

## ALLIANCE FOR EARLY SUCCESS'S CHILD CARE NEXT INITIATIVE'S

# Milestones for Collective Power

---

In 2021, the Alliance for Early Success invited Innovation Network to conduct an evaluation of the Planning Year for its [Child Care \(CC\) NEXT Initiative](#). This document summarizes findings about the important stages, elements, or “milestones” of collective power discussed by CC NEXT members and serves as a tool for reflection on how to understand coalitions’ efforts to build collective power in their states.

**Milestones for collective power emerged in the CC NEXT Planning Year evaluation as both goals members were working towards, as well as outcomes they had achieved that supported them to build power.** Milestones included both processes and outcomes. These are areas identified as important in the context of today’s political environment, where often parents and providers have not been part of policy solutions and coalitions are focused on including them. Not all members agree with the focus on milestones: at the CC NEXT Convening, one member shared that emphasis on milestones can prevent revolutionary thinking that can disrupt the child care system. These milestones are specific to CC NEXT members and are a starting point for understanding how members build collective power, and can track their progress in creating collective power.

We identified seven milestones across CC NEXT members, detailed further below:

1. Setting the table
2. Safety and trust across members
3. Cohesion
4. Financing
5. Directed by parents and providers
6. Advocacy progress
7. Impact for children and families

## MILESTONE

## QUOTE



## SETTING THE TABLE

States were intentional about the membership and leadership of their coalitions. Five states (CO, LA, NM, NY, VA) discussed a milestone of their coalition as **getting the right decisionmakers in place** to contribute to the group. Who those decisionmakers were varied: some emphasized bringing in community voices (VA, LA, NY), while NM emphasized bringing in a child care association whom they had previously had a contentious relationship with in the past.

At the CC NEXT Convening, participants emphasized how coalitions should be built intentionally, ideally **starting small with grassroots groups** when building collective power.

*The first big leap for us was bringing in a child care association...We recognized that while of their values and politics are different than ours, they do share a lot of the same interests*

- CC NEXT member in New Mexico



## SAFETY AND TRUST ACROSS MEMBERS

At the CC NEXT Convening, groups described the need for a **feeling of safety and trust** amongst the voices in the coalition, especially amongst the most impacted communities: parents and providers.

They mentioned the importance of creating a “culture of authenticity”: **spaces that allow for honest opinions and feedback**. These spaces may require “sitting with discomfort” and processes for accountability.

*Spoke about key piece of building power is people have trust in the process, there is a safe place to share your contribution. You go back to make sure people have been heard, listened to – that there is trust and transparency.*

- CC NEXT member during the Convening



## COHESION

Cohorts got on the same page about what is important, including shared values (LA, NY, OR), internal processes such as operating agreements (OR, VA), and policy agendas (CO, VA, NY, OR).

During the CC NEXT Convening, participants shared how members in a coalition have different roles. Those with positional power are able to leverage that power for those in the coalition without it.

*I don't think we would have been as coherent or determined in our asks if we hadn't determined our principles or goals. It was one of the best things that happened and everything followed from that.*

- CC NEXT member in New York



## FINANCING

States need funding and resources to form and strengthen their coalitions. Virginia lauded the funding and resources they receive from another funding partner, New Mexico lamented the lost time before they received funding from CC NEXT, and Colorado noted as a milestone meeting with funders to advocate for what they need.

Participants at the CC NEXT convening noted the importance of financing as well, particularly funds devoted to address barriers to participation. However, one small group also noted the importance of “recognizing not all resources are money.”

*I can't overstate the impact of resources provided by VA Early Childhood Foundation – they are a trusted partner with the state. We have access to research and resources.*

- CC NEXT member in Virginia



## DIRECTED BY PARENTS AND PROVIDERS

Participants at the CC NEXT Convening discussed the importance of **provider representation** and close **relationships with parents** to guide their work.

Participants discussed how the **inclusion** of these groups can require time, energy, and intentional practice at all levels, including translation, compensation, and direct services.

They also shared how they should see **increased engagement from parents and providers** over time, and that “impacted communities are demanding more and showing up.”

*When we thought about milestones we thought about what it looks like. We are not calling the shots anymore, those most impacted are. The decisionmaking table looks radically different. We don't need to usher people to meetings because they will already be there.*

- CC NEXT member during the Convening



## ADVOCACY PROGRESS

States are in coalition to make progress on child care issues, and when they see progress that is a notable milestone for them. States have seen increased engagement in the campaign (NY, VA), completed a cost of care study and had a big win in the short 2022 legislative session (\$90 million for childcare) (OR), received the governor's support for a bill (VA), and launched a “serious campaign” and “have come a long way” to educate elected officials and establish child care as a core issue (NY).

*We are reaching new milestones with engagement – each training more people are involved and some people come back to learn more.*

- CC NEXT member in Virginia



## IMPACT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

At the CC NEXT Convening, participants agreed that collective power should result in **real impact for children and families**.

*If things accomplished aren't making an impact you may not have the collective power you think you do.*

*- CC NEXT member during the Convening*

*For more information, please contact:*

**Alissa Marchant**

Interim Co-Director  
Innovation Network

[amarchant@innonet.org](mailto:amarchant@innonet.org)

**Jacinta 'Jacy' Montoya Price**

Senior Director of Advocacy and Issue Campaigns  
Alliance for Early Success

[jmontoyaprice@earlysuccess.org](mailto:jmontoyaprice@earlysuccess.org)