

Ecosystem Conditions Cheat Sheet

What is helping and hindering the effectiveness of the early childhood system in your region? Consider the conditions below:

Conditions	Examples	Keywords
 <p>Mindsets Beliefs, values, narratives, assumptions, and attitudes that create a way of viewing reality for people who share them.</p>	Many believe child care is just babysitting instead of an opportunity to build healthy brains and improve lifelong outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value • Attitude • Culture • Narrative • Feel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception • Believe • Trust • Assume • Priority
 <p>Goals Stated and unstated aims, targeted outcomes, and purpose of organizations, initiatives, and systems - including accountability mechanisms.</p>	Regional organizations have targeted outcomes around reducing racial/ethnic disparities in child and family outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals • Outcomes • Targets • Aims • Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact • Mission • Benchmarks • Accountability
 <p>Decision-Making Processes How decisions are made, and who is included/excluded from these processes.</p>	Families have influence over decision-making about how to design programs and policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions • Power • Input • Influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership • Family voice • “Never listens to ___”
 <p>Policies and Practices Formal and informal policies, practices, procedures, protocols, laws, standards, and norms.</p>	Some quality rating standards are not culturally responsive to the diversity of ECE providers in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies • Standards • Practices • Procedures • Eligibility • Legislation • Laws <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations • Routine • HIPAA, FERPA • “Not allowed” • “This is how we’ve always done it”
 <p>Connections Exchanges of information, referrals, learning, and resources between people and organizations.</p>	Information/data is being shared between cross-sector partners and with families in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchanges • Referrals • Network • Coordination • Co-location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering and sharing of information, data, • Resource sharing • Communication
 <p>Human Resources People and their skills and knowledge.</p>	Many ECE providers still need to develop their skills in trauma-informed practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available staff • Volunteers • Credentials • Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People don’t know how to___” • People don’t understand___”
 <p>Financial Resources Money and capital.</p>	Many ECE settings struggle to access funding for operational costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money • Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost • “Can’t afford ___”
 <p>Natural and Built Environment Aspects of the natural (e.g., land, water) and built (e.g., buildings, roads, internet) environment.</p>	Broadband internet is not yet accessible across the region, especially in rural communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building space • Physical infrastructure • Affordable housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Not enough safe parks” • “We don’t have the technology to do ___”
 <p>Program Components The array, accessibility, and quality of programs (e.g., Head Start, WIC), services (e.g., healthcare, public transit), and opportunities (e.g., jobs).</p>	High-quality, affordable child care slots are available to meet <i>some</i> of the needs and preferences of families in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough slots/openings • Quality • Cultural responsiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • Hard to get to • “___ is at the wrong times” • In some places but not others

Adapted from: Watson, E.R & Collins, C. (Under Review). Putting the system in systemic racism; Foster-Fishman, P.G., & Watson, E.R. (2017). Understanding and promoting systems change. In M. Bond & C. Keys (Eds.). *Handbook of Community Psychology*; Meadows, D. H. (1999). Leverage points: Places to intervene in a system. Vermont, USA: *The Sustainability Institute*.