A Systems Building Theory of Change

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Three Questions

1. What is early childhood systems building?

2. What are elements of a theory of change for early childhood system building?

3. Where does collaboration enter in?
System Building Sequence

System Building Activities → Better Early Childhood System → Better Child and Family Outcomes
1) Context

- Policies
- Funding
2) Components

- Family Support
- Early Intervention
- PreK
- Health, Mental Health, Nutrition
3) Connections

- Early Learning
- Health, Mental Health and Nutrition
- Special Needs/Early Intervention
- Family Support

Source: Early Childhood Systems Working Group
4) Infrastructure

- Governance
- Training
- Quality
- Data
5) Scale

- Spread
- Breadth
- Depth
- Ownership
Five Elements of Systems Building

- **Context**: Improving the political context that surrounds the system so it produces the policy and funding changes needed to create and sustain it.

- **Components**: Establishing high-performance programs and services that produce results for children and families.

- **Connections**: Creating strong linkages across system components that further improve results for children and families.

- **Infrastructure**: Developing the supports systems need to function effectively and with quality.

- **Scale**: Ensuring a comprehensive system is available to as many people as possible.
## Expected System-Level Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Connections</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Scale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shared vision</td>
<td>• New system programs or services</td>
<td>• Shared goals</td>
<td>• System spread</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Leadership</td>
<td>• Expanded program reach or coverage</td>
<td>• Shared standards</td>
<td>• System depth</td>
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<td>• Public engagement</td>
<td>• Improved quality</td>
<td>• Shared competencies or skills standards</td>
<td>• System sustainability</td>
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<td>• Media coverage</td>
<td>• Increased operational efficiency</td>
<td>• Seamless services</td>
<td>• Shifts in system ownership</td>
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<td>• Public will</td>
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<td>• Political will</td>
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<td>• Policy changes</td>
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Importance of Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative advocacy, shared messages</td>
<td>Less categorical policies and funding streams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Components</td>
<td>Program-to-program MOUs</td>
<td>Operational efficiencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>Aligned standards across the system</td>
<td>Seamless services and referrals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Shared training and professional development</td>
<td>Practitioners with cross-system skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Shared ownership for system building</td>
<td>Sustainable systems</td>
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