



The Alberta Family Wellness Initiative:

Where Science Meets Real Life

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THE ALBERTA FAMILY WELLNESS INITIATIVE

- Created in 2007 by the Palix (formerly Norlien) Foundation
- Mobilizes the **core story of brain development** to better understand how early childhood experiences impact on health and well being throughout life, with a particular focus on mental health and addiction
- Funds and initiates many activities to bring about positive change in policy and practice for the benefit of all children and families based on this knowledge
- *Catalyst, broker, model, platform for cross-sector engagement - academia, health, human services, justice, education*

What is the knowledge base?

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child – synthesized body of knowledge



FrameWorks
Institute



The core story of child development:

- Brain architecture
- Serve and return
- Toxic stress
- Air traffic control

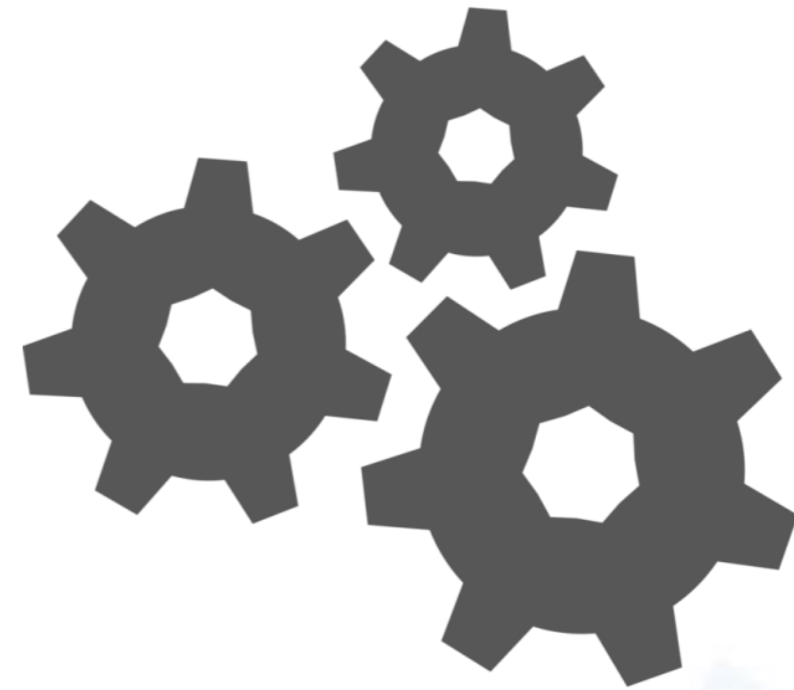
The Core Story of Brain Development:



AFWI Is Using an Emergent Strategy to Catalyze Systems Change

AFWI's work:

- Seeks to influence multiple complex systems (health, education, human services, justice) at many levels
- Engages the systems on multiple levels
- Employs an opportunistic and adaptive strategy
- Prominently features two approaches: knowledge translation and mobilization and relationship-building “change management”*



The following terms appear throughout these findings:

1. **“The knowledge”** refers to the synthesis of brain science (e.g., core story and quality addiction treatment) created, curated, or shared via AFWI activities
2. **“Systems”** refers to the configuration of interacting, interdependent parts (e.g., individuals, organizations, and institutions across multiple sectors) with which Albertans interact when seeking improved health and wellness, particularly in the early childhood development and addiction/mental health spaces



* Source: TruePoint Center. (2013). An Evaluation Framework for the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative: A Discussion Paper

AFWI

AFWI Theory of Action

Translated knowledge base

Identification of change agents

Knowledge mobilization activities

- Research on ECD & A/MH*
- Presentations & convenings
 - Symposia
- Program development
- Education & training
- Media & communications
 - Networking
 - Relationship building

Δ in change agents

- Relationships
- Narrative & language
- Understanding & beliefs
- Behaviors & practices

Δ in systems

- Resource allocation
- Institutions & organizations
- Government policy
- Professional practice

Improved health & wellness outcomes for children & families

Broad adoption of approaches to ECD & A/MH* rooted in the knowledge

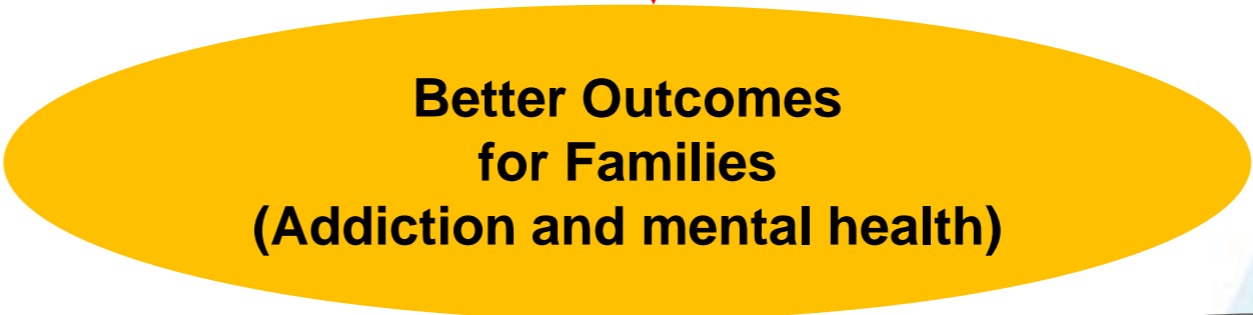
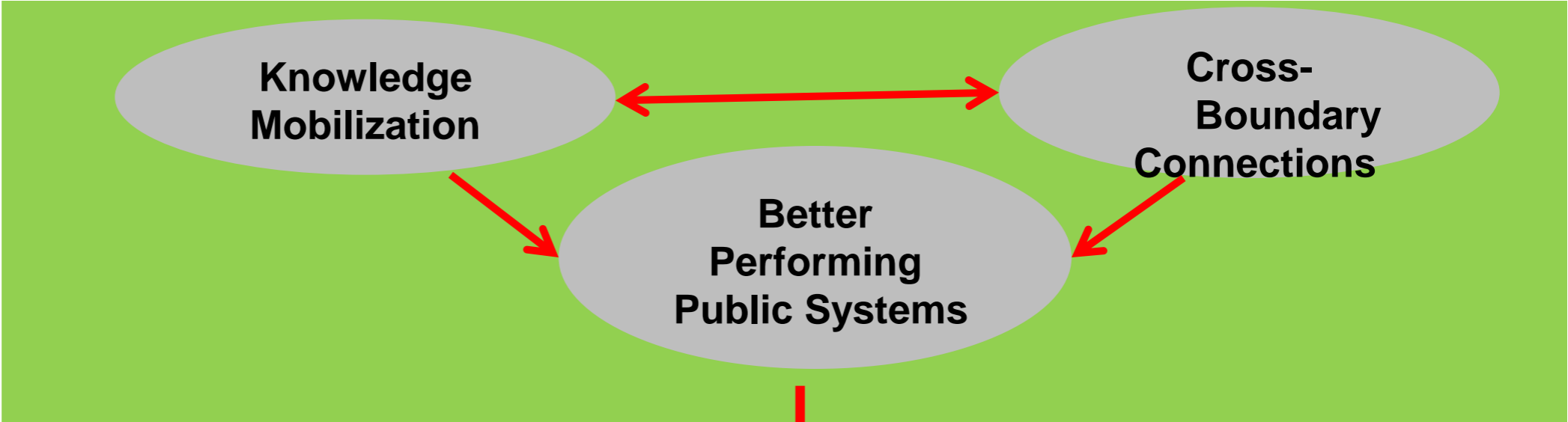
Assumptions

1. Understanding how the brain works and develops will overcome existing misperceptions and underlying beliefs and will support changes in individual behavior and systems related to ECD & A/MH*
2. Change agents identified by AFWI will act as drivers of systems change by spreading knowledge throughout systems (“ripple effect”)

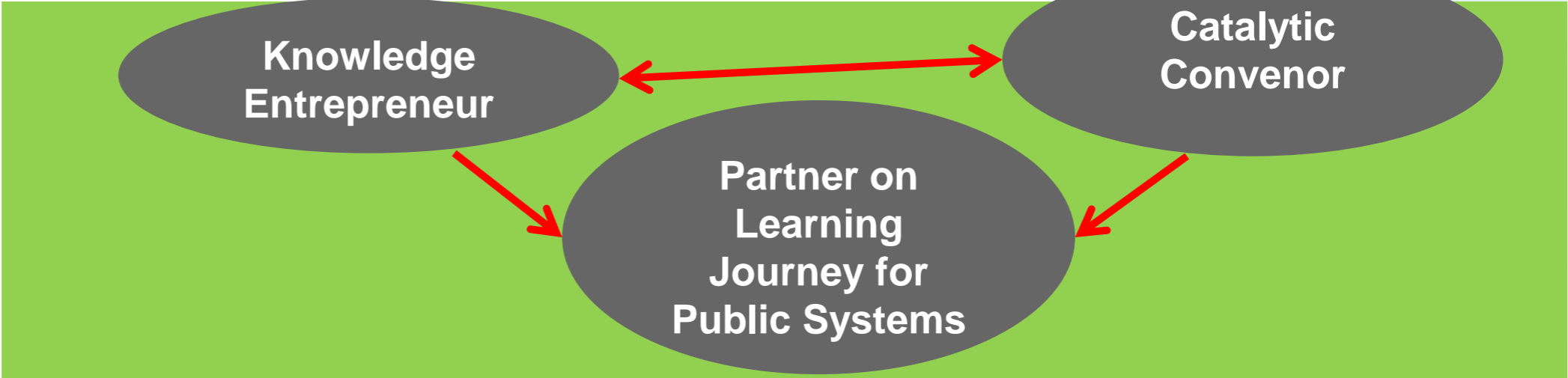


The Alberta Family Wellness Initiative: Theory of Philanthropy

Theory
of
Change



Theory
of
Philanthropy



AFWI Is Contributing to Changes in Individuals, Organizations and Systems





A Decade of Science Informing Policy

NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD

A Decade of Science Informing Policy

The Story of the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child



Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A DECADE OF SCIENCE INFORMING POLICY

Extending the Impact Globally

Even though the Council has focused explicitly on policies at the state level, the impact of its work has also reached outside U.S. borders. Nancy Mannix, patron and chair of the Alberta, Canada-based Norlien Foundation, found the Council's work to be exactly what she had been searching for to help stop cycles of addiction and poor mental health. She has invited many Council members to speak in Alberta, and the Council's publications have been referenced throughout official policy documents relating to human services and child development across the province. Following the Council's lead, Mannix also asked FrameWorks to study attitudes to addiction, early childhood development, and mental health in Alberta, thereby creating a valuable, cross-cultural knowledge base of scientific understanding.

"We believed there was a connection between childhood experiences and later adult health outcomes, but was there science to validate that?" Mannix says. "When we found this work, it was a foundational piece of what we needed." In 2007, the Norlien Foundation created the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative (AFWI), which is working to integrate neuroscience into Canadian policy and practice. A visit to the Initiative's website reveals multiple links to Council papers and videos. Recently AFWI staff collaborated with the Center and FrameWorks to produce their own video, *How Brains are Built: The Core Story of Brain Development*, which illustrates the concept

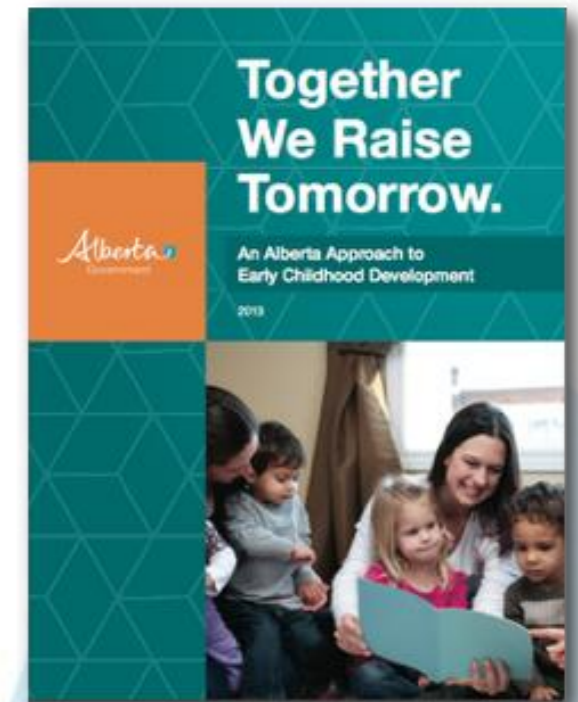
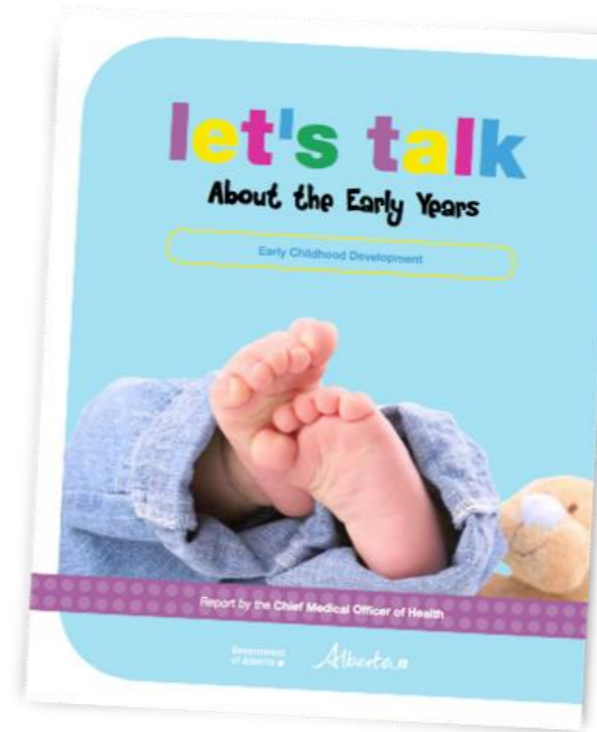
Presentations have provided an effective method of sharing the Council's work. From left to right, Megan R. Gunnar, Nathan A. Fox, and Judy L. Garfield present on the science of early childhood in Alberta, Canada.



14 NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD WWW.CDC.ONAFCCHILD.NET


Alberta policy documents integrate the core story

- Creating Connections
- Let's Talk About the Early Years
- Together We Raise Tomorrow
- Valuing Mental Health



Alberta Ministry of Human Services Contract requirements integrate the core story

Human Services
[PQR-001-CFS]



Human Services Contract Alignment Project
PQR Submission Office
7th Floor, Centre West
10035 – 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
TSJ 3E1


Submission Package

PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUEST ("PQR") NUMBER PQR-001-CFS

Human Services Child and Family Services PQR

Alberta Human Services

PQR Issue Date: January 4, 2016
PQR Closing Date and Time: February 5, 2016
no later than 14:00:59 Alberta Time
Project Lead: Patrick Campbell
Email and Contact: HS.CAP@gov.ab.ca



Foundations of Caregiver Support – June 2015

Pre-Qualification Request – SUBMISSION PACKAGE

Mandatory Requirements Checklist

General Qualifications Check the respective boxes (Met/Unmet) that align with the Proponent's qualifications.	Met	Unmet
Deliver proposed services in the Province of Alberta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comply with federal, provincial and municipal laws related to the service provision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be sensitive to the needs of Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) infants, children, and youth. Proponents must be willing to deliver services that are consistent with their cultures and values.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide services in scope of the Health Professions Act, and be a member in good standing of a professional body that is recognized in Alberta (Alberta College of Social Work).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When applying to provide contracted Child Intervention services and require accreditation, the proponent must either: be currently accredited by a Child and Family Services (CFS) approved accrediting body and commit to maintaining accreditation in good standing, or if not currently accredited, must apply for and achieve accreditation with a CFS approved accrediting body within 18 months of being issued work, as directed by CFS.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commit to aligning services with the values stated in the Family Intervention Framework for Children, Youth and Adults and the Child Intervention Practice Framework. (Attached)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commit to using the knowledge of the Foundations of Caregiver Support (Stress/Trauma, Child & Brain development, Loss and Grief) in the delivery of services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proponents are required to verify qualifications and experience before entering into any contract. Additional qualifications may be identified in Service Requests or in the contract.

"Experience" in the requirements means working experience and not education or otherwise stated.

Conclusions

- Impact would not be possible without the core story of brain development and investments in learning how to “use” it
- Critical ingredient in the AFWI Theory of Change
- Creates a common framework of understanding and common language to bridge different world views and catalyze social change