



Keeping it Real - The importance of the Early Years and Early Intervention

**Supporting Children's Positive Mental Health
'Keeping the Child's Mind in Mind
Positive Mental Health for a Positive Future
Saturday 23rd January
Blackpool**

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Some Ramblings.....

I would not be
without him
but he has
ruined my life
and my
marriage

I would like to take this
opportunity to thank
everyone who was not
there for me, everyone
who couldn't or wouldn't
listen to me and everyone
who failed to protect me....

Cherry (2013)





History can remind us that it is worth working for the things you believe in and the study of history shows how important it is to record ideas and practices for those who follow to ponder.

Nutbrown, Clough and Selbie (2008:181₃).



So lets us ponder.....

Though much remains to be learnt about how to lay necessary foundations during the pre-school years, which will enable children to achieve eventually the fullest measure of their potential, yet enough is known to take some action now...



promoting optimal emotional, social and intellectual development; preventing neglect and deprivation; and, most difficult of all, for breaking into the vicious circle of the emotional or intellectually deprived children of today becoming tomorrow's parents of yet another generation of deprived children.

Pringle and Naidoo (1975:169).



Those who suffer multiple adverse childhood events achieve less educationally, earn less, and are less healthy, making it more likely that the cycle of harm is perpetuated, in the following generation (Davies, 2013:2).



Important Point....



- There is some excellent work undertaken by agencies and practitioners across England.
- This needs to be recognised and lessons learnt and shared.

However...



Key Messages-Provocations

- There is some excellent practice but we can/need to do better
- If we were getting it right:
 - ❖ **Why do we have more and more young children and young people with mental health issues?**
 - ❖ **Why is child abuse still an issue?**
 - ❖ **Why do professional still face barriers working together?**
 - ❖ **Why does policy keep changing?**

- Workforce reform in the early years is making an impact
- Those with Early Years Professional Status or Early Years Teacher Status are new partners in early intervention

but... **Who knows about them?**

Why are will still not joined up?



What should we be doing individually and collectively?

As Prof Sir Al Aynsley Green
asks:

Where is our **OUTRAGE?**





What is your outrage?

RANT





We now need to think about how to make it normal – even aspirational – to attend parenting classes. We all have to work at it. And if you don't have a strong support network – if you don't know other mums or dads – having your first child can be enormously isolating.

David Cameron
January 2016



Key Message

All children have the right to experience a professionalised early years/children's workforce that:

- supports, challenges and inspires those working within it
- works in partnership with others and draws on inter-disciplinary knowledge to address inequality
- promote all aspects of children's care, health, development and learning.....

...and, most importantly,

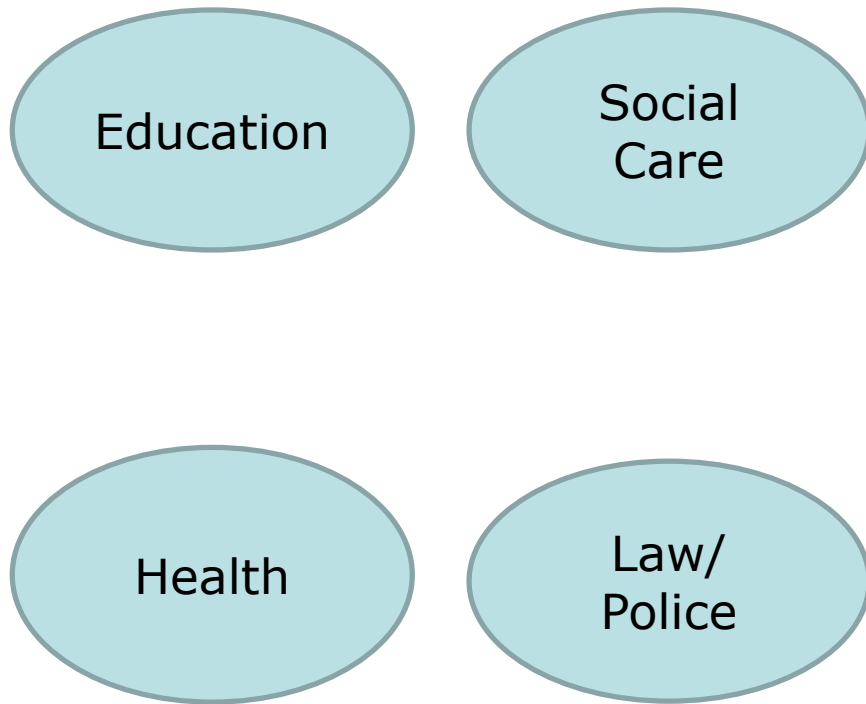
professionals working with children and young people in the margins of society realise and act upon the fact that:

Every Interaction Counts

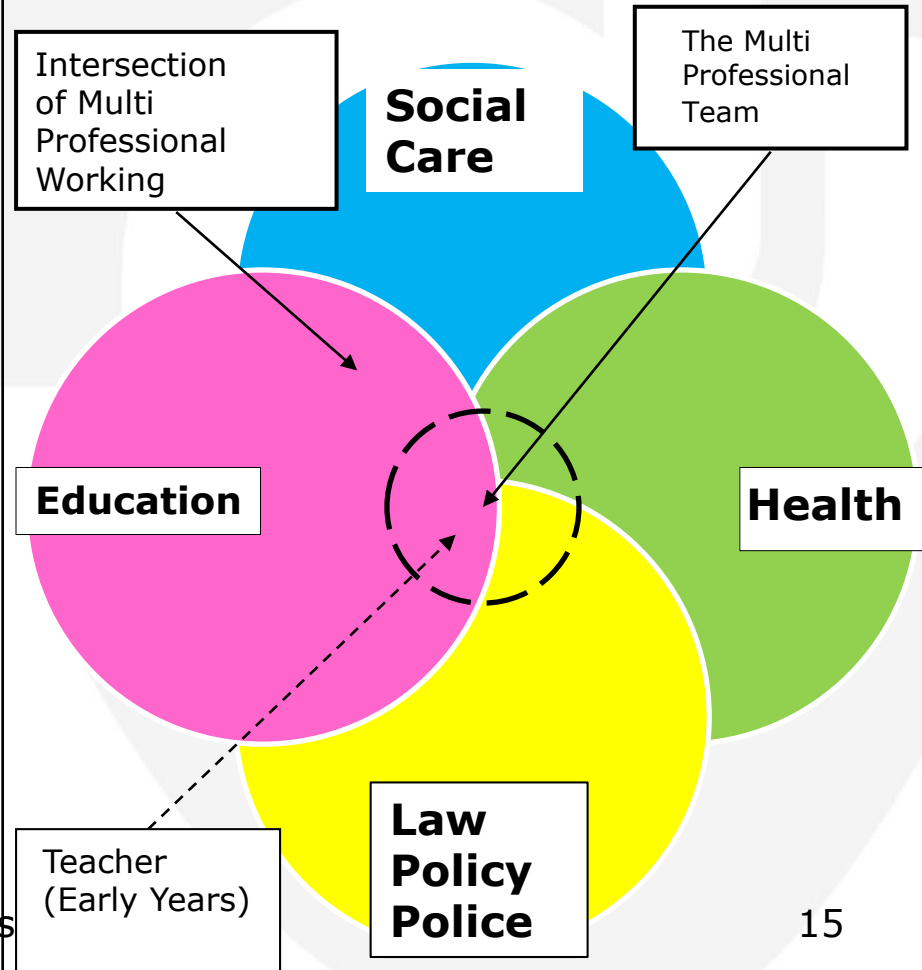


Separatist and Integrated Professions in Children's Services: Why we find it so difficult

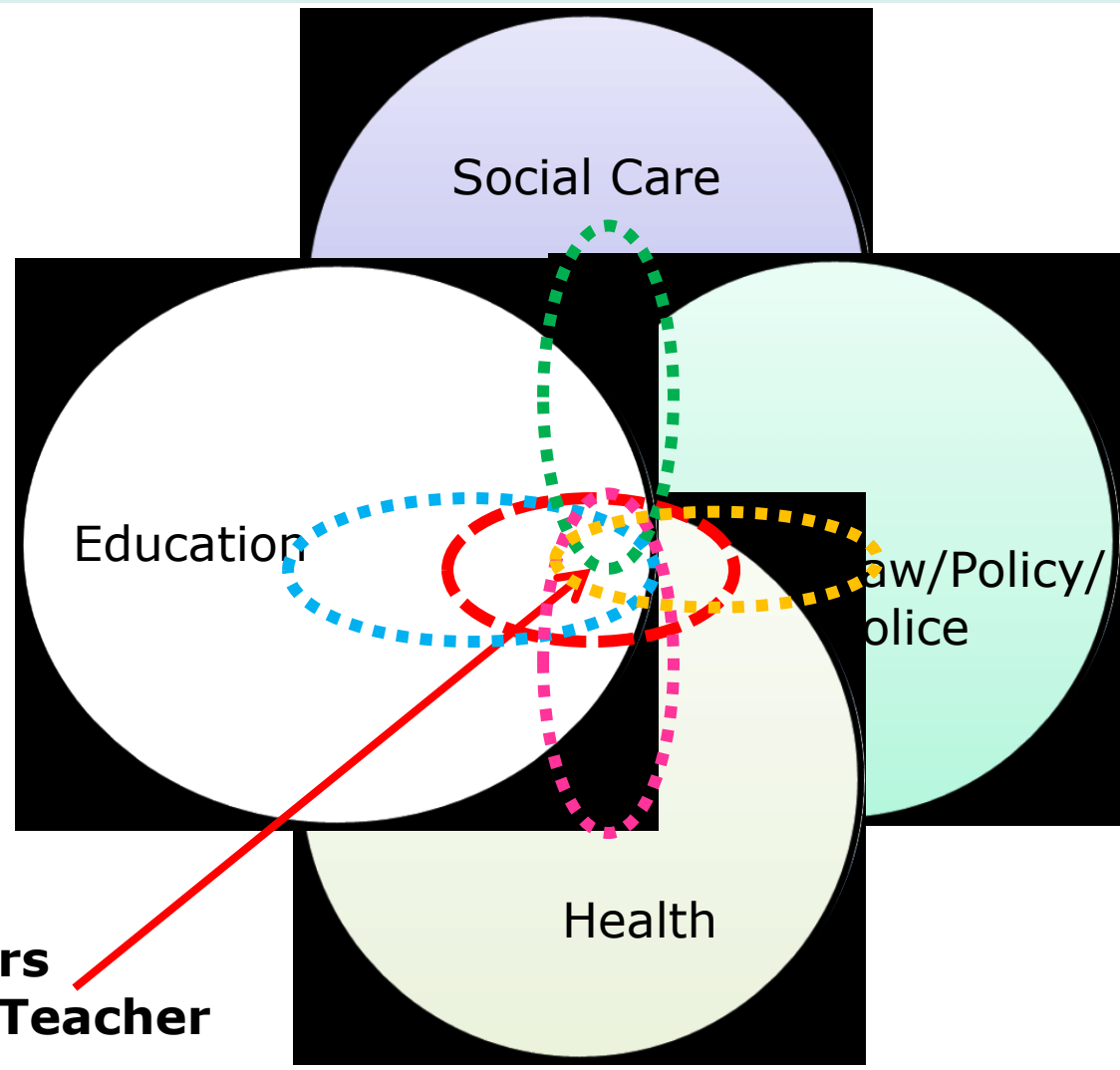
Separatist Professions



Integrated Professions



Early Years: so many professionals coming together



The Early Years Professional/Teacher



'Flexible Borders'

Lumsden (2012)



- *Each of us and our organisations see the world in the light of our backgrounds and experiences*
- *Others see exactly the same world through different eyes*



Prof Sir Al Aynsley Green



Our work needs to stop being marketed in how much money has been spent...

Today, as I speak to you, there are more than 3,470 children waiting to be adopted.... That's why, from 1 May, following a successful pilot in 10 areas, the Adoption Support Fund (worth £19.3m) will be rolled out across the country enabling adopters who could benefit from therapeutic services to get the help they need when they need it.

Mr Timpson, 2015





I offer to the prologue now, in advance, in the hope that others too maybe moved to get into the act.

'The play's the thing'.

Bronfenbrenner, (2005:124).





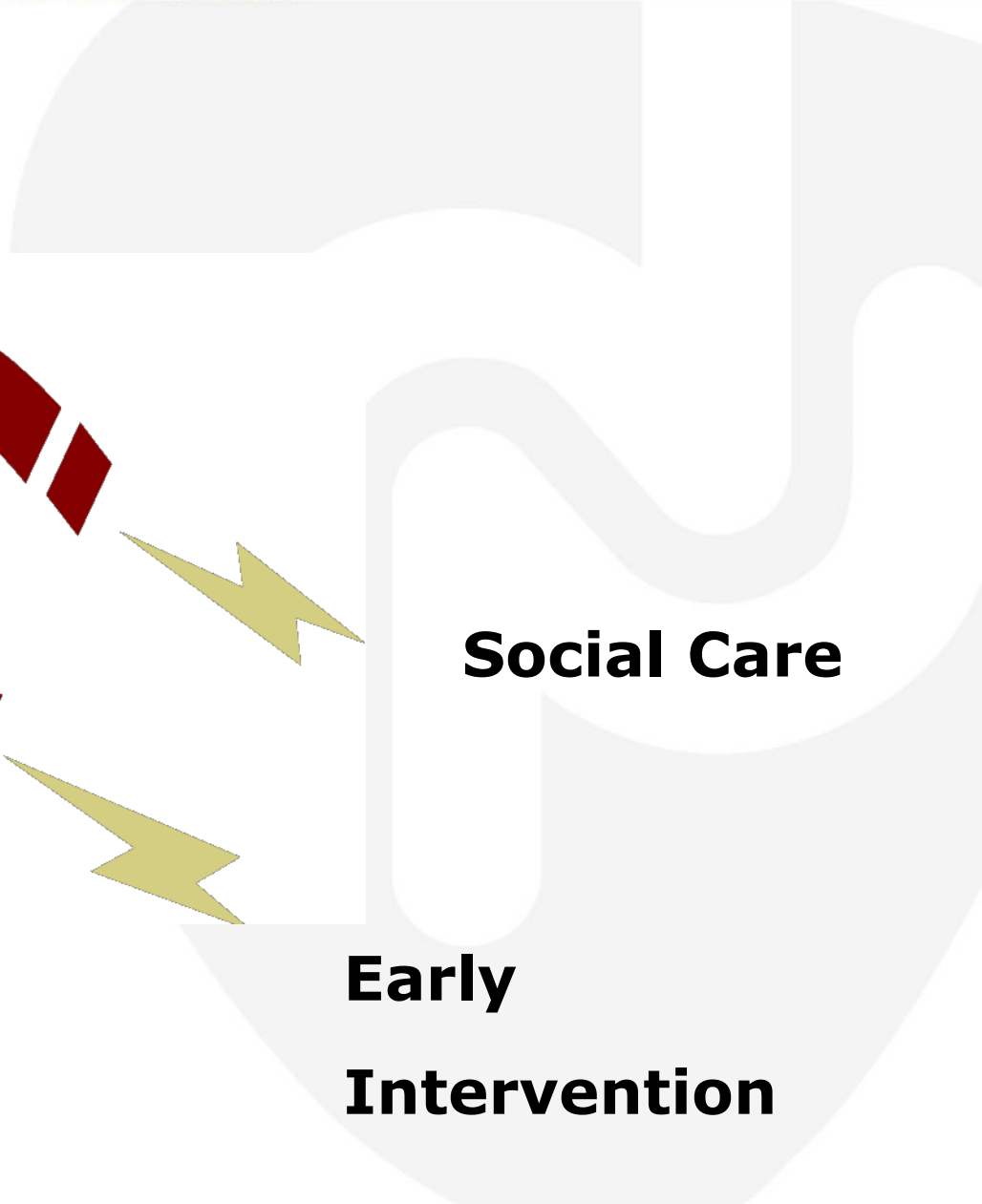
Education



Social Care

**Early
Intervention**

Health





Values

- *Why do you do what you do?*
- *What is your primary driver?*
- *What has influenced you?*
- *What will you compromise on and what will you **NOT** compromise on?*





**So what has this got to do
with...**

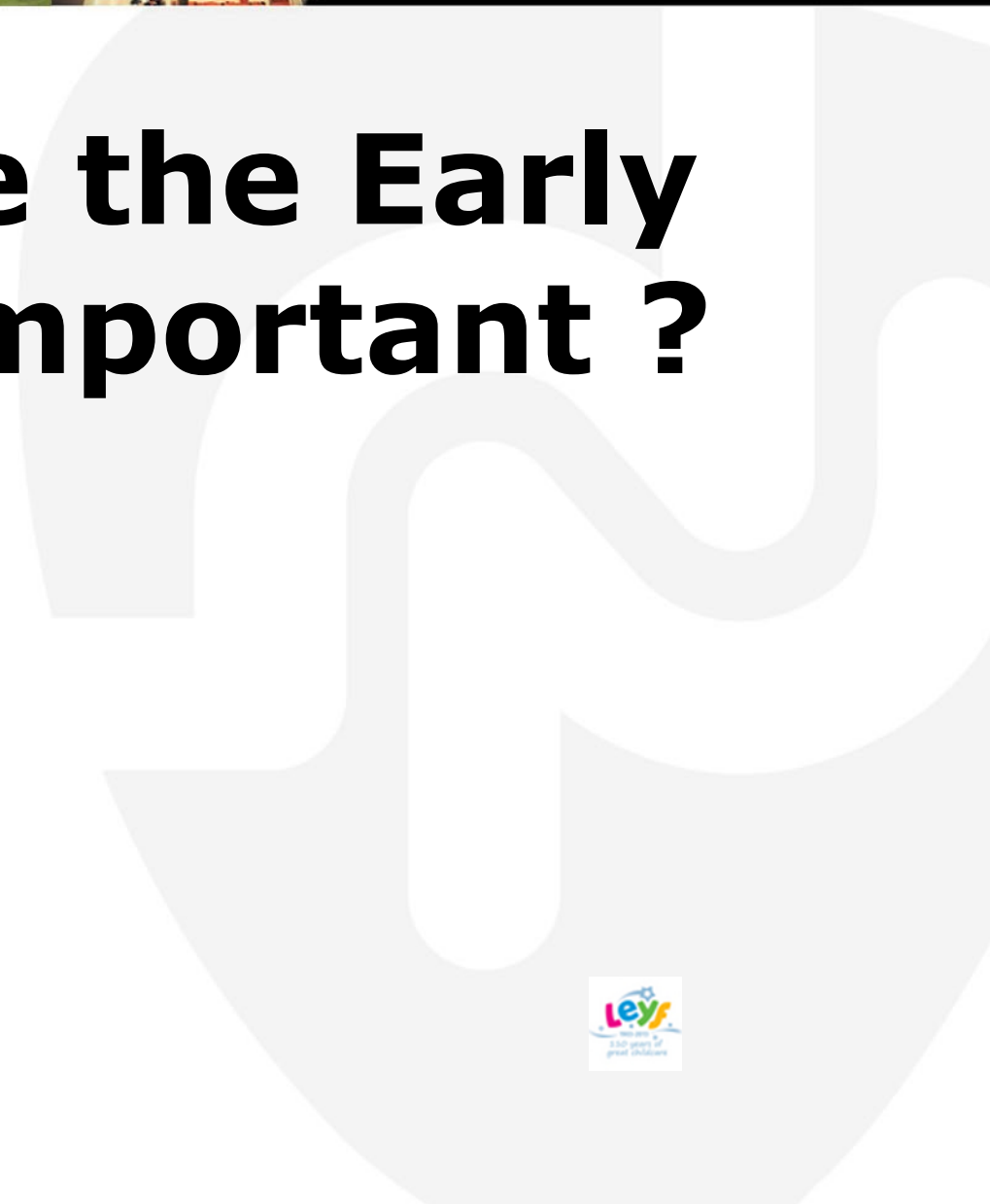
Infant Mental Health





THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHAMPTON

Why are the Early Years Important ?





What we know

- The importance of safeguarding children from violence is internationally recognised (UNCRC, 1989; Wave, 2013).
- Detecting, intervening and protecting children from abuse both within the family and in institutions is complex (Munro, 2011).



- The brain grows most in the first years and that warm nurturing environments and secure attachments are vital for later development.
- It is estimated that 26% of babies have complex families and in 2011 over 1000 babies were on child protection plans before they were even born.
- The first years of a child's life are therefore absolutely crucial.

1001 Critical Days

<http://www.1001criticaldays.co.uk/>



Childhood abuse, neglect and trauma are major causes of adulthood mental health problems, particularly affective disorders (Pawlby, 2015).



Babies show their distress through..

Poor sleep patterns, difficulties with feeding, restlessness and gastric disturbance, that they are anxious and tense, distressed and fearful.

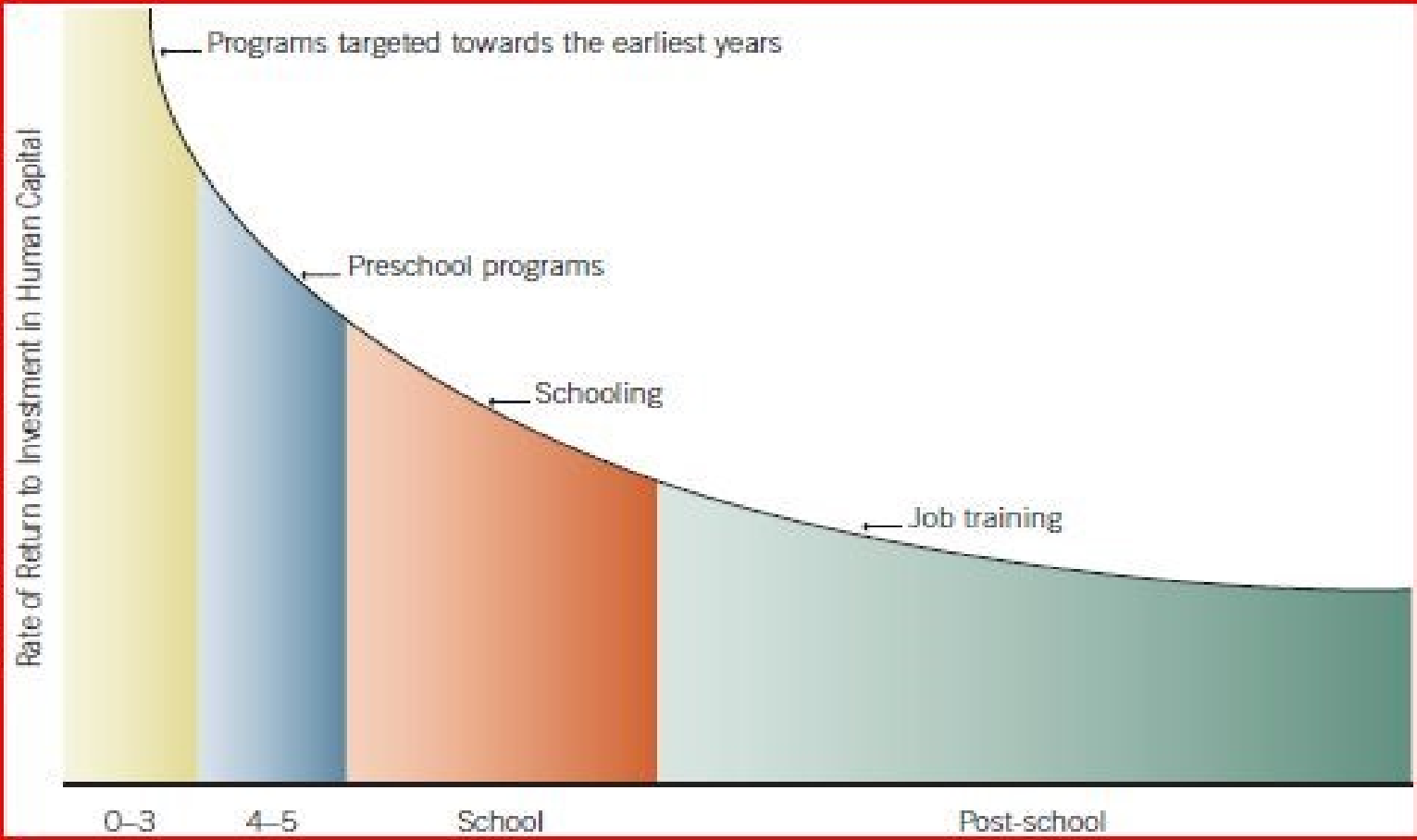
These emotions need to be responded to with love and empathy by those on whom they depend for survival (Young Minds Policy, 2014).

What about Babies and young children in early years settings?





ECD Interventions Yield Higher Returns than Investments Later in Life



Source Heckman and LaFontaine, 2007



Three lessons from Heckman

- Develop the whole child concept – focus on the multiplicity of human abilities
- Invest in early childhood development – as inequalities open up early
- Early remediation is far more effective than later re-mediation and low cost



Some important facts and figures

National Society of Cruelty for Children (NSPCC):

For every one child who has a Child Protection Plan because they are at risk of abuse, approximately eight cases go undetected (*Harker et al., 2013*).



In the early years...

National Statistics on 31 March 2012 indicate that:

880 unborn children and 4850 under the age of one in England were subject to a Child Protection Plan because of concerns about their carers' ability to protect them from harm (NSPCC, 2013).





- 26.1% of the 382,400 children deemed in need of social care services, mainly because of abuse, were under five years old (DfE, 2012).
- Another 39,000 children under the age of one were reported as living in families with domestic violence in 2012 (Wave Trust, 2013).





31st March 2015

69,540 children looked after

Increase of 1% compared to 31 March
2014

**Increase of 6% compared to 31
March 2011**

Slight reduction in 1-4, increase over 10





Number of Children Looked After

- 2140 under 1 (2320 2013)
- 8760 0-5 (9370 2013)





University of Lancaster Research

2018 babies subject to care proceedings at birth in 2013

At least 1 in 4 women will return to the family court, having previously lost a child through court order, and the chances of having a child removed increase to at least 1 in 3 for the youngest women who were teenagers at the birth of their first child.

<http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2015/12/14/bjsw.bcv130.full>





Cuthbert, Rayns and Stanley (2011:5) report that:

- 19,500 babies under one year old are living with a parent who has used Class A drugs in the last year
- 39,000 babies under one year live in households affected by domestic abuse in the last year
- 93,500 babies under one year live with a parent who is a problem drinker
- 144,000 babies under one year live with a parent who has a common mental health problem





Impact of Neglect in the Early Years

Neglected children have:

- less stimulation
- fewer neuron connections
- impeded brain and gene development.





This can lead to a lack of:

- sense of 'self',
- low self-esteem,
- learning disabilities,
- attention and focus difficulties,
- poor academic achievement
- passivity,
- lack of enjoyment,
- inability to regulate emotion,
- disassociation



Doyle and Timms, 2014; Oates, Karmiloff-Smith and Johnson, 2012; De Bellis, 2005.



Verbal Abuse

Has been found to impact on brain development in particularly size and the area responsible for processing language and speech (Doyle and Timms, 2014).





Stress

Impacts on brain development and, while stress is experienced by all, it is when it reaches toxic levels that brain development is impacted upon (Gerhardt, 2015).





Child maltreatment increases stress levels and can alter the physiology of the body.

This includes increased adrenaline and hormonal changes, which can influence the long term health and wellbeing of the child.

For example, prolonged increases in cortisol can lead to weight gain and diabetes (Doyle and Timms, 2014).





Obesity

Hemmingsson, Johansson and Reynisdottir (2014) reviewed 23 studies into the relationship between child maltreatment and adult obesity.

They concluded that there was a significant relationship between the two and the greater the severity of the maltreatment the higher the significance.

There is also evidence that neglect may increase the risks of obesity and that there is a significant correlation between child maltreatment, obesity and mental health (Whitaker, Phillips, Orzol and Burdette, 2007).



Mental Health

The impact of abuse on the mental health of a child through the life course and the impact of the mental health of the mother can have the infant is well documented (Wave, 2013; Plane *et al.*, 2013; Norman *et al.*, 2012). The impact can include:

- **Drug and alcohol abuse**
- **Suicide**
- **Sexualised behaviour and sexually transmitted diseases**
- **Depression**
- **Anxiety**
- **Other psychiatric disorders**





So if we ponder history...

None of this information is a surprise, empirical research is evidencing professional knowledge and wisdom.

So what do we need to do?



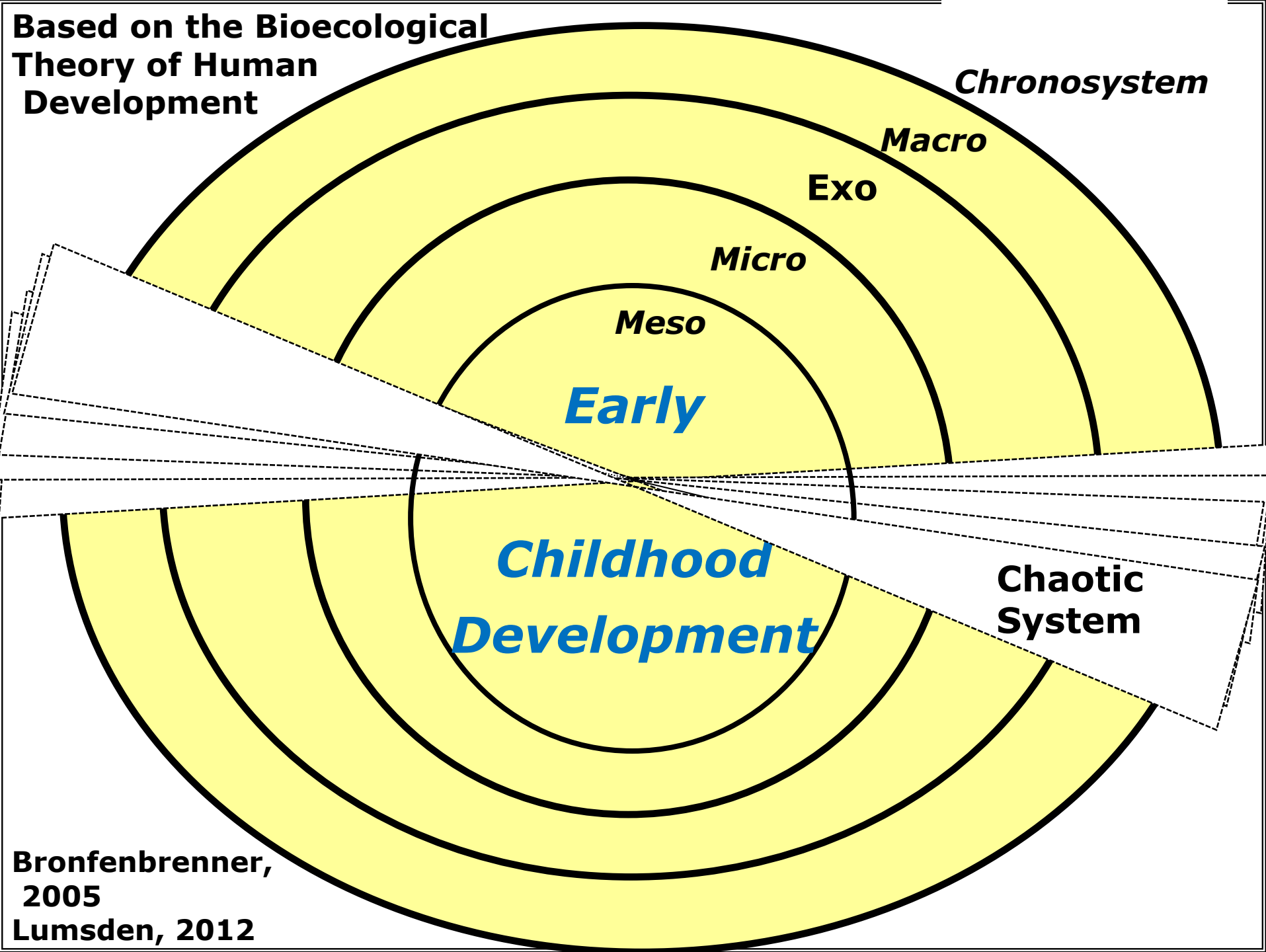
Theoretical Framework

The contemporary significance of the ecological model cannot be overstated. It has provided a major starting point for understanding the link between children and their community.

Pierson (2008:87).

*Bioecological
Theory of Human
Development*







Embed change in policy

- Political recognition and commitment to a prevention agenda across the life course that supersedes political ideology and puts empirical research and the needs of children and families at the heart of policy direction.
- One government department that is responsible for children and family life.



- Integrated not segregated provision.
- Policy that integrates public health, social care and education in the early years.
- Increased investment in the early years, early identification and support
- Greater multi professional training

And....





Locally

- We need to know:
 - Our communities
 - Our workforce
 - Our training needs
 - Courage

We need to realise.....





We need to.....

Change the Script





So.....

**Children
can change
theirs**





**The time is always right to
do the right things** Martin Luther King



Thank you for listening



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