



WHAT COULD SUCCESS LOOK LIKE IN YOUR CHURCH?

Having a clear picture of what you want is essential for you, your team and your church.

Becoming a First Thousand Days (FTD)-friendly church is a journey, with multiple destinations along the way that give us a chance to stop, reflect, review and adapt/modify/improve.

THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

For you and your team to be in a strong position to grow a church environment that supports, connects with and empowers parents and caregivers, there are key foundations that need to be in place.

As a leader and Champion, your own personal growth is important. As with any area of ministry, there are times when things go well and times when you may be frustrated by what is happening. You need to have a heart that is patient, willing to learn from others, committed to the big picture, ready to ask for help and a deep sense of dependence upon God.

Prayer is a crucial part of this ministry. Prayer demonstrates our need for God to intervene and do the things that we ourselves cannot do. Teams need His guidance, His wisdom, His leading, His strength and His empowering. Pray with families, your leaders and your team.

An honest examination of your church practices will help to identify blind spots. There may be practices, beliefs, prejudices or attitudes that discourage families, moms or caregivers. This can be difficult to recognize but is essential for creating a community that welcomes and embraces families.

You will need to be willing and able to have constructive conversations with leadership. There may be a need to challenge leaders regarding practices – both current ones and those you want to introduce. Skillfully raising and addressing these will set you up for success.

Grow a team. You cannot do everything within the church, you need a group of people who can meet the needs and take the opportunities that arise. See resources in this toolkit to know who and how to grow your team.

Have a plan in place. Knowing where you are going is essential for you, your team and your pastor. Write it down – whether it is for 18 months or 5 years – it will help you know what steps to take next.

A PICTURE OF SUCCESS

Your pastor is speaking out about FTD, the issues that impact children in the FTD, and the role of the local church.

Equip your pastor with knowledge around FTD; regularly check Sikunye's website for resources to give your pastor to guide their talks/sermons (e.g. baby dedication script, sermon scripts). At the same time, make sure you are raising your awareness to speak up on FTD topics.

Congregants are creating a warm and welcoming space for families.

Create opportunities for your congregation to meaningfully engage with the FTD in your church with appropriate tools (e.g. lifestyle guide, devotional etc.) Be sure to challenge the preconceptions and prejudices within your church to ensure that all families feel seen, welcomed and cared for; whilst encouraging congregants to form loving connections with families as they enter your space.

Your church is praying for families in the FTD.

Identify families to include in prayer meetings and bring FTD related prayer items to your group meetings. As FTD team, you're your pastor, make it a regular routine to pray together and seek God's will on what you should be doing and when; who to include etc.



Congregants are surrounding families with love, support and care.

Set up ways to identify and surround families in the FTD of life: such as when babies are born, make a meal roster; contact moms to see how they are; engage and support dads; suggest ways small groups can support new families etc.

Your church connects with other churches and services in your community.

Be sure to continue exploring what other churches and service providers are doing in your neighbourhood, whilst looking at ways to collaborate and work together – stand together for the FTD and with a united front you will ensure that all families are supported and no child is left behind.

Equip and prepare parents.

Explore which training would suit you in this season. Identify and recruit congregants to attend Sikunye trainings in [home-visiting](#), [book-sharing](#), and Flourish [ante- and postnatal](#) training. Keep up to date via the website.

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