

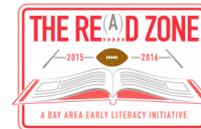
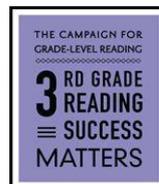


LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH GROUP  
increasing opportunities-to-learn for all // dedicated to the science of learning // informing research, practice, and policy

# THE ROAD TO IMPACT: OVERCOMING COMMON PITFALLS AND IDENTIFYING HIGH-STAKES DECISIONS FOR LITERACY SUCCESS

Nonie K. Lesaux, PhD  
First Things First Early Childhood Summit  
August 24-25, 2015  
Phoenix, AZ

Reading proficiency by third grade is the most important predictor of high school graduation and career success. Yet every year, 67% of children nationwide miss this crucial milestone.



# AGENDA

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- Today's Context of Early Literacy
- Recent Research on Early Literacy Development
  - 3 Key Findings
- Today's Literacy Efforts
- Capitalizing on the Momentum: Leading the Next Generation of Improvement Initiatives

# **TODAY'S CONTEXT OF EARLY LITERACY**

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The science of early learning, the demographic context, policies & initiatives

# THE SCIENCE OF EARLY LEARNING

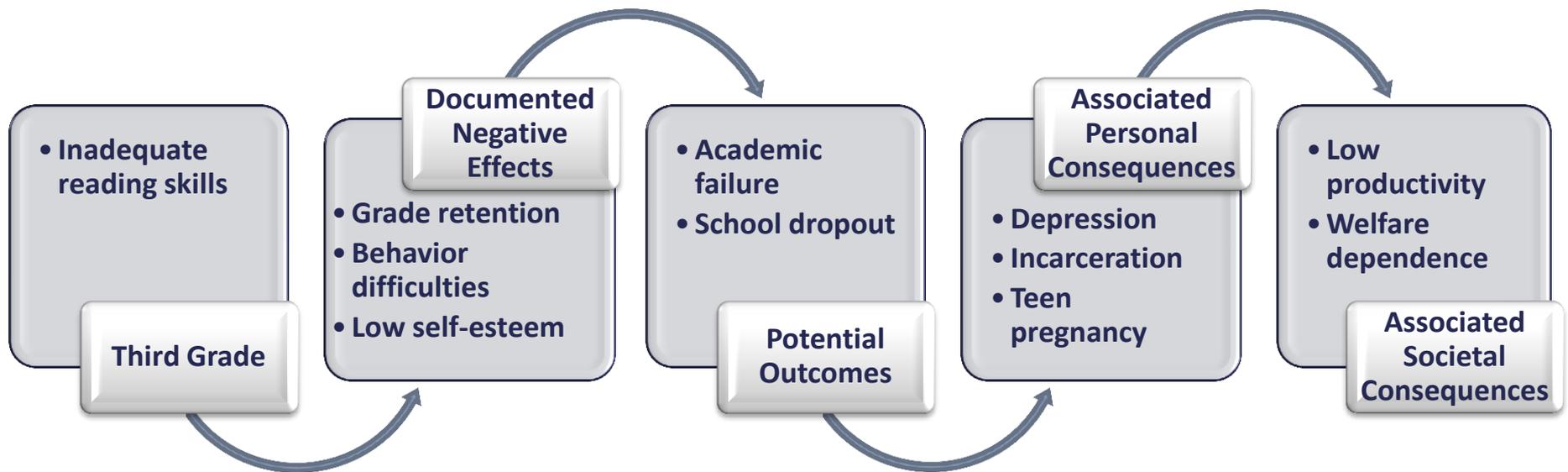
The foundations of lifelong learning are established in the earliest years of children's lives

Optimizing children's development requires strong and supportive interactions across contexts

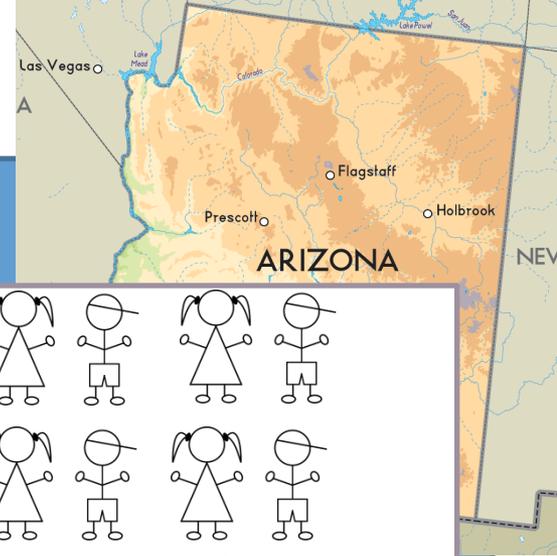
Child development exists along a continuum

Early learning practices and policies can buffer the impacts of adverse childhood experiences

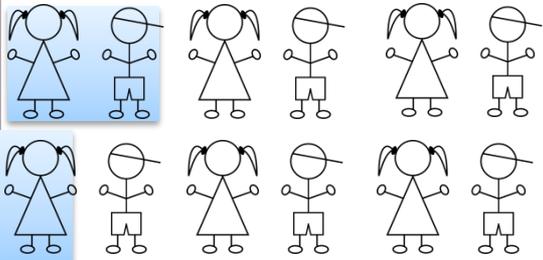
# Why Literacy in the Early Years?



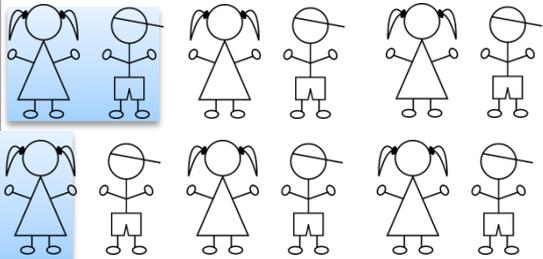
# Today's Population



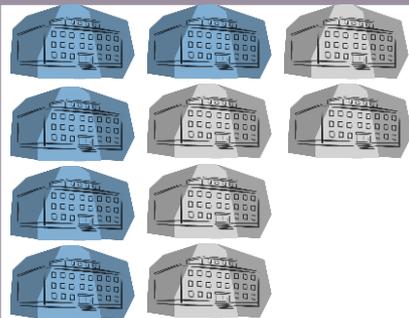
## U.S. Children...



25% of children, ages 0-5, live in poverty

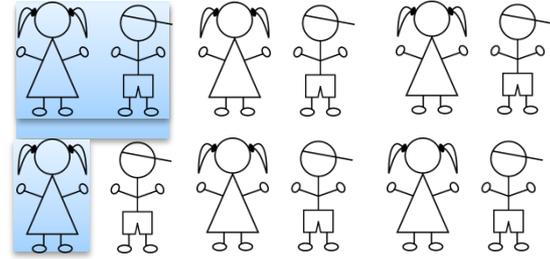


24% are children of immigrants

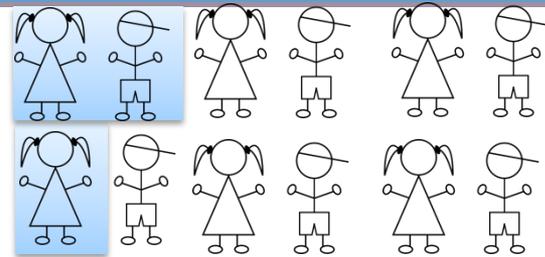


46% of children age 3 to 4 enrolled in early education and care

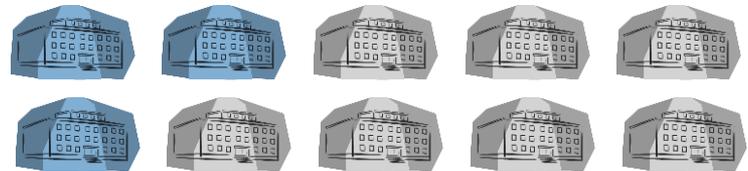
## AZ Children...



29% of children, ages 0-5, live in poverty



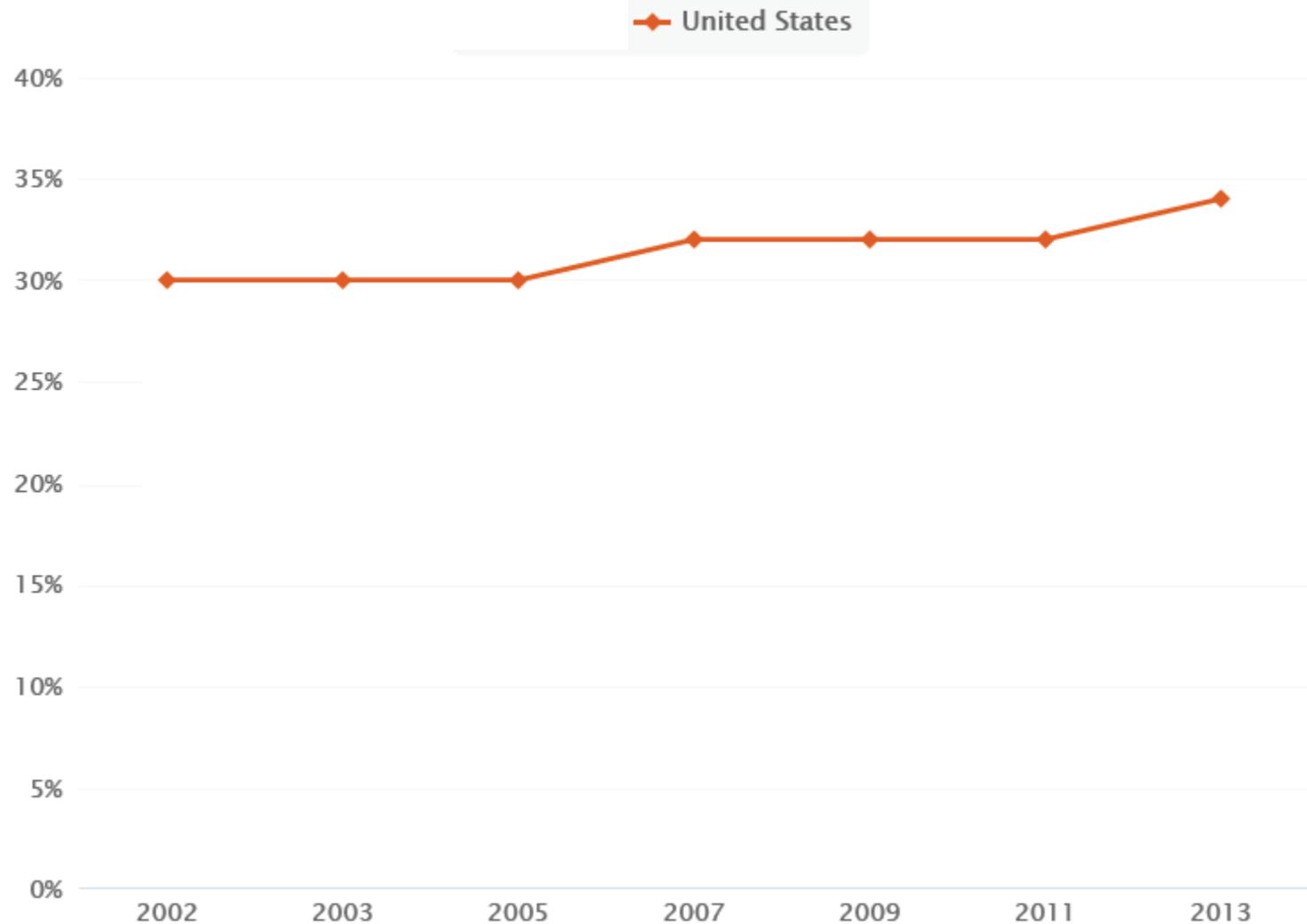
28% of children and youth are children of immigrants



33% of children age 3 to 4 enrolled in early education and care

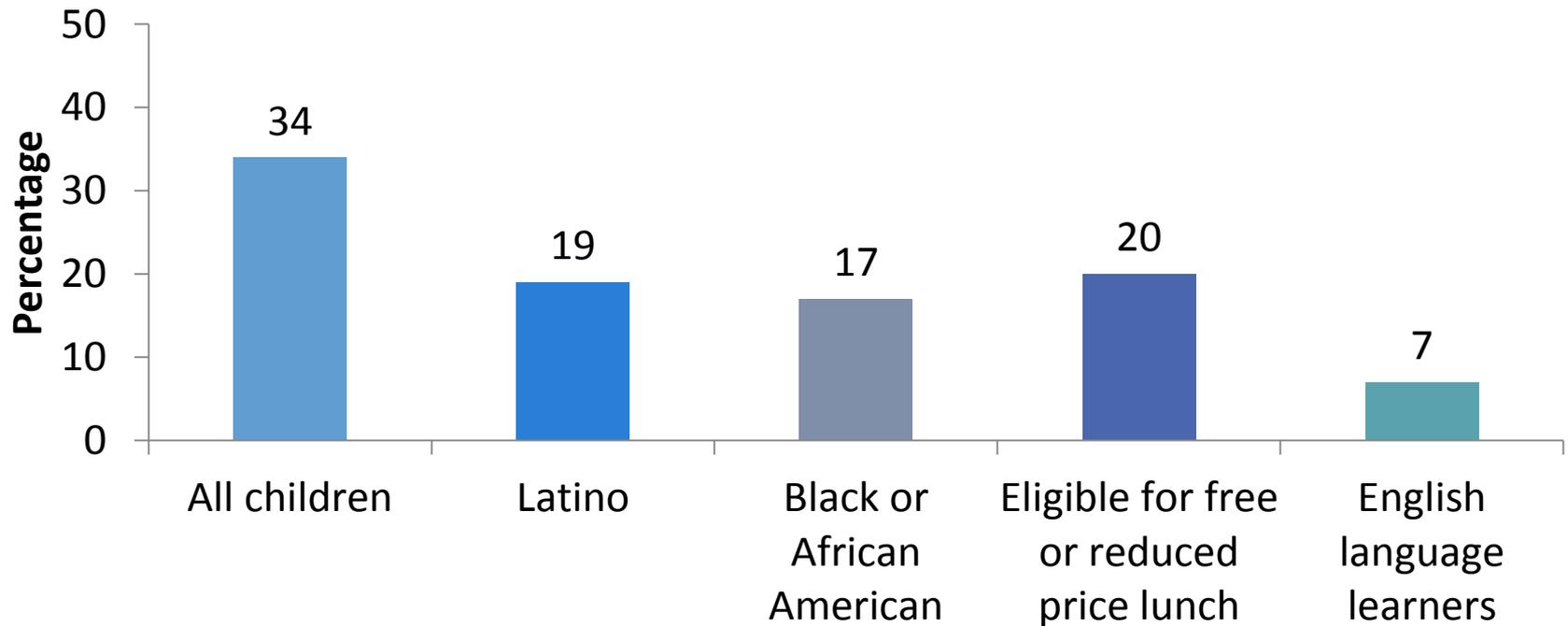
# Literacy Data: National NAEP Trends

## 4<sup>th</sup> Graders Who Scored At or Above Proficient

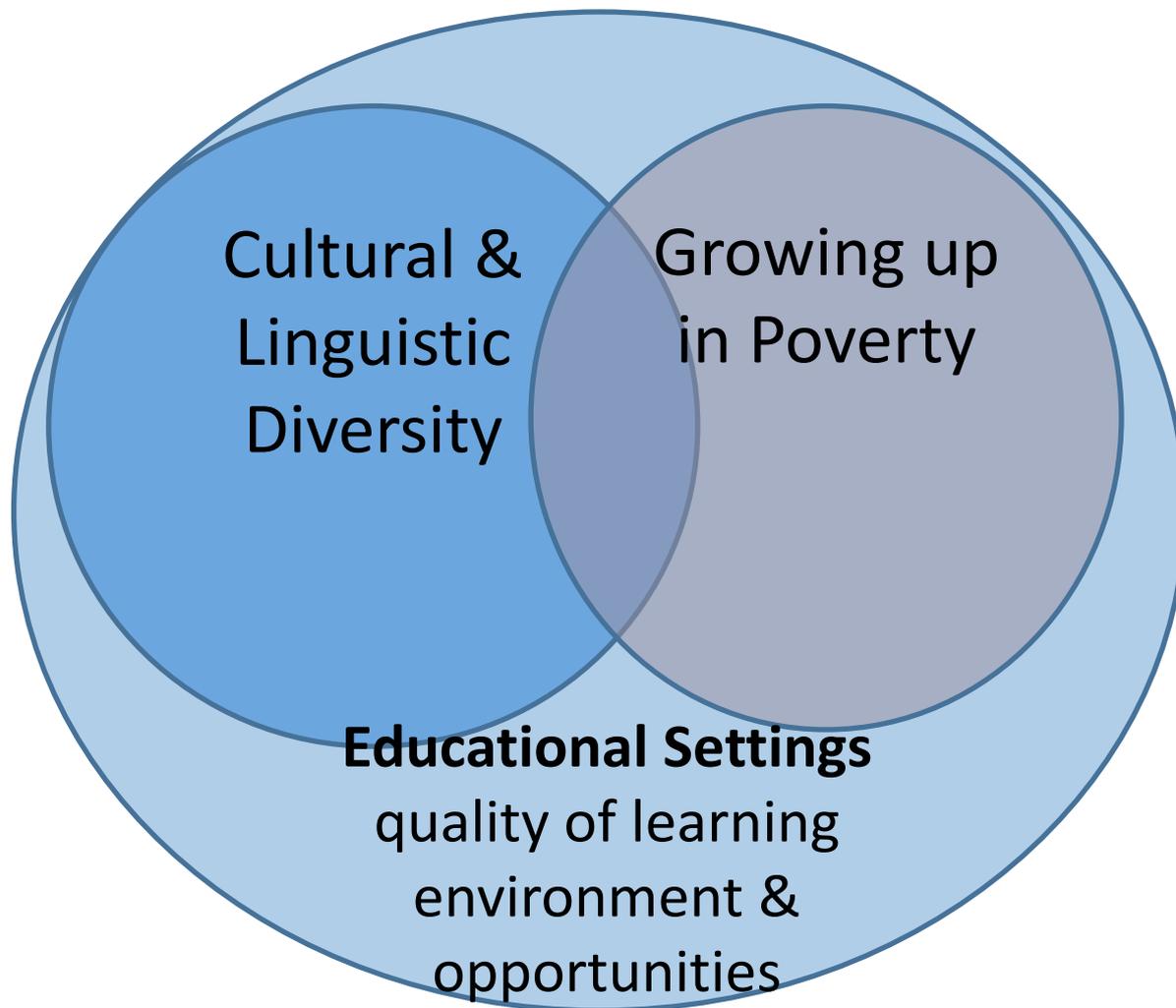


# Literacy Data (con't): Clear Disparities

**US 4<sup>th</sup> Graders Who Scored  
At or Above Proficient  
2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress**



# INCREASING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY & INCREASING VULNERABILITY



**Compromised opportunities to develop language and reading skills**

**Compromised opportunities to develop strong emotional, social, and cognitive skills**

# Matching the Science and the Context with Policies and Initiatives



**Policies & Large-  
Scale Initiatives**

**Improved  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
Outcomes**

PreK expansion  
Preschool for All initiative  
Campaign for Grade Level  
Reading  
Word-gap initiatives  
(e.g., *Too Small to Fail*)  
My Brother's Keeper  
AAP Policy Statement  
(*Pediatric Care & Literacy Promotion*)

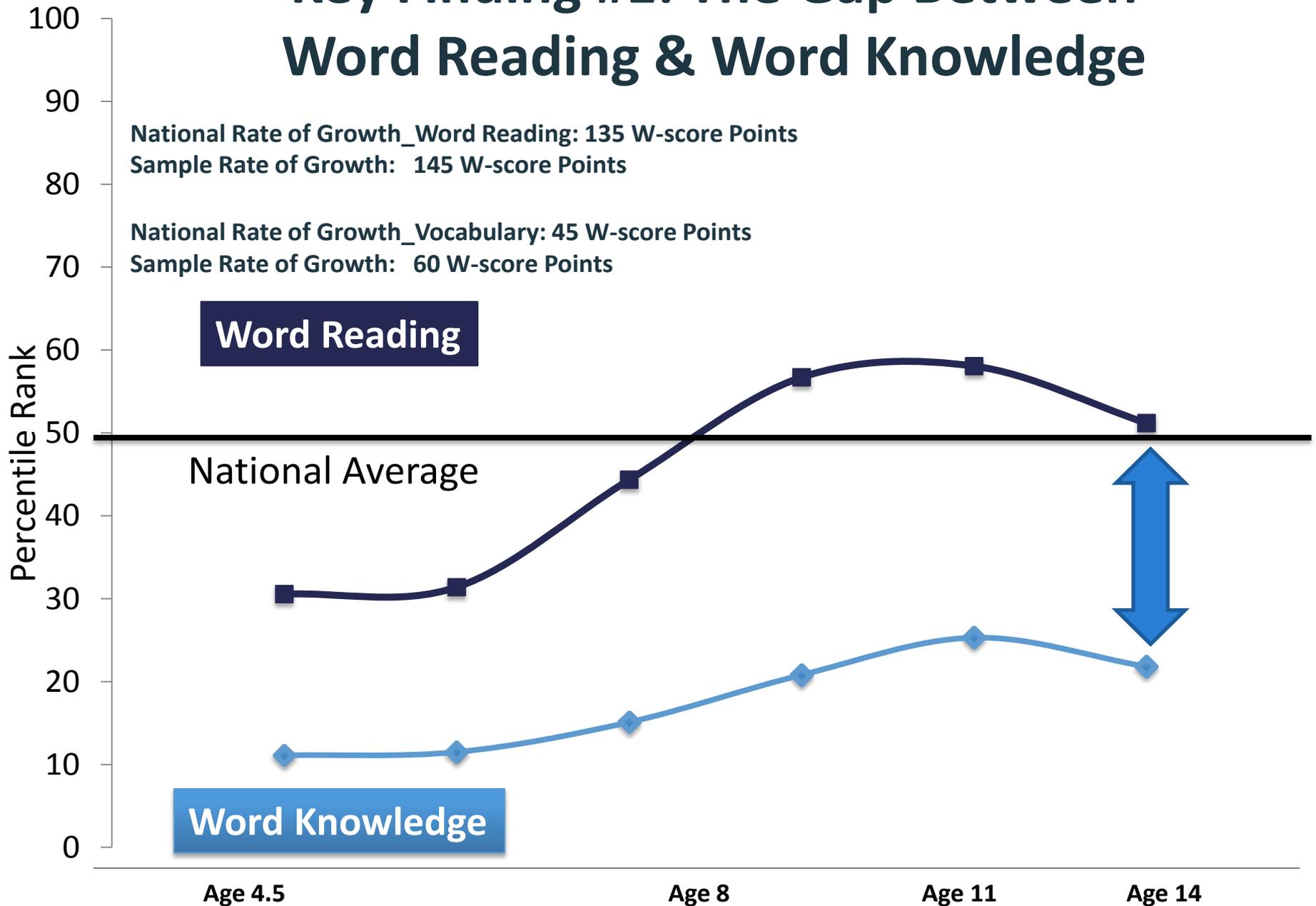
**TODAY'S RESEARCH ON EARLY LITERACY  
DEVELOPMENT:  
3 KEY FINDINGS**

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# Key Finding #1: The Gap Between Word Reading & Word Knowledge

National Rate of Growth\_Word Reading: 135 W-score Points  
Sample Rate of Growth: 145 W-score Points

National Rate of Growth\_Vocabulary: 45 W-score Points  
Sample Rate of Growth: 60 W-score Points



**Word Reading**

National Average

**Word Knowledge**

Age 4.5

Age 8

Age 11

Age 14

# Why This Gap?

## Two Different Problem Spaces

### Code-based skills

/H/  
“-igh family”  
high  
sigh  
thigh

4 sounds, 1 word:  
/s/ /p/ /ee/ /d/

115+ words correct per  
minute (grade 5)

### High-Speed Trains

A type of high-speed train was first introduced in Japan about forty years ago. The train is low to the ground, and its nose looks somewhat like the nose of a jet. These trains provided the first passenger service that moved at a speed of one hundred miles per hour. Today, they are even faster, traveling at speeds of almost two hundred miles per hour. There are many reasons that high-speed trains are popular.

### Meaning-based Skills

Cognitive  
strategies

Vocabulary

Relevant background  
knowledge

Understanding of  
language

Interest and  
motivation

# CHANGING TEXT DEMANDS

## The Train Trip

I like to ride the train.  
I can walk all around the train car whenever I want.

Grade 1

## High-Speed Trains

A type of high-speed train was first introduced in Japan about forty years ago. The train is low to the ground, and its nose looks somewhat like the nose of a jet. These trains provided the first passenger service that moved at a speed of one hundred miles per hour. Today, they are even faster, traveling at speeds of almost two hundred miles per hour. There are many reasons that high-speed trains are popular.

Grade 5

## Economic and Governmental Forces: Their Impact on American Railroads in the Twentieth Century

And so began one of the biggest populist campaigns ever seen in America – the crusade to harness the railroad robber barons. Before long, that drive had spread to Washington where in 1887, Congress legislated not out of reason but out of fear to create the Interstate Commerce Commission. Remember that in the days of a relatively powerless federal government, the railroad industry budget was many times the size of the federal budget.

High School

# Implications & Next Steps

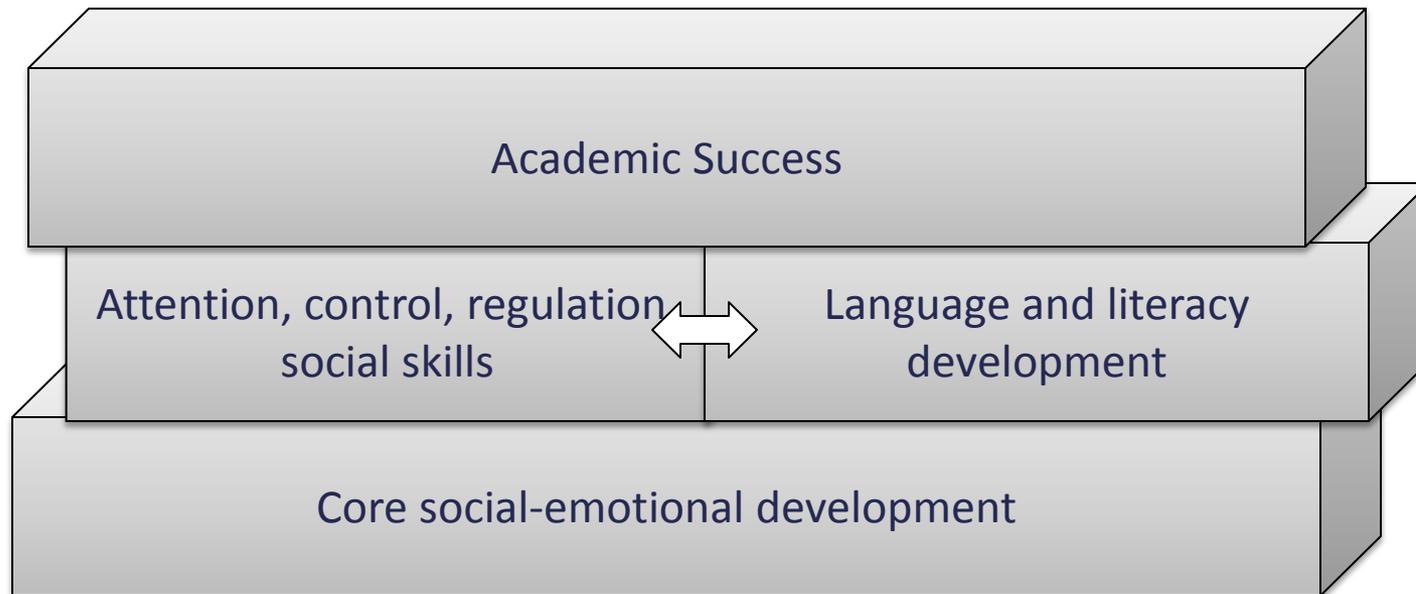
## Common Pitfall

- Onset of remediation of language-based literacy difficulties at grades 2, 3, and beyond

## What We're Learning

- Create a prevention model, beginning in the earliest years, designed around the crucial link between early language development and later reading outcomes

# KEY FINDING #2: ACADEMIC, EMOTIONAL, AND SOCIAL CAPABILITIES ARE INEXTRICABLY INTERTWINED



# UNPACKING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND COGNITIVE SKILLS



**Executive Functions**  
(e.g., goal setting,  
planning, and attention)



**Social Skills**  
(e.g., understanding  
social cues, resolving  
conflict,  
cooperating)



**Emotional Skills**  
(e.g., expressing &  
identifying  
emotions, regulating  
emotions,  
perspective-taking)

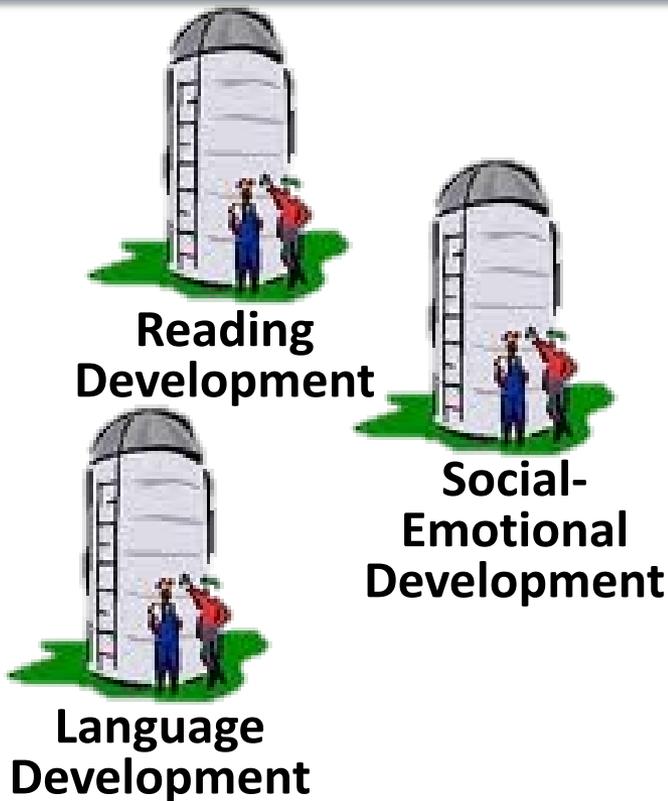


# A WINDOW INTO THE INTEGRATED NATURE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

	Alphabet Knowledge & Early Word Reading	Vocabulary Knowledge
Impulse Control	.18**	.23**
Attention Skills	.09	.19**
Positivity and Confidence	.21**	.26**

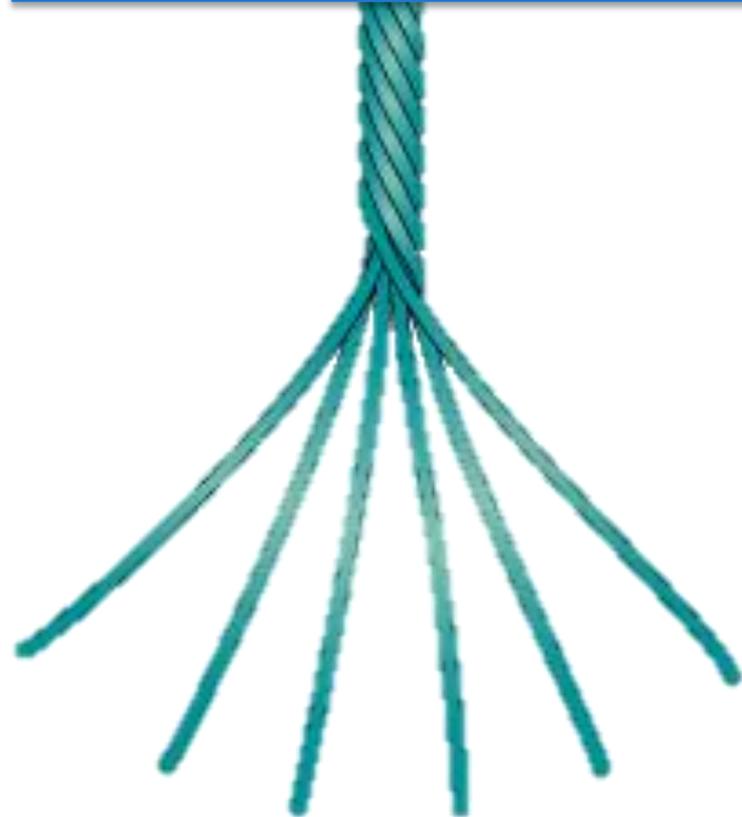
# IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK

## Common Pitfall



**Approaching development as the composite of isolated domains**

## What We're Learning



**Design settings and programs that focus on multiple domains of development**

# KEY FINDING #3: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IS THE RESULT OF ONGOING ACCUMULATION OF EXPERIENCES

Has 250-350 words

Has 3000-5000 words

Now learning 3,000 words/year

**Infant**

**Toddler**

**Preschooler**

**Early Elementary**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

Imitates Speech

Looks through a book and retells the story

Reads simple books

Reads independently and talks about what he reads

Vocalize feelings (cry, giggle)

Asks questions when listening to stories



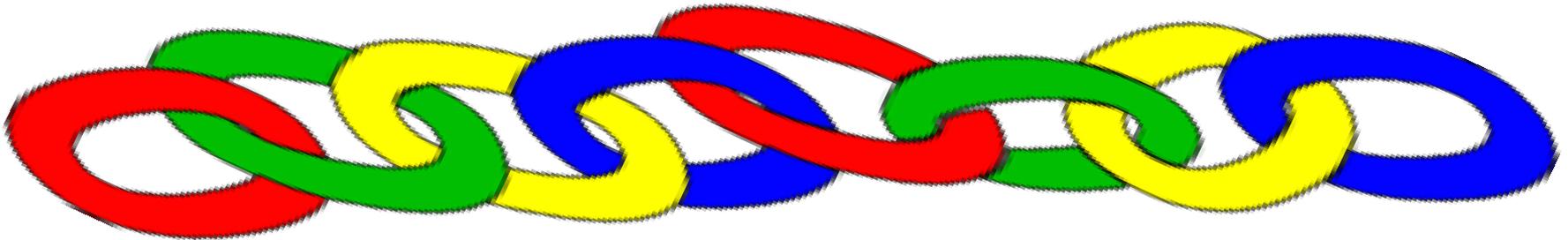
# IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

## Common Pitfall

- Investing in a particular time period at the expense of others
  - Kinks/breaks/disconnections in the pathway

## What We're Learning

- Provide learning experiences and opportunities across the early childhood continuum



# **TODAY'S LITERACY EFFORTS**

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Toward a comprehensive approach to early literacy reform

# COMPREHENSIVE EARLY LITERACY REFORM

**Increase the quality of children's language and reading environments across the many settings in which they are growing up, from birth to age 9**

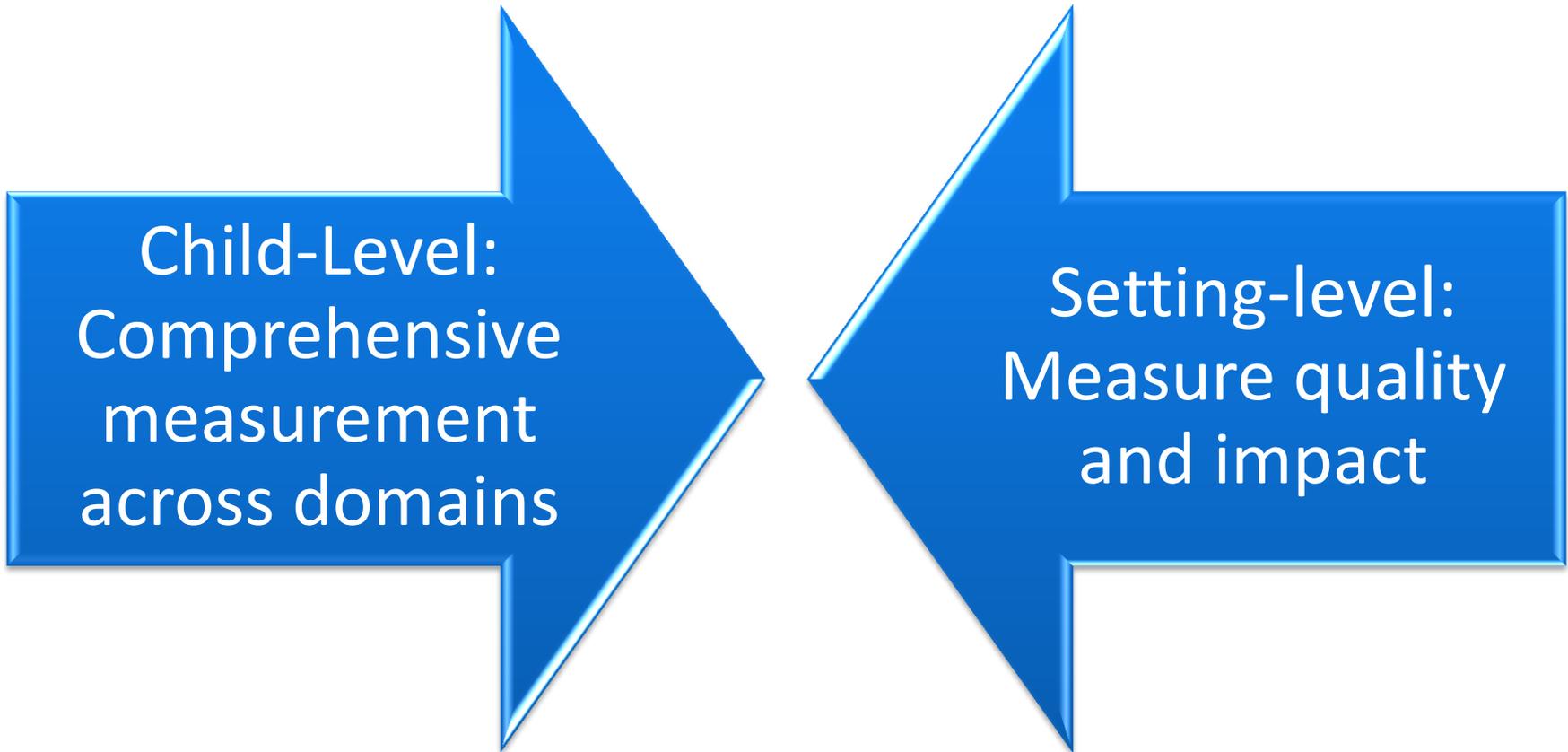
Ongoing  
Assessment of  
Children &  
Settings

Re-Defined Adult  
Capacity-Building  
Models

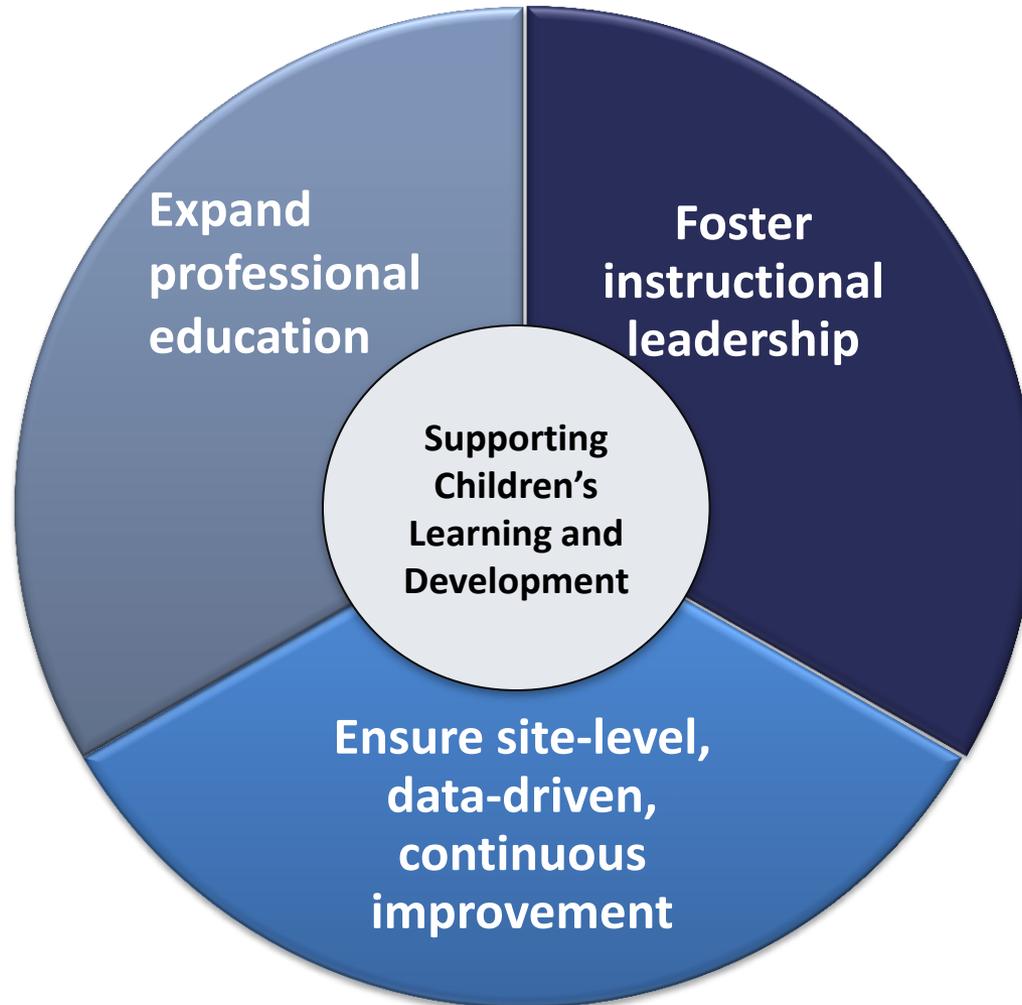
Curricula  
Supporting  
Language-Rich,  
Rigorous, &  
Regulated  
Learning  
Environments

Partnerships with  
families focused  
on language &  
learning

# CONDUCT EARLY, ONGOING ASSESSMENTS OF CHILDREN'S SKILLS *AND* THE QUALITY OF SETTINGS AND SERVICES



# Increase adults' capacity to assess and support children's language and literacy development



# Use Curricula to Support Language-Rich, Rigorous, & Regulated Learning Environments



We can't  
confuse curricula  
with good  
teaching



**But we can  
support good teaching  
with high-quality,  
comprehensive curricula**

# PRINCIPLES OF AN INTEGRATED INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH



Organizes learning around content-rich themes and texts

Promotes culturally responsive classrooms

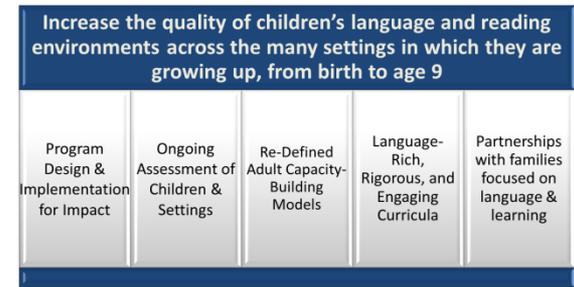
Uses consistent routines and language

Provides rigor and challenge in a supportive context

Combines explicit instruction with inquiry-based learning

Supports peer-to-peer interaction

# EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN WORK WITH FAMILIES ACROSS LEARNING SETTINGS AND WITHIN COMMUNITIES



- Link family engagement to children's language and reading
- Strengthen family literacy ↔ community library connection
- Tap community leaders

# PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

Increase the quality of children's language and reading environments across the many settings in which they are growing up, from birth to age 9

Ongoing  
Assessment of  
Children &  
Settings

Re-Defined Adult  
Capacity-Building  
Models

Curricula  
Supporting  
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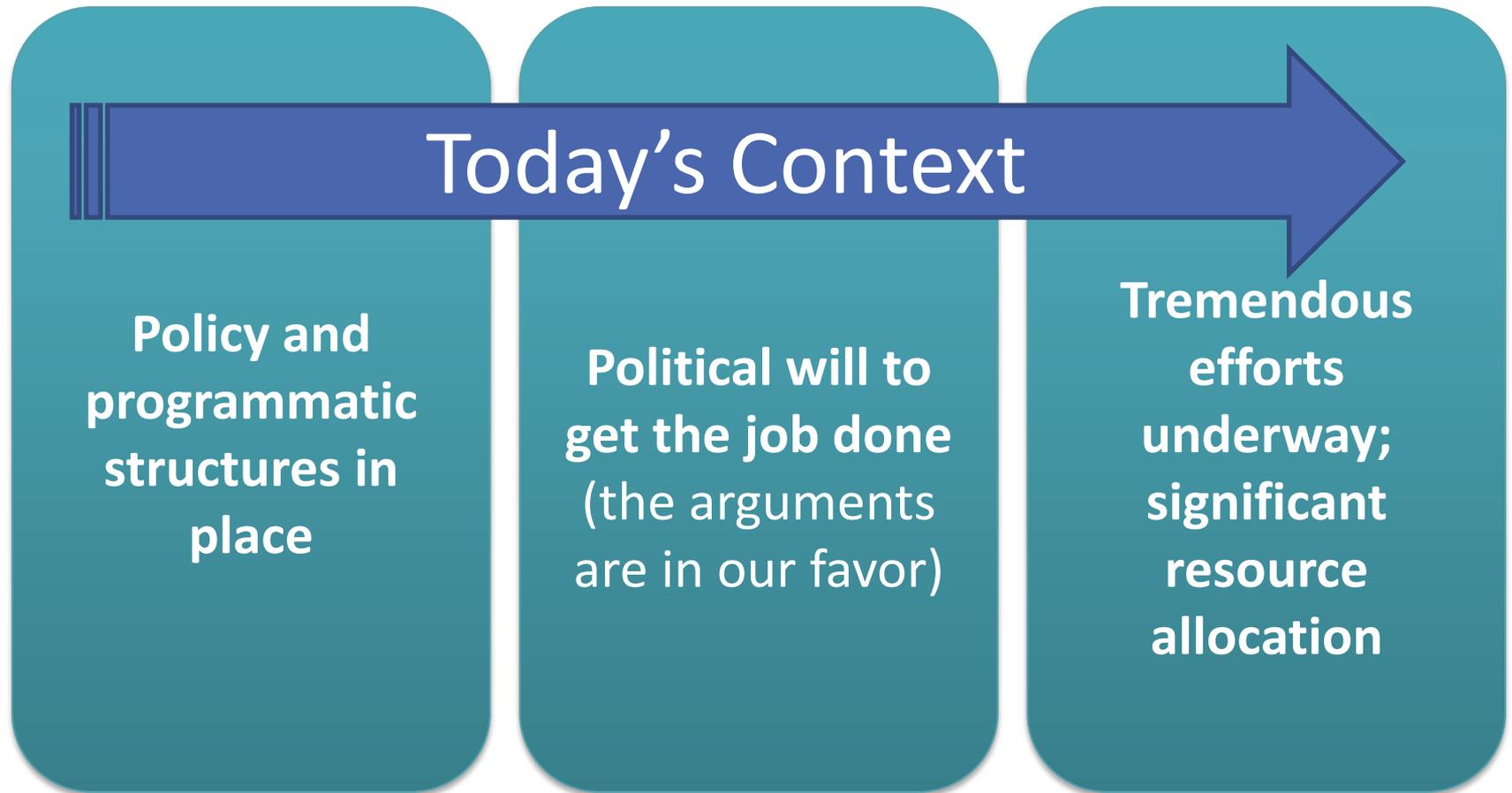


# **CAPITALIZING ON THE MOMENTUM: LEADING THE NEXT GENERATION OF IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES**

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Implications for the collective effort

# CAPITALIZING ON THE MOMENTUM...



**Key Issue**: Ensuring sustained, intensive, and strategic efforts that result in measurable impact across settings, stakeholders, and developmental stages

**Increase the quality of children's language and reading environments across the many settings in which they are growing up, from birth to age 9**

Ongoing  
Assessment of  
Children &  
Settings

Re-Defined Adult  
Capacity-Building  
Models

Curricula  
Supporting  
Language-Rich,  
Rigorous, &  
Regulated  
Learning  
Environments

Partnerships with  
families focused  
on language &  
learning

**...WHILE ADDRESSING COMMON PITFALLS  
THAT FUNCTION AS BARRIERS TO DESIRED  
OUTCOMES**

# COMMON PITFALLS AT TWO LEVELS

Collective (Community, District, etc.)

The diagram consists of two horizontal rows. Each row features a blue rounded rectangular box on the left containing text, and a white rectangular box on the right. The top row's blue box contains the text 'Collective (Community, District, etc.)' and the white box is empty. The bottom row's blue box contains the text 'Individual (Program, Service)' and the white box is also empty. The two rows are vertically aligned and separated by a small gap.

Individual (Program, Service)

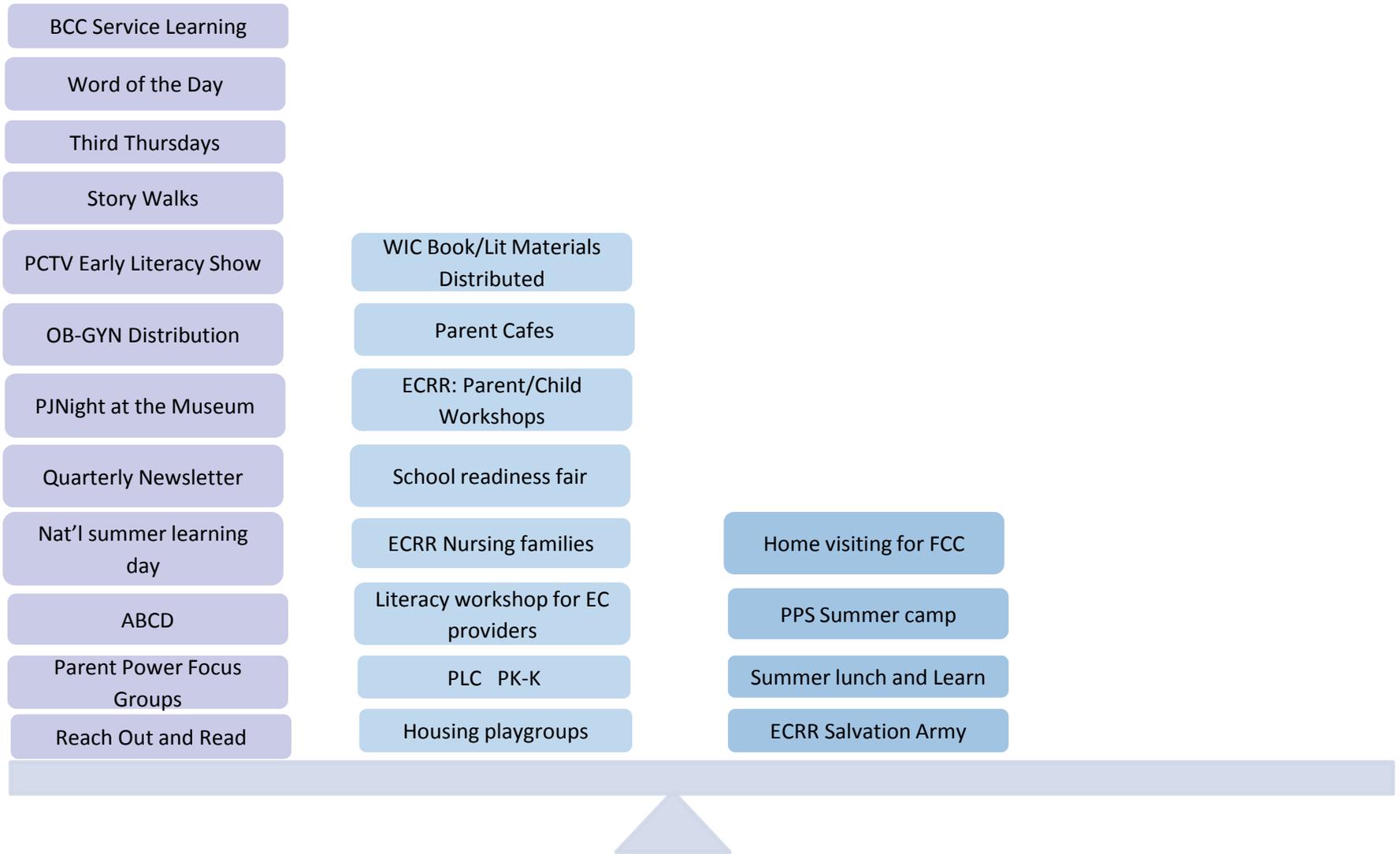
# COLLECTIVE LEVEL: TWO (RELATED) KEY PITFALLS



1. Not having a Strategic “Map” of the Landscape
2. Responding to Limited Success By Adding New (and More) Programs

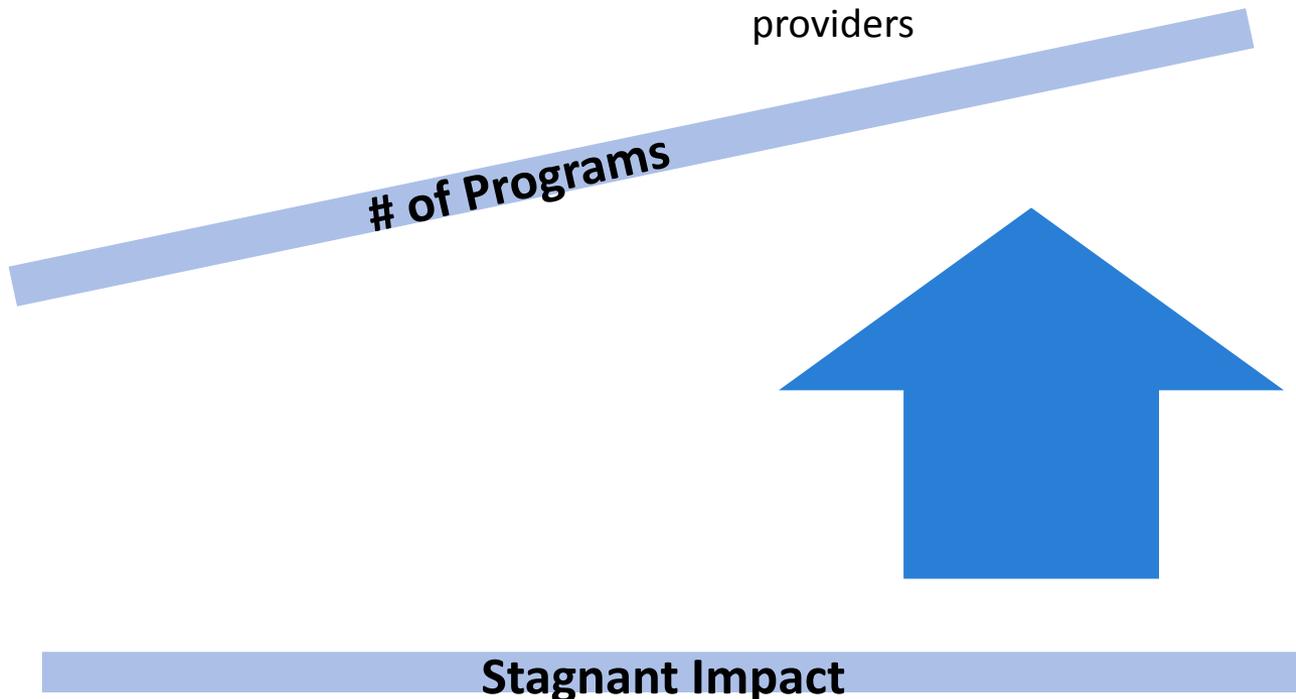
# ADDRESSING PITFALL #1.

## MAPPING A COMMUNITY'S LITERACY EFFORTS (CLASSIFY BY TYPE, POPULATION SERVED, ETC.)



# PITFALL #2: REACTING TO LIMITED SUCCESS BY ADDING NEW (AND MORE) PROGRAMS

- Administrative costs
- Redundancies
- Confusion among stakeholders and providers



# INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM LEVEL: TWO (RELATED) KEY PITFALLS

Collective (Community, District, etc.)

Individual (Program, Service)



1. Disconnect between the program's design and the guiding goal/desired outcome(s)
2. Not making a distinction between outputs and outcomes

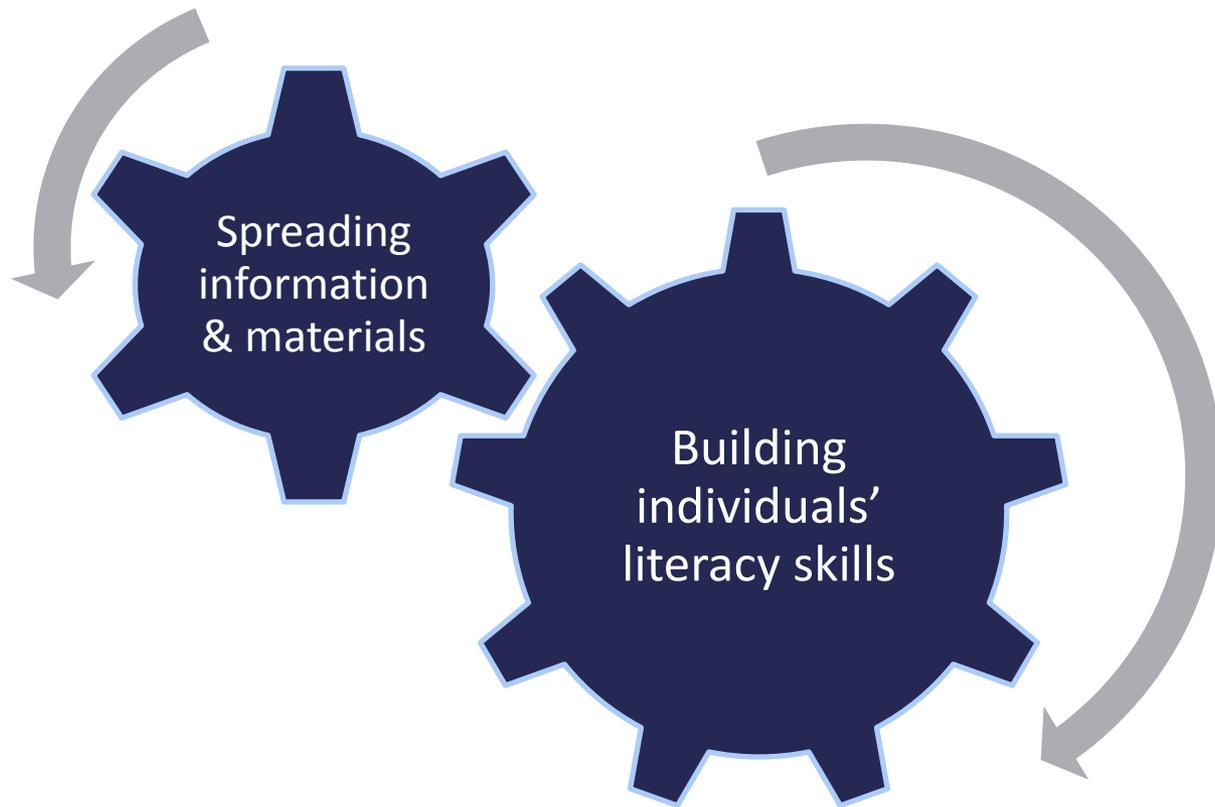
# A NEW WAY OF THINKING: UNDERSTANDING PROGRAM TYPES ALONG A CONTINUUM

Raising Awareness

Changing Behaviors

Intensity

# Where do we sit on the continuum? How does this map onto our goals?



# MAPPING A HIGH-RISK COMMUNITY'S LITERACY EFFORTS

Raising Awareness

Changing Behaviors

BCC Service Learning

Word of the Day

Third Thursdays

Story Walks

PCTV Early Literacy Show

OB-GYN Distribution

PJNight at the Museum

Quarterly Newsletter

Nat'l summer learning day

ABCD

Parent Power Focus Groups

Reach Out and Read

WIC Book/Lit Materials Distributed

Parent Cafes

ECRR: Parent/Child Workshops

School readiness fair

ECRR Nursing families

Literacy workshop for EC providers

PLC PK-K

Housing playgroups

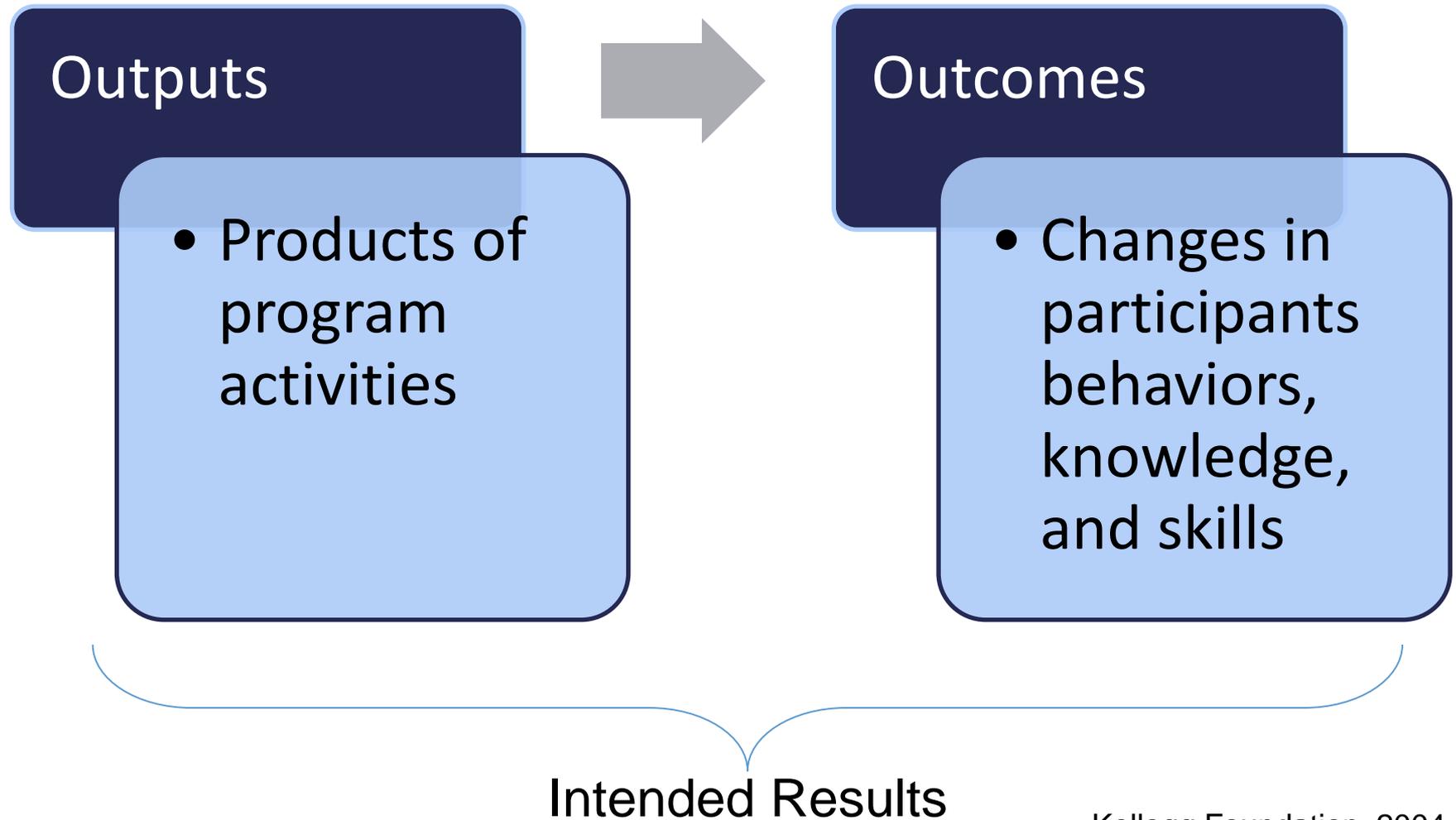
Home visiting for FCC

PPS Summer camp

Summer lunch and Learn

ECRR Salvation Army

# KEY PITFALL #2. NO CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES



# KEY PITFALL #2: IMPLICATIONS

Collective (Community, District, etc.)

Individual (Program, Service)

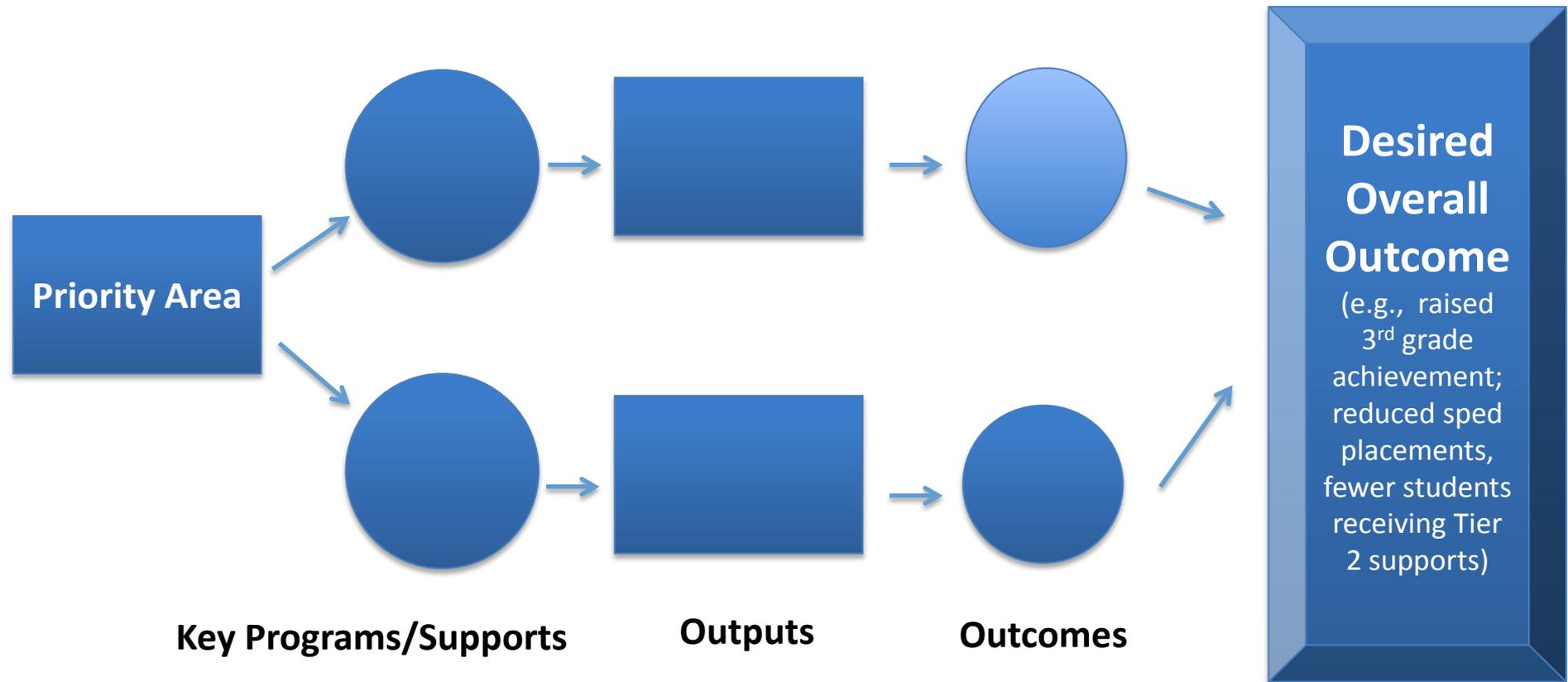
- Using *outputs* as indicators of effectiveness
  - Rather than *outcomes*
- No clear information about whether the program or support is having the intended effect
  - Missed opportunities: no data to drive mid-course corrections, ensure there is a clear match between participants' needs and program, etc.

# **BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: THE NEXT GENERATION OF WORK FOR IMPACT**

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What do we offer? What is our theory of change?

# MOVING TOWARDS IMPACT



# MOVING TOWARDS IMPACT

## Building Individuals' Literacy Skills

### Dosage

Is the program or service delivered to participants regularly and frequently?

Do the same adults work with the same children, over time?

### Staff Training

Is the program or service delivered by an adult with relevant professional training?

Is the staff/volunteer training multi-session?

Is ongoing training and coaching provided?

### Metrics and Indicators of Success

Are we measuring and monitoring outputs (products of program activities, including reach and spread indicators)?

Are we *also* measuring and monitoring outcomes (changes in participants' behaviors, knowledge, and skills)?

# Acknowledgements

## Collaborators and Research Team

**Kelly Kulsrud**, Strategies for Children

**Stephanie Jones**, Kargman Associate Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education

**Jeannette Mancilla-Martinez**, Vanderbilt University

**Michael Kieffer**, New York University

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## Funders and Partners



Supporting research to improve the lives of young people

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# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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Overcoming common pitfalls and identifying high-stakes decisions for literacy success