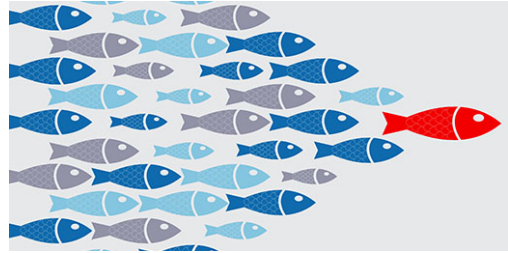


Systems Leaders



and System Thinkers



EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT
SYSTEMS THINKING*
BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

NAEYC Professional Learning Institute June 3, 2019 Jana Martella Tom Rendon Diane Schilder

Session Description

Nothing happens in early childhood *except in a system*. That system has profound influence on whether what happens is successful and supportive of children ... or is not.

But too few early childhood professionals understand how early childhood systems work at the local, state or national level.

This session provides a primer on systems thinking and systems leadership, and how these concepts apply to early childhood systems. Through simple explanations and focused discussion, this session will help you become more adept at understanding how best to operate within your system.

Session Objectives

1. understand the key terms of **systems thinking** (what is a system? what is system building? what is system thinking? what difference does thinking in systems make?)
2. learn where you are in the system, and why it's a **beautiful day in your neighborhood** (if you only knew your neighbors)
3. practice the fine arts of **system leadership**

Session Overview

Definitions

What our system looks like

Using system thinking and leadership for system improvement

Preschool Development Grant

B-5 Early Childhood State System. -- The term “B-5 Early Childhood State System” refers to **core early childhood care and education programs**, including the Child Care and Development Fund and State child care, which may include center-based, family child care, and informal care providers, Early Head Start and Head Start, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, and other State or locally funded home visiting services, Part C and Section 619 of Part B of IDEA, State preschool programs, and programs funded by Title I of the ESEA. In addition, it also includes **a wide range of early childhood care and education programs and services that strengthen, engage, and stabilize families and their infants and young children** including supports that target health and wellness, such as Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Title V Maternal and Child Health Programs, Healthy Start, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the infrastructure components that support these programs and services. (p. 7; **emphasis added**)

From U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (2018). Preschool Development Grant: Birth through Five [Federal Opportunity Announcement]. Retrieved from https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/files/HHS-2018-ACE-OCC-IP-1379_0.pdf.

Preschool Development Grant

(continued)

Mixed delivery system. -- The term “mixed delivery system,” as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Pub. L. 114-95, Section 9212(b)(5), means **a system of early childhood care and education services that are delivered through a combination of programs, providers, and settings**, such as Head Start, licensed family and center-based child care programs, public schools, and other community-based organizations, that is supported by a combination of public and private funds. (p. 8; **emphasis added**)

From U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (2018). Preschool Development Grant: Birth through Five [Federal Opportunity Announcement]. Retrieved from https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/files/HHS-2018-ACE-OCC-TP-1379_0.pdf.

What is a system?

DEFINITION: a set of connected things or parts forming a complex whole.

What is system building?

The ongoing process of developing the **structures, behaviors, and connections** that make all the components of an early childhood system operate as a whole to promote shared results for children and families. System-building is dynamic and can occur in fits and starts or double back and start over.

What is system-thinking?

a transformational approach to **learning, problem-solving** and **understanding** the world. Systems thinking helps people see beyond the heart of a problem to find fair and lasting solutions that deliver benefits.

about **seeing life in motion**, recognizing that the big picture is rarely static, but almost always a web of factors that interact to create **patterns and change** over time.

Where am I?

Finding yourself in the system.

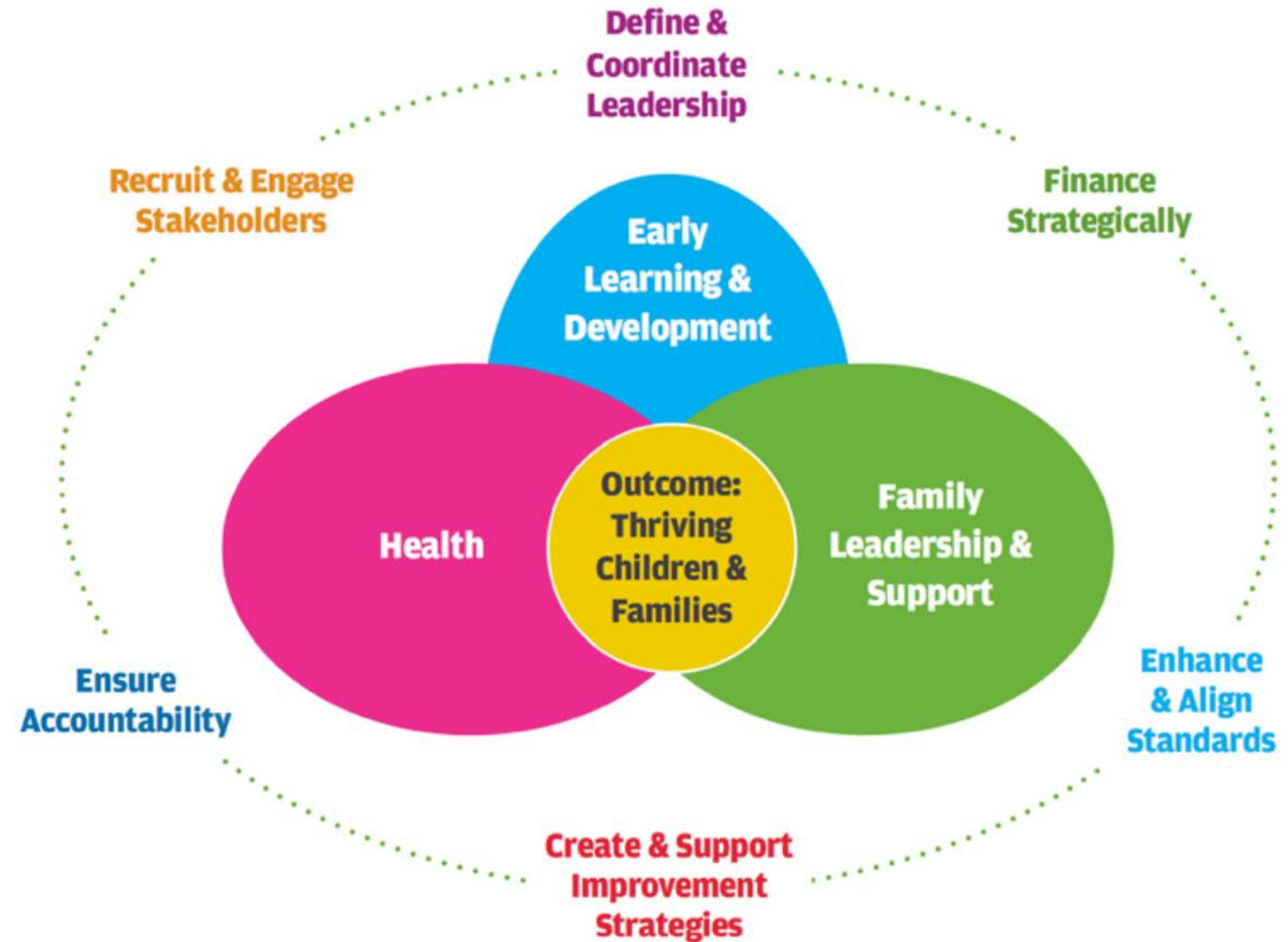
Your system...any system is
perfectly designed to produce
the results you are obtaining.

(Adapted from Carr, 2008)



WHAT WE THINK THE
SYSTEM LOOKS LIKE

Figure One. Six Key Strategies to Improve the Functioning of a Comprehensive Early Childhood System





WHAT THE SYSTEM ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE

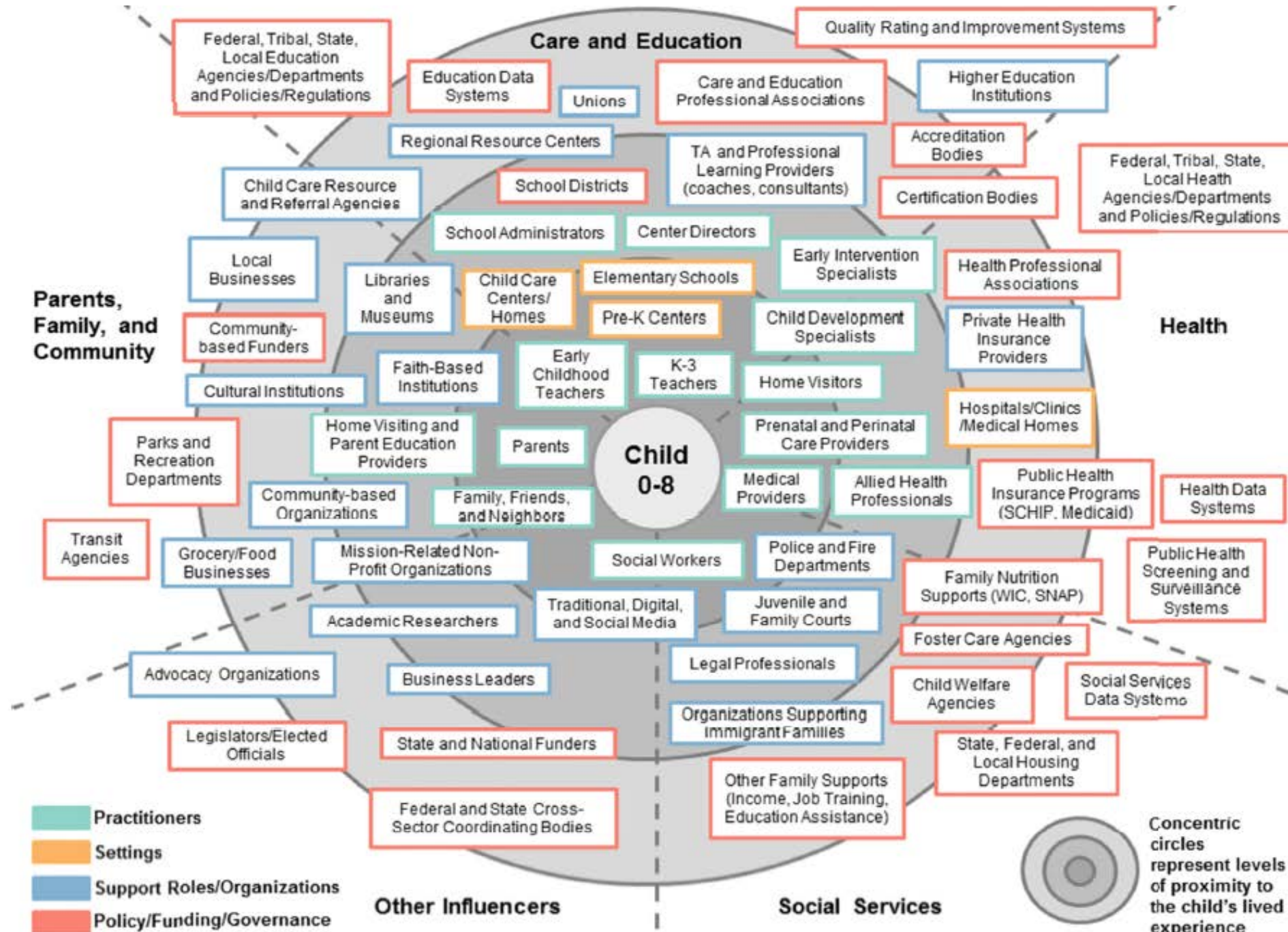


FIGURE 1-1 The complex landscape that affects children ages 0-8

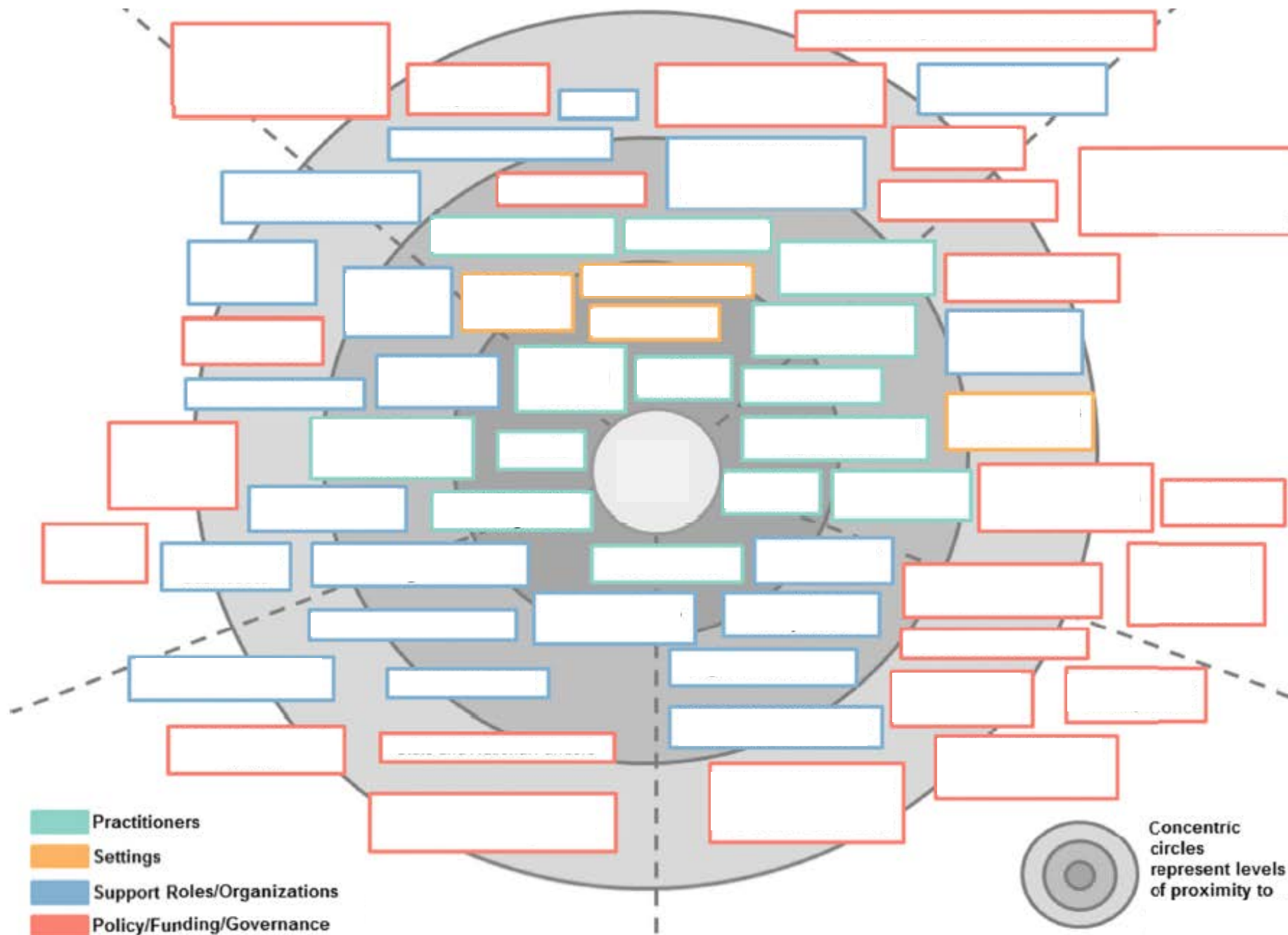


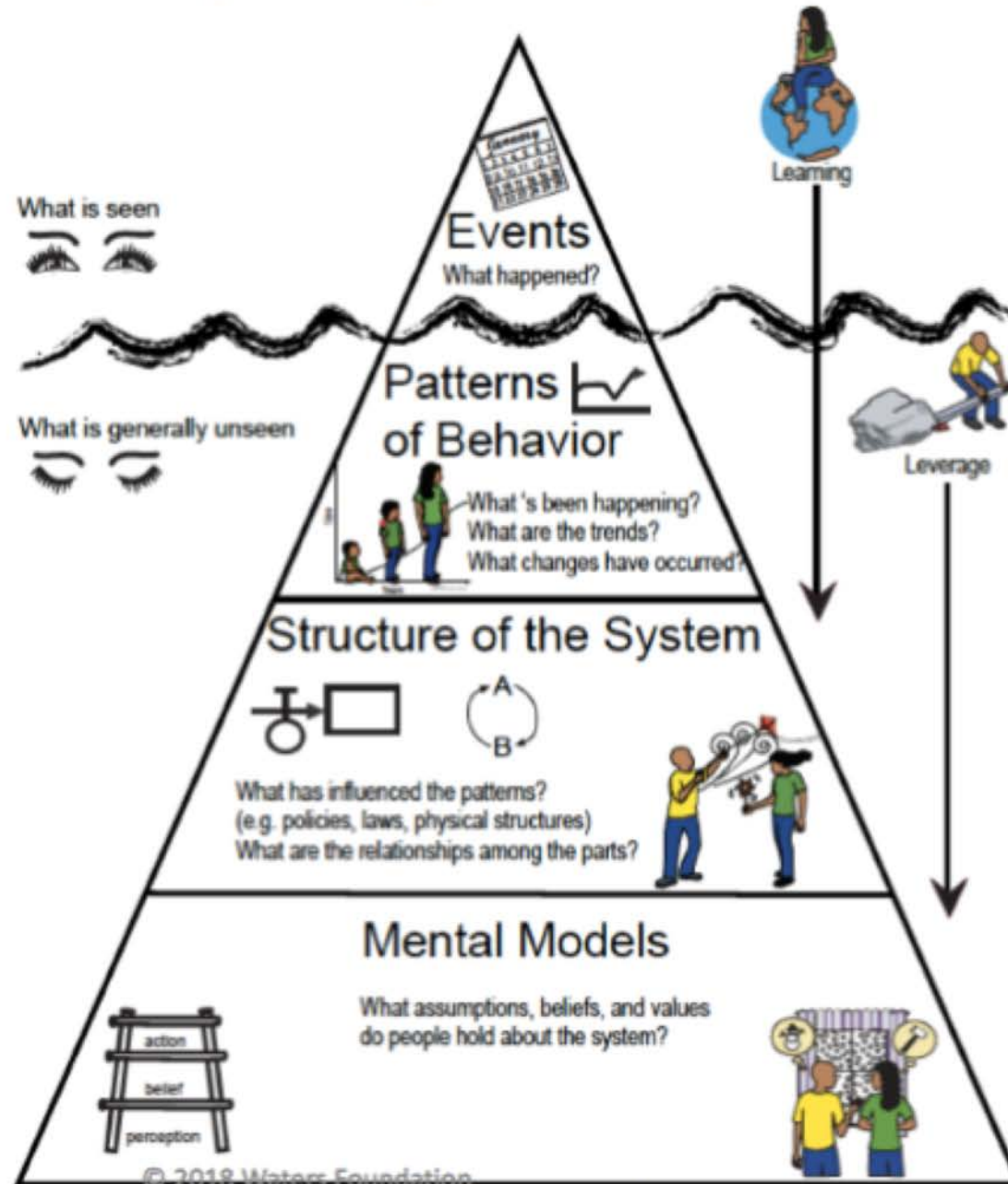
FIGURE 1.1 The complex landscape that affects

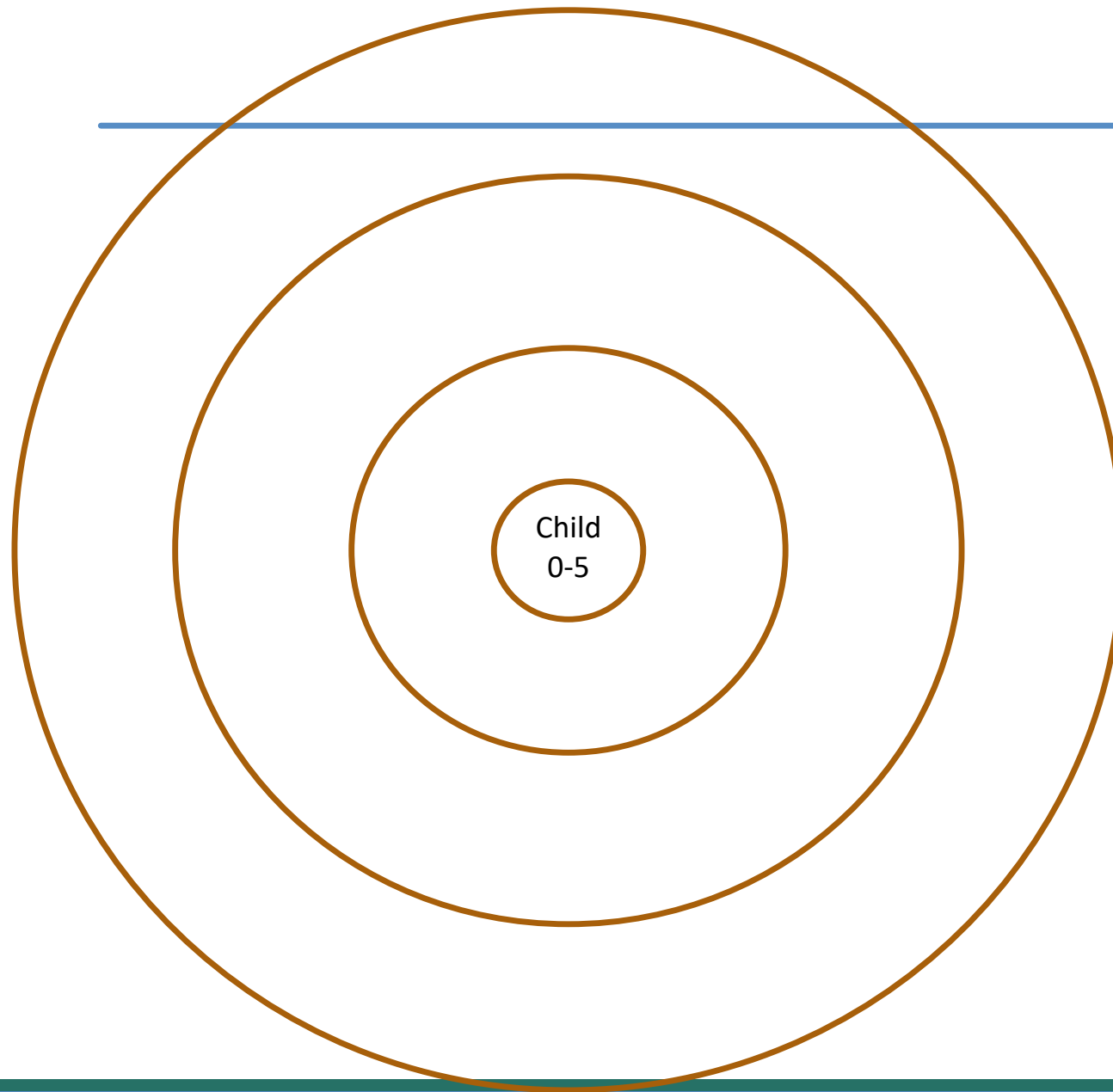
The Big Picture

Seeks to understand the "big picture"



Iceberg... Seeing What's Below the Surface





Fixing the System

Addressing challenges

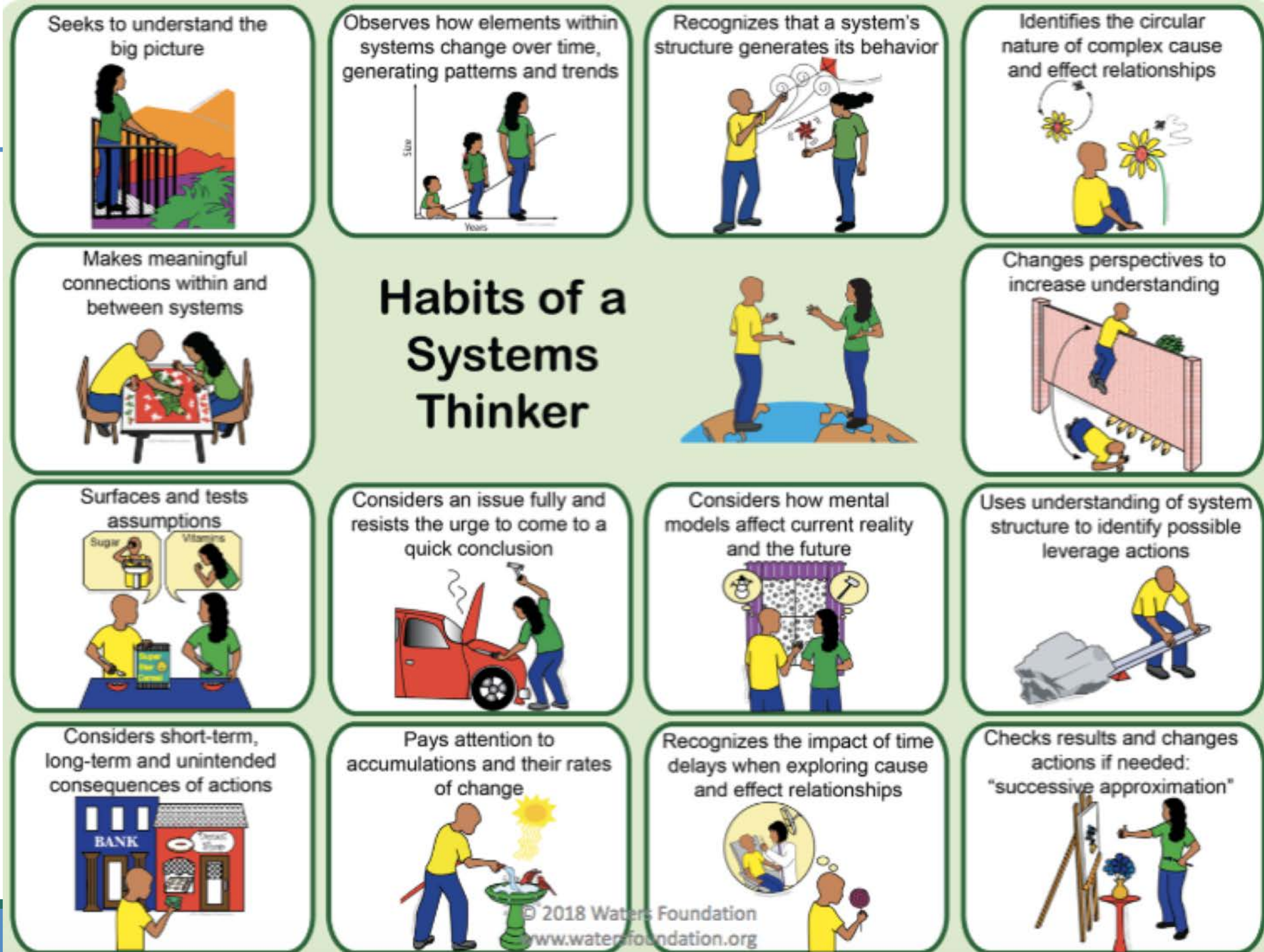
What are challenges we face as an early childhood system?

What is system-thinking?

a transformational approach to **learning, problem-solving** and **understanding** the world. Systems thinking helps people see beyond the heart of a problem to find fair and lasting solutions that deliver benefits.

about **seeing life in motion**, recognizing that the big picture is rarely static, but almost always a web of factors that interact to create **patterns and change** over time.

Habits of Systems Thinkers



**Analyze your challenge
through a specific system
thinking lens.**

System Narratives

Fixes that backfire

Shifting the burden

Limits to growth

Success to the successful

Accidental adversaries

SYSTEM NARRATIVE: Fixes that backfire

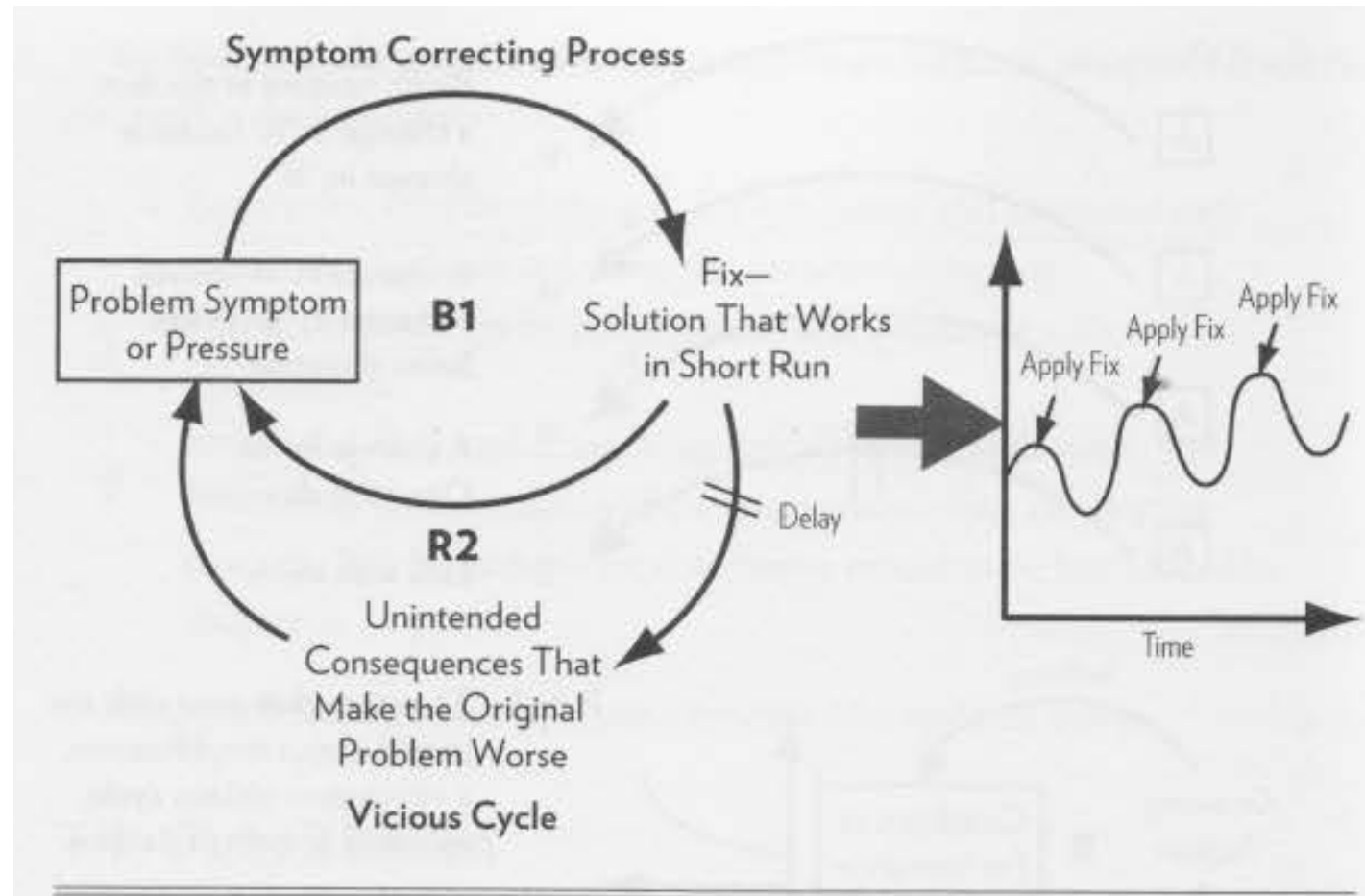


FIGURE 4.4 FIXES THAT BACKFIRE. Fixes That Backfire is the story of a quick fix producing unintended consequences that gradually make a problem symptom worse over time. Innovation Associates Organizational Learning

SYSTEM NARRATIVE: Shifting the burden

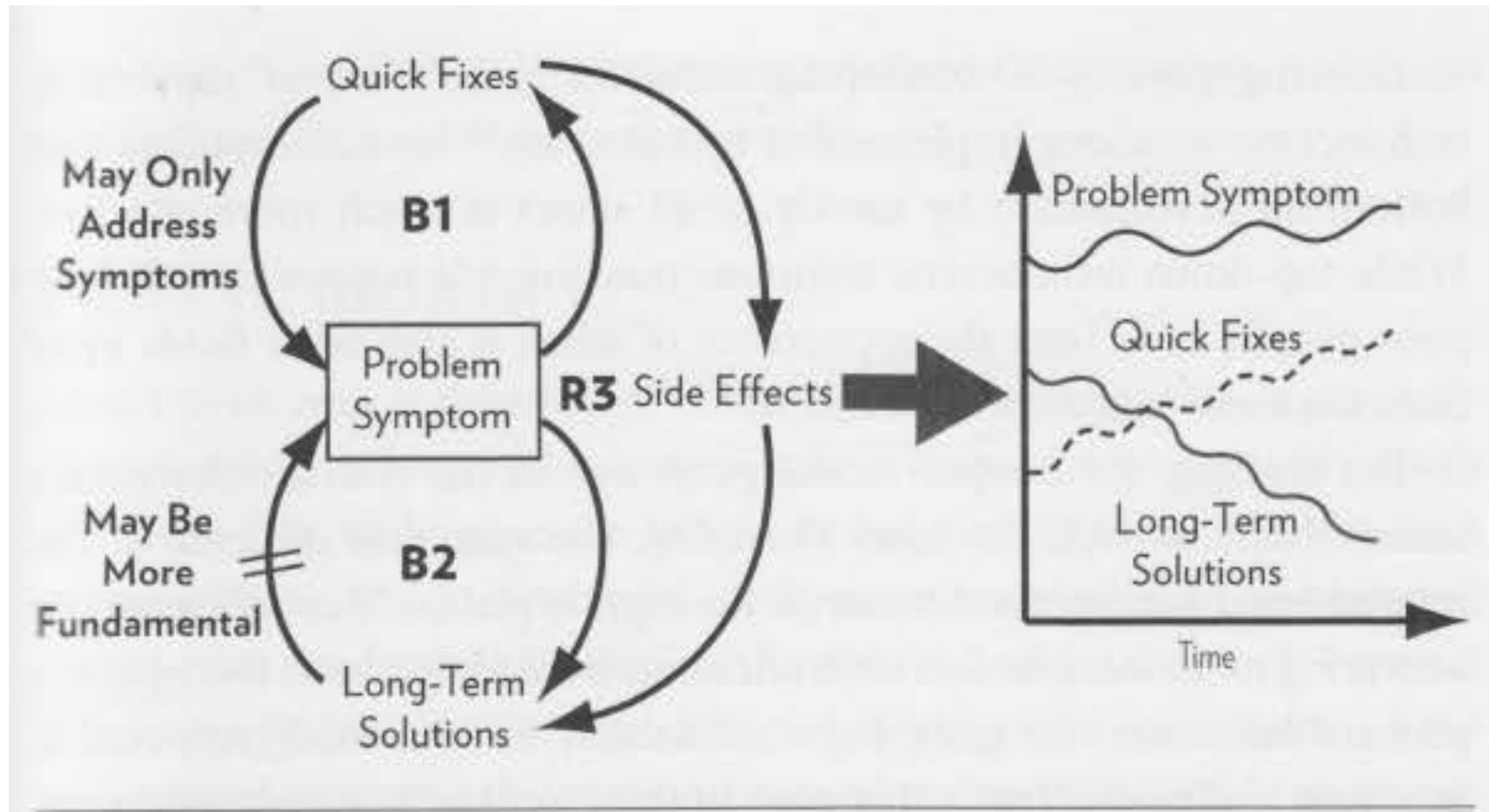


FIGURE 4.5 SHIFTING THE BURDEN. Shifting the Burden is the story of unintended dependency on a quick fix that reduces people's willingness and ability to implement a more fundamental solution. Innovation Associates Organizational Learning

From Stroh, D. (2015),
Systems thinking for
social change. White
River Junction, VT:
Chelsea Green.

SYSTEM NARRATIVE: Limits to growth

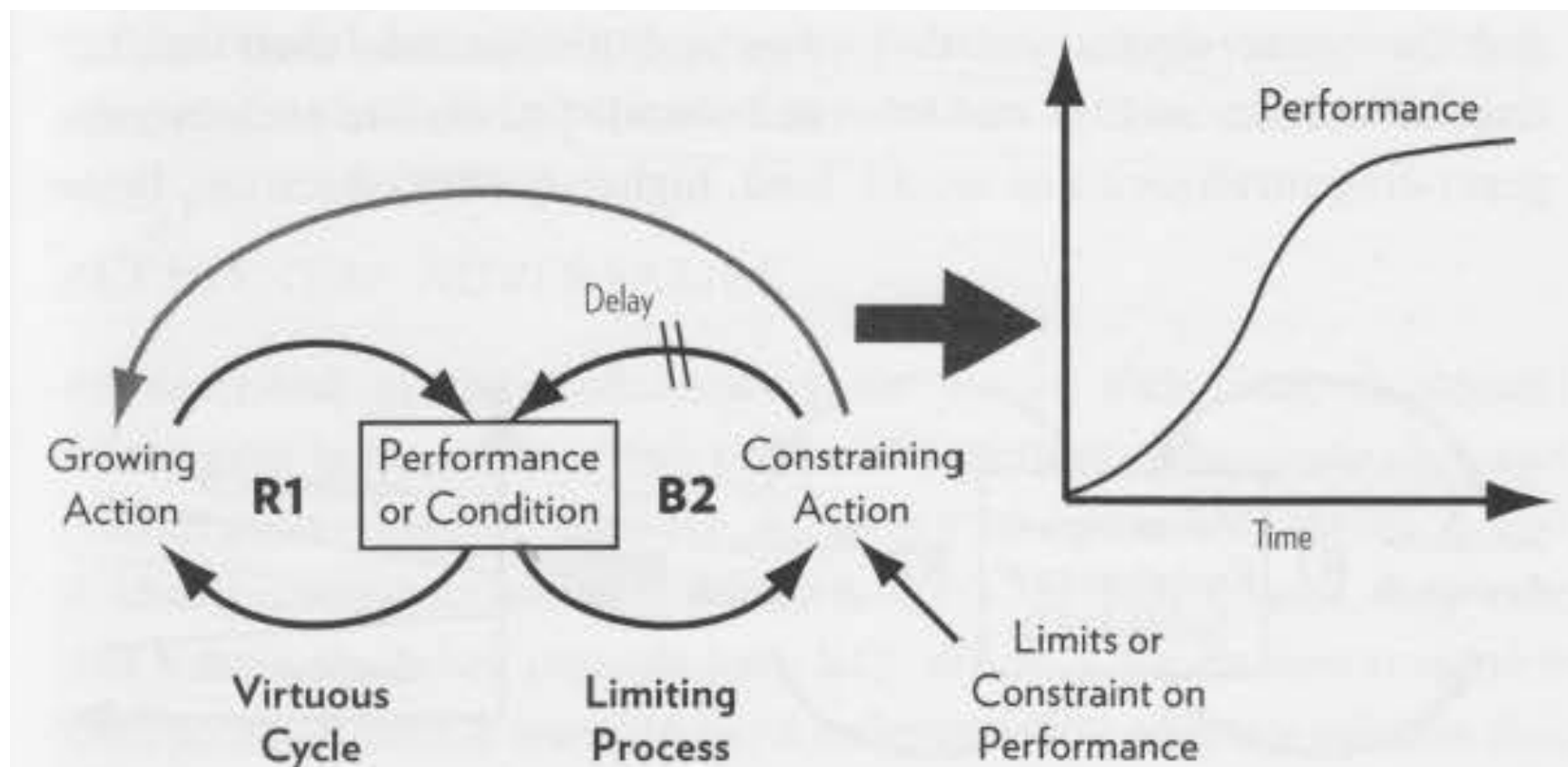


FIGURE 4.6 LIMITS TO GROWTH. Limits to Growth is the story of growth inevitably constrained by limits that must be overcome in order to sustain success. Innovation Associates
Organizational Learning

SYSTEM NARRATIVE: Success to the successful

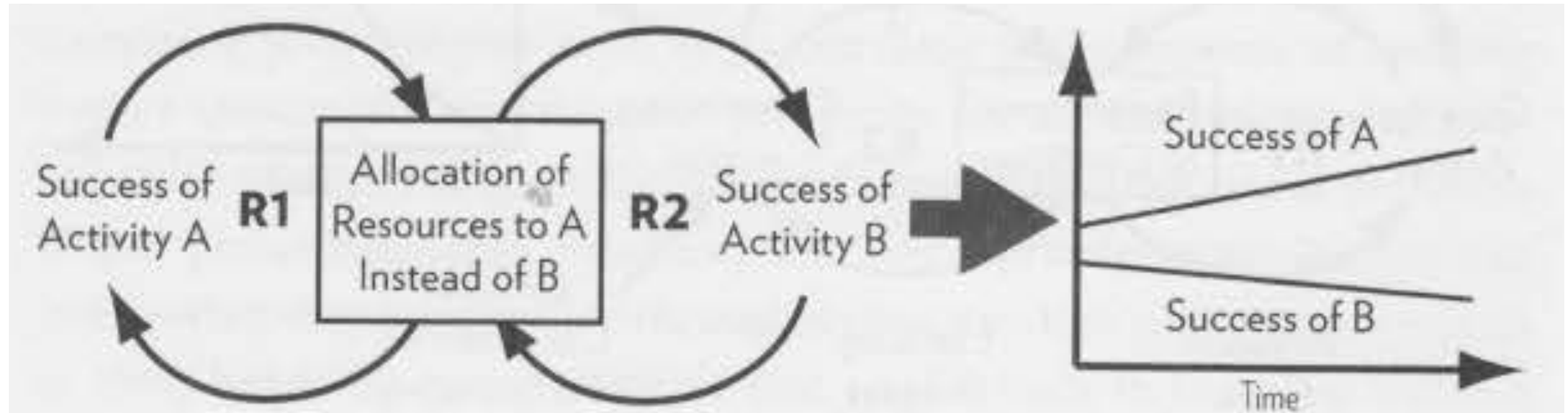


FIGURE 4.7 SUCCESS TO THE SUCCESSFUL. Success to the Successful explains how one party's success and another party's failure can be so closely linked. Innovation Associates Organizational Learning

SYSTEM NARRATIVE: Accidental adversaries

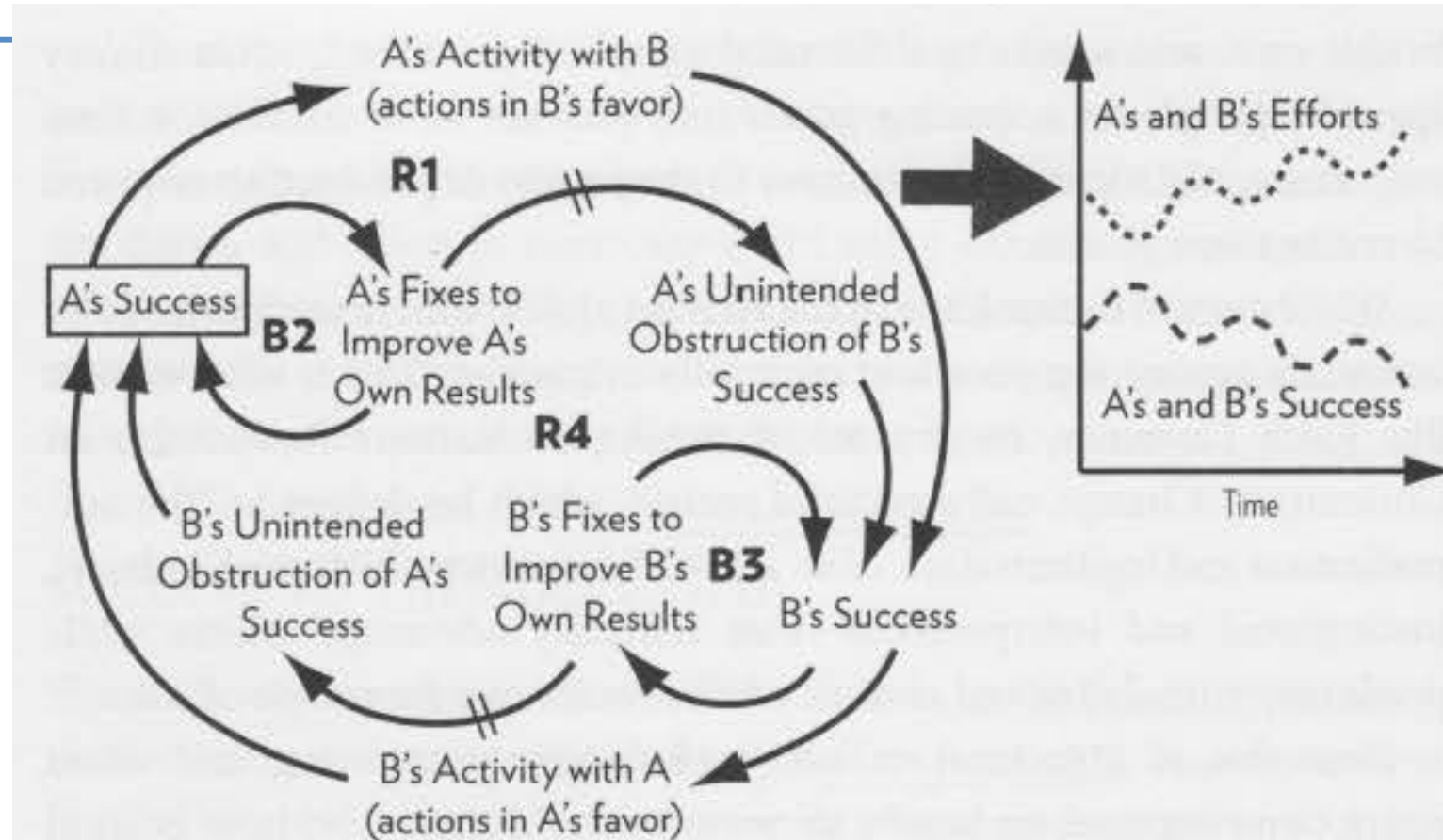


FIGURE 4.8 ACCIDENTAL ADVERSARIES. Accidental Adversaries describes how a promising relationship can unwittingly deteriorate into an adversarial one. Innovation Associates Organizational Learning

From Stroh, D. (2015),
*Systems thinking for social
 change*. White River
 Junction, VT: Chelsea
 Green.

Getting unstuck: What we need to know before we can address the challenges?

BAR/T

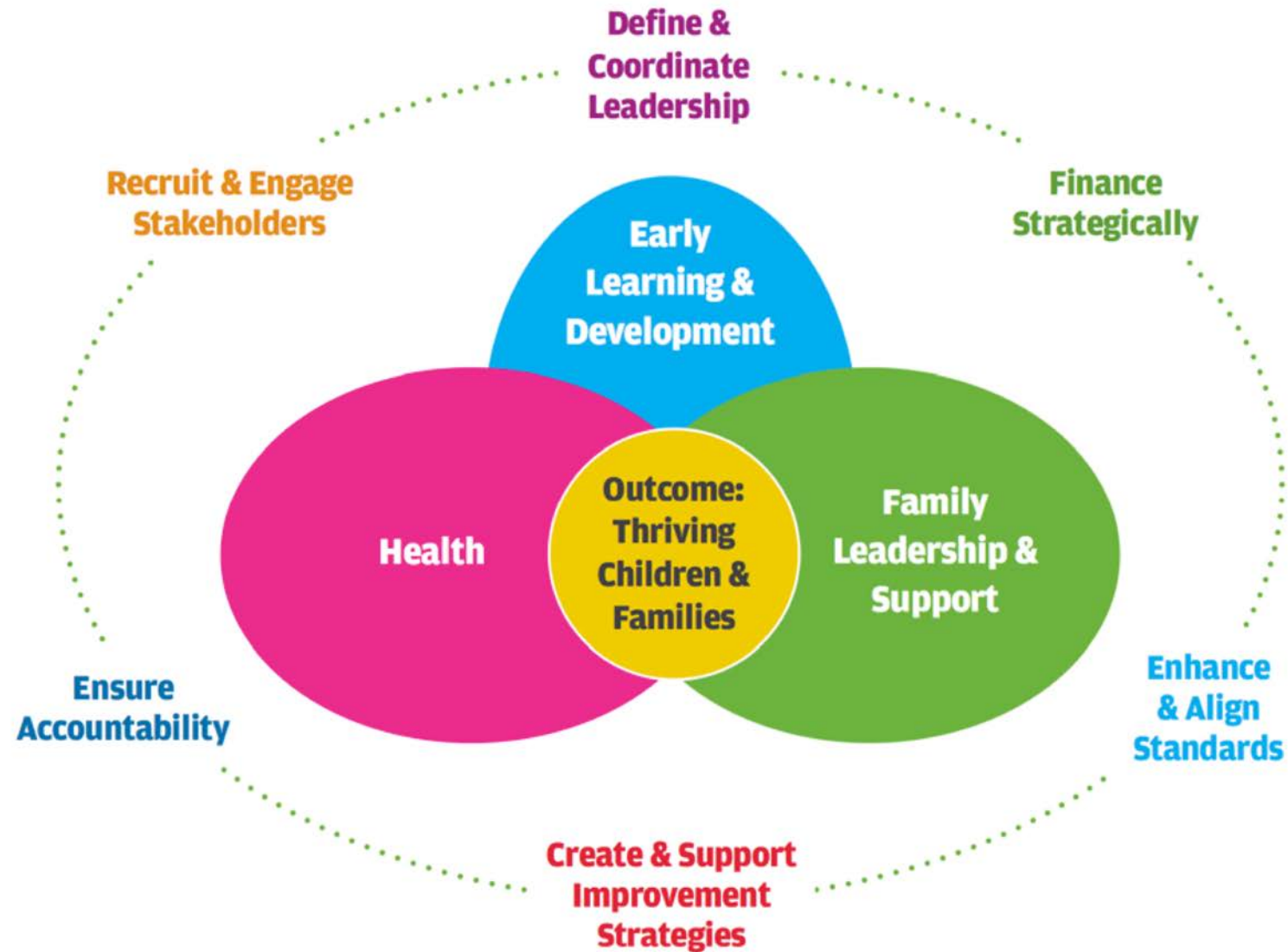
Boundaries

Authority

Roles

Tasks

**Think about a group, team
or committee you sit on.
What is your BAR/T?**



Early Childhood Systems Working Group. 2014.). Comprehensive early childhood system building: A tool to inform discussions on collaborative, cross-sector planning. Retrieved from: http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/uploads/Documents/ECSWG%20Systems%20Planning%20Tool_2014.pdf

System Leadership

Leading change at a system level

How to address challenges?

System level approaches*

Technical vs. Adaptive Leadership

Managers vs. Leaders

System Thinking Habits

BAR/T

System Scenarios

APPLYING
LEADERSHIP
APPROACHES

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP – The challenges we face

Technical Challenges

- Know-how currently exists
- Requires authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures to solve

1. What kind of challenge it is? Technical or adaptive?

2. Depending on the kind of challenge it is: what does a technical vs an adaptive approach tell you about how you should solve this problem?

Adaptive Challenges

- Solution not currently available
- Requires innovation/ experimentation, new discoveries, adjustments on multiple levels
- Risk and courage involved as uncertainty and resistance is encountered
- Solved by the people experiencing the problem

MANAGERS	LEADERS
Administer	Innovate
Ask how and when	Ask what and why
Focus on systems	Focus on people
Do things right	Do the right things
Maintain	Develop
Rely on control	Inspire trust
Have short-term perspective	Have long-term perspective
Accept the status quo	Challenge the status quo
Eye the bottom line	Eye the horizon
Imitate	Originate
Emulate the classic good soldier	Are their own person
Copy	Show originality

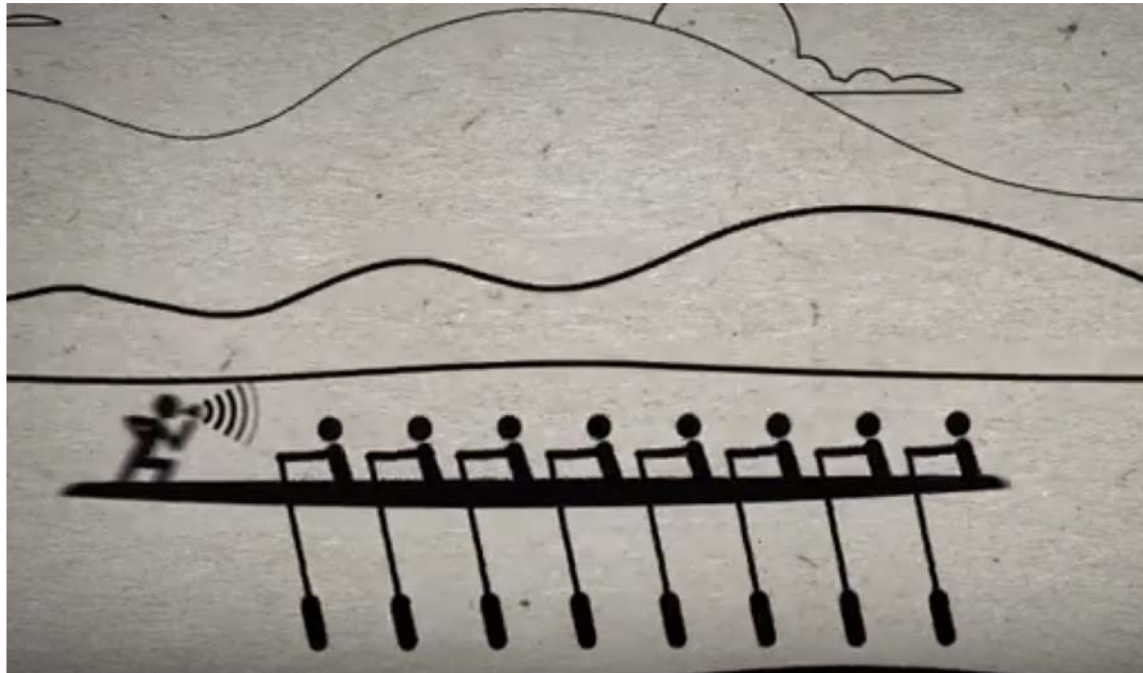
"The best way to optimize the system is to improve the relationships among its parts, not to optimize each part separately."

--David Peter Stroh, Systems Thinking for Social Change

*“All real living is
meeting.”*

--Martin Buber, I and Thou

We can't do this alone...



Watch this video here:

<https://youtu.be/YRX2y46fHXE>

THANK YOU! – MORE INFORMATION

Jana Martella

- JMartella@edc.org

Tom Rendon

- Tom.rendon@iowa.gov
- (515) 326-5389

Diane Schilder

- DSchilder@edc.org

CEELO

- www.ceelo.org
- Link to another systems presentation: http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ceelo_presentation_naeycpli_2018_ta_session.pdf