

Florida's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Impact Project: Mind Mapping Report



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Introduction

Mind mapping is a technique used to facilitate brainstorming for individuals or groups to capture and organize thoughts on a specific subject. Typically, at the core of the map is the main topic of discussion with thoughts and ideas connected by lines and arrows. Mind mapping results in a visual representation of the thoughts that relate to the topic of focus. Mind mapping technique was used during the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) impact project state meeting as a means of capturing ideas related to supporting child development within communities. Groups were given crayons, a large sheet of flip chart paper, a brief description of the purpose of mind mapping, and the following questions to be used as a guide for the activity:

- What is needed to allow young children to thrive developmentally?
- What are the current systems, programs, or policies (national, state, or local) in place to support what is needed? What is lacking?
- What action steps are most important or should be in place to fill in the gaps of supporting child development?



Participants

Stemming from various agencies that support the work of ECCS, participants included the state improvement team, evaluation team, and staff and parent representatives from the two place-based communities, New Town Success Zone in Jacksonville (NTSZ) and Liberty City, Miami (MCI). The state improvement team consisting of staff and parent partners from the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions (FAHSC), Florida Help Me Grow, the Office of Early Learning, and the ECCS evaluation team.

Results

Group 1. This group identified key drivers that might affect a child's development both negatively (negative direct influencers) and positively (positive direct influencers). The negative direct influencers listed included trauma, parent education, household dynamics, and economics. Furthermore, each of those factors has their own subsets. For instance, the group noted trauma is related to integrational racism, [drug and alcohol] addiction,

abuse, incarceration, poverty, and the loss of a loved one. As one of the participants stated, “*Trauma encompasses intergenerational racism and it encompasses violence...*” The subsets related to parent education are lack of resources and services, literacy, healthcare, and developmental awareness. For household dynamics, listed subsets of the negative direct influencer are domestic violence and community. Related to economics are unemployment, poverty, policy, housing, quality childcare, and nutrition.

Following the identification of the negative direct influencers, the group identified positive direct influencers of supporting child development. Some of the elements include healthcare, a healthy environment, friends/peers, supportive relationships/teachers, neighbors, faith community, coaches and mentors, positive role models, summer programs (camp), extracurricular activities (school), after-school programs, home visiting programs, early steps, advocacy, grandparents, and extended family members. Constructs that were subsets of positive direct influencers were also identified. For instance, the concept of healthy environment was related to neighborhood gardens, safety, and playground.



In addition to identifying positive and negative direct influencers, Group 1 selected the most impactful drivers of supporting child development as **parent education on child development, trauma awareness, quality childcare, and policy**, explaining that parent education as a child’s well-being largely depends on the actions of his or her parents. It was mentioned that if a parent is aware or educated on certain aspects of their child’s development such as the detrimental effects of trauma, their child may have a greater chance of developing successfully. Additionally, it was stated that not every child is enrolled in childcare but are instead at home with their parents. Parent education allows for parents to know how to provide an enriching environment for their child to develop successfully. For quality childcare, Group 1 discussed the deterring issue of childcare cost. It is rather unfortunate when sometimes “*all that is keeping a child from qualifying for quality child care is \$50*”. It was stated that it is imperative to find a solution to reducing childcare costs. Lastly, Group 1 discussed that many sustainable improvements to early childhood systems could be made by implementing new policy implications. Group members mentioned the importance of voicing concerns to state legislators for actions to take place.

“... if we want to affect the child, that’s where we got to start and so you can build in the parent education in those childcare centers. Parent engagement systems should be setup.”

Group 2 identified parents/home, the community, and childcare providers as direct influencers of supporting child development. As it was determined by group members that parents in the home is where child development begins, the indirect influencers of parent/home included economic status, educating parents, resources, services, and support system. Most notably, it was stated that in order to educate parents, there needs to be an understanding of family dynamics, knowledge of the parent’s literacy level, individualized planning, and a level of trust. As with parent/home, members of Group 2 also included the indirect impact of a support system to the direct influencer of the community. Group 2 mentioned that the parents’ interactions at their place of employment and worship, along with their interaction with their friends and family



contribute to their support system.

The last direct influencer noted was the impact of childcare providers on supporting child development. Child care rules and regulations, quality of services, the reality of childcare providers' jobs, and owner buy-in influence childcare providers. For instance, overpopulated classrooms seem to be a problematic issue for childcare providers. Due to certain schools and daycare centers being for-profit businesses, quantity may take precedence over quality. In order to make a profit, the teacher-student ratios are often skewed resulting in a shift of focus to safety rather than quality. Group 2 determined that **childcare owner buy-in and**

access to services are the most important action steps in supporting

child development. Gaining owner buy-in to provide quality improvement training to childcare providers, early childhood training before and during employment to childcare teachers, and providing incentives to childcare teachers are potential solutions noted by group members to support child development.

Improving social services was also noted as an important action step. Services refer to the available programs offered in the community that aid in the flourishing of families. Group 2 noted that parents need to be made aware of the type of services available in their community, the location of the services, and how to reach the program to begin receiving services.

Group 3. Through their discussion Group 3 identified the role of activities, policies, funding, and statues, value, time, parents, caregivers, and extended family, friends, programs and safety as direct influencers of supporting child development. Safety, a direct influencer that was discussed in depth, was broken into 3 ideas including real versus perceived, security in self and familial setting and school and neighborhood.

It was mentioned by group members that the perception of living in a violent community can be positively influenced by protective factors such as the presence of a supportive family and friends. Similarly, programs was categorized by the type of program: home visiting, placed-based initiatives, early learning, healthcare, psychosocial, educational and experimental and by the characteristics of a program: high quality and affordable. Additionally, the group mentioned indirect influencers that impact child development. These include economics such as job opportunities for the parents, having access to quality basic necessities like transportation and stable housing, a relatively thriving community, and relationships with peers and teachers.

Group 3 reported that **programs, parents, caregivers, and extended family, and policies, funding, and statues** as the most important influencers in which the ECCS team can intervene on to support child development. The participants in group 3 noted that conducting proper evaluations should be an action step under policies, funding, and statues. Action steps in relation to parents, caregivers, and extended family included encouraging caregivers to be transparent about barriers and services received, conducting focus groups

“Quality in early childcare sets the foundation for learning.”

“So we have a lot of expectations, our expectations don’t match their compensation, it doesn’t match the professional development.”



“I think there’s a lot of different types of activity. You want interactive activities between the caregivers and the child. You also want the child just to be able to play on a playground or have time to run around outside.”

to gather the thoughts of the caregivers in the two place-based communities, and the ECCS team building relationships with the caregivers residing in the community. Last of all, programs were mentioned as an important influencer. Participants stated holding collaboration meetings, identifying barriers with the help of the transparency from caregivers, defining rules, creating MOUs, identifying the audience in where change is needed, and making efforts through an equity approach to support caregivers as potential action steps.

“Because even if you’re in a violent neighborhood, if you feel like you’ve got somebody that’s protecting you, that makes you able to thrive....so that’s part of the mental health aspect of feeling safe, a child has to feel safe and that’s sometimes provided by parents, provided by peers but it’s the mindset.”

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FL ECCS Evaluation: <http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/chiles/eccs>

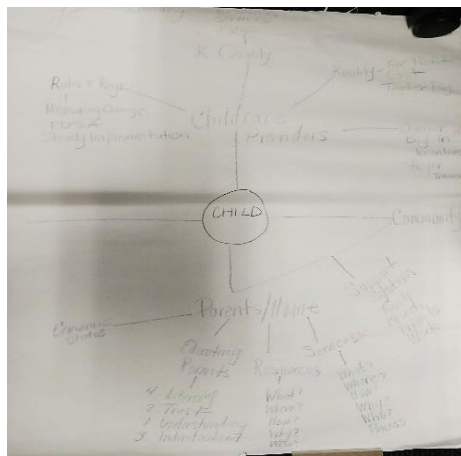
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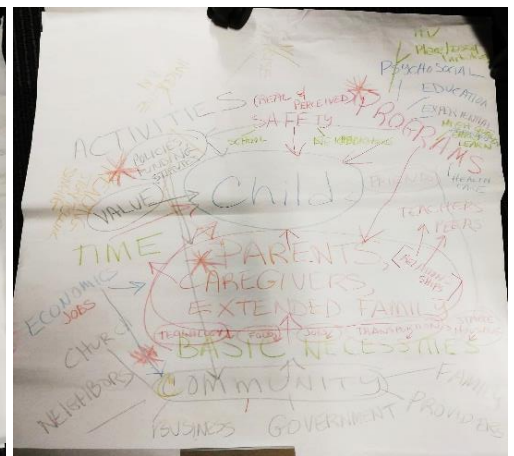
Appendix 1: Mind Maps



Group 1

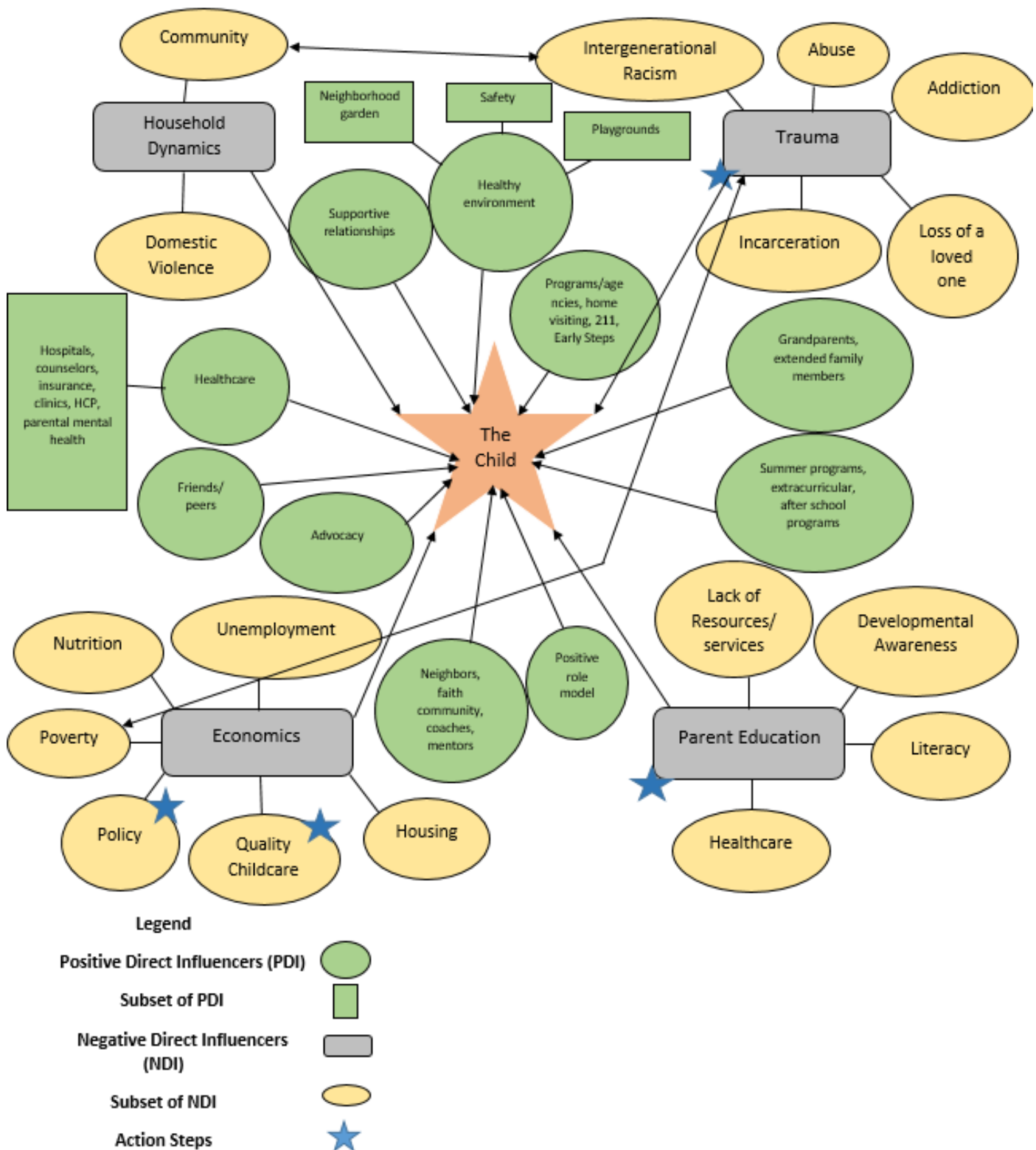


Group 2

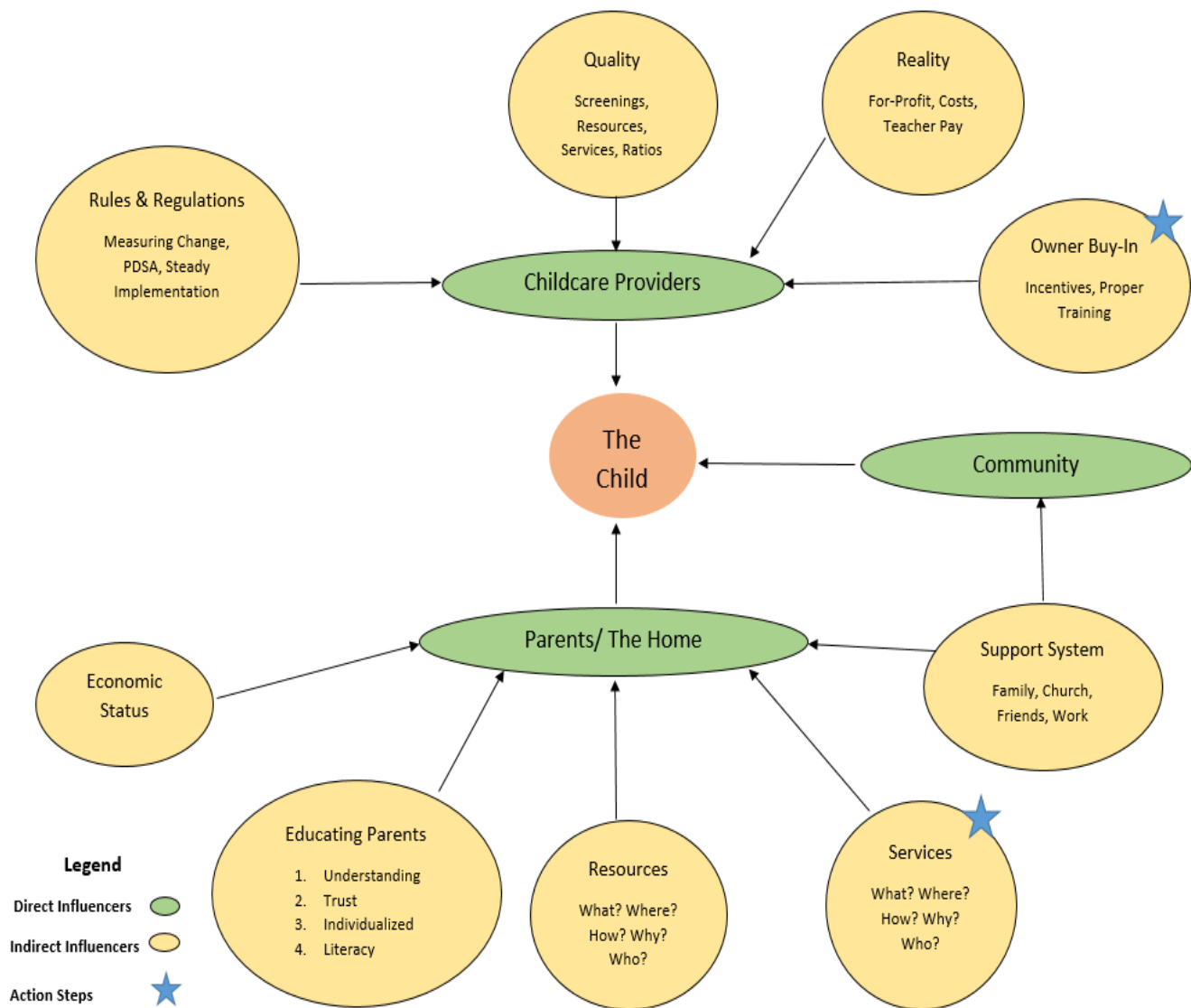


Group 3

Appendix 2: Graphic Representation of Group 1 Map



Appendix 3: Graphic Representation of Group 2 Map



Appendix 4: Graphic Representation of Group 3 Map

