

# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

## How AOK Networks Improve Child and Family Outcomes

AOK Networks are community-based collaborations that consist of people who share a common interest in helping families with young children get the best start in life. Knowing that individual program efforts are not enough, AOK Network partners work together to connect and coordinate services as they address current child and family priorities.

AOK Networks use system-building strategies to improve service access, equity, capacity, quality as well as families' satisfaction. As a result of working together, Network Partners generate even greater outcomes for healthy pregnancies and children birth to five and their parents/caregivers.

**CORE SETS OF PRINCIPLES:** COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT • FAMILY SUPPORT • SYSTEM BUILDING

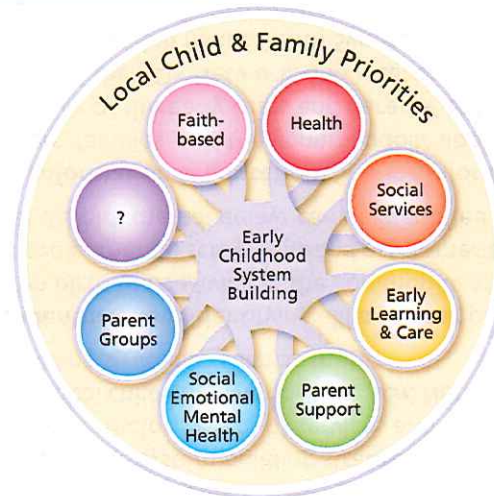
### NETWORK CAPACITY BUILDING



#### CORE AREAS

- Shared Agenda
- Collaborative Leadership & Engagement
- Continuous Learning & Adaptive Action
- Network Infrastructure

### SYSTEM-BUILDING



#### STRATEGIES

- Early Identification
- Public Information & Education
- Information & Referral
- Coordination of Care
- Service Needs & Utilization
- Workforce Staffing & Development
- Local & State Policy

### COLLECTIVE IMPACT

#### SYSTEM IMPACTS

- Access
- Quality
- Equity
- Capacity
- Satisfaction

#### CHILD & FAMILY OUTCOMES

- Babies are born healthy
- Children maintain physical and emotional health and well being
- Children enter school ready to learn
- Parents are leaders in their families and communities



## AOK Networks Mission Statement

AOK Networks are community-based collaborations that promote healthy pregnancies and the positive growth and development of all children birth to five and their parents/caregivers by assuring a high-quality, well-coordinated, easily-accessible system of services and supports.

### Network Capacity Building

Network capacity building is essential for system building. AOK Networks continually strengthen their ability to work together on system building issues by focusing on 4 network capacity building core areas.

- **Shared Agenda:** Having a shared understanding of the AOK Networks' system building mission and framework as well as the Network's local, cross-sector goals and initiatives that support that mission
- **Collaborative Leadership & Engagement:** Taking individual and organizational responsibility for carrying out the Network's shared agenda
- **Continuous Learning & Adaptive Action:** Engaging in a dynamic, iterative assessing-planning-acting-learning-adapting process that strengthens the impact and sustainability of the Network and its system building efforts regardless of changing conditions
- **Network Infrastructure:** Establishing Network functions, structures, and processes that enhance the Network's capacity to collaborate and build the system of services and supports

### System Building

AOK Networks use system building strategies to create a more coherent, cross-sector system of services and supports while addressing local child/family priorities. AOK Networks focus on system building strategies such as these:

- **Early Identification:** Identifying all expecting parents and children birth to five living in the community and ensuring that developmental screenings and assessments are offered so that developmental delays can be identified early.
- **Public Information & Education:** Sharing information with providers, families, and the general public about the importance of the early years and parents' essential role, the work of the AOK Network, and local early childhood issues, e.g., Sudden infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- **Information & Referral:** Providing information about available services and resources to families and providers and establishing a system-wide referral process to assure families get the services they need.
- **Coordination of Care:** Helping families who receive services from multiple providers access the services they need while reducing duplication.
- **Service Needs & Utilization:** Monitoring service availability, needs, and use to assure there are adequate services to meet the need.
- **Workforce Training & Development:** Assuring a high-quality early childhood and family support workforce that is siloed in their fields of specialization and in family support principles and practices.
- **State and Local Policy:** Addressing local and state level policy issues through information sharing, education, and advocacy.

### Collective Impact

By working together, AOK Networks are able to improve the local system of services, which in turn leads to greater outcomes for very young children and their parents/caregivers.

#### System Impacts

- Families have **Access** to the services and supports they want and need.
- Families benefit from high **Quality** services and supports.
- Families experience **Equity** in the services and supports they are offered or receive.
- Families' needs for services and supports are met by the **Capacity** of the system to meet those needs.
- Families experience a high-level of **Satisfaction** with the system of services and supports.

#### Child and Family Outcomes

- Children are born healthy.
- Children maintain physical and emotional health and well-being.
- Children enter school ready to learn.
- Parents are leaders in their families and community.



## Principles

To carry out their mission, AOK Networks must (1) strengthen their capacity as a Network, (2) enhance cross-sector service delivery, and (3) improve the system of services and supports. AOK Networks work with 3 sets of principles to guide practice and behavior in each of these areas.

### (1) Community Engagement

The following principles help AOK Network partners increase their capacity to work well together.

- People support what they create.
- People act most responsibly when they care.
- Conversation is the way humans have always thought together. In conversation we discover shared meanings.
- To change the conversation change who is in the conversation.
- Expect leadership to come from anywhere.
- Focusing on what's working gives us energy and creativity. Ask what's possible, not what's wrong.
- The wisdom resides within us.
- Everything's a failure in the middle. Change occurs in cycles.
- Learning is the only way we become smarter about what we do.
- Meaningful work is a powerful human motivator.
- Humans can handle anything as long as we're together.
- Generosity, forgiveness, and love, these are the most important elements in a community.

\*From The Berkana Institute & Neighborhood Centers, Inc.

### (2) Family Support

The following principles help service providers respect and honor parents/caregivers' inherent strengths, wisdom, and capacity to care for their families. These principles help communities improve the overall quality of service delivery.

- Staff and families work together in relationships based upon equality and respect.
- Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members – adults, youth, and children.
- Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.
- Programs affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.
- Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.
- Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.
- Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.
- Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.

### (3) System Building

These system building principles guide AOK Network partners in building a comprehensive system of services and supports that increases families' satisfaction with the system while improving service access, quality, equity, and capacity.

**Proactive:** The system promotes the growth and well being of all young children.

**Holistic:** The system is comprehensive and addresses the full range of a young child's developmental needs.

**Inclusive:** The system integrates all community services for pregnant women, young children, and their parents/caregivers.

**Strength-based:** The system builds upon the strengths of families.

**Culturally sensitive:** The system is respectful and sensitive to the diverse needs of families.

**User-friendly:** The system is voluntary as well as easy to access and use.

**Family involved:** Families are involved in the development of the system.

**Coordinated:** Services are aligned and connected so that families can easily access services across typical service domains.

**Outcomes-based:** The system improves child and family outcomes.

**Cooperative:** Development of the system is a cooperative, community effort.