

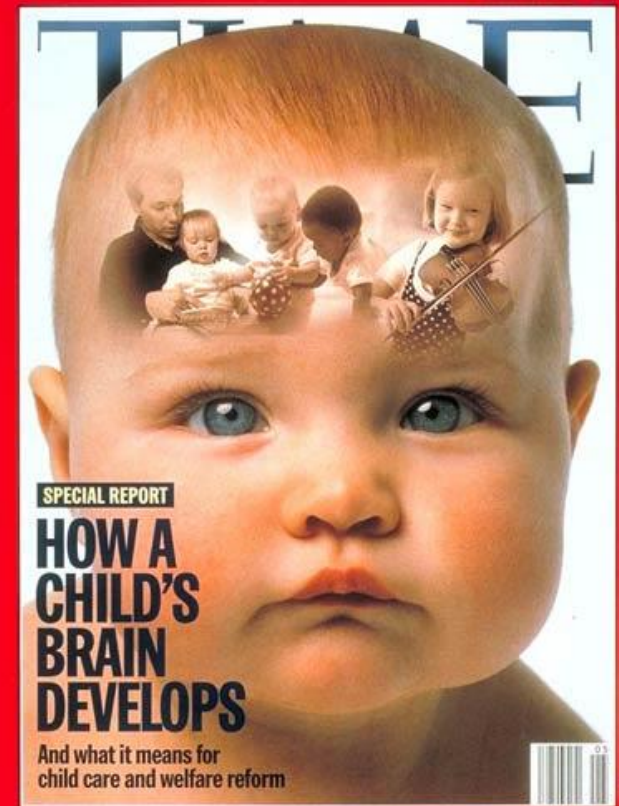
# The Protective Factors Framework

Hartford Care Coordination Collaborative  
Hartford Care Coordination Collaborative Meeting  
March 27, 2015  
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# Children's Optimal Healthy Development

## *A critical window of opportunity:*

- 1990-1999 = “Decade of the Brain”
- “Toxic stress” and ACEs
- The role of experience and the importance of nurturing relationships
- Heckman: The greatest return on investment is incurred when interventions occur during early childhood as compared to later in life

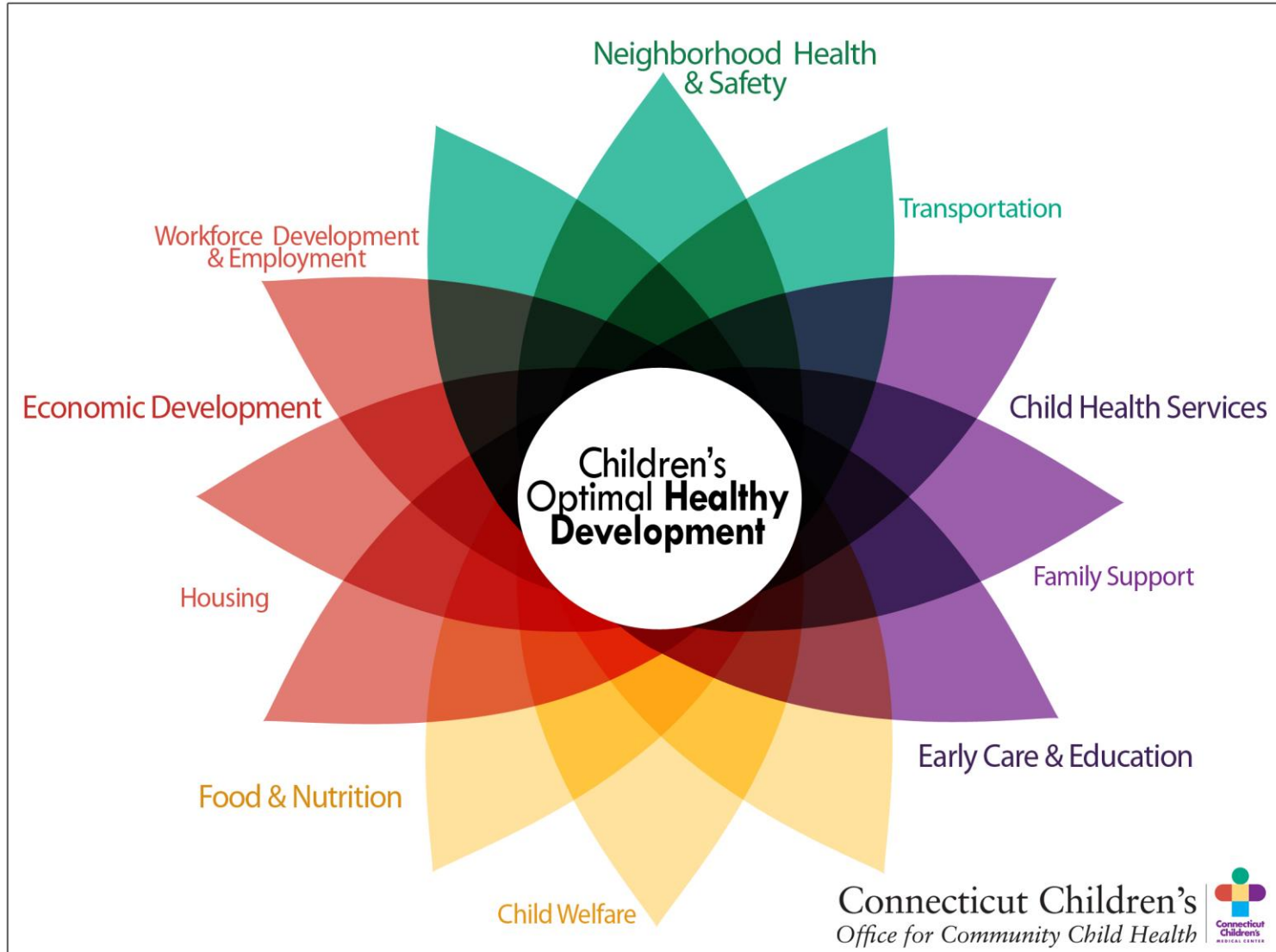


# The Challenge...

## *Measuring the impact of child health interventions:*

- Long-term (life course) outcomes are difficult to measure
- Investments in one sector will have returns in other sectors
- No common language for measuring success

# The Critical Need for System Building



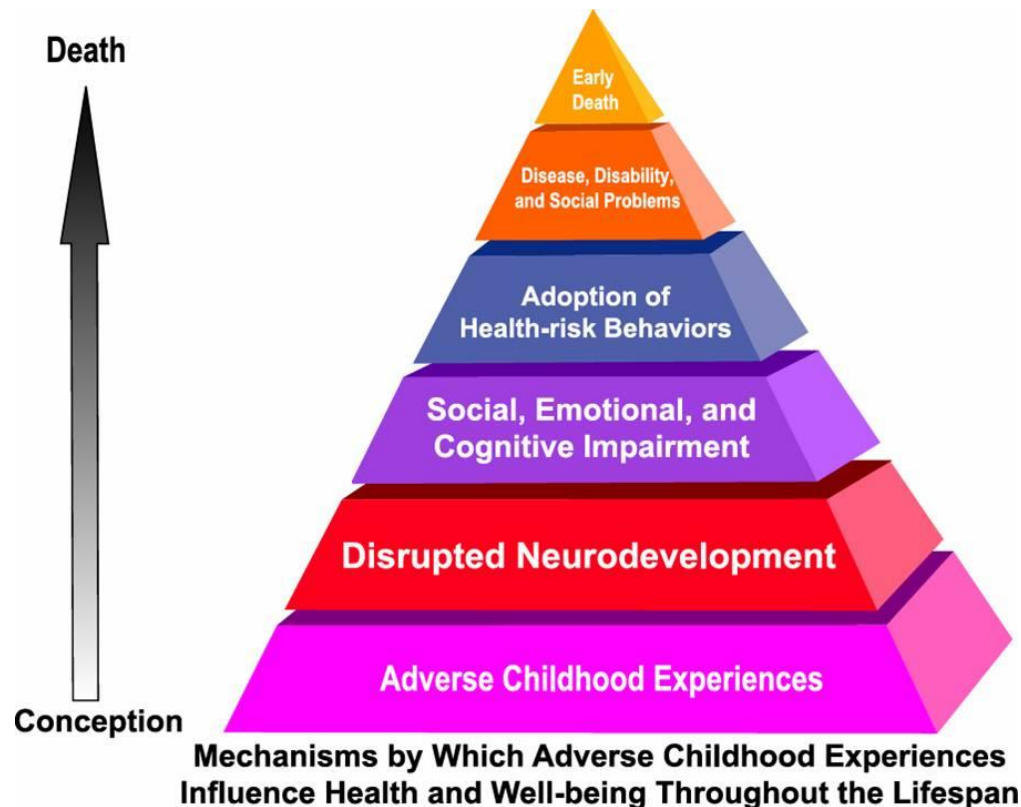
# The Context for System Building

- Programs and services must be comprehensive and address the multiple factors that facilitate and hinder healthy development
- We must engage a broad array of partners in the context of cross-sector collaboration and **collective impact**

**Collective impact:** *the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem*

- Meaningful cross-sector collaboration must include aligned outcomes and a **common platform for measuring impact**
  - *Proximate measures?*

# The Importance of Framing Our Work



**A deficit model, like one based simply on reducing risk, is not sufficient.**

# The Protective Factors Framework

*Strengthening Families Initiative*, Center for the Study of Social Policy

- The Protective Factors Framework summarizes scientific research and outlines a course of action to help families reduce stress, address risk factors and promote healthy development.
  - An intuitive explanation of what families need to thrive and what programs can do to support them
  - A common framework and a shared set of results for families
  - A broad range of concrete, low- and no-cost actions that many types of programs can implement
- More than 30 states have developed interdisciplinary leadership teams to implement Strengthening Families.
- Currently in use in Early Care and Education, Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Home Visiting, and Child Welfare

# The Protective Factors Framework

*Strengthening Families Initiative*, Center for the Study of Social Policy

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children



# The Protective Factors Framework

- **Parental Resilience**

Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma

- **Resilience to general life stress**

- Hope, optimism, self confidence
    - Problem solving skills
    - Self care and willingness to ask for help
    - Ability to manage negative emotions

- **Resilience in parenting**

- Not allowing stress to interfere with nurturing
    - Positive attitude about parenting and child

# The Protective Factors Framework

- **Parental Resilience**

Everyday actions:

- Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued
- Honor each family's race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting
- Encourage parents to manage stress effectively
- Support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills
- Help parents understand how to buffer their child during stressful times

# The Protective Factors Framework

- **Social Connections**

Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support

- Multiple friendships and supportive relationships with others
- Feeling respected and appreciated
- Accepting help from others, and giving help to others
- Skills for establishing and maintaining connections

# The Protective Factors Framework

- **Social Connections**

Everyday actions:

- Help families value, build, sustain and use social connections
- Create an inclusive environment
- Facilitate mutual support
- Promote engagement in the community and participation in community activities

# The Protective Factors Framework

- **Concrete Support in Times of Need**

Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges

- Seeking and receiving support when needed
- Knowing what services are available and how to access them
- Adequate financial security; basic needs being met
- Persistence
- Advocating effectively for self and child to receive necessary help

# The Protective Factors Framework

- Concrete Support in Times of Need

Everyday actions:

- Respond immediately when families are in crisis
- Provide information and connections to services in the community
- Help families to develop skills and tools they need to identify their needs and connect to supports

# The Protective Factors Framework

- **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development**  
Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development
  - Nurturing parenting behavior
  - Appropriate developmental expectations
  - Ability to create a developmentally supportive environment for child
  - Positive discipline techniques; ability to effectively manage child behavior
  - Recognizing and responding to your child's specific needs

# The Protective Factors Framework

- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Everyday actions:

- Model developmentally appropriate interactions with children
- Provide information and resources on parenting and child development
- Encourage parents to observe, ask questions, explore parenting issues and try out new strategies
- Address parenting issues from a strength-based perspective



# The Protective Factors Framework

- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children**

Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships

- **For the parent**

- Warm and consistent responses that foster a strong and secure attachment with the child
- Encouraging and reinforcing social skills; setting limits

- **For the child**

- Age appropriate self-regulation
- Ability to form and maintain relationships with others
- Positive interactions with others
- Effective communication

# The Protective Factors Framework

- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children**

Everyday actions:

- Help parents foster their child's social emotional development
- Model nurturing care to children
- Include children's social and emotional development activities in programming
- Help children develop a positive cultural identity and interact in a diverse society
- Respond proactively when social or emotional development needs extra support

# Pilot Application of the Framework in Program Evaluation

- Data from *Help Me Grow Connecticut*
  - Families rated the ways in which their contact with *HMG* resulted in changes in their ability to help their children develop along a healthy trajectory
  - As a result of calling *HMG*, parents reported that they learned how to find and access resources, gained a better understanding of child development and parenting skills, felt supported in new and better ways, and became more confident in their own abilities to cope with stressful situations

# Pilot Application of the Framework in Program Evaluation (cont'd)

Response to Survey Questions	Parent Responses (%)		
As a result of my call to Child Development Infoline and the information and services I received:	Extremely or Quite a bit	Not at all	N/A
I have a better understanding of my child's development.	80%	4%	7%
I am able to better understand and meet my child's needs.	79%	2%	5%
I have a better understanding of services for me and/or my child.	81%	6%	1%
I am able to access services if I need it.	84%	2%	2%
There are people who can provide me with assistance when I need it.	87%	1%	4%
I have people I can talk to for advice and emotional support.	79%	1%	4%
There is improvement in my family's day-to-day circumstances.	66%	5%	17%
My relationship with my child has improved.	71%	2%	27%
My child's behavior has improved (e.g., mood, attitude, play, relationships with other children).	45%	1%	32%

# Conclusion: Protective Factors as a Tool for System Building

- *Exploring the feasibility of operationalizing the Framework in program design and evaluation*
  - Protective factors as **proximate measures** of developmental outcomes
  - The Protective Factors Framework could provide **a common language for measuring impact**