



The Alberta Family Wellness Initiative: A platform for social change to improve outcomes for all children and families

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THE ALBERTA FAMILY WELLNESS INITIATIVE

- Created in 2007 by the Palix (formerly Norlien) Foundation
- Mobilizes synthesized research about brain and child development to better understand how early childhood experiences impact on health and well being throughout life, with a particular focus on mental health and addiction
- Funds and initiates many activities to bring about positive change in policy and practice for the benefit of children and families based on this knowledge
- ***Catalyst, broker, model, platform for cross-sector engagement - academia, health, human services, justice, education***



What is the knowledge base?

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child - synthesized and condensed body of knowledge

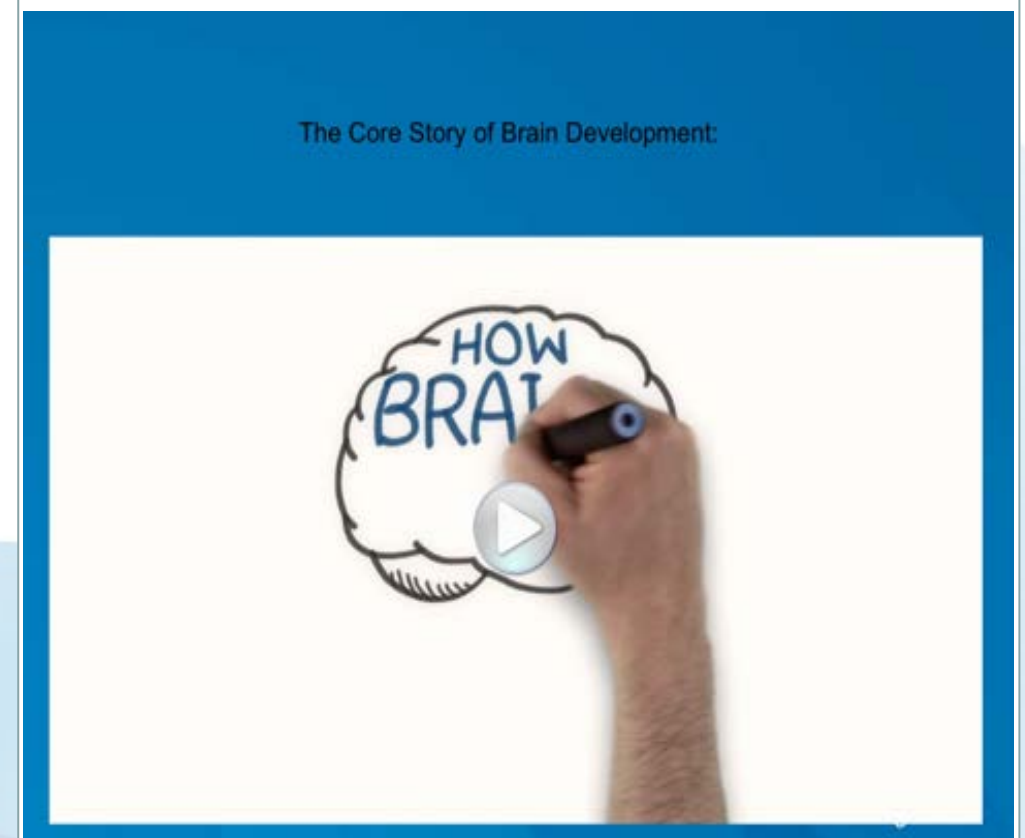


FrameWorks Institute



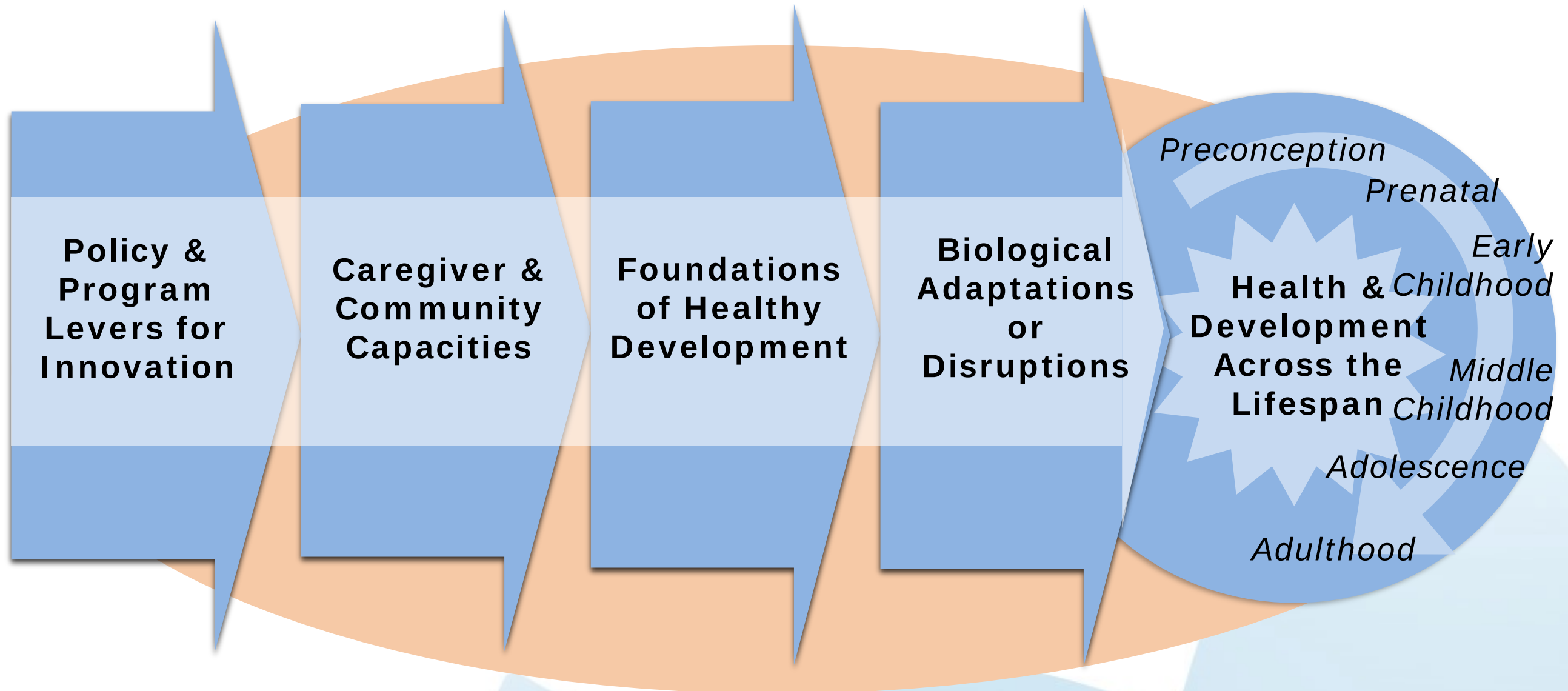
The core story of child development:

- Brain architecture
- Serve and return
- Toxic stress
- Air traffic control





Using a Knowledge-Based Logic Model to Inform More Effective Policies and Programs



AFWI

AFWI Theory of Action

Knowledge base

Identification of change agents

Knowledge mobilization activities

- Research on ECD & A/MH*
- Presentations & convenings
 - Symposia
- Program development
- Education & training
- Media & communications
 - Networking
 - Relationship building

Δ in change agents

- Relationships
- Narrative & language
- Understanding & beliefs
- Behaviors & practices

Δ in systems

- Resource allocation
- Institutions & organizations
 - Government policy
 - Professional practice

Improved health & wellness outcomes for individuals & families

Broad adoption of approaches to ECD & A/MH* rooted in the knowledge

Assumptions

1. Understanding how the brain works and develops will overcome existing misperceptions and underlying beliefs and will support changes in individual behavior and systems related to ECD & A/MH*
2. Change agents identified by AFWI will act as drivers of systems change by spreading knowledge throughout systems ("ripple effect")



AFWI Change Agent Theory of Change

“If...”

“And...”

“Then...”

AFWI Activities

- Convening change agents
- Sharing brain science



Short-term Outcomes

- New and strengthened relationships
- Shared narrative and language
- Increased understanding of the brain science

Intermediate Outcomes

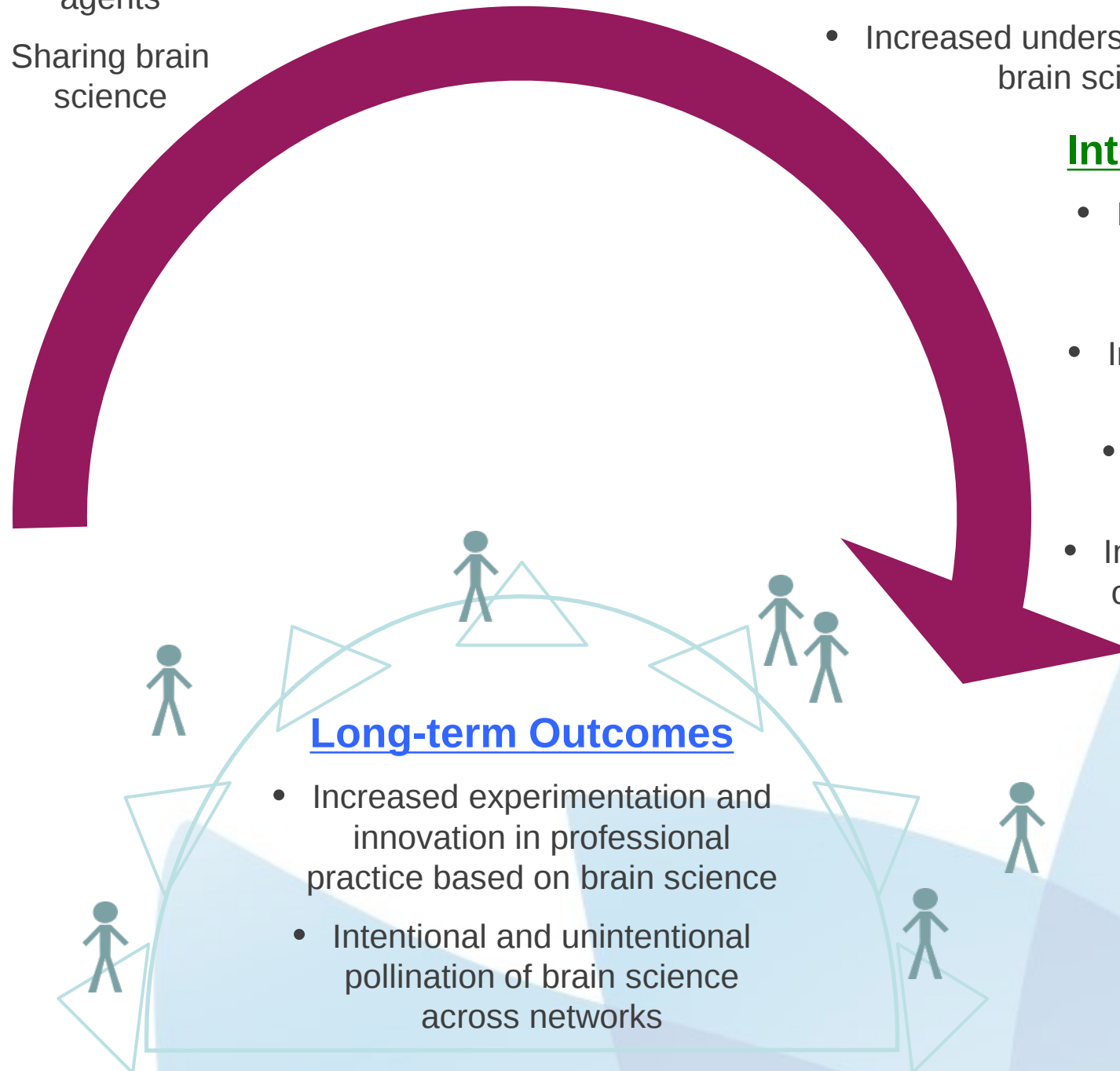
- Increased understanding of own role in system change efforts
- Increased confidence in own work
- Increased willingness to innovate and collaborate
- Increased aspirations for and ownership of driving change

Long-term Outcomes

- Increased experimentation and innovation in professional practice based on brain science
- Intentional and unintentional pollination of brain science across networks

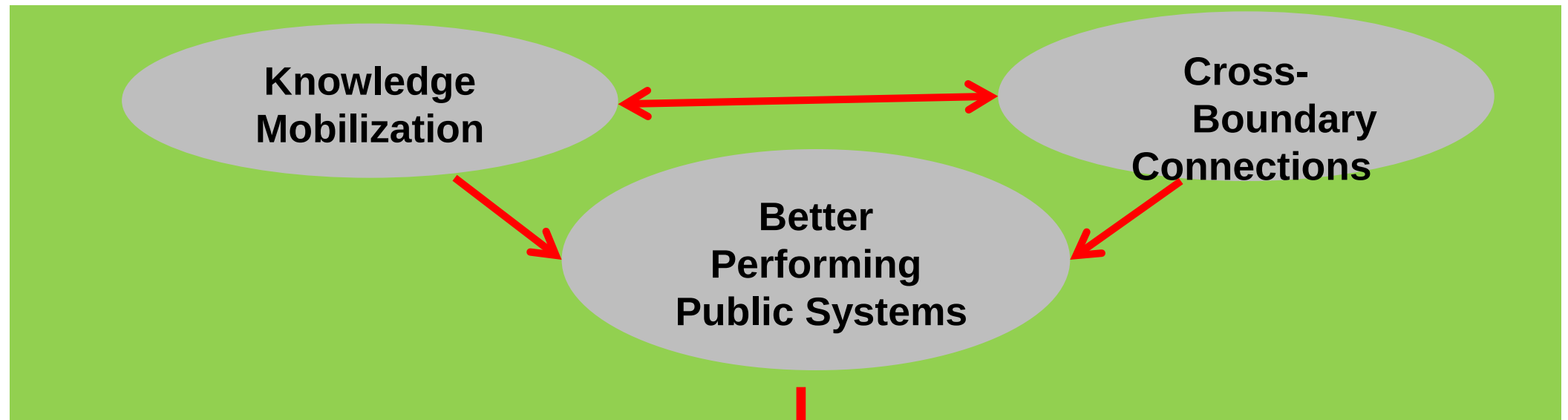
Baseline

- Inconsistent narrative and incomplete understanding of the brain science
- Siloed work (a narrow focus on one's part of the elephant)



The Alberta Family Wellness Initiative: Theory of Philanthropy

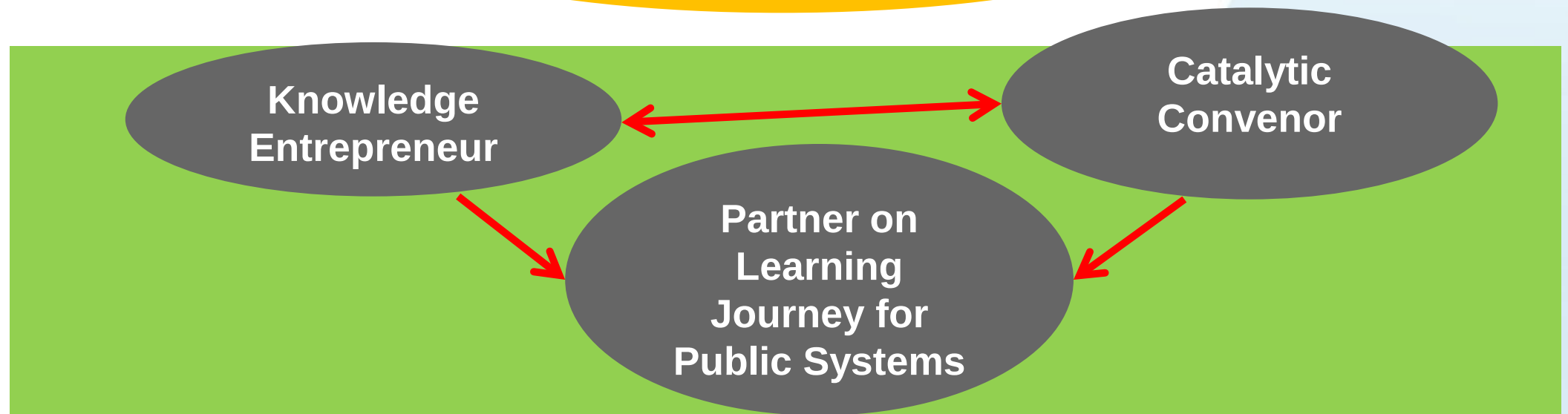
**Theory
of
Change**



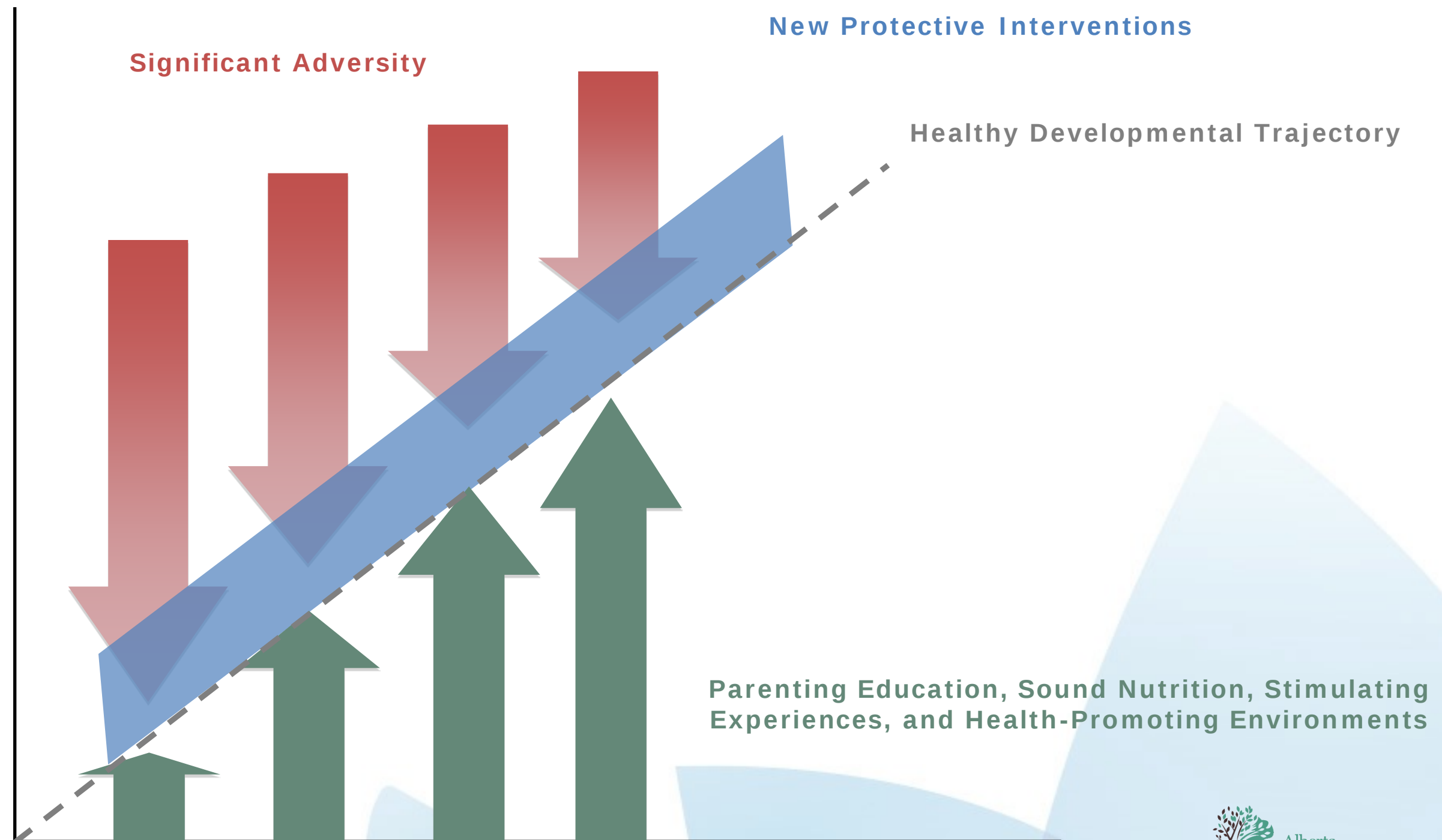
**Better Outcomes
for Families
(Addiction and mental health)**



**Theory
of
Philanthropy**



Protective Interventions Can Build Resilience and Improve Life-long Health and Well-being



AFWI Is Contributing to Changes in Individuals, Organizations, and Systems, but the Amount of Change Varies

Some Change

Significant Change

Individual Change

Efficacy and role in creating change

Forming or deepening relationships

Changing behaviors

Increasing understanding

Organizational Change

Changing policy or strategy

Increasing sense of priority

Increasing conversation

Funding reallocation

Adopting new practices

Discussing changes to activities

Changing in activities

Institutionalizing the core story

Sharing the core story

Systems Change

Changing professional practice standards

Ownership over policy implementation

Approving high-visibility policy documents

Funding reallocation

Increasing cross-sector work

Increasing cross-sector dialogue



VIO



chapter: 6

Message - From the

In the last 10 years we have learned more about early childhood development than we ever knew before. Science is teaching us that what happens in the early childhood years and life-long learning is crucial.

The purpose of this report is to get people talking and engaged about early childhood development. Why? Because the province depends on our ability to foster the growth and well-being of the next generation. Every child, no matter his or her circumstances, has the right to opportunities that will enable them to grow, develop and thrive; and when we invest wisely in children and families, we benefit from the constant renewal of our province through a lifetime of productive and responsible citizenship.

Our growing understanding about early childhood development is a compelling opportunity to re-think how we support healthy childhood development. Governments in Canada, including the province of Alberta, have traditionally focused more on children after they enter the school system, and our investments are primarily in children deemed to be from high-risk backgrounds. If we wait to intervene until children are in school or even adults, we miss out on opportunities to create better outcomes for children. This means that investing in the first five years of life will yield the greatest dividends for our collective benefit.

All children, but particularly those in at-risk situations, need a safe, nurturing environment to reach their full potential. Specifically, our children need a strong foundation which means access to health, nutrition, and early learning opportunities.

let's talk

About the Early Years

Early Childhood Development



Report by the Chief Medical Officer of Health

Government of Alberta

Alberta

Chapter 1

Photographs tell an important story about early childhood milestones in a child's life, including first smile, first steps, first day of school.

As individuals, families and as a government, we have a role in ensuring healthy early development for Alberta children.

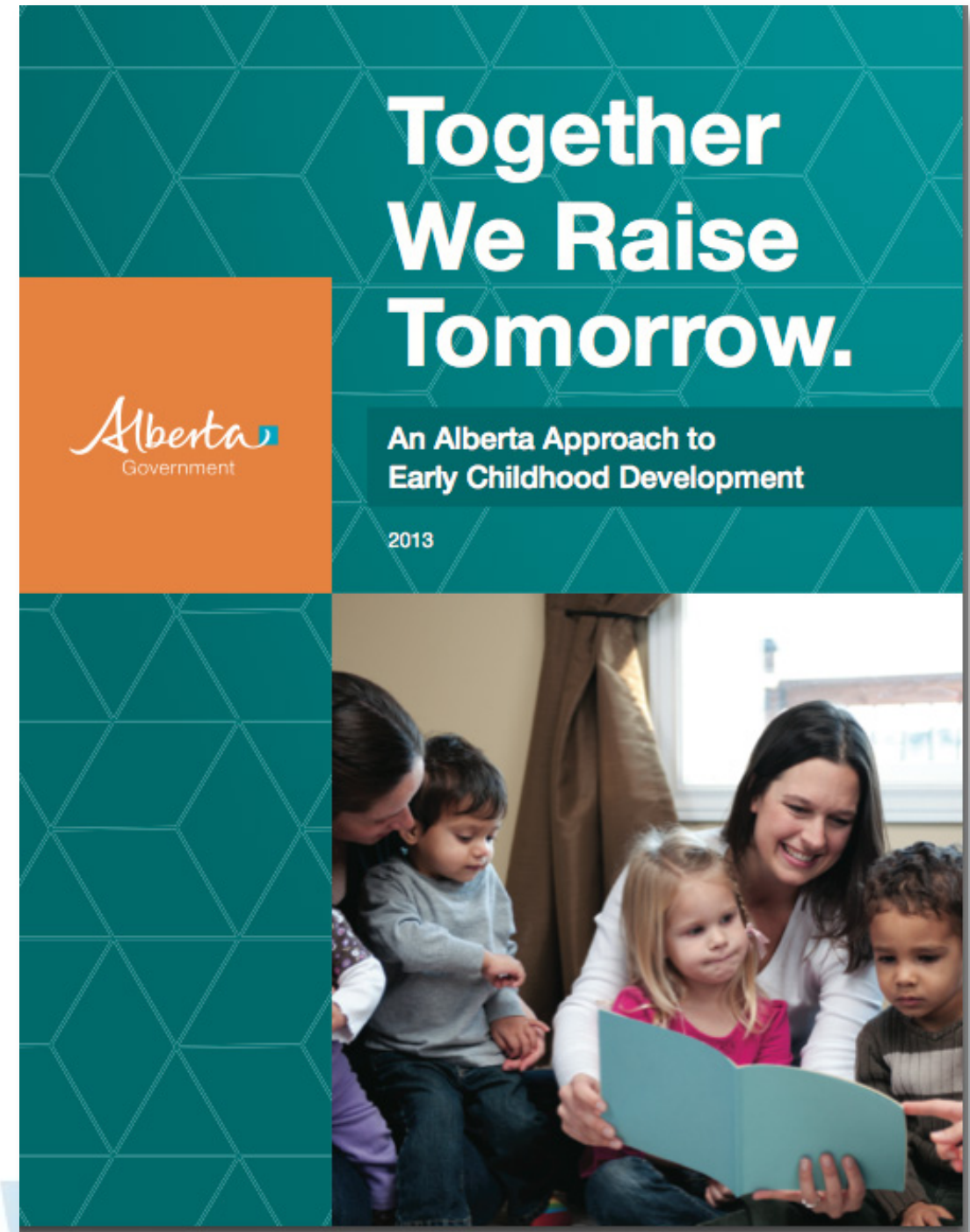
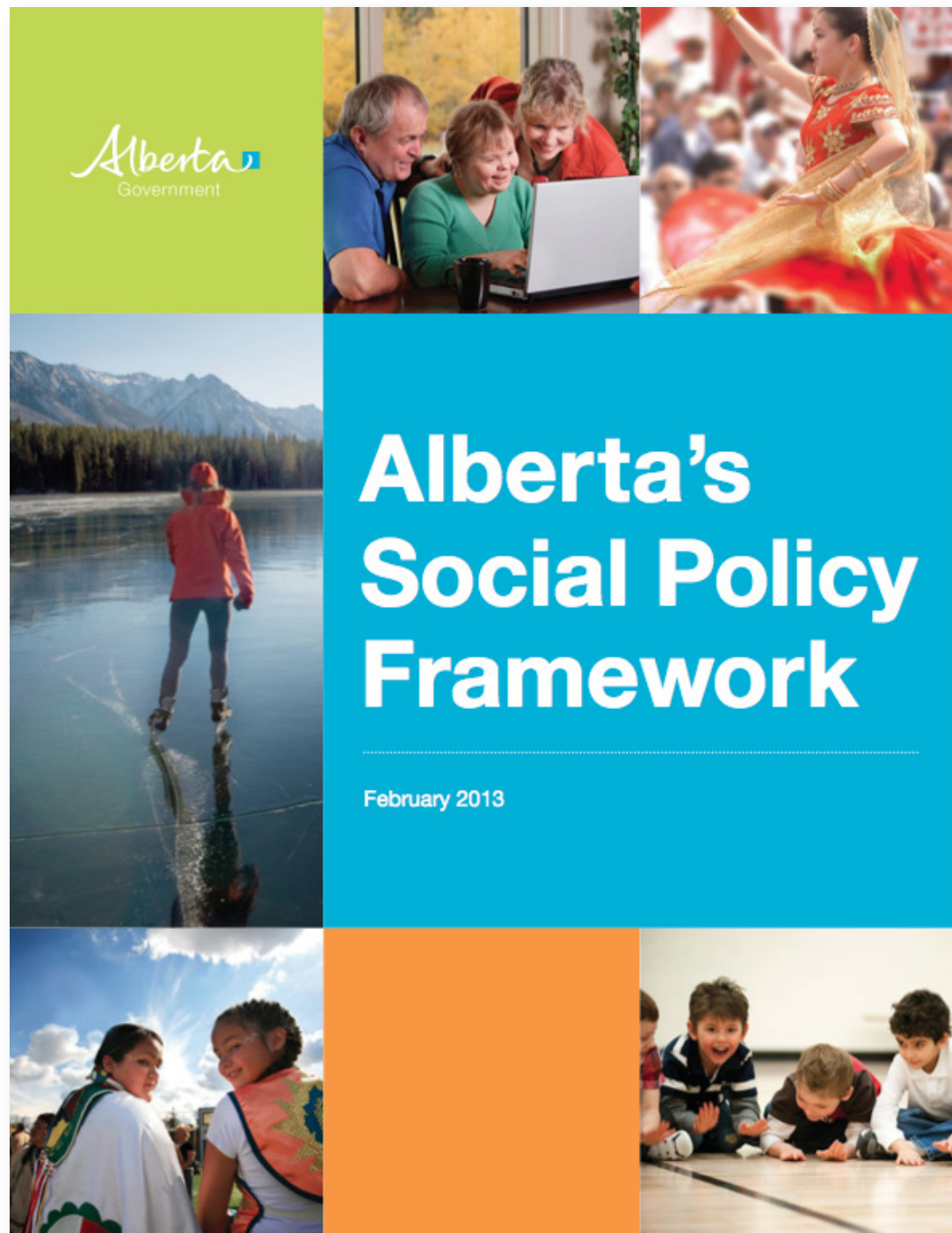
What is early childhood?

Early childhood is generally referred to as the first five years of a child's life before the age of five. During this time, a child's body and brain grow rapidly. This period includes the infant, toddler and preschool years. For the purposes of this report, we refer to early childhood as the first five years of life.

Let's Talk About Early Childhood Development CHAPTER 1



Creating Connections: Alberta's Addiction and Mental Health **STRATEGY**
September 2011



In summary:

A collective impact model for social change:

- ✓ Synthesized knowledge translated into a core story
- ✓ Private foundation as broker and catalyst
- ✓ “Hybrid” knowledge entrepreneurs
- ✓ Relationships, relationships, relationships
- ✓ Favorable policy environment
- ✓ Right timing
- ✓ Engagement and enthusiasm
- ✓ Distributed leadership
- ✓ Multi-level action
- ✓ Early intervention = prevention = better physical and mental health outcomes for all

Provocative Questions

- How do we prevent and buffer toxic stress?
- How do we prevent adverse childhood experiences?
- How do we prevent the intergenerational transmission of poor outcomes?