The Pathways Project

✧ What is the overarching goal of Pathways?
  ▪ To improve school readiness so that children are on a positive achievement trajectory in 3\textsuperscript{rd} grade, especially those growing up in difficult circumstances, such as poverty

✧ Why the Pathways model?
  ▪ The evidence indicated that neither a individual intervention nor single system was sufficient for improving children’s school readiness
  ▪ Pathways aims to strengthens the linkages between and build capacity within early childhood systems (e.g., early childhood care and education, health/mental health, family supports)
Pathways: A Systems Approach to Improve School Readiness

1. Provides reliable guidance about what has worked elsewhere, users can combine with their understanding of local conditions and opportunities

2. Provides policy makers and philanthropic funders with new ways of understanding what works, so that they think and act more broadly and deeply in their efforts to improve outcomes

3. Creates a forum through which community experience can continuously inform and modify the knowledge base

4. Makes it easier for an array of stakeholders to develop strategies across disciplines and jurisdictions
Process for Developing the Pathways Framework

- Conducted a literature review
- Convened a group of experienced researchers and practitioners with diverse expertise
- Mental Map of School Readiness Outcome
  - Considering the research, theories, and experiences that you have been exposed to, what could a community do to raise rates of school readiness?
- Framing the question in this way made clear the “big picture” or systems implications of this work
The Pathways Framework Provides Guidance to Identify *Essential Attributes*

- A shift from focusing on *successful programs* to *attributes that are crucial for school success* across the following:
  - Services and supports
  - Community activities
  - Policies and systems
  - Funding and regulatory decisions
  - Community capacity to monitor the availability and continuity of high quality services and supports over time
  - Community capacity to strengthen social bonds and to influence neighborhood norms
Pathways: An Outcomes Framework

♦ Focus on improving the outcomes that matter to children’s school readiness

♦ Accountability that includes the appropriate use of outcomes and corresponding indicators to measure progress of strategic planning efforts

♦ Data and the community’s expertise serves as the catalyst for quality improvements
Overview of Presentation

- Background on School Readiness
- Overview of Pathways Goals
- Pathways Process & Tool-Kit
- Results
- Evidence from the Field: Shawnee County Interagency Coordinating Council
Background on School Readiness

♦ What is school readiness?
  ▪ Physical well-being, social & emotional function, approaches to learning, language & literacy development, cognitive & general knowledge including math and science

♦ The national ECLS-K study shows that kindergarten test scores account for about 60% of the variance in 3rd grade test scores

♦ Children who are doing poorly in preschool and kindergarten are likely to continue to do poorly through elementary and high school

♦ Other predictors of school readiness include: Family background, parental health/mental health, parenting behaviors, and neighborhood resources
Overview of the Pathways Goals

1. Healthy and well-timed births
2. Health and Development on Track
3. Supported and Supportive Families
4. High Quality Child Care and Education
5. Continuity in Early Childhood Experiences
6. Effective Teaching and Learning in K–3 Classrooms

Pathways Process and Tool-Kit

• Two phases of the Pathways research project: (1) On-site coalitions and (2) Web-based coalitions

• Typically, coalitions completed each tool within one to three months; however, it is possible to complete a tool in a shorter amount of time

• The tools are designed for use in group settings, for example, at coalition meetings

• The Pathways tools are available on the webinar archive site and the Pathways project website

• Instructional videos, slide shows, and the User Guide provide additional information about the rationale behind each tool and instructions to complete them (available from Pathways website)
Early Childhood Coalition Monitoring and Assessment of Progress (ECC MAP) Tool

- **Purpose**: Assess and monitor coalitions’ clarity of vision, data linked to the vision, and involvement of key stakeholders.

- **Result**: Coalitions will have a better understanding of their vision, goals, and involvement of stakeholders.
Programs and Services Mapping Tool

➢ **Purpose:** Map early childhood (formal and informal) interventions in the community in order to assess strengths and needs.

➢ **Result:** Coalitions will have a comprehensive list of interventions in their community that will help them identify gaps in programming and assist in strategic planning.
Demographic and Community Data Tool

- **Purpose**: Identify available data and data sources in their community.

- **Result**: Helps coalitions identify and select shared indicators and outcomes, which are essential for strategic planning.
Strategic Planning Tool

➢ **Purpose**: Guide the development and implementation of a strategic plan that addresses priority areas that are in need of improvement.

➢ **Result**: Provide coalitions with a step-by-step guide for addressing priority area(s).
As a result of participating in Pathways, coalitions developed strategic plans to address the following:

- Better articulate vision and share it with all members and external stakeholders
- Engage external stakeholders in mutually beneficial relationships
- Identify programs and services that are missing and/or unavailable
- Identify data needed to align vision with measurable progress; and if data not currently collected initiate data collection
- Develop and implement evidence-based actions/strategies aimed at improvement of measurable outcomes and indicators
- Accountability: Movement toward using data to inform continuous quality improvements
Evidence from the Field:
Shawnee County Interagency Coordinating Council

Cindy Rosebrook, Program Director
Successful Connections/United Way
Shawnee County Interagency Coordinating Council
Pathways facilitated discussion and strategic planning

- **Outcomes**
  - Development of two committees
    - Communications Committee
    - Stakeholder Committee
  - Shared Intake Form
Communications Committee

♦ Change the name of the group to reflect the work of the group
  • Chose Early Childhood Coalition of Shawnee County (ECC)
  • Voted to implement in January 2012

♦ Plan activities and identify opportunities to make stakeholders and the community more aware of the coalition
  • Develop a website for partners and for the community
  • Distribute press releases regarding ECC activities
  • Develop a social media presence for the coalition
Stakeholder Committee

- Expand the coalition membership to include key stakeholders who were not participating in the group (parents, mental health providers, local business)

- Look at new ways of gaining input from stakeholders other than attending meetings (social marketing, special events, email surveys, etc.)
Shared Intake Form

♦ Became the focus of the Kansas Early Learning Collaborative grantees

♦ The form will be used by the Successful Connections program (central intake for home visitation and other family service programs)

♦ Goals

  o Families in Shawnee County will benefit by avoiding the duplication of required information with the development of a more efficient and coordinated intake process.

    • Short-term: When programs receive the form as part of a referral, they will pre-populate their own forms instead of asking families for the information already provided
    • Long-term: All programs will use the form for intake purposes
Other Outcomes

- The group discovered the county had a poor ranking in the state regarding domestic violence
- Through discussion, found most partnering agencies felt their staff needed more training in domestic violence issues
- Partnered with the YWCA Center for Safety and Empowerment to provide two training, four hours long
  - Trained over 100 community workers
- Formed a committee to develop domestic violence protocols
- YWCA Center for Safety and Empowerment now participates in the coalition
NCCP Pathways Project
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