



COLORADO
Department of Education

A Tale of Two State Coordinators

Dr. Kristin Myers
Kerry Wrenick, LMSW

McKinney-Vento and Foster Care serve different populations, however, the interventions are often the same. This session will consider potential barriers and the impact of social determinants, specific to highly-mobile students. Attendees will take a deep dive into how to join forces at the state and local levels (e.g. funding sources, navigating partnerships, agency collaboration) to serve highly-mobile students. Participants will gain insight on maximizing resources and leveraging your professional role across systems.

Low Graduation Rates

Trauma

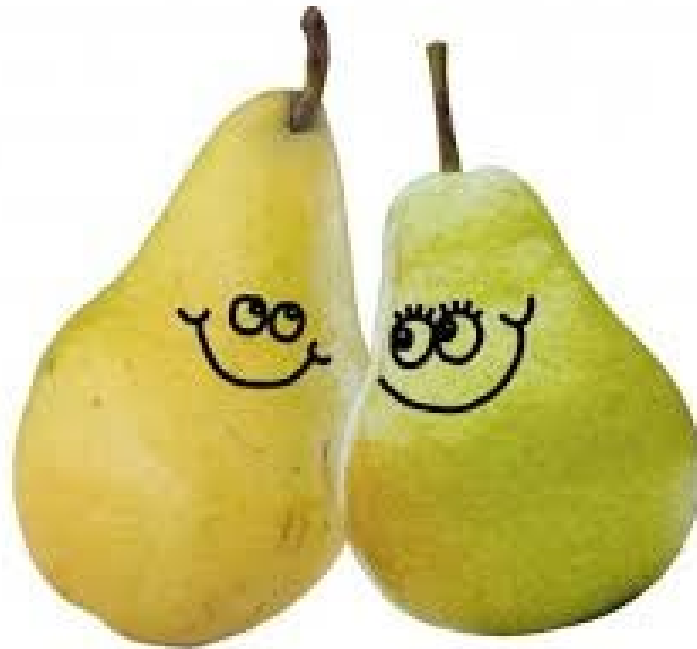
Access to Early Education

Post-Secondary Enrollment

Pair and Share

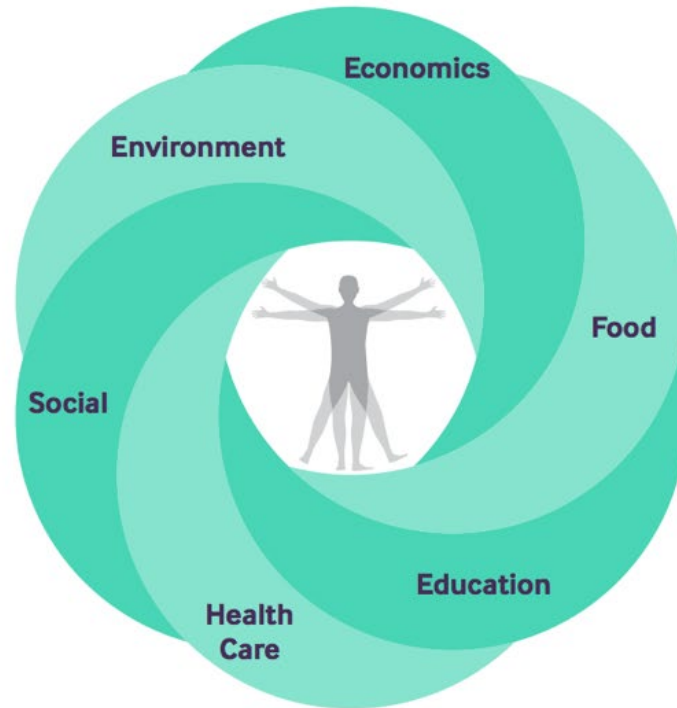
Find someone you don't know:

- Identify 2 ways your work is aligned
- What are 2 ways your roles differ



Conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes.¹ These conditions are known as social determinants of health (SDOH).

Social Determinants of Health



NEJM Catalyst (catalyst.nejm.org) © Massachusetts Medical Society



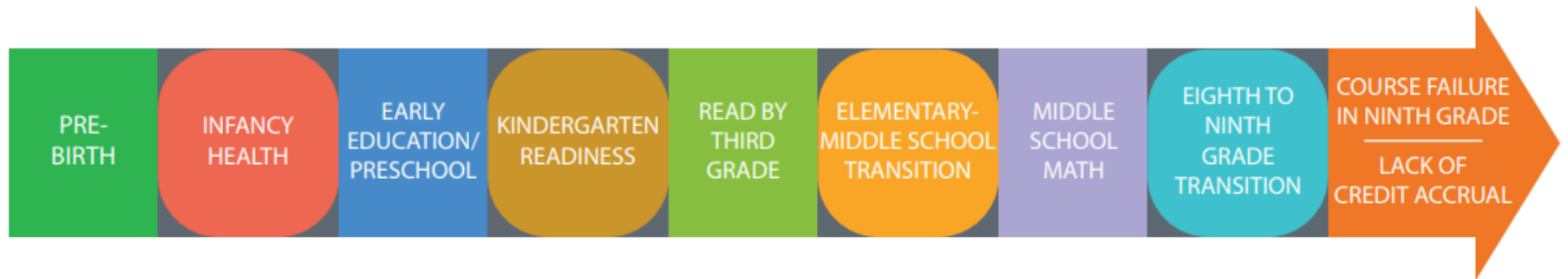
We know that poverty limits access to healthy foods and safe neighborhoods and that more education is a predictor of better health. We also know that differences in health are striking in communities with poor SDOH such as unstable housing, low income, unsafe neighborhoods, or substandard education.

By applying what we know about SDOH, we can not only improve individual and population health but also advance health equity.

Education Walk Activity

EDUCATIONAL MILESTONES

KEY CONSIDERATIONS/IMPACT



PRE-BIRTH

- Substance abuse
- In-Utero trauma
- Premature birth
- Poverty

INFANCY HEALTH

- Low birthweight
- Parental substance abuse
- Trauma
- Born into poverty

EARLY EDUCATION/PRESCHOOL

- Access to early education programs
- Trauma
- Abuse/neglect
- Parental substance abuse
- At-home education

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

- Able to write name
- Able to count to 100
- Recognize signs and sounds

READ BY THIRD GRADE

- Third grade literacy tied to multiple educational outcomes

ELEMENTARY-MIDDLE SCHOOL READINESS

- Academic proficiency
- Attendance
- Social/emotional health
- Family support
- Issues of mobility

MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH

- Proficiency tied to predictor of high school success

EIGHTH TO NINTH GRADE TRANSITION

- Academic proficiency
- Attendance
- Social/Emotional health
- Family support
- Issues of mobility

COURSE FAILURE IN NINTH GRADE / LACK OF CREDIT ACCRUAL

- Predictor of dropout and high school credential attainment
- Significant predictor for dropout





- The early years are critical to brain development.
- There are mountains of research that support the need for intervention and healthy brain development.



- Access to prenatal care
- Healthy life choices on behalf of the mother
- Healthy birth weight
- Fetal development and gestation length
- Pre-birth- babies begin learning language from their mother



Social

The social development of your baby is what happens when he/she responds to human faces and voices. According to the American Pregnancy Association, he/she may learn to smile back at you when you hold her or she may even begin babbling as if trying to speak to you. Social development affects how your baby plays with other children and adults as she grows.

Emotional

A baby's emotions go hand in hand with his/her social development and they need to work together to mature. In the first six months of development, a baby will respond to love and attention by developing a sense of trust, according to the National Network for Child Care. At the same time, a baby will express their emotions, anger, happiness, excitement or fright.

Language

According to Medline Plus, language development is starting to make sounds, learn words and understanding what people say.

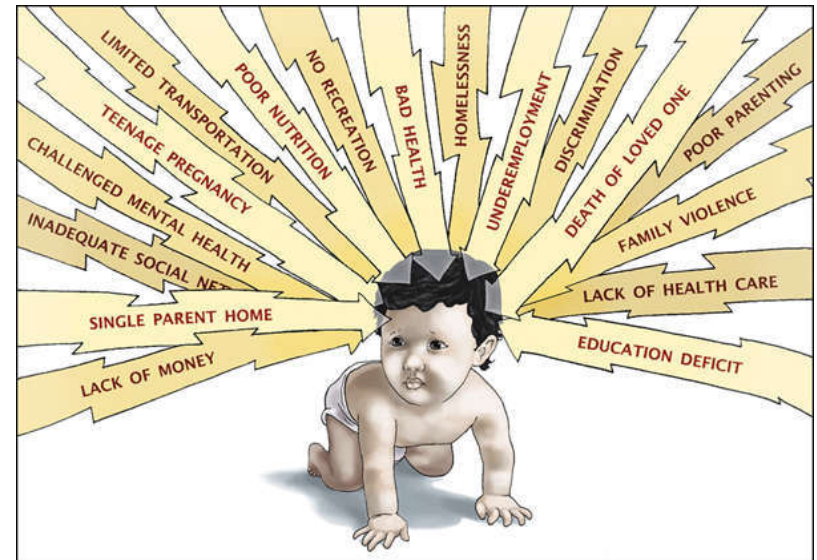
Impact of Trauma on the Brain

Trauma can impact the developing brain by:

- Reducing the number of connections formed
- Reducing the size of the cortex
- Strengthening survival connection

Resulting in:

- Memory problems
- Attention difficulty
- Language development delays
- Emotional and behavioral regulation issues





Efforts to define and implement a P-3 approach to learning are emerging across the country and throughout Colorado. A growing body of research supports the knowledge that academic and social skills acquired by age eight provide the foundation for lifelong learning and success. The first decade of a child's life is the most opportune time to influence learning paths and ensure the very best outcomes for all children.

- Children taught at an early age usually benefit in the following ways: improved social skills, less or no need for special education instruction during subsequent school years, better grades, and enhanced attention spans
- Access to early childhood education can prove to be difficult due to cost, availability, and qualification for eligibility.



Kindergarten Readiness

Kindergarten marks the start of a child's formal education. A child's first school experiences can influence the way he or she relates to others for the rest of life. For example, success or failure at this stage can affect a child's well-being, self-esteem and motivation.

The academic success of children in later years depends heavily upon their kindergarten readiness. The first few years of education and preparedness are the most crucial to establishing a solid foundation from which children can adapt to school systems and learn successfully. During this period, children develop primary skills that form the foundations of reading, counting, and social interaction.



The levels of preparedness with which a child enters kindergarten are academic and emotional, and they rely most heavily on being prepared at home. It is vital to nurture related skills in children, including the ability to focus, think logically, recognize important words, demonstrate some self control, and speak clearly. To help children who are entering their first years of school, it is essential to ensure that adequate support and educational stimulation are provided at home.



Every child should read by the third grade. This is an elemental building block to receiving a quality education.

Research shows students must make the transition from *learning to read* to *reading to learn* by the end of the third grade to be successful in later grades. Each year, as grade-level demands increase, students who struggle to read can fall further behind.





Youth regularly go through transitions – changing grade levels, changing schools, transitioning from school to work – however, such transitions are often left out of schools efforts to support students.

- Schools need to address transitions proactively in order to enhance their own goals of supporting youth development. Examples of transition opportunities include welcoming new arrivals, providing ongoing social supports as students adjust to new grades or new schools, and using before and after-school and summer activities to support students' academic and social-emotional development to promote success in school.

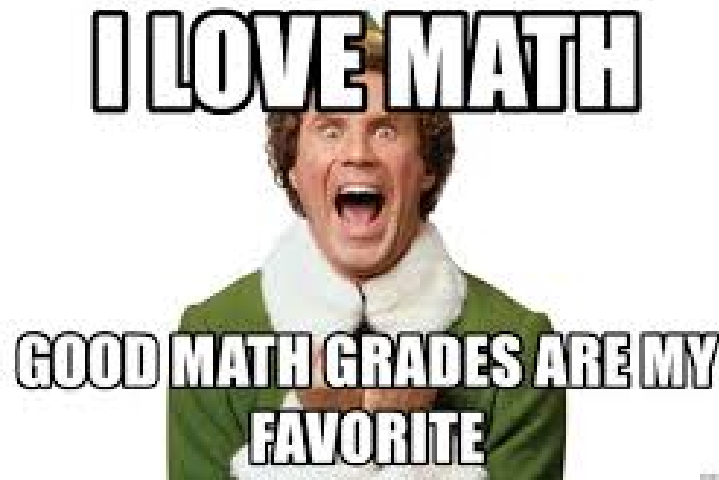
A well-designed transition plan can help alleviate the anxiety and confusion and restore a sense of belonging that students felt at their old school, or old grade.

- Transition programs can include a variety of activities, but some essential components include providing students and their family with information about the new school, providing students with social support, and bringing school personnel (elementary to middle, middle to high school) together to learn about one another's curriculum and requirements.



It is not just up to high schools to reduce dropouts...good grades in high school are unlikely unless students have shown strong academic performance in elementary school; this suggests that high schools cannot address this issue alone.

Elementary and middle schools should work with high schools to prepare students for the ninth-grade transition. Neild and Balfanz (2006) have shown that attendance and failure in eighth grade can be used to predict eventual dropout.

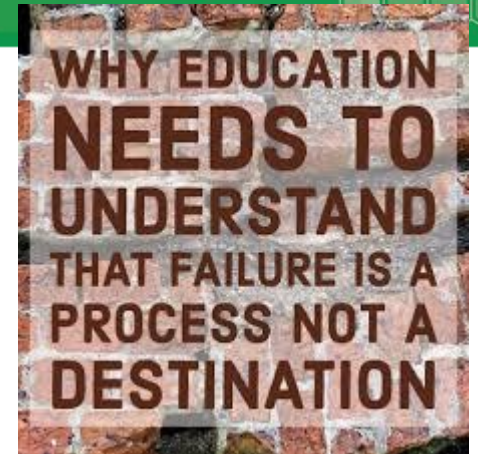




Similar to transition from elementary to middle school. These transitional years and settings can create anxiety, fear, social awkwardness, academic challenges, and unanticipated challenges.



Research from Chicago Public Schools states, What is often lost in discussions about dropping out is the one factor that is most directly related to graduation—students’ performance in their courses. They have shown that inadequate credit accumulation in the freshman year, which usually results from course failures, is highly predictive of failing to graduate four years later. On the other hand, students with good grades in their first year are very likely to be successful in their remaining years of high school.



Lack of Credit Accrual

The continued failure in coursework perpetuates a students' lack of motivation and feelings of failure. Eventually, a student is faced with the fact that a 4-year graduation track is not realistic and decide to dropout. A number of factors contribute to poor attendance, course failure, and behavioral responses.





Highly Mobile Student Framework



- Essential needs
- Connecters in and out of school
- Innovative solutions to address barriers to learning
- Multiple pathways



Highly Mobile Framework



- **Essential needs:** Ensuring students have access to basic human needs, which includes:
 - Food
 - Housing
 - Safety
 - Clothing
 - Hygiene
 - Language interpreter (if needed)



Highly Mobile Framework



- **Connectedness (in and out of school)** — Refers to ensuring students have an opportunity to form meaningful connections with peers and adults in all aspects of their lives. Programs that support connectedness include, but are not limited to:
 - Enhanced mentoring (programs that connect to adults and peer networks)
 - Extracurricular
 - Academic engagement/interest exploration
 - Community engagement
 - School climate



Highly Mobile Framework



- **Innovative solutions to address barriers to learning** — Refers to the education provider's efforts to reduce barriers to learning for highly mobile students. Examples of programs include, but are not limited to:
 - Academic progression and course completion
 - Seamless transfer of coursework
 - Assessment of academic gaps due to school mobility
 - Essential classroom skills
 - Assessment of educational milestones
 - Complete and up-to-date student assessment
 - Credit accrual and attainment



Highly Mobile Framework



- **Multiple pathways** — Defined as a variety of structured academic opportunities for students to achieve their goal for high school graduation and postsecondary success. Each pathway is defined by its programming and is accessed by each student based on the individual student's academic interest and unique needs. Examples include:
 - Complete and up-to-date career and academic plan
 - Opportunity to explore interests
 - Opportunity to build on strengths and talent
 - Opportunity to explore a multitude of postsecondary career options



McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Education



- Individual Programming
- Cross-Programmatic Collaboration
- Lessons Learned



Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Grant Management

- State
- Federal

Data Sharing Agreements

State-level Partnerships

Professional Development

- MKV Liaisons
- Child Welfare Liaisons

Boards/Councils/Committees



Grant Programs

- Education for Homeless Children and Youth
- Educational Stability

Partnering with other CDE Program Offices

- Migrant
- Health and Wellness
- Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness
- Federal Programs
- 21st Century

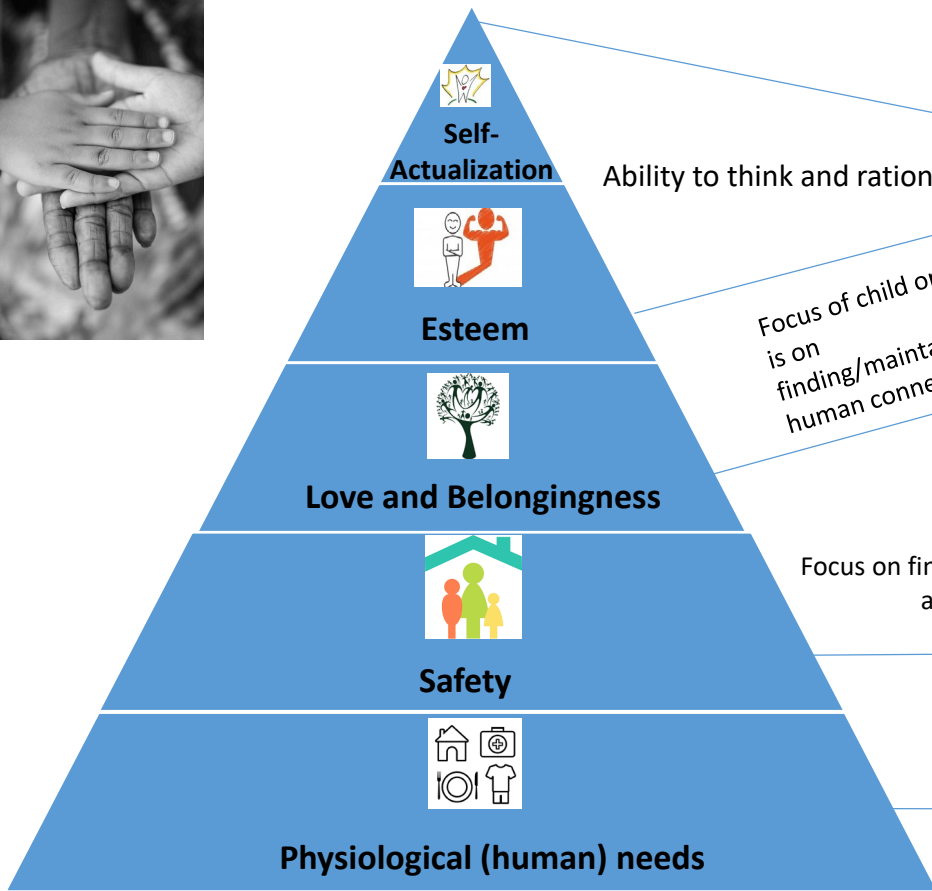


Trainings

- Regional
- Educational Stability Symposium

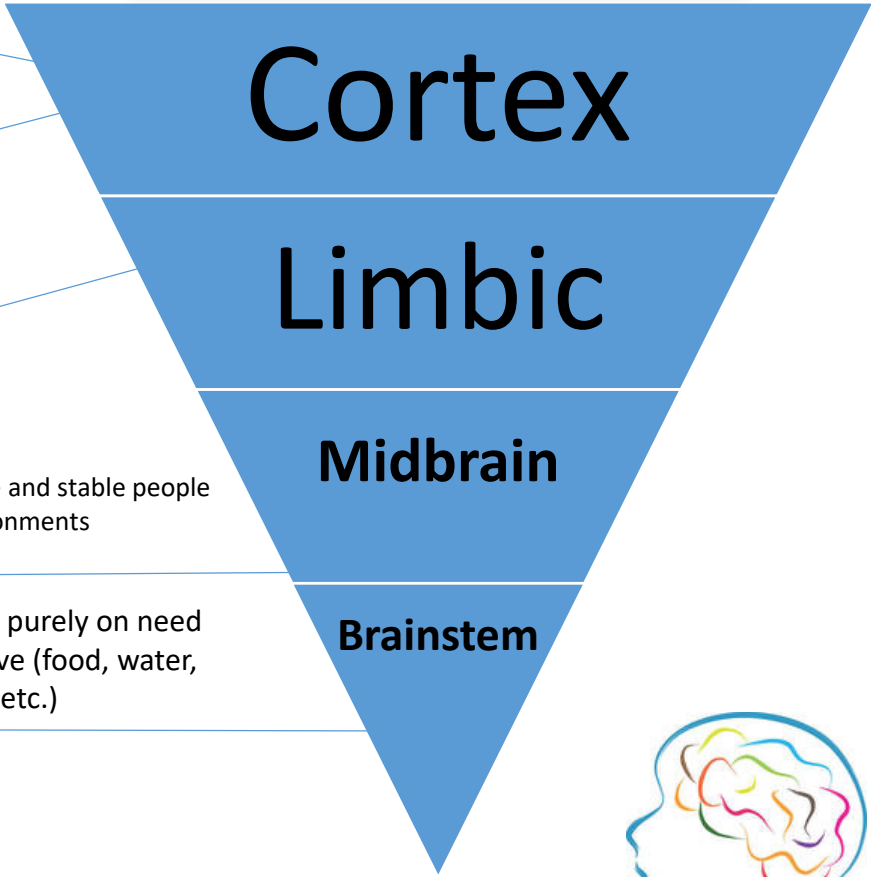
Post-Secondary Readiness

- Credit Accrual and Attainment
- Multiple Pathways



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Brain Functioning



Learning



Brain Functioning

Cortex

Limbic

Midbrain

Brainstem



NOT Learning

Self-Actualization



Esteem



Love and Belongingness



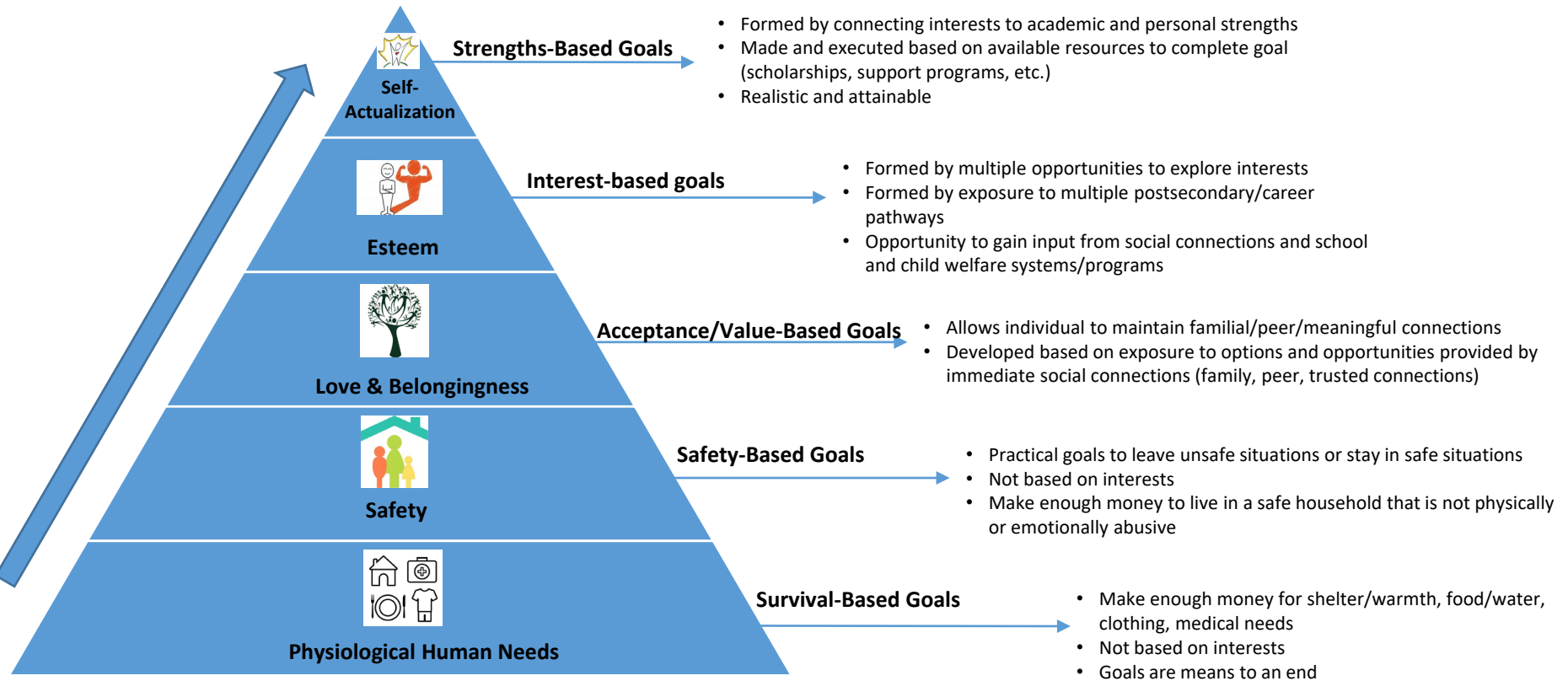
Safety



Physiological (human) needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Characteristics of Postsecondary Goals Related to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for Youth in Foster Care



School System as Related to Meeting Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



School System Responsibility

Supporting Programs/People

- Well established, meaningful, and attainable goals
- Identified point of contact at postsecondary institution or career-based program/training (soft pass to next step)
- Well-established support network
- Complete financial access to live and attend postsecondary programs

Self-Actualization

- Single points of contact at Universities/Colleges
- Programs at the college level that support independent students
- Tuition assistance/vouchers specifically for former foster youth

- Complete/meaningful Individual Career and Academic Plan
- Academic readiness for postsecondary/career choice
- Ability to explore, recognize, and build on strengths (both academic and personal/social)
- Exposure to multiple postsecondary and career pathways
- Information about scholarships and programs that are aligned with interests
- Support with postsecondary/career applications
- Multiple opportunities to connect to trusted adults and peers during and after school
- Participate in extracurricular activities
- Sense of belongingness with teachers, school staff, and peers
- Pride in school environment
- Demonstrate social skills

Esteem

- School counselors that ensure ICAPs up-to-date and meaningful
- Concurrent enrollment and vocational/technical options in high school
- Career days, college visits
- Directed assistance in applications, financial aid and scholarships



Love & Belongingness

- Bullying prevention and social connectedness programs
- Variety of extracurricular options
- Social-emotional learning infused into curriculum



Safety

- School stability laws enforced
- Trauma-informed school personnel
- Programming for highly mobile students that benefit all students
- Restorative justice approach to discipline
- Adequate mental health service providers at schools

- Consistent/predictable school environment
- Consistent exposure to physiologically and psychologically safe place to learn
- Safe place to develop relationships (adults/peers)








Physiological Human Needs

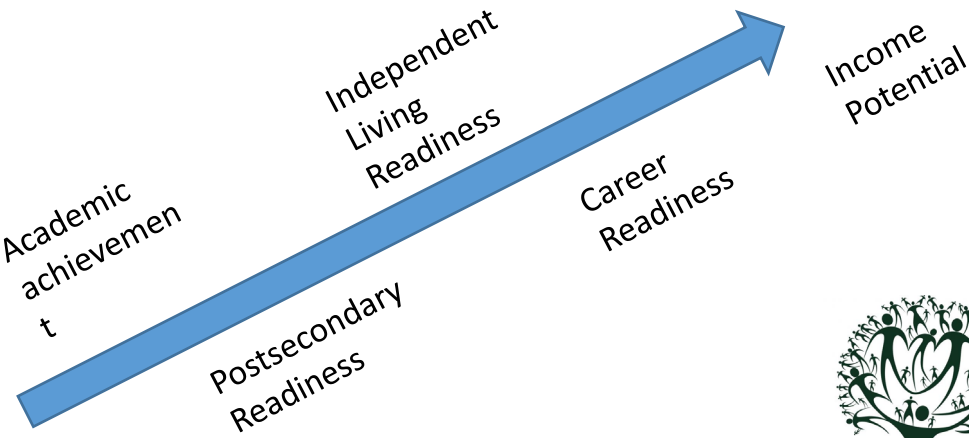
- Training for school personnel in ESSA foster care provisions and McKinney-Vento laws
- Ensure liaisons are informed of foster care status

- Ensure access to free meals, support for clothes and hygiene if needed

Goal Setting Considerations for Children/Youth in Foster Care

Child Welfare System	School System Influence	Goal Setting Considerations for Children/Youth in Foster Care	Type of Goal	Goal Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and housing support in planning for emancipation Connected to programs that support stable housing and basic needs Independent living skills attained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well established, meaningful, and attainable goals Identified point of contact at postsecondary institution or career-based program/training (soft pass to next step) Well-established support network Complete financial access to live and attend postsecondary programs 	 Actualization (Cortex)	Interest and strengths-based goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formed by connecting interests to academic and personal strengths Made and executed based on available resources to complete goal (scholarships, support programs, etc.) Realistic and attainable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive adults and systems to explore postsecondary and career interests Connection to postsecondary support programs (foster care programs/scholarships) Opportunity to develop independent living skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete/meaningful Individual Career and Academic Plan Academic readiness for postsecondary/career choice Ability to explore, recognize, and build on strengths (both academic and personal/social) Exposure to multiple postsecondary and career pathways Information about scholarships and programs that are aligned with interests 	 Esteem (Cortex)	Interest-based goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formed by multiple opportunities to explore interests Formed by exposure to multiple postsecondary/career pathways Opportunity to gain input from social connections and school and child welfare systems/programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living in a family-like setting Acceptance, love, belonging communicated by caregivers, immediate social circle, peers and systemic support Treated as "part of the family" Access to family of origin (whenever possible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support with postsecondary/career applications Multiple opportunities to connect to trusted adults and peers during and after school Participate in extracurricular activities Sense of belongingness with teachers, school staff, and peers Pride in school environment Demonstrate social skills 	 Love and Belongingness (Limbic)	Acceptance/Value-Based Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows individual to maintain familial/peer/meaningful connections Developed based on exposure to options and opportunities provided by immediate social connections (family, peer, trusted connections)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure child/youth is placed in a physically and psychologically safe living environment Consistent place to sleep/eat (predictable meals, clean clothes, bed, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent/predictable school environment Consistent exposure to physiologically and psychologically safe place to learn Safe place to develop relationships (adults/peers) 	 Safety (Brainstem/Midbrain)	Safety-based goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical goals to leave unsafe situations or stay in safe situations Not based on interests Make enough money to live in a safe household that is not physically or emotionally abusive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a living environment with access to basic physiological needs (shelter, food and water, clothes, medical needs, warmth, care from adult) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure access to free meals, support for clothes and hygiene if needed 	 Physiological/Survival Needs (Brainstem)	Survival-based goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make enough money for shelter/warmth, food/water, clothing, medical needs Not based on interests Goals are means to an end

Lalonde, T., Tsai, C., & Myers, K. (2019). *Postsecondary Access for Colorado Students Who Experienced Foster Care: Where did they go and how did they get there?* (Report No. 107A). Denver, CO: Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab at the University of Denver.



Safety

- Secure place to live
- Trust in immediate environment
- Stability
- Ability for basic learning

Love & Belongingness

- Ability to form healthy connections
- Sense of family and community
- Ability to retain information and learn

Esteem

- Ability to explore interests
- Take ownership in learning
- Develop independent living skills
- Able to retain in long-term memory

Self-Actualization

- Ability to apply learning in real-life situations
- Secure in self, interests, and goals
- Independent living skills to meet goals

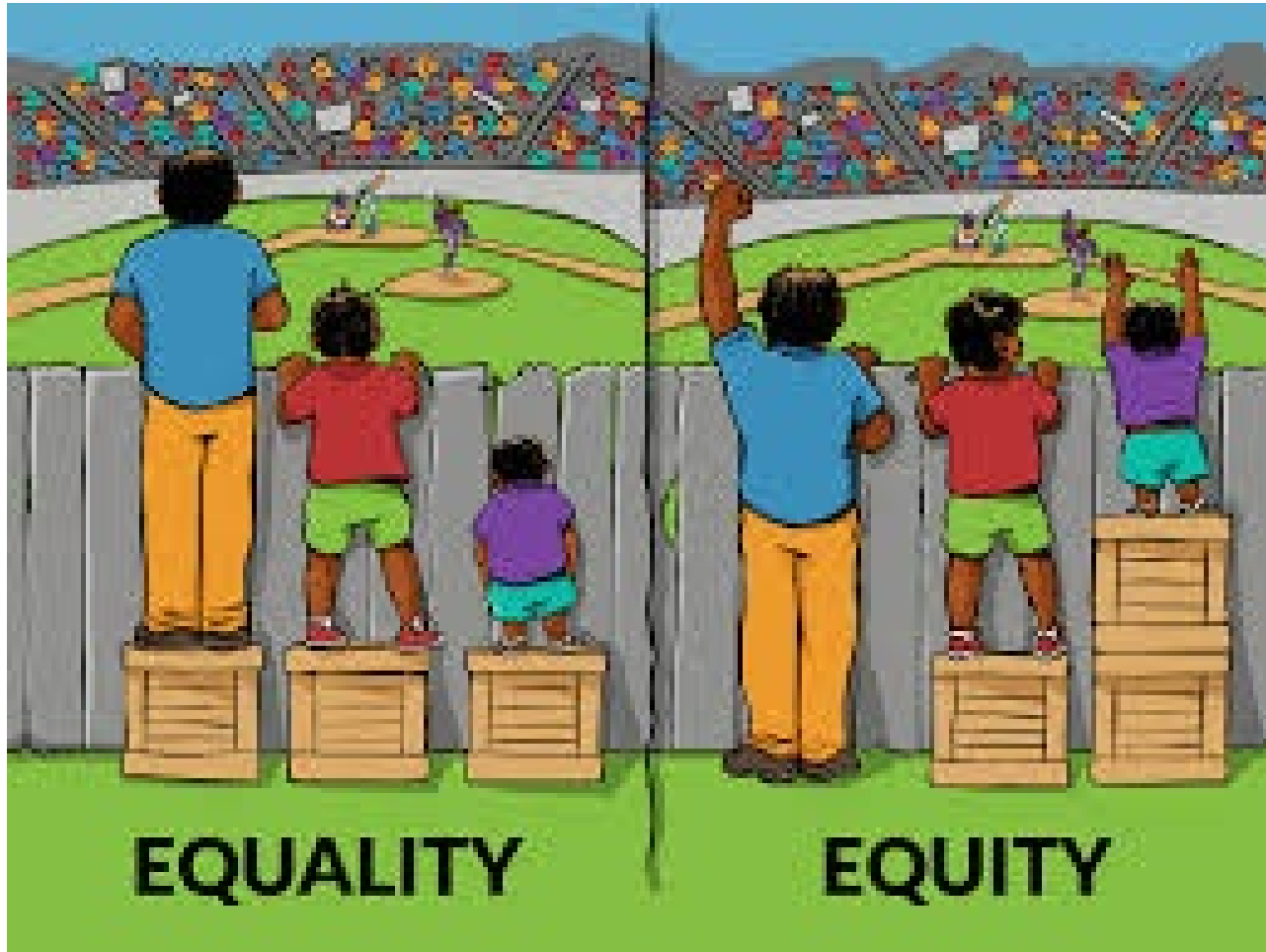


Physiological Human Needs

- Ability to communicate, think, grow, show up to school.



- Shared Messaging
- Understanding the Roles
- Local Control State
- Educational Stability Symposium



The current reality of bias, harassment, prejudice and discrimination

in our schools and communities challenges us all to take effective measures to create and sustain a safe and enjoyable learning environment for our students.

True educational equity is not the same as equality.

In decisions regarding educational equity, the following must be considered:

Access: An equal opportunity to gain entry.

Process: A state beyond nondiscrimination that is characterized by fair and just, but not identical treatment.

Outcome: All students are provided educational experiences that ensure the achievement of certain uniform goals and objectives.



The main themes of educational equity are removing barriers and providing access, opportunity, relationship building and academic rigor for all without judgment or prejudice. All of these factors guide a student to attaining more educational capital and should guide our policy-making.

Everyone faces barriers in their lives, but some groups face laws or practices or even expectations that, intentionally or not, create barriers for whole groups at a time. If one group faces barriers more than other groups do, it is not likely to lead to good outcomes for all. Educational equity is the commitment to provide for students the resources necessary to enable them to achieve at their highest levels without judgment or prejudice.

Schools and communities should work together to achieve educational equity through discussions, building awareness, and setting specific goals to address bias, prejudice and discrimination. This collaborative relationship is vital because societal issues that impact our communities also impact our schools. The health of our schools, our communities and our democracy is clearly linked to our level of success in achieving equity for all.





Website: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention>

Kristin Myers

State Coordinator for Foster Care Education

Email: myers_k@cde.state.co.us

Kerry Wrenick

State Coordinator for Homeless Education

Email: wrenick_k@cde.state.co.us