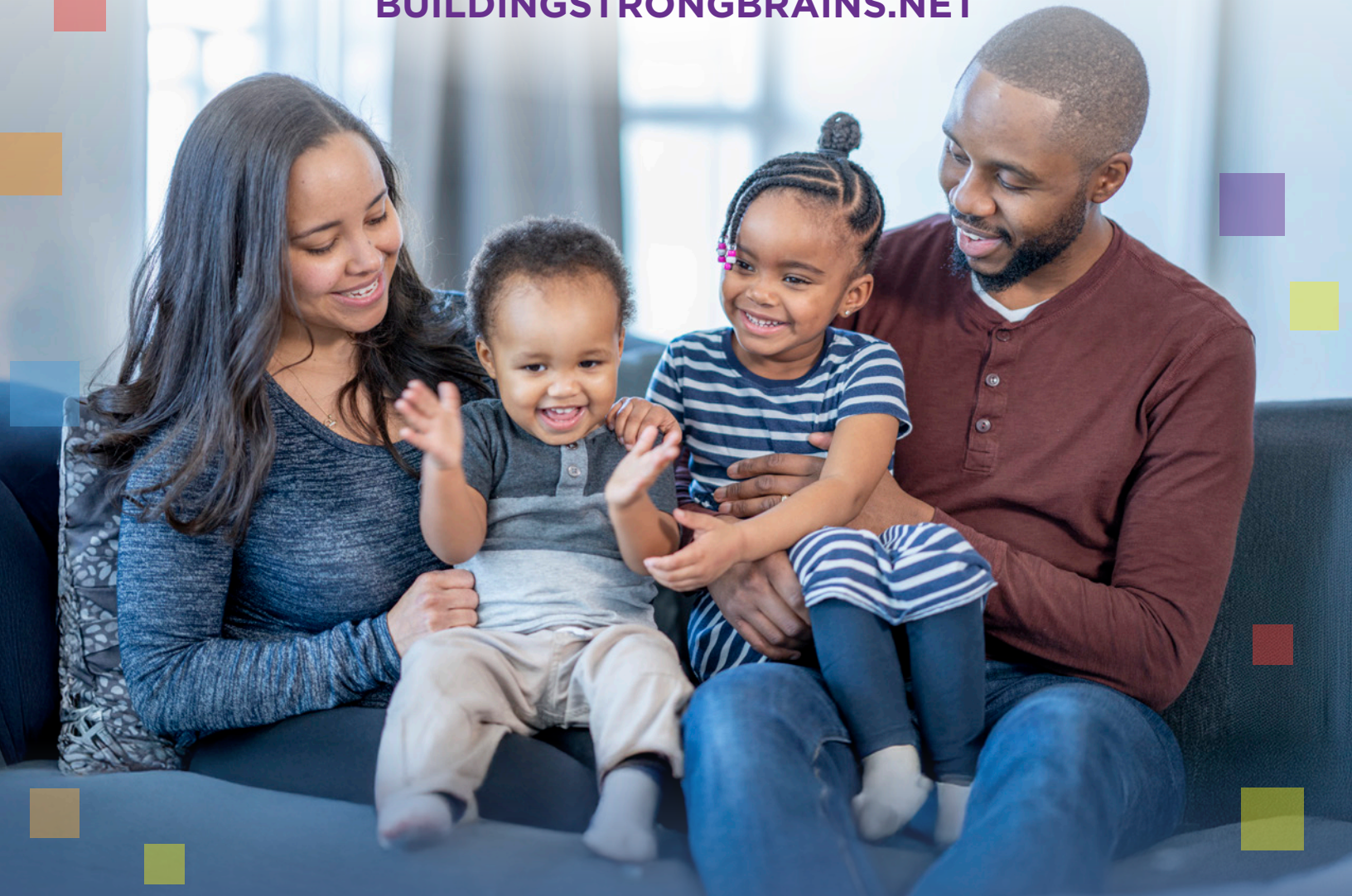


NOVEMBER 2025

Building Strong Brains Coalition in Elkhart County

EVALUATION PRACTICE, AND IMPACT RESULTS

BUILDINGSTRONGBRAINS.NET



BUILDING STRONG BRAINS
COALITION
Elkhart County's Early Childhood Initiative

OVERVIEW

About Building Strong Brains in Elkhart County

Building Strong Brains in Elkhart County is a place-based, collective impact collaboration launched in 2022. It brings together a diverse network of community partners to improve the early learning outcomes for children ages 0 to 6.

The **vision** for Building Strong Brains is for all young children in Elkhart County to thrive. Where families have the support they need to nurture their children's healthy development from birth. Where our community comes together to ensure every child enters school ready to learn and succeed. This is the future we are working toward, and we are dedicated to making it a reality through a **sustained 10+ year commitment** in partnership with community stakeholders from all sectors.

The **mission** of Building Strong Brains focuses on building a system supporting children under age 6 and the families who raise them so that every child enters elementary school prepared and ready to learn.

The **“theory of change”** that undergirds this work is that if children and mothers have positive health outcomes, if children have access to safe and stimulating environments, and if families have the resources they need to support children's positive development, then the community's children will enter kindergarten poised for success. The effort is being called “Building Strong Brains: Elkhart County's Early Childhood Initiative.”

The Building Strong Brains Coalition represents a diverse network of organizations, including philanthropy, education, health, public sectors, early learning providers, nonprofits, business, and community members. The Coalition drives the collective work in the community. All participating organizations and individuals contribute to and co-design the collective strategies, learning and evaluation, and accountability. The layers of evaluation include program evaluations by partner organizations, and systems and population impacts.

This report highlights and summarizes evaluation efforts to date and how they are integrated into the evaluation framework designed by Building Strong Brains. It also provides an overview of progress and impacts generated by the BSB coalition members and partners over the past few years. This report is designed to be an overview of the evaluation practice to date and an opportunity to understand the patterns of change and impact that have been generated to date.



Evaluation Report: Section Content

The report contains three sections, which highlight the evolution of Building Strong Brains and its evaluation approach.

SECTION ONE

Building Strong Brains: Systems Evaluation Framework

- Mission Outcomes: Population Level Change through Indicators
- Systems Change Outcomes: Water of Systems Change Framework
- Strategic Learning Outcomes: Documentation and Feedback Loops

SECTION TWO

Systems Change Results and Impacts

- 2022: BSB Evaluation Results
- 2023: BSB Action Teams: Reflections of Systems Change Impacts
- 2024: Social Network Analysis Results
- 2025: BSB Stories of Impact: Summary of Outcomes
- 2025: BSB Story Examples and Impact Themes
- 2025: Strategic Learning Themes: Steering Team and Action Teams

SECTION THREE

Evaluation: Progress and Impact



Evaluation Report Highlights

Key BSB Evaluation Results

- **172 BSB impacts** reported by Coalition partners in 2025
- **6 BSB evaluation reports** developed and shared since 2022
- **200 community partners** actively engaged
- **2,360 hours contributed** by the BSB Coalition members in 2024
- **75% of Coalition partners report mission alignment** with BSB
- **664 relationships** reported between partners in 2024
- **1,745 collaborative activities** advancing BSB reported by partners
- **Over \$10 million contributed** by external and community-based investments of time, in-kind resources, and dollars
- **23 stories of impact** shared with network

Since the formation of the Building Strong Brains in Elkhart County collective change effort, the coalition of community members has actively pursued evaluation to understand progress and impact. This report highlights key impacts shared by coalition members through data walks, stories, social network analysis, and impact reporting.

The BSB initiative evaluation framework guides the coalition's work, engages partners in learning and sensemaking practice, and is foundational in reporting progress and results to the Elkhart County community.



SECTION ONE

Building Strong Brains: Systems Evaluation Framework

Below is the systems evaluation framework for Building Strong Brains (BSB) in Elkhart County. The framework focuses on different levels of evaluation, including mission outcomes, system change outcomes, and strategic learning outcomes.

The evaluation approach is informed by the [Water of Systems Change](#) framework, which identifies shifts in the system in seven impact areas: mental models, relationships and connections, power dynamics, policies, practices, resource flows, and population-level changes.

The BSB systems evaluation framework includes various data collection methods and tools to gather data and identify community-level and systems impact. The Data Support Team acts as the steward of the systems evaluation framework. The BSB backbone and Data Support Team actively engage their partners and members in evaluation design, data collection, and analysis to advance strategic learning outcomes.

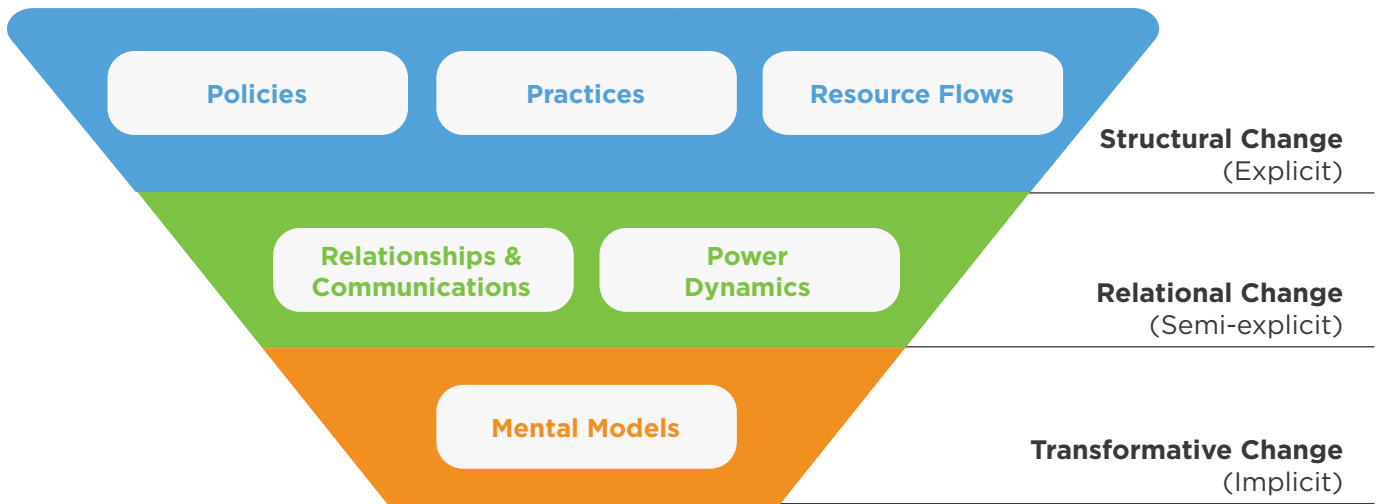
Strategic Learning Outcomes

Level of Evaluation	Evaluation Questions	What We Measure	Measurement Strategy
Mission Outcomes	Are we impacting individuals, families, and our community?	• North Star: Kindergarten Readiness Score; • Developmental Milestones or Indicators • Participation Rates • Midstream and Upstream Influences	• Data Dashboard
Systems Change Outcomes	How are we shifting the conditions that hold the problem in place? In what ways is the system working differently because of our efforts?	• Changes in Policies, Practices, Resource Flows • Changes in Relationship and Connections • Power Dynamics • Shift in Awareness or Mental Models	• Outcomes Mapping or Harvesting • Social Network Analysis • Public Awareness metrics • Storytelling
Strategic Learning Outcomes	How are we uncovering and using new insights that help move us forward?	• Effectiveness of Feedback Loops • Access to and use of data • Engagement of new perspectives/voices • Adjustments to theory/plan/structure	• Engagement of new perspectives/voices • Adjustments to theory/plan/structure • Documentation Analysis (Meeting notes, theories of change, action plans, etc.)



Six Conditions of Systems Change

Adapted from Mark Cabaj “Evaluating Systems Change Results: An Inquiry Framework”



Mission Outcomes: Population-Level Changes

Measurement Strategy	Timeline	Oversight	Reporting
Data Dashboard	Developed and launched June 2024. Ongoing updates. Initial foundation in place, dashboard to be launched in 2026. Updated regularly based on timing of new data released.	Data Support Team	Annual analysis/report on trends. Data Repository/ dashboard available to stakeholders. Analysis/ data walks developed as needed to inform work.
Outcomes Mapping or Harvesting	Collected from coalition members during BSB quarterly coalition meetings beginning in 2022.	Data Support Team/CFEC	Ongoing sharing of findings with Steering and Leadership Teams. Annual Report from BSB to coalition.
Social Network Analysis (Visible Network Labs)	Initial survey launched November 2024. Annual survey open in November each year.	HEA/CFEC with support from the Data Support Team	Annual Briefs and Reports of Findings. Additional analysis/reports shared through data walks and with Steering and Action Teams.
Public Awareness Analysis	Plan for assessing shifts in public awareness (mental models). Create plan by June 2026.	Communication Support Team/ CFEC	Findings included in Annual Report.
Collection and synthesis of lessons learned across BSB Leadership, Action and Support Teams	Ongoing	BSB Backbone Staff	Ongoing feedback loops facilitated by BSB Backbone Staff and Team Leads. Key strategic learning findings captured in annual report.



Mission Outcomes: Population Level Change through Indicators

The Coalition Indicators framework identifies population-level data, including developmental milestones, population and network indicators, and midstream and upstream influences. Coalition indicators will be reported through a data dashboard, which includes trend analysis and reporting. In some cases, BSB will utilize approaches like data walks to engage partners in analyzing data trends and results.

Quality Childcare & Early Learning Environments

Early Learning Access INDEX
Capacity, Quality, Affordability, Choice

- Capacity Sufficiency Rate (CSR)
- Capacity Sufficiency Rate for high-quality programs
- High-quality programs as a percentage of programs
(Proportion of high-quality capacity)
- High-quality capacity as a percentage of capacity
- Cost to Income Ratio (Affordability)

Families enrolled in Imagination Library

Community Supports for Children & Families

Families enrolled in Imagination Library

Families enrolled in Lantern
(Bright by Text)

Parent participation increases year over year
(Triple P, Nurturing Care / Mentoring groups, Parent Cafes, Music Together, Healthy Families, Nurse Family Partnership)

Interventions lead to increased Parental Confidence & Connections

Maternal and Child Health

Infant Mortality Rates

Early and Adequate Prenatal Care

Preterm births

Economic Self-Sufficiency

Family Income by census tract

Unemployment by census tract

Network Indicators

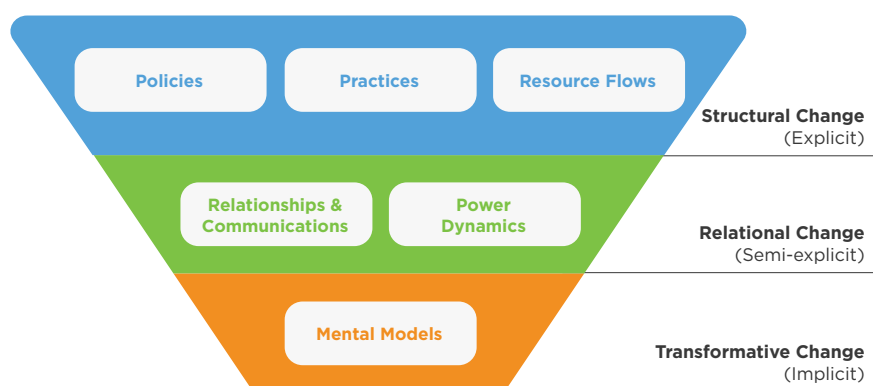
Mission Alignment, Engagement, Network Density, Shared Vision, Increased Collaborations, Organizational Benefit (connections, alignment), Awareness of Other Organizations, Impact on Relationships, Types of Activities (cooperative, coordinated, integrated).

Systems Change Outcomes: Water of Systems Change Framework

FSG developed The [Water of Systems Change](#) as an actionable framework for funders and organizations interested in documenting systems-level influence, changes, and impact. FSG described the framework as an opportunity for organizations and collective impact efforts to see how their ways of thinking and acting can influence shifts and changes at different levels within the system.



The Water of Systems Change framework has three levels of change and six conditions to advance system changes. The conditions include structural changes in policies, practices, and resource flows; relational changes, which occur through increasing connections and addressing power imbalances; and transformative changes, which occur when mental models are influenced, shifted, or changed.



The framework is useful in supporting collective impact efforts to identify, document, and analyze their influence and impact on systems. In the case of Building Strong Brains, the systems impacting early developmental outcomes for children under the age of six include the family environment, early learning environment, health system, governments and the policy environment, community services system, including funders and organizations, and the business community.

Strategic Learning Outcomes: Documentation and Feedback Loops

Building Strong Brains (BSB) has identified **strategic learning** as a key component of its evaluation framework. A strategic learning process engages partners in gathering and analyzing information to improve the overall approach and achieve desired outcomes.

The elements of a strategic learning process include the systematic gathering and integration of relevant data from different sources, including research, evaluation, and performance metrics. It also includes collective interpretation by members and partners of the collective. Finally, strategic learning is also about applying the learning outcomes to improve existing strategies or refine future strategies and tactics.

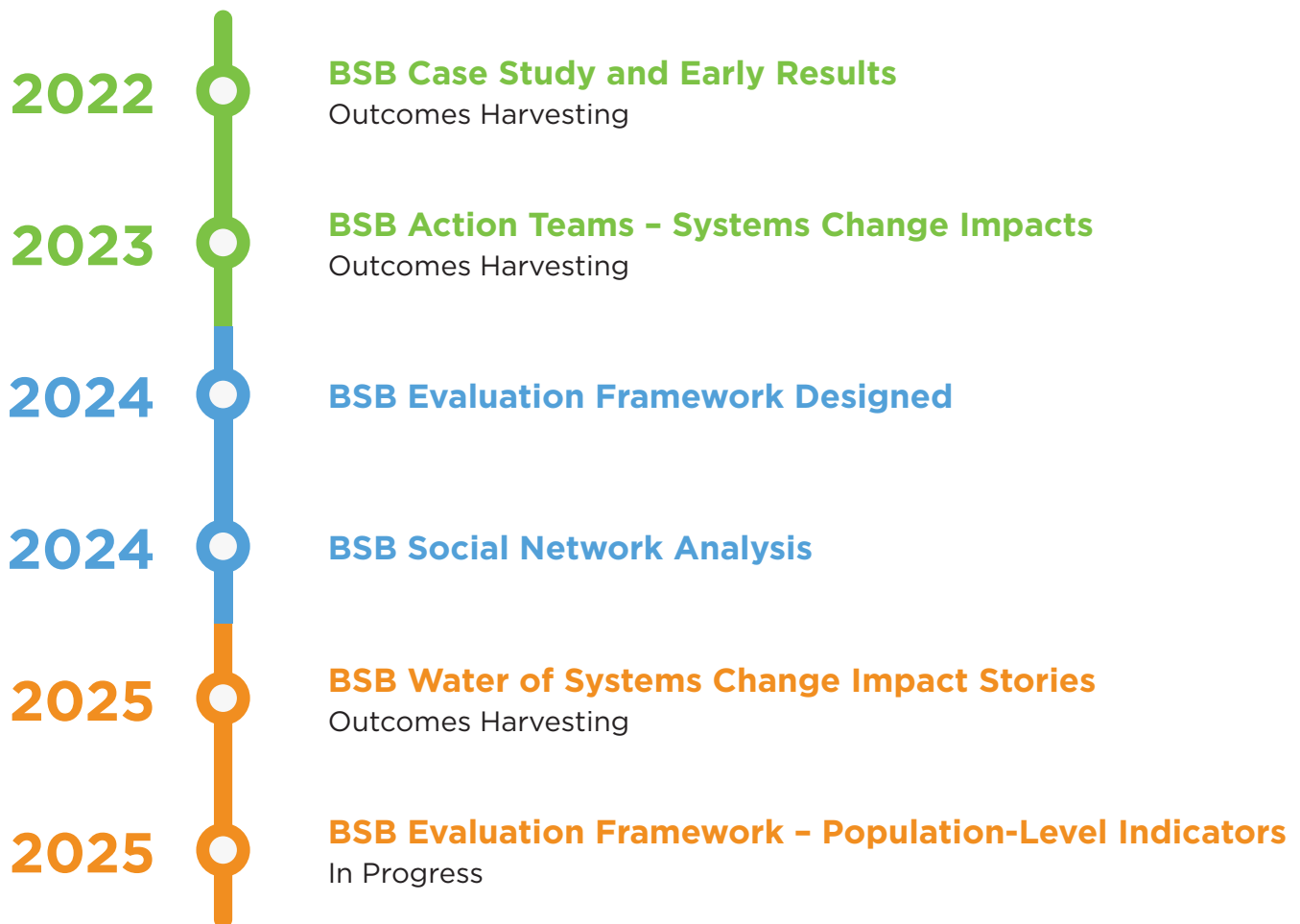
Building Strong Brains, since its formation, has engaged its members and partners in the practice of co-design, co-adaptation, and strategic learning. Engaging partners in data walks and collectively interpreting community-based and early learning data, engaging community partners in a social network analysis, and utilizing the Water of Systems Change framework as an evaluative tool are three examples of how BSB has built strategic learning as an integral element in its evaluation framework.

SECTION TWO

Systems Change Results and Impacts

Since its formation, the BSB Coalition has identified the importance of evaluating its progress and engaging partners in strategic learning sessions. Below is the Building Strong Brains evolving evaluation and reporting timeline. This report highlights impact reporting outcomes since its formation in 2022.

Building Strong Brains: Evaluation and Impact



This section of the report includes the following evaluation and learning practices initiated by the BSB Coalition partners.

- **2022:** BSB Evaluation Results
- **2023:** BSB Action Teams – Reflections of Systems Change Impacts
- **2024:** Social Network Analysis Results
- **2025:** BSB Stories of Impact
- **2025:** BSB Stories of Impact Themes
- **2025:** Strategic Learning Themes – Steering Team and Action Teams

2022 | Building Strong Brains in Elkhart County Evaluation Results

In 2022, the lead partners of the Building Strong Brains Coalition and the Tamarack Institute developed a case study focused on early results. The collective work of the BSB coalition was launched in September 2021 when eleven community leaders formed a design team to strategically improve outcomes for 40% of children in Elkhart County entering kindergarten not ready to learn.

The 2022 [Building Strong Brains in Elkhart County, Indiana](#) case study reported impact results of BSB Coalition during its first two years. Progress was made by the Coalition on:

- Designing a ‘good enough’ theory of change
- Learning from parents and caregivers across Elkhart County
- Using data to understand the challenges and opportunities in the early learning system
- Moving from shared ideas to implementation strategies
- Hosting shared learning sessions and broadening the BSB Coalition membership

The following early progress indicators were reported in the 2022 case study.

Indicator	Impact
Understand the problem from the perspectives of individuals who live with it each day	• Nine parent listening sessions were held engaging 47 parents and caregivers in English and in Spanish • One kindergarten teacher listening session was held to gain their perspectives about kindergarten readiness
Co-create solutions that are rooted in the lived experience and have the potential for significant uptake	• 70 community partners engaged in a data walk session which uncovered shared learning about key data points impacting children and families • 35 community leaders representing cross-sector perspectives co-designed strategic priorities and proposed action solutions
Refine the collective impact initiative's evolving goals, strategies and indicators	• The collaborative began its work by asking a compelling question about kindergarten readiness in Elkhart County • A theory of change was developed and shared • The three action strategies were further defined by action teams • Key social, emotional and community indicators have been identified
Expand the initiative's reach, by increasing awareness, building the will for action, and improving the adoption of best practices	• To date, more than 350 community members have been engaged • The Building Strong Brains brand has been developed and a communications strategy launched • The BSB website was launched in November 2022 • Four articles appeared through local media outlets
Build community capacity to lead and sustain change	• Five key partners: Community Foundation of Elkhart County, Crossroads United Way, Child and Parent Services, Horizon Education Alliance and The Source are deeply invested in the work • The circle of partners is growing • Seed financial resources have been provided by the key partners • A director for the BSB coalition was hired in December 2022



2023 | BSB Action Teams- Reflections of Systems Change Impacts

In October 2023, BSB convened a meeting of Action Team members to document their perspectives about the progress being made on systems change. The meeting participants included 40 cross-sector community partners representing 24 different organizations across Elkhart County. The session included opportunities for networking, building connections, learning, and planning.

The [Water of Systems Change](#) framework was used to document shifts and impacts being witnessed by the collaborative partners. The Water of Systems Change framework, described above, is used to identify changes and shifts in six conditions, including policies, practices, and resource flows (structural change), relationships and connections, power dynamics (relational change), and mental models about early childhood experiences (transformative change). Tracking these shifts is instructive for partners to both ‘see the system’ and also identify practical actions that are occurring or might be possible through collective action.

In October 2023, the BSB partners reported the following changes and impacts they have experienced or contributed to at the structural, relational and transformational levels.

Relational Change (semi-explicit)

Policies	Practices	Resource Flows
• CRUW and HEA aligned • Kindergarten-ready skills and data points • Organization MOAs • Governance Structure • Multiple agency boards discussing importance of Early Childhood • Parents at the center • Action team priorities aligned to framework • Shared belief statements • Identification of North Star/Purpose/Challenge question • Vision Statement	• Capacity for imagination • Shared decision-making • Organizations encouraging each other in funding pursuits • Collective work emphasized • Shared leadership • Leveraging collective knowledge and capacity • Open communication • Website developed • Action teams engaged in research and evaluation of strategies and tools • Engagement with Tamarack • Regular meetings and communication	• Work is creating capacity for Elkhart County to be competitive for national funding • Support of Goshen College and University of Notre Dame for grant proposal development • Shared financial commitments • Roles for multiple sectors • November launch included many sectors • Integrated input from community engagement sessions • Consistent meeting attendance and organizational commitment • Identification of funding already allocated to Early Childhood work • Increased awareness of the BSB work • Collaborative grant proposals



Relational Change (semi-explicit)

Relationship-Connections	Power Dynamics
• Home-based childcare conference attendance included representatives from three institutions • Growing healthcare sector relationships • Combined network is extensive • Ideas are moving to action through collaboration • Support for each organization at community-wide events • Collaboration between Notre Dame and Goshen College • Convened child care directors • Dissemination of BSB within and across organizations • Community health workers conversation • Finding roles to fit many interests/skills/experiences • Director hired to support the community's work • Goshen College building connections with healthcare providers • Shared goal • Aligned and collaborative work • New relationships continue to develop and grow	• Honoring historical early childhood work as part of the process • Action teams and sharing their work • Work started with parent listening sessions • Elevating priorities of lived-experience experts • Public power derived from collective impact • Increased organizations recognizing their connection to the BSB work • Horizontal governance structure • Competitive stance yielding to common good • Shared decision-making

Transformative Change (implicit)

Mental Models

- Increased recognition of the need to understand how experts with lived experience, experience the system
- Systems work is highlighted
- We believe that we can do this
- Continued work to realize what equity looks like
- Holistic view
- We all have a role in this work
- Emphasis on elevating the systems-level perspective
- A shift from outside guidance last year to increased local guidance capacity
- Experience of young children matters
- Increased realization that geography is an important component of the work
- Go slow to go far

2024 | Social Network Analysis

As a coalition working to improve early childhood outcomes in Elkhart County, one of the critical elements of Building Strong Brains (BSB) is supporting the development and strengthening of relationships between organizations. The BSB Data Support Team identified and supported the use of Visible Network Labs as a tool to track our progress in building an aligned coalition, strengthening relationships between organizations, and moving collaborative work forward towards improving outcomes for children and families.



A total of 61 organizations were invited to participate in the BSB Survey capture in Fall/Winter 2024 using the PARTNER Tool through [Visible Network Labs](#). One representative from each organization was contacted to participate in the survey. These organizations were invited based on their participation and membership in BSB action groups and leadership and support teams. A total of 49 organizations participated in the survey (response rate of 80%).

The initial survey allowed BSB to establish a baseline of current partnerships in the coalition, the nature of these partnerships, and the initial impact of BSB on the formation and strengthening of relationships between partners. It also provided an opportunity for organizations to provide feedback and insight into the functioning and overall impact of the coalition to date.

Survey Findings

Data collected through the survey showed that the 61 member organizations have a total of 664 partner relationships between them, a density of 18% (meaning that 18% of all possible relationships between the 61 organizations currently exist - if all organizations partnered with each other, the density would be 100%). There were a total of 1,506 “awareness” level connections reported, for a density of 41% (if all organizations were aware of all other organizations in the network, the density would be 100%). Organizations were asked to categorize their relationships as cooperative, coordinated, or integrated, with the intensity of collaboration increasing from cooperative being the least intense to integrated being the most intensive.

The data show that all three types of relationships are present in the coalition, but the majority are cooperative and coordinated, with less integrated relationships in the network. Organizations partner on a variety of activities, with exchanging general information as the most common, followed by hosting events, and then referrals. In total, 1,745 collaborative activities were reported (with some partnerships involving more than one type of activity).

The network map with sectors identified showed that there are as many relationships across sectors as there are within sectors represented in the network. This is a key finding of the first VNL survey – BSB is already functioning as a strong cross-sector coalition, with strong relationships between sectors that are being further developed, strengthened, and expanded by BSB. This is often not the case in young coalitions and demonstrates that BSB already has a strong foundation on which to build. The sector of “industry” is not yet represented in BSB and will be an important sector to engage, leading to additional opportunities to foster new cross-sector relationships.

Organizations were asked to select the direct services they provide to the community. A diversity of direct services is represented by the organizations in the network, and even though BSB focuses on early childhood, most organizations serve a range of ages and are not solely focused on early childhood. Parent/caregiver education/support was the service reported by the most organizations, followed by youth development and different health



services. There are fewer organizations represented that might address the broader needs of families, including housing, transportation, addiction services, job placement/career services, and legal aid.

Density of relationships within action teams showed that these are more tightly connected networks (higher level of density) as compared to the broader coalition. This could be both a product of the opportunity for networking and relationship-building provided by the action teams and could also be related to the shared interests of the organizations on each action team, which would make them more likely to partner with each other. The data demonstrates the value of action teams in fostering and sustaining connections around shared interests, issues, and goals.

On the survey, 75% of organizations reported that BSB significantly or somewhat impacted their awareness of other organizations in the network, with about 28% reporting a significant impact. Respondents were also given the option to indicate, of the organizations with which they currently partner, whether the relationship was developed through BSB, strengthened by BSB, expanded because of BSB or not impacted by BSB.

The information provided by organizations shows that BSB has had an impact on 279 organizations. Most of this impact was through strengthening or expanding relationships, rather than forming new relationships. This is a significant impact in the early years of the coalition and shows that organizations are finding new ways to partner, even if it is with organizations with which they already have a relationship. BSB's support of cross-sector relationships is apparent, with nearly all the new relationships developed being cross-sector relationships (19/20). All but four organizations were reported as being part of a relationship that was strengthened through BSB.

The table below identifies some of the key indicators identified from the VNL survey data, which will be tracked over time. The data from the 2024 survey will serve as a baseline for these indicators.

The data from the survey was a point-in-time capture based on those organizations that participated in the survey. Networks are dynamic and continually changing. We recognize that new relationships are being formed and changing on a regular basis. The VNL platform is intended to allow us to capture these changes over time; new relationships that develop or changes in relationships that happened since the 2024 survey will be captured in our next survey (coming in November 2025). We are hopeful to continue to have strong participation in this annual survey to enable us to fully capture our network and track growth and change over time.



Network Indicators	Indicator Definition	VNL Baseline Data
Mission Alignment	Percent of respondents who reported strong mission alignment with BSB	65%
	Percent of respondents who believe strong mission alignment is a factor facilitating engagement	75%
Total Engagement; Engagement by Sector	Total number of “Member Organizations”	61
	Percent of organizations engaged with BSB from each member type	Private: 10% Public: 18% Non-Profit: 72%
Number of Relationships Reported	Total number of relationships reported in the network (by organizations completing survey)	664
Network Density; Action Team Density	Total density of the network (Percentage from 1-100% based on percent of actual relationships out of potential relationships)	Total: 18%
	Density of Action Teams (Percentage from 1-100% based on percent of actual relationships out of potential relationships within each action team)	Early Learning: 22% Community Supports: 33% Maternal & Child Health: 41%
Community Benefits: Shared Vision, Increased Collaborations	% of respondents that reported a shared vision as an outcome of BSB	79%
	% of respondents that reported increased collaboration as an outcome of BSB	66%
Organizational Benefits: Increased Connections; Increased Alignment	% of respondents that reported meaningful connections as an impact on their organization of BSB	58%
	% of respondents that reported aligning work with partners as an impact on their organization from BSB	41%
Awareness	Percent of respondents that report that BSB has somewhat or significantly increased their awareness of other organizations in BSB	75%
	Awareness Density (Percent of “awareness” relationships - organizations being aware of each other out of total of all possible “awareness relationships”)	41%

Continued



Network Indicators	Indicator Definition	VNL Baseline Data
BSB Impact on Relationships	Total number of relationships reported as being impacted by BSB	279
	Percent of relationships impacted by BSB that were “new relationships”	3%
Types of Relational Activities	Percent of reported relationships identified in each relationship category (based on characteristics of activities in the relationship): Cooperative activities, Coordinated Activities, Integrated Activities	Cooperative: 46% Coordinated: 31% Integrated: 17%

2025 | Stories of Impact using the Water of Systems Change

Summary of Outcomes Reported by BSB Partners

In June 2025, BSB hosted a gathering of collaborative partners and community members with the desired outcome of capturing system influence and impact stories. Over 70 community partners participated in the workshop and, through a facilitated process, identified 142 distinct impacts using the [Water of Systems Change](#) as a framework. The participants were also invited to share a brief impact story, which further illustrated the impact of the BSB initiative overall in driving forward community and systems-level change.

The first table captures the reported impacts shared by the individuals participating in the workshop. These impacts illustrate the experience of the participants and their relationship and contributions to the shared outcomes identified in the BSB theory of change and collaborative approach.

In each of the categories: practices, resource flow changes, connections and mental model shifts, the participants reported at least 30 impacts. In the policies and power dynamics categories, fewer impacts were reported by participants.



Policies	Practices	Resource Flows
19 Impacts Reported	34 Impacts Reported	34 Impacts Reported
• Prenatal vouchers • Focus on systems • Work completion focused • Changes to assessment forms • Mental Health support • Health resources • Geographic targeting • Community Resource Navigators • Health System alignment • Alignment to improve child outcomes • Increased awareness by decision makers • Awareness of infant mortality	• Pre-K and K educator survey to improve transition • Increased access to OB health for moms • RETA partnerships • Identification of silos • Unify practices • Honoring family voice • Increase collaboration • Data disaggregation • Addressing best practice between health care partners • Communication in English and Spanish • Closing referral loops • Effective handoff to support patient outcomes	• Increased access to information and resources • Family Resource Center programs • Findhelp resource program launched • Engagement of partner organizations • Collaborative grant opportunities • Indoor and outdoor play spaces documented • Lilly GIFT VIII • Prenatal voucher pilot • Community resource navigators coordination • Shared funding approaches • Data collection • Health First Indiana grant • Committed time to work collaboratively

Relationship-Connections	Power Dynamics
32 Impacts Reported	23 Impacts Reported
• Increased collections • Triple P/HEA with new programs • Increased parental engagement • Growing collaboration • Deeper relationships • Health systems alignment • Service provider connections • Focus on patient and client outcomes • Pre-K to K focus • Speaking with one, shared voice	• Centering family, pregnancy and parent • Family voice • Engagement of organization team • Non-judgmental space for moms • Health and education at the tables • Knowing who to speak with to make changes • Empower staff to make decisions

Mental Models
30 Impacts Reported
• Trauma informed practice • Mental health and parenting • Public awareness of early childhood • Courageous leadership • Optimism • Support for health care providers • Systems focus • Collective effort • Ecosystem supporting families • Emphasis on every child thriving



Collaborative partners and community members were also invited to write a short story which captured in more detail a systems level shift, change or impact. The stories were categorized across the Water of Systems Change categories. A total of 23 stories illustrate the impact of the BSB collaborative in driving change forward across Elkhart County.

Theme	No. of Stories	Stories Cited	Impact Cited
Structural Change - Policies	Two Stories	• Oaklawn - Medicaid Redetermination using Findhelp • Trauma informed systems change and government funding	• Creation of client accounts to improve access • Collective strategy to offer resources independent of funding
Structural Change - Practices	10 Stories	• Family Voice Project - data collection and shared narratives initiative • Improved mental health supports and programming for Moms • Findhelp to connect families to resources in an efficient way • Findhelp used to provide direct support to a mom in need • Health Systems Alignment Team supports RETA • New collaborative approach by community health partners to provide enhanced OB care • Pre-K to Kindergarten transition survey • Collaboration of Partners to address the Pre-K to K transition process • Family Resource Center and BSB collaboration • Indoor Play Spaces Collaboration	• Identification of common themes which are critical for success and inform BSB priorities • Launch of Beyond the Blues in Sept 2024 for moms with 8 participants • Findhelp is a one-stop search for resources for families in need - now using Findhelp data to improve services • Improved OB care for pregnant and birthing moms • Improved alignment with health system partners • 15 birthing moms per month now access improved health care during the OB process • Increased shared understanding of the Pre-K to K gaps • Launch of Kindergarten Bootcamp to address Pre-K to K transition gaps • Increase in number of families accessing TOT time program at the Family Resource Center • Creating data to improve community knowledge about outdoor play spaces
Structural Change - Resource Flows	Two Stories	• Partner collaboration through BSB convening • Access to prenatal care	• Increased sharing of resources across partners • System navigators and use of vouchers to improve access for families to prenatal care

Theme	No. of Stories	Stories Cited	Impact Cited
Relational Change – Relationships	Six Stories	• BSB approach to convening and collaboration • BSB and partner engagement • BSB - network analysis • Partnership and collaboration to improve access to resources • Using SDOH and data to improve access to programs and funding opportunities • Parent's Voice and collaboration	• Use of surveys and data to enhance the BSB partner experience • Enable partners to step forward and step back • Network analysis leads to connection and commitment • Increased collaboration leading to shared and improved access to resources • Engaging Parents to improve pre-k to K outcomes

Relational Change – Power Dynamics	One Story	• Using data to understand connections and relationships between BSB partners	• Increased level of trust and connections between partners • Improved outcomes and collaboration
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Theme	No. of Stories	Stories Cited	Impact Cited
Transformative Change – Mental Models	Four Stories	• Use of data to prioritize investments • Shared recognition of the importance of investing in thriving children • BSB collaboration has shifted the mental model • Systems thinking and action approach	• Partner recognition of the use of data to inform systems shifts and investment • Shared recognition of investing in thriving children • BSB has moved the mental model towards community support and the interconnected nature of a healthy and vibrant society. • Community shift toward systems thinking approach
23 Total Stories			



2025 | BSB Story Examples and Impact Themes

Below is a selection of story examples provided by BSB coalition members and partners at the June 2025 workshop. These stories are illustrative examples. All the submitted stories are included in the appendix to this report.

Structural Change	
Policy Change	Oaklawn is trying to mount a response to quarterly Medicaid redeterminations. Because of involvement in BSB, I was able to outline some of the ways that Findhelp might be helpful in allowing clients to create accounts for their personal information that can aid them when they need to have their information available
Practice Change	Through BSB, Goshen Health and Maple City Health Care Center created a new collaborative approach to OB care, shared protocols, risk models, and privileges to be able to smoothly share patient care. This allowed Maple City Health Care to restart OB services, first prenatal to 30 weeks, then 32 weeks, then 40 weeks, then including delivery. Today 15 births per month are happening through this collaboration benefiting these patients. No dollars changed hands, the system is better, with practices, policies, and relationships built. The new prenatal voucher program will turbocharge this collaboration better serving moms.
Resource Flow Change	The impact of coming to BSB meetings and action team meetings has meant giving and getting more information to share with my community. It is always talked about that Elkhart County is resource rich, but the problem is getting these resources into the hands that need it most. Especially with Findhelp I have been able to share once one family in my community gets ahold of information, it should spread to others in their communities.
Relational Change	
Relationships and Connections	People Factors: Used 11 organizations who are already embedded in various communities across Elkhart County, high level of trust among health care organizations, equity-voucher is for uninsured moms. Resource factors: a stipend for CRNs committed to the cohort, agreed-upon voucher payment value (all providers agreed to the voucher rate/visit). Case for early and adequate prenatal care is well established.
Power Dynamics	Watching the data team come together around the work of systems change has been inspiring. Rather than narrowly focusing on just the obvious measurements, the work has also included tracking all of the organizations who touch the BSB work and also how each of these organizations are connected to each other. We see how connections are valuable but also where focus is needed to connect closely to working organizations more tightly so that work can shift to places where resources are less adequate and decisions can be made as coalition partners.



Transformative Change

Mental Models

Building Strong Brains has been a remarkable effort to build a community that values and supports a holistic approach to well-being. Over the years BSB has used its efforts to highlight a parent centered approach, helped launch a voucher program for prenatal visits, and facilitated information sharing across systems. Although it is difficult to sustain collaborative work, the gains that BSB has made have moved the mental model towards community support and the interconnected nature of a healthy and vibrant society.

2025 | Strategic Learning Themes – Steering Team and Action Teams

The Building Strong Brains (BSB) Steering Team is a diverse network of community leaders, many of whom have been engaged with the Coalition since its inception. The following report is a summary of the strategic learning and reflection generated by the steering team. Strategic learning is a key component of the BSB evaluation framework, and the Coalition regularly engages in opportunities to support reflection and learning.

2025 Steering Team Strategic Learning Results

1. Data-Driven Decision Making

The group is consistently working to make data more actionable:

- Recognized the **lagging nature of traditional data** (often 6–8 months old) and are exploring ways to incorporate real-time or qualitative data (e.g., family stories, service user “sense-making”).
- Efforts are underway to develop a **data repository** that can show both quick weekly snapshots and deeper dives into the priority areas.
- Data must align with **indicators across prenatal-kindergarten, and beyond**, with identified gaps in child development, maternal health, and family well-being indicators.

Strategic Learning: Data must go beyond numbers to capture stories and lived experience, while also being structured in a way that supports timely decision-making and clear communication of impact.

2. Network Building & Collective Impact

Visible Network Labs (VNL) analysis is central to learning:

- Identified key network roles (influencers, brokers, information exchangers) and began considering how to leverage or re-engage organizations strategically without overburdening them.
- There is continued interest in a directory/map of organizations to strengthen collaboration and visibility.
- Ongoing reflection on trust and value measures—whether the network is ready to assess them, and how such sensitive feedback could be used productively.



Strategic Learning: Network analysis is not just about mapping connections but about strategically positioning and supporting organizations to maximize system-wide impact.

3. Addressing Systemic Gaps

Consistent identification of structural barriers for families:

- Affordable childcare and housing remain urgent needs; even when resources exist, policy/funding cuts limit family access.
- Organizations are navigating uncertainty in funding and policy that makes long-term planning difficult.
- Grassroots and peer support models (e.g., community resource navigators, caregiver empowerment) are seen as opportunities to fill systemic gaps.

Strategic Learning: Systems-level change requires balancing upstream advocacy with downstream service access, while also equipping families themselves as decision-makers and leaders.

4. Governance & Leadership Development

- The Steering Team clarified its accountability role in shaping recommendations to the backbone and funders.
- Leadership transitions (new backbone staff, evolving coalition team roles) highlight the need for distributed leadership and clear role alignment.

Strategic Learning: Sustaining momentum depends on broadening representation, balancing responsibilities across leadership roles, and ensuring intentional inclusion of underrepresented partners.

5. Storytelling as Strategy

Across all meetings, the group emphasized the power of narrative:

- Storytelling is essential to contextualize quantitative indicators, capture family experiences, and communicate impact to funders and the community.
- Stories also build shared vision, deepen relational trust, and help demonstrate systemic progress beyond numbers.

Strategic Learning: Embedding storytelling alongside data strengthens both community engagement and advocacy efforts.

Steering Team - Overall Strategic Takeaway (2025):

The Steering Team is learning that **impactful systems change requires integrating multiple forms of knowledge (quantitative data, lived experience, network analysis)**, while also adapting governance structures and partnerships to address systemic gaps. By pairing rigorous data with authentic storytelling and network intentionality, Building Strong Brains is positioned to sustain momentum despite external policy and funding uncertainties.



2025 BSB Action Teams Strategic Learning Summary

The BSB Action Teams are groups of partners (organizations, individuals) that meet monthly to explore, plan, and implement ideas to strengthen the early childhood system. The Action Teams focus on specific domains: maternal and child health; quality child care & early learning environments; community supports for children and families.

The Action Teams are part of a broader coalition structure: there are also Support Teams (e.g. for communications and data), a Steering Team, Leadership Table, etc. The Action Teams implement more domain-specific parts of the strategy.

2025 Action Teams Strategic Learning Results

Based on what the coalition has done below are Action Team key strategic learnings which include things that seem to work well and things that are being discovered.

Learning	What is Working / Discovered
Regular meetings & cadence	The monthly meeting structure gives continuity: enough time to plan, monitor, follow through, but frequent enough to keep momentum.
Domain-specific focus	Teams focused on specific areas (health, early learning, supports) allow subject-matter depth, allow partners with relevant expertise to contribute.
Learning from data & community voice	Action Teams are using data (e.g. surveys, network analysis) and listening to lived experience (parents, caregivers) to drive insight into barriers and opportunities.
Coordination with support functions	Teams are not working in isolation: there are support teams for data, communication, alignment (e.g., health systems) that help remove barriers and coordinate system-level efforts.
Iterative design / evolving structure	The structure of the coalition and action teams is evolving - theory of change, governance, and partnership networks are being refined.
Identifying and addressing barriers	Action Teams are not only planning programs but trying to remove barriers — e.g., Findhelp to build awareness and reduce access barriers to community supports.



Learning	What is Working / Discovered
Cross-sector and cross-organizational partnerships	Many partners, from various sectors, contribute to Action Teams; bringing in diverse voices (health, education, social services) as well as those with lived experience.
Transparency & shared accountability	The coalition uses quarterly convenings, data walks, network maps, public platforms to share wins, gaps, and lessons.
Responsive to community voice & partner input	Listening to Community Resource Navigators about practical barriers families face; adjusting the model to incorporate economic self-sufficiency and other social determinants.
Need for resource alignment & clarity	Some gaps noted: in the network, certain sectors or rural areas are underrepresented; more tools/resources are desired to see what others are doing; some partners want better tools to collaborate.

Action Teams Strategic Learnings / Insights

Several strategic learning themes emerge from how the Action Teams are working and what's helping them learn and progress the work:

1. Clear Structure, Roles, and Shared Leadership

The division into distinct Action Teams by domain (maternal health; quality early environments; community supports) helps clarify focus and responsibility. Having co-chairs implies shared leadership, which can distribute workload and ensure diverse perspectives.

2. Intentional Planning Foundations

The presence of a Theory of Change, planning resources, and progress documents suggests that the Action Teams are not just convening, but following a planned strategy. This helps with alignment, measuring success, and adapting as needed.

3. Use of Data & Public Reporting

The regular data walks, reports, and newsletters indicate they are collecting data, reflecting on it, sharing externally. This transparency enables accountability, helps partners stay informed, and allows identification of where gaps exist.

4. Resource Sharing & Tools for Collaboration

The teams have and are developing shared tools. That kind of shared resource reduces duplication, ensures consistency, and helps partners engage more fully.



5. Ongoing Communication & Feedback Loops

With co-chair meetings, regular convenings, and periodic newsletters/events, there are regular touch points for checking in, adjusting direction, and maintaining momentum among many partners.

6. Focus across Multiple Domains

By having multiple Action Teams focusing on interrelated but distinct areas (early care, maternal health, community supports), the initiative can address multiple levers of early childhood development. This comprehensive approach allows synergies.

7. Visibility and Engagement

Publishing progress and structure makes the effort visible to stakeholders and the public. Visibility helps with partner engagement, accountability, and community trust.

SECTION THREE

Evaluation Themes: Progress and Impact (September 2025)

Building Strong Brains (BSB) is advancing a long-term vision for an Elkhart County where all children are born to thrive. Through a systems-based evaluation framework and shared learning practices, the coalition has generated and directly contributed to progress and impact.

Early-stage collective impact efforts often focus on building a coalition of engaged partners and building trust to effectively engage them in contributing to the shared vision. The Building Strong Brains Coalition in Elkhart County has been able to achieve much more. The coalition members have launched and shared innovative initiatives. They have engaged a broad and rich array of contributors from across diverse sectors. This broad and deep coalition has leveraged over \$10 million in external funding and community-based investments in Building Strong Brains in Elkhart County.

Interesting patterns have emerged through BSB Coalition reflection reports. BSB Coalition members can identify and articulate specific impacts generated through their collective contributions. In each round of impact gathering (2022, 2023, and 2025), the circle of partners has increased, but the diversity of responses has grown richer and reflects a shared identification of progress and impact.

Key BSB Evaluation Results

- **172 BSB impacts** reported by Coalition partners in 2025
- **6 BSB evaluation reports** developed and shared since 2022
- **200 community partners** actively engaged
- **2,360 hours contributed** by the BSB Coalition members in 2024
- **75% of Coalition partners report mission alignment** with BSB
- **664 relationships** reported between partners in 2024
- **1,745 collaborative activities** advancing BSB reported by partners
- **Over \$10 million contributed** by external and community-based investments of time, in-kind resources, and dollars
- **23 stories of impact** shared with network

Impact Areas	2022 Results	2023 Results	2025 Result
Policies		5 impacts reported	19 impacts reported
Practices	4 impacts reported	10 impacts reported	34 impacts reported
Resources	2 impacts reported	13 impacts reported	34 impacts reported
Connections	4 impacts reported	10 impacts reported	32 impacts reported
Power		6 impacts reported	23 impacts reported
Mental Models	3 impacts reported	12 impacts reported	30 impacts reported



In 2025, BSB coalition members were invited to develop impact stories. 23 distinct stories were gathered reflecting the shifts across all six levels of systems change. These stories reflect progress across each of the elements in the water of systems change framework including policies, practices, resources, connections, power and shifts in mental models. The stories provide a rich array of the progress and impact of BSB across Elkhart County.

Strengthening Systems Through Collective Action

BSB partners are aligning strategies across healthcare, education, and family services. Shared accountability, backbone coordination, and the Data Support Team ensure that evaluation and learning are integrated into the coalition's ongoing work. This alignment has led to stronger coordination and innovative pilots such as prenatal vouchers.

Shifts in Practices and Resource Flows

Community partners report measurable changes in practices—standardizing assessment tools, launching Findhelp for resource referrals, and expanding OB supports for families. Resource flows are increasingly equitable, with collaborative grants, shared funding models, and expanded access to critical services. Families are directly benefiting from improved service navigation and support.

Elevating Family and Community Voice

Parents and caregivers are at the center of BSB's work. Listening sessions, the Family Voice Project, and data walks ensure that lived experiences shape strategies. These approaches strengthen trust and create services that are more responsive, family-centered, and culturally relevant.

Building Trust, Relationships, and Shared Power

BSB's convenings and social network analysis reveal stronger connections among partners, higher levels of trust, and shared leadership. Partners describe a culture where organizations "step forward and step back" to support collective outcomes. While still emerging, power is increasingly shared across agencies and with families.

Changing Mental Models and Public Awareness

The coalition is shifting how the community thinks about early childhood well-being—from a program-level issue to a collective, system-level responsibility. Public awareness and partner narratives now emphasize that thriving children require interconnected systems of health, education, and family support.

Early Signs of Population-Level Impact

Although long-term outcomes take time, early progress is evident. Families report improved access to prenatal care, parents are more engaged in early learning programs, and partners are using shared dashboards to monitor child development trends. The evaluation infrastructure currently being refined provides a foundation for tracking future population-level impact.



Culture of Strategic Learning and Continuous Improvement

BSB has embedded strategic learning loops into its evaluation framework. Tools such as data walks, partner reflection sessions, and storytelling capture real-time insights and support adaptive change. Evaluation is viewed not as compliance, but as a shared practice that strengthens strategies, deepens collaboration, and accelerates impact.

Summary

Evaluation findings to date demonstrate that BSB is successfully building a culture of collaboration, shifting practices and leveraging external funding and community-based resources, elevating family voice, and shaping community mindsets. These system-level shifts create the foundation for long-term improvements in school readiness and healthy development for Elkhart County's youngest children.

The evaluation findings also point to significant progress in building a coalition of partners dedicated to the shared and collective vision of Building Strong Brains.

The evaluation framework will be used to guide the work of the coalition in the future. BSB's commitment to shared learning and sensemaking of evaluation results has deepened the commitment of coalition members. It has also leveraged the knowledge and wisdom of community practitioners, community leaders and partners.

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Appendix

Appendix – 2022 Building Strong Brains from Idea to Impact Case Story

- Tamarack Institute | Article – [Building Strong Brains in Elkhart County](#)

Appendix – BSB Social Network Analysis Reports

Visible Networks Lab Research Briefs – Building Strong Brains Coalition Social Network Analysis

- [Research Brief #1: Characteristics of the Building Strong Brains Network](#)
- [Research Brief #2: Engagement within the BSB Network](#)
- [Research Brief #3: Impact of the BSB Network](#)
- [Research Brief #4: Service Delivery and Resource Distribution within the BSB network](#)

Appendix – BSB Coalition Partners – Impact Stories

Structural Changes – Policies

- Oaklawn is trying to mount a response to quarterly Medicaid redeterminations. Because of involvement in BSB, I was able to outline some of the ways that Findhelp might be helpful in allowing clients to create accounts for their personal information that can aid them when they need to have their information available.
- I've seen equity and trauma issues discussed more generally with focus on systemic change. When the government threatened to pull funding from organizations who don't agree to report participants who are undocumented, I witnessed collective strategy to offer resources and referrals independent of funded programming and warm handoffs to support community support and alternative services.

Structural Changes – Practices

- Family Voice Project: We now have a data platform where we share narratives and conversations with parents (signed consents) and analysis (system to collect and analyze themes). Through each conversation, we are slowly collecting data that will help us support parents prepare their kids for school, understand barriers, and how they are keeping their culture at the center. We are starting to see some common themes (libraries, WIC, Churches, Preschools) that are identified as critical to success. Building Strong Brains is supporting this work with gift cards, graphic design, and backbone staff time. These themes and trends will inform the community's work.
- Better mental health support for moms: I started attending BSB meetings in early 2024. I learned that Marti Conrad (ECHD) was also interested in launching a perinatal mood and anxiety disorder (PMAD) support group. I had further discussion with Marti and Shin Yee Tan, and we decided to start the group at Oaklawn. We developed a plan and presented it to the clinical team, and it was approved. Beyond the Blues launched in September 2024 with fewer referrals than we had hoped (8 women (and babies) have attended. A grant was awarded to support supplies, baby items, workbooks, gas cards, and snacks to launch the group. Feedback from group members has been positive. The moms who come regularly say that it's been very helpful to them.
- The Community Supports for Families Action Team launched Findhelp to connect families to resources in an efficient way. The resources were out there but lacked a centralized place to find them. Keeping lists of resources was scattered among various organizations and did not update as changes happened. With the coalition's support, the Findhelp hub was launched to be a one-stop search for resources for families in need. We are now gathering the data on how Findhelp is being used and what people are searching for.
- I was taking a lunch during my lunch break downtown near the library when I saw a woman sitting on a bench surrounded by boxes and a tiny baby in a baby carrier. And it was a chilly, cold day. I asked if she needed help. She needed a warm place to wait as she had been evicted. I put her belongings in my car for safekeeping and brought her and the baby into the library to get warm. I was so grateful for the resource of Findhelp as she was looking for emergency housing. I don't know how her story ended but I was glad Findhelp was there when she needed it.



- When RETA began offering OB services to moms up to 20 weeks gestation, we met some barriers to other established healthcare organizations understanding and supporting our work. It was clear we need to build relationships and connections if we wanted to build a sustainable process. Through the health system alignment team, we were able to tell our story and why we saw a significant need with our patient population to provide this service. We were able to answer questions and after that move forward with strong connections, so our transition plan is seamless.
- Through BSB, Goshen Health and Maple City Health Care Center created a new collaborative approach to OB care, shared protocols, risk models, and privileges to be able to smoothly share patient care. This allowed Maple City Health Care to restart OB services, first prenatal to 30 weeks, then 32 weeks, then 40 weeks, then including delivery. Today 15 births per month are happening through this collaboration benefiting these patients. No dollars changed hands, the system is better, with practices, policies, and relationships built. The new prenatal voucher program will turbo charge this collaboration better serving moms.
- Progress is being tracked through completion of the Pre-K to K transition survey. I am excited to see policy changes and updates based on the survey results or possibly the need for more information gathering. A positive thing I hope for is that Pre-K and K staff will communicate together more
- Through connections and collaborations with leaders, agencies, and programs, the Family Resource Center has been able to share information about our programs and services, especially TOT time. Our TOT time has grown so much that we are between 5-10 families every Wednesday. Children and parents are able to socialize and do developmental activities together creating strong bonds and community relationships. The TOT time has been added to the indoor play spaces in BSB's mini-action team and will be added to the website when it is up and running.
- Libraries and Parks Department are collaborating with Brian Replogle to collect information on indoor play spaces. They hope to learn together and then share information.
- A team of dedicated, focused individuals from several partnerships came together to enhance the preparedness of preschoolers for kindergarten. This group gathered practices used by all groups and synthesized information to form a survey to distribute to Pre-K and K teachers to assess what they felt was vital to curriculum practice and social emotional development for children to be prepared for Kindergarten. After reviewing the data and working with BSB we saw a great gap between students who attended Pre-K and those with no Pre-K while still assessing the data we move forward with a Kindergarten Boot camp. Results will be coming in August 2025 for the first groups of students. This plus our data evaluation will help us form stronger partnerships and educational environments for children we serve.

Structural Changes - Resource Flows

- The impact of coming to BSB meetings and action team meetings has meant giving and getting more information to share with my community. It is always talked about that Elkhart County is resource rich but the problem is getting these resources into the hands that need it most. Especially with Findhelp I have been able to share once one family in my community gets ahold of information, it should spread to others in their communities.
- Prenatal care for all regardless of ability to pay. Staff engagement to all resources for patients (Findhelp). Community Resource Navigators for prenatal vouchers. Community health care partners at the same table work together to improve access to prenatal care.

Relational Changes - Relationships and Connections

- Satisfaction and evaluation surveys and attention to each other's events and interventions, data collection, and awareness raising, collective communication strategies, meeting people where they are at
- As someone who has been involved with the development of BSB, it's amazing to witness how the coalition has evolved over time. There are times when some can give it all and there are also times when some can step back and trust the process continues. Regardless this is not individual work, it's WE work to honor the next generations to come.
- Loved the network analysis (Visible Network Labs) and hope there is more work to come from this. Leveraging and aligning organizations to lead work differently. Some organizations are connecting in new ways. New openness to collaboration. This took TIME and TRUST FIRST to then be able to begin these conversations.



- People Factors: Used 11 organizations who are already embedded in various communities across Elkhart County, high level of trust among health care organizations, equity-voucher is for uninsured moms. Resource factors: a stipend for CRNs committed to the cohort, agreed upon voucher payment value (all providers agreed to the voucher rate/visit). Case for early and adequate prenatal care is well established.
- Created platforms for staff at every level to give voice to improvements. Connected on a deeper, more humble level with community partners. Using SDOH data internally for process change decisions. Worked to identify more creative and out-of-the-box funding sources and ways to create financially lean plans so our current funds and staff were better utilized.
- Seeing the expectations of rising K change, the reduction of affordable and quality care, and how we get the child dashboard red areas to move to green. Seeing the data from the dashboard and utilizing the resources and organizations to move the change for good. Collaborating and relying on others for support has benefited our success to moving the systems. Listening to parents and not assuming we know the challenges.

Relational Changes - Power Dynamics

- Watching the data team come together around the work of systems change has been inspiring. Rather than narrowly focusing on just the obvious measurements, the work has also included tracking all of the organizations that touch the BSB work and also how each of these organizations is connected to each other. We see how connections are valuable but also where focus is needed to connect closely to working organizations more tightly so that work can shift to places where resources are less adequate and decisions can be made as coalition partners.

Transformative Changes - Mental Model Change

- Reported by a person new to the work: The coalition is targeting families of highest need, ongoing reflection of what is going well and what are the barriers is evident, data is being collected to inform work and justify allocating funds to areas of greatest opportunity
- Many people in Elkhart County want kids to thrive. More variety of partners are coming together to look at how “we” (Elkhart County) can support our (Elkhart County) kids to thrive.
- Building Strong Brains has been a remarkable effort to build a community that values and supports a holistic approach to well-being. Over the years, BSB has used its efforts to highlight a parent-centered approach, helped launch a voucher program for prenatal visits, and facilitated information sharing across systems. Although it is difficult to sustain collaborative work, the gains that BSB has made have moved the mental model towards community support and the interconnected nature of a healthy and vibrant society.
- The language is shifting to systems-focused language.



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