

IdeaBook Summary



A NEW FUTURE FOR **ROCK COUNTY FAMILIES**

A call to action for Rock County systems change, created in partnership with parents in Beloit.

A project in collaboration with:





WHY THIS DOCUMENT EXISTS

The purpose of the IdeaBook is to share a community-driven version of keeping families safely together, and to reimagine a world where families are never separated by Child Protective Services (CPS). Here, you will find actionable ideas from the perspective of families in Rock County who have been negatively impacted by the system, that create a beloved community of support. It presents starting points for how Rock County Human Services, and CPS specifically, can become a resource for prevention and support, instead of family separation in times of trouble. It also offers a model for engaging and sharing power with families - by centering their expertise and creating change where they say they need it most. It is meant to serve as a guide for staff, system leaders, funders, and community-based providers to set in motion transformation within the local community, supported by systems change in Rock County.

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The following content has been summarized from the original 62-page IdeaBook, which details preparation for co-design work, family journeys in our idea “Village Network,” and our plan for digging into solutions.

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Project Context

A BROADER CHANGE EFFORT

In response to the 2018 federally legislated Family First Prevention and Services Act, ***the Rock Families First Movement was launched in 2021 with three primary goals.*** In partnership with Rock County CPS, Alia, and parents in Rock County, Rock Families First will continue to work to design a new way forward by empowering a community network to ultimately reduce the government's over-involvement in families. Rock Families First is starting with the children with the greatest need, learning what works, then scaling learnings to the remaining parts of the county. ***Our goal is to keep more children safely at home with their families.*** We believe this is possible by standing up community-led solutions so parents can get the help they need earlier.

(1)
Use a data
driven approach
in Child
Protective
Services

(2)
Safely reduce the
number of
children
removed from
their families

(3)
Engage with
families with
increased
satisfaction

THE OPPORTUNITY for change through co-design

The ultimate hope for our co-design work is that we create a future where, when families struggle, as all families inevitably might, they can get the support they need to stay safely together. Both the broader Rock County community and the Rock County Human Services Department (including CPS) have a critical role to play in realizing that hope.

In order to meet the opportunity for change, a broader systems lens was applied to the project - ***focusing beyond CPS to understand how a community-based approach, along with Rock County systems change, could help disrupt the overrepresentation.*** This means:

1. *Creating space for parents to speak to their vision, and take the lead on both internal and external initiatives.*
2. *Identifying where and how the Rock County system needs to shift within Human Services and CPS.*

Through the process, parents spoke to a need for community-led and community-owned support networks. ***Their vision is of a community-based “village” of support.***



Our Vision

“Nothing about us, without us.”

Our ‘Call to Action’ of the System, as parents of the community.

Welcome to...

Rock County



WE ARE THE MOVEMENT.
OUR PEOPLE ARE AMAZING,
BEAUTIFUL,
FULL OF RESILIENCE,
FULL OF SPIRIT,
AND CREATING CHANGE.

BUT WE NEED THE SYSTEM
TO CHANGE.

Over the course of 5 co-design workshops, county staff and families from the community who have been impacted by CPS, came together to image what could be, and to create starting points for bringing a shared vision to life.

That vision is to build a village that supports each other with care and compassion.

In this village, we anchor on:

- Pathways for prevention, stability, and growth made for us, by us.
- Compassion, care, and cultural understanding.
- Responding to what families say and need.
- Meaningful collaboration amongst everyone who cares for that child and family.
- Love. We amplify strength, joy, and possibility.



“We want to give our community the investment, intention, and care it deserves. It will take a village - parents, kids, teachers, social workers, administrators, mental health professionals - to make our community whole.”

A large, light teal number '5' is centered in the background of the page. The text 'RECOMMENDED IDEAS' is overlaid on the center of the '5'.

RECOMMENDED IDEAS

Our village comprises **4 key solution areas** that collectively house many community initiatives and systems change starting points for Rock County.



Building a Community-Led Peer Response

Community: Empower a **Village Network** of community-based experts and peers (including neighbors, friends, and chosen family) that parents can voluntarily access as their primary source of support. This network of support can build from existing opportunities such as parent groups and community organizational support.

System: Train staff at intake to ask parents about their needs first, and provide guidance and education to community members who report most (law enforcement, teachers, medical providers, etc.), on how to support families before reporting. Convert investigation roles into family support roles, and root roles in trauma-responsive and cultural relevance training.

Creating Stability and Mobility for Families

Community: Work with the Village Network roles trained to navigate and improve access to supports that address both short-term needs and long-term growth for families. Improve access to resources (counseling, housing, financial help, respite, etc.), so families have the ability to take advantage of capacity-building resources, such as education and job training in the long-term.

System: Building partnerships with resource providers. Family Supporters can help Community Coaches and Peers connect parents to vetted resources; and co-build plans of support that center their personal strengths and goals. Explore ways to help families who have been impacted by past CPS interactions, by offering a means of healing and resources to help them “catch up” socially and economically.

Providing a One-Stop-Shop Place for Support

Community: Partner with a physical center that parents can come to before or during crisis for judgment-free, holistic support. A space designed intentionally with parent experience and access in mind, and where families can go to for support without fear of being reported to CPS. A one-stop-shop staffed and supported by the Village Network, where parents can tap into the resource network, seek temporary care for their kids, and de-escalating or preventing crisis.

System: Partnering with local resource centers and providing the tools and resources to support parent needs. Explore ways to offer supports that ensure family safety without the need for surveillance during times of crisis. Working regularly with community-led peer networks to understand what would help parents to address crisis.

Building Community Awareness Through Outreach

Community: Build awareness on how to support parents by educating the community. Share parent success stories in local media outlets and in places parents gather, such as churches and schools. Launch a marketing campaign with local partners centered on providing families support, and educating families on their own rights. Leverage Family Supporters rooted in the community to spread awareness.

System: Provide the content, funding and sponsorship support to local campaigns, as well as to community leaders to lead the outreach movement. Equip the community support team and family support supporters to help get the word out.

“

TRUST THE PROGRESS

“

Parent Co-Designer

We have our ideas and solutions.
We have tangible starting points.

We know the possibility of what
awaits on the other side.

Now is the moment to keep moving.

**Will you join us? We can talk about how
we plan to actualize these solutions, and
how *YOU* can help support
Rock Families First!**

