what more do we need to know?)
3. Synthesize and interpret our research
4. Develop a list of priorities based on our interpretation of the research.

Having completed the previous steps, you now have the basic components of your Strategic Plan:

- a. Mission,
- b. Vision
- c. Values
- d. Assessment of your current situation (SWOT)
- e. Strategic goals
- f. Strategies or objectives

3. PUTTING YOUR PLAN INTO ACTION

3.1 Establishing an Action Plan

Your Action plan will consist of the specific steps you will take to accomplish your strategies. Each of the action steps should answer three questions:

- What will be done?
- Who will do it?
- When will it be done?

It also makes sense at this stage to identify:

- What resources will be required
- Potential barriers and how these might be overcome
- Collaborators: Who else should know about this action

Here is an example of how you might create action steps related to one of your strategies:

Goal: Broaden Community Involvement

Strategy: Achieve involvement of the business community in promoting Child Friendly businesses

Action	Responsible	Completion date	Resources Required	Potential barriers	Collaborators
Create child-friendly business pamphlet and presentation	Mary Smith	July 07	10 hours; \$1,500	None anticipated	
Make presentations to the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club – ask them to form a sub committee	Mary Smith and Fred Jones	September 07	6 hours	They might see this as being not worth while – convince them of the benefits	Chamber and Rotary Chairs
Assign a liaison person from the ECD group to encourage and support the sub committee	Fred Jones	October 07	2 hours monthly	Time involved to liaise – identify someone who has an interest in attending business meetings and be clear about time required	Sub committee chair
Recognize the work of the business sub committee 4 times annually in the local newspaper and on the website	Mary Smith	January 08	Donated space	None anticipated	



Tips:

- It is important to assign an individual to be responsible for each action item. If a committee will be doing the work, put the Chair’s name in the plan.
- It is best to put a specific date, i.e. day, month and year as opposed to end of the summer, fiscal year end, etc.

When you have detailed your action steps, your planning group should review the entire plan including these steps to ensure that the actions are “doable” within the identified time period and with the available resources – then make adjustments as required.

4. MONITORING YOUR PROGRESS

Unfortunately, too many strategic plans end up gathering dust! You can avoid this by creating an evaluation plan. Your evaluation plan should identify how and when you will review, update and report on your progress. Ensure that one internal person has ultimate responsibility for reporting that the various parts of the plan are being enacted in a timely fashion.

The frequency of reviews will depend on the nature of your activity, however as a rule of thumb your committee could plan to review progress quarterly.

Remember that your plan is your “roadmap”; not a set of rules. If your map is not taking you where you want to go, you can change direction, but you need to understand the reasons for deviations and update your plan to reflect new directions.

Some key questions for monitoring the status of your plan:

1. Are the activities being completed as planned and are they contributing to achievement of our goals and objectives?
2. Should the deadlines for completion be changed?
3. Do people have adequate resources to achieve the goals (funding, equipment, facilities, training, etc.)?
4. Are the goals and objectives still realistic?
5. What can be learned from our monitoring and evaluation to improve future planning activity and future monitoring and evaluation efforts?

Ensure that you document the answers to these key questions as well as revisions made to your plan as a result of this monitoring. This information will be important when you begin to develop your next strategic plan.

Some initiatives may want to create a logic model for evaluation purposes. If you decide to do this, ensure that your logic model contains all of the appropriate elements.

5. DOCUMENTING AND COMMUNICATING YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

When you have completed the planning process, document your plan. Minimally the body of your plan should include:

- a. A brief introduction – Some information about your group - organization and history, why you created the plan and how you went about doing it.
- b. Mission, vision and values statements
- c. Strategic goals
- d. Strategies or objectives
- e. Evaluation plan

Append the outcomes of your SWOT and your Action plan. You could also append any other information your strategic decisions were based upon (e.g. community demographics), for future reference or to make these decisions clear to readers who were not involved in the planning process. You might also include detailed budgets, your monitoring and evaluation plan and a communication plan – the actions that will be taken to communicate the plan and/or portions of it and to whom.

Consider distributing your plan (or highlights) to everyone connected to your initiative including funders and potential collaborators. New staff members, potential committee members or others you want to become involved in your initiative will quickly gain understanding of your work through reviewing your plan. Publish portions of your plan in your newsletter and marketing materials as appropriate.

6. LAST WORDS

Congratulations - your plan is now complete! You can now pull sections out of the plan to form work plans as appropriate – for example, actions related to spreading the word would form your marketing plan, or actions assigned to a particular committee would form that committee's work plan.

The foregoing seems like a lot of work – and it is. But you are encouraged to do it! Strategic planning is much like planning a trip – you choose your destination (or goal), then you plan the steps to get there – you consider which roads to take, how long the journey, where you will stop along the way, what the costs will be, etc.

Finally, don't forget to celebrate your successes. When your plan is completed, acknowledge that you have done something worthwhile. One of the real benefits of strategic planning is the process; you have likely gained new insights about your organization, improved your working knowledge of each other and gained confidence in your ability to move forward. Celebration is as important as achieving your objectives – without a sense of closure and a job well done, the next planning cycle will not be anticipated with pleasure.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

The Ourtown ECD initiative is presently gathering information from people in the community who have an interest or stake in our activity. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions:

1. Our Mission Statement is: *“The Ourtown Early Childhood Development Committee promotes and supports community engagement in improving the health and well-being of children (prenatal to age 6) in Ourtown”.*

Do you believe that this Mission is valid? Yes No

If you answered “No” what changes can you suggest?

2. Our Vision Statement is: “We envision a future where the community:
 1. Shares responsibility for supporting and investing in the future of all young children and their families.
 2. Promotes and respects diversity and the equal rights of all children
 3. Ensures that all parents/caregivers/families of young children have access to the necessary supports, resources, skills, information and services to meet the physical, emotional and cognitive needs of their children”.

Do you support this Vision? Yes No

If you answered “No” what changes can you suggest?

3. From what you know about the initiative, what would you say are its greatest strengths?
4. From what you know about the initiative what would you say are its greatest weaknesses?
5. From what you know about the initiative and early childhood development, what opportunities do you think are open to the initiative?
6. From what you know about the initiative, what do you think are the greatest threats to our work to improve the health and well-being of children in Ourtown?



This information can be efficiently collected using the online Survey Monkey tool. Check it out at www.surveymonkey.com

“Core Activities” of Children First

a. Working Together

- The development, or enhancement, of a coalition of service providers and community members interested in healthy early childhood development. This group will have broad inter-sectoral representation. One of the roles of this group will be to act as the steering committee to the initiative.
- The engagement, by the steering committee, of an individual to coordinate all the activities of the initiative.
- The participation of the Aboriginal, and as appropriate other multi-cultural, communities.
- The constant broadening of the coalition. Community partnerships need to extend to all sectors of a community, whether or not they have traditionally been involved in ECD service delivery. (e.g. business, faith community).

b. Spreading the Word (Public Awareness)

- Public awareness activities designed to increase the understanding of the importance of the early years.
- Community engagement and mobilization. A range of activities to involve community members in the support of young children and families.
- The development of a mechanism(s) for making information about the ECD services and supports in the community widely available. (e.g. brochures, websites).

c. Research

- Community research activities designed to guide the planning of supports and services. Research information collected by the initiatives includes:
 - a review of existing ECD assets and services;
 - socio-economic characteristics of the community;
 - information (EDI) on school readiness;
 - information from parents and service providers on the accessibility and effectiveness of existing services; and
 - an overview of early childhood development “promising practices”.

d. Planning

- The development of a strategic plan for the initiative, articulating goals, objectives, activities and intended outcomes.
- The joint creation (with all other coalition members) of a community ECD plan – identifying local needs and priorities for young children and their families along with strategies to address those priorities.
- The development of innovative ways to use and/or link existing ECD resources and services more effectively and efficiently.
- A focused review and plan to enhance early identification and screening activities in the community.
- Strategies to engage “hard to reach” families in the community, including the identification and response to the barriers that limit access to services.

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e. Advocacy

- Activities to further identified community priorities for young children and families.

f. Allocation

- The development of a process for allocating funds to locally identified priorities and the commitment of coalition members to honouring that process.
- Allocation of available funds to meet identified priorities. This may include both funds available within the initiative budget and those from other funding sources (e.g. School District, MCFD).

g. Evaluation

- Evaluation of the achievement of the provincial objectives of the initiative.
- Monitoring of local child development outcomes.

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APPENDIX C

Example of a strategic planning work in progress – Identifying Strategic Goals:

Working Together

Strategic questions identified by the planning group:

1. How do we get parents voice at the table?
2. How do we engage business community?
3. How will we FIND the multicultural community?
4. How do we SERVE the multicultural community? (What do they want and need?)
5. How do we meet the needs of the gay and lesbian, families with special needs – or diverse families? What are their barriers?
6. How do we strengthen the coalition with solid agreements and timeline commitments from funders?
7. How will we ensure that the coordinator has what is needed to fulfill the contract?
8. How will we share our best practices, information etc?
9. How do we celebrate the accomplishments of the committee and those related to ECD concerns?

Decisions made: Items 1-4; were grouped under the strategic goal of “Broaden community involvement”. Items 6-9 were grouped under the strategic goal of *“Increase the initiatives ability to integrate services”*, with objectives and actions flowing from this goal.

Spreading the Word

Strategic questions identified by the planning group:

1. How do we go to all the events where people are? How do we choose? How much emphasis does the committee want? (Could be fulltime).
2. How will we develop a range of tools to use for parents, frontline workers, politicians, business people etc.?
3. How do we work regionally to deliver some of these spreading the word tools.? How do we filter information back to people at our own agencies (e.g. receptionists)?
4. How will we maintain our marketing efforts (full time marketer?)
5. How can we gather feedback without a huge effort?
6. How do we show the community how important the early years are?
7. How do we tailor information to meet the community’s need?
8. How do we show families how important their input is into their child's life?
9. How do we stress the importance of play?

Decision made: These items formed the strategic goal of *“Increase awareness of the importance of the early years”*, with objectives and actions flowing from this goal.

Research

Strategic questions identified by the planning group:

1. How do we use research at the broader community level?
2. How do we use research – Do we integrate services?
3. How will we integrate services better?
4. How do we use the research to best create ECD services?
5. How will we ensure that everyone is kept up to date on the research?

Planning

Strategic questions identified by the planning group:

1. How do we use research to drive our planning?
2. How do we move focus our planning using research and current identified ‘hot areas’ among partners
3. How can we work together to make sure that the strategic plan happens?
4. How can we evaluate and re-evaluate the goals of the committee?

Allocation

Strategic questions identified by the planning group:

1. How do we move toward having all the funding that affects ECD on the table during funding recommendation decisions?
2. How do we move away from competitive bidding and relying on short-term projects that appear adhoc? (Programs that have come forward have merit and may fill some gap but seem adhoc and not part of a cohesive plan).

Decisions made:

Questions 1-4 under "Research", questions 1-2 under "Planning" and both questions under "Allocation" became part of the goal to: *"Increase the initiative's ability to integrate ECD service"* and the following objectives related to research, planning and allocation flowed out of this broad goal:

1. Reach agreement (MOU?) related to allocation of resources, decision making principles and processes, supervision /support of coordinator
2. Design and implement an integrated ECD system of care (Decide which services should be offered universally and which should be targeted; Decide how universal services will be offered and by whom; Decide where targeted services (hubs, etc.?) should be offered and by whom
3. Increase our use of research in planning and priority setting

Question 4 under "Research" became an objective under *"Increase awareness of the importance of the early years"* and Question 4 under "Planning" became an objective under Evaluation.

Advocacy

Strategic questions identified by the planning group:

1. How will we decide upon our role as advocates?
2. What form should our advocacy take?

Decision made: The planning group decided that this issue was not one of the most important to address at this time; that advocacy was already taking place on an adhoc level and agreed to bring this forward as a potential issue for discussion at a provincial ECD meeting.

Evaluation

Strategic questions identified by the planning group:

1. How will we evaluate our progress on the strategic plan?
2. How will we evaluate our progress in building our capacity to integrate services?

Decision made: These questions formed the goal of "Monitor our progress" with related objectives and actions related to annually evaluating the initiatives collaborative effort and results of strategic planning action.

STRATEGIC PLANNING - QUICK GUIDE

