Strengthening Families and Essentials for Early Childhood

Essentials for Childhood Task Force

North Carolina Institute of Medicine

June 13, 2014

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Center for the Study of Social Policy

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY'S strengthening families™ A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

What we'll discuss this morning

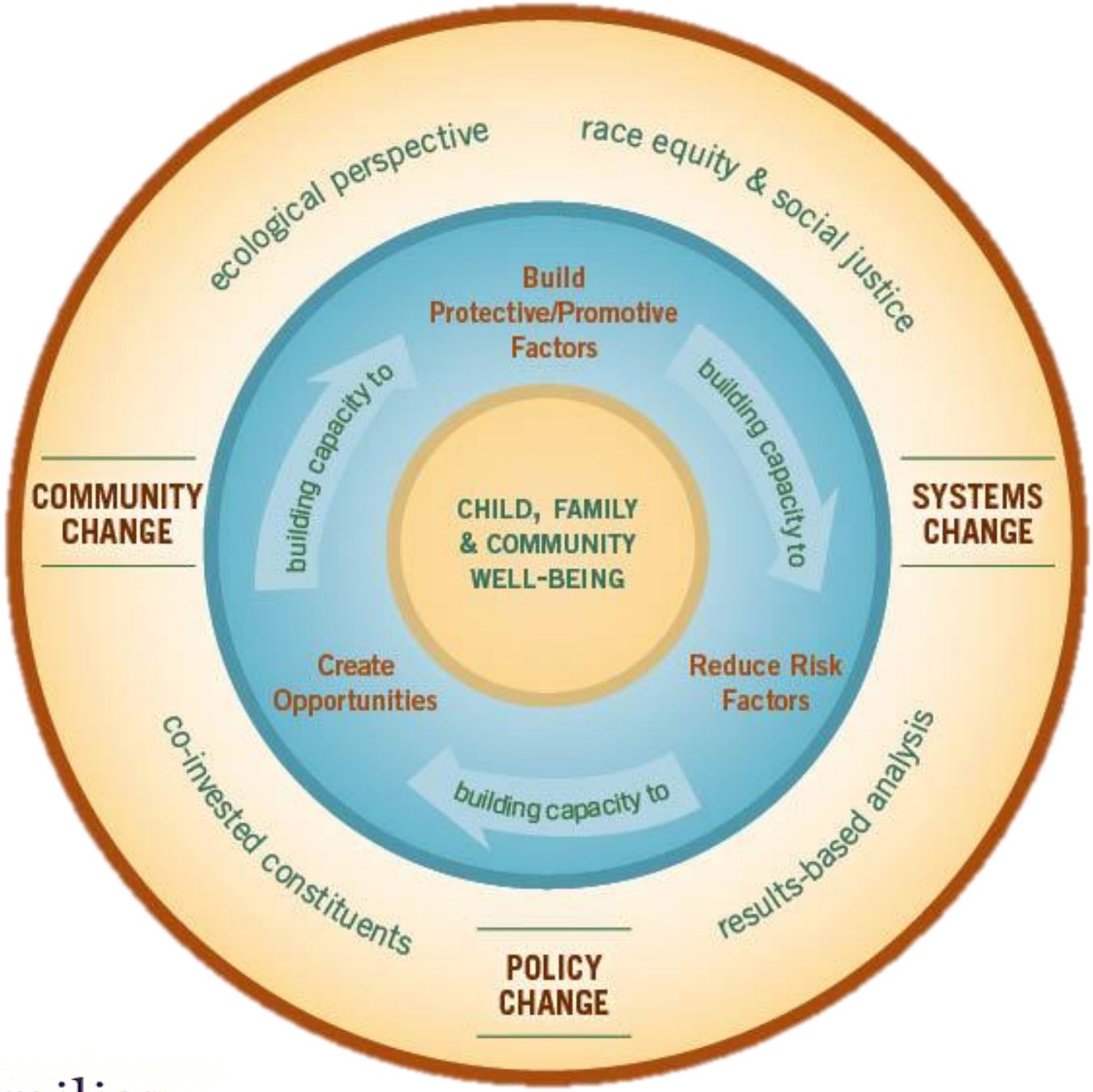
- Overview of Strengthening Families
- Social norms work related to the protective factors
  - Building a movement for children / Connect the Dots
  - Positive Community Norms work in other states
- Relationship between Strengthening Families and Essentials for Childhood

Strengthening Families: Not your ordinary initiative

- Implementing Strengthening Families is about:
  - small but significant changes in everyday practice

    and

  - the shifts in policies and systems that allow/promote those changes in practice
- Implementation funds come from existing dollars
- All national implementation tools are available free of charge



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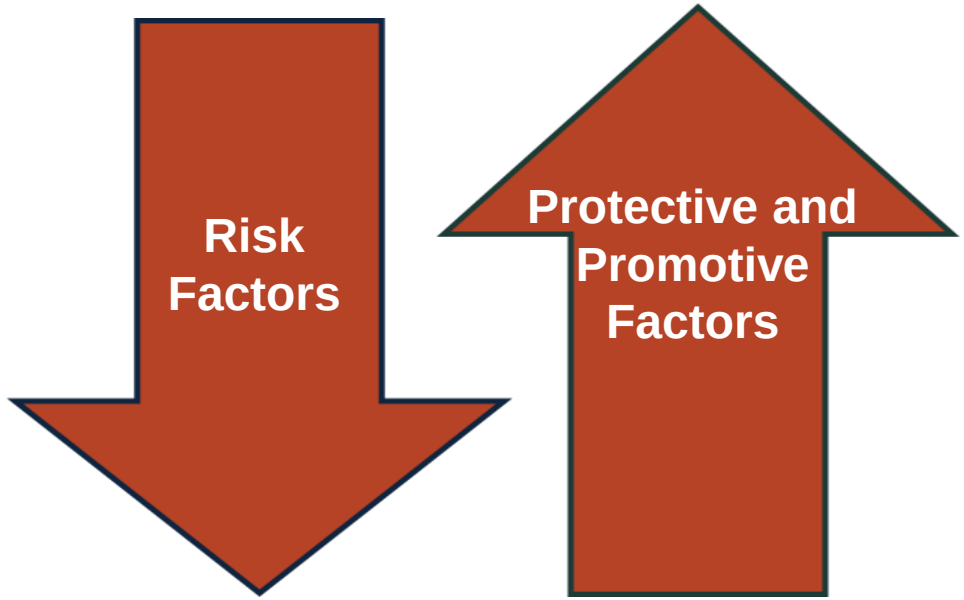
Big Idea #1: A Protective Factors Approach



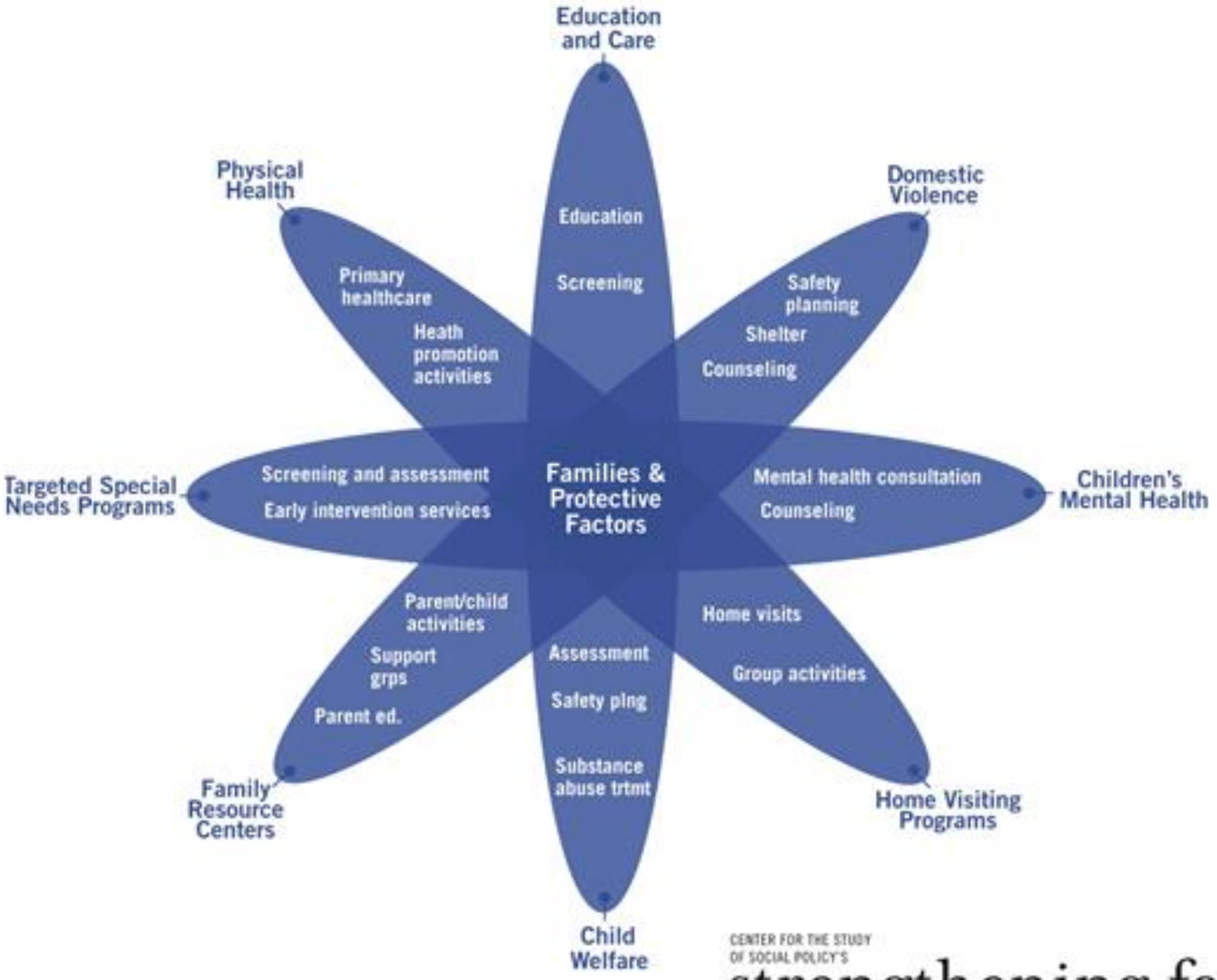
- Protective Factors: conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate or eliminate risk

- Promotive Factors: conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that actively enhance well-being

What we know: Families gain what they need to be successful when key protective factors are robust in their lives and communities

Big Idea #2: An Approach, Not a Model

- Applied in any setting that serves young children and their families
- Implemented through small but significant changes
- Not parallel to, but integrated into existing practice
- Cross-sector implementation as core to the approach



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Big Idea #3: A Changed Relationship with Parents

- Supporting parents' ability to parent effectively
- Involving parents as partners in achieving good outcomes for children
- Engaging parents effectively through programs
- Engaging parents directly in mutually supportive relationships that build protective factors
- Partnering with parents to help design systems and policies that work for children and families

Partnerships with Parents: How?

- Recognize parents as primary agents of change for their families: **Parents strengthen their families.**
- Support parents' growth, learning, transformation
- Build positive relationships between parents and service-providing professionals
- Promote positive, supportive relationships between bio and foster parents
- Build and support foster parent leadership
- Collaborate to build parenting communities

Big Idea #4: Alignment with Developmental Science

- Paying attention to what the research tells us:
  - Critical periods of development – early childhood and adolescence
  - Importance of nurturing relationships in early childhood
  - Effects of trauma on development, behavior and outcomes
- Providing tools and guidance to align practice with what we know about child development

Applying a protective/promotive factors frame across development

YOUTHRIVE

PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

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26

Birth

Child/Youth Protective Factors

Parent Protective Factors

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Five Protective Factors

PARENTAL RESILIENCE

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

KNOWLEDGE *of* PARENTING *and* CHILD DEVELOPMENT

CONCRETE SUPPORT *in* TIMES *of* NEED

SOCIAL *and* EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE *of* CHILDREN

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The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families

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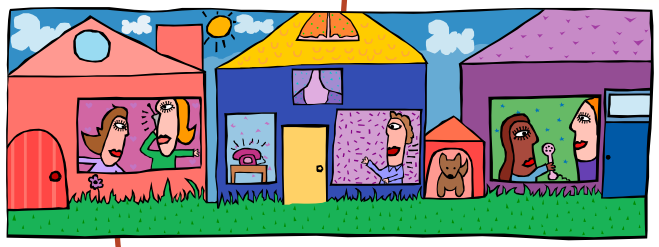
Social Norms Work Related to Strengthening Families



Education and Care

Physical Health

Primary healthcare

Heath promotion activities

Education

Screening

Domestic Violence

Safety planning

Shelter

Counseling

Targeted Special Needs Programs

Screening and assessment

Early intervention services

Families & Protective Factors

Mental health consultation

Counseling

Children's Mental Health

Parent/child activities

Support grps

Parent ed.

Assessment

Safety plng

Substance abuse trtmt

Home visits

Group activities

Family Resource Centers

Child Welfare

Home Visiting Programs

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The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families

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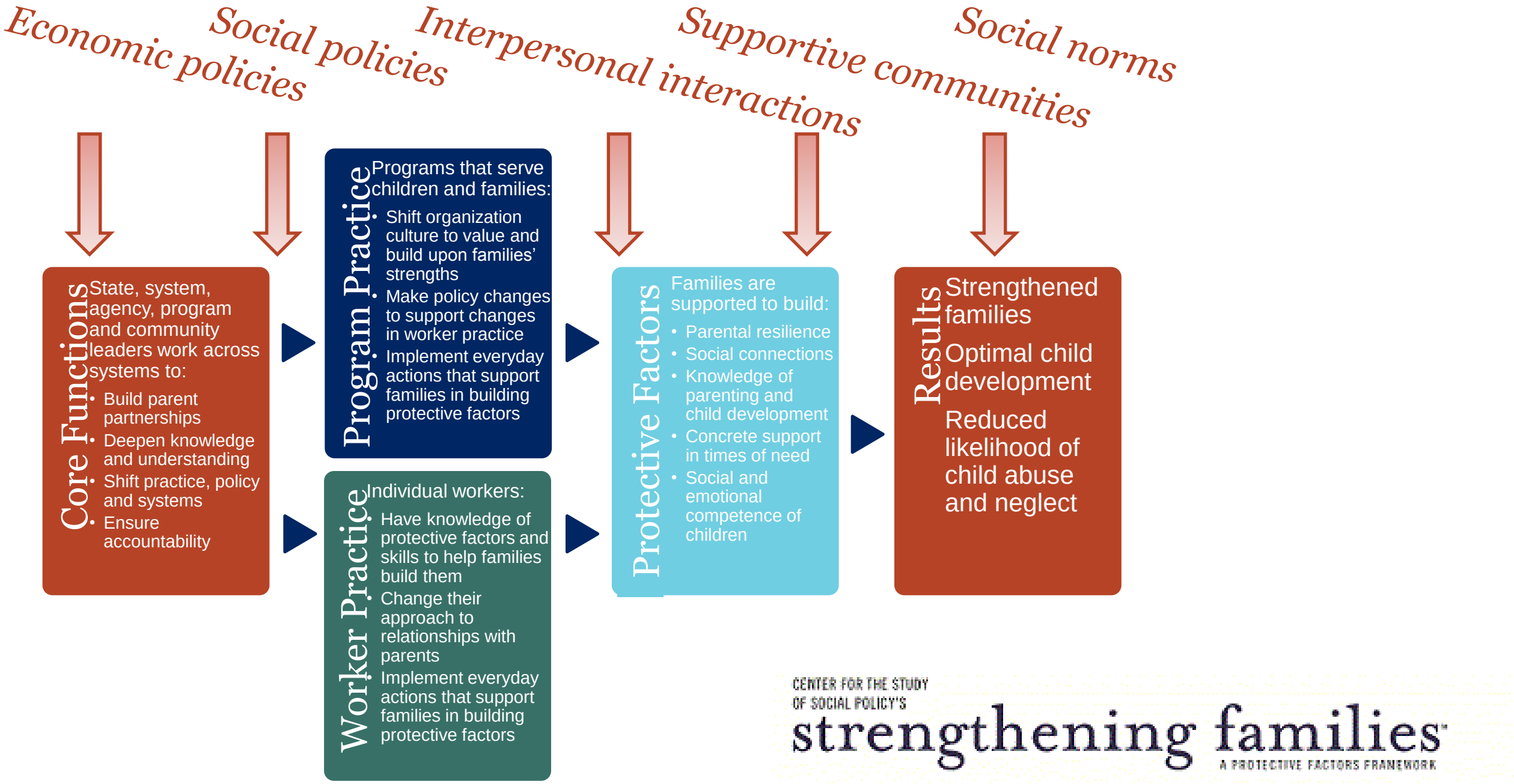

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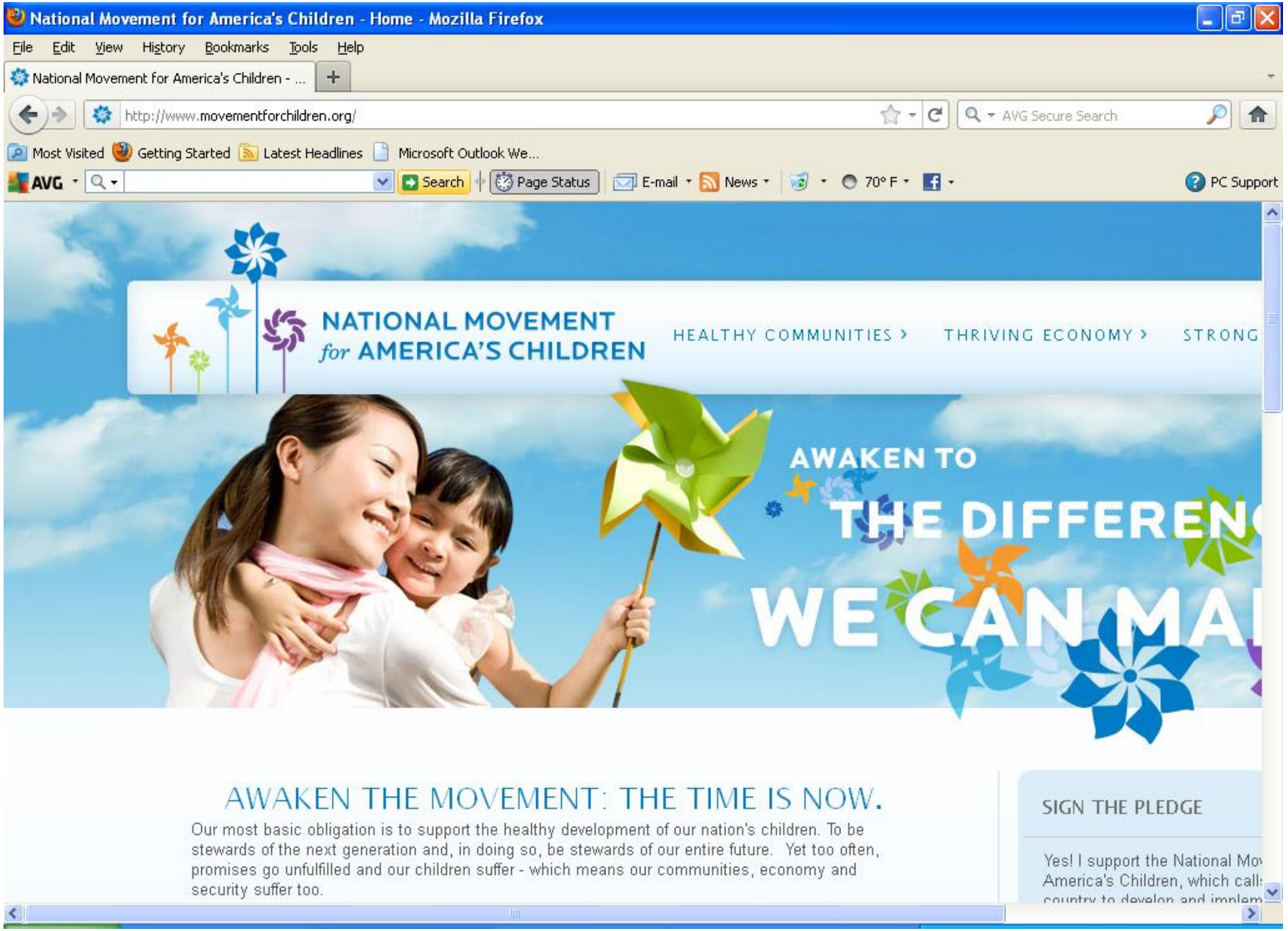
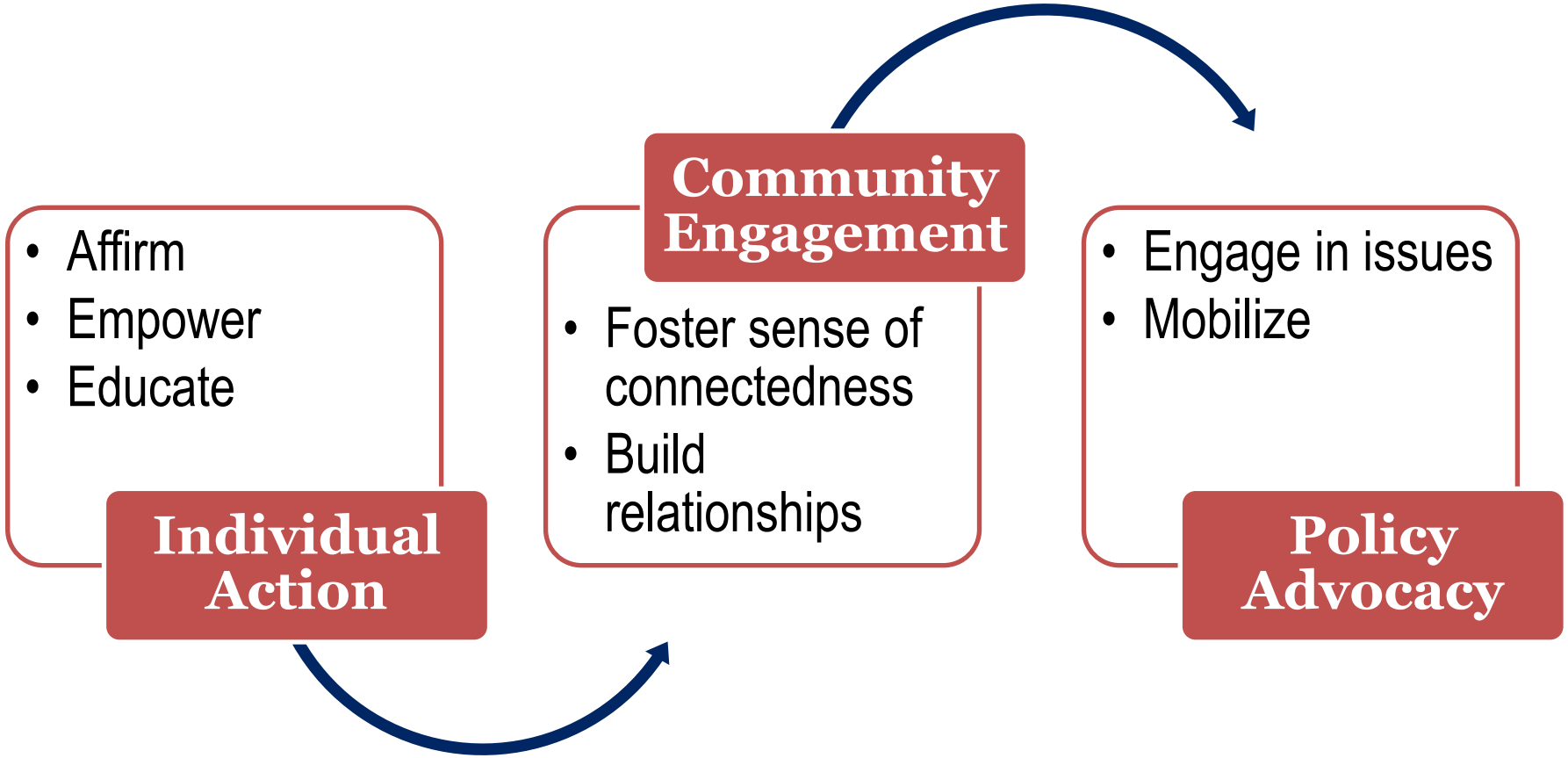
Building a national movement for children



Engaging the public in prevention and strengthening families



Step 1: Individual Action: #KidTips

- "I have a role to play – we all do"
  - Sharing everyday actions people can take to build protective factors
  - A mix of things people probably already do, or could do easily, and things that may be more outside their comfort zone

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Posted by Movement for America's Children on April 30, 2014 at 11:10am

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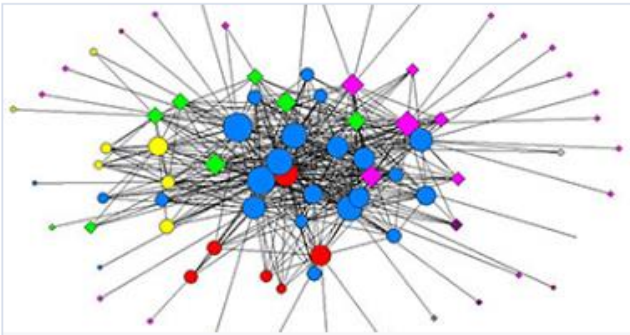
Work with a community organization to put on a cultural fair – where families can share items and food from their home cultures.
http://movementforchildren.ning.com/profiles/blogs/promoting-children-s-well-being-social-connections-and-yet-even-m
#KidTips!



Promoting Children's Well-Being. Social Connections. And Yet Even More KidTips!
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How do you help to promote children's well-being in your community? Children are more likely to thrive when their parents have positive, supportive social conn...

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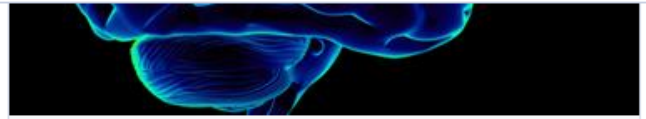

Building Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development. Helping Children and Families Thrive in...
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How do you help children and families thrive in your community? Families are more likely to thrive when parents have knowledge of parenting and child developm...

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National Movement For America's Children shared a link.
Posted by Ben Tanzer [?] · April 29

Organize a kickball or soccer game for dads and kids from your child care program, school, or neighborhood.
http://movementforchildren.ning.com/profiles/blogs/promoting-children-s-well-being-social-connections-and-yet-even-m
#KidTips!

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I HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY.
WE ALL DO.
NATIONAL MOVEMENT for AMERICA'S CHILDREN
Photo by Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia
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I'M TEACHING MY CHILD TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS PEACEFULLY.
I HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY.
NATIONAL MOVEMENT for AMERICA'S CHILDREN
Photo by Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota
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I'M GOING TO HELP A PARENT "CATCH" THEIR CHILD BEING GOOD
I HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY
NATIONAL MOVEMENT for AMERICA'S CHILDREN
Photo by Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia
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Step 2: Community building

- "We're all in this together"
  - Fostering a sense of connectedness and shared stake in the well-being of children and families
- "Connect the dots"
  - Helping people connect to others who care, including community organizations that work on these issues

On the path of life…
we are ALL
in this together.
Building a Movement for Children
movementforchildren.org

"Believing in ALL children, we help ALL of us."

- David Lawrence Jr.

Retired editor of the *Miami Herald*
Founder of The Children's Movement of Florida

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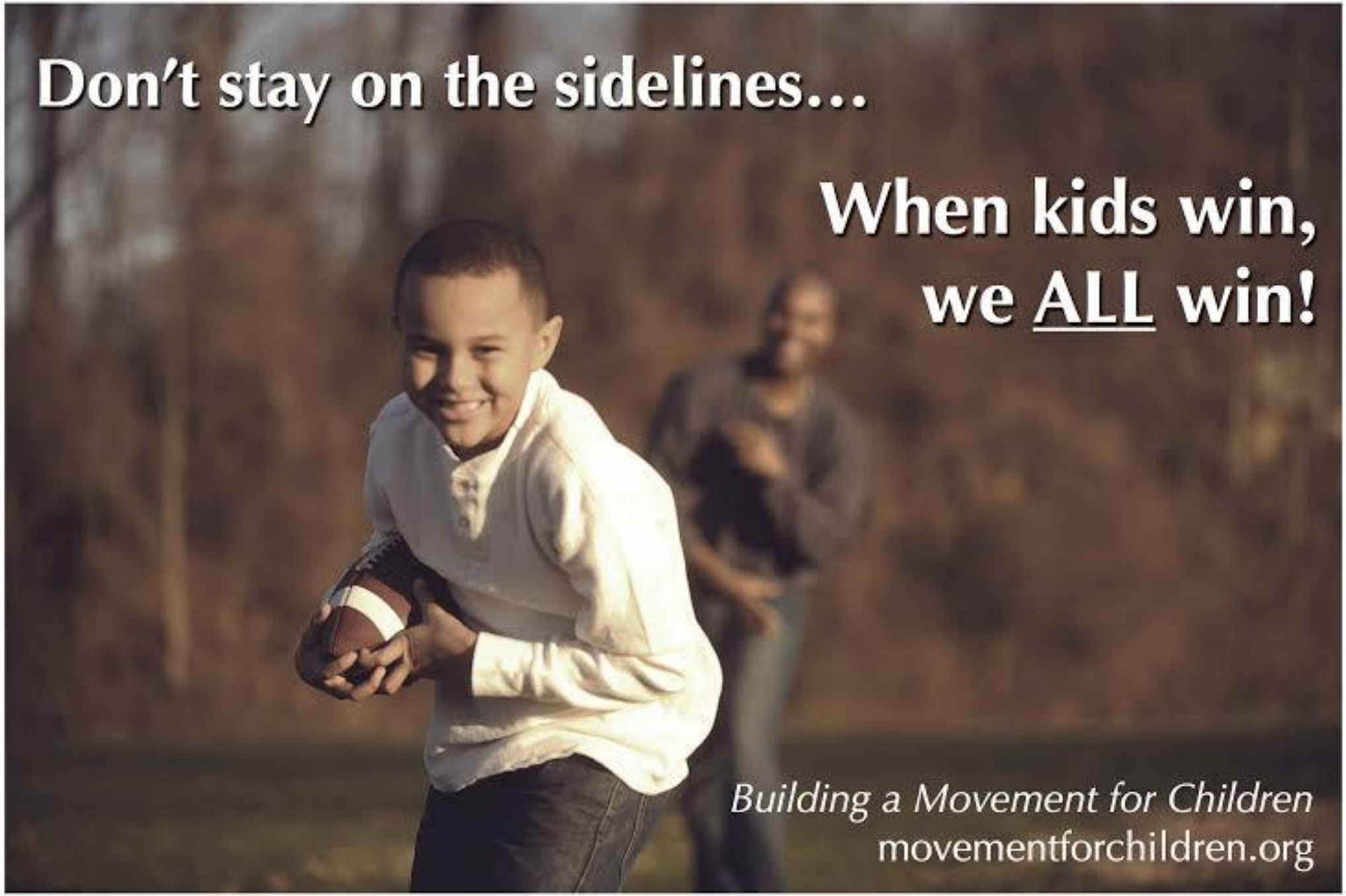
Don't stay on the sidelines...
When kids win,
we ALL win!
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When we lend a hand, it shows we're ALL in this together!
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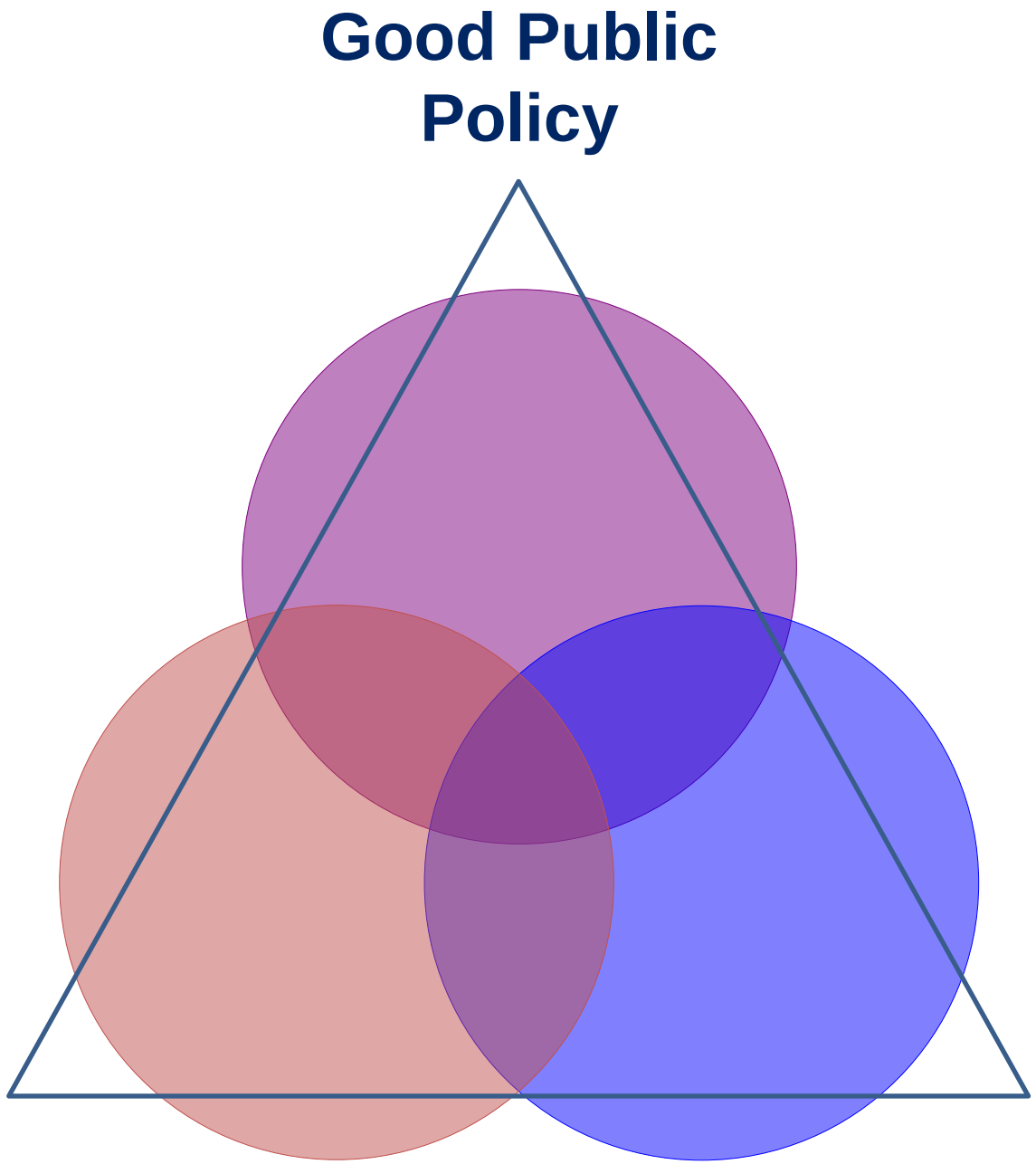
Step 3: Policy Advocacy

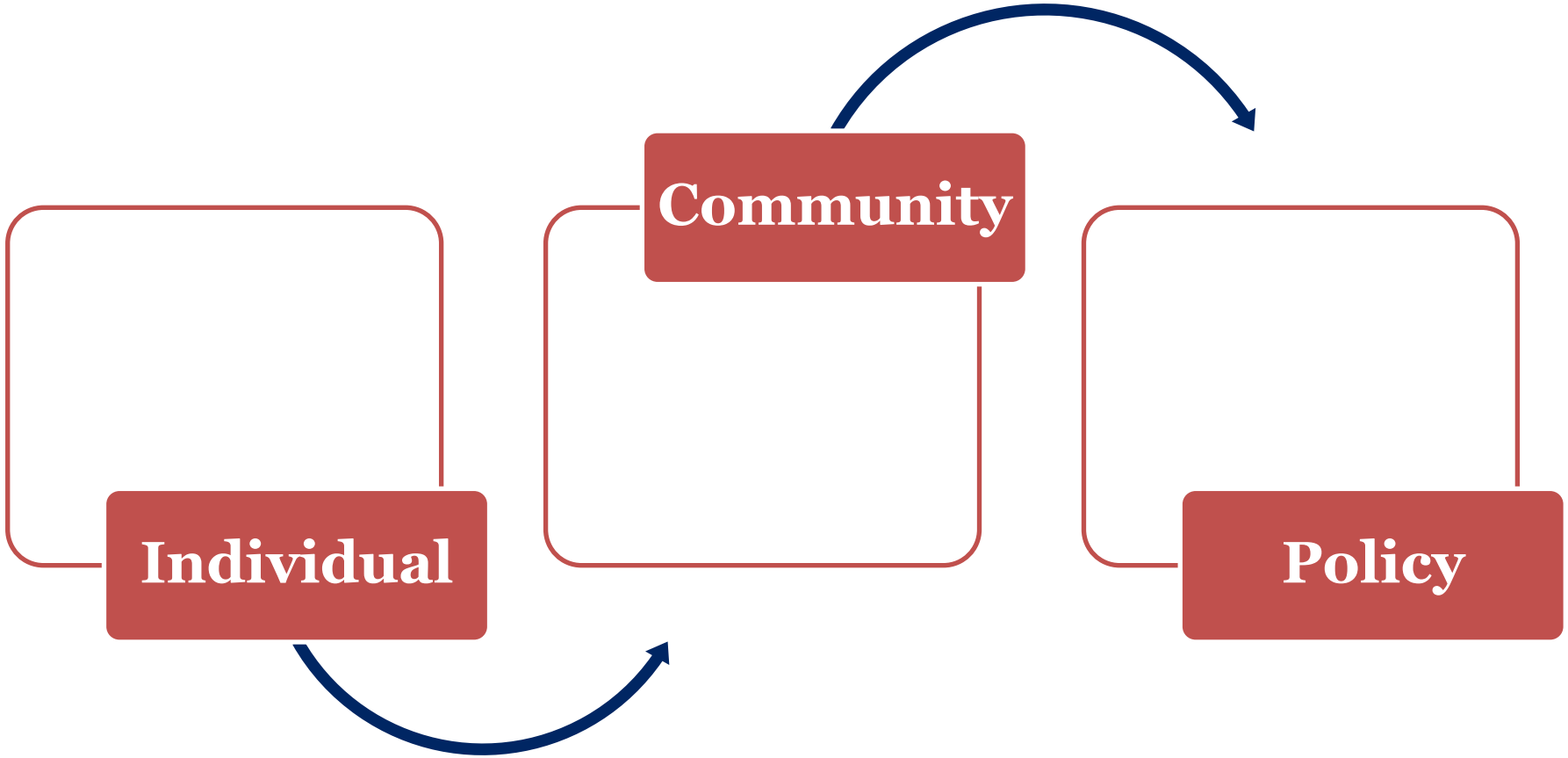
- "Connect the dots"
  - Helping concerned people see the relationship between public policy and outcomes for children and families
  - Building a base of people who will speak up when policies are harming children and families

A framework for influencing public policy



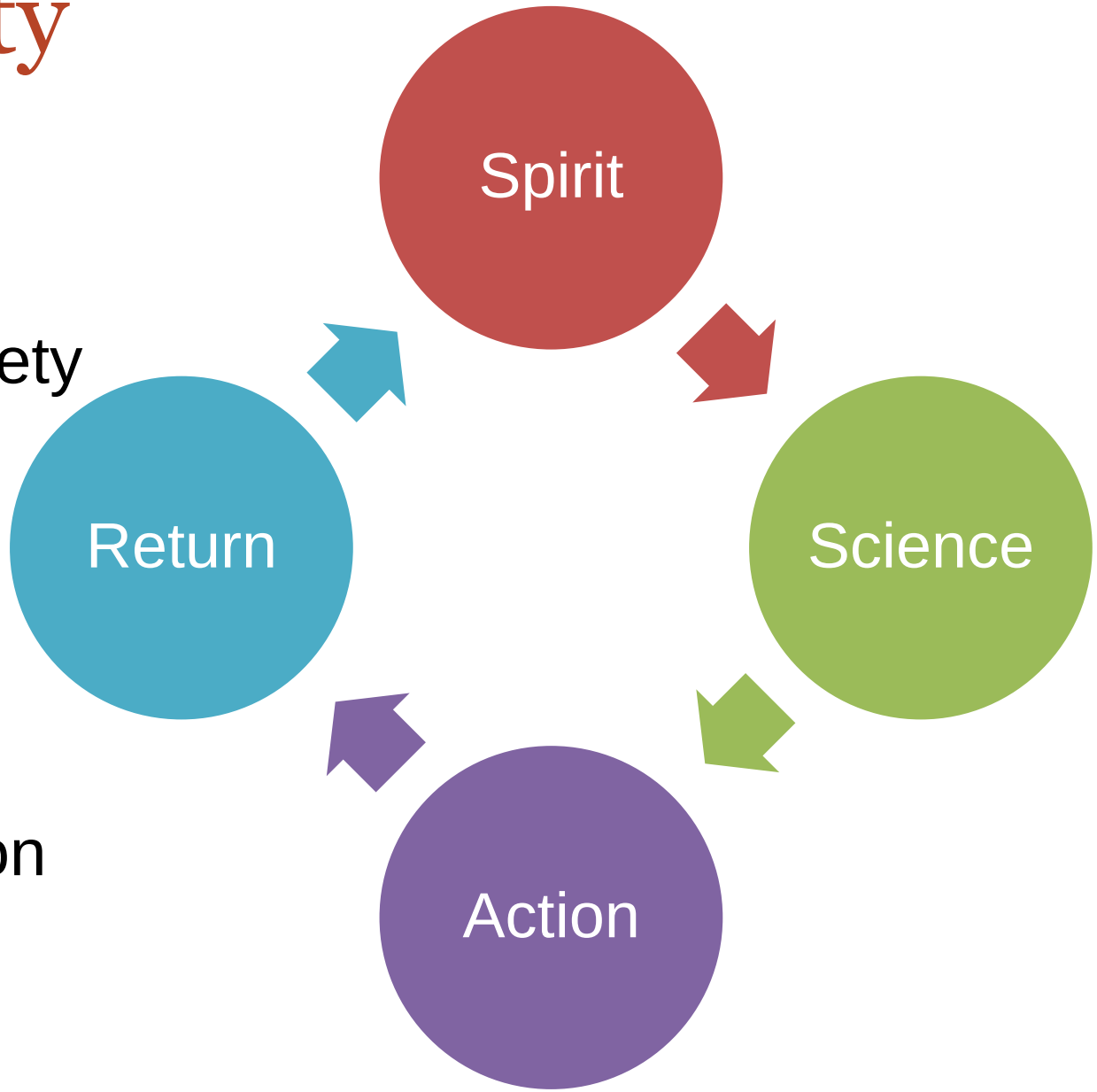
The Wellstone Triangle
Wellstone.org

Example: Bullying



Positive community norms

- Most Of Us
  - Center for Health and Safety Culture at Montana State University
  - Used for social norms change around drunk driving, substance abuse, now child abuse prevention



Positive community norms work related to protective factors

- West Virginia
  - Provide communication tools to prevent child maltreatment and promote positive outcomes for children in West Virginia by:
    - growing positive parenting norms supporting safe, stable nurturing relationships (broadly) – including questions about protective factors
    - creating safe sleeping environments and behaviors
    - reducing shaken-baby syndrome
- Wisconsin
  - "Wisconsin's in it for kids" with a focus on safe, stable, nurturing relationships

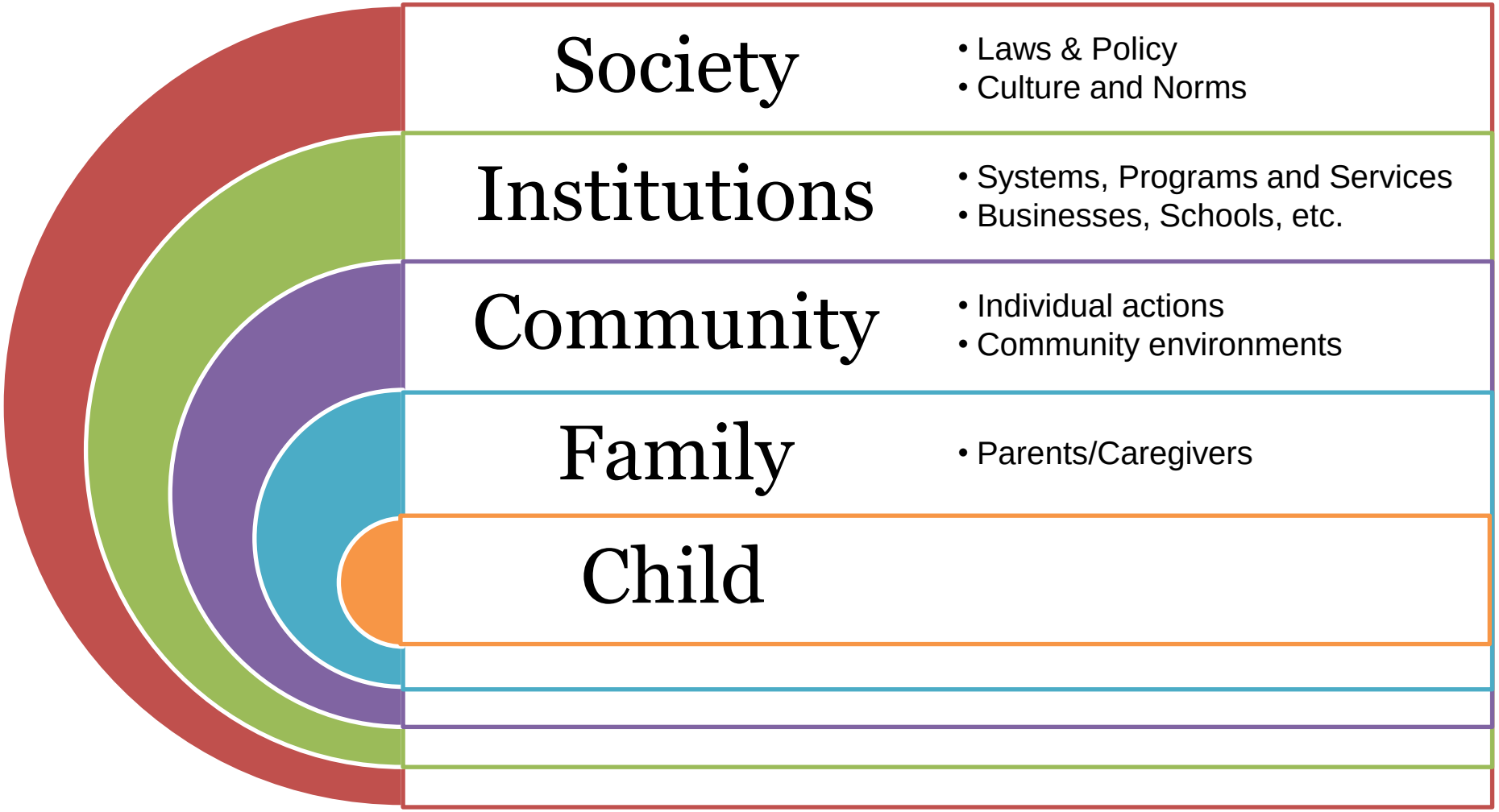
Strengthening Families and Essentials: Common goals

- Ensuring that children have access to **safe, stable and nurturing relationships** with parents and other direct caregivers

BY

- Shifting the environments around parents and caregivers to make them more supportive of children and families

The ecological model



Environments and context that support safe, stable and nurturing relationships

Safe, stable and nurturing relationships

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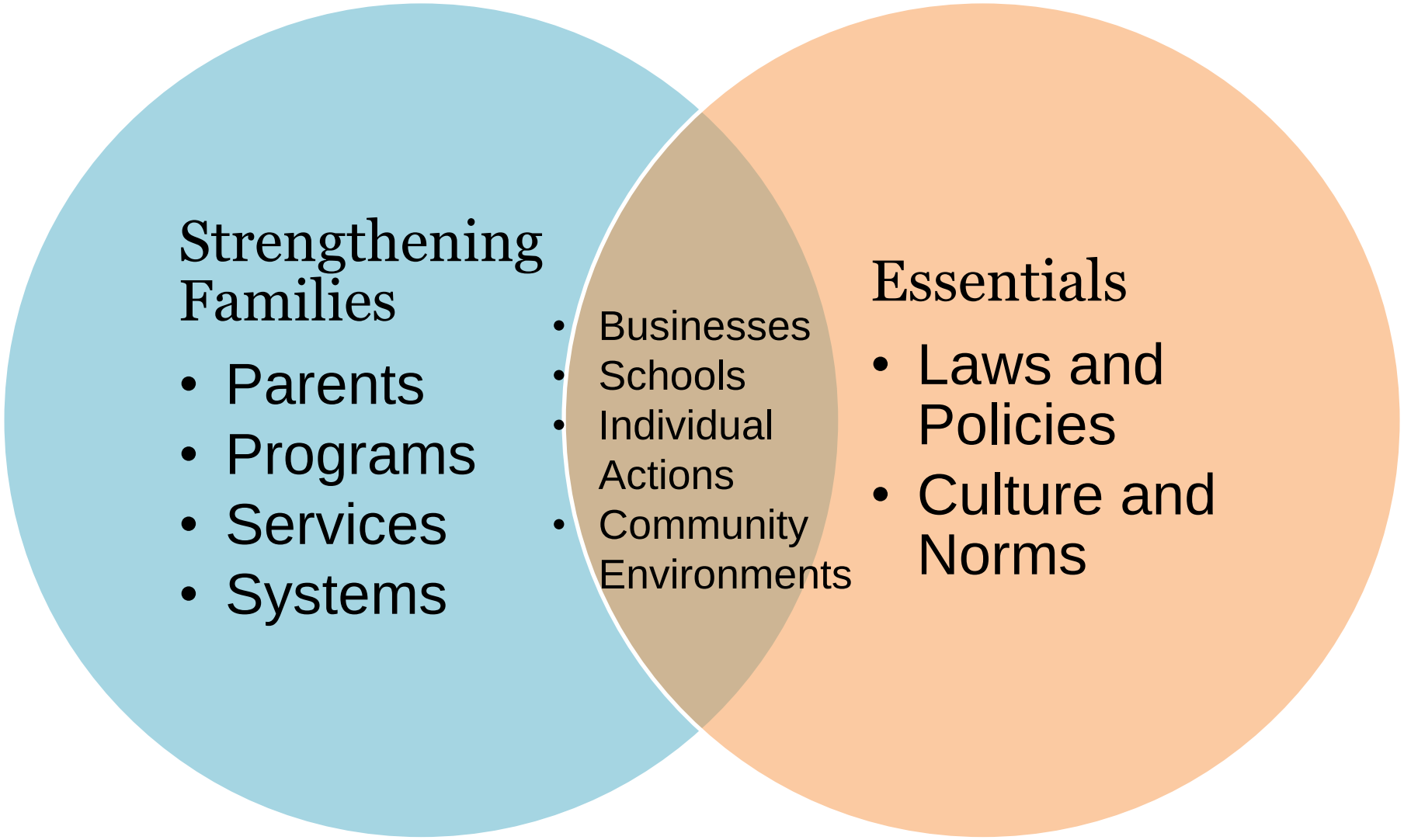
Overlapping foci



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Ideas into Action