

Family Resource and Impact Center: a *Demonstration Site for a Trauma-Informed Community of Care*

“ We all have the capacity to be therapists...
to love a child unconditionally and share in mutual delight”

- Adapted from neuroscientists presenting to the Napa Parent – Infant Mental Health Fellowship



Background

VISION

San Benito County's children thrive and reach their full potential at home, in school, in the community, and throughout life.

MISSION

First 5 San Benito promotes the health, early learning, and social-emotional well-being of children prenatal through age 5 via strategic investments and partnerships.



Strategic Area: Children & Families

Strategic Area: System & Network

Strategic Area: Literacy

**Strategic Area: Children, Youth and Families
Impact Center**

Social Equity

“Don’t beat the odds, change the system.”

- Adapted from Dr. Manuel Pastor, University of Southern California

As part of the strategy to strengthen systems and networks, First 5 organized local leaders around building a sustainable, outcome-based, collaborative.

The collaborative had worked together to resolved social equity barriers in a local park.

The partners understood that the park effort was the tip of the iceberg and reflected the need for deeper systemic work to address the underlying issues that exist within the community.



The Hollister Literacy Collaborative

“Every child is one compassionate adult away from thriving.”

-Adapted from Josh Shipp, CMHACY Conference, 2018

The partners of the collective effort shared a value of investing in **early education and prevention and determining the potency and developmental window for intervention strategies** that kept our children and youth in school and away from the juvenile justice system.

The collaborative adopted **third grade literacy scores** as a predictor whether children will end up in the justice system or graduate from high school.



Photo from the book, *Mind of God*

What changes when a system becomes trauma informed?

...Everything.

-Epstein, et al. 2014

Trauma is an exceptional experience in which powerful and dangerous stimuli overwhelms the child's developmental and regulatory capacity to regulate emotions and occurs with **insufficient resources** to cope with the event.



Macro Level Challenges parallel Micro Level Challenges

Macro level challenge- The evidence base of the importance of integrated early childhood mental health is not reflected in public policy for mental health, early learning and development, or health care reform (including Medi-Cal and managed care).

Micro level challenge - Providers of services to young children are fragmented, siloed, hierarchical, accustomed to system specific specialized language that does not promote a shared value-across sectors mental health, early learning and development, or health care.

There are not enough providers with training in early childhood mental health interventions.

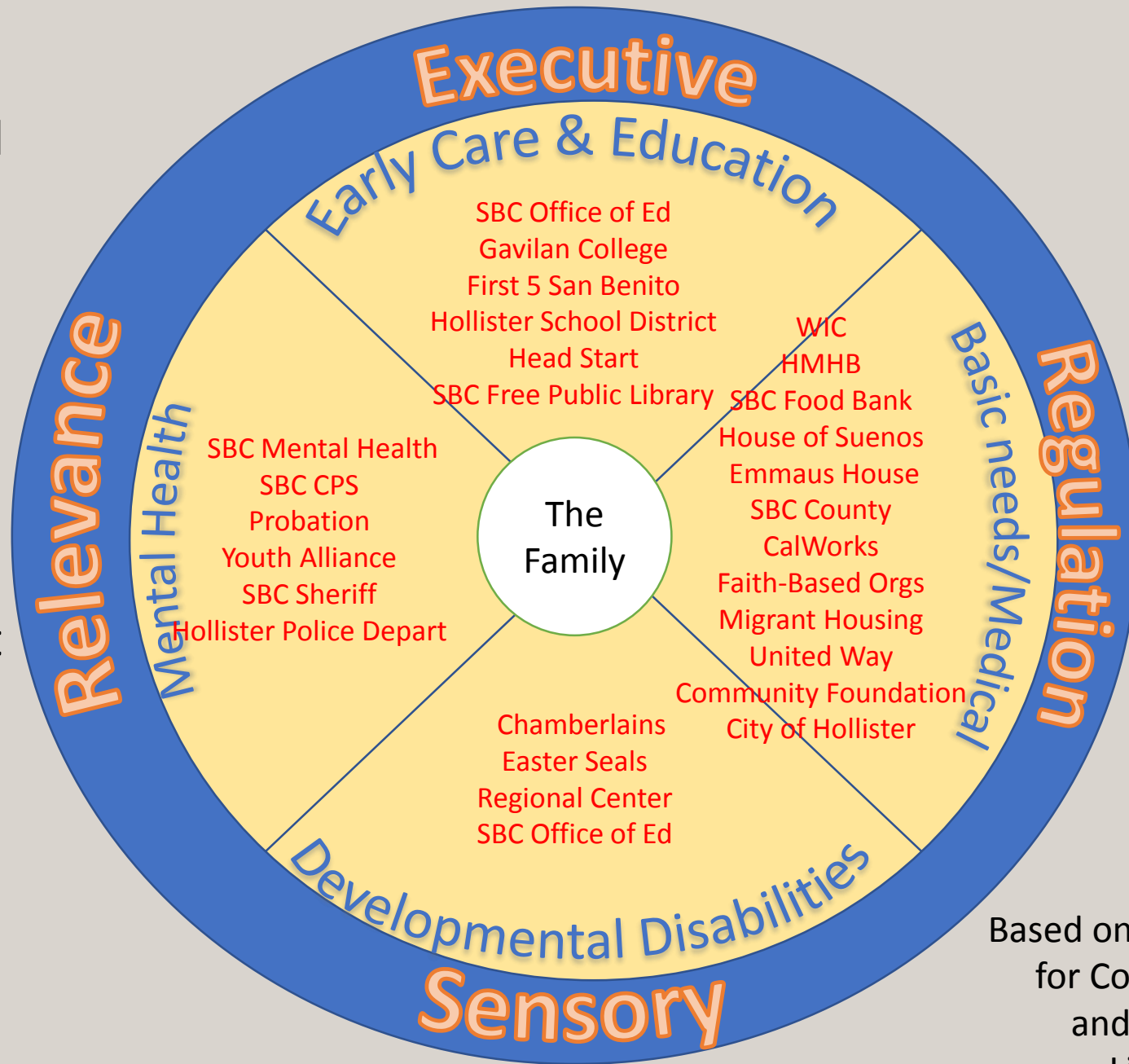
Macro level challenge - The demand for compliance to meet the eligibility determinations that is satisfied by a “single-label” diagnoses fails to account for the complexity that exists.

Micro level challenge – After the age of two years, providers fail to take into account the regulatory responses our youngest children and demand compliant behavior regardless of their neurobiology or sensitized system as a result of trauma and toxic stress.

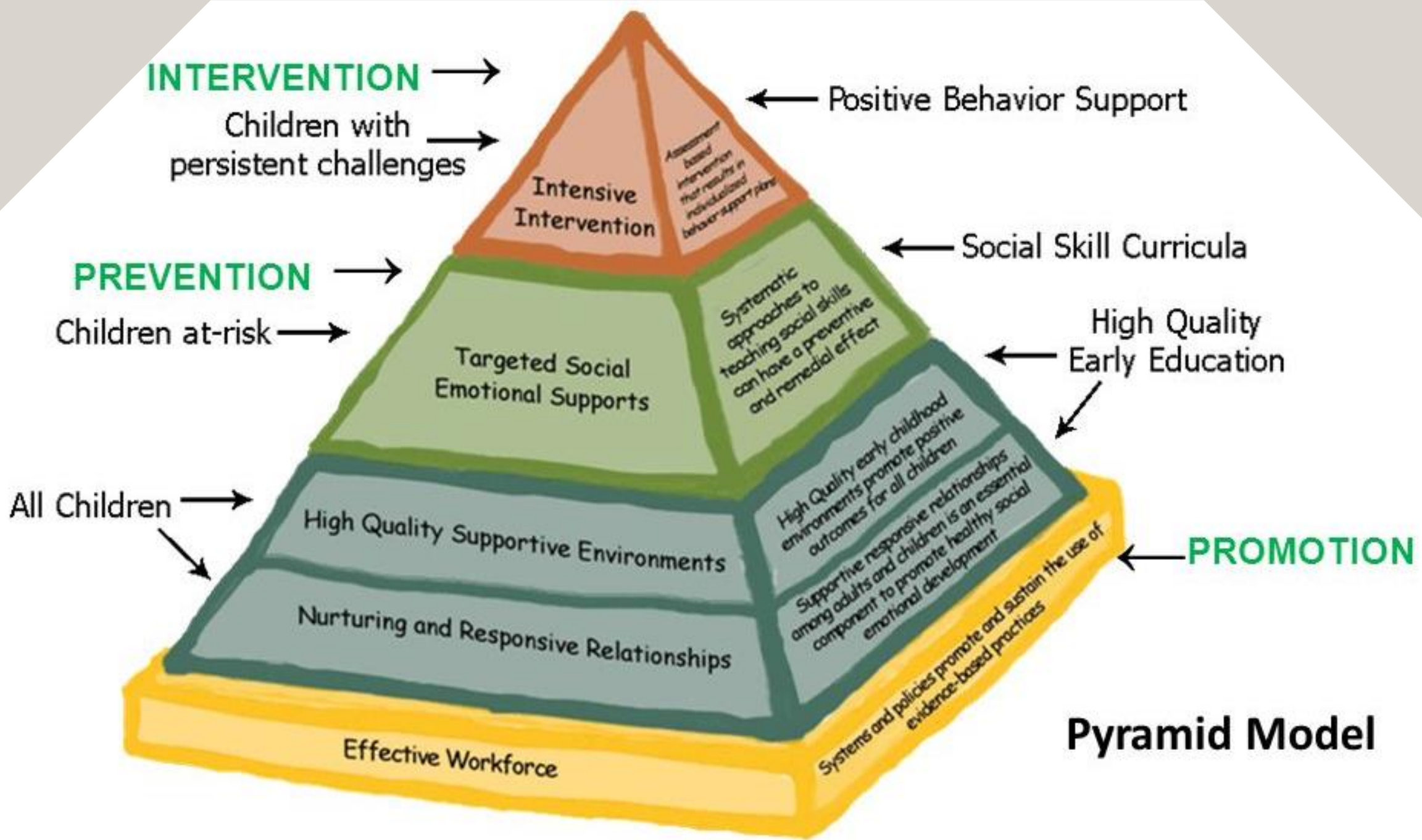
Solution: –Invite Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) to the Table

- ✓ Design and advocate for public policies that are inclusive of early childhood educators /providers that are integrated with mental health (i.e., home visiting, screening, etc.)
- ✓ Establish an organizational systemic structure that values early care providers and early childhood educator as a “warm hand-off referrers.”
- ✓ ECEs have an existing, attuned, and trusted the relationship with kids and parents!
- ✓ Build the capacity of the early childhood workforce to provide therapeutic approaches to our most vulnerable children and families that will promote resiliency factors and reduce long-term effects of toxic stress.
- ✓ Develop a shared-language to allow a transdisciplinary team to address promotion, prevention, and intervention of detrimental impacts of toxic stress (i.e. NRF colors, co-regulation, stress patterns, social emotional development “mental health” etc.)

Macro system level partners representing the four core areas of healthy infant and child brain development



Based on Neurorelational Framework for Community System Building and Transdisciplinary Work
Lillas & Turnbull, 2009



Pyramid Model

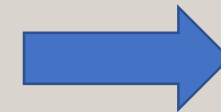
San Benito Early Childhood Education and NeuroRelational Framework (NRF) Demonstration Site

Why a demonstration program? Quality education provides a backdrop of safety. From the earliest ages, early relationships are critical. Strong, responsive relationships have permanent effects on brain development, physical health, and mental health. In the early stages of child development, social emotional and physical health go hand in hand. Responsive providers /caregiver can mitigate trauma the effects of varying conditions such as prematurity or poverty.

Regulate



Relate



Reason

- Dr. Bruce Perry

“Bottom up” experience of community that allows us to better support children and families that are at epigenetic risk due to vulnerabilities, generational, and cultural trauma. Many families that experience trauma also experience inner personal relationships that are ruptured and in need of repair. A school is rich in relational wealth