Mission

Building language and relationships through play.
The belief that every parent has the ability to improve their child’s future fuels our mission to strengthen families. Play Smart Literacy empowers parents and caregivers by bringing awareness to the connection between talk, play and child development. With an understanding of these powerful connections, we work to support abilities and build the skills needed to recognize, create and engage in opportunities for playful adult-child conversations every day.

Play Smart Literacy focuses on families and young children (birth - age 5) living in Chicago's underserved communities. We strive to empower adults to ensure that children enter kindergarten ready to achieve. To do this, Play Smart increases knowledge about the positive impacts of play and adult-child conversations on early childhood development. Knowledge alone is not enough. That's why Play Smart also supports adults in developing skills and forming habits that create positive environments rich with opportunities for talk and play.

YOUNG CHILDREN FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TALK PLAY SUCCESS

Vision

Through strong, positive adult-child experiences, every child will be emotionally and cognitively prepared to succeed in kindergarten and in life.
Play Smart Literacy envisions a world where families and early care-providers understand the connection between talk, play and healthy child development and see themselves as important teachers for their children, where positivity is viewed as a powerful tool for approaching both life and learning. Play Smart envisions a world where the significant adults in children's lives are able to see and act on the opportunities for learning present in everyday life. We believe positivity, play and talk are a recipe for forging strong adult-child relationships that move development forward. Play Smart Literacy envisions a world where socio-economic status does not limit a child’s chances to succeed and every child enters kindergarten emotionally and academically prepared to excel.

Guiding Principles

Cultivate a Positive Environment
We see positivity and joy as catalysts for change. When we recognize the good in ourselves, we can see it in others and this cultivates an environment for growth and change.

Empower Others
We believe in social justice. When knowledge, support and resources are accessible to everyone, there is equal opportunity, and the power to make change.
**Respect Efforts**  
More often than not, people are doing the best they can within the context of their life circumstances. We begin with respect for and acknowledgement of these efforts and offer resources and guidance to boost confidence and renew hope that leads people to strive for more.

**Foster Connections**  
The human spirit - the idea that all humans are connected through inherent strengths and common struggles guides our belief that working collectively is the best way to bring about change.

Through strong, positive adult-child experiences, every child will be emotionally and cognitively prepared to succeed in kindergarten and in life.  
Play Smart Literacy envisions a world where socio-economic status does not determine a child's chances to succeed. We envision a world where positivity is viewed as powerful tool for approaching both life and learning; where all families and early care-providers understand the connection between talk, play and healthy child development and see themselves as important teachers for their children. Play Smart envisions a world where the significant adults in children's
lives are able to see and act on the opportunities for learning present in everyday life. We believe positivity, play and talk are a recipe for forging strong adult-child relationships that move development forward. Play Smart Literacy envisions a world where every child enters kindergarten emotionally and academically prepared for success.

OR

I like the vision below much better! My thought after reading the one above was that I wish the socio-Econ part was not first. I like how you start w the positivity and then it unfolds. Stacey-this is awesome!!

Through strong, positive adult-child experiences, every child will be emotionally and cognitively prepared to succeed in kindergarten and in life.
Play Smart Literacy envisions a world where positivity is viewed as a powerful tool for approaching both life and learning; where all families and early care-providers understand the connection between talk, play and healthy child development and see themselves as important teachers for their children. Play Smart envisions a world where the significant adults in children’s lives are able to see and act on the opportunities for learning present in everyday life. We believe positivity, play and talk are a recipe for forging strong adult-child relationships that move development forward. Play Smart Literacy envisions a world where socio-economic status does not limit a child’s chances to succeed and every child enters kindergarten emotionally and academically prepared to excel.

Values:
The core beliefs of the org that inspire and guide its choices in the way it operated and deals with people. Values should be embedded in both mission and vision and part of all internal and external communications.

What are our values? Seems like most orgs have 3 to 4 values
I haven’t gotten very far yet… this is much harder than the mission and value statements. I could really use your feedback on what I have so far to help me move forward.

Values/Guiding Principles Ideas:

1. Cultivate a Positive Environment
We believe positivity, joy and happiness are catalysts for change. When we recognize the good in ourselves, we can see it in others and this cultivates a positive environment that opens opportunities for growth and change.

OR
We believe positivity, joy and happiness are catalysts for change. When we recognize the good in ourselves, we can see it in others and this cultivates opportunities for growth and change.

OR
We believe positivity, joy and happiness are catalysts for change. When we recognize the good in ourselves, we can see it in others and this cultivates an environment for growth and change.

I love the third (last one ) the best -above

2. Empower Others
We believe in social justice. When knowledge, support and resources are accessible to everyone, so is the power to make change and the opportunity for success.

I think there should be something here about how support and resources ought to be equitable and or accessible for all children and people.

3. Foster Connections
We believe in the human spirit - the idea that all humans are connected through inherent strengths and common struggles. With this belief in mind, we feel working collectively is the best way to bring about change.

4. Respect efforts
More often than not, people are doing the best they can within the context of life circumstances. We believe respect for and acknowledgement of these efforts can boost feelings of competence, build capacity to persevere and lead people to strive for more.

OR

More often than not, people are doing the best they can within the context of their life circumstances. We believe respect for and acknowledgement of these efforts can boost confidence, renew hope and build capacity to persevere.

Awesome. I think put strengths first

4. Strengthen Relationships
Adult-child High-quality early ed experiences

5. Build Language
for connection and self-expression, healing

Don’t think we need these 2, they’re in the mission

Vision:
The guiding image of success for the org, highlighting its hopes and ambitions for the future. Part emotional – to inspire others to imaging a better future, part rational – presenting a view of the future that everyone can believe in.
Should answer:

- What does success look like for our org?
- How will the world be different if we succeed in our mission?
- What makes our org unique?

They will value learning together, find joy in spending time with them and forge strong connections, they will value in have the knowledge and skills necessary to help their children start Kindergarten ready to achieve.

Stacey- these ideas all seem appropriate- just very teachers to me. If the vision statement is meant to inspire, my first concern or hope is that families find more joy in each other as they build language and relationships through play. My hope is that they spend the first 4-5 years before kids enter elementary school learning together- using that time as an opportunity to talk and play every day, becoming closer one playful conversation at a time, using resources and the world around them to create high quality learning experiences out of the every day.

Want families to learn happiness and positivity is a skill and powerful approach not only to learning but also to living.

We do want every child to be ready emotionally and cognitively to learn everything they need to in Kindergarten, in a more formalized group setting

We also want families to gain a sense of development- and a growth mind set...so they develop an educational and growth path for their family and child and seek continued involvement and new resources or great ed environments to boost their child’s learning as much as possible

Revised Vision statement Ideas:

1. All families and early care-providers will understand the connection between talk, play and healthy child development and view happiness and positivity as powerful skills that can be used to approach both life and learning. The significant adults in children’s lives will see themselves as the most important teachers for their children and use the world around them to create high-quality learning experiences for their children every day. Through strong, positive adult-child relationships, every child will be emotionally and cognitively prepared to succeed in kindergarten and in life.

2. Through strong, positive adult-child relationships, every child will be emotionally and cognitively prepared to succeed in kindergarten and in life.

3. Play Smart Literacy envisions a world where happiness and positivity are viewed as powerful skills to approach both life and learning; where all families and early care-providers understand the connection between talk, play and healthy child development and see themselves as important teachers for their children. We envision a world where the significant adults in children’s lives are able to see and act on the
opportunities for learning present in everyday life. We believe positivity, play and talk are a recipe for forging strong adult-child relationships that move development forward. Play Smart Literacy envisions a world where every child enters kindergarten emotionally and academically prepared for success.

4. Through strong, positive adult-child relationships, every child will be emotionally and cognitively prepared to succeed in kindergarten and in life.

All families and early care-providers will understand the connection between talk, play and healthy child development and view happiness and positivity as powerful skills for approaching both life and learning. The significant adults in children’s lives will see themselves as the most important teachers for their children and use the world around them to create high-quality learning experiences every day. Through strong, positive adult-child relationships, every child will enter kindergarten emotionally and cognitively prepared to succeed.

Through strong, positive adult-child relationships or experiences, every child will be emotionally and cognitively prepared to succeed in kindergarten and in life.

Play Smart Literacy envisions a world where happiness and positivity are viewed as powerful skills to approach both life and learning; where all families and early care-providers understand the connection between talk, play and healthy child development and see themselves as important teachers for their children. We envision a world where the significant adults in children’s lives are able to see and act on the opportunities for learning present in everyday life. We believe positivity, play and talk are a recipe for forging strong adult-child relationships that move development forward. Play
Smart Literacy envisions a world where every child enters kindergarten emotionally and academically prepared for success.

Add in something about working to eliminate Poverty/cycle of poverty

Families can transcend the conditions of poverty

The vision- number 3 really stood out for me. I love it.
- the only thing you might want to add to vision that I only thought of yest as an important part of our values- would be we have a strong value for social justice - (compassion and spirituality but we prob dont want to say that) we want to connect w others, and help fight poverty by using the strengths inherent in all of us, plus technology and resources.
- i went to a workshop years ago by a group whose mission byline was using technology to fight poverty. They taught nonprofits to use their phones to make their own mini movies