



**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**2020-2023**

# INTRODUCTION

ReadyKids provides essential resources for children and families in Central Virginia. Your organization values adaptability in providing these essential programs, which makes strategic planning a central part of envisioning and implementing the best programming for your community.

In 2019, The Spark Mill was hired to guide the organization in the development of its strategic plan. The project began with the Gather phase, gaining input and feedback from key stakeholders, staff, and board about the current and future state of community-oriented mental healthcare services and early education resources for the Charlottesville area's children and families.

## Information Gathering

As part of the strategic planning process consultants spoke with community members, conducted two surveys, and facilitated retreats for the board and staff in an iterative process to gather feedback, absorb the feedback, and plot a visionary future.

## Key Questions

The Spark Mill Team recorded key questions from ReadyKids and used these questions to guide inquiries with stakeholders and assessments of the data.

Questions that ReadyKids primarily identified as being most important to the organization's sense of direction were:

1. How aligned are programs with the people running them?
2. What is our reputation in the community?
3. Who is not accessing our services and why not?
4. What is the role of cultural competence in our work?
5. Who are we when we compare the community vision with our own?
6. What other supports are already in place that we can partner and work with to overcome barriers?
7. How do we position ourselves to be in the right conversations early on?

## Stakeholder Overview

The Spark Mill gathered data from approximately 300 people using one-on-one interviews, a stakeholder survey, participant surveys, and a retreat with the staff. TSM also reviewed internal documents, including previous strategic and financial documents, annual reports, and other important organizational data.

## Participant Survey

The participant survey was distributed by ReadyKids program directors via paper surveys, with translated copies in Spanish and Dari available. Fourteen participant surveys were collected over the span of around 4 weeks.



# Stakeholder Survey

The stakeholder survey was sent by The Spark Mill to community partners, donors, staff, board, volunteers, and a few participants. 237 individuals responded to some or all of the survey for a response rate of 19%, which is above average for an external survey. Below is a summary of the survey results.

## RESPONSES

Total: 237  
Response Rate: 19%



## DEMOGRAPHICS

48% Community Partner / 25% Donor / 18% Staff / 9% Board / 7% Participant / 4% Volunteer  
77% White / 10% PNTA / 8% Black / 3% Hispanic / 1% Asian / 1% Multiple / .4% Native  
79% lived in Charlottesville 6+ years / 10% did not live in the area

	NOT AT ALL	SOMEWHAT	MOSTLY	DEFINITELY
Do you have a clear understanding of what ReadyKids does?	0%	10%	41%	48%
Do you believe ReadyKids is valuable to the community?	0%	0%	10%	89%
When you mention ReadyKids to your friends, are they familiar with the organization?	11%	49%	30%	10%

**99%** VALUABLE TO THE COMMUNITY

## COMMUNITY GAPS & NEEDS



Counseling  
Early Education  
Family Support  
0-3

Older Kids & Teens  
Trauma Informed  
Parental Support  
Affordable Childcare

## IDEAS & OPPORTUNITIES



**Capacity** : desire for increased hours, increased staff, increased services  
**Collaboration** : the need is tremendous, desire for more comprehensive care  
**Diversity & Equity** : call to lead with equity, concern lack of diversity hinders this  
**Siloed Experience** : people only know what they know about you

# THEMES

## COMMUNITY RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING

Stakeholders offered invaluable insight into their views on ReadyKids' alignment with the needs, priorities, and self-perceptions of communities that are served by ReadyKids. There were several references to your visibility as an organization with an array of services for children and families. Many stakeholders recommended you adopt community-led practices of co-creation to help reduce barriers to knowledge of and access to your services.

## ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMMING

Stakeholders often lauded ReadyKids and shared the belief that the organization provides high-quality programming that meets an otherwise unmet regional need. As a result, they also expressed concern around the accessibility and capacity of ReadyKids with many pointing to waitlists as an example. Your stakeholders believe you are doing something necessary and important and would like more people, particularly those traditionally underserved, to be able to easily access your programs.

## REPUTATION & PERCEPTION

Throughout gather, data showed a shared uncertainty about the full scope of services offered with most people having a siloed understanding of what ReadyKids does. People who engage in or with a ReadyKids' program believe your work in that area is highly reputable. When stakeholders were asked about reputation and barriers to success, responses included a significant number of references to the racial makeup of the staff and board, lack of community engagement, and concerns about ReadyKids' ability to provide culturally competent care.

## LANDSCAPE CHANGES

ReadyKids has been around for a long time and has secured a very positive reputation based on the quality of services provided. Regional decision-makers and funders are prioritizing evidence that organizations are creating a more equitable world through their work by sustaining inequality-addressing best practices in their operations. Like ReadyKids, other nonprofits in the Charlottesville area are faced with what the administration of inclusive, equitable, community-centered work should look like for them. Stakeholders have shared feedback about how ReadyKids can think about this changing landscape.

## PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

As referenced earlier in the report, overwhelmingly stakeholders would love to see more from ReadyKids. They had a variety of opinions on exactly what “more” looks like – from providing existing services to more people to adding services ReadyKids doesn’t currently offer. Opportunities and growth areas were suggested around all three of your existing focus areas.

## DESIRE FOR COLLABORATION

This area directly connects to a few of the questions ReadyKids sought to answer through this strategic planning process. Depending on their role and relationship in the community, stakeholders identified a variety of gaps and opportunities in the Charlottesville area, while also acknowledging concern around duplication of services. As a result, many of your stakeholders saw communication, cooperation, and ultimately collaboration as a possible solution to having the greatest impact on the greatest number of people in the most effective and efficient way.

## INTERNAL CULTURE & STRUCTURE

At the outset of the strategic planning process, ReadyKids posed questions about sustainability and leadership structure. Some stakeholder feedback emphasized that ReadyKids needs structures in place to support a transition in vision—particularly in the areas of equitable hiring and programming—as well as in implementation.

# IMPACTS

Given all of the feedback reviewed from community members and internal stakeholders, ReadyKids has committed to two impact areas for this strategic plan. All goals and strategies are meant to work towards these areas of focus.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT: Kids and families will be able to access the programs they need when they need them.**

**COMMUNITY IMPACT: ReadyKids will have the capacity and skills to serve marginalized kids and their families in a culturally responsible and equity centered approach.**

**INTERNAL FOUNDATIONS OF SUCCESS: ReadyKids is fortified for continued impact for the kids and families that need their services**

The Strategic Plan is in effect from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023. The CARE Team and the board's Operations Committee will monitor the plan in conjunction with the staff and full board and update annually as needed.

# STRATEGIC PLAN

**IMPACT: Kids and families will be able to access the programs they need when they need them.**

1. Invest in deep community engagement through relationship and trust building
  - 1.1 Increase community engagement activities through the hiring of an outreach coordinator (FY22)
  - 1.2 Conduct strategic community outreach (FY22)
  - 1.3 Establish ReadyKids community engagement best practices (FY22)
  - 1.4 Develop deep community listening practices to assess community needs (FY21)
2. Assess and implement solutions for the current gaps and barriers to receiving services
  - 2.1 Expand innovative solutions and strategies to decrease wait time for services (FY21)
  - 2.2 Consider alternate hours and modes of delivery for key services (FY21)
  - 2.3 Research the option of deploying some services in community-based locations in order to reduce barriers to participation (FY23)
  - 2.4 Invest in increased translation services (FY22)
3. Work with our broader community to advocate for the needs of children and families in our region in order to increase resources for them from partners and the community
  - 3.1 Continue to be a thought leader within the community on the needs of children and families (FY21)
  - 3.2 Engage community members and leaders in the co-development of position statements geared towards positive policy actions (FY22)
  - 3.3 Empower families with the tools necessary for self-advocacy through partnerships and support for client families (FY22)

**IMPACT: ReadyKids will have the capacity and skills to serve marginalized kids and their families in a culturally responsible and equity centered approach.**

4. Formalize internal pillars that sustainably support ReadyKid's overarching commitment to equity
  - 4.1 Engage external support in the assessment and development of a ReadyKids approach to equity (FY21)
  - 4.2 Develop human resources tools and procedures that create a more inclusive environment for staff members from diverse backgrounds (FY21)

- 4.3 Strengthen the retention and recruitment efforts of staff members from diverse backgrounds (FY21)
- 4.4 Build a board membership that is more reflective of the lived experience of communities served (FY21)
- 5. Advance the principle of Cultural Humility in all parts of the organization
  - 5.1 Invest in ongoing training and education for staff and board (FY21)
  - 5.2 Assess the organization's assets for cultural humility, including building, messaging, and internal processes (FY22)
  - 5.3 Review and adapt outcome and metrics collection to ensure an equity approach to success while maintaining strong data (FY23)

**FOUNDATIONS OF SUCCESS: ReadyKids is fortified for continued impact for the kids and families that need their services**

- 6. Build a sustainable future through innovative philanthropy mechanisms in order to support the strategic work (FY21)
- 7. Review financial and budgeting principles to ensure investment of extra resources is directed to reducing barriers for families and children in need (FY21)
- 8. Craft a robust administrative and operational support structure in order to deploy efficient and effective services (FY21)

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## Strategic Planning Team Members

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Sarah McLean  
Rich Schragger  
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## The Spark Mill Support

Sarah Milston  
Lindsey O-Pries  
Courtney Layman

## One-On-One Interviews

Glenda Best	Albemarle Department of Social Services
Eboni Bugg	Charlottesville Area Community Foundation
Dylan Cope	Boys and Girls Club of Central Virginia
Harold Folley	Legal Aid Justice Center
Claudette Grant	Piedmont Housing Alliance
Holly Hatcher	Hatcher Consulting
Jon Nafziger	Child Health Partnership
Christine Nardi	The Center for Nonprofit Excellence
Sara Robinson	Region Ten
Nikuyah Walker	Mayor of Charlottesville
Nathan Walton	Abundant Life Ministries