

Creating an Early Childhood System

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Arizona Early Childhood Task Force



An organized, inter-related network of elements, programs and services for all children.



Purpose of System Planning in Arizona

To get measureable results for Arizona's young children and their families



Why is a System Important?

- Affecting school readiness requires comprehensive approaches and involvement from all sectors: health, mental health, family support, early care and education, parents, higher education, faith communities, business, the media and many others



Why is a System Important?

- To maximize resources including multiple funding streams with their own regulations and requirements
- To improve the performance of multiple systems impacting young children and their families



Why is a System Important?

- There are individual variations in the circumstances and needs of children and their families
- There is duplication of services and a lack of coordination and many children are not being served



Why is a System Important?

- There are inefficiencies in service delivery and varied quality in programs
- Current services are both market based and government financed and both public and private issues must be addressed



Why is a System Important?

- To reduce turf issues through a shared vision and agreed-upon goals and objectives
- Helps to secure needed policy changes and improvements
- Better communication among partners



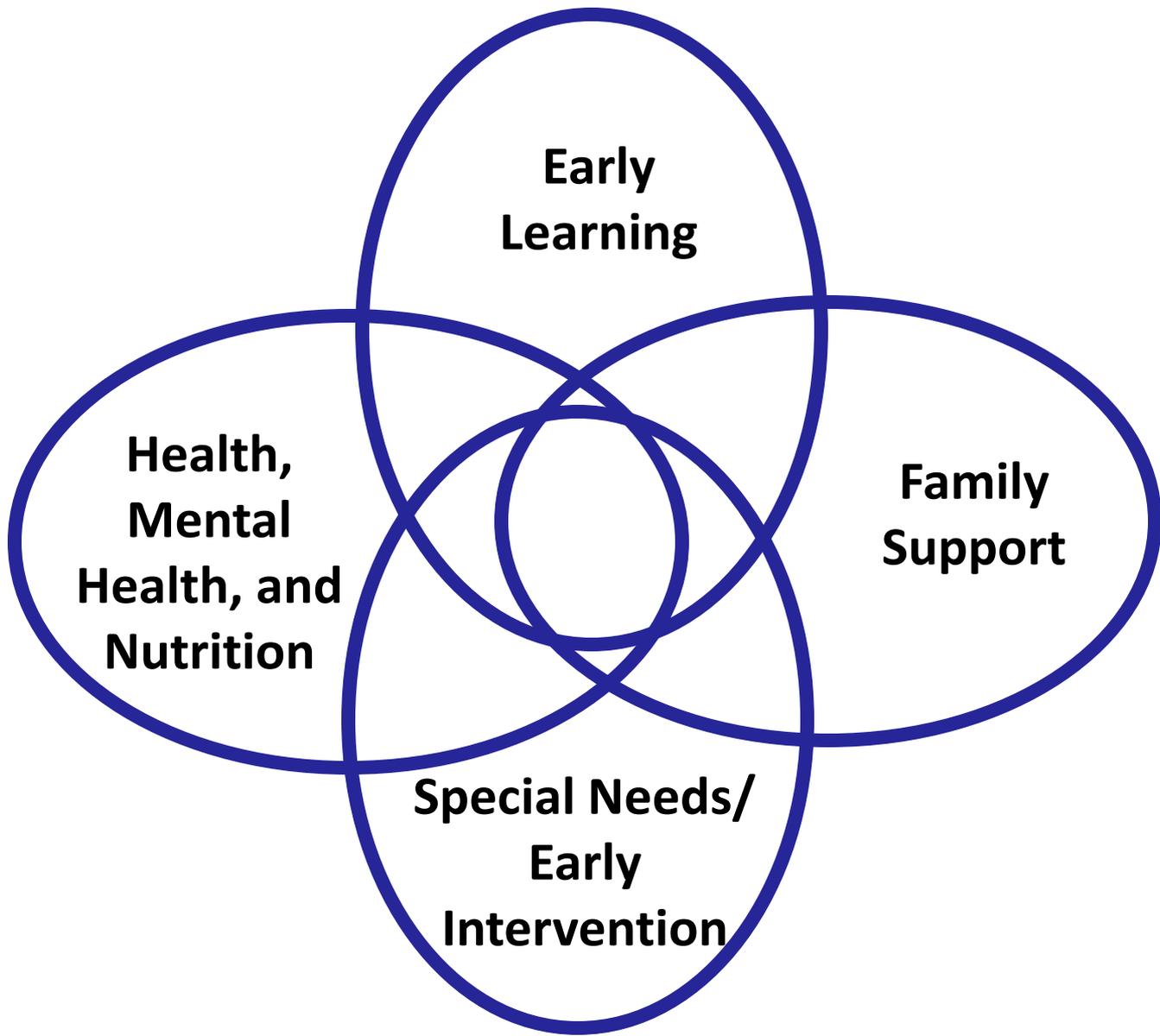
Characteristics of an Effective System

- Comprehensive
- Accessible for children and families
- Scalable
- Outcome focused
- Accountable



Components to Consider



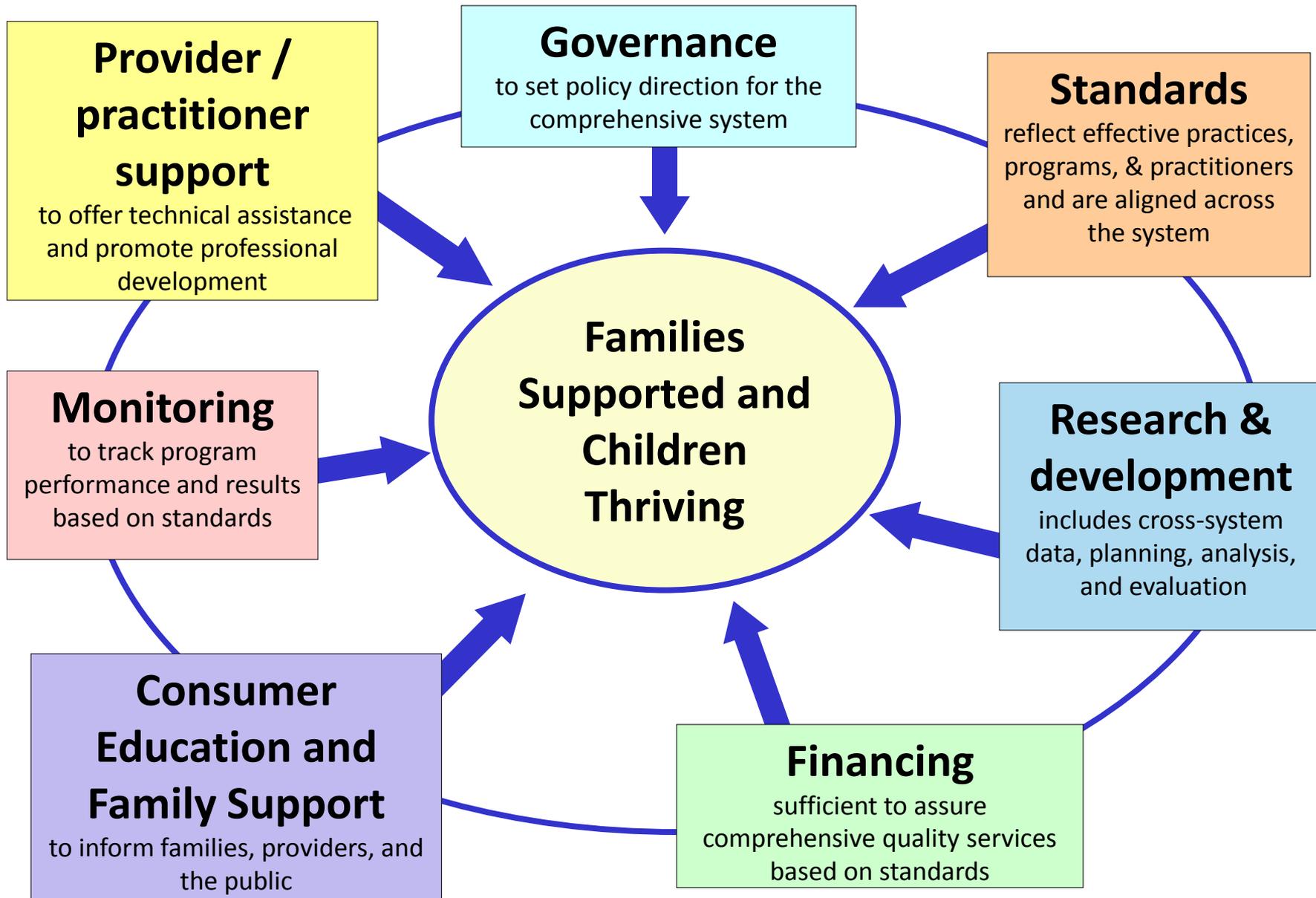


**Early
Learning**

**Health,
Mental
Health, and
Nutrition**

**Family
Support**

**Special Needs/
Early
Intervention**



KIDS MATTER FRAMEWORK

INFRASTRUCTURE

Research and Resources:
Infrastructure In WA State;
Projects and Initiatives:

COMMUNICATION

Children's Web Hub
211 Information and
Referral Line

FUNDING

Leverage public/private resources to
move the early care and education
agenda

KEY RESOURCES

STRATEGIES

ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE & MEDICAL HOMES

- Increase awareness among all who care for young children about the importance of comprehensive health care
- Enroll more eligible children in public health insurance programs (Medicaid, SCHIP, Basic Health, SSI)
- Facilitate access to a Medical Home for all children (including medical, dental, mental health & vision services)
- Make developmental assessment & referral to Early Intervention (EI) accessible

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH

- Ensure that communications with all who work with young children emphasizing the importance of social, emotional & mental health
- Promote existing program's awareness & implementation of models of services & supports for young families that are effective, culturally competent & community-based
- Promote existing programs' awareness & implementation of practices that provide opportunities for social connectedness for families
- Promote caregivers' knowledge of social, emotional & mental health of young children
- Promote collaboration among policymakers, providers & other stakeholders

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION/CHILD CARE

- Use Washington State Early Learning & Development Benchmarks as a tool to enhance the quality of early care & learning
- Improve the ability to evaluate & reward high-quality programs through development of Quality Rating system (QRS) & Tiered Reimbursement
- Promote children's health in early care & education programs (ongoing statewide collaborative effort: Healthy Children Care Washington - HCCW)
- Support high quality professional development services for caregivers
- Develop capacity within the early care & education systems to engage in family support
- Voluntary Universal Pre-K

PARENTING INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

- Provide information to parents & facilitate connection to needed services & supports
- Provide professional development programs, services & supports for professionals providing information & support to parents
- Strengthen & sustain the Washington Parenting Education Network (WAPEN)

SYSTEM CHANGES

- Increased number and percentage of children who have medical insurance

- Increased availability of appropriate and coordinated mental health services for children

- Increased number and percentage of child care & preschool programs that are quality rated
- Increased wages for quality child care providers
- Increased systems' recognition of families' role as the primary nurturer of their children
- The public sees early childhood education, health & school readiness as a major contributor of economic growth
- Increased ability for parents and caregivers to access community resources and support networks

- Increased availability of parent education resources & services

PARENT & CARE-GIVER CHANGES

- Increased understanding of the importance of comprehensive health care (including medical, dental, mental health & vision)
- Increased ability to recognize an emerging issue with their child's health or development and connect with appropriate services

- Improved understanding and practice of nurturing behaviors to promote children's optimal social-emotional development and mental health

- Increased understanding of what children need for optimal health & development (physical, social-emotional, cognitive & language)

- Increased stress-reduction skills
- Increased knowledge & skills to support children's health & development

CHILD CHANGES

- Increased number and percentage of children that receive recommended preventive care (e.g., well-child, immunizations)
- Increased number and percentage of children who have access to comprehensive health care (including medical, dental, mental health, vision)

- Increased number and percentage of children entering kindergarten with social-emotional skills

- Increased number and percentage of children entering kindergarten healthy & ready for school, including: 1) physical well-being, health & motor development; 2) social & emotional development; 3) approaches toward learning; 4) cognition & general knowledge; and 5) language, communication & literacy

- Increased number and percentage of children who live in safe, stable & supportive families

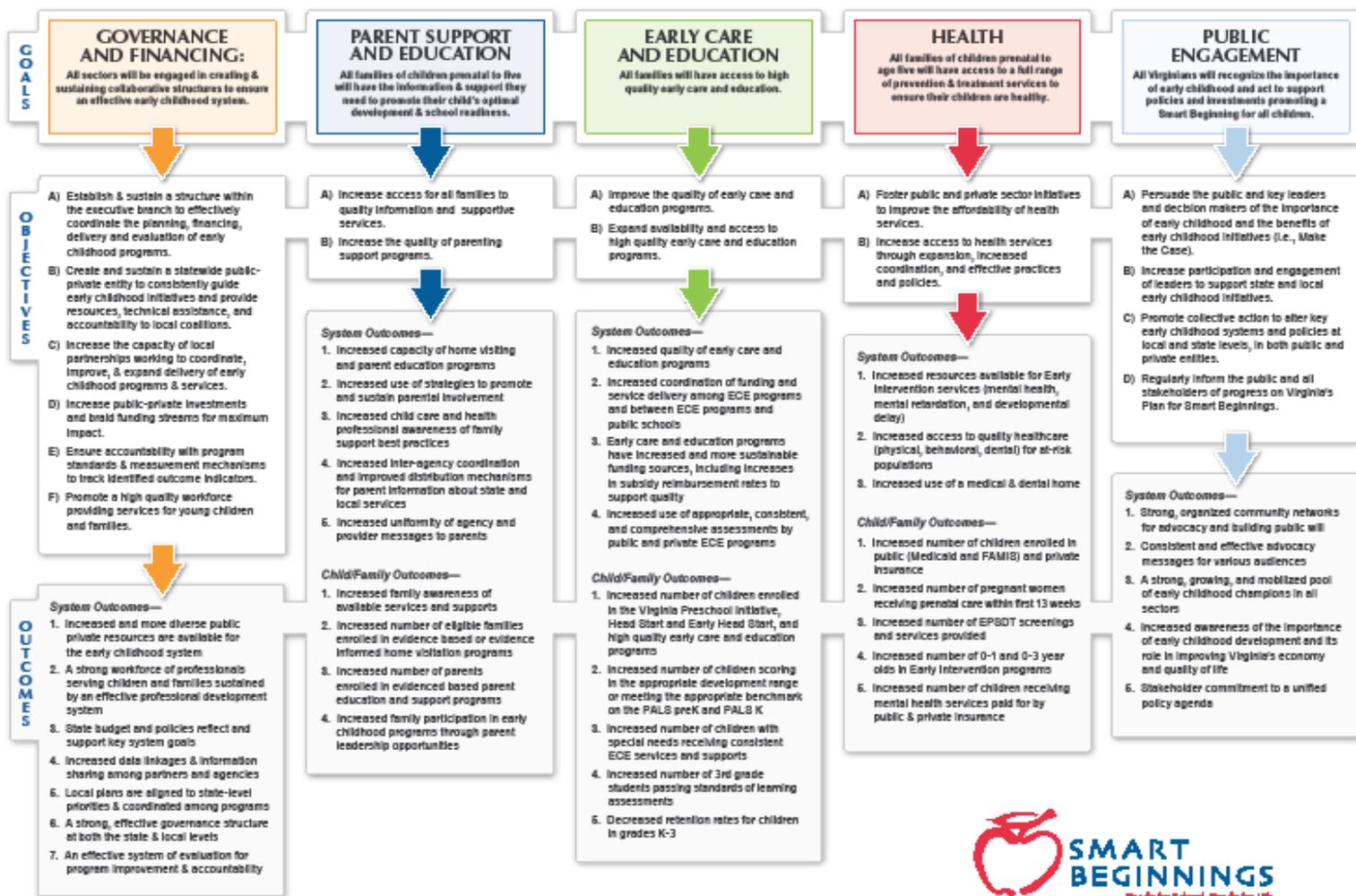
GOAL

CHILDREN ARE HEALTHY AND READY FOR SCHOOL



Family Support approach, strategy, or outcome

VIRGINIA'S PLAN FOR SMART BEGINNINGS



Infrastructure Elements to Consider

- Assessment and planning
- Governance
- Advocacy
- Funding
- Accountability
- Workforce
- Data



Components to Consider

- Early Care and Education
- Family Support and Education
- Health, Mental Health and Nutrition
- Special Needs and Early Intervention



Challenges for the Task Force

- Breadth and depth of system
- Are components equally weighted or some areas emphasized?



Scope of System

Universe
Or
Focused Areas?



Areas to Consider

- Context
- Components
- Connections
- Infrastructure
- Scope and Scale



Lessons Learned

- An open, visible process is needed
- A diverse group of thinkers is important
- Choose strategic areas of focus for an actionable agenda



Lessons Learned

- Strategic decisions are required: Slicing the pie doesn't work because of too many needs and not enough money
- Draw from knowledge base that already exists

