



A Focus on Goal Achievement: An Emerging Framework for TANF and Related Work Programs

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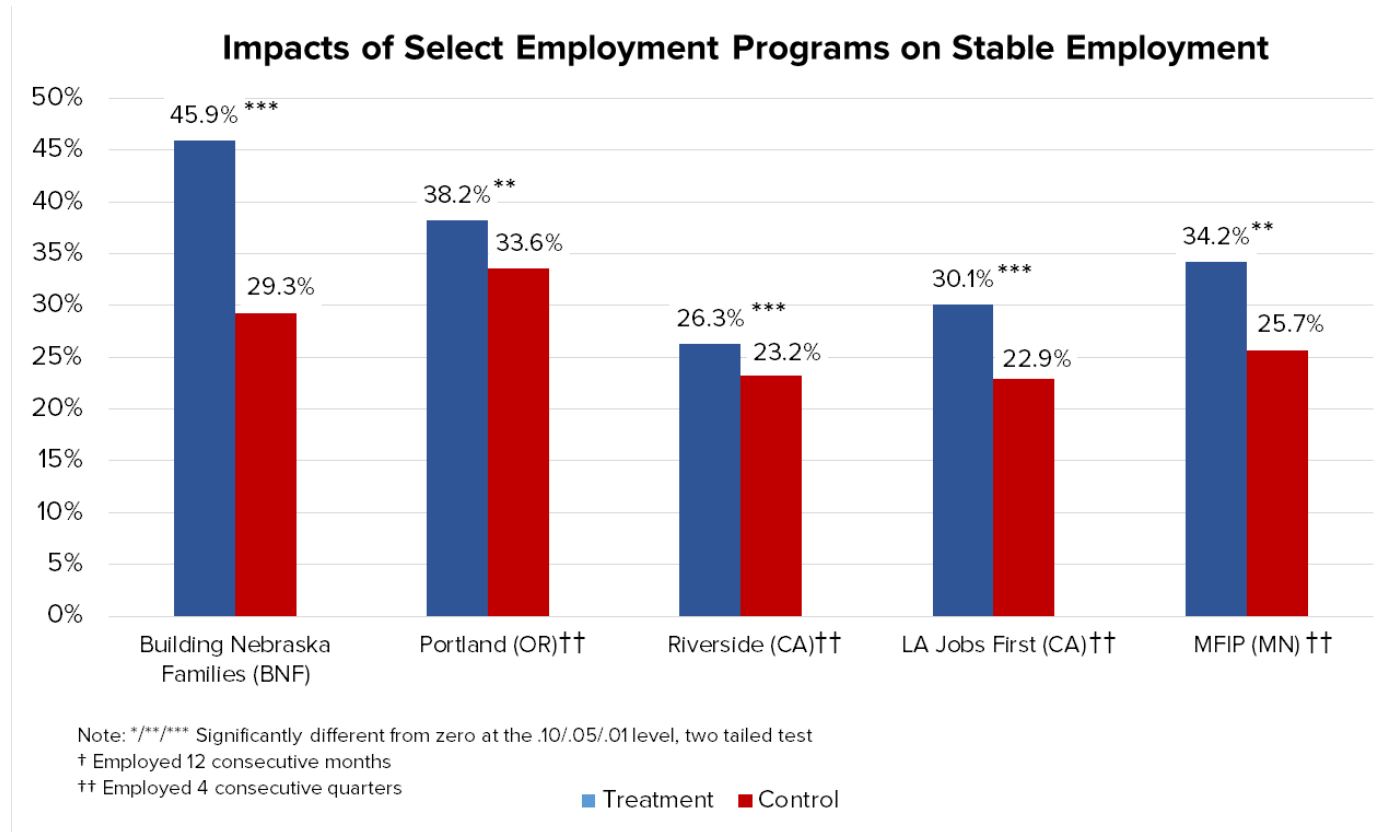


Why Create a New Framework for TANF and Related Employment Programs?

- **History:** Modest success, even in the most effective employment programs
- **The future:** Need to invest in adults to see big improvements in long-term outcomes for kids
- **Changing labor markets:** Declining employment among single mothers with high school education or less for most of the last 10 years; increased demand for skills
- **New possibilities:** Evidence that if we teach “life skills” we can do better



Existing programs make a significant difference for some, but many program participants are left behind



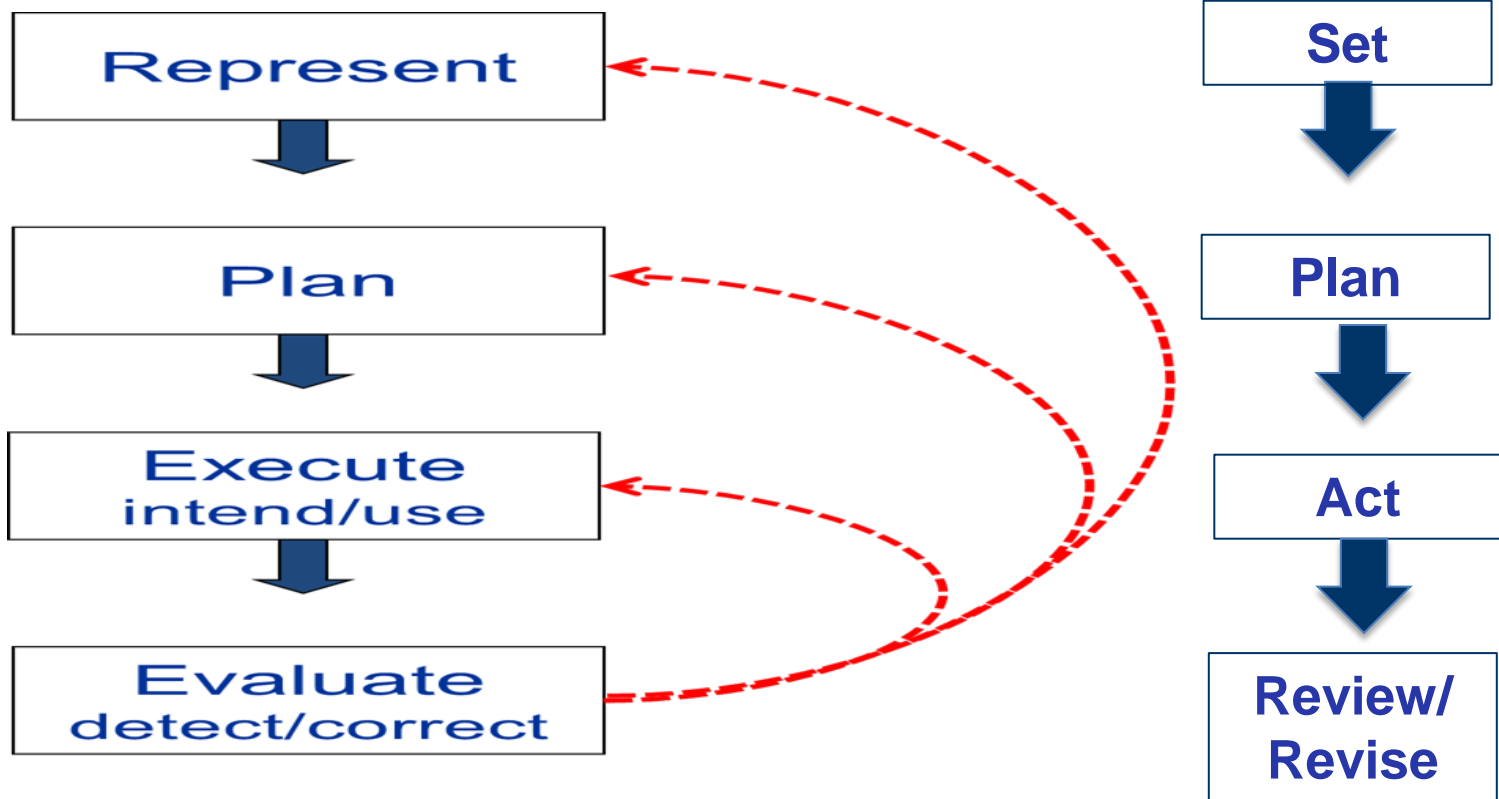


Why Focus on Goal Achievement?

- Grounded in science
- Compatible with key program purposes, but provides a new approach to service delivery
- Provides a framework that can guide individual, organization and community goals simultaneously
- Shifts the emphasis from what we do to what we achieve and how we achieve it
- Creates a structure for measuring interim progress toward longer-term goals – especially useful for individuals with significant employment barriers
- Makes explicit how critical “life management” or “executive function” skills are to success at school, home and work



The Science Behind Goal Achievement Comes from Research on Self-Regulation and Executive Function



Goal Achievement/Problem-Solving Process:
Phil Zelazo, Executive Function expert, University of Minnesota



Executive Function Skills are Skills We Draw on To Successfully Achieve A Goal

- Executive functions are ***a set of processes*** that all have to do with ***managing oneself and one's resources*** in order ***to achieve a goal***
- An umbrella term for skills we use to:
 - Organize and plan
 - Control how we react to situations
 - Get things done



What are executive function skills?

- **Skills we use to organize and plan things**
 - Organization
 - Time Management
 - Planning/Prioritization
- **Skills we use to control how we react to situations**
 - Response Inhibition
 - Flexibility
 - Emotional Control
 - Metacognition
- **Skills we use to get things done**
 - Task Initiation
 - Sustained Attention
 - Goal-Directed Persistence
 - Stress Tolerance
 - Working Memory



Executive Function Skills Are Important to Work Programs Because They Play a Critical Role in **Goal Achievement**

Goal-Achievement Process	Executive Functioning Skills
Set	Metacognition, working memory
Plan	Planning/prioritization, time management, working memory, task initiation
Act	Task initiation, response inhibition, time management, sustained attention, working memory
Review/Revise	Metacognition, flexibility, working memory



Factors Related to Living in Poverty that Influence Executive Function Skills

- Toxic Stress
- Bandwidth Tax (Living in conditions of chronic scarcity)
- Environmental and “life” factors



What is toxic stress and why does it matter?

- **Toxic stress** is prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.
- Toxic stress disrupts brain architecture and impairs the development of executive functions.
- If children do not get what they need from their relationships with adults and the conditions in their environments—or (worse) if those influences are sources of toxic stress—their skill development can be seriously delayed or impaired.
- Exposure to toxic stress has lifelong consequences



What is the “bandwidth tax” and what does it have to do with living in poverty?

- Living in poverty means living in chronic scarcity
- Living under the conditions of scarcity imposes a “bandwidth tax” which reduces the cognitive resources that individuals have available to devote to activities aimed at achieving long-term goals
- Researchers that have studied scarcity liken living in poverty to living perpetually on a missed night of sleep
- The impact of the bandwidth tax:
 - Reduces capacity to think logically and analyze and solve novel problems and process information
 - Diminishes ability to evaluate options and make high-quality decisions
 - Impairs self-control, often leading to impulsivity

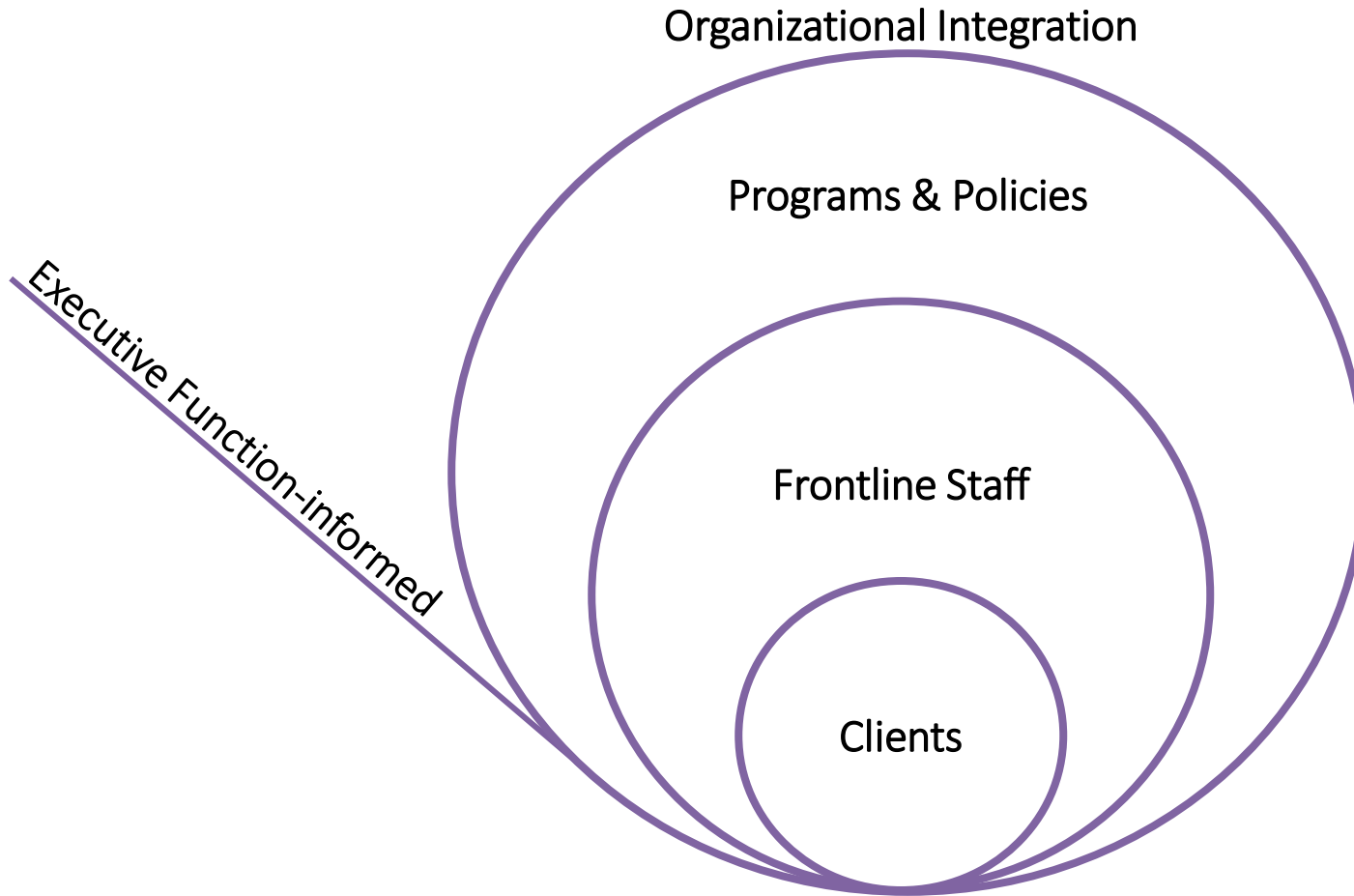


Environmental and “life” factors that negatively impact executive functions

- Stress
- Poor nutrition
- Lack of sleep
- Lack of social connections (loneliness)
- Sadness
- Physically unfit



Implications for TANF Programs: *Executive Function-Informed Practice Is Focused on Changing **How** We Provide Services*



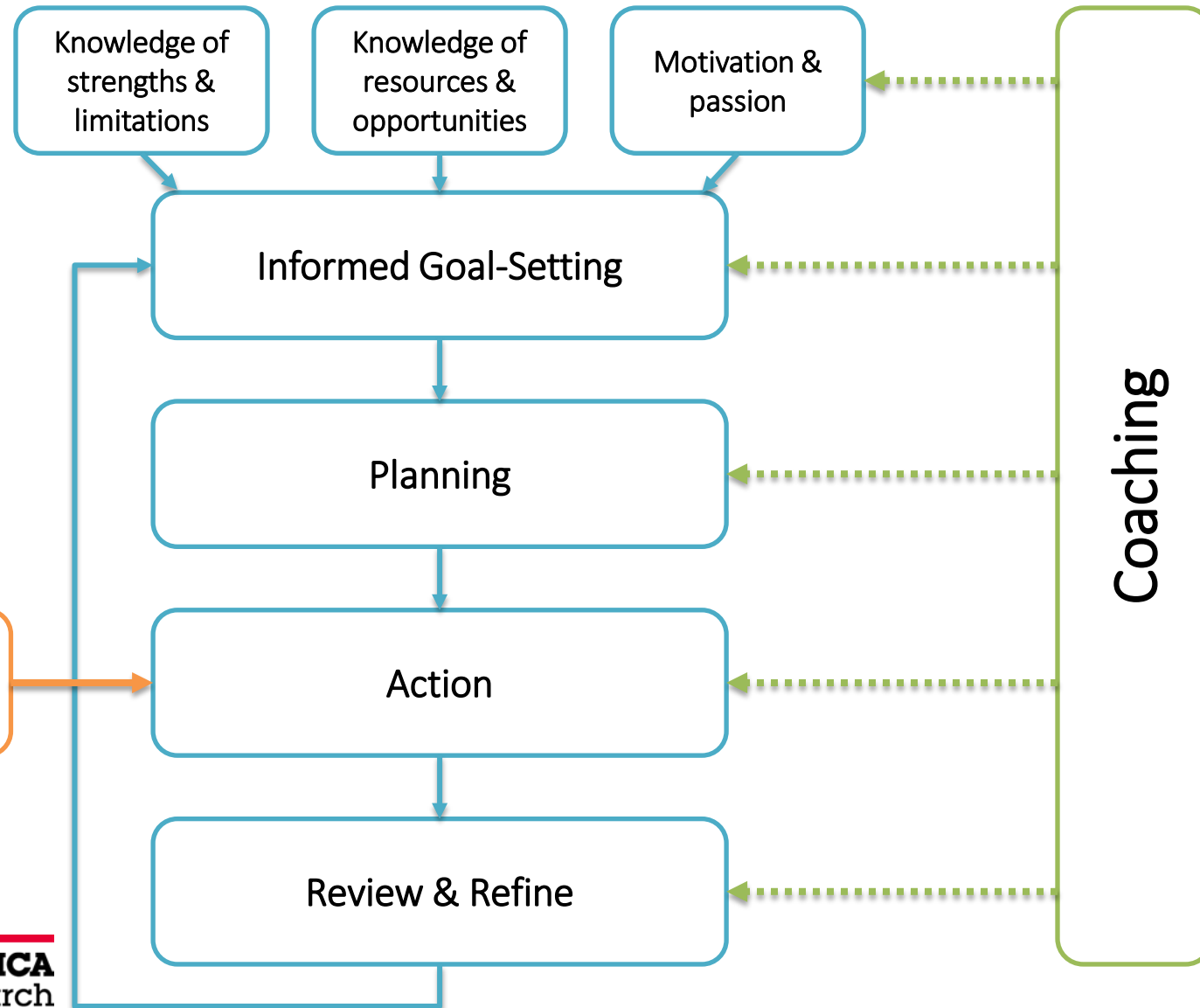


What Makes an EF-Informed Goal-Setting Process Different from Current Practice?

- More explicit emphasis on **goal setting and achievement** – how goals are set matters
- More intentional and specific approach to **planning** – break goals down into manageable steps with explicit plans for achieving them (down to the day and time something will get done)
- “Living” plans that are **regularly reviewed and revised**
- Different approach to providing **support** – creating “**scaffolds**” that break tasks into **small steps**; provide as much support as is needed to successfully complete the task
- Important role for using **incentives** to engage participants and build skills
- Focus on **active skill building** that involves modeling use of skills and practice in settings that mimic the settings where they will be used



An Example of a Goal-Achievement Model





Design Questions

- What are the progressive steps for achieving long- and short-term goals? How do they link to the program's mission, goals, and services?
- Who works with the client to facilitate goal achievement (e.g., coach/direct service staff, peers, online)? Where does it occur (e.g., individual meetings, dyads/triads, groups)? What is the process?
- What changes can create a more streamlined and supportive program, work, and home environment? (Interventions to reduce the strain on executive skills)
- What resources and processes can be used to motivate and reward goal achievement? (Use of incentives)
- How are progress and performance outcomes used to instill accountability, implement course corrections, and celebrate successes?



PROGRAM EXAMPLES



Example: Crittenton Women's Union

CRITTENTON WOMEN'S UNION'S THEORY OF CHANGE BRIDGE TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY*



Mobility Mentoring®

FAMILY STABILITY		WELL-BEING		EDUCATION AND TRAINING	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT		EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER MANAGEMENT
Housing	Dependents	Health and Behavioral Health	Social Networks	Educational Attainment	Savings	Debts	Earnings Levels
No subsidy, housing costs less than 1/3 household take-home pay	Dependent needs met; serving as no barrier to parent/guardian school or work	Fully engaged in work, school, and/or family Health / behavioral health issues serving as no obstacle	Advocate/ Networker: Uses own and other resources and connections to advance the mobility goals of others	Completed bachelor's degree or higher	Savings of three months' expenses or more	Current on all balances and no outstanding debt other than mortgage or educational and/or car loans	Job with earnings \geq Mass. Index wage (If not calculated for specific family, use income \geq \$65,880)
No subsidy, housing costs exceed 1/3 household take-home pay	Dependent needs serving as minimal disruption to parent/guardian school or work	Minimal disruption to work, school, and/or family due to health / behavioral health issues	Developed Network: Consistent source of both support and leveraging connections	Completed associate's degree or postsecondary job training or certificate program	Savings of more than two months' expenses but less than three months' expenses	Current in payments and plans and paying more than minimum payments	Job with earnings of 66-99% of Mass. Index wage (If not calculated for specific family, use income range of \$43,481 - \$65,879)
Partial subsidy (shallow): Paying \$200 or more towards rent	Dependent needs serving as intermittent disruption to parent/guardian school or work	Intermittent disruptions to work, school, and/or family due to health / behavioral health issues	Emerging Network: Consistent source of support and occasional leveraging connections	Attending college or postsecondary job training program	Savings of at least one months' and up to two months' expenses	Structured payment plans in place and meeting minimum payments	Job with earnings of 33%-65% Mass. Index wage (If not calculated for specific family, use income range of \$21,741-\$43,480)
Full subsidy, permanent housing: Paying \$200 or less towards rent	Dependent needs serving as significant obstacle to parent/guardian school or work	Regular and recurring disruptions to work, school, and/or family due to health / behavioral health issues	Limited network: Occasional source of support	Completed postsecondary remedial education classes, college preparatory program, or prerequisites for job training/ readiness program	Savings of less than one months' expenses	Debts in excess of ability to pay, behind in payments	Job with earnings less than 33% Mass. Index wage
A. Homeless / co-housed with family or friends B. Homeless / transitional housing Homeless / emergency shelter	Recently emergent or not yet addressed dependent needs, requiring additional attention	Severely limited engagement in work, school and/or family due to significant health/ behavioral health issues	Isolated or draining network	Attending postsecondary remedial education classes, college preparatory program, or fulfilling prerequisites for job training/readiness program High school diploma or General Educational Development certificate GED obtained No high school diploma or GED	No savings	Defaults or nonpayment on all or most loans and accounts	Unemployed

FUTURE ORIENTED DECISION MAKING

CONTEXTUALIZED DECISION MAKING

May 2014



Example: New Haven MOMS Partnership

- Cognitive behavioral therapy intervention (within the context of stress reduction) for mothers in public housing developments
- Extensive use of incentives (e.g., Walmart gift cards; personal care items)
- Community collaborative – public/private partnership
- Neighborhood hubs, including one in a grocery store
- Hired “community ambassadors” to deliver services – act as a critical bridge between the community and agency staff
- Innovative use of technology – Momba cellphone app
- Adding a workforce component
- Accomplishments:
 - Extremely high levels of participation and completion
 - Significant reduction in parental stress
 - Significant reduction in depression
 - Significant increase in social connections



Example: Reduce Cognitive Demands

Children's Bureau, Inc.
Preserving families and protecting the future of Indiana's children.

Thank you for coming to your appointment. Without all of the following documentation you will not be recertify;

Check all that apply:
PROOF OF IDENTITY – AT LEAST 1 (ONE) PER PERSON *check: same list for 1st application?*

Parent(s) picture ID:
 Driver's License State ID
 Passport Military School ID
 Work ID

*Foster Parents- All of the above plus:
 Valid Foster Parent License which matches where you live
 Verification the child is ward of the State from DCS caseworker or current per diem documentation with child(ren)'s name on it

PROOF OF RESIDENCY (RECEIVED IN PREVIOUS 30 DAYS OF APPOINTMENT)

<input type="checkbox"/> Valid Lease or lease amendment for existing lease period; Signed & dated Landlord Statement or rent receipt	<input type="checkbox"/> ICES Screen	<input type="checkbox"/> Utility Bill (billing date within last 30 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> Current mortgage statement	<input type="checkbox"/> Valid Driver's License	<input type="checkbox"/> Current Pay Check Stub
<input type="checkbox"/> Current mail in envelope received at address including postmark (No Window)	<input type="checkbox"/> Current mail in envelope received at address including postmark (No Window)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mail from DFR, DWD, IMPACT service provider
<input type="checkbox"/> Valid State ID	<input type="checkbox"/> INS Green Card	<input type="checkbox"/> Online documentation from US Postal Service

PROOF OF SERVICE NEED (WORKING AND/OR ATTENDING SCHOOL AND/OR PARTICIPATING IN TANF/IMPACT PROGRAM)

If working:
 Bi-weekly- Last 2 prior to appointment
 Weekly – Last 4 prior to appointment
 TANF/IMPACT Referral

If in School - School Schedule or letter from school with all the following:
 Have your name and school name
 Credit Hours/Class Hours
 Semester begin and end dates

MONTHLY- 1 most recent checks
 Wage Verification or Letter- if no checks or NEW JOB

VERIFICATION OF ALL OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME (IF APPLICABLE)
 (Must cover most recent 30Days (30 days prior to your appointment date))
 Current TANF benefit letter
 Social Security (SSD) benefit letter (New Tanf/Impact Clients – referral and ICES screens were sent from caseworker)
 Any other income you receive – Please List: _____
 Unemployment print out

OTHER DOCUMENT (IF APPLICABLE)
 Information from CCDF qualified childcare provider:
 Provider Information Page completed by a licensed or certified CCDF provider only
 Letter from Daycare (stating you do not care for your children while working at daycare)
 Your Service Card

4 Easy Steps to Renewing Your Voucher

Here is a checklist to help you track what you will need to bring to the appointment.

1. Proof of Current Address
 Check off the one document you will bring:
 Driver's license Utility bill- current at time of appointment
 Envelope postmarked in the 30 days prior to your appointment (no window envelopes)
 Letter from State or Federal Government agency dated in the 30 days prior to your appointment

2. Proof of Identity
 Check off the one document you will bring:
 Driver's license Military ID
 Passport School ID
 Other government-issued ID Work ID

3. Provider Information Page
 This is the attached YELLOW form. You must have your CCDF eligible provider fill it out even if you are keeping the same provider.

4. Proof of Eligibility
 Check off all of the situations that apply to you and what you need to bring.

Do you go to school or training?
 BRING A SCHEDULE that shows your name, school name, credit hours taken and/or hours of participation, and semester dates or begin and end dates, if applicable.

Do you work?
 BRING PAY STUBS for all of your jobs for the 30 days prior to your appointment.
 Examples: If your appointment was on December 25, your pay stubs would have to cover the days from November 25 to December 25. If you had two jobs that paid every other week, you would have to bring four pay stubs to your appointment, two for each job.

Do you have any other forms of income, aside from work?
 BRING PROOF OF ANY OTHER INCOME, for example:
 Unemployment printout
 Social Security (SSI) benefit letter
 Current TANF benefit letter

Questions about what to bring?
See the next page.

Need more help?
Call us at 1-866-287-2420 x204



Example: Community Engagement (Routt County)

- Talk it Up – Engaging community partners
- Step it Up – Six week goal setting group
- Move it Up – Individualized education and employment activities



Example: Online Goal Achievement (Larimer County)

- Automate routine processes to free up staff time to provide more one-on-one support
- Create milestones in different domains – breaking tasks into discrete and manageable steps; examples include
 - Exploring careers
 - Applying for child care
 - Registering for school or training
 - Job search monitoring and management
- Integrate tracking of hours with online completion of milestones
- Provide more immediate feedback to participants when tasks are completed (e.g., use of non-monetary incentives to create and sustain motivation)



TuaPath

The screenshot shows the TuaPath website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Larimer County Workforce Center logo and the tagline "get connected | stay connected". The navigation menu includes "Milestones", "Status", "Documents", "Resources", and "Settings". A user is logged in as "mfauth" with a "Log Out" option.

The main content area features six milestone cards:

- Understand**: Know where you are and where you are going
- First Things First**: Balancing Work and Life is key to Success
- SSI / SSDI**: SSI/SSDI have their own steps. We can help!
- Internship Readiness**: Internships can be incredible opportunities
- Employment Readiness**: Learn the skills needed for your career search
- Education and Training**: Dreams need a little training. You can do that!

On the right side, there is a "Sponsored by:" section for "INTLconnect" featuring a grid of international flags and the text "CONNECT TO YOUR FUTURE CAREER >click here<".

At the bottom, there is a footer with copyright information: "© 2015 - TuaPath. All Rights Reserved" and "Milestone Content and LCWC Logo ©2015 - Larimer County Workforce Center | All Rights Reserved". It also includes links for "Privacy Policy | Terms of Use | Support | Version: 2.0.2.3562".



Next Steps

- Call for action to innovate -- design and implement a goal achievement/executive function-informed employment program
- Start small - engage in a fast-cycle learning process
- Participate in a “learning community” of states and localities
- Commit to evaluate – “build the evidence”



For More Information

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Also visit: www.buildingbetterprograms.org