

PRACTICE BRIEF

ANALYZING THE RESOURCE LANDSCAPE

BOSTON COLLEGE CENTER FOR THRIVING CHILDREN

Scholarship from diverse fields emphasizes the importance of systemic, comprehensive approaches to student support aimed at meeting the needs of the “whole child.”¹ To be effective in helping every student learn and thrive, systems of support should match each student with resources and opportunities that meet their individual strengths and needs across developmental domains.² To better meet the diverse needs of students and provide opportunities, schools can develop partnerships with community-based organizations. Findings from the worlds of research and practice provide guidance on how best to analyze the resource landscape.

I. DEVELOPMENTAL SCIENCE

Insights from developmental science help us better understand how schools can organize the available school and community resources that students need. These insights include:

DEVELOPMENT OCCURS ACROSS DOMAINS

Child development takes place across multiple domains – including academics, social-emotional well-being, health, family, career readiness, and many others. Each domain impacts all other domains.³

INTENSITY MATTERS

Children experience risks and strengths along a continuum of intensity, requiring varying levels of support.⁴

DEVELOPMENT IS DYNAMIC

As children grow over time, features of their world also change. The influence of contextual factors on development is dynamic, and continuous care that responds to these changes is important.⁵

II. THE ROLE OF RESOURCES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Evidence-based integrated student support practices apply knowledge of these categories of domain and intensity to mapping the local resource ecosystem. Since child development takes place across multiple domains, school and community resources that support student development can be categorized based on the particular areas of strength and need they address. Though scholars and tools may define the developmental domains differently, effective student support practices will identify resources according to the domain they address.

In addition, because children experience difficulties and strengths along a continuum of intensity, the degree of support provided can be tailored to meet the intensity level of strengths and needs. Resources in both school and community settings provide different intensities of supports for students, such as enrichment, early intervention, and intensive intervention.



III. IDENTIFYING RESOURCES

Schools and districts vary widely in how well they are able to identify and organize information about resources available to address the needs of students and families. Moreover, many non-profits and service providers have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, making it difficult to keep track of closures and changes in service availability. Starting points for identifying programs and services include:

- Asking the district central office, school offices, city or town hall for lists of local resources they may have;
- Asking student support staff, and others, for lists or contacts they keep;
- 211.org, a state by state compilation of resources by type and geography created by local United Ways;
- Other local databases accessible to the public, such those maintained by cities, hospitals, large nonprofits; and
- On-line resources that can augment local services, such as on-line mentoring, tutoring, tele-health or mental health, or delivery of basic needs such as clothing, shoes, or toiletries.

IV. ORGANIZING SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Schools and communities can organize information about resources available to students along several dimensions. These may be informed by science and/or practical considerations:

- Developmental domains: for example, academic, social-emotional-behavioral, peer-relations, health and wellbeing, family, and career readiness;
- Levels of student needs: such as enrichment/prevention, early intervention, and intensive or crisis intervention;
- Ages served: age range of children and youth best served by the program;
- Service provision location: whether they are school-, community-, or web-based programs and services;
- Provider location: the location of the provider and neighborhoods served;
- Transportation options: whether transportation is offered by the provider;
- Language resources: languages spoken by providers;
- Enrollment guidelines: whether there are open enrollment periods, waitlists, or other considerations;
- Eligibility and cost: whether services are covered by insurance, subsidized, and if so, for which eligible populations.

V. EXPANDING AND UTILIZING SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Organizing information about school- and community-based resources in this manner sets the stage for the efficient and effective tailoring of supports and opportunities that are best designed to address students' strengths and needs at the appropriate intensity of intervention.

It also facilitates the identification of critical gaps, and allows for strategic outreach. To fill gaps in resources, school coordinators can help colleagues think creatively about existing school resources, establish new partnerships with community agencies, or find relevant resources online, such as virtual mentoring programs or non-profits that will ship for free needed clothing or school supplies. By using this type of resource analysis structure, schools create a strategic, balanced, thorough set of partners that can be leveraged to support students' healthy development and learning.

VI. ACTION STEPS

Identifying, organizing, and updating resource information can become time consuming tasks. Begin by asking some strategic questions, such as:

- Are there existing databases or lists maintained by other organizations that we can rely upon?
- Do we want to assume responsibility for creating and maintaining resource information at the district-level, school-level, or in collaboration with a third-party?
- What are the developmental domains and categories of service that matter most to our community?
- Who is best tasked with identifying and organizing resource information so that we are better able to meet the comprehensive needs of students so that they are ready to learn and engage in school?
- How will the information be stored? For example, will you use paper, an Excel spreadsheet, add a tab to your student information system, create a database, or contract with a third-party?

For more information about organizing resources and data see [Selecting Technology for Systems of Integrated Student Support](#).



SAMPLE RESOURCES

VERSION 1 – is useful to understand the extent to which the resources you know about are aligned with students’ comprehensive needs. Consider whether two resources or service providers can be assigned to each box in this grid:

		Academics	Domain 1	Domain 2
School-based Programs	Prevention/Enrichment			
	Early Intervention			
	Intensive or Crisis			
Community-based Programs	Prevention/Enrichment			
	Early Intervention			
	Intensive or Crisis			

VERSION 2 – Create an Excel Spreadsheet that captures relevant domains, intensities of need, and organizational categories of interest. For example:

SERVICE PROVIDER	MAIN ADDRESS	SERVICES PROVIDED	SERVICE DELIVERY TYPE	SERVICE DELIVERY LOCATION	DOMAIN	LEVEL STUDENT NEED	TRANSPORTATION	LANGUAGES
Children's Place	456 Main Street, Anywhere, USA	Individual Counseling	Community-Based	123 Broad Street	Social-Emotional-Behavioral	Intensive Intervention	No	English; Spanish
		Social Skills Group	Community-Based	456 Main Street	Social-Emotional-Behavioral	Early Intervention	Yes	English
		In-Home Therapy	Community-Based	Various locations	Social-Emotional-Behavioral	Intensive Intervention	No	English; Spanish
XYZ Community Center	1234 South Street	Parenting Group	Community-Based	1234 South Street	Family	Early Intervention	Yes	English; Spanish; Chinese
		After School Program	Community-Based	1234 South Street	Academic	Enrichment/Prevention	Yes	English
		Basketball Club	Community-Based	100 Home Street	Health	Enrichment/Prevention	Yes	English
		Financial Counseling	Community-Based	1234 South Street	Family	Early Intervention	No	English; Spanish; Chinese
ABC University	100 Washington Road	Academic Tutoring	School-Based	789 Broad Street	Academic	Early Intervention	No	English
		Mentoring	School-Based	789 Broad Street	Social-Emotional-Behavioral	Early Intervention	No	English
		Wellness Group	School-Based	789 Broad Street	Health	Enrichment/Prevention	No	English

CITATIONS
¹ Centers for Disease Control (2016). Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child. Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsc/index.htm>
² Walsh, M. E., Wasser Gish, J., Foley, C., Theodorakakis, M., Rene, K. (2016). Policy Brief: Principles of effective practice for Integrated Student Support, Center for Thriving Children, for summary of research.
³ Ford, D. H., & Lerner, R. M. (1992). Developmental systems theory: An integrative approach. Newbury Park, CA: Sage; Lerner, R. M. (1995). Developing individuals within changing contexts: Implications of developmental contextualism for human development research, policy, and programs. In T. A. Kindermann & J. Valsiner (Eds.), Development of person-context relations. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. Rutter, M. (2007). Gene–environment interdependence. *Developmental Science*, 10, 12–18; Sameroff, A. (2009). The transactional model. *American Psychological Association*.
⁴ Adelman, H. S., & Taylor, L. (Eds.). (2006). *The school leader's guide to student learning supports: New directions for addressing barriers to learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.; Frey, K. S., Hirschstein, M. K., & Guzzo, B. A. (2000). Second step preventing aggression by promoting social competence. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 8(2), 102-112.; Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., & Stormont, M. (2013). Classroom-level positive behavior supports in schools implementing SW-PBIS identifying areas for enhancement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 15(1), 39-50.
⁵ Waters, E., Weinfield, N.S., & Hamilton, C.E. (2000). The stability of attachment security from infancy to adolescence and early adulthood: General discussion. *Child Development*, 71(3), 703-706.

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The Center for Thriving Children advances science, implementation, and innovation to promote healthy child and youth development, learning, and thriving.



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