



**Executive Functioning Across Generations © :
Building Core Capabilities for Life**

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Institute for
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Goals

- Learn about executive function and self-regulation skills
 - What they are/why they're important
- Share the Executive Functioning Across Generations[©] model
 - Design & results
 - Virtual home visiting adaptations
- Policy and systems considerations
- Next steps and how to get involved







WE BELIEVE

Families, no matter what their form,
are the foundation of strong communities.

OUR PURPOSE IS TO

Clear the path for family success.

WE WILL PURSUE THIS BY

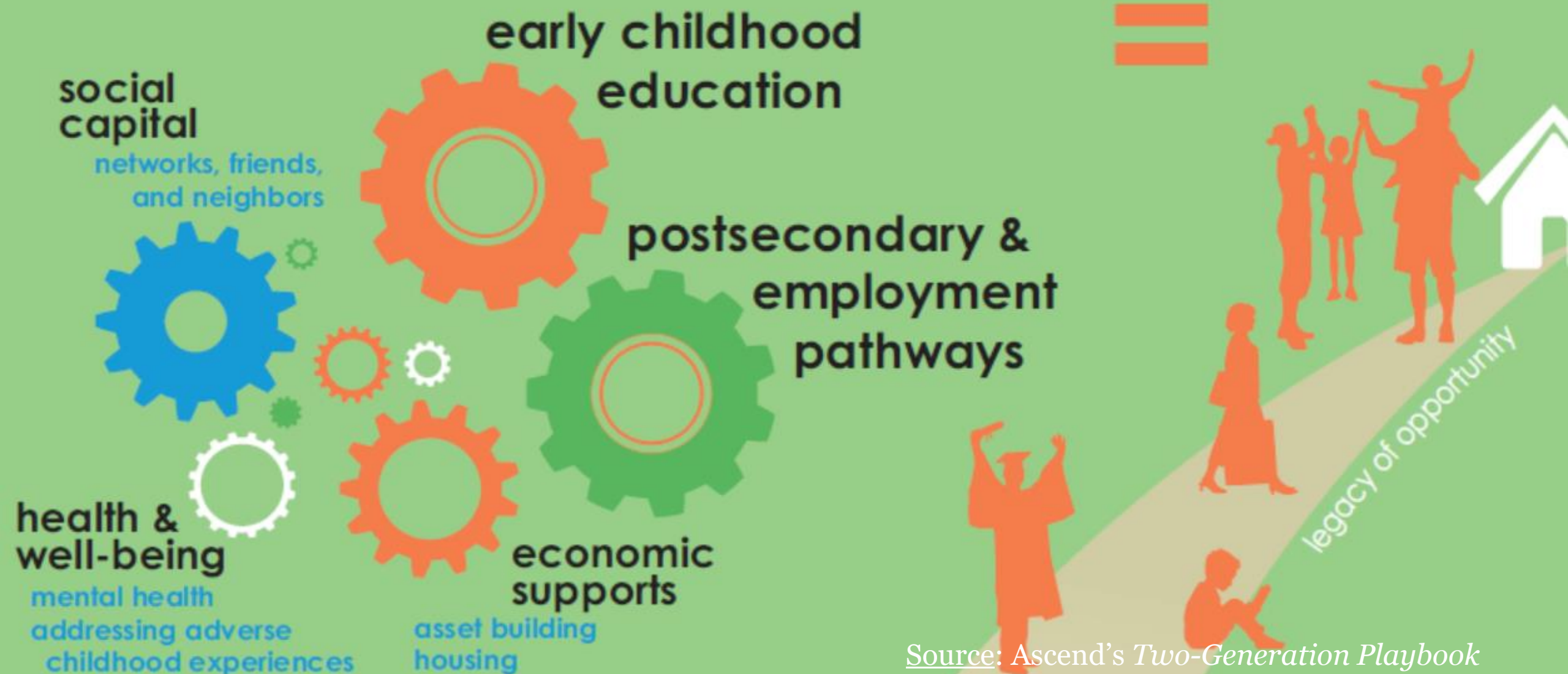
Championing the two-
generation approach

Preventing and
overcoming adverse
childhood experiences

Demonstrating
leadership in thought
and action

Building partnerships
based on trust

Two-generation approaches put the **WHOLE FAMILY** on a path to economic security.



Source: Ascend's *Two-Generation Playbook*

Executive Function/Self-Regulation Skills

- Harvard Center on the Developing Child calls EF/SR Skills “Core Capabilities for Life”
- Key skills needed to:
 - Learn how to learn, succeed in school
 - Make and keep friends
 - Develop healthy relationships
 - Make healthy choices
 - Get and job, keep a job
 - Nurture healthy children

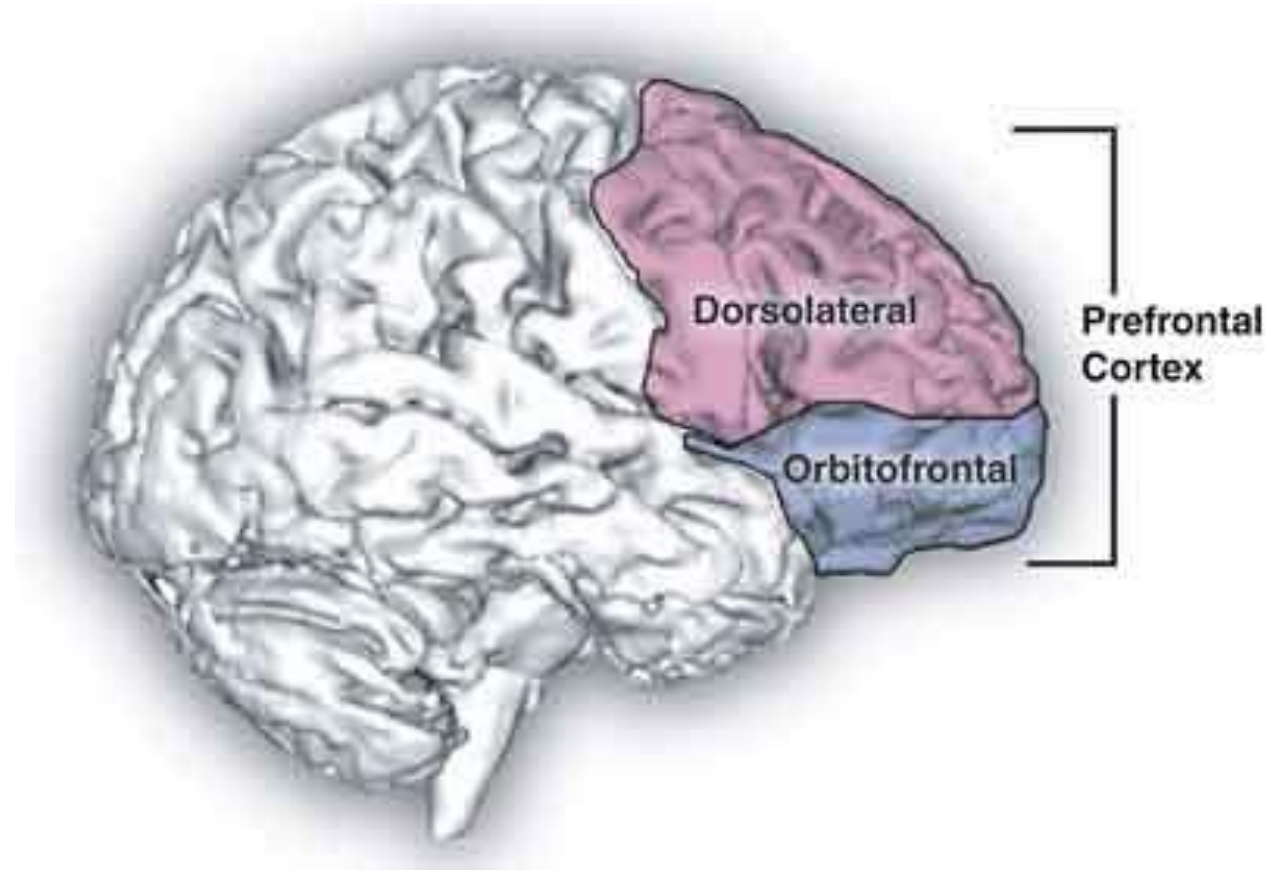


Executive Function and Self-Regulation

- Working memory (holding onto information while using it)
- Flexibility (moving between tasks or between task rules)
- Inhibition (suppressing a dominant response)
- Persistence
- Delaying gratification



Where is self-regulation located in the brain?



Executive Function Is Language-Based

- Importance of Internal State Words for EF
 - Perception
 - Physiology
 - Volition/ability
 - Emotion/affect
 - Cognition/Mental state
 - Obligation/moral judgment
- Ability to connect the ISWs to Personal Narratives



Personal Narratives

- Stories that we tell about ourselves and our experiences.
- First narratives to develop.
- Important to the development of self awareness and executive functioning.
- Link external events with our feelings, thoughts, and reactions through the use of internal state words.



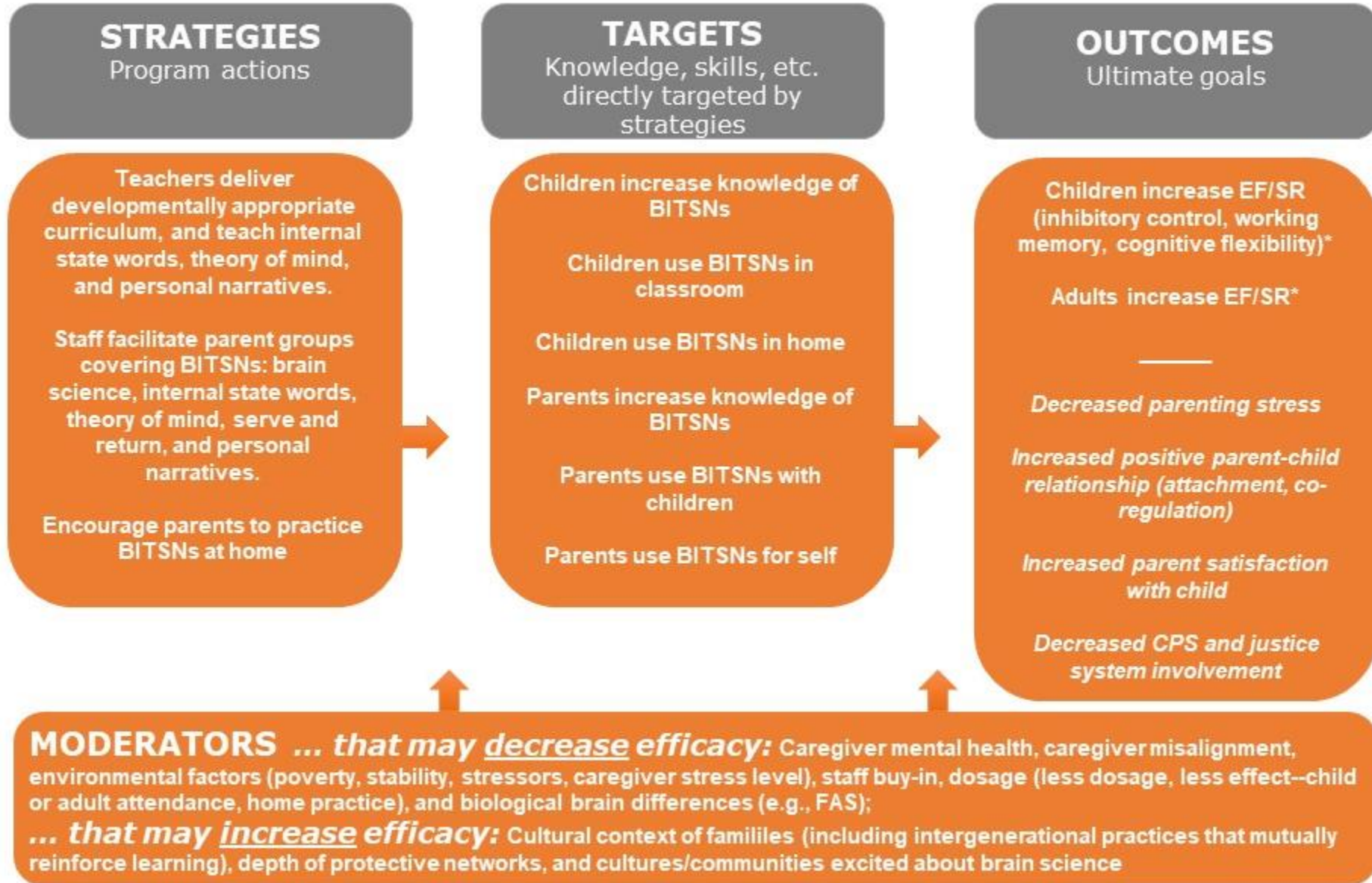
Model Description – Core Model Strategies

Executive Functioning Across Generations® is a two-generation (2Gen) intervention designed to boost executive functioning with children and parents

- **Children’s Curriculum (3-5 year olds)**
 - Daily delivery in groups of 5 children, 26 lessons
 - 6-8 weeks for delivery, 45 minutes per day
 - Focus on acquisition of Internal State Words and development of Personal Narratives
 - Books, songs, activities
- **Parents’ Curriculum**
 - Group delivery, 3 sessions, about 2 hours with breaks and food
 - Help parents learn practical brain science
 - Focus on recognizing and supporting children’s acquisition and use of Internal State Words and development of Personal Narratives
 - Curriculum familiarizes parents with types of activities used with children



Executive Functioning Across Generations – The Family Partnership



**Outcomes with existing measures*

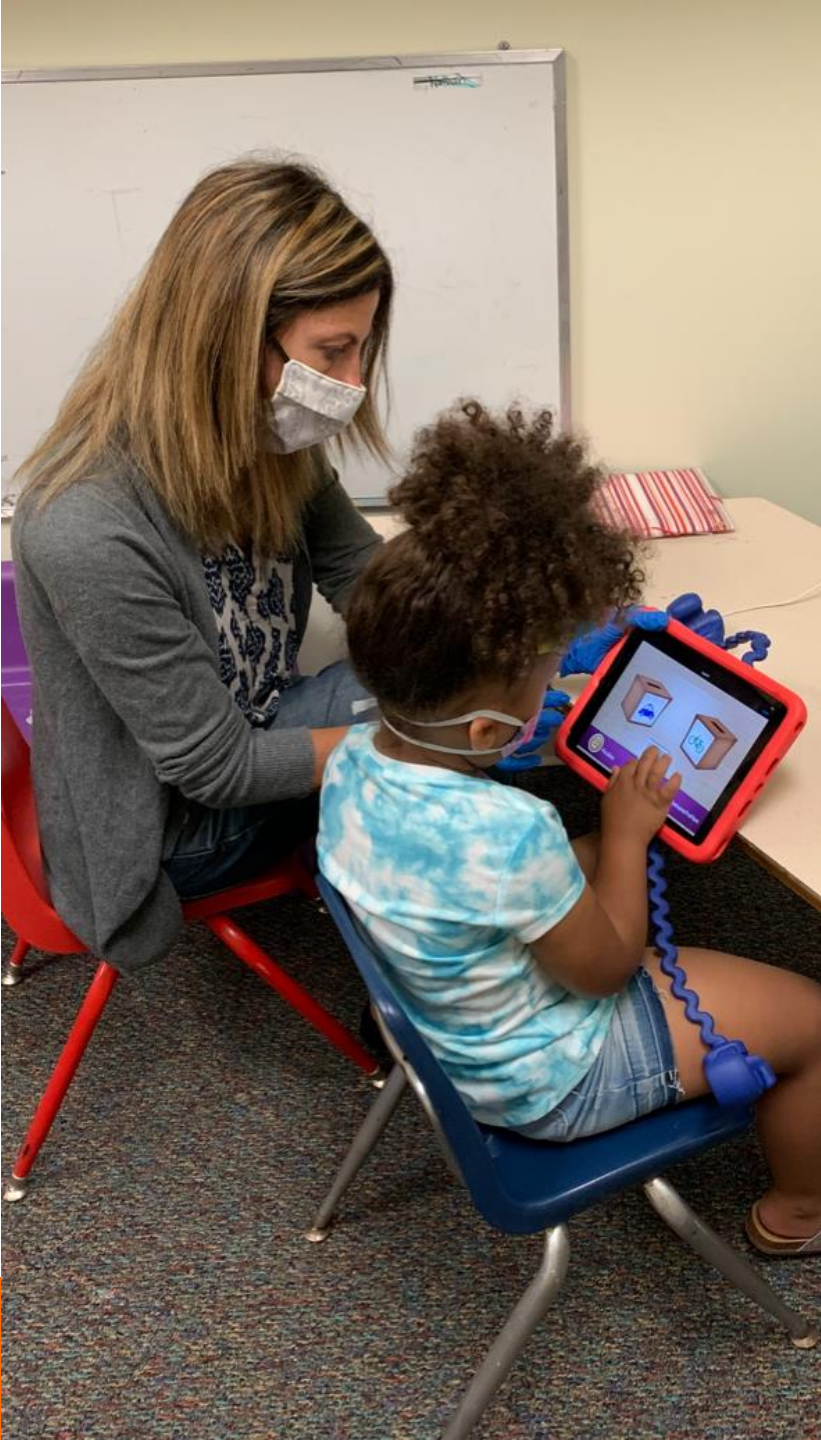
New Evaluation Tool: MEFS

Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS)

- Developed by Reflection Science at University of Minnesota; Stephanie Carlson, Ph.D. and Phil Zelazo, Ph.D.
- Tablet-based app
- 5 minutes to take
- No minimum interval before reuse
- Only early learning readiness assessment usable with children as young as two years old
- Base pricing \$10/child/year, but as low as \$5/child/year with volume

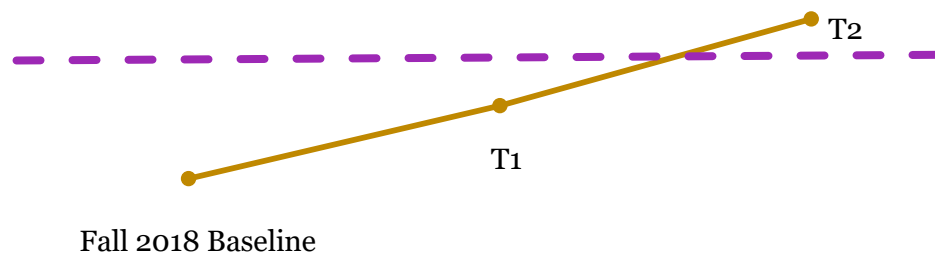


How It Works

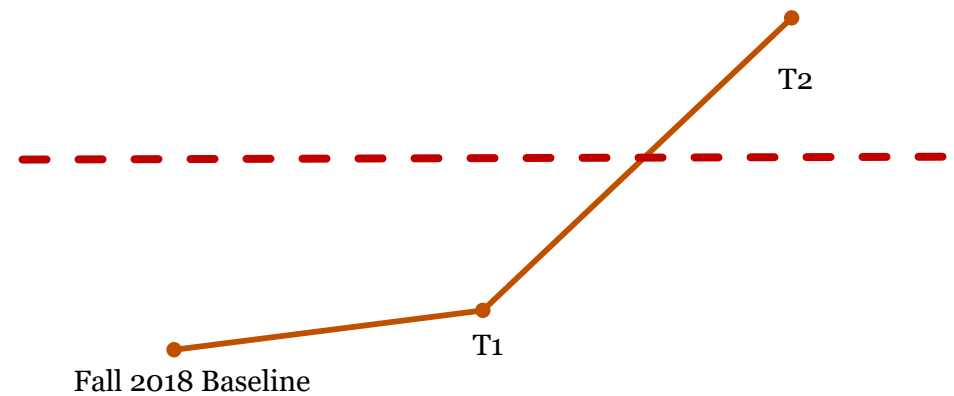


Key Findings with Children in Third Pilot: *MEFS Scores Increased*

MEFS National Percentile

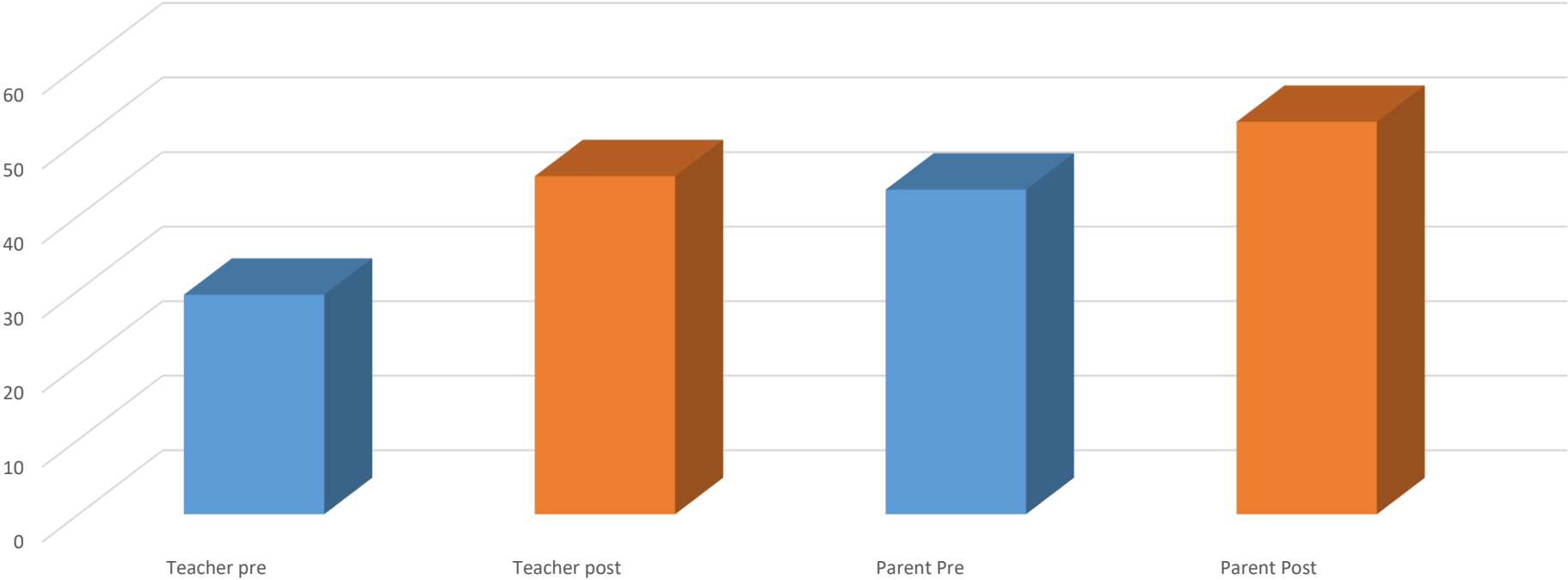


MEFS Standard Score



Key Findings with Children in Third Pilot – Language

Internal State Word Use Increased



Chris Wing (2019)



Key Findings with Children in Third Pilot - Language

- ISW increases were statistically significant
- Teachers observed larger increases in ISWs than parents did
- 70% of children demonstrated increased use of the developmental elements of personal narration

Teachers' Learnings with the Children's Curriculum

- Teachers reported that children:
 - The children liked the curriculum
 - Were talking more, and more expressive of their feelings
 - Expressing a broader range of emotions
- Teachers pointed to specific activities that the children enjoyed, such as the feeling wheel and the books
- Teachers emphasized the importance of keeping groups to 5 children – groups with 7-8 children were very difficult to engage around the lessons



Key Findings with Parents (First Parent Pilot)

- Parents were very interested in the brain science about EF
- Language had to be tailored to ensure it was accessible
- Increased intimacy with each other and with staff
- Parents who asked for help from staff for the first time (resources and supports)
- Parents voicing that children were bringing home skills learned in the classroom



Learnings from Parenting Curriculum Facilitators

- Some of the scientific content was new to one of the facilitators, and also had to be “translated” for greater accessibility for parents
- Group discussion was perhaps even more valuable than the didactic curriculum content
- The facilitators felt that the curriculum could be incorporated into group work with parents and wouldn’t necessarily have to follow in such a structured way.
- Parents had a hard time generating other emotional vocabulary than basic words, but they did start using them more frequently at home
- Facilitators reported that this was the most successful parent group they had held at their site



Inexpensive to Adopt

- **Initial Training** - \$2,500 for full day training with TFP team
- **Curriculum Guide** - \$50/copy, need one per children's group facilitator and one each for parenting group facilitators (min. 2)
- **Weekly Coaching Sessions** - \$100/week x 8 weeks = \$800
- **Children's Books and Supplies** - \$100 for books/classroom + \$200/classroom for supplies
- **Data Collection Incentives** - \$200 per teacher, \$200/group facilitator, \$50/parent for pre/post collection
- **MEFS Training and Per Child Fees** – Modest, but TBD shortly.
- **Evaluator** - \$100/hr. at 20 hrs. = \$2,000



Why Innovate?



Social Innovation

Good Design...

- Honors reality.
- Creates ownership.
- Builds power.
 - George Aye, Greater Good Studios



Institute for Child & Family Well-Being

The mission of the Institute for Child and Family Well-Being is to improve the lives of children and families with complex challenges by implementing effective programs, conducting cutting-edge research, engaging communities, and promoting systems change.

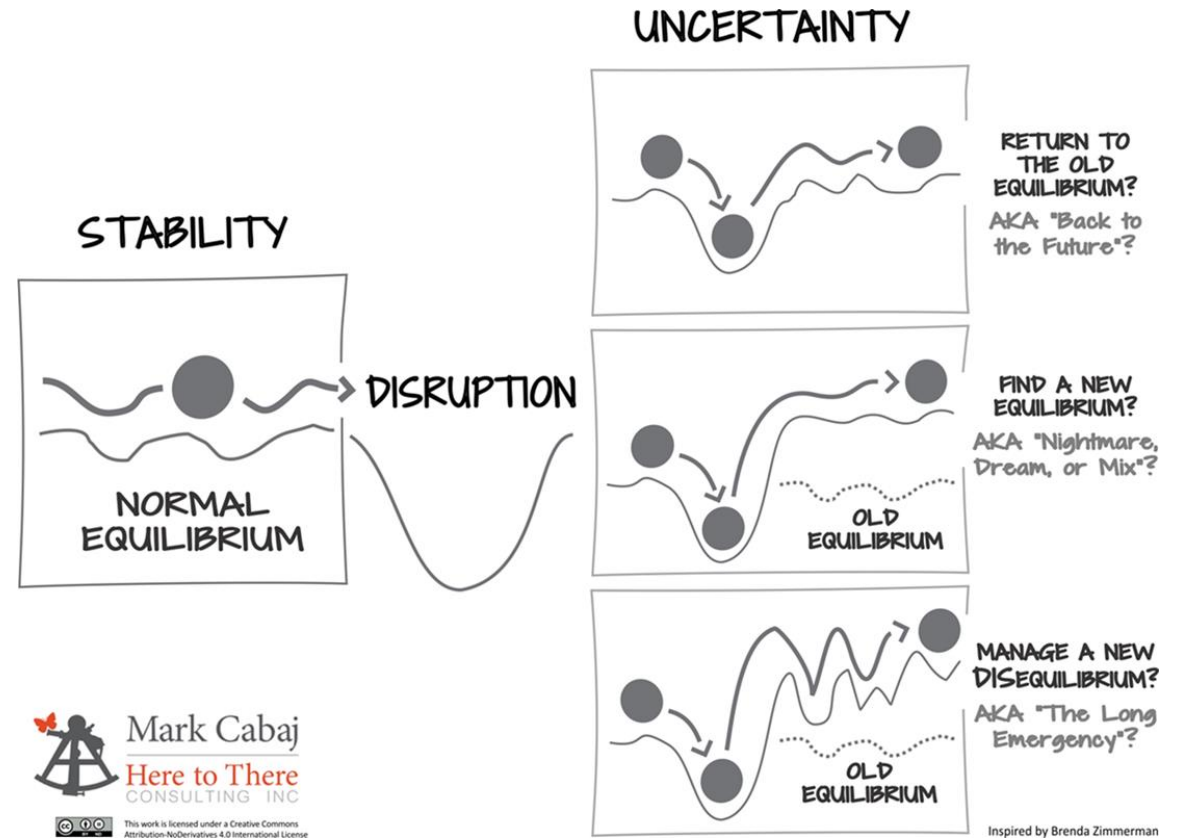


Uncertainty, Executive Functioning, and Innovation

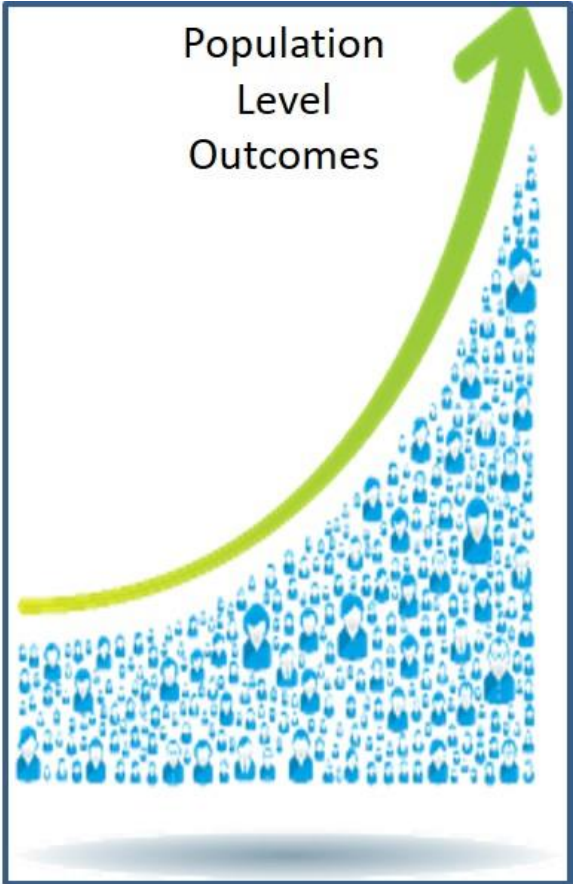
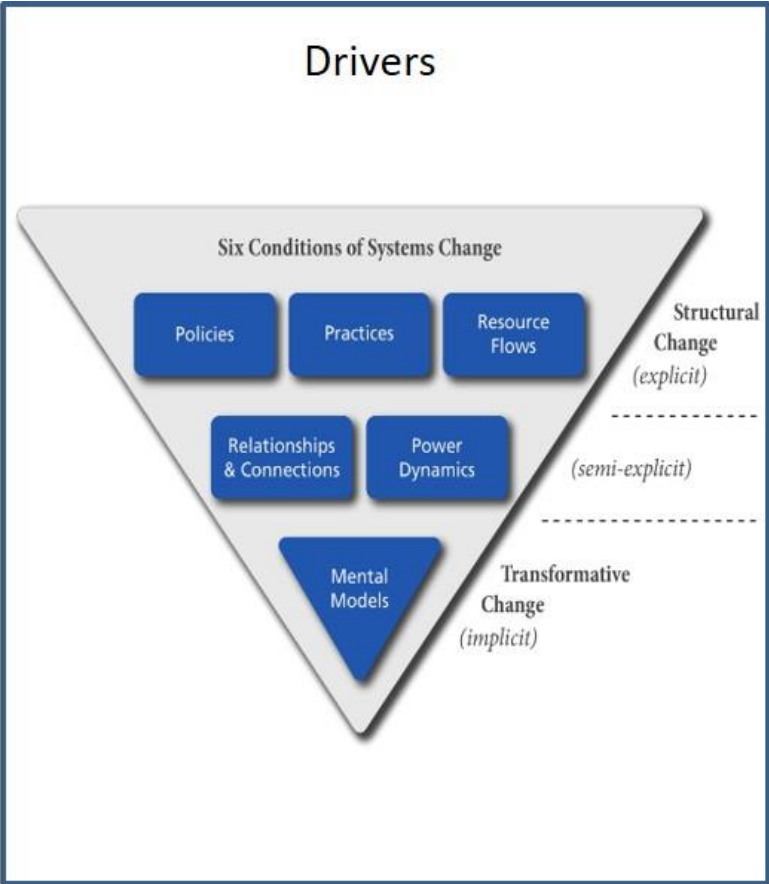
Families under tremendous economic and health related stress impacting their Executive Functioning.

The general population is more willing to engage in virtual services that they weren't before.

- In a survey of 84 parents receiving home visiting, treatment foster care, or child welfare services 41% indicated that they *prefer* virtual services.



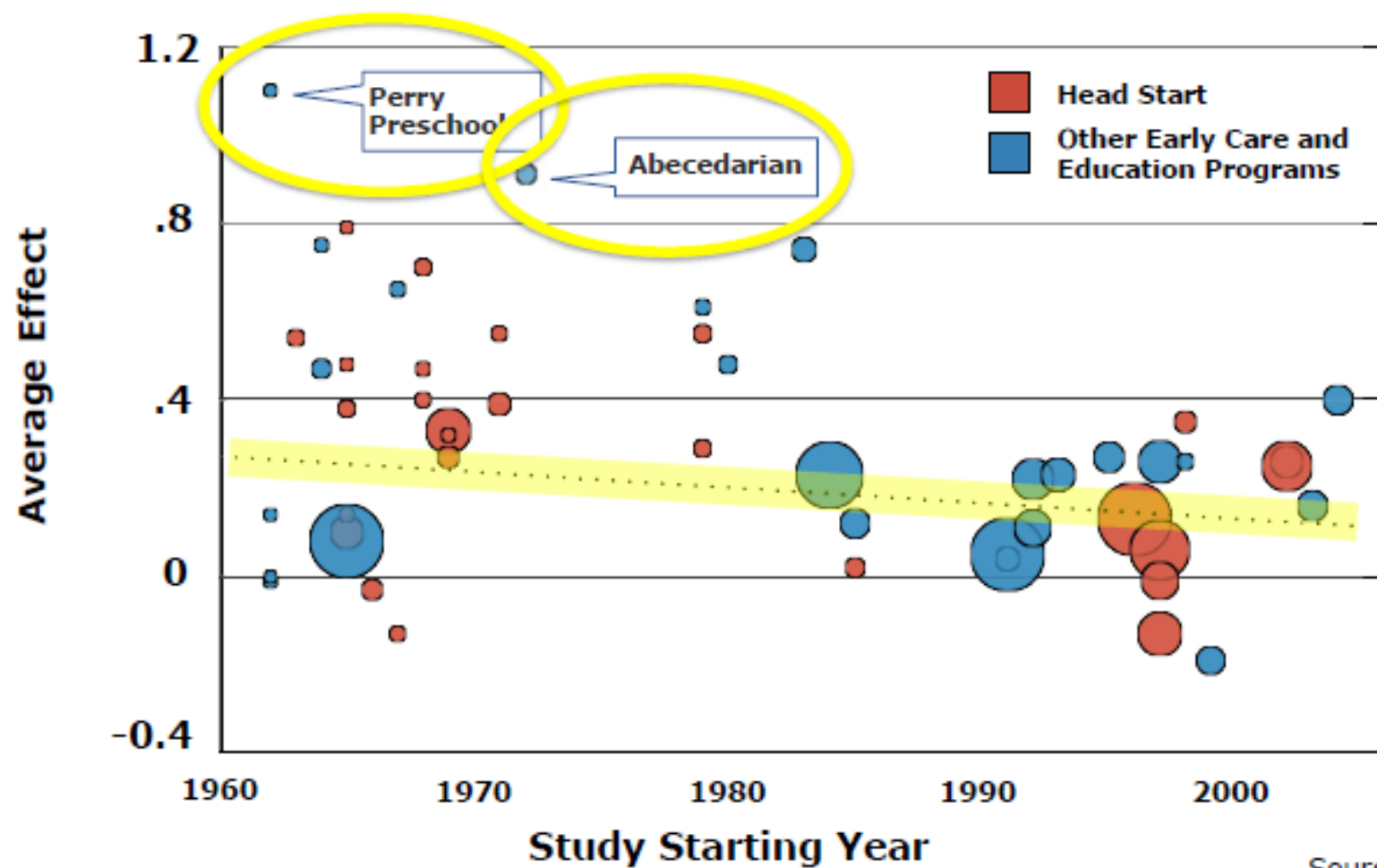
Innovation and Systems Change



Mark Cabaj, Here to There Consulting Inc



The Evidence Base on 50 Years of Early Childhood Programs: Proof of Concept But Modest Effects



Source: Duncan & Magnuson (2013)

Ongoing Development

- Worked with Harvard Center on the Developing Child-Frontiers of Innovation and three partners in NE, WI, and DE to refine TOC (November 2019)
 - Created TOCs for Home Visiting and Parenting Group Adaptations
 - Revised adaptations for COVID-19 and virtual service delivery
- Refined both child and parent curriculum (Q1 2020, Q3 2020)
- Scaling Up: Increase number of pilots for original 2Gen EF model (Q3-4 2020)
 - Family Service of San Antonio
- Test virtual adaptations for home visiting and parenting programs – Fall 2020-Spring 2021
 - Current focus: virtual service delivery strategies



IDEAS Framework Guiding Principles

- Precision in program definition & measurement, which allows us to
 - Identify who benefits most and least (segmentation)
 - Develop strategies to address specific needs/issues within larger programs (modularity)
- Fast-cycle iteration: testing, learning, and refining rapidly
- Co-creation: bringing together expert knowledge from science, practice, systems, and community
- Shared learning: across a network using common measures



Virtual Home Visiting Adaptation - Why Do This?

- EF is a core capability for life – *caregiver needs to stay on track with goals, get a job, keep a job, keep cool, be flexible, provide consistent parenting*
- Understanding EF as an enhancement of what home visiting already offers
- EF helps counteract ACEs and build resiliency
- We frame it as a BOOST for the parent and potentially for the child
- Something for “older” kids in the household, ages 3-5



Virtual Home Visiting Adaptation

- National partners: Nebraska Children’s Home Society, Children’s Wisconsin, HCDC-FOI, Children’s Home Society of America
- TFP owns the design; Chris Wing is our curriculum developer
- Pilot exclusively with HFA sites in Fall 2020
- Feasibility Study
 - Can the intervention be implemented?
 - Is it acceptable to clients?
- “Start Small and Learn” Philosophy: Fast Cycle Evaluation; Amy Susman-Stillman of Future Services Institute is our evaluator
- Additional statewide MN pilots planned for 2021 (no EBP requirement)

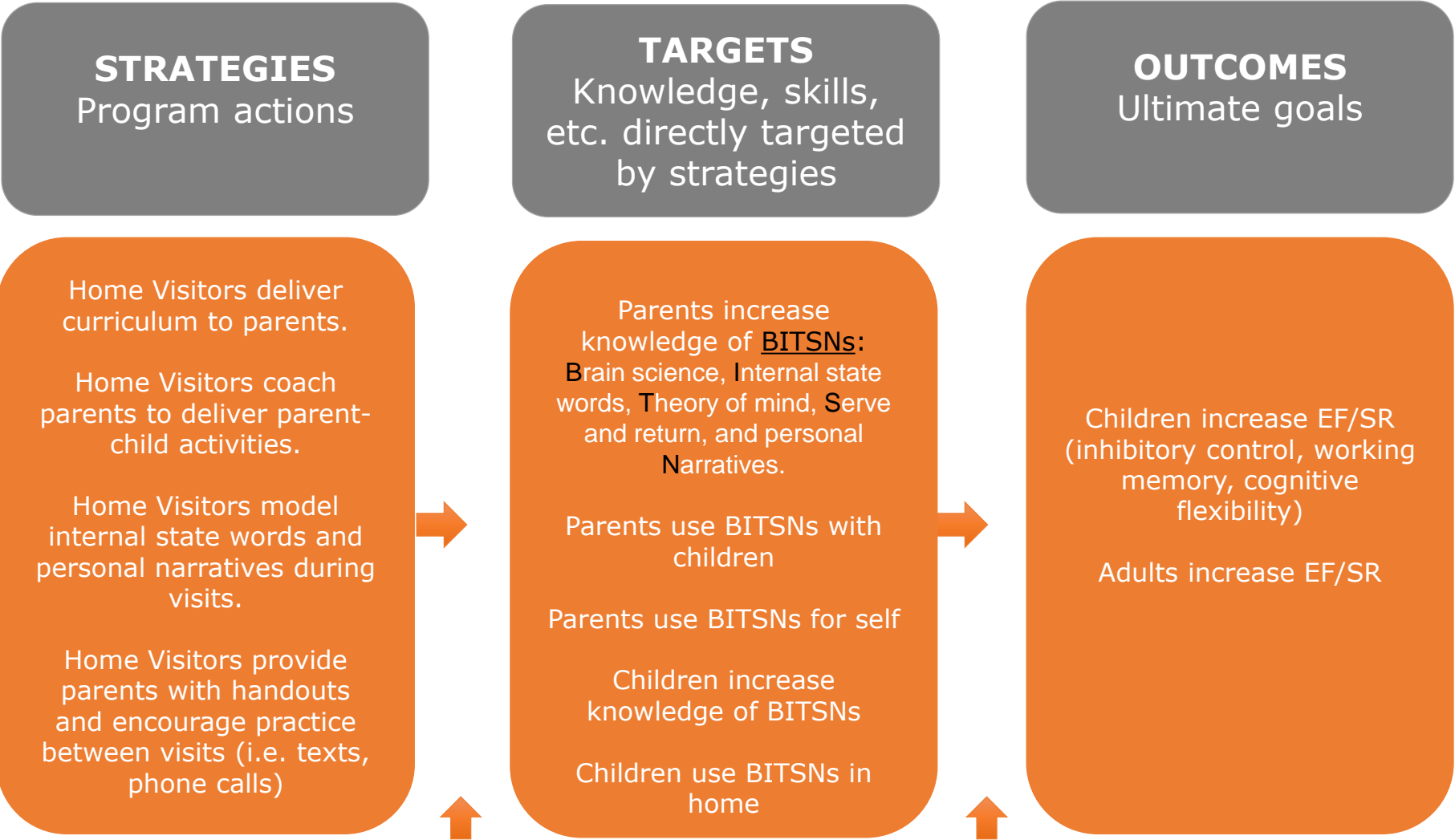


Fall 2020 FOI Pilots - Virtual Home Visiting Adaptation

- Pilot sites will target 10 enrolled HFA households with at least one child age 3-5
- Content is focused on the parent and presented virtually
- 10 Sessions/modules – 30 min each, 12 week delivery period
- Activities for parents to practice the skills with children between sessions



Executive Functioning Across Generations: Virtual Home Visiting Adaptation



MODERATORS ... that may *increase efficacy*: Caregiver has good mental health, financial security, low level of basic needs, access to tablet or PC, internet and data; caregiver spends more time with child practicing BITSNs in the home; staff perception that intervention is easy to implement, cultural context of families (including intergenerational practices that mutually reinforce learning), depth of protective networks, and cultures/communities excited about brain science ... that may *decrease efficacy*: Caregiver stress/caregiver has mental health challenges, financial stressors, high basic needs, phone access only, low access to internet and data, lack of staff buy-in, staff perception that intervention is difficult to implement, caregiver spends less time practicing BITSNs at home, dosage (less dosage, less effect), and biological brain differences (e.g., FAS).

How is the Adaptation Different from Core Model?

- Virtual service delivery; 1:1 approach
- Primary focus of intervention is the parent/caregiver
- Shift in focus with parents:
 - *From* increasing knowledge of brain science and children's curriculum content...
 - *To* building EF skills in parents
- Greater number of sessions with parents provides time for growth in parent EF skills
- Main method of delivering content to kids is through parent-child activities between sessions (books, etc.)



Next Steps After Fall Pilots

- Planning a statewide pilot for 2021
- RFP for pilot in Q1 2021
 - No EBP requirement in pilot site
 - Seek one site each in Northern, Central, and Southern MN
 - 10 families per site with a child 3-5 in the household
 - Possibility of more pilot sites if more funding is secured
- MN Coalition for Targeted Home Visiting will help promote, select partner sites
- Pilot occurs in Q2-3 2021



Questions?

