

Children and young people

- **optimal antenatal/infant development**
- **optimal physical health**
 - adequate nutrition
 - free from preventable disease
 - healthy teeth and gums
 - healthy weight
 - adequate exercise and physical activity
 - healthy teenage lifestyle
 - safe from injury and harm
- **optimal social and emotional development**
 - positive child behaviour and mental health
 - pro-social teenage lifestyle and law abiding behaviours
 - teenagers able to rely on supportive adults
- **optimal language and cognitive development**
 - successful in literacy and numeracy
 - young people complete secondary education

Families

- healthy adult lifestyle
- parent promotion of child health and development
- good parental mental health
- free from abuse and neglect
- free from child exposure to conflict or family violence
- ability to pay for essentials
 - adequate family housing
- positive family functioning

Society

- quality antenatal care
- early identification of child health needs
- high quality early education and care experiences available
- adequate supports to meet needs of families with children with a disability
- children attend and enjoy school
- health and community services that meet the needs of parents critical to parenting
- adequate supports for vulnerable teenagers

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Community

- safe from environmental toxins
- communities that enable parents, children and young people to build connections draw on informal assistance
- accessible local recreation spaces, activities and community facilities
- low levels of crime in community



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Every Child Every Chance

Outcomes Framework

Victorian Child & Adolescent Monitoring System

Inputs

Administrative Data
DHS, DET, DoJ,
DVC, VicPolice

New Collections
VCHWS, Local
Level survey,
Aboriginal Child
Survey, Adolescent
Survey, etc

Other Collections
School Entrant Health
Questionnaire, Victorian
Population Health Survey,
etc

NGO/Uni Data
ABS, Survey of Recent
Mothers, Vic Injury Survey
Unit, Victorian Community
Indicators Project, etc

VCAMS

AIM: To monitor and report
on the safety, health, learning,
development and wellbeing
of children and young
people in Victoria

- System & indicator development
- Data analysis for policy and planning
- Regular reporting

Products

Annual Reports

Community Profiles

Aboriginal Community Profiles

Topical Bulletins, Journal Articles, etc

Web Based Data Access

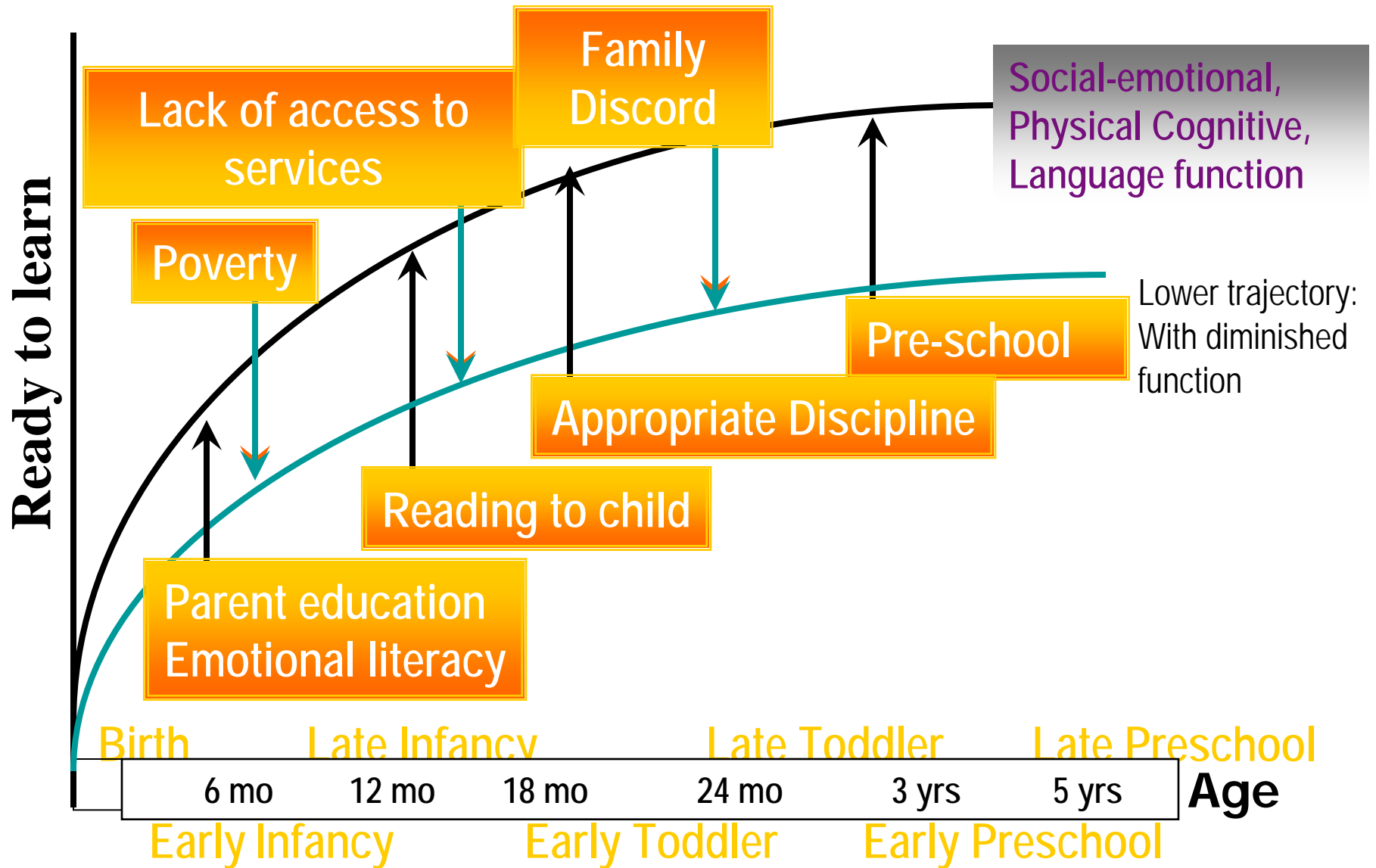
Audience

Government
State
Local
National

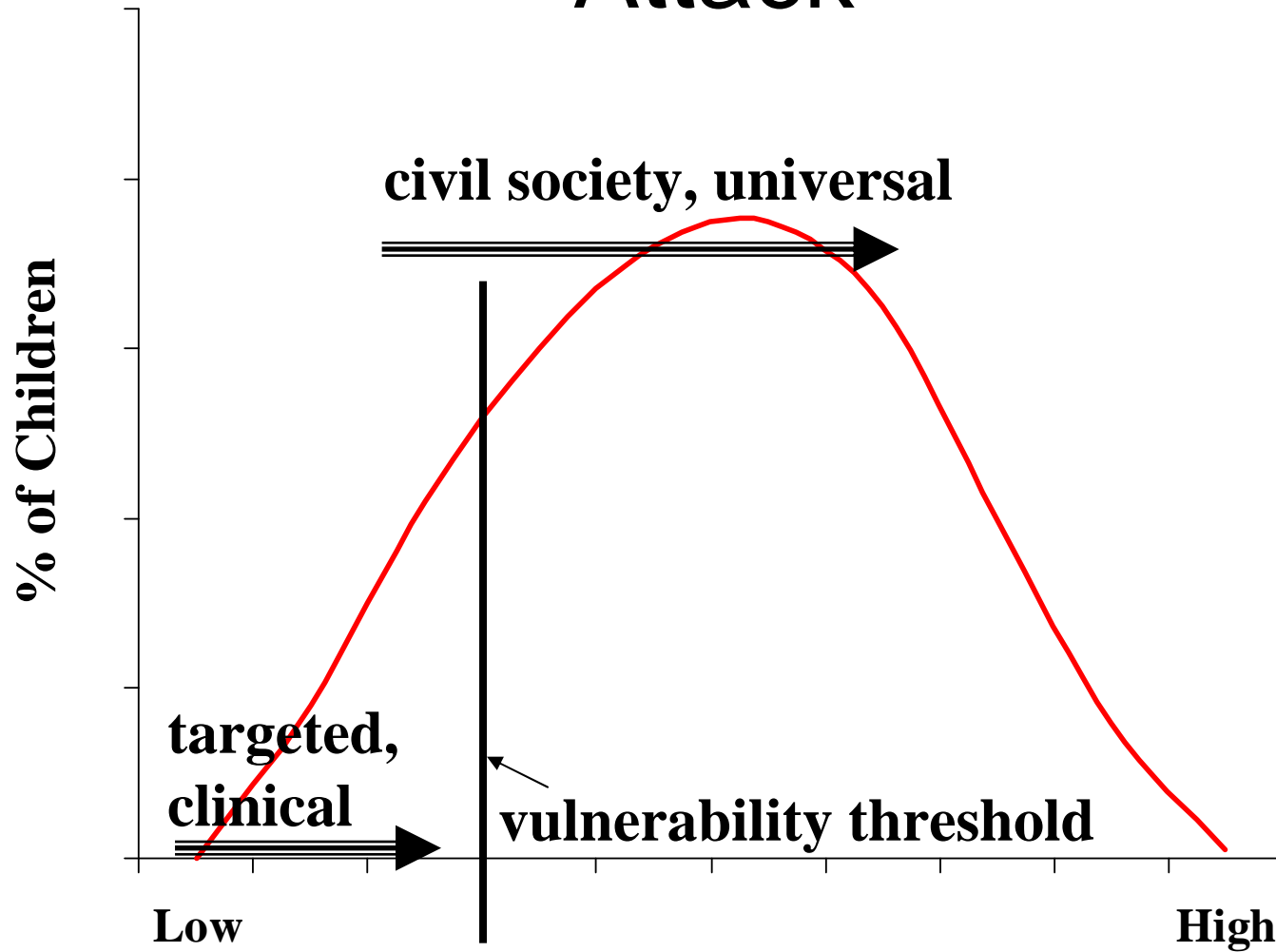
Communities
Schools, Child Care
Providers, Health
Providers, etc

Others
NGOs,
Advocacy
Groups, Other
Interest groups

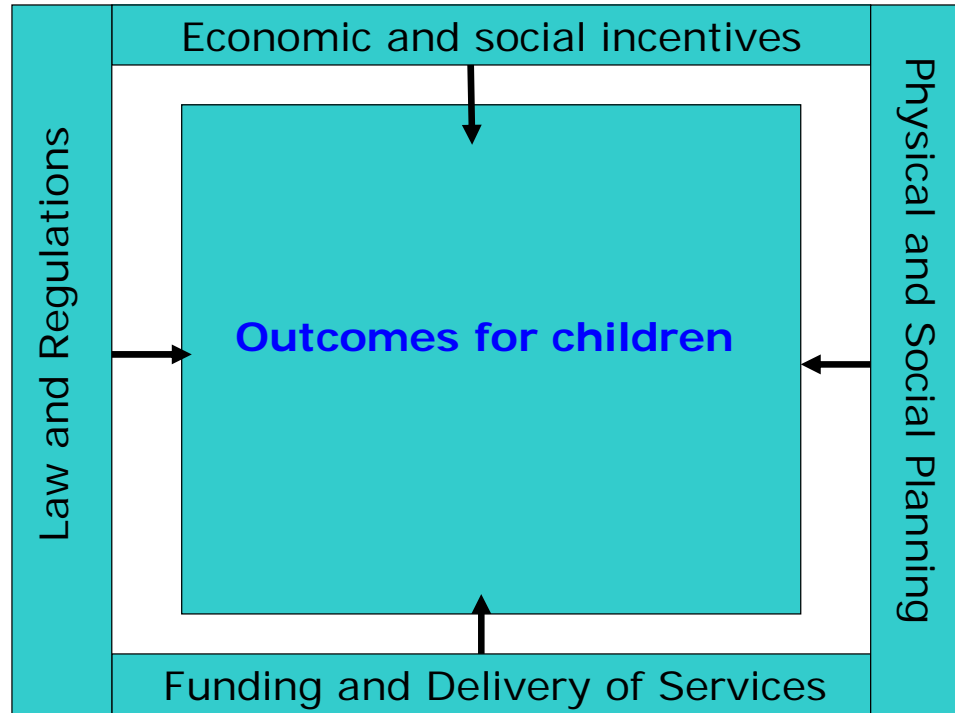
Researchers
Universities
Community Experts



Levels of Intervention: Points of Attack



1 Levers for change



Early childhood settings ie
Childcare, kindergarten

Schools

Primary care settings ie MCH,
GP, community health

Secondary support services for children and families eg family support,
specialist services, early intervention, hospitals, CAMHS

Tertiary services for children and
families eg child protection

Adult services eg mental health,
drug and alcohol

Outcomes & Interventions

Antenatal

Birth

Infancy

Preschool

POSTNATAL
DEPRESSION

Prevent Injury

Reading to children

Immunization

*Kindergarten
participation*

Breastfeeding

Dental caries

SMOKING

Parenting and Parent education

Home visiting=certains groups

General practitioners/community health=primary care

Antenatal care

MCH/playgroups=universal

ACTIVITY

What are the key elements of a positive home environment to enable children to develop optimally?

SOLUTION:

Rethinking Child Care

- Child care services are valuable early learning environments
- Not just “child minding” services
- Need to be universally accessible and in particular to disadvantaged families
- Strong focus on the provision of quality child care by expert child

Child care focus on

- Relationships with Children
 - The relationship with their care givers are a key factor in brain development
 - Professionals looking after children need to have the proper training and education in early childhood care and education
- Relationships with families
 - Support families to develop and nurture a positive home environment
 - Through guidance, education, credible

Child Care focus on

relationships

- Relationships with Community
 - The home, child care as an early learning environment
 - Links to other community agencies
 - libraries
 - recreation programs
 - parenting programs
 - playgroups

- **Implications for parenting**
 - Educate parents on the importance of early experiences for their children's development
 - Written materials
 - Parenting classes
 - Coaching
 - Home visiting
 - Importance of reading to children
 - Importance of play

- Prevent abuse and neglect: For

Implications for parenting

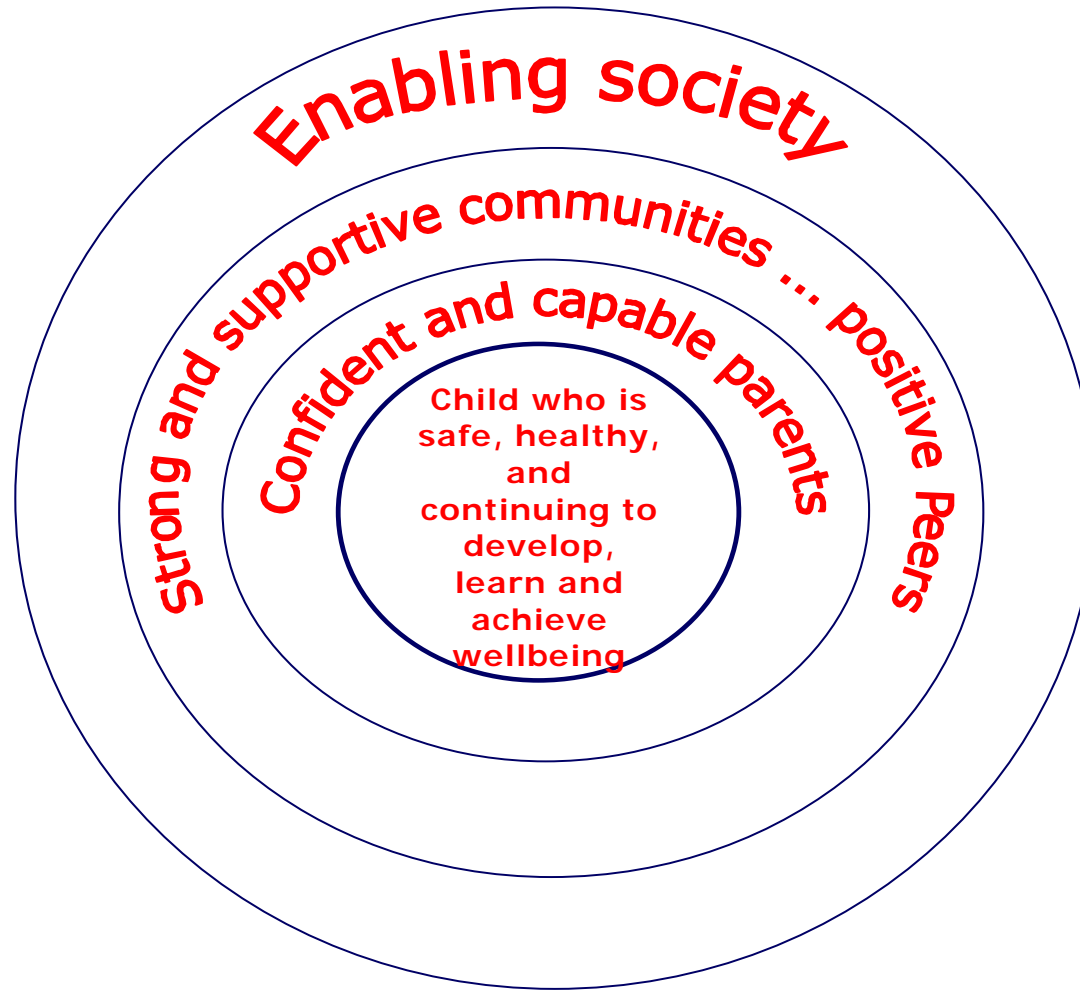
- Early identification of parents with mental health needs
 - Referral to mental health services to ensure they are in the best position to respond to their child's needs
- Ensure adequate nutrition pre and postnatally

Reading aloud

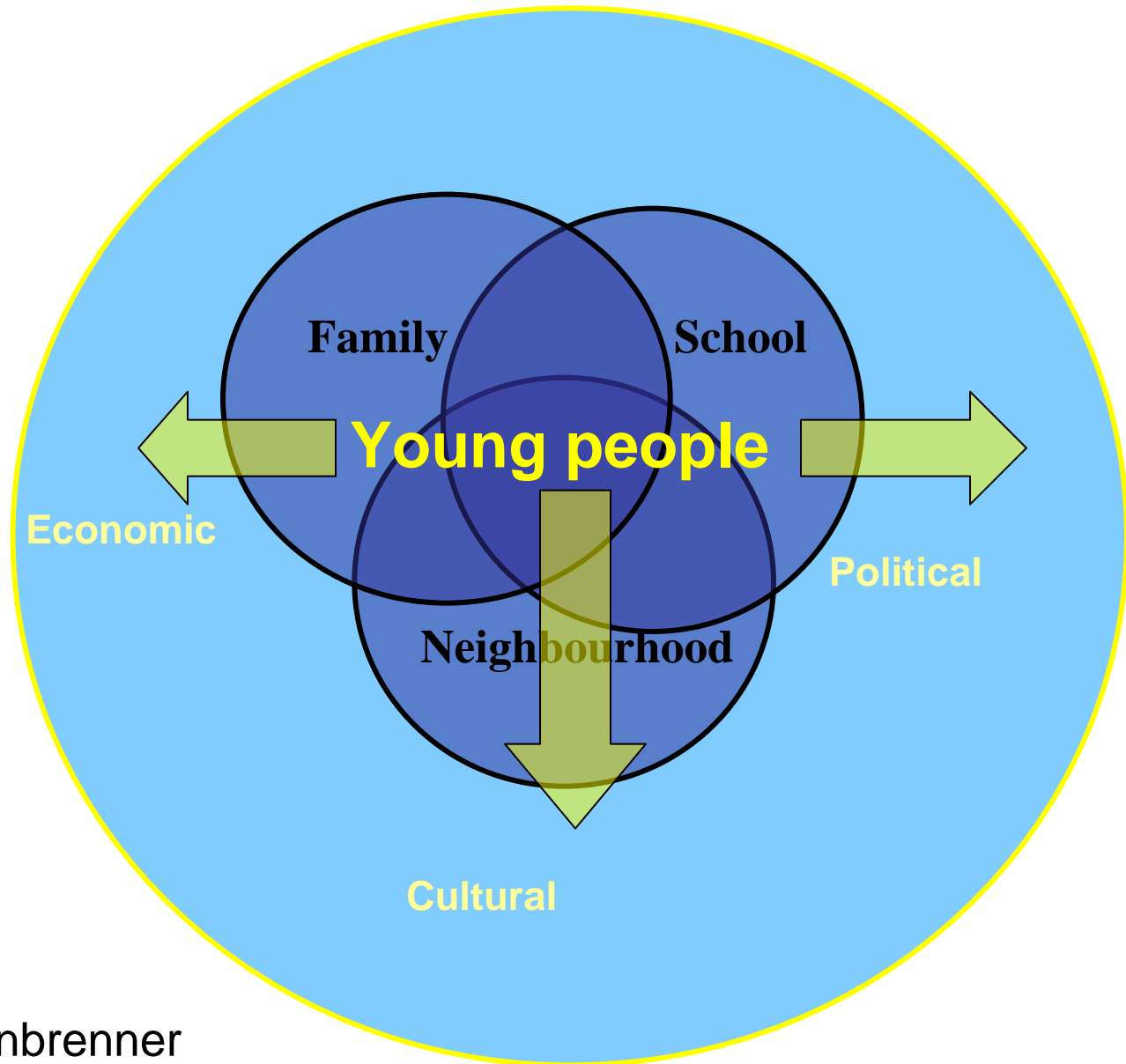
- The value of reading aloud has been found consistently to foster language development and emergent literacy skills in preschool children
- ‘There is a strong consensus supporting a causal connection between preschool exposure to reading aloud and subsequent reading ability’ (*Needleman 2004*)
- ‘Reading aloud is the single most important activity for building the

Shift focus to the
adolescent brain...

The ecology of childhood



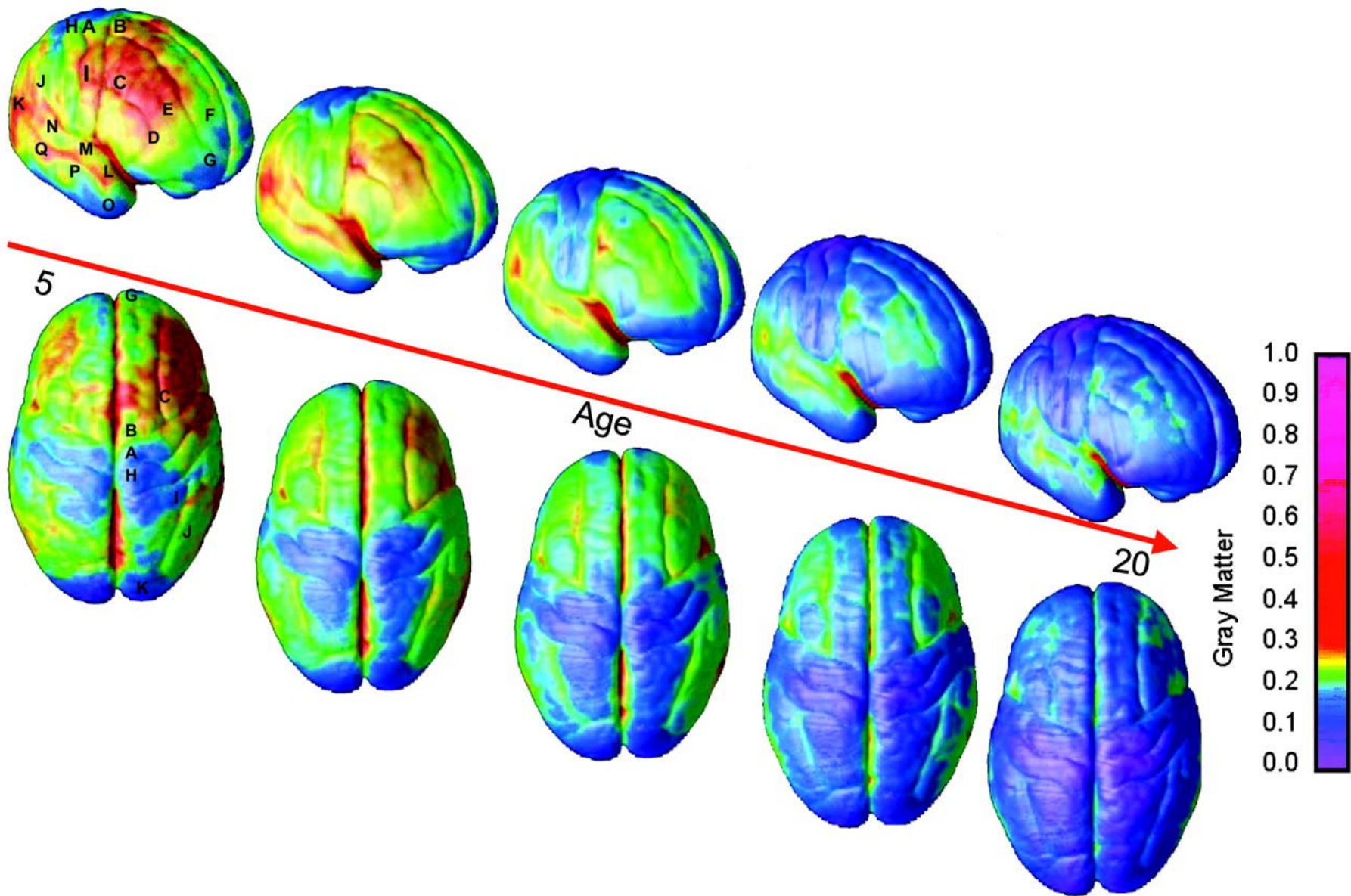
The ecology of adolescence



Bronfenbrenner

Adolescent Brain Development

- A process that is not complete until mid-20s
- A period of exuberant growth and pruning
- Prefrontal cortex is one of the last parts of the brain to mature
- Not able to execute cause and effect thinking efficiently



Adolescent

- Biological Development
 - Puberty
 - Males 12-16 years
 - Females 10-14 years
- Cognitive: 12-16 years
 - Formal operational thought
- Psychosocial: 12-20+ years
 - Developmental tasks of

Cognitive

Development

- Formal operational thought process
- Ability to think in an abstract manner
 - Future time perspective
 - Appreciate consequences of behaviour

Emotional Development Developmental Tasks of

Adolescence

- Central focus of adolescence is the emergence of a coherent sense of self
 - Mastery and control
 - Autonomy and Independence
 - Sexual Self-concept
 - Educational and Vocational Goals

develop during adolescence and young

- Controlling impulses
- Initiating appropriate behaviour
- Inhibiting inappropriate behaviour
- Organising things
- Setting priorities
- Making decisions
- Insight

Risk and Protective

Framework:

Risk Factors

- Individual Factors
 - Rebelliousness
 - Peer Behaviour
 - Early initiation of risk behaviours
 - Trauma
 - Homelessness
- School Factors

Family Factors

- Parental style
- Family conflict
- Family history

Community Factors

- High transitions and mobility
- Low

RISK and Protective

Framework:

Protective Factors

- Individual Factors
 - Social Skills
 - Healthy Attachments to important people
 - Healthy Standards and choices
- Family Factors
- School Factors
 - Feels valued at school
 - Opportunities for prosocial involvement
- Community Factors
 - Community norms and laws

ACTIVITY:

In your opinion, how does trauma impact on young people?

SOLUTION:

Impact of trauma on children

- Problems with trust, autonomy, initiative
- Entering young adulthood, difficulty with
 - Independence
 - Intimacy
 - Self care

Impact of Trauma

- Interferes with cognitive development: resources diverted from growth to survival
 - Attachment, biology, affect, disassociation, cognition, self-concept
- Neglect contributes to organic brain changes

Impacts on cognitive

Impact of Trauma

- Learned responses:
Intergenerational behaviours
 - Act the way they have been taught
- Difficulty interpreting and identifying emotional responses
- Brain hemisphere integration can be affected
 - Rational thought versus

- **Effects of abuse/neglect**
 - Chronic stress, abuse, neglect
 - Overdevelop regions of the brain which affect fear and anxiety
 - Under-development of frontal lobe (key to learning, decision-making)
 - Chronic activation of neural pathways in fear creates
 - Permanent memories

Implications for Practice

- Trauma recovery requires
RELATIONAL connections
 - Reconnect with important people and ordinary life
- Empower young people to make decisions
 - Young people involved in their own permanency planning
 - Actively involved in court

Implications for Practice

- All children and young people make mistakes as part of their normative developmental pattern
- Developmentally expected behaviours should not be pathologised

Requirements for healthy

- Opportunities for participation
- Gain experience in decision-making
- Interact with a peer group and acquire a sense of belonging
- Learn skills of self-reflection
- Discuss conflicting values
- Experimentation with different identities, relationships, and ideas
- Accountability to others

Gisella Knopka

Positive responses to

- Understanding the connections between brain development and behaviour
- Help foster positive family connections
- Create and develop places for young people to feel valued/belong
- Promote learning through role



The importance of play

The importance of play in promoting healthy

child development

- Recognised as a basic human right of every child (Article 31 UNCRC)
- Essential for the cognitive, physical, social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people
- Ideal opportunity for parents to

The benefits of play

- Promotes healthy brain development
- Engage and interact with the world around the child
- Can explore a world they can master, conquer fears, practise adult roles – leads to greater confidence and resilience
- Learn how to work collaboratively, negotiate, resolve conflict, learn self-advocacy skills

Parents' role in play

- Children's developmental trajectory is critically mediated by appropriate, affective, relationships with loving and consistent care givers as they relate to children through play
- Parents can see the world from the child's perspective
- Children form attachments to parents who are paying full attention to them
- Learn to communicate more

Play is integral to the academic

- Allows the school to attend to the social and emotional development of the child as well as the cognitive.
- Helps children adjust to school settings and enhances their readiness to learn, learning behaviours, and problem solving skills
- Allows for peer interactions that are important for social and emotional

Risks to play

- Vulnerable, stressed families
- Unsafe communities with a lack of resources to support families
- Overscheduled, high-aspiration families
- Parental work schedules
- Reliance on media

Play: Key messages

- We must promote free play as a healthy, essential part of childhood – plenty of unscheduled, independent, non-screen time that allows the child time to be creative, reflect and decompress
- Play should be child driven rather than adult directed, but important that adults engage in play with their children
- Benefits of classic toys – blocks, dolls, cars, requiring imagination for creative play
- Important to promote resilience and build protective factors such as self efficacy

For every complex
problem there is a simple
solution....and it is wrong

H L Mencken

(1880-1956)