



Early Child Development Toolkit: Case Study #1, Organizational Case Statement

This document is an organizational case statement, used to describe the organization to potential donors, participants and the larger community. This case study looks at the document before and after implementing reframing recommendations, and illustrates the importance of using values and simplifying models to explain the need for a program.

BEFORE (Opening Paragraph):

The Children's Service Alliance (CSA) represents a unique collaboration of strong community leaders in Spartanburg, South Carolina, who share a vested interest in the education, health and wellness of the area's youth between the ages of birth and 21 years. This collaborative effort has now been formalized through the implementation of a new non-profit group which was officially approved by the state of South Carolina on January 1, 2008. Member organizations of CSA are: Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, Spartanburg County First Steps, United Way of the Piedmont, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Spartanburg School District Six, Department of Mental Health, University of South Carolina Upstate, Wofford College, Converse College, Spartanburg Community College and Sherman College. The formation of the CSA is a direct result of the Early Education Learning Lab Feasibility Study, funded by the Mary Black Foundation of Spartanburg and conducted by Spartanburg County First Steps. This study focused on the possibility of creating a center that would provide best education practices in instruction and learning for children birth to age six and the professionals who serve them, particularly local early childhood education providers.

Analysis:

The opening of the original document is descriptive of the collaboration, but doesn't frame the issue of early child development so that the reader understands the importance of the organization's work. In the revised text, the addition of a value (future prosperity) and simplifying model (brain architecture) places the organizational description in context.

AFTER REFRAMING (Opening Paragraph):

Spartanburg's future prosperity depends on the ability to produce strong, healthy children who will lead the community tomorrow. If solid, responsible citizens are expected, there must be a substantial investment into our children and youth today. The latest science says the best way to do this is to provide children with enriching

experiences and adequate health care services. These two elements literally impact the architecture of a maturing brain.

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BEFORE (second paragraph)

The formation of the very Alliance itself is recognition that various discrete disciplines can maximize their impact when working together as a team. Education, public health, behavioral health, early childhood development, diagnostic services, pediatric specialties and a host of other disciplines increase the prospect of working together when they co-locate. The benefits of shared records, joint scheduling, interdisciplinary services and shared resources can best be achieved when an environment is shared as well. The benefits for families which flow from such "one-stop shopping" are obvious.

Analysis:

Once again, this paragraph is descriptive of how the organization works across disciplines and issues, but makes the mistake of assuming the benefits are obvious to the reader (even going so far as to state this directly.) FrameWorks' research, however, shows that these connections must be *made* obvious to the audience. By starting with a sentence that incorporates the simplifying model of brain architecture and how it gets built, the reader is able to draw the conclusion that a multidisciplinary approach makes perfect sense.

AFTER REFRAMING (subsequent paragraphs)

Science confirms that paying attention to young children's emotional and social needs, as well as to their mastery of literacy and cognitive skills, has the maximum impact on human development. Because the brain is a highly integrated organ and its multiple functions operate in a richly coordinated fashion, focus must not be placed on developing one part of the child without paying equal attention to other capacities.

The formation of the Alliance is recognition that various discrete disciplines can maximize their impact on human and community development when working together as a team. This partnership of education, public health, behavioral health, early

childhood development, diagnostic services, pediatric specialties and a host of other disciplines increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their services when they co-locate. The benefits for families which flow from such “one-stop shopping” are obvious.

(Thanks to Ida Parris Thompson, Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System and the Children’s Service Alliance, for permission to use this example.)