

## Conference Theme 4: Building capacity for effective implementation

### Transforming the Developmental System in Disadvantaged Communities Through Sustainable Prevention Support and Delivery Systems

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The large-scale prevention of complex problems relating to child wellbeing depends not only on the quality of specific programs delivered through the many sectors that make up the developmental system (including home, school, community), but also on the extent to which the institutions and organisations that make up the prevention delivery system are able to collectively address the multiple mechanisms contributing to those problems in a systematic way.

While the concept of collective impact inspires much hope, it is critical to recognize that dedicated resources are needed to empower members of the delivery system to participate actively in collective problem solving networks and use effective collaborative processes to align the work of many around mutually shared goals. In terms of the Interactive Systems Framework for Dissemination and Implementation of innovation (Wandersman et al, 2008), the capacity to move collective impact from an idea to a reality depends on complementary activity to translate information about its fundamental principles into tangible resources, and to support the effective use of that information within grass-roots delivery systems. In this presentation we report progress of a project designed to strengthen the developmental system in socio-economically disadvantaged communities using a framework that highlights the importance of: **Collaboration, Relationships, Early intervention, Accountability, Training, and the use of Evidence-informed practices (CREATE)**. These core principles are being used to guide the development of a support system for community coalitions to enhance capacity to use collective strategies to achieve real change for children.

The support system incorporates tools and processes to strengthen the way community coalitions identify priority issues for child wellbeing and mobilise their efforts and resources to address them. It blends advice, mentoring, and coaching provided by skilled project staff (on-site and off-site) with a compendium of on-line resources (including video manuals, interactive evaluation tools, communication tools, data management systems, and program information). Together, the electronic and human resources provide community coalitions with practical support to develop effective collaborative processes and to undertake key tasks including: Community Assessment (using data to identify needs and resources, analyse problems, set goals, and inform intervention decisions); Action Planning (strategically combining a suite of mutually reinforcing, empirically supported, and contextually appropriate programs to address multiple factors underlying the development of priority issues in the community); assessment of technical assistance needs to support implementation; and development of evaluation and continuous improvement plans (founded on a strong focus on outcomes, joint accountability, and the use of a shared measurement system).

The project partnership draws on the expertise of researchers, program administrators, and practitioners from over 10 government and non-government organisations and works with Communities for Children (CfC) as one of Australia's most promising systems for delivering preventive services for children and families in disadvantaged communities. This partnership provides a process for working with community coalitions to explore what type of support they need to put the essential conditions of a collective approach into practice, and how best to provide that support. Project members work closely with CfC community committee members to support effective collaborative processes, and engage consultatively with community organisations as resources are being developed to make sure they are practitioner-friendly and match the needs and learning styles of intended users.