


# Breaking the Cycle of Poverty: Using a Whole Family Approach to Build Social & Economic Mobility



Vermont Community Action Partnership  
March 30, 2023

# The Promise Of Community Action

*Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.*



# Who Is In The Room (Program Areas)?

- Head Start
- CSBG
- Work Force
- Housing
- Food and Nutrition
- Other Programs

# Objectives

- Highlight how a Whole Family Approach framework can accelerate families' social & economic mobility
- Highlight resources to support the design & implementation of a Whole Family Approach framework

# Complex Challenges Require Comprehensive Solutions



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urU-a\\_Fs5Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urU-a_Fs5Y)

# Why Are We Here Today?

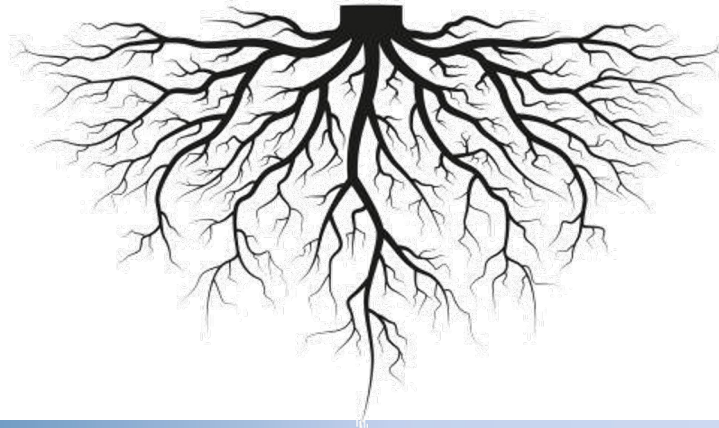
Community Action believes in the promise that **every family** should have access to the opportunity for success

# Strong Roots: Community Action

The Community Action Network has had boots-on-the ground in fighting poverty for low-income children and families in local communities since 1964 when the **Economic Opportunity Act** was ratified.

The Economic Opportunity Act was a policy aimed to "eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity".

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# Economic Opportunity Act of 1964

To mobilize the human and financial resources of the Nation to combat poverty in the United States. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. That this Act may be cited as the "*Economic Opportunity Act of 1964*".

## FINDINGS AND DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

SEC. 2. ...The United States can achieve its full **economic and social potential** as a nation only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of his capabilities and to participate in the workings of our society. It is, therefore, the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation...



# The Mission of the CAA

The EOA defined the purpose of a CAA:

...to stimulate a **better focusing of all available local, State, private, and Federal resources** upon the goal of enabling low-income families, and low-income individuals of all ages, in rural and urban areas, to attain the skills, knowledge, and motivation to secure the opportunities needed for them to become self-sufficient.

# What do we want to achieve?

- Stability
- Self Sufficiency
- School Readiness
- Stable Housing
- Utility Crisis Resolved
- Benefit Coordination
- Prosperity for All
- Social and Economic Mobility
- Health and Well-Being
- Flourishing
- Poverty Reduction

# What is your north star?

- Social and Economic Mobility
  - How do you define it? (Example PEW: The ability to move up or down the economic ladder within a lifetime or from one generation to the next)
  - What science and research are you using? What drivers, precursors, factors influence SEM?
- Health & Well-Being
  - How do you define it? (Physical & Mental Health, Meaning & Purpose, Evaluative Well-Being, Emotional Well-Being)

# SEM As Our North Star for WFA

- Breaking the cycle of poverty from one generation to the next
- Creating a legacy of well-being from one generation to the next

# What is Social and Economic Mobility?

**Social mobility** is the movement of individuals, families, and households between social strata. It relates to being valued in community and equitable, sustained access power and autonomy.

**Economic mobility** is the ability of an individual, family, or some other group to improve their economic status – usually measured in income, but also potentially including other assets and resources.

*-Kresge Foundation*



# Social & Economic Mobility Defined



# SEM Framework

## Economic success:

Having rising income and assets.

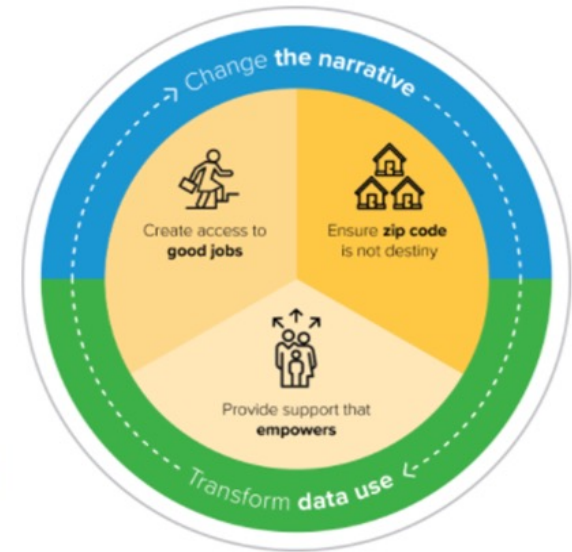
## Being valued in community:

Having control over one's life, the ability to make choices, and the collective capacity to influence larger policies and actions that affect one's future.

**Power and autonomy:** Feeling the respect, dignity, and sense of belonging that come from contributing to one's community.

Source: [U.S. Partnership on Mobility from Poverty](#)

- Change the narrative.
- Create access to good jobs.
- Ensure zip code is not destiny.
- Provide support that empowers.
- Transform data use.



# SEM Framework

## UPWARD MOBILITY PREDICTORS



### OPPORTUNITY-RICH & INCLUSIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

- Housing affordability
- Housing stability
- Economic inclusion
- Racial diversity
- Social capital
- Transportation access



### HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION

- Access to preschool
- Effective public education
- School economic diversity
- Preparation for college
- Digital access



### REWARDING WORK

- Employment opportunities
- Jobs paying living wages
- Opportunities for income
- Financial security
- Wealth-building opportunities



### HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT & ACCESS TO GOOD HEALTH CARE

- Access to health services
- Neonatal health
- Environmental quality
- Safety from trauma



### RESPONSIVE & JUST GOVERNANCE

- Political participation
- Descriptive representation
- Safety from crime
- Just policing

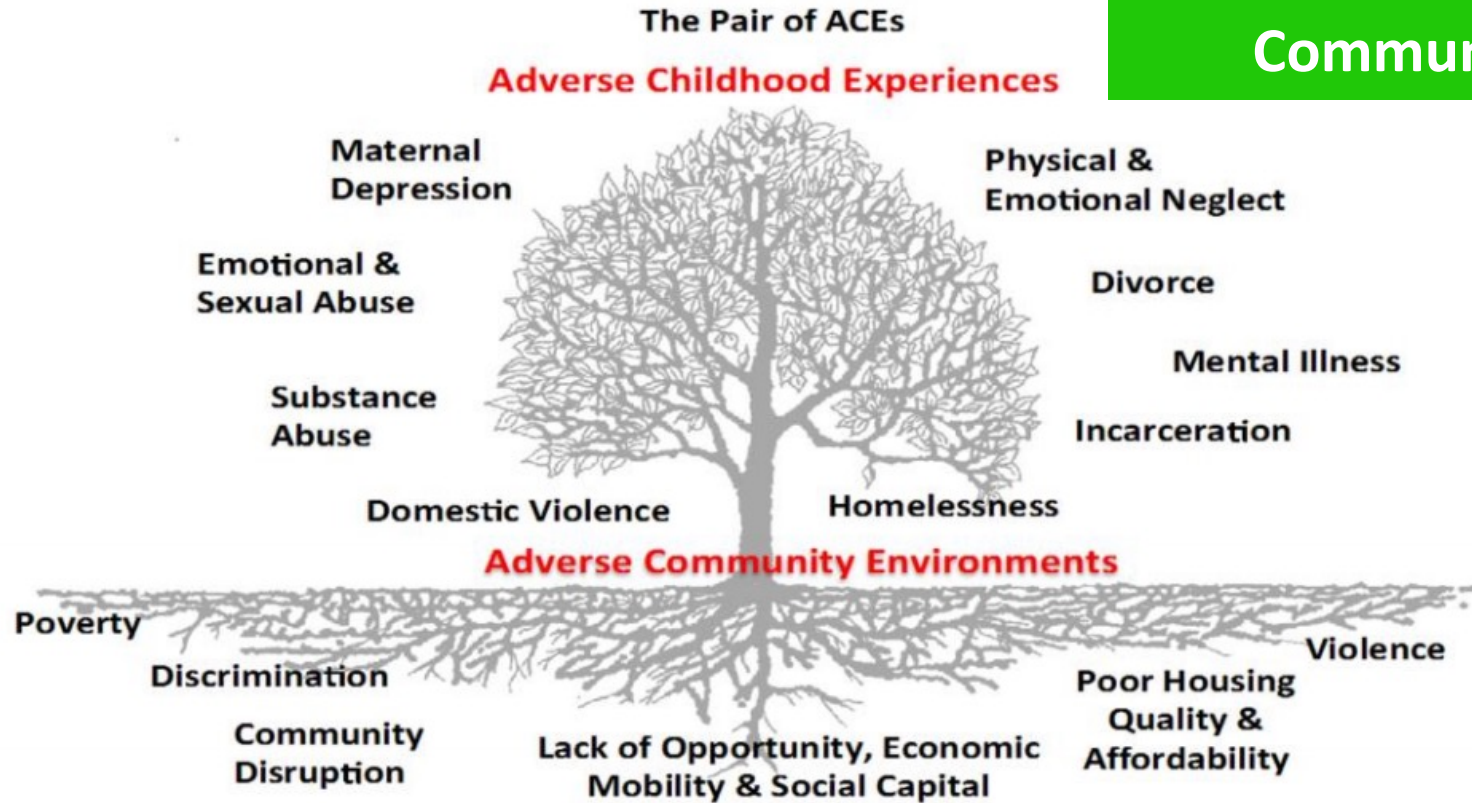
[Boosting Upward Mobility From Poverty](#), Urban Institute

[Evidence Resource Library](#), Urban Institute



# Environments and Experiences

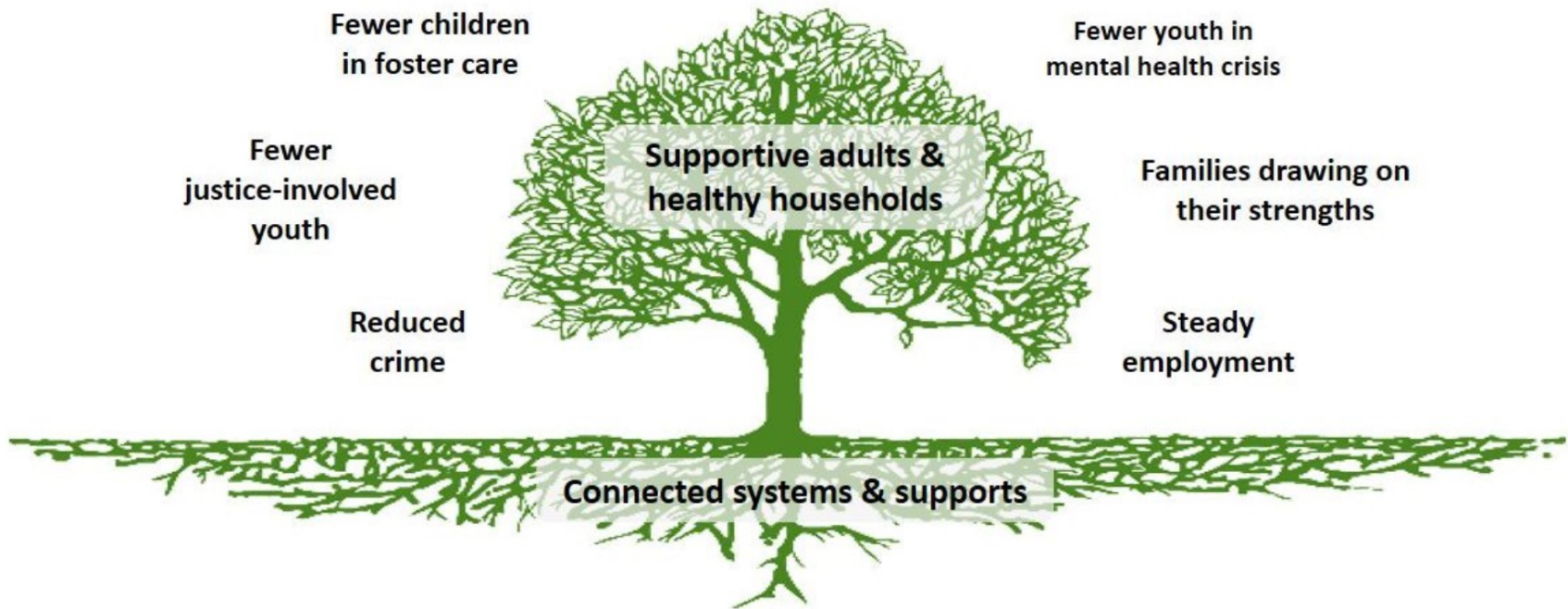
Individuals and  
Community



Ellis, W., Dietz, W. (2017) A New Framework for Addressing Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences: The Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model. *Academic Pediatrics*. 17 (2017) pp. S86-S93. DOI information: 10.1016/j.acap.2016.12.011

# Environments and Experiences

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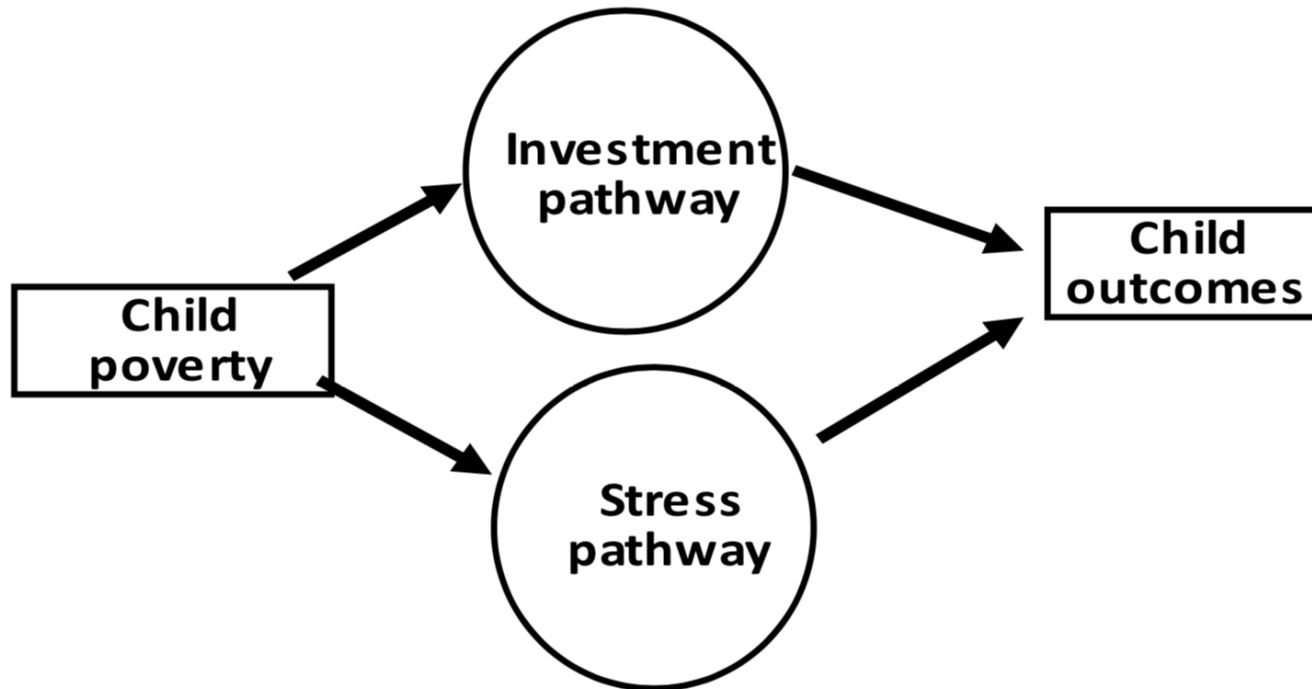
Source: Building Community Resilience Collaborative at the Redstone Center, George Washington University

# Child Poverty

“The committee concludes...the weight of the causal evidence does indeed indicate that income poverty itself causes negative child outcomes, especially when poverty occurs in early childhood or persists throughout a large portion of childhood.”

- *National Academy of Sciences, A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty*

# Child Poverty



**FIGURE 3-1** Hypothesized Pathways by Which Child Poverty Affects Child Outcomes.  
SOURCE: Created by the Committee on Building an Agenda to Reduce the Number of Children in Poverty by Half in 10 Years.



We must consider the importance of limiting the amount of time a child spends in poverty especially in their early childhood years.



# Reimagining Impact...

All this requires deeper engagement with families, being data-driven & person-centered, a deep grounding in equity (starting with racial equity), addressing other community factors, and a commitment to innovation.

# Whole Family Approach



Environments

Experiences



Early Childhood Development

Parents, Child,  
Family



Social Capital



WHERE THEY DREAM

# WHOLE



# LE

## FAMILY APPROACH



# How Much Do You Know about WFA?

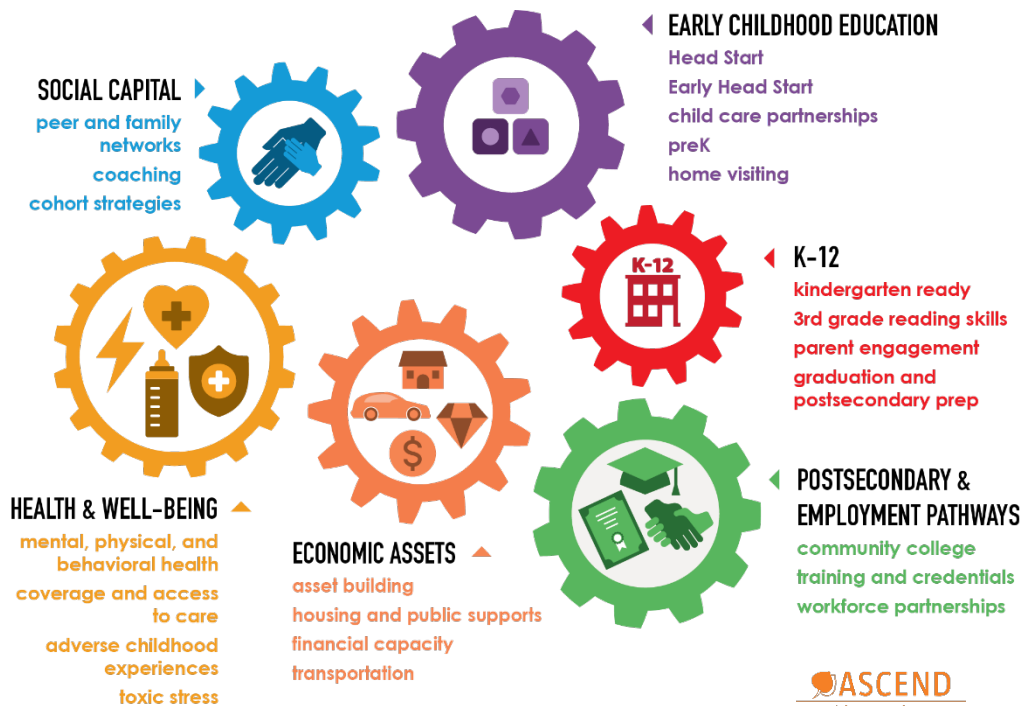
- I am very familiar.
- I am somewhat familiar.
- I am not familiar.
- Other

# Whole Family Approach Concepts

## THE 2GEN CONTINUUM



## 2GEN CORE COMPONENTS

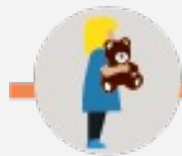


## HALLMARKS OF THE 2GEN/WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH

- Center on families
- Integrate services
- Remove barriers
- Incorporate coaching
- Develop partnerships
- Center in equity, starting with racial equity
- Measure parent, child, and family outcomes
- Apply science and evidence while continually improving
- Attend to core life skills for children and parents
- Incorporate strategies that build family resiliency (trauma-informed focus)
- Provide high-quality services
- Deliver services of sufficient intensity, duration, and dosage to enable families to achieve social and economic mobility

# Whole Family Approach Concepts

## THE 2GEN CONTINUUM



**CHILD-FOCUSED**



**CHILD-FOCUSED WITH PARENT ELEMENTS**

e.g., early childhood development, parenting skills, family literacy, and health screenings



**WHOLE FAMILY**



**PARENT-FOCUSED WITH CHILD ELEMENTS**

e.g., workforce programs, food and nutrition, and supports for student parents

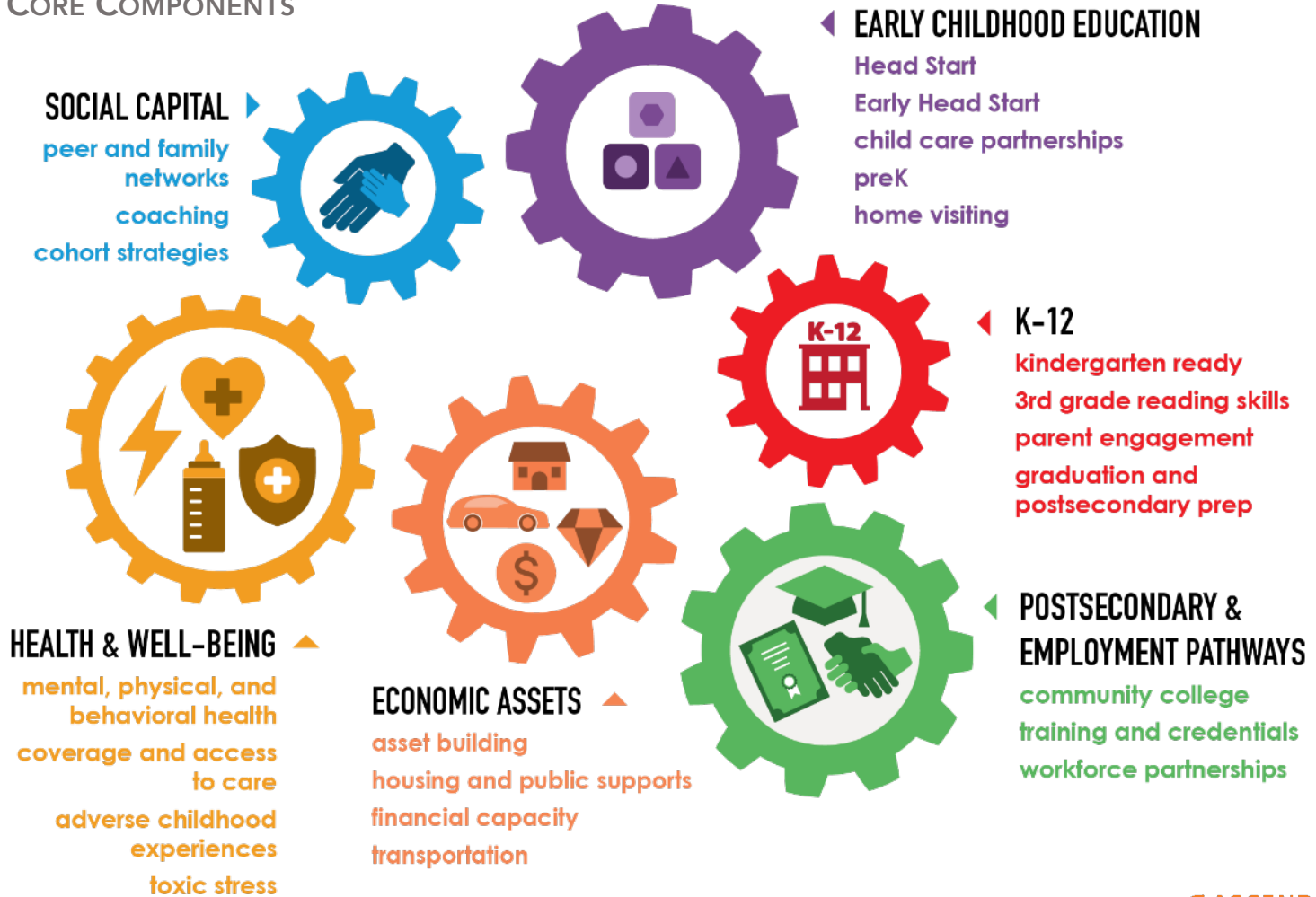


**PARENT-FOCUSED**

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# Whole Family Approach Concepts

## 2GEN CORE COMPONENTS

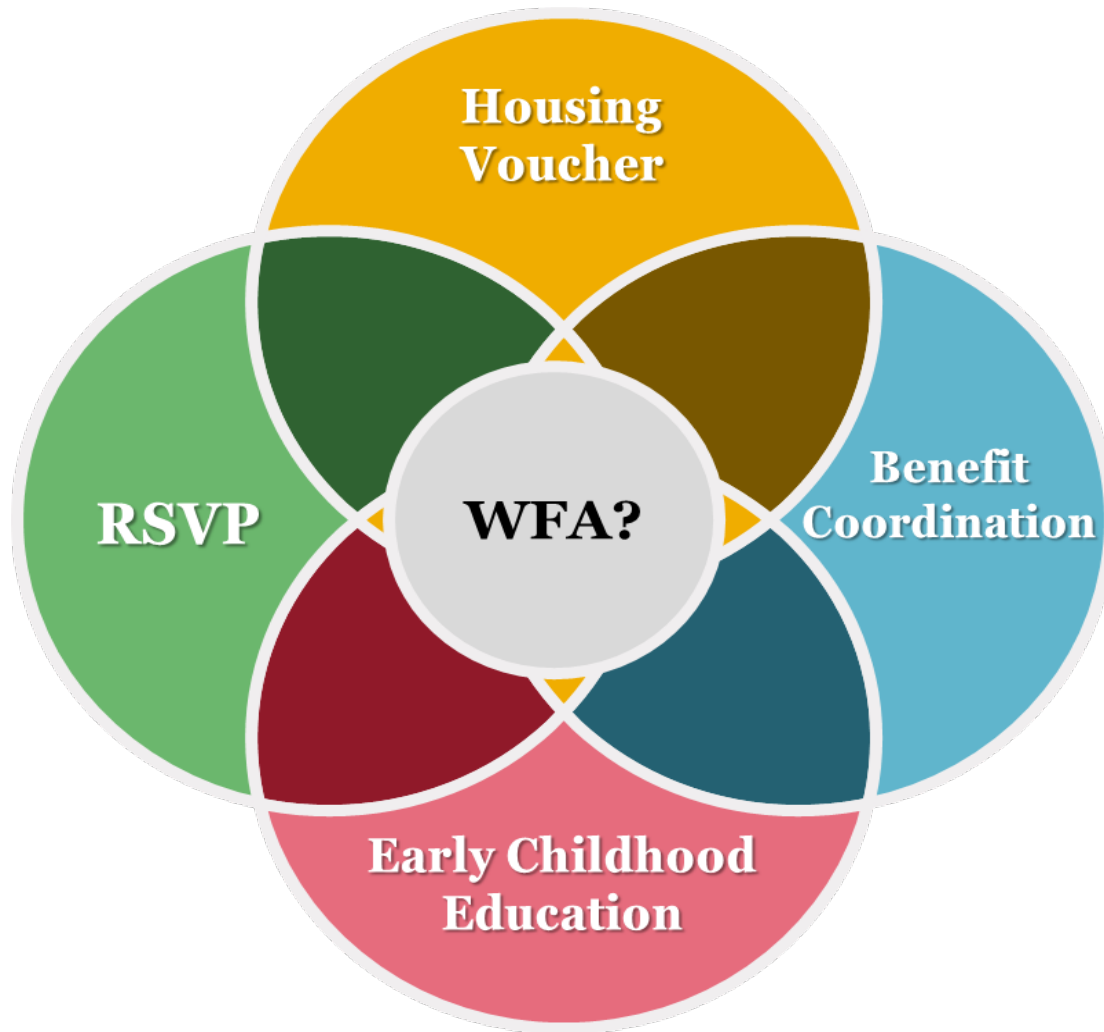


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# Whole Family Approach



# Whole Family Approach



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= Whole Family Approach?

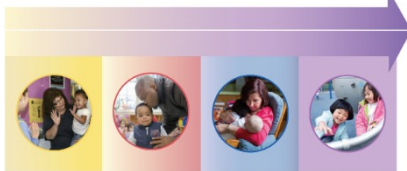


# Whole Family Approach Quiz

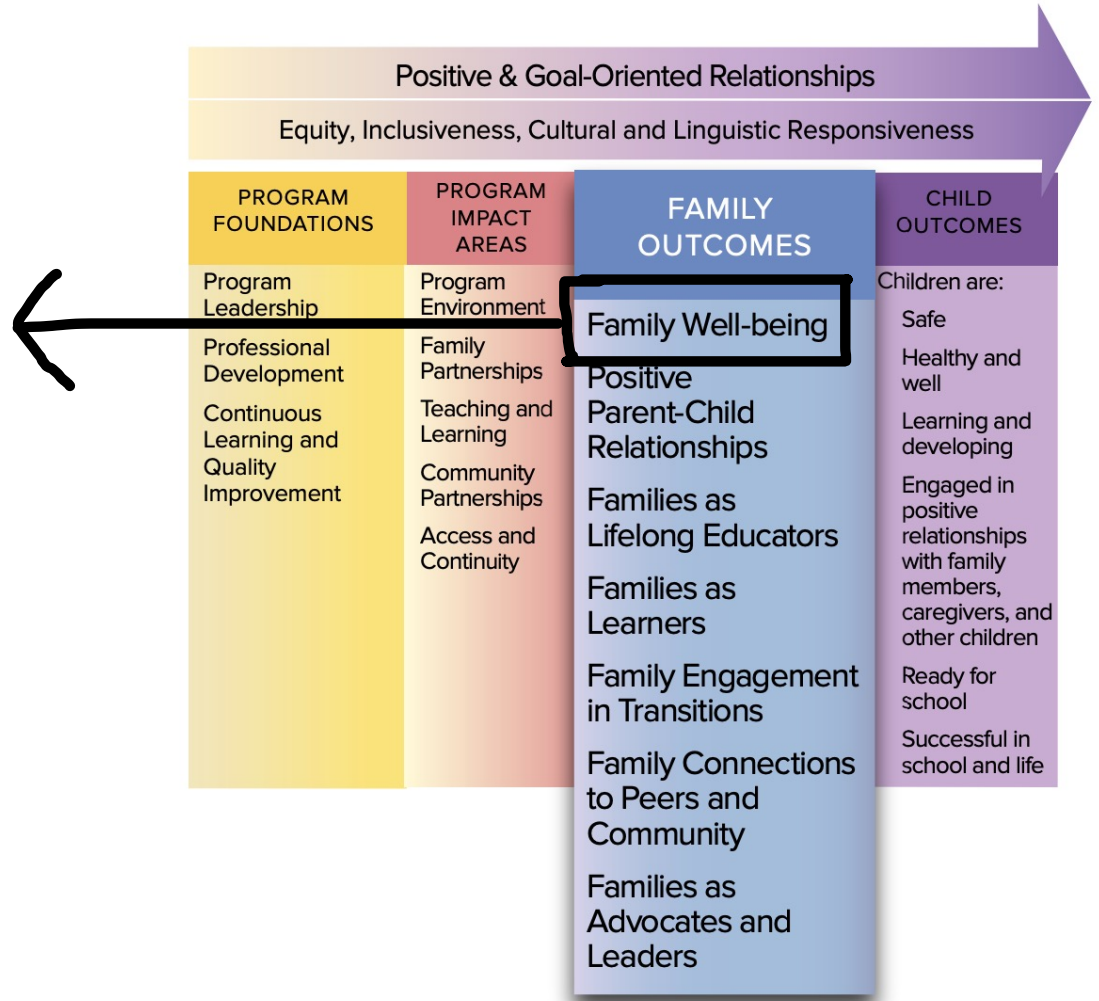
## Family Well-being

Families are safe, healthy, have opportunities for educational advancement and **economic mobility**, and have access to physical and mental health services, housing and food assistance, and other family support services.

Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework



2nd Edition





# North Star (SEM) Outcomes

## Parents

- Healthy Parents
- Family Supporting Employment

## Children/Youth

- Healthy Children
- Meeting Developmental Milestones

## Family

- Parents and children are engaged in family life
- Healthy relationship between parents and children
- Cycle of poverty is broken

## Community

- Families better connected and able to participate in civic life
- Community has an ecosystem of partners that work together to support young families and children

# Why a Whole Family Approach?

Research shows that supporting children and their caregivers together has an outsized impact **for generations.**



A college degree doubles a parent's income.



A \$3,000 increase during early childhood yields a 17% increase in adult earnings.



The brains of new parents undergo major changes.



Research demonstrates a 13% ROI in high quality early childhood education.



Parents with health insurance are more likely to seek care for their children.

# Where do we begin?

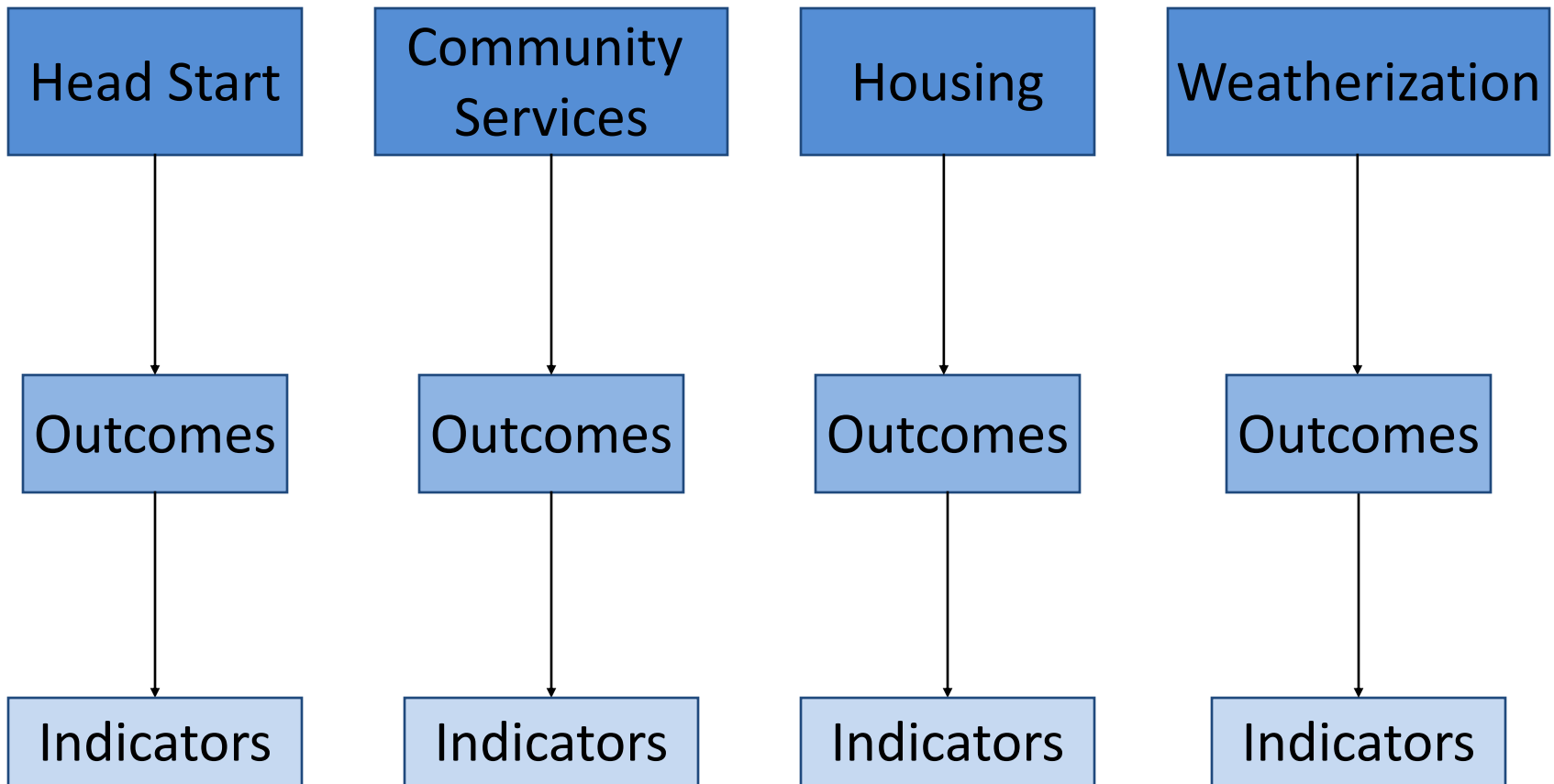
# CAA Lessons Learned

- Form a guiding coalition of folks up and down and across the organization to design WFA
- Develop a theory of change and logic model
- Be intentional about designing for a specific target population
- Pay attention to structure, and don't silo WFA in a specific program
- Shared data and outcomes for parents, child, and family must be available
- Using organizational culture change practices and methods really matter
- Cross-train staff from across the organization in coaching
- Service integration is key, but WFA is much more than integrated services

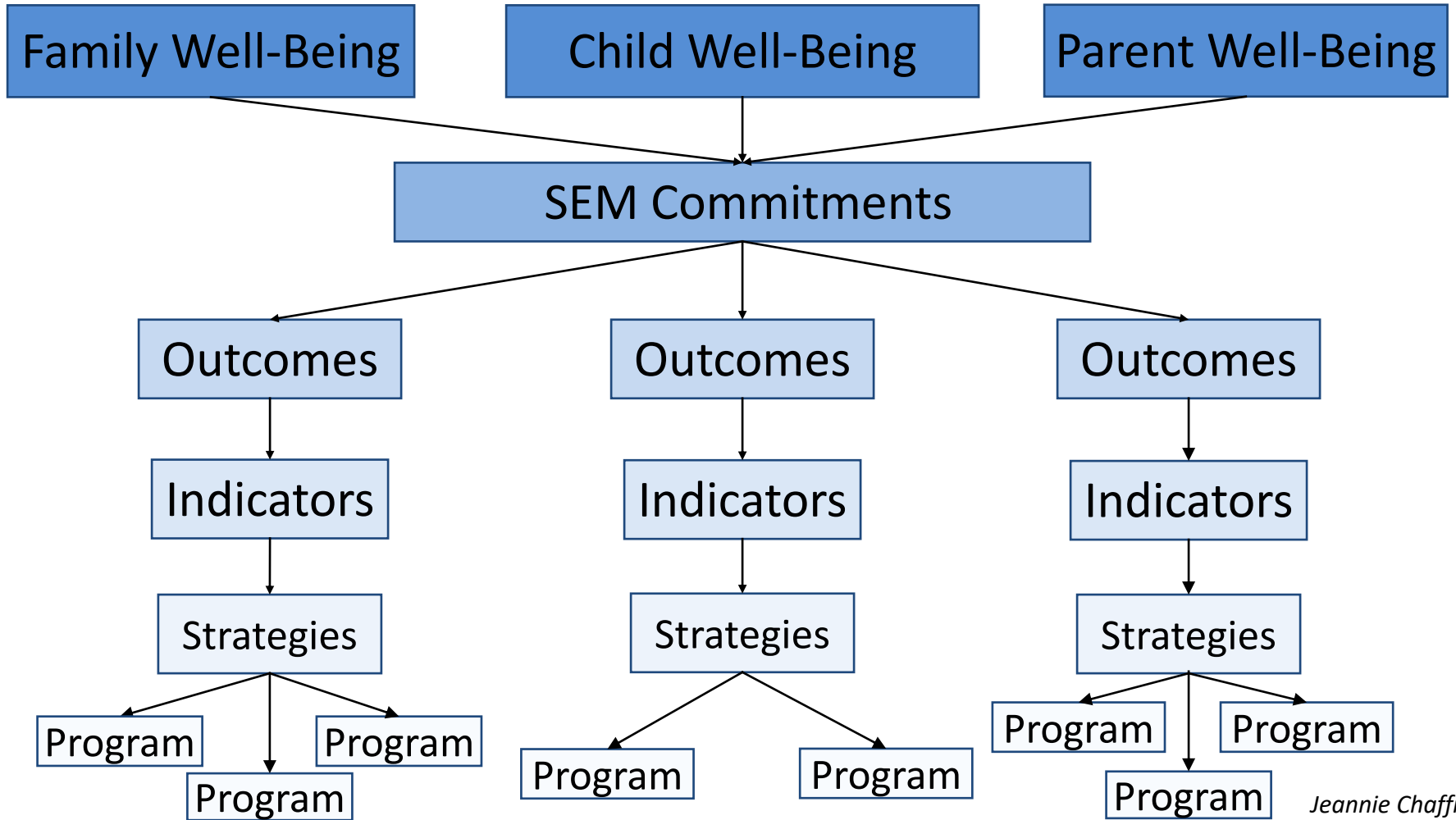
# CAA Lessons Learned

- Head Start is a super platform to build on, but it will take more than Head Start
- Caseload numbers matter
- Tools such as assessments, scales, and goal planning are essential for success
- Strive for common goals, not program-specific goals
- Individualized goals are family driven within the agency SEM vision
- Families must be involved in the design and operationalizing WFA
- WFA is not a silver bullet; system and community-level change are also needed, and what we learn in WFA can advance the systems work (examples: living wage, EITC, cliff effect, racial equity, and justice)

# Grants Management Business Model



# Community Action WFA Model



Jeannie Chaffin, LLC

**Whole Family  
Approach, Strategy,  
Organization  
Continuum**

**ORGANIZATION**  
Providing services  
to both children  
and adults  
**simultaneously** and  
**tracking outcomes**  
for both.

**STRATEGY**  
Aligning and/  
or **coordinating**  
services with other  
organizations to  
meet the needs of  
all family members.

**APPROACH**  
A new **mindset** for  
designing programs  
and policies that  
serve children  
and parents  
simultaneously.

Throughout the continuum, cultural competency is a prerequisite.

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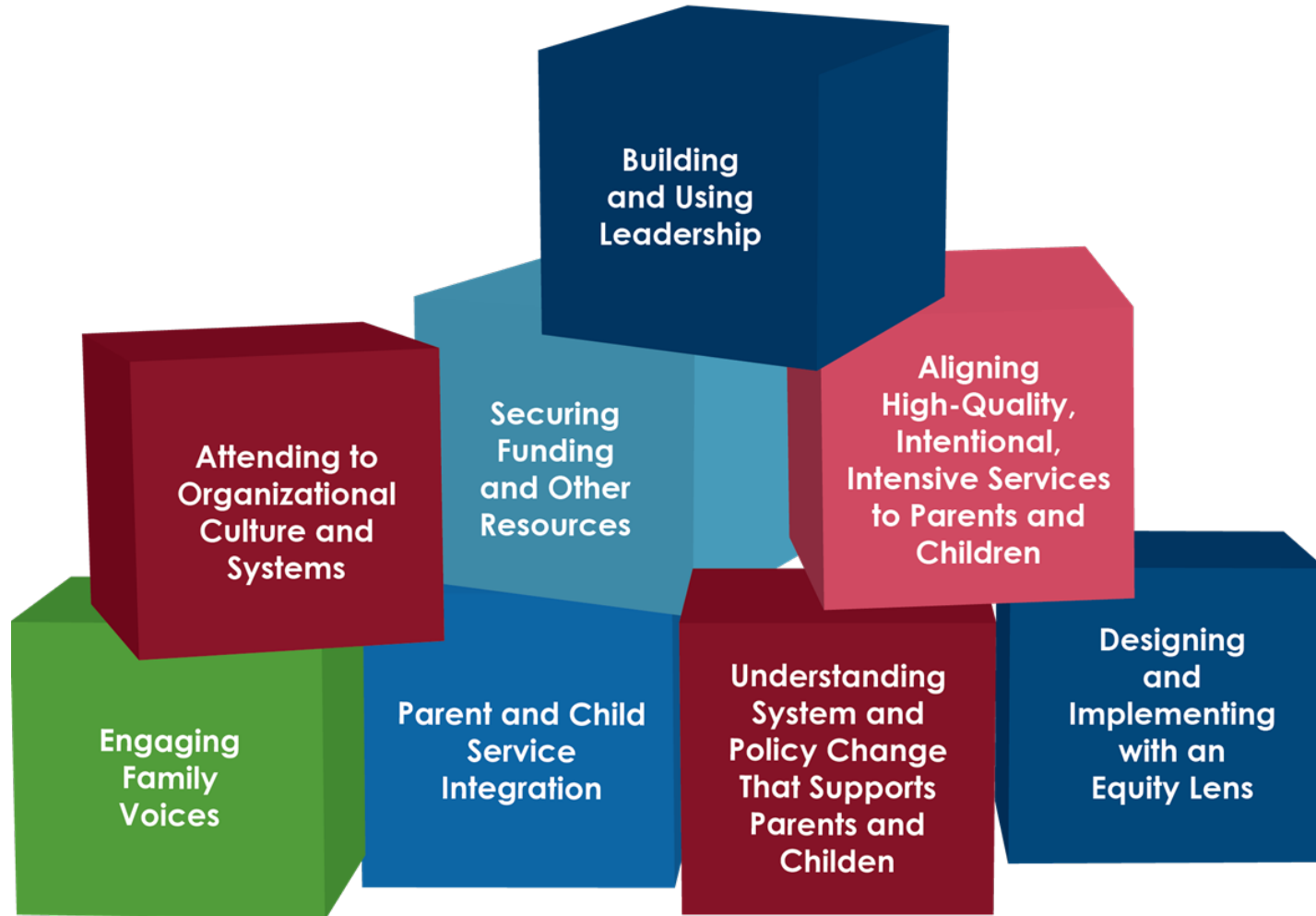


WFA  
PILOT

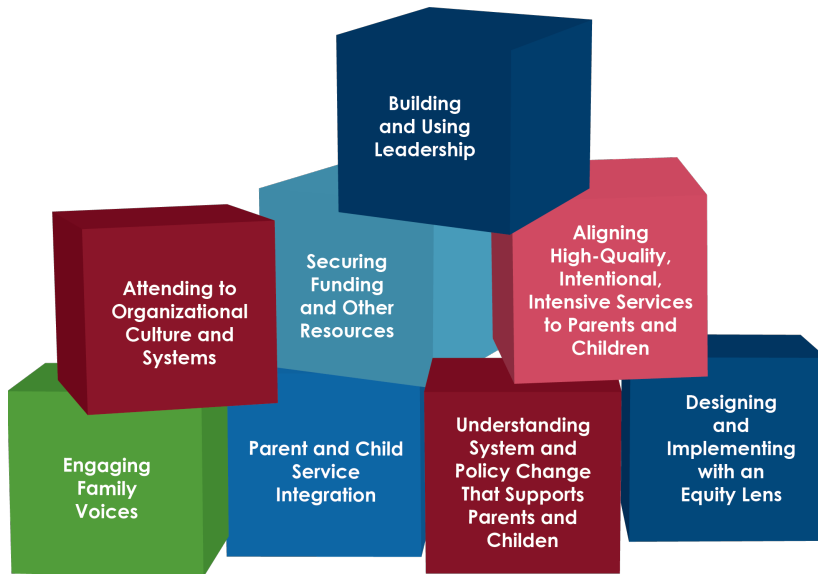


# Enabling Conditions and Building WFA Readiness

# Whole Family Approach Building Blocks



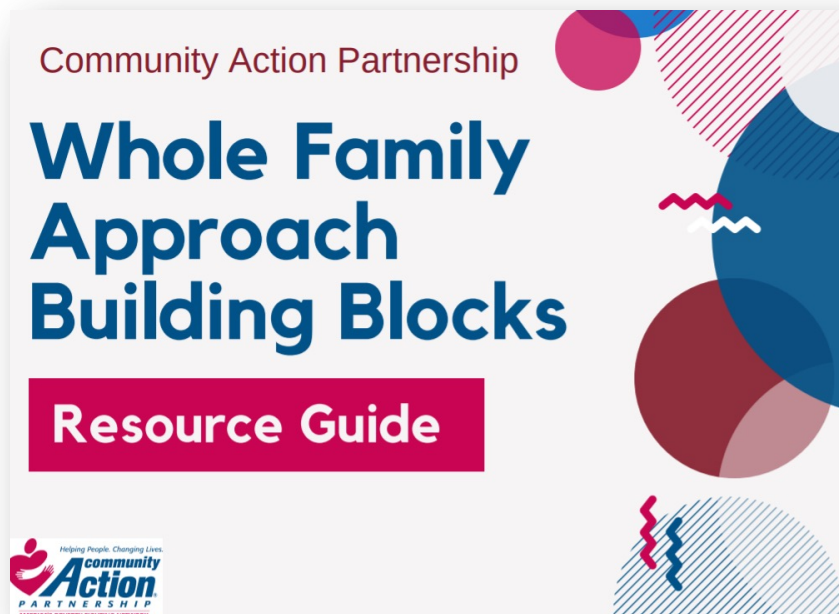
# Deconstructing the WFA Building Blocks



- Develop a theory of change and logic model
- Utilize target population and recruitment protocols
- Realign organization structures and supervision
- Distribute staffing and case loads appropriately
- Train staff in new practice approaches
- Complete comprehensive family assessments
- Individualize work with families to enable them to set their own goals
- Share family goals across agency programs
- Create space for culturally specific family activities
- Place burden of service coordination on systems and programs rather than families
- Consolidate/universalize intake process
- Coordinate family and staff planning
- Co-locate services
- Coordinate with partners to fill gaps and provide comprehensive services
- Provide high-quality services that are evidence and science-based
- Use data to drive decision-making
- Disaggregate race data and examine services and results by race
- Adopt enterprise software/applications
- Include parents in the guiding coalition
- Pursue system changes that interrupt structural racism
- Find ways to blend and braid funding streams
- Incorporate strategic planning

# WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH RESOURCES YOU CAN USE

# Whole Family Approach Resources



# Whole Family Approach Resources



## VIRTUAL WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH INSTITUTE

[Overview](#) | [Participant Packet](#) | [Videos](#) | [Presentations](#) | [Presenter Bios](#) | [Graphics](#)

[DOWNLOAD AGENDA](#)

### EVENT OVERVIEW

Join Whole Family Approach Cohort colleagues at the 2020 Whole Family Approach Institute! Participants will receive specialized support related to service integration, peer-learning opportunities, access to expert presentations and a wealth of resources & connections.

- Connect with community-based organizations shifting to a Whole Family Approach
- Listen to transformation stories
- Learn from outside experts on foundational areas/topics
- Deepen racial equity and trauma informed practice knowledge
- Learn about building blocks critical to Whole Family Approach success
- Apply practical insights to improve the design of a Theory of Change, Logic Model and plan for data collection and use

Time Zones:  
1:00pm-5:30pm ET  
12:00pm-4:30pm CT  
11:00am-3:30pm MT



# Whole Family Approach Resources



**Free, online  
learning hub for  
the Community  
Action Network!**

Visit  
[www.communityactionpartnership.com](http://www.communityactionpartnership.com)  
to register!



SAVE THE DATE!

# Whole Family Approach Institute



📅 June 6-8, 2023

📍 Washington, DC Area





# Questions



# Let's Stay In Touch

## National Community Action Partnership (NCAP)

[www.communityactionpartnership.com](http://www.communityactionpartnership.com)

 @CAPartnership

 @CommunityActionPartnershipNationalOffice

 Community Action Partnership – National Office

### Jeannie Chaffin

Special Advisor

[chaffin.Jeannie@gmail.com](mailto:chaffin.Jeannie@gmail.com)

### Jennifer Gregory

Director, Mobility Learning Design & Practice

[jgregory@communityactionpartnership.com](mailto:jgregory@communityactionpartnership.com)

### Tamerdis Hollywood

Sr. Associate, Learning & Dissemination

[thollywood@communityactionpartnership.com](mailto:thollywood@communityactionpartnership.com)