

Bright Spot 1

Canopy Anywhere



What challenge are you addressing?

The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the youth mental health crisis, disproportionately affecting low- and middle-income families. Canopy aims to address this urgent need with a scalable, tech-enabled and integrated screening solution and access to care and support the well-being of middle and high-school students.

What makes your approach effective?

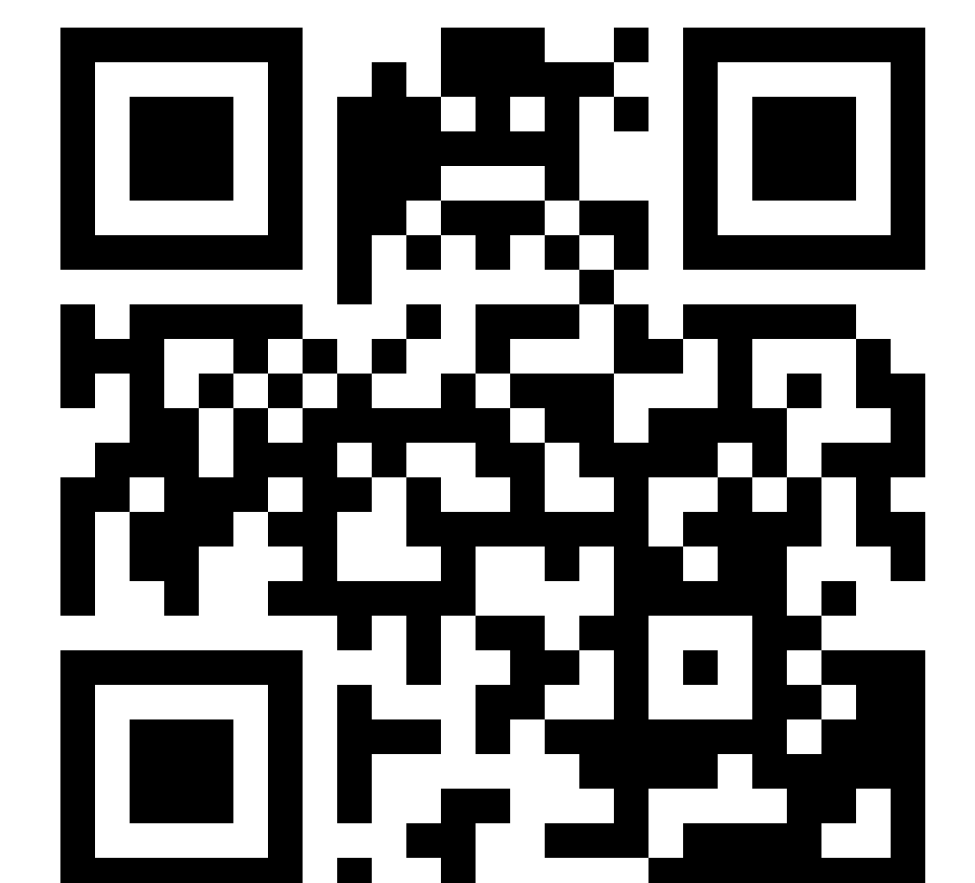
Leveraging Canopy's in-person ("high touch") expertise in clinical care and statewide healthcare network, Canopy Anywhere marries this with a "high tech" solution and delivers a scalable, technology-enabled wellness approach rooted in the science of hope.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

Leveraging the power of partnerships (and technology) to scale impact.

Learn more:

<https://mycanopy.org/>



Bright Spot 2

Community Partnership Schools



What challenge are you addressing?

Students' academic success is often hindered by unmet needs outside the classroom. In the communities we serve, 95% of students are economically under-resourced, facing barriers like food insecurity, limited healthcare access, and unstable housing. Community Partnership Schools address this by bringing health services, mental health supports, expanded learning, and family resources directly onto school campuses. These “one-stop” hubs remove barriers before they disrupt learning - helping drive outcomes like a 42% decrease in absenteeism and a 50% reduction in disciplinary referrals - so students can focus on learning and thrive.

What makes your approach effective?

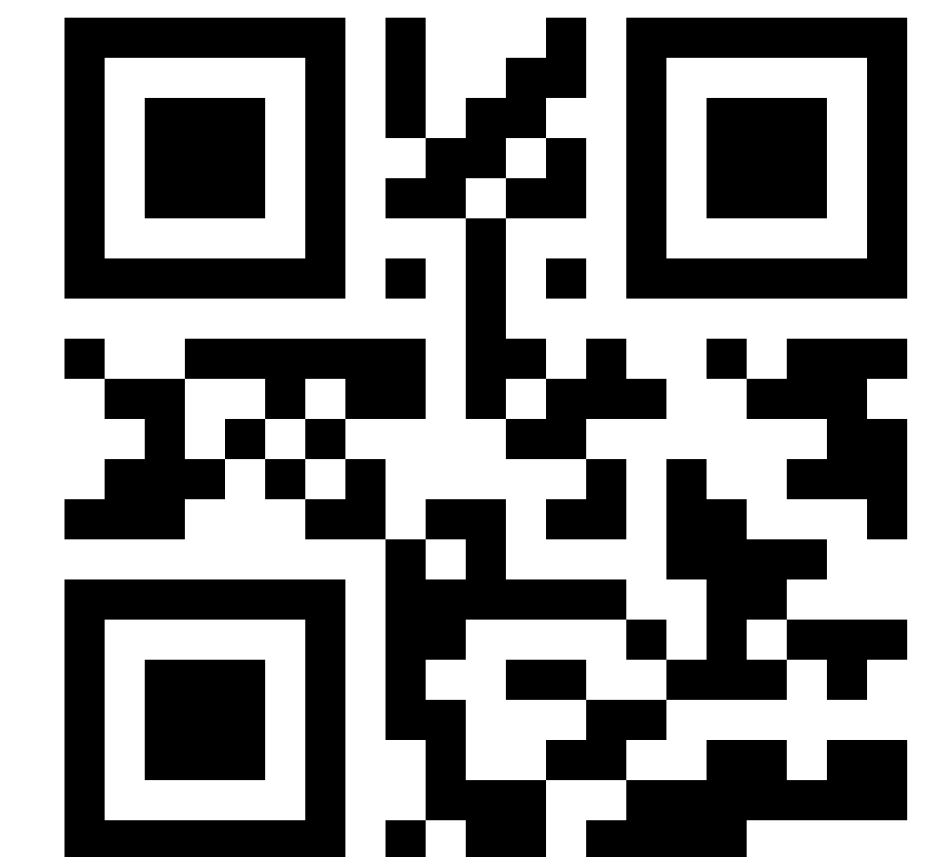
The Community Partnership Schools™ model is effective because it integrates academic, social, and health supports in one place, aligned through strong community partnerships. Each school is guided by local needs and real-time data, ensuring services are tailored and responsive. This coordinated approach creates a supportive ecosystem where students and families are engaged, barriers are addressed early, and outcomes improve - including 30% higher graduation rates.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

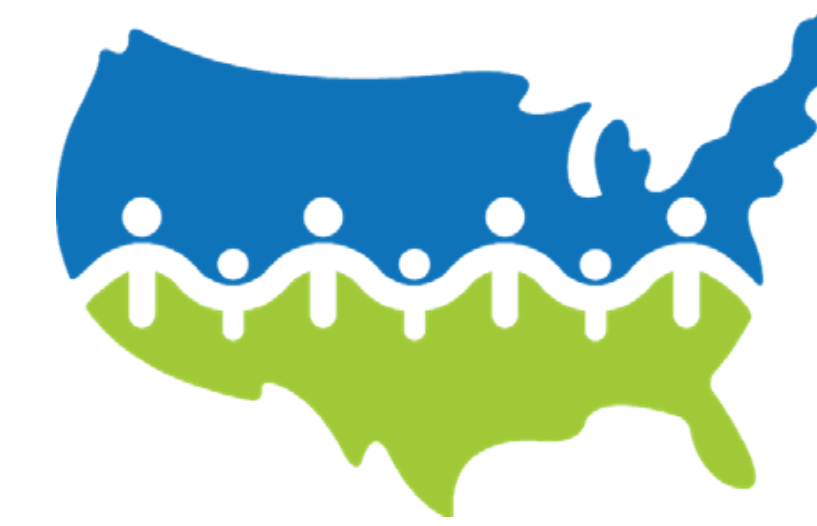
Wraparound support works best when it is locally driven and built on strong collaboration between schools, families, and community partners. When systems are aligned, impact is amplified - improving outcomes for students while strengthening entire communities. This approach not only supports student success, but also drives long-term value, generating an estimated \$800 million economic impact across Florida.

Learn more:

www.chsfl.org



Bright Spot 3



NATIONAL
Family Support
NETWORK

Prevention at Scale: How Family Resource Centers Turn Fragmented Systems into Community Infrastructure

What challenge are you addressing?

Families don't experience systems, they experience fragmentation. Services are siloed, access is uneven, and support often arrives too late. The challenge is not just coordination, it is building trusted, community-based infrastructure that prevents crisis and enables families to thrive before systems intervene.

What makes your approach effective?

Family Resource Centers function as community-based infrastructure for prevention, not just programs. Grounded in family voice and guided by the Standards of Quality, they align services, relationships, and leadership development in one trusted hub. This model strengthens protective factors, reduces system involvement, and delivers measurable impact across diverse communities.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

Prevention doesn't scale through programs, it scales through infrastructure. Lasting impact happens when communities pair local trust and leadership with shared standards and accountability. Build systems that reinforce relationships, consistency, and continuous learning, and prevention becomes visible, investable, and sustainable across sectors.

Learn more:

www.nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org



Bright Spot 4



Family Success Centers

What challenge are you addressing?

How do we make support easier to reach, trust, and use before families hit crisis? Systems that support families often feel fragmented, hard to navigate, or out of reach. Across New Jersey, barriers such as poverty, transportation challenges, mistrust of institutions, kinship caregiving responsibilities, and fear and uncertainty related to immigration enforcement can make it harder for families to seek help. Family Success Centers (FSCs) were designed to serve as welcoming, trusted, community-based pathways of support where families can build connection, reduce isolation, and access concrete supports and resources close to home.

What makes your approach effective?

FSCs are effective because they use a grassroots, community-based approach that blends trusted relationships, concrete supports, and meaningful opportunities for connection. Families come not only to navigate resources, but also to build community, reduce isolation, and support one another. Parent leaders are activated and cultivated through opportunities such as parent cafés and advisory membership, helping make FSCs places of both support and growth. For many families, FSCs become more than a pathway to services—they become a lifeline for connection, belonging, and self-growth.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

Effective support is built on trusted relationships. Is rooted in community. Is designed with families as active contributors, not just recipients.

Learn more:

<https://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/fcp/fsc/>

Statewide footprint & reach:

- 57 Family Success Centers statewide
 - At least one FSC in each of New Jersey's 21 counties
 - 1 mobile FSC
- In calendar year 2025, New Jersey's FSC network served 37,539 unduplicated families

Community Engagement

- In calendar year 2025, the FSC network:
 - Held 5,115 public events offered
 - 78,103 parent attendees hosted at their events.*
 - 52,204 children attendees hosted at their events.*

**note: attendance figures reflect duplicated participant attendance across events*



Bright Spot 5



In partnership with
akin

Statewide Family Resource Center Network

What challenge are you addressing?

Families often face complex, overlapping needs, but the systems meant to support them are fragmented, reactive, and hard to navigate. Family resource center networks create a coordinated, equitable, and prevention-focused system that actually meets families where they are—before families reach crisis.

What makes your approach effective?

The effectiveness isn't just about individual Family Resource Centers—it's significantly amplified by the network behind them. The centers build trust and deliver support locally; the network connects, strengthens, and scales that impact so it becomes a coherent system rather than a set of isolated programs.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

A network is not just a collection of organizations—it's a shared way of working. Akin's own FRC are walking alongside the other FRCs in the Washington Family Support Network.

Learn more:

<http://wfsn.org>



Bright Spot 6



EMPath
Economic Mobility Pathways

Economic Mobility Pathways

What challenge are you addressing?

Many families navigate complex, intersecting systemic barriers — including limited access to stable housing, employment, and financial resources — alongside the weight of chronic stress. Conventional services often address one area at a time and are transactional. A holistic approach is needed that sees and supports the whole person, not just a presenting need.

What makes your approach effective?

Mobility Mentoring centers on each person's own vision and capabilities. A dedicated coach partners with individuals to set goals across five life domains — family stability, well-being, education, employment, and financial health — and builds on existing strengths at every step. Rooted in brain science, the approach develops executive function skills while connecting people to resources, fostering self-direction and confidence.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

People are the experts on their own lives. A consistent, strengths-based coaching relationship — one that honors all dimensions of a person's life — creates the conditions for real, lasting change. Key tip: coach the whole person, honor participant-led goals, and walk alongside them.

Learn more:

<https://empathways.org/approach>



Bright Spot 7

Canopy LINK



What challenge are you addressing?

LINK was developed to address families at risk of instability before crisis becomes removal or system involvement. Specifically, LINK serves:

- Families with low resources and high stressors (housing, finances, parenting skills, mental health)
- Risk of losing permanency, safety, or well-being
- Fragmented access to services- families don't know where to go or how to navigate systems
- Low hope/low agency- families don't believe change is possible or don't know how to get there

What makes your approach effective?

It is built on a Hope-Centered Model building goal, pathways, and willpower as measurable skills

It offers an ecosystem of support (not siloed services) through parenting, financial literacy, mental health, crisis response, access to community partners. Care coordination ensures access, engagement, and continuity of care

LINK is outcome focused:

- 97% increase hope
- 90% Barrier Resolution
- Improved family functioning

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

Sustainable outcomes require both internal capacity (hope) and external support (resources); Pair services with skill-building; Design for navigation, not just access; Measure belief and agency, not just participation in the program; When families believe a better future is possible, and have a clear path to get there, outcomes accelerate.

Learn more:

<https://mycanopy.org/solutions/link/>



Bright Spot 8



Family Keys

What challenge are you addressing?

“Inadequate housing” is selected as a removal reason for nearly 1 in every 10 children separated from their families. The Family Keys approach offers flexible funding for communities to co-design programs and supports that meet the needs of families experiencing housing instability so children do not need to unnecessarily enter foster care.

What makes your approach effective?

Family Keys' effectiveness is rooted in flexible funding, innovative practices, and community partnerships - each of these elements reflecting the needs and opportunities of each unique Family Keys community.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

A flexible, community-led approach (like Family Keys) is key to effectively and sustainably addressing local challenges and meeting the needs of families.

Learn more:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/family-first/innovation/keys>



Bright Spot 9



**Children's Service
Society of Utah**

Kinship Care • Adoption • Caregiver Support

GRANDFamilies Program

What challenge are you addressing?

In Utah, most children raised by relatives are outside the formal foster care system and lack essential support. Of the 21,000 children living with non-parent caregivers, only about 750 families are licensed, leaving roughly 96% providing care informally, often without preparation or resources. The challenge is ensuring all kinship families have the education, support, and community needed to care for children who have experienced trauma. GRANDfamilies served 2,000 participants during the last fiscal year.

What makes your approach effective?

Children's Service Society launched GRANDfamilies in 2002 to support Utah's kinship families facing legal, emotional, and financial challenges. The program offers case management, trauma-informed groups, concrete assistance, guardianship support, and free mental health counseling, along with a 10-week trauma curriculum, connection activities, and access to a family advocate, creating a holistic, evidence-informed model that builds stability and resilience. Families report strong outcomes: children are better off emotionally (88%), feel safer (85%), and perform better in school (84%), while caregivers gain skills (91%) and feel more hopeful about their family's future (92%).

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

A key transferable insight is that families need more than help navigating systems. They need support during moments of trauma and crisis, and a sense of community where they feel they belong. When services combine practical guidance with emotional support and connection, families are more stable, resilient, and better able to care for children.

The program is statewide, the only one serving kinship families in the state, and it includes rural areas. Funding is a combination of government funding (state and federal) and private donors and foundations.

Learn more:

www.cssutah.org



Bright Spot 10



SOUL Family

SUPPORT • OPPORTUNITY • UNITY • LEGAL RELATIONSHIPS

SOUL Family

What challenge are you addressing?

Nationally, more than 15,000 youth each year are aging out of foster care disconnected from a supportive, loving, lasting family. This puts them at risk of not finishing school, being homeless and facing economic insecurity. In Kansas, 635 teens ages 16 and 17 are transitioning from care with a goal of APPLA.

What makes your approach effective?

The SOUL Family framework offers youth a voice and choice in the decisions determining their permanency. The framework, developed by and for older youth who have foster care experience, reflects what youth say they need most: 1) a loving and lifelong chosen family with a legal primary caregiver and other caring adults to mentor and support them on the road to adulthood; 2) legal bonds preserved with their birth parents and siblings; 3) resources to support education, housing and health and other needs so they may thrive.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

The SOUL Family framework provides that innovation lasts when the expertise, insights, ideas and voices of young people are built into existing systems and supported by community commitment. Young people were leaders every step of the way as Kansas became the first state in the nation to adapt the framework and pass a law creating this new permanency option.

Learn more:

<https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/SOUL.aspx>

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/soul-family-permanency-option-for-older-youth-in-foster-care>



Bright Spot 11



Your Case Plan

Your Case Plan by Sunlight

What challenge are you addressing?

Families in the child welfare system often face communication breakdowns between parents or youth, caregivers, attorneys, caseworkers, and courts. These gaps contribute to unnecessary delays, missed services, and prolonged family separation. Your Case Plan addresses this by providing a secure, HIPAA-compliant communication and case management platform designed specifically for child welfare cases.

What makes your approach effective?

Early pilot sites report improved communication, fewer missed court dates, and reduced out-of-home placements. One father shared: “For the first time in a year, I feel like I'm in control of my case and know what I need to do to bring my son home.” State offices report reduced continuances, improved reunification rates, and better collaboration among case teams.

What’s a transferable insight or lesson?

Child welfare outcomes improve when communication is transparent, accessible, and centered on the family. Technology, when implemented collaboratively, can humanize rather than replace relationships.

Learn more:

<https://www.yourcaseplan.com/>



Bright Spot 12

The Bridge Program



What challenge are you addressing?

The Bridge Program aims to increase the number of foster children successfully placed in home-based family care settings, increase capacity of child care programs to meet the needs of foster children in their care, and maximize funding to support the child care needs of eligible families.

What makes your approach effective?

Our approach meets the child care needs of foster children and their caregivers through a three part strategy: emergency child care vouchers, child care navigators, and trauma-informed care training and coaching. Together, these components provide immediate financial support, promote placement stability, and strengthen the long term capacity of the child care system.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

Effective support for foster children requires a system that meets both immediate needs and builds long term capacity. The emergency child care vouchers reduce barriers such as child care costs for foster children. The child care navigator highlights how personalized guidance improves placement success. Trauma-informed care training and coaching strengthen child care providers' ability to understand and respond effectively to the unique needs of foster children providing them with trauma responsive environment.

Learn more:

<https://rrnetwork.org/provider-services/trauma-informed-care>



Bright Spot 13



Family Engagement with a Residential Intervention

What challenge are you addressing?

Increasing Family Engagement in residential interventions as part of a continuum of care in Oregon.

What makes your approach effective?

This is a co-designed 2-year project with youth and families, providers, academicians and oversight agency leaders to implement effective family engagement strategies through peer-to-peer learning in order to improve sustainable outcomes from residential interventions.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

The co-design approach has led to high engagement from all 5 provider organizations, beginning by incorporating the perspective and leadership of those with lived experience. It changed the way we approached this endeavor.

Learn more:

<https://togetherthevoice.org/>



Bright Spot 14



From Fragmentation to Flourishing: The Standards of Quality as a Scalable Framework for Community- Based Prevention

What challenge are you addressing?

Communities face fragmented systems that respond after crises rather than preventing them. Families navigate disconnected services, inconsistent quality, and limited trust. Without a shared framework, efforts remain siloed, outcomes vary widely, and prevention lacks visibility, investment, and scale across sectors working to support family wellbeing and long-term stability.

What makes your approach effective?

The Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support create a shared, research-informed framework that aligns practice across organizations and sectors. By centering protective factors, relationships, and community voice, the Standards transform isolated programs into coordinated systems. This consistency builds trust, strengthens workforce capacity, and enables measurable, scalable prevention that adapts across diverse community contexts.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

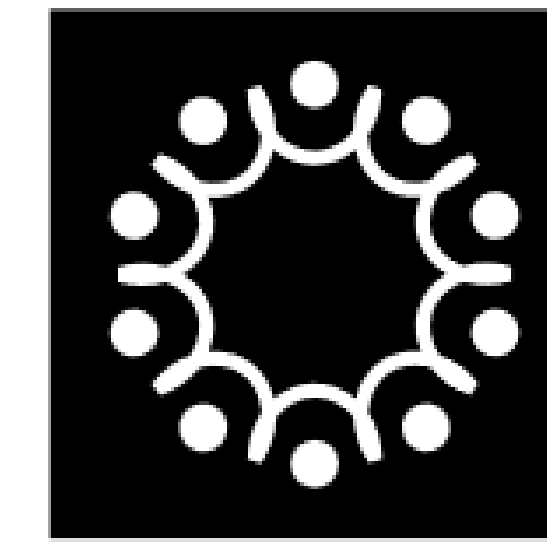
Lasting change requires shared language, not just shared goals. A simple, adaptable framework can unify diverse partners while preserving local flexibility. When communities align around quality, relationships, and prevention, they move from isolated efforts to collective impact. Start with what connects your work, then build systems that reinforce consistency, trust, and continuous learning.

Learn more:

www.nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org



Bright Spot 15



**Center for the
Study of
Social Policy**
Ideas into Action

Culture is Healing

What challenge are you addressing?

The insufficient support for culturally responsive and community-led services.

What makes your approach effective?

We are bringing together different stakeholders--community providers, systems leaders, researchers, and funders--to collaborate in identifying needs and barriers and in brainstorming solutions.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

Advancing culturally responsive requires collaboration between all stakeholders-community organizations, systems leaders, researchers, and philanthropy-through coalition-building and collective advocacy.

Learn more:

<https://cssp.org/resource/culture-is-healing/>



Bright Spot 16



Connected Communities - Thriving Families

What challenge are you addressing?

When children in Missouri enter the child welfare system, they are taken away from their families and communities. This often occurs due to misguided responses to family and community challenges, rather than actual harm or neglect from the family. This flawed approach hurts children, families and communities and isn't sustainable in the long run. Our Connected Communities - Thriving Families initiative suggests a system overhaul that actively involves and supports communities in empowering families. Through this redesign, we will realign the continuum of care to match appropriate resources with community needs and specific solutions, which will in turn guide policy changes and funding priorities.

What makes your approach effective?

We work with communities to align resources and policies with their priorities, providing support that helps overburdened families thrive and avoid systems not designed for their needs.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

The key components are long-term investment in parent, youth, and community voices; legal advocacy; family-strengthening supports; and strong relationships within communities.

Learn more:

<https://mocoalitionforchildren.org/connected-communities-thriving-families/>



Bright Spot 17

OPT-In for Families



What challenge are you addressing?

The current child welfare system, as structured, has limited capacity to provide early, community-based support to families. We believe there is a better way to prevent abuse and neglect.

What makes your approach effective?

OPT-In for Families is a community-informed initiative grounded in research showing that child welfare addresses safety but does not help families thrive. The model centers on early identification of need, compassionate engagement by community-based providers, trusted service navigation, and direct material support—developed through ongoing co-design with people with lived experience.

In South Carolina, success was driven by learning from earlier sites, strong community relationships through Family Resource Centers, and early planning for sustainability. These efforts led to a 29% engagement rate—above industry norms—and positioned the state for long-term impact through strengthened partnerships and recent federal approval to expand prevention services.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

To transform a system, building infrastructure for long lasting change is crucial. We want to learn from the available evidence available that the change works and ensure that families who are affected by this change and could benefit from its transformation remain at the center of the design. Once the design has been implemented, we want to take measurable outcomes to proof that this change is both innovative and replicable. Finally, we want to continuously improve on the model and provide quality work that is informed by our stakeholders.

Learn more:

<https://www.ddf-opt-in.org> <https://dss.sc.gov> <https://scparents.org/>
<https://scchildren.org/our-work/our-programs/family-resource-centers/>



Bright Spot 18



Workforce Retention & Well-Being

What challenge are you addressing?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Children's Wisconsin's Child Welfare team faced high turnover, rising caseloads, and staff fatigue. In response, leadership implemented strategies—including pay increases, workload redesign, hybrid flexibility, supportive leadership, and consistent recognition—to improve staff well-being, engagement, and continuity of care for families.

What makes your approach effective?

CW leadership addressed the staffing crisis with urgency and data-driven insight, analyzing turnover, vacancies, and caseloads alongside employee feedback. This informed five core strategies—pay increases, workload redesign, hybrid flexibility, supportive leadership, and consistent recognition—that stabilized caseloads, rebuilt trust, and reconnected staff to a shared purpose. The effectiveness of these strategies was later confirmed through formal evaluation.

What's a transferable insight or lesson?

Advancing culturally responsive requires collaboration between all stakeholders-community organizations, systems leaders, researchers, and philanthropy-through coalition-building and collective advocacy.

Learn more:

<https://childrenswi.org/who-we-are/community-programs/child-welfare-services> & icfw@uwm.edu



Bright Spot 19



Kin Licensing Standards

What challenge are you addressing?

How might we build equity, trust, and access into new kin-specific licensing standards that all state agencies can pick up and use right away? Especially when agencies have limited resources, policy changes can take years, and staff may be averse to change.

What makes your approach effective?

- Co-designed with those most impacted, working with kinship caregivers, agency staff, and former foster youth throughout the whole process
- Designed for equity with structure and flexibility to create standards that work across diverse populations
- Shifted kin assessment from compliance to support using a strengths-based approach and including specific examples of material supports and resources to stabilize placements
- Eliminated unnecessary requirements to reduce administrative burden, while staying attentive to youth and family needs
- Published findings and designs incrementally to build momentum and encourage early adoption
- Created guidance on “why” and “how” to empower staff to advocate for changes

What’s a transferable insight or lesson?

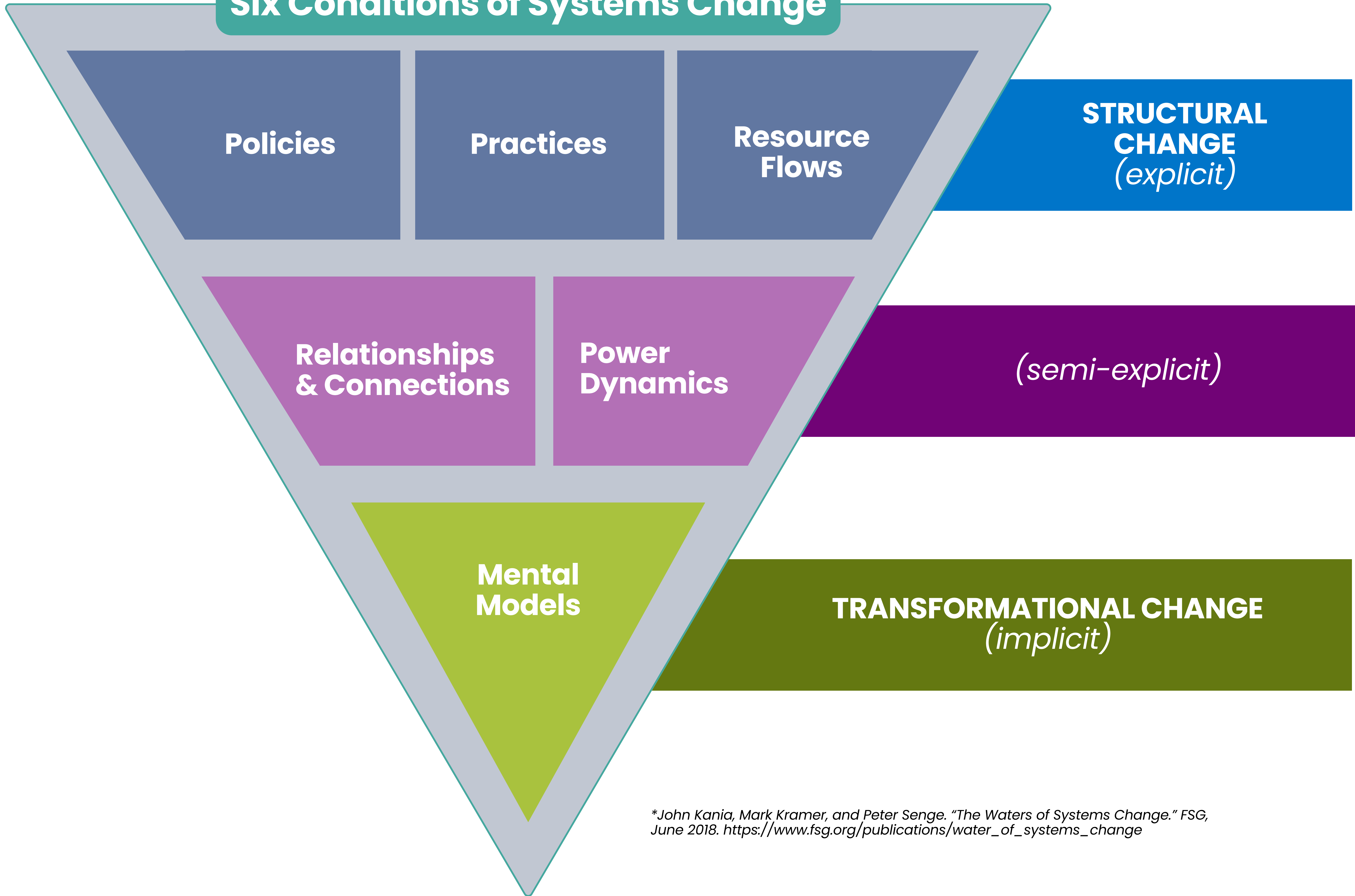
- Building relationships and coalitions from the start and working in the open throughout the assessment development process allowed us to quickly drive adoption at scale. In just over 2 years since the final rule passed, 19 states and 6 tribes have adopted kin-specific licensing standards.
- Specific guidance drove culture change. It gave long-time kin advocates a template to build from and agencies were able to easily see the shifts in practice they might need to make.

Learn more:

<https://bloomworks.digital/work/creating-national-standards-to-approve-kin-caregivers/>



Six Conditions of Systems Change



*John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge. "The Waters of Systems Change." FSG, June 2018. https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change