



**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**First Up**

MARCH 2024

PREPARED BY:



**BLOOM**

ASPIRE | GROW | ACHIEVE

BLOOMPLANNING.COM

111 S. INDEPENDENCE MALL EAST • SUITE 800

PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106

267.225.8761



## Table of Contents

I. BACKGROUND	2
II. FIRST UP'S VISION, MISSION & VALUE PROPOSITION	3
III. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS	4
A. PURPOSE	4
B. APPROACH	4
PHASE I: DISCOVERY ( <i>AUGUST TO OCTOBER 2023</i> )	4
PHASE II: VISIONING ( <i>OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER 2023</i> )	6
PHASE III: DETAILED PLANNING ( <i>NOVEMBER 2023 TO JANUARY 2024</i> )	7
PHASE IV: ACCOUNTABILITY ( <i>JANUARY TO FEBRUARY 2024</i> )	8
PHASE V: FINALIZATION ( <i>FEBRUARY TO MARCH 2024</i> )	9
IV. PLANNING PATHWAYS	10
PATHWAY 1: ECE PROGRAMS & FAMILIES	10
PATHWAY 2: STAFF & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	13
PATHWAY 3: IMPACT	15
PATHWAY 4: ADVOCACY & PARTNERSHIPS	17
PATHWAY 5: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORTS	19
VI. RISK IDENTIFICATION, MITIGATION & CONTINGENCY PLANNING	22
STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE	26

## I. BACKGROUND

For over 50 years, First Up, has been making a significant, positive impact on the early childhood education (ECE) sector in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Their coaching, training and technical assistance teams have helped hundreds of early childhood programs reach statewide or national accreditation standards. Their advocacy team has created a statewide grassroots advocacy network that has grown to more than 3,000 individuals and organizations that work each day to influence public policy. Their focus on supporting all caregivers (providers and families) who strengthen young children's lives fosters a future of success for all children.

By supporting early childhood education professionals, organizations, and families for over half a century, First Up has become the Greater Philadelphia region's most trusted partner and advocate for high-quality early childhood education.

First Up's position within the ECE community has fostered new connections among government officials, partners, and funders and established a collaborative network dedicated to improving the education of our youngest learners, today and every day to come.

Building on First Up's strong foundation, this strategic planning process aimed to strengthen and refine First Up's capacity to support educators, families, and programs in providing the highest level of education for our youngest learners.

In August 2023, First Up engaged with Bloom Planning to help guide their strategic planning process. With Bloom's assistance, the planning team analyzed research, reviewed stakeholder feedback, and set future priorities with a clear focus on ensuring all early childhood educators, families, and providers are positioned to advance the future of the children in their care. This belief was an essential piece of the strategic planning process described in this document, and our hope is that it can be seen in the ultimate goals and actions proposed in First Up's strategic planning elements.

---

## II. FIRST UP'S VISION, MISSION & VALUE PROPOSITION

---

### Our Vision

---

We envision a society in which early childhood professionals are highly skilled and valued; families have the knowledge, capabilities and resources to guide their children's learning; and every young child has a quality start that lasts a lifetime.

---

### Our Mission

---

We empower and equip early childhood professionals, families, and other adults influential in young children's lives through training, coaching, and advocating to positively impact educational and developmental outcomes for young children.

---

### Our Value Proposition

---

First Up is the region's most qualified organization to train and coach early childhood education (ECE) professionals and families, resulting in high quality ECE programs and positive life outcomes for *all* young children, birth to age 8. First Up is uniquely positioned to work with families, policymakers and ECE professionals to provide best-in-class training, strengths-based coaching and accessible technical assistance that ensures organizations run effectively and meet and exceed state and national standards, while increasing public investment and understanding of the importance and value of ECE through advocacy to promote change.

### III. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

#### A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the First Up strategic plan is to develop agreement on and alignment with a shared five-year vision for impact, set key three-year planning initiatives, and articulate an implementation roadmap for First Up’s continued expansion, the sustainability of its programming and initiatives, and the growth of its funding opportunities.

##### WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN?

- A self-created roadmap to guide decisions, growth, and change, and to help us realize our collective mission and vision
- A process of stakeholder engagement yielding a set of carefully considered domains and goals that bring our core priorities into focus for the next three to six years
- A living document that will be revisited and revised on a regular basis

##### A STRATEGIC PLAN IS NOT...

- A tactical plan
- A static document
- Everything everyone wants, nor everything the organizations involved do

#### B. APPROACH

First Up developed this strategic plan using a five-phase planning process as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Five Phases of First Up’s Strategic Planning Process



#### Phase I: Discovery (August to October 2023)

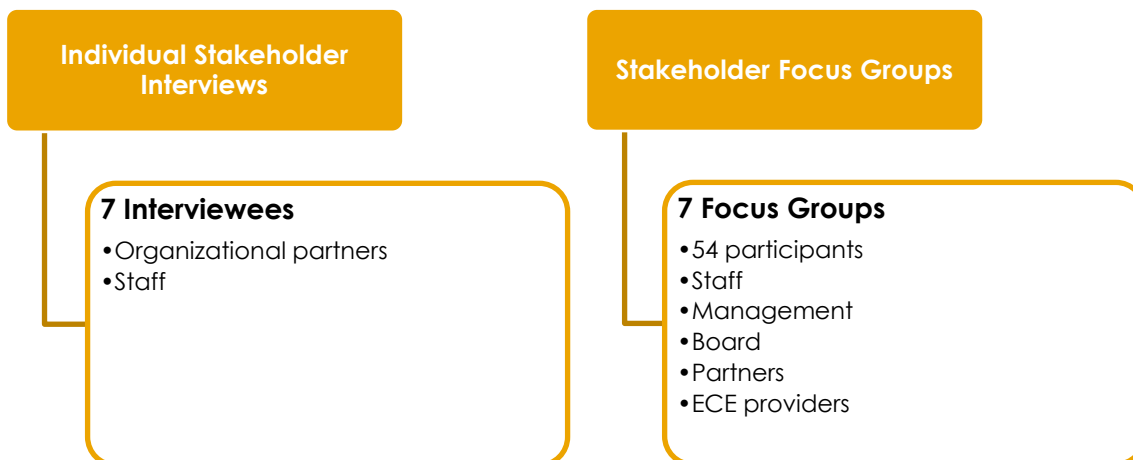
##### PROCESS

As the first step in this strategic planning process, the Bloom team conducted a series of research activities to inform the visioning and strategic initiative-setting process. Through a variety of feedback opportunities, stakeholders from across First Up’s community had the opportunity to reflect on the organization’s strengths and areas for development.

##### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders were engaged to provide specific context. Individuals from across First Up’s community—including but not limited to staff, board members, providers, educators, and partners—had the opportunity to reflect on First Up’s organizational strengths and areas for development in its programming, operations, and advocacy.

Figure 2: Summary of Phase I Research Activities



### PARTICIPATION

As part of the discovery process, and in preparation for the work on the visioning process, Bloom worked with First Up leadership to convene key stakeholders from First Up's staff, board, and partners. These stakeholders worked collaboratively through multiple facilitated activities to review the research and to parse out and name core themes and goals. Figure 3 lists the individuals who attended at least one meeting during the research reflection, visioning, and/or planning stages.

Figure 3. Members of the Strategic Planning Team

- **Carol Austin**, Executive Director
- **Zakiyah Boone**, Board Member
- **Lisa Browne**, Director of Family & Equity Initiatives
- **Rachel Camacho**, Early Learning Specialist
- **Caroline Campana-Reynolds**, Director of Workforce & Professional Development
- **Cherie Crosby-Weeks**, Board Member
- **Alyssa Cruz**, Program Manager
- **Kim Farmer**, Early Learning Specialist
- **Deb Green**, Board Member
- **Terry Grier**, Board Member
- **Jackie Groetsch**, Public Policy Manager
- **Pamela Haines**, First Up Public Policy Consultant
- **Christine Haley-Brinen**, Senior Early Learning Specialist
- **Ashley Haneiko**, Administration & Projects Manager
- **Whitney Hawkins**, Manager of Equity Initiatives
- **Shadeen Holmes**, PD Instructor
- **Cathy Kaufman**, Board Member
- **Lisa Kemmerer**, Administrative Assistant
- **Sherilynn Kimble**, Partner, First Up Consultant
- **Jamie Lokoff**, Board Member
- **Kate Luce**, Early Learning Specialist
- **Richard Marks**, Board Member
- **Drew Martin**, Director of Operations

- **Rosanna Matos**, Early Learning Program Engagement Specialist
- **Jill Michal**, Partner, former Board President
- **Martha Nardone**, Accountant
- **James Nicholson**, Manager of Trauma-Informed Care
- **Charlene Nolten**, Administrative Assistant
- **Randy Ostrow**, Controller
- **Elizabeth Ozer**, Policy Manager
- **James Plummer**, Board Member
- **Ryan Rodriguez**, Communications Associate
- **Jennifer Schaum**, Early Learning Specialist
- **Lisa Schultz**, Director of Programs
- **Tyrone Scott**, Director of Government & External Affairs
- **Shay Shuler**, Early Learning Specialist
- **Stephanie Simon**, Program Manager
- **April Solomon-Tate**, Early Learning Specialist
- **Michelle Tagliatela**, Board President
- **Kendra Thomas**, Program Manager
- **Tiffany Thorpe**, Program Manager
- **Ken Wesler**, Director of Development & Communications
- **Carol Wong**, Board Member
- **Lizette Woods**, Manager of Workforce
- **Robyn Younger**, Board Member

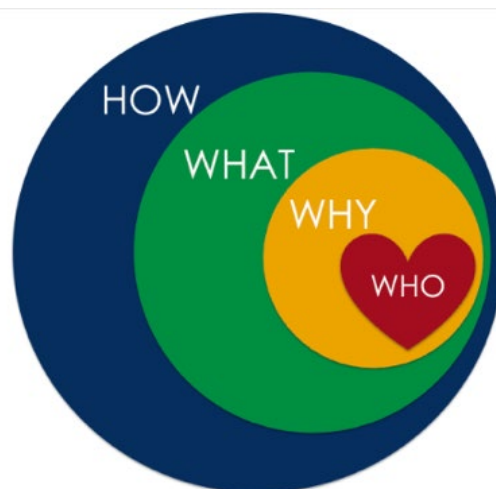
**Phase II: Visioning** *(October to November 2023)*

**PROCESS**

After validating First Up’s current state and identifying its organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats during the discovery phase, First Up’s leadership created a draft vision for impact that identified the framework of priorities First Up would focus on for the next five years.

Through a series of conversations and the visioning workshop, the planning team considered the purpose of First Up by placing the people they serve at the center of their vision and building out their why, what, and how from that center (as Figure 4 demonstrates). The Vision for Impact also highlighted the key planning pathways First Up would prioritize throughout their strategic plan.

**Figure 4: Visioning Prioritization Lens**



## VISION FOR IMPACT

---

In 2029, First Up is nationally recognized and sought out as a transformational leader in the field of early childhood education (ECE). We propel individual educators and families (caregivers and parents) into the next level of their development, where they are inspired and equipped to use new knowledge and tools to advance the future of the children in their care. ECE program leaders are agents and partners in promoting policy-level systems changes and quality improvements that elevate the field. ECE educators are compensated commensurately for their education, their experience, and the stakes of their profession, at least on par with their K-12 teaching counterparts.

The success of First Up relies upon our:

**ECE Programs & Families.** We prioritize programming that focuses on economically disadvantaged communities, families, and children who continue to be unserved through First Up's initiatives. We seek ways to ensure our services are accessible and attractive to our consumers. We expand First Up's reputation for excellence in programming that is culturally relevant and responsive, cutting edge, and asset focused and that meets the dreams of those we serve.

**Staff & Organizational Development.** Our staff are diverse, knowledgeable, highly trained, dedicated, and respected in the field. Our staff, board, organizational culture, and programming reflect and demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice. Using trauma-informed strategies, we foster a physically, emotionally, and socially safe workplace where lived experience and collaboration lead to internal and external opportunities for growth.

**Impact.** We relentlessly focus on impact. Our consumers are at the table with us as we collect and analyze data, distribute and communicate our learnings, and use evidence-based lessons to improve what we offer. We grow the power of our programs through innovative solutions that positively impact ECE program quality and that empower early childhood educators and families to effectively utilize the knowledge and skills they have acquired from First Up's offerings.

**Advocacy & Partnerships.** We are proactive and at the forefront of the issues. We are extraordinary storytellers who increase the number of advocates in the field who come from the ranks of the unheard. Policymakers seek us out to engage with them in setting policy, and ECE leaders seek us out for partnership and support.

**Workforce Development & Supports.** We actively seek out opportunities and resources to offer robust development opportunities to meet the needs of our field. We are tuned in to the needs and dreams of the professionals in our ECE ecosystem, and we stand ready to deliver the resources they need either directly or through referral, advocacy or partnership/collaboration. Our innovative solutions and ongoing achievements create value and improve consumer expertise.

---

### Phase III: Detailed Planning *(November 2023 to January 2024)*

#### PROCESS

The planning phase allowed for additional participation from strategic planning team members. Sessions for each of the pathways were facilitated, with opportunities to provide feedback and propose additional ideas. Through a series of activities and deeper conversation, the pathways were refined, and feedback was used to determine strategic initiatives for each pathway.



Figure 5: First Up’s Strategic Planning Framework



Over the course of several meetings that provided additional feedback opportunities, the planning team and captains, with support from Bloom, finalized a statement of intent and SMARTIE<sup>1</sup> objectives, as well as detailed sets of milestones and action steps for each initiative.

**Phase IV: Accountability (January to February 2024)**

**PROCESS**

To ensure successful implementation of the detailed action plans produced in the planning phase of this process, Bloom worked with the senior leadership of First Up on a series of accountability activities that included clarifying the metrics necessary to measure progress, and creating accountability, communication, and risk mitigation plans.

Figure 6: Accountability Plans & Tools



**METRICS**

First Up recognizes that creating effective, targeted metrics is essential to monitoring the organization’s success, particularly as it takes on bold and innovative initiatives.

First Up will use a comprehensive set of metrics to monitor progress toward achievement of each pathway’s objectives. The metrics and targets are aligned with each of the five pathways. First Up will utilize existing and new data-collection practices and tools to ensure consistent data collection and monitoring.

**RISK PLANNING**

Potential risks to successful implementation of the strategic plan were discussed and integrated into final documents for the implementation teams to consider and plan for as they work to roll out the strategic plan across the community.

**ACCOUNTABILITY & IMPLEMENTATION OWNERSHIP**

First Up leadership collaboratively reviewed all strategic initiatives and determined the role to manage/oversee each initiative and each pathway as a whole. Additionally, the team spoke about the

<sup>1</sup> SMARTIE—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable

practicality of accomplishing all proposed objectives and how they would monitor their progress on an ongoing basis. First Up has identified a role to track progress across the entire plan and support pathway leads in monitoring implementation progress.

**Phase V: Finalization (February to March 2024)**

The final summary (this document) will represent the culmination of First Up’s strategic planning process. While it will capture the plan as a starting point in time, the necessary steps that will achieve strategic planning goals will continue to evolve and grow with implementation. These implementation steps will be captured in a separate *Strategic Implementation Tool*. This document includes a master action plan task list and implementation monitoring tools designed to be updated as work is completed.

**Figure 7: Implementation Management Tool (Sample)**

First Up Strategic Plan Timeline					2024				2025				2026				2027	
Observation for Early Education ©2023 Bloom Planning					Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Pathways & Initiatives	PRIMARY LEAD	START DATE	END DATE	NOTES	1/1/2024	3/1/2024	5/1/2024	7/1/2024	9/1/2024	11/1/2024	1/1/2025	3/1/2025	5/1/2025	7/1/2025	9/1/2025	11/1/2025	1/1/2026	3/1/2026
<b>Pathway 1 ECE Programs &amp; Families</b>	Director of Programs																	
Initiative 1.1 Accessible & Attractive Offerings	Director of Family & Equity Ini	10/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 1.2 Known & Trusted ECE Leadership	Program Manager (SS)	7/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 1.3 Framework that Guides Programming	Director of Programs	9/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 1.4 Aligned Processes & Programs	Program Manager (AC)	7/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 1.5 Supporting Customer Sustainability & Advancement	Director of Programs	10/1/24	6/1/27															
<b>Pathway 2 Staff &amp; Organizational Development</b>	Executive Director																	
Initiative 2.1 Trauma Informed	Executive Director	4/1/24	6/30/27															
Initiative 2.2 DEIB-Centered (Externally & Internally)	Executive Director	7/1/24	6/1/26															
Initiative 2.3 Culturally Responsive Learning	Director of Family & Equity Initia	9/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 2.4 Communication for Success	Director of Development & Carr	12/1/23	6/1/27															
<b>Pathway 3 Impact</b>	Director of Operations																	
Initiative 3.1 Collaborative Development of Metrics	Director of Operations	7/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 3.2 Data Collection & Analysis	Director of Operations	7/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 3.3 Innovation Based on Data	Director of Operations	2/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 3.4 Centering Client Stories	Director of Development & Carr	7/1/24	6/1/27															
<b>Pathway 4 Advocacy &amp; Partnerships</b>	Director of GEA																	
Initiative 4.1 Amplifying ECE's Value	Director of Development & Carr	7/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 4.2 Nurturing Advocates	Policy Manager	7/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 4.3 Influential Change Agent	Policy Manager	2/1/25	6/1/27															
Initiative 4.4 Leveraging Stakeholders	Director of GEA	10/1/24	6/1/27															
Initiative 4.5 Building a Unified Voice	Policy Manager	7/1/24	6/1/27															
<b>Pathway 5 Workforce Development &amp; Supports</b>	Director of Workforce & Professional Development																	
Initiative 5.1 Collaborative Communities	Manager of PD	7/1/24	6/30/27															
Initiative 5.2 Programs that Prioritize the Underserved	Director of Workforce Developn	10/1/24	6/30/27															
Initiative 5.3 High School Pipeline	Director of Workforce Developn	7/1/24	6/30/27															
Initiative 5.4 Culturally Responsive Frameworks	Director of Workforce Develo	7/1/24	6/30/27															
Initiative 5.5 Maximizing Learning Through Technology	Manager of PD	7/1/24	6/30/27															

## IV. PLANNING PATHWAYS

### Pathway 1: ECE Programs & Families

#### STATEMENT OF INTENT

By 2029, First Up will prioritize ECE programs and partnerships that serve economically disadvantaged communities, families, and children who continue to be unserved through First Up’s initiatives. In working with these communities, First Up will employ an intentional, holistic, and asset-based mindset to engage the voices and strengths of families and early childhood educators to both strengthen successful initiatives and programming and to innovate in ways that are responsive to those emerging or unmet concerns that limit positive outcomes for children. We will meaningfully engage these communities by utilizing their strengths in planning and delivery, and we will leave every program and family with the resources they need to utilize what we have provided. We will lead where we have expertise. We will partner, refer, convene, and advocate where there are critical needs we are not best positioned to meet. First Up will continue to work with partners (as appropriate, as aligned) and use a lens of equity to develop outcomes and discern impacts.

#### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

<b>1.1 Accessible &amp; Attractive Offerings</b>	<b>1.2 Known &amp; Trusted ECE Leadership</b>	<b>1.3 Framework That Guides Programming</b>	<b>1.4 Aligned Processes &amp; Programs</b>	<b>1.5 Supporting Consumer Sustainability &amp; Advancement</b>
--	---	--	---	---

#### SMARTIE OBJECTIVES, METRICS & MILESTONES

<b>1.1 Accessible &amp; Attractive Offerings</b>	
<i>First Up's offerings are accessible and attractive to our "consumers to be", focusing on constituents with the greatest potential impact in their communities that have not yet been able to take full advantage of available resources.</i>	
<b>SMARTIE Objective</b>	By June 2027, First Up will have a way of understanding the needs of early childhood education programs and families that have not yet been able to take full advantage of available resources. This will result in engagements that are responsive and accessible to these programs and the families that they serve. First Up initiatives will see at least (50%) participation from these programs and their families.
<b>Metrics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of ECE programs that have been identified as being highly impactful to their communities</li> <li>• # of total engagements with highly impactful programs and their families</li> <li>• # of new engagements</li> <li>• # of families engaged</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	

**Year 1:** Needs assessment of ECE programs and their families that have not participated in First Up offerings is completed.

**Year 2:** One to two projects that support identified needs of ECE programs and their families are created and piloted.

**Year 3:** Existing initiatives are refined and revised. A process within First Up to continue building programs around community needs is implemented.

### 1.2 Known & Trusted ECE Leadership

*First Up is a known and trusted partner to/for ECE decision makers at the local, state, and national level*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up staff will actively contribute to multiple recurring local, regional, or statewide system-impacting discussions (e.g., OCDEL/PA Key meetings, PELSA advisory council, etc.), resulting in three system change wins that benefit the early childhood community.

**Metric**

- # of new practices we see implemented

**Implementation Milestones**

**Year 1:** System-impacting issues we would like to see changed and what tables and/or organizations have the capacity to make these changes are identified.

**Year 2:** An invitation to sit at one or more additional decision-making tables is received.

**Year 3:** ECE professionals and families of young children are convened to speak up on key policy issues. Invitations to sit at two more decision-making tables are received.

### 1.3 Framework That Guides Programming

*First Up's program offerings are cohesive and intentionally designed from our theory of change to fulfill our vision*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, a framework will guide the vetting of 75% of grant opportunities and initiatives to ensure they are cohesive and intentionally designed based on our theory of change to fulfill our vision.

**Metrics**

- % of initiatives that fit within the framework
- Staff awareness of the framework

**Implementation Milestones**

**Year 1:** A framework and rubric through which initiatives will be evaluated for fit with First Up's mission are developed.

**Year 2:** The framework is piloted.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved! The framework is revised based on information gained in the pilot.

### 1.4 Aligned Processes & Programs

*First Up employs a strategic, efficient, and effective process for recruiting and engaging ECE programs and families and creating pathways for ECE programs within First Up initiatives*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will enact intake and transition processes that guide ECE programs toward the First Up services that best suit the needs of their program and families as well as the program's capacity to engage.

**Metrics**

- # of programs that have engaged with First Up and are receiving information about First Up's resources (initiatives) and ways to engage and connect (emails, list serves, etc.)
- Documentation confirming that departments are communicating about and resourcing each other when recruiting ECE programs
- # of engagements compared to # of programs that reached out for services via individual inquiry or in response to First Up's outreach
- % of programs that remain engaged throughout First Up initiatives

**Implementation Milestones**

**Year 1:** An intake process is developed, including a means for tracking current programs served and individual service inquiries.

**Year 2:** The process is revised and refined. Staff is trained on the intake procedures.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved!

### 1.5 Supporting Consumer Sustainability & Advancement

*First up employs an intentional, holistic, and asset based mindset to program design and implementation, leaving programs with the resources and tools they need to sustain and advance*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will ensure that 85% of ECE programs, staff, and families have the tools and resources they need to sustain learned practices beyond their engagement with First Up.

**Metrics**

- % of initiatives that have sustainability plans built into their design
- Sustainability data from clients

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** Sustainability level supports are embedded into 50% of initiative designs.

**Year 2:** Sustainability level supports are embedded into 75% of initiative designs. Existing supports are refined with client feedback.

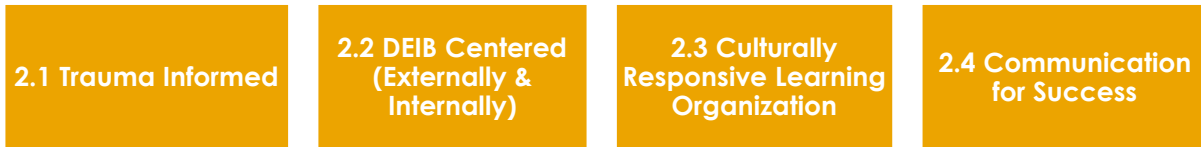
**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved! Sustainability supports already implemented are refined. Supports are embedded into 100% of programs. A process is built for this to be embedded in planning for future projects.

## Pathway 2: Staff & Organizational Development

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

By 2029, First Up will realize an organizational structure and culture that makes space for employees to grow personally and professionally, be self-reflective, learn from others, be valued for their authentic selves, and be acknowledged for their individual contributions. Our policies, processes, and internal communication systems and practices will support teamwork, individual growth, and organizational growth, and will include effective feedback loops that allow every employee’s voice to be heard.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



### SMARTIE OBJECTIVES, METRICS & MILESTONES

#### 2.1 Trauma Informed

*First Up operates as a highly evolved trauma informed organization*

<b>SMARTIE Objective</b>	<p>By June 2027, First Up staff will consistently employ a trauma-informed framework as established by the Creating PRESENCE model and guided by a standing committee of team members. This standing committee will be responsible for helping to introduce new staff to the Creating PRESENCE model as well as helping the organization to respond to critical issues requiring a trauma-informed lens. “Trauma trained” is the highest level in the progression of “trauma aware,” “trauma informed,” and “trauma trained.”</p>
<b>Metric(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Creating PRESENCE onboarding process developed and implemented</li> <li>• Trauma-informed committee charter developed and committee formed</li> <li>• Annual and ongoing feedback</li> </ul>

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** A Creating PRESENCE centered group of processes that addresses onboarding new staff and refresher trainings for existing staff is developed. A trauma-informed committee charter that includes committee member training is drafted.

**Year 2:** The trauma-informed committee has advised HR on embedding trauma-informed metrics/questions into annual reviews and drafted a tool to collect information on incidents identified by staff that require a trauma-informed assessment/response.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved!

## 2.2 DEIB Centered (Externally & Internally)

*First Up relentlessly centers DEIB both internally and externally*

### SMARTIE Objective

By June 2026, First Up will consistently utilize a suite of processes and policies that ensure every major aspect of the employment life cycle and our external relations with everyone from providers to vendors are centered on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) practices, resulting in a staff that honors the individual and communal life histories of each other and of those we serve. These processes and policies will undergo regular review by an internal DEIB team to incorporate enhancements and refinements.

### Metric

- Internal processes and policies (i.e., recruitment, hiring, retention, mobility, accessibility) developed and implemented
- External processes and policies (i.e., supplier diversity, representation, cultural sensitivity, communications) developed and implemented
- Annual staff feedback

### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** An initial review of current processes and policies is completed. Recommendations are produced and implemented.

**Year 2:** An ongoing review rubric is created and scheduled for future use.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved!

## 2.3 Culturally Responsive Learning Organization

*First Up functions as a high performing, culturally responsive, Learning Organization*

### SMARTIE Objective

By June 2027, First Up will develop a shared understanding of an organizational model that embraces continuous feedback and culturally responsive values, expectations, and practices that support a culture of learning, growth, and equity both within the organization and in its interactions with partnering organizations. This organizational culture allows for innovation, high morale, efficacy, growth, and a clear awareness and respect for the people and communities we serve.

### Metric(s)

- Staff performance (via evaluations) and staff feedback

### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** A shared understanding of what it means to be a "learning organization" is created.

**Year 2:** Learning organization practices as defined in the Year 1 milestone are introduced. A team of people responsible for coaching the rest of the organization toward the learning organization practices is formed and is active.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved!

## 2.4 Communication for Success

*First Up centers communication as a critical element of success*

### SMARTIE Objective

By June 2026, First Up will utilize purposeful, seamless, and efficient communication practices. These practices will strengthen internal relationships and productivity while maximizing external partnerships and awareness.

### Metric

- Staff rating of the communication structure via the annual staff survey

### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** A policy on what communication tool is used in a given circumstance is set.

**Year 2:** Feedback on communication protocols is gathered, and protocols are revised as needed.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved!

## Pathway 3: Impact

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

By 2029, First Up will employ human-centered design principles to increase efficiency, quality improvement, and sustainability in new and ongoing projects. Through partnerships and collaboration with our clients, we will identify the data and metrics that reliably support growth and improvement, with a special emphasis on serving those communities with the greatest need. Using strategic data analysis, we will refine and innovate our practices to support programs’ goals and dreams in a transformational way. By centering the clients’ measurable achievements in our communication efforts, we will effectively tell both the First Up story and the story of the ECE field.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



### SMARTIE OBJECTIVES, METRICS & MILESTONES

3.1 Collaborative Development of Metrics	
<i>First Up's allies and clients are meaningfully engaged in identifying metrics for success</i>	
<b>SMARTIE Objective</b>	By June 2027, First Up will cooperatively develop 90% of programmatic metrics with a diverse group of stakeholders (including ECE owners, directors, and teachers from programs of varying size, longevity, and focus, as well as families and allies) to ensure that our clients' dreams and goals, as well as First Up's vision of access to quality ECE for all children, are centered in our work at all times.
<b>Metric(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of programmatic metrics cooperatively developed</li> <li>• # of key data/metrics processes and policies developed and implemented</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation Milestones</b>	
<b>Year 1:</b> Ongoing projects and current metrics are fully reviewed. A responsible use of metrics is discussed at length with stakeholders.	<b>Year 2:</b> Seventy-five percent of projects employ cooperatively developed metrics. A process for cooperatively developing metrics for new projects is established.
	<b>Year 3:</b> SMARTIE objective is achieved!



### 3.2 Data Collection & Analysis

*First Up creates infrastructure necessary for collecting and analyzing data in real time*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will expand its data collection and analysis infrastructure to cover 100% of First Up's programmatic efforts, utilizing cooperatively developed metrics (see initiative 3.1) to provide real-time analysis. These systems will undergo regular testing and review to root out bias and refine efforts to center the client and First Up's mission and vision.

**Metric(s)**

- % of programmatic efforts captured in Quinteo, including dashboard reporting of key metrics
- # of key data/metrics processes and policies developed and implemented

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** Fifty percent of programmatic efforts are captured in Quinteo, including dashboard reporting of key metrics. A training regimen to onboard end users is developed.

**Year 2:** Seventy-five percent of programmatic efforts are captured in Quinteo, including dashboard reporting of key metrics. A feedback loop to review systems and suggest improvements is developed.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved!

### 3.3 Innovation Based on Data

*First Up uses data responsibly, ensuring our offerings are up to date and refine for innovative program offerings*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will regularly and responsibly use data analysis to identify emerging trends, as well as to inform refinement of ongoing First Up projects and innovation for new projects. The responsible use of data analysis will require ongoing collaboration with key stakeholders (see initiative 3.1), regular testing of systems (see initiative 3.2), and rigor in both data validation and interpretation.

**Metric(s)**

- % of First Up projects impacted by data analysis
- Rate of acquisition and implementation of best practices

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** Best practices in data validation and interpretation are learned.

**Year 2:** Fifty percent of First Up projects are impacted by data analysis. A policy to ensure ongoing use of best practices is established.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved!

### 3.4 Centering Clients' Stories

*First Up tells stories via clients dreams and measurable achievements*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will embed authentic stories about clients (both qualitative and quantitative) in 90% of applicable communications about First Up projects. By centering communications on the diverse hopes, dreams, challenges, and successes of our clients while utilizing data collected from First Up projects, we will deliver an objective but humanistic message that tells both clients' stories and First Up's.

**Metric(s)**

- % of applicable communications about First Up projects that feature clients' stories
- # of story acquisition and approval processes and policies developed and implemented

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** A story acquisition and approval process is developed and implemented. Fifty percent of applicable communications about First Up projects feature clients' stories.

**Year 2:** Seventy-five percent of applicable communications about First Up projects feature clients' stories.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved!

## Pathway 4: Advocacy & Partnerships

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

By 2029, First Up will broaden the reach of our advocacy efforts through expanded development of individual advocates, intentional and direct coordination with aligned strategic partnerships, and deliberate and cultivated relationships with local, state, and federal policymakers. We will meet homegrown advocates—both ECE educators and families—where they are and bring them to the table to tell their own stories and to demand accountability from their elected officials. Through our advocacy and partnerships, First Up will remain a key collaborator and thought leader guiding policy that supports the outcomes of our youngest learners.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

<b>4.1 Amplifying ECE's Value</b>	<b>4.2 Nurturing Advocates</b>	<b>4.3 Influential Change Agent</b>	<b>4.4 Leveraging Stakeholders</b>	<b>4.5 Building a Unified Voice</b>
-----------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

### SMARTIE OBJECTIVE, METRICS & MILESTONES

#### 4.1 Amplifying ECE's Value

*First Up amplifies messaging around importance of ECE and First Up's role in ensuring a high quality ECE ecosystem*

<b>SMARTIE Objective</b>	By June 2027, First Up will create and distribute more widely a succinct, direct, and repeatable message that reminds the public that every child should have access to a high-quality early education provided by a highly trained, well compensated professional, leading to voters seeing ECE as a definitive issue on which to vote.	
<b>Metric(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poll results (ELPA's budget)</li> <li>• # of favorable articles</li> <li>• # of times hearing ECE questions raised by others in public forums (town halls)</li> </ul>	
<b>Implementation Milestones</b>		
<b>Year 1:</b> Baseline ECE articles, LTEs, and op-eds are cowritten by First Up as well as ELPA poll. Messages are created, distributed, tested, assessed, & revamped as needed.	<b>Year 2:</b> ECE's status as an important issue (as evidenced by state polls and local media coverage) is increased by 5% over the baseline.	<b>Year 3:</b> ECE's status as an important issue (as evidenced by state polls and local media coverage) is increased by 10% over the baseline.

#### 4.2 Nurturing Advocates

*First Up develops home grown advocates who tell their own stories and demand accountability from elected officials*

<b>SMARTIE Objective</b>	By June 2027, First Up will double the number of active advocates in the region, creating an active coalition of families, practitioners, and supporters. We will focus our expanded advocate network on those districts that will most influence legislators and outcomes for ECE.	
<b>Metric(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of active advocates</li> </ul>	
<b>Implementation Milestones</b>		
<b>Year 1:</b> A family engagement strategy is piloted.	<b>Year 2:</b> The strategy is implemented in Montgomery and Delaware Counties.	<b>Year 3:</b> The strategy is implemented in Bucks and Chester Counties.

### 4.3 Influential Change Agent

*First Up influences policy makers guiding policy on local, regional, state, and federal levels.*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will influence at least two local policy wins and a yearly state policy win and work with national partners to get Pennsylvania state legislators on board with favorable national proposals that align directly with the most pressing needs of the field and our partners.

**Metric(s)**

- # of contacts initiated by legislators/policymakers or their staff

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** The First Up team's access to Pennsylvania House Children & Youth legislators and city/county council members is increased.

**Year 2:** First Up is invited to testify at any relevant hearings.

**Year 3:** First Up is on the Pennsylvania House Children & Youth e-blast list for feedback on proposed legislation.

### 4.4 Leveraging Stakeholders

*First Up leverages the assets and power of nontraditional stakeholders to advance the ECE policy agenda*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will recruit, develop, and initiate nontraditional advocates in all served counties. The advocates will be business leaders (e.g., chambers of commerce members) who will prioritize impactful child care and ECE legislation.

**Metric(s)**

- # of business leaders/chambers engaged with
- # of chambers listing ECE in its agenda

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** First Up staff are active members of all county chambers of commerce, which includes attending legislative committee meetings

**Year 2:** Chambers of commerce are activated to consider ECE in their priorities.

**Year 3:** First Up has moved chambers of commerce to include ECE in their legislative priorities.

### 4.5 Building a Unified Voice

*First Up engages Southeast Pennsylvania advocacy organizations to speak as one voice*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, 75% of known Southeastern Pennsylvania grassroots advocacy groups will be members of Southeastern Pennsylvania Early Childhood Coalition or 3P (Public Policy Partners) so that as a collaborative group we develop effective and supportive communication and advocacy practices that make lasting change in ECE.

**Metric(s)**

- # of advocacy groups attending First Up coalition meetings

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** Norms and a structure for the group that allow for effective performance of this collaborative effort are formed and implemented.

**Year 2:** Member groups are collaborating on selected campaigns of interest.

**Year 3:** Coordinated campaigns are launched.  
:

## Pathway 5: Workforce Development & Supports

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

By 2029, First Up will build a system of supports for each constituent group of the ECE workforce (educators, program leaders, directors, owners, new educators, current educators, etc.) that will provide them with the access, confidence, competence, and resources they need to provide the highest quality early childhood education to the children and families they serve. We will create communities among practitioners. First Up will model the practice of meaningfully engaging educators and ECE program leaders in the development of our programming and programmatic offerings. We will collaborate with system partners, including OCDEL, higher education institutions, and others, to inform, demand, and deliver best practice in service to the ECE workforce.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

<p><b>5.1 Collaborative Communities</b></p>	<p><b>5.2 Programs That Prioritize the Underserved</b></p>	<p><b>5.3 High School Pipeline</b></p>	<p><b>5.4 Culturally Responsive Frameworks</b></p>	<p><b>5.5 Maximizing Learning Through Technology</b></p>
---	--	--	--	--

### SMARTIE OBJECTIVES, METRICS & MILESTONES

<h4>5.1 Collaborative Communities</h4> <p><i>First Up facilitates collaborative communities amongst various stakeholders (teachers, directors, owners) in ECE programming</i></p>	
<p><b>SMARTIE Objective</b></p> <p><b>Metric(s)</b></p>	<p>By June 2027, First Up will establish individual quarterly event opportunities for key ECE stakeholders (teachers, directors, owners, and aides) that provide educators with the space to collaborate, share resources, and gain a sense of belonging. First Up will structure each collaborative session based on the interests and needs of the stakeholder (format, time, schedule, facilitator, topics, technology, child care, and food).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of quarterly events</li> <li>Feedback ratings from quarterly participants</li> </ul>
<h4>Implementation Milestones</h4>	

**Year 1:** The needs and desires of stakeholders are assessed, using the human center design model. One to two collaborative gatherings with different ECE topics and audiences are piloted.

**Year 2:** Two to three collaborative events are facilitated, developed in partnership with ECE professionals and building on the successes and lessons learned from Year 1.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved! Quarterly collaborative events are facilitated. Pathways are created for each collaborative topic, and ECE leaders are supported in contributing to planning.

### 5.2 Programs That Prioritize the Underserved

*First Up tells provides workforce development and professional development offerings that are attractive to underserved/marginalized communities*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will maximize the delivery of its training and workforce development programs to underrecognized educators, ensuring that all educators have equitable access to opportunities and resources that will benefit them, their students, and families.

**Metric(s)**

- # of Star 1 and Star 2 program participants

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** A needs assessment of the ECE field, particularly educators who have not participated in existing First Up offerings, is created and implemented. Trusted relationships with potential new clients are built.

**Year 2:** New programs and supports based on client feedback and data collected in Year 1 are created and piloted.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved! Initiatives are reassessed and modified. Next steps are investigated, and plans are begun.

### 5.3 High School Pipeline

*First Up generates high school pathways for ECE employment*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will have a fully implementable high school to ECE educator pipeline that moves young people from high school to teaching in ECE programs.

**Metric(s)**

- Collaborative framework designed
- # of entities utilizing the First Up pipeline framework

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** A framework is created in collaboration with ECE and Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) partners that encourages high school students to pursue an ECE career through a dual-enrollment program.

**Year 2:** A dual-enrollment program for high school students is piloted. Data is collected from ECE families on joining the ECE workforce.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved! The dual-enrollment program for high school students is revised and expanded. A family model is piloted.

### 5.4 Culturally Responsive Frameworks

*First Up develops a comprehensive and culturally responsive workforce development framework that includes emerging and incumbent workers*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will create and introduce a workforce development framework that supports the current ECE workforce's desire for professional growth, entices new people to enter the field, and encourages and supports existing educators in understanding and growing their skills and credentials while simultaneously considering and responding to the social, emotional, and physical needs of the students, families, and communities the educators support.

**Metric(s)**

- # of ECE retentions in Southeastern Pennsylvania
- # of annual new to ECE employees

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** A tool is created in collaboration with system partners that identifies trainings, resource partners, and gaps that exist to develop staff in alignment with the required state educator credentials.

**Year 2:** Initiative(s) that address gaps in educator preparation are piloted.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved! Initiatives are refined based on data. The workforce development plan is solidified.

### 5.5 Maximizing Learning Through Technology

*First Up innovates delivery through effective use of technology*

**SMARTIE Objective**

By June 2027, First Up will create and launch an online ECE professional development platform that expands educators' opportunities in terms of when, where, and in what languages they may access key content to improve their skills.

**Metric(s)**

- # of educators accessing information/resources and utilizing technology via First Up
- # of clicks resources receive to measure how thoroughly they were explored

#### Implementation Milestones

**Year 1:** The virtual/remote needs of potential users and available platforms/information systems to adopt are assessed. An RFP is drafted and published.

**Year 2:** The virtual/remote needs of potential users and available platforms/information systems to adopt are assessed. An RFP is drafted and published.

**Year 3:** SMARTIE objective is achieved! The virtual/remote needs of potential users and available platforms/information systems to adopt are assessed. An RFP is drafted and published.

## VI. RISK IDENTIFICATION, MITIGATION & CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Figure 8: Risk Mitigation & Contingency Planning

As First Up plans for the future, it recognizes there are a range of risks that could impact the implementation of this strategic plan and accompanying pathway initiatives. These risks are internal, relating to how First Up currently operates and the ambitious goals the organization has set for itself, as well as external, relating to the many different stakeholders, partners, and financial challenges inherent in this work. First Up intends to mitigate these risks in the short term through forward planning, and, if a risk does become realized, it will use these contingency plans to ensure it does not derail achievement of First Up’s long-term strategic goals. The following plans were generated through analysis of conversations during the detailed planning process.



INTERNAL RISKS	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM
Risk	Mitigation Plans	Contingency Plans
<b>Lack of time to implement initiatives with integrity; people stretched with current commitments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the strategic plan responsibilities and current calendars to identify overlap and redundancy.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review with direct reports.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Review the plan to collapse and combine.</li> <li>Avoid the "tyranny of urgency."</li> <li>Communicate to the First Up team about priorities and strategic focus.</li> <li>The strategic plan is the center of the ecosystem/conversation.</li> <li>Convene six-month and annual meetings to realign and adjust our schedules.</li> <li>Utilize regular check-ins to monitor progress.</li> <li>Revise annual evaluations to align them with the strategic plan and organizational goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify inefficiencies in our work time, and see where we can limit/outsource work.</li> <li>Complete a full review of implementation goals, and identify what needs to take precedence.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reassign tasks and timelines with the purpose of meeting end goals.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Initiatives not achieving intended outcomes in the short term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect data and review what is occurring at regular intervals to see what is and what is not working.</li> <li>Have regular conversations to maintain accountability for successes and failures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review goals to see if they are truly realistic; reassign, if needed.</li> <li>Reevaluate activities to generate excitement around change and long-term priorities.</li> </ul>

INTERNAL RISKS	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM
Risk	Mitigation Plans	Contingency Plans
<p><b>(CONTINUED) Initiatives not achieving intended outcomes in the short term</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain ongoing communication with others about the expected length of time to achieve goals to manage expectations.</li> <li>Keep the strategic plan and its priorities at the center of conversations.</li> <li>Revise annual evaluations to align them with the strategic plan and organizational goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reevaluate priorities to ensure consistency and outcomes.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjust or stay the course.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenging cross-team communications, exacerbated by a hybrid environment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule intentional manager meetings to discuss cross-team work.</li> <li>Schedule cross-team peer conversations/meetings about the strategic plan to generate interaction and purpose.</li> <li>Determine what is not working; utilize a continuous feedback loop to hear what is not working and what kinds of communication are best to use in person and virtually.</li> <li>Intentionally prepare for each meeting with a schedule for early review of agenda items.</li> <li>Assess the value of our regular communication structures and who is accessing them and why.</li> <li>Regularly review the organization dashboard in SLT and manager meetings.</li> <li>Implement initiative 3.4.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add time to all-staff meetings to create regular pathway check-ins; everyone must be in one of the pathway meetings.</li> <li>Structure collaboration time (either in person or remote) to limit hybrid inefficiencies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hiring and onboarding the right people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current hiring practices and identify questions, evaluation process, etc. that give First Up the greatest lens into candidates, including their strategic plan skill set and competencies.</li> <li>Identify and continue to utilize the pool of the most successful First Up candidates.</li> <li>Utilize the interview process to review strategic plan tasks that may be assigned to new hires.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the publicity for open positions.</li> <li>Create less restrictive application processes.</li> </ul>



INTERNAL RISKS	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM
Risk	Mitigation Plans	Contingency Plans
<b>Insufficient resource (human, financial) allocation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure clarity regarding competencies in postings and interviews.</li> <li>• Audit completed plan for new roles and resources needed to fulfill the plan and allocate for future budgets</li> <li>• Check in quarterly on constraints to fulfilling the plan</li> </ul>	re-evaluate priorities and adjust

EXTERNAL RISKS	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM
Risk	Mitigation Plan	Contingency Plan
<b>Staffing shortages in the ECE ecosystem challenge program implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support career education opportunities.</li> <li>• Evaluate and share practices that maximize individuals capacity and lead to the highest level of retention.</li> <li>• Continue external communication, and manage expectations around the timeline.</li> <li>• Partner with other workforce organizations to collaborate.</li> <li>• Implement initiative 5.3.</li> </ul>	•
<b>Decrease in funding from philanthropic partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly evaluate funding sources and trends to better understand the shape of the philanthropic environment.</li> <li>• Identify any “rainy day” options in the budget in an effort to continue strategic progress.</li> <li>• Remain proactive, and stay ahead of the needs and wants of the ECE community.</li> <li>• Review the funding needs for strategic priorities as part of the monthly SLT check-ins and monthly <i>Elevate</i> calls.</li> <li>• Diversify funding streams.</li> </ul>	• Reevaluate strategic priorities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build value in First Up as an organization.</li> <li>• Actively market to and discuss our work with funders.</li> <li>• Extend our communicative reach.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Continued lack of investment/funding for the ECE environment/programming</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and continue to share financial efficiencies with partners in order to maximize their capacity.</li> <li>• Communicate that First Up is continuing to advocate for funding.</li> <li>• Maintain an understanding of the stress the ECE environment is experiencing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate our own strategic priorities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competitors limiting our impact/reach</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and map out our perceived partners and competitors to be aware of the relationship between the two.</li> <li>• Identify any overlap of initiatives with others in the ECE space delivering similar work.</li> <li>• Create space for collaboration.</li> <li>• Identify any overlap, and determine potential partnerships and/or where one can carry and one can step back.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realign our tactics in order to meet our desired objectives and outcomes.</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE

### VISION FOR IMPACT

---

In 2029, First Up is nationally recognized and sought out as a transformational leader in the field of early childhood education (ECE). We propel individual educators and families (caregivers and parents) into the next level of their development, where they are inspired and equipped to use new knowledge and tools to advance the future of the children in their care. ECE program leaders are agents and partners in promoting policy-level systems changes and quality improvements that elevate the field. ECE educators are compensated commensurately for their education, their experience, and the stakes of their profession, at least on par with their K-12 teaching counterparts.

The success of First Up relies upon our:

**ECE Programs & Families.** We prioritize programming that focuses on economically disadvantaged communities, families, and children who continue to be unserved through First Up's initiatives. We seek ways to ensure our services are accessible and attractive to our consumers. We expand First Up's reputation for excellence in programming that is culturally relevant and responsive, cutting edge, and asset focused and that meets the dreams of those we serve.


**Staff & Organizational Development.** Our staff are diverse, knowledgeable, highly trained, dedicated, and respected in the field. Our staff, board, organizational culture, and programming reflect and demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice. Using trauma-informed strategies, we foster a physically, emotionally, and socially safe workplace where lived experience and collaboration lead to internal and external opportunities for growth.


**Impact.** We relentlessly focus on impact. Our consumers are at the table with us as we collect and analyze data, distribute and communicate our learnings, and use evidence-based lessons to improve what we offer. We grow the power of our programs through innovative solutions that positively impact ECE program quality and that empower early childhood educators and families to effectively utilize the knowledge and skills they have acquired from First Up's offerings.

**Advocacy & Partnerships.** We are proactive and at the forefront of the issues. We are extraordinary storytellers who increase the number of advocates in the field who come from the ranks of the unheard. Policymakers seek us out to engage with them in setting policy, and ECE leaders seek us out for partnership and support.

**Workforce Development & Supports.** We actively seek out opportunities and resources to offer robust development opportunities to meet the needs of our field. We are tuned in to the needs and dreams of the professionals in our ECE ecosystem, and we stand ready to deliver the resources they need either directly or through facilitation or partnership/collaboration. Our innovative solutions and ongoing achievements create value and improve consumer expertise.


---

<p><b>Pathway 1</b></p>  <p><b>ECE Programs &amp; Families</b></p>	<p><b>1.1</b> Accessible &amp; Attractive Offerings</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Known &amp; Trusted ECE Leadership</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Framework That Guides Programming</p> <p><b>1.4</b> Aligned Processes &amp; Programs</p> <p><b>1.5</b> Supporting Consumer Sustainability &amp; Advancement</p>
---	--

<p><b>Pathway 2</b></p>  <p><b>Staff &amp; Organizational Development</b></p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Trauma Informed</p> <p><b>2.2</b> DEIB Centered (Externally &amp; Internally)</p> <p><b>2.3</b> Culturally Responsive Learning Organization</p> <p><b>2.4</b> Communication for Success</p>
--	---

<p><b>Pathway 3</b></p>  <p><b>Impact</b></p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Collaborative Development of Metrics</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Data Collection &amp; Analysis</p> <p><b>3.3</b> Innovation Based on Data</p> <p><b>3.4</b> Centering Clients' Stories</p>
--	---

<p><b>Pathway 4</b></p>  <p><b>Advocacy &amp; Partnerships</b></p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Amplifying ECE's Value</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Nurturing Advocates</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Influential Change Agent</p> <p><b>4.4</b> Leveraging Stakeholders</p> <p><b>4.5</b> Building a Unified Voice</p>
--	--

<p><b>Pathway 5</b></p>  <p><b>Workforce Development &amp; Supports</b></p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Collaborative Communities</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Programs That Prioritize the Underserved</p> <p><b>5.3</b> High School Pipeline</p> <p><b>5.4</b> Culturally Responsive Frameworks</p> <p><b>5.5</b> Maximizing Learning Through Technology</p>
--	---