

# KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION BRIEF

## Learning Communities

### LEARNING COMMUNITY ELEMENTS



Time is designated for learning & reflection



Community engagement is an organizational priority



There is a willingness & ability to ask challenging questions

Informed By Building Movement Project. 2006



**LEARNING COMMUNITIES** often experience “positive results for their participants, as well as high job satisfaction, low staff turnover, and dynamic community connections” (Nenadal & Sherman, 2008, p. 22).

Learning communities typically involve an ongoing process where individuals or organizations work collaboratively to achieve improvement and outcomes through collective inquiry and action.

### *The Family Strengthening Field*

Changing the way we talk can change the way we work (Kegan & Laskow-Lahey, 2000). Learning communities within the family strengthening field is an innovative approach that facilitates a more collaborative and consistent prevention dialogue.

Learning communities allow for the development of cross-sector partnerships to support the well-being of children and families. Opportunities to share and collaborate on best practices, data, and evaluation increases individual and organizational capacity.

By bringing together family strengthening field practitioners, families, community residents, funders, and policymakers, learning communities can “increase organizational capacity to solve [the] pressing problems of practice” (Woodland, 2016, p. 506).

## Strategies 2.0

Strategies 2.0 is a collaborative partnership whose mission is to support the professionalization of California's family strengthening field.

The family strengthening field is expansive and includes, but is not limited to: OCAP network, family resource centers and family serving organizations, child abuse prevention councils, county agencies, mental/public health, probation, and law enforcement; First 5 Commissions, housing agencies, education, and many others.

Strategies 2.0 offers FREE training, consultation, peer learning, and other professional development opportunities both in-person and online. Services are designed to help organizations and individuals develop the skills, organizational structure, and collaborative relationships necessary to mitigate the risk factors of child abuse and neglect.

### **Take Action: Learning Communities in California**

Strategies 2.0 has recognized the importance learning communities can play in the family strengthening field. A statewide network of six distinct, geographically defined learning communities encompassing all 58 California counties has been developed.

Find your local learning community by visiting [Strategies 2.0/learning-communities](https://strategies20.org/learning-communities).

### **Constituent Engagement**

Though it can be challenging, developing consistent and formalized methods for constituent involvement is vital for bringing about meaningful, long term solutions. Refer to the resources section for ideas on how to engage constituents in learning communities.

### **Resources**

The resources presented provide additional information on how to form, structure, and establish learning organizations within your community specific to the field of family strengthening.

[shcowell.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Revisioning-Case-Management.pdf](https://shcowell.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Revisioning-Case-Management.pdf)

[buildingmovement.org/blog/entry/22](https://buildingmovement.org/blog/entry/22)

[managingforimpact.org/sites/default/files/resource/3\\_learning\\_with\\_constituents\\_0.pdf](https://managingforimpact.org/sites/default/files/resource/3_learning_with_constituents_0.pdf)

[us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/developing-a-learning-culture-in-nonprofit-organizations/book232923](https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/developing-a-learning-culture-in-nonprofit-organizations/book232923)



Figure: California Learning Community Regions

### **References**

Nenadal, Y. & Sherman, J. (2008). Re-visioning case management: Partnering with families and communities to create meaningful change.

Kegan, R. & Lahey, L. (2000). How the way we talk can change the way we work. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Woodland, R.H. (2016). Evaluating pk-12 professional learning communities: An improvement science perspective. American Journal of Evaluation. 37(4), 505-521.

