



# Building and Sustaining an Early Childhood System in Minnesota

**Build**  
Strong Foundations For  
Our Youngest Children

# Our Purpose

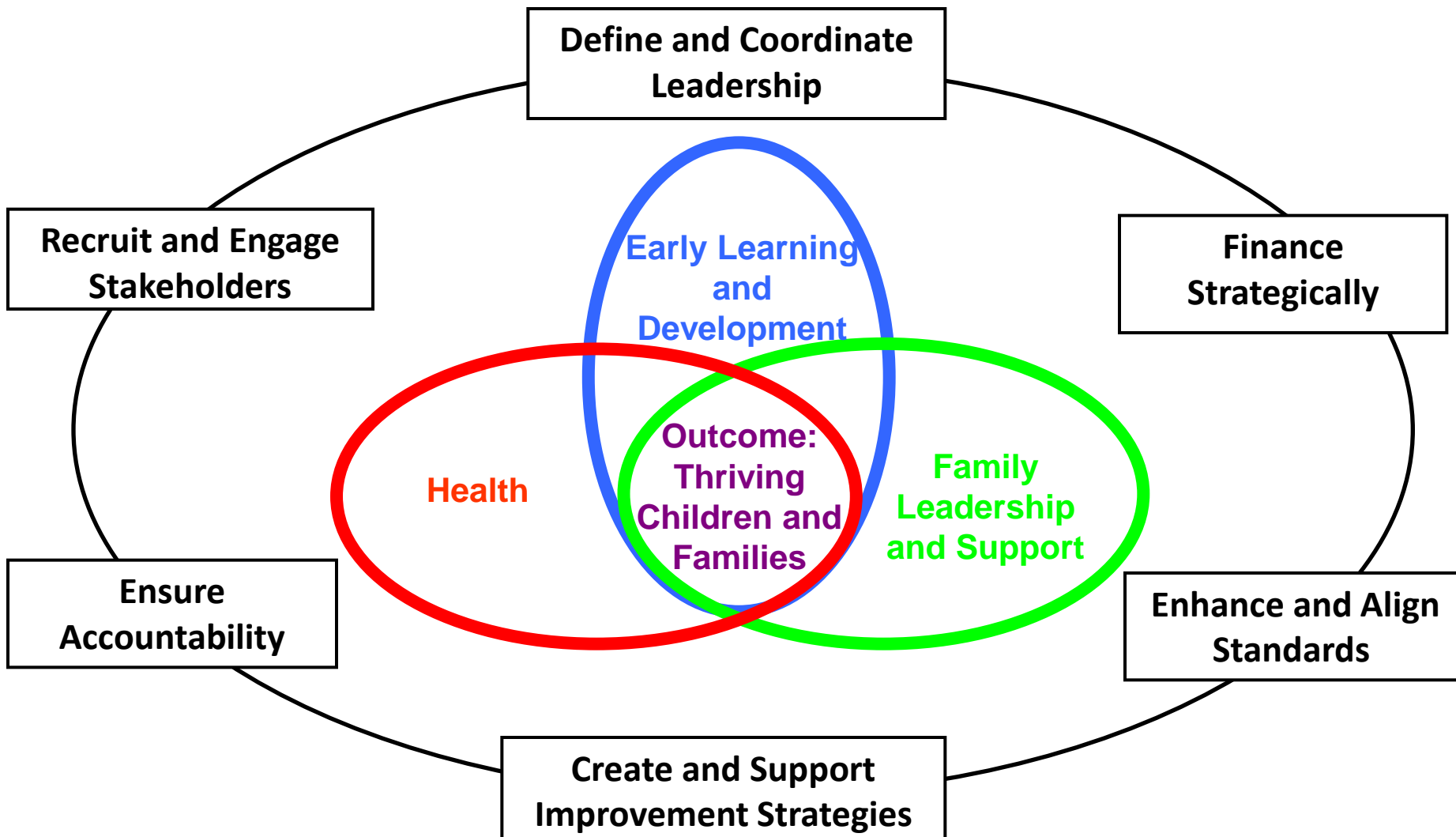
**To engage in a candid discussion about how Minnesota's leaders can deliver on their ambitious promises, and lead the nation in early childhood systems development**

# Take-Away Messages

- MN needs to build capacity and leadership at all levels of the system
- MN leaders need to find the right balance among the inherent tensions within EC policy-making



# Core Functions of a Comprehensive Early Childhood System



# What Type of Policy Work Are You Really Doing?

- **CONTEXT:** *Improving the political context that surrounds a system to produce policy changes needed to create and sustain it.*
- **COMPONENTS:** *Establishing high-performance programs and services within the system to produce results for children.*
- **CONNECTIONS:** *Creating strong linkages across the system components that further improve results for children.*
- **INFRASTRUCTURE:** *Developing the supports systems need to function effectively and with quality (data systems, cross-system governance, etc.)*
- **SCALE:** *Ensuring a comprehensive system is available to as many children as possible to produce broad results.*

# A 20-Year Overnight Success

- Illinois: effective collaboration among foundations, advocates and state government
- Before: advocates often at cross-purposes
- Leaders have brought along Dem and GOP govs, trained state senators...



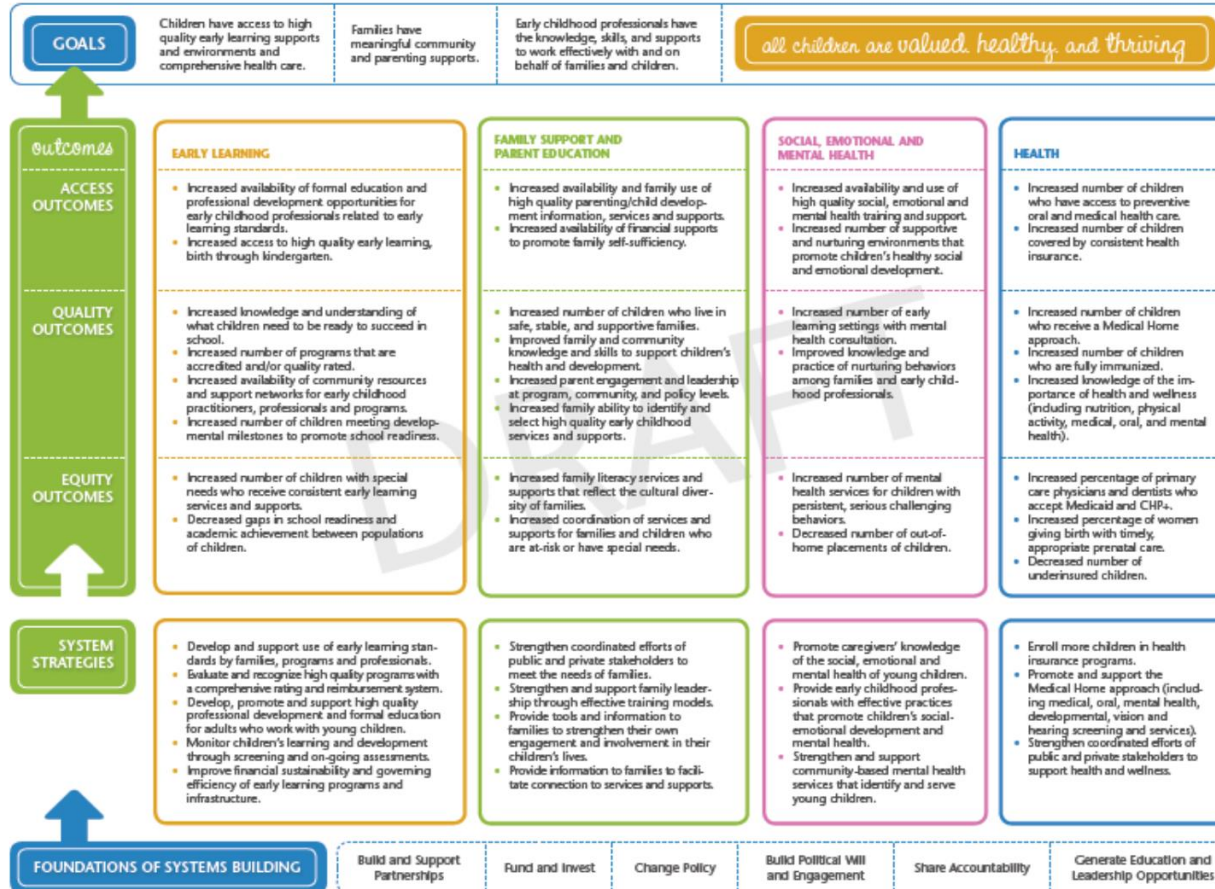
# The Colorado Story

- Great framework, QRIS, local Councils, little prioritization
- Leadership troubles stalled progress
- Now RTT-ELC and new leaders have them poised for success
- Like MN: how to balance early learning with “whole child?”





# Colorado's EC Framework





# North Carolina's Long Game

- 1990's – Gov. Jim Hunt, Smart Start
- 2011: under fire, organized effort to de-fund EC services
- The power of local partnerships as advocates: the firewall
- “War Room,” 501-c-4 lobbying, tapping GOP lobbyists
- State-level choreography requires well-trained dancers locally



# North Carolina's Quality Focus

- All early learning and development programs participate in QRIS, including public school and Head Start programs
- 68% of ALL subsidized children and 94% of children with special needs, are in **4 and 5 star programs**
- 85% of all teachers are working toward an AA or BA
- NC has highest rates of early screenings of all states (ABCD project)

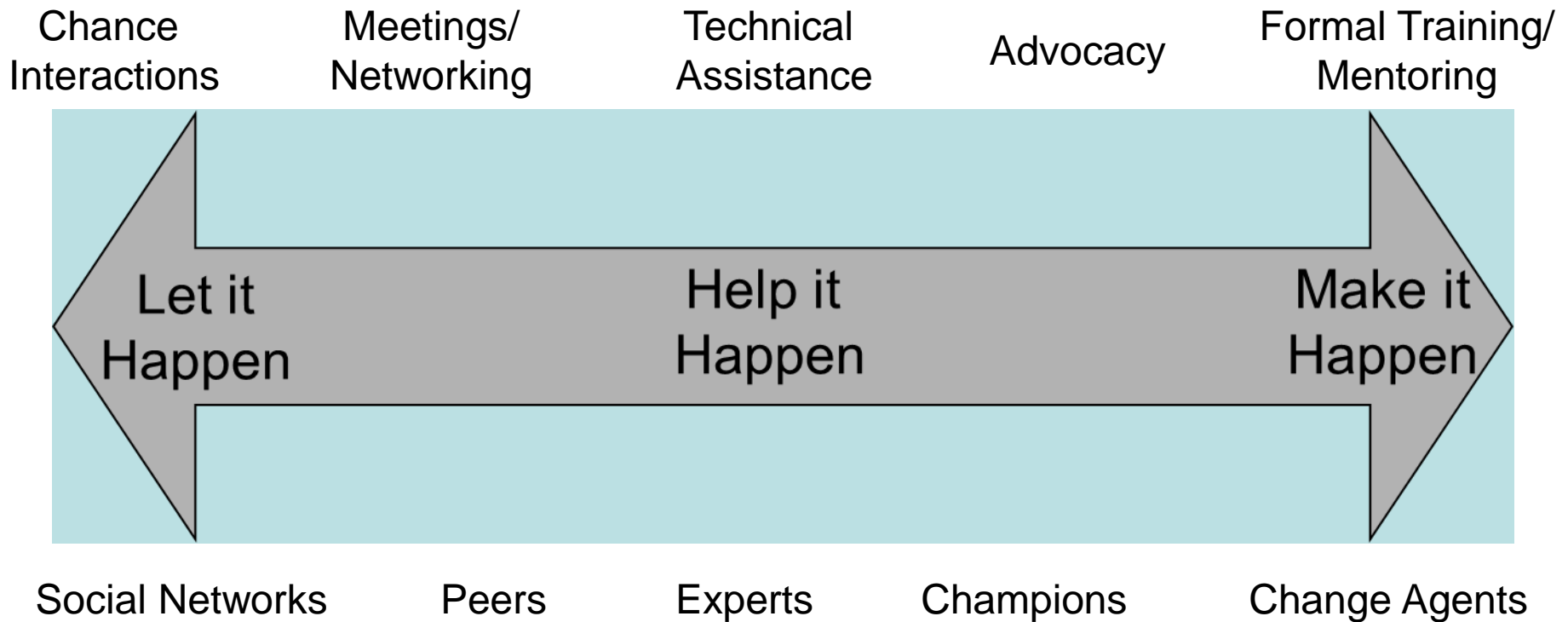


# Diversity and Equity

- How inclusive are your planning and decision-making processes? Are all voices really being heard?
- How explicitly are you addressing issues of race, language and culture?
- Examine standards, QRIS, PD, measures, definitions
- No one has this down yet!



# Diffusing Innovation



# Final Thoughts

- Believe the cliché about shared vision and goals
- Be bold – don't aim too low
- Lean in to the sharp points
- Be the duck
- Lead!!

# The BUILD Initiative

**For more information, visit**  
**[www.buildinitiative.org](http://www.buildinitiative.org)**

**Contact: Gerrit Westervelt, Ph.D.**  
**Executive Director**  
**[gwestervelt@buildinitiative.org](mailto:gwestervelt@buildinitiative.org)**  
**303-929-5011**