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Supporting Newcomers' Access to Early Childhood Services

switchboard
connecting resettlement experts



Today's Speakers



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Today's Speakers



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Learning Objectives



By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1

EXPLAIN

how early childhood services can support child development and family well-being

2

IDENTIFY

three types of early childhood services and their distinguishing characteristics

3

DESCRIBE

common challenges that newcomers experience in accessing early childhood services

4

APPLY

strategies to enhance newcomers' access to early childhood services in your community



1

How Early Childhood Services

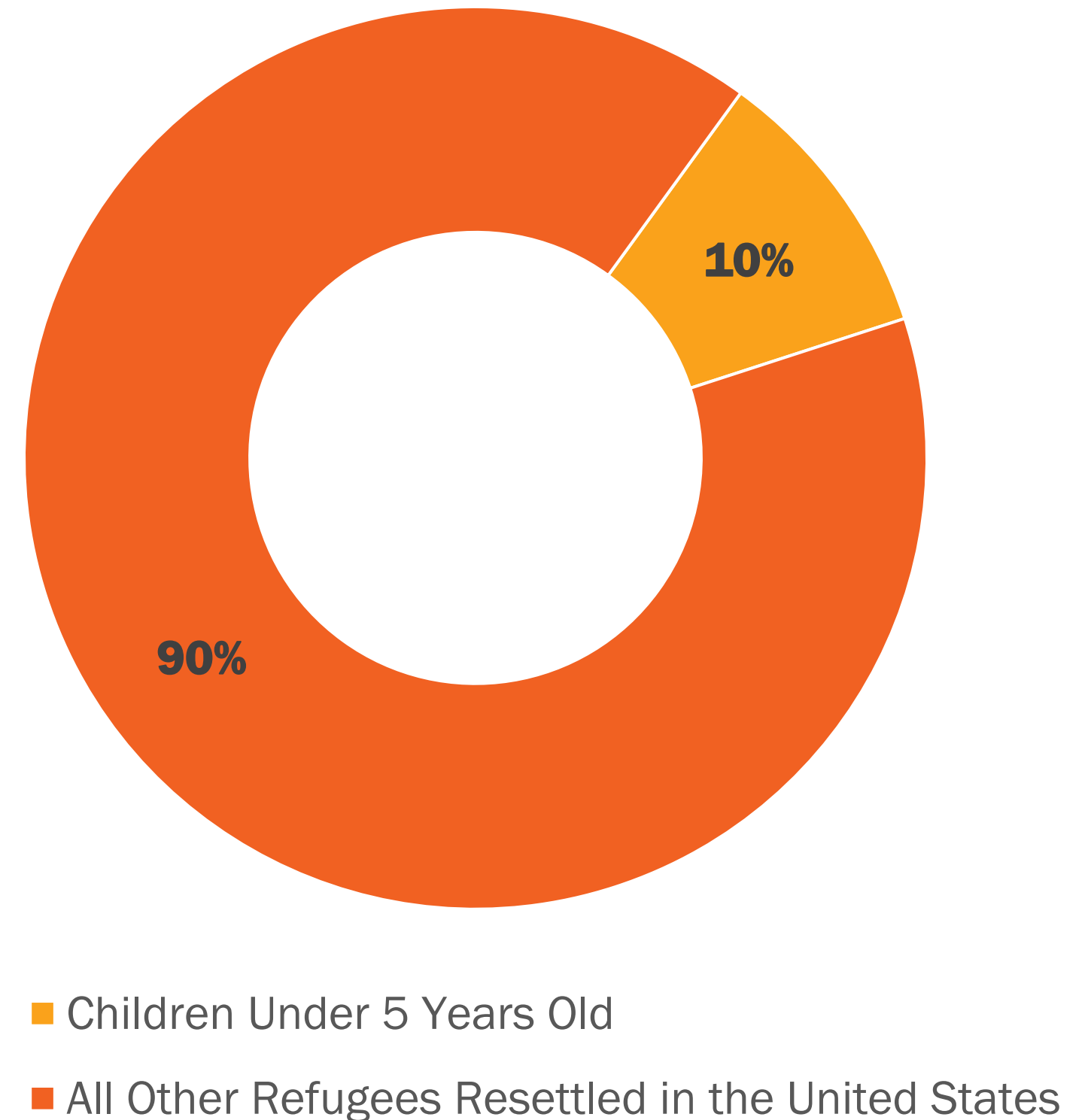
Support Child Development and Family Well-being

Newcomer Families with Young Children



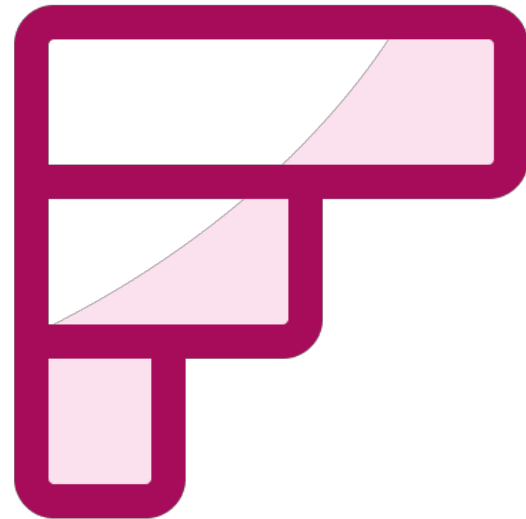
Overview

- Newcomer parents are often not familiar with early childhood programs
- Newcomer parents are eligible for programs but face barriers to access
- Resettlement providers can help bridge that gap by connecting families to impactful programs



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On a scale of 1-5, how familiar are you with early childhood services in your community?

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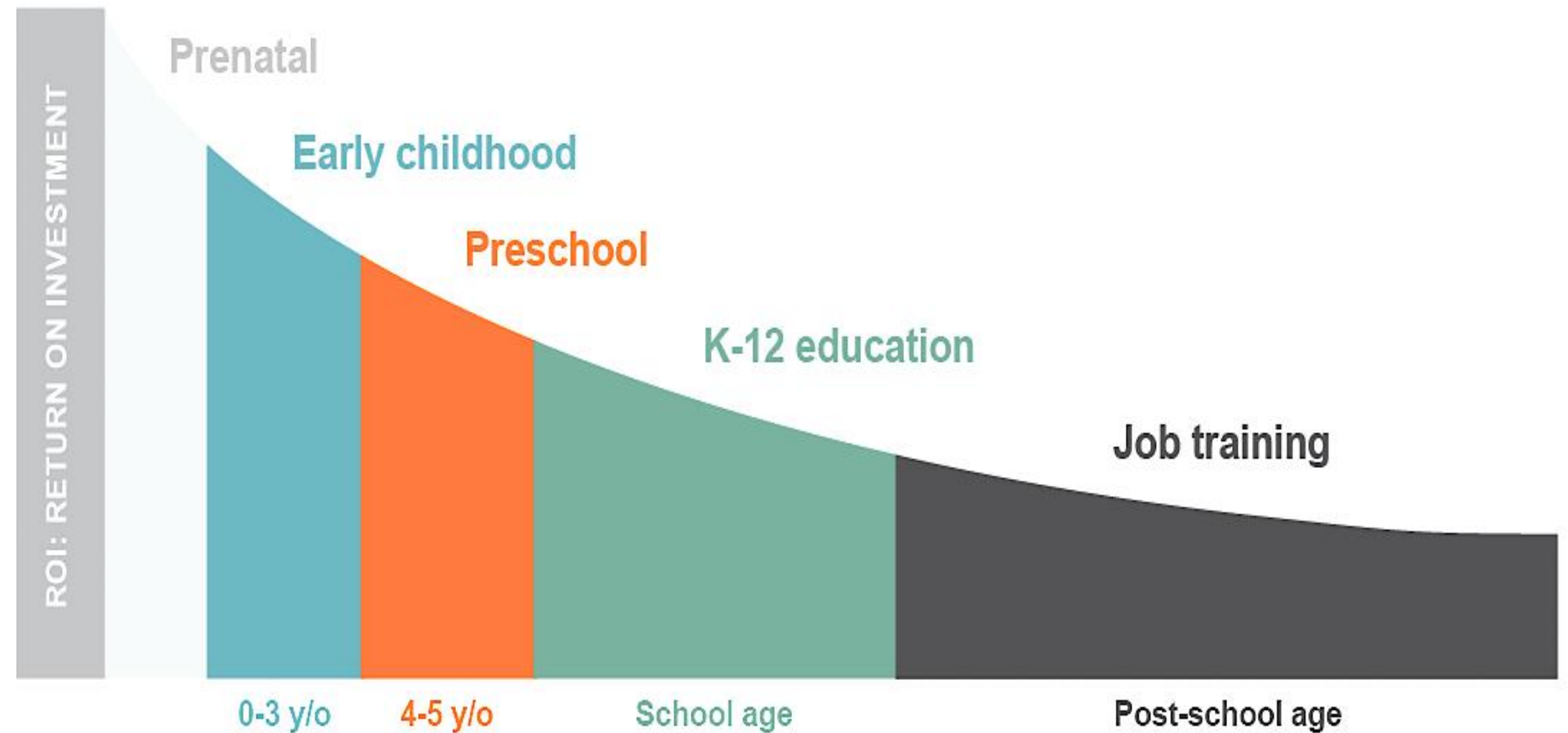
Which of the following early childhood services have you connected families to?

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A Window of Opportunity

Investments in early childhood have the highest impact on outcomes across the lifespan





Benefits of Early Childhood Services



1. Support dual-language learners' school readiness
2. Promote social-emotional development
3. Help families identify and address developmental delays and disabilities
4. Build resilience and nurture relationships
5. Connect families to other comprehensive services that enhance well-being



2

Three Types

of Early Childhood Services

Three Types of Early Childhood Services



Overview

**Child Care and Early
Education**



Home Visiting



Early Intervention





Child Care and Early Education

Head Start and Early Head Start



- Head Start is available in every state and territory
 - Half of a million children are served by Head Start (ages 3-5)
 - More than 191,000 children are served by Early Head Start (prenatal-age 3)
- Head Start programs focus on:
 - Education and school readiness
 - Nutrition and mental/physical health
 - Parent involvement and engagement
 - Helping parents achieve goals and self-sufficiency



Child Care and Early Education

Child Care Centers and
Homes

- In 2021, more than 1.3 million children received child care subsidies
 - More than one in three families don't have a copay
- Child care can support with:
 - Developing early language skills
 - Promoting early academic skills
 - Nurturing social-emotional development



Child Care and Early Education

Pre-Kindergarten Programs

- Programs may be available through state, county, or city-wide programs
- Pre-k programs focus on kindergarten readiness

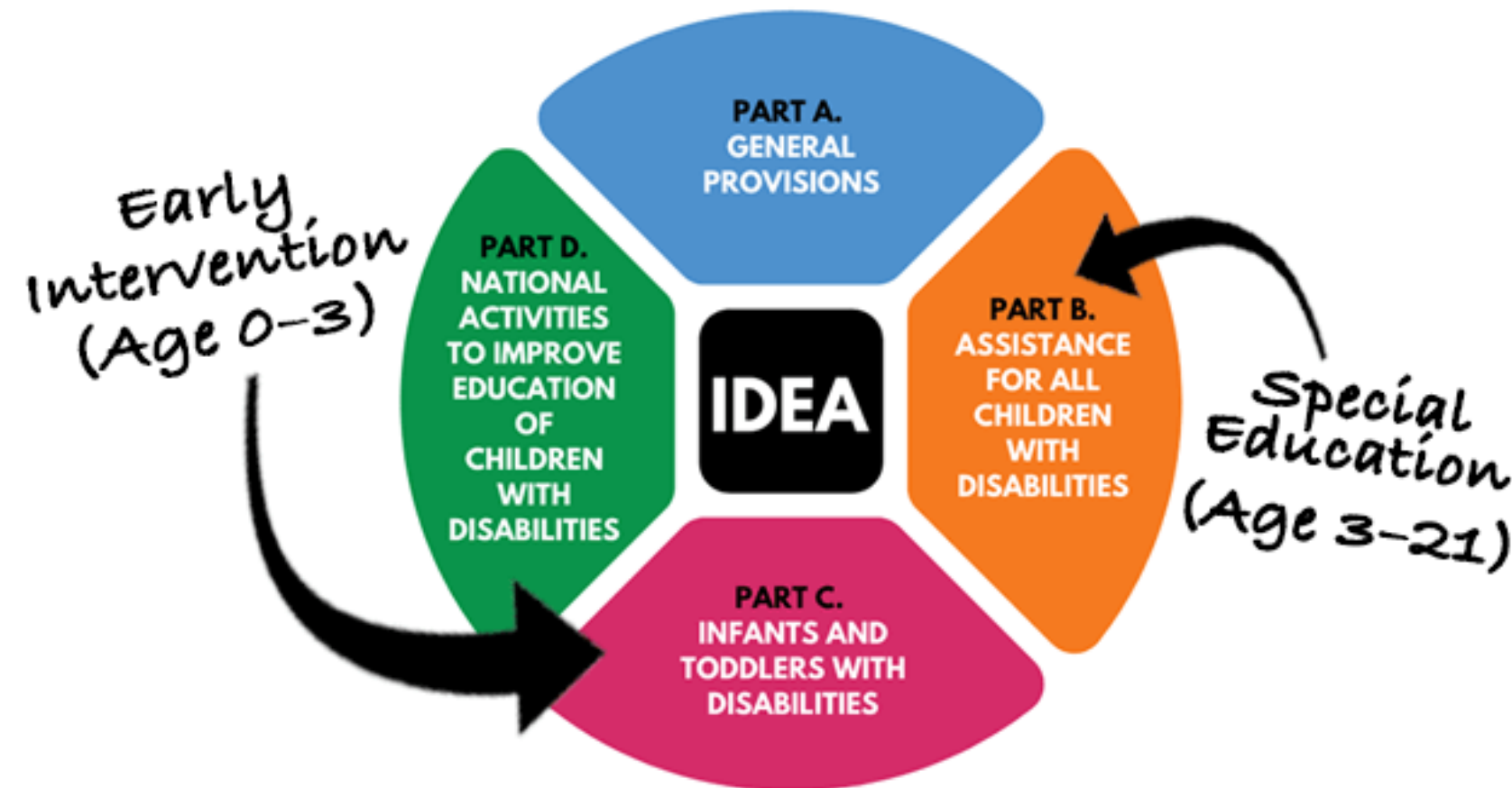
Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood

Home Visiting



- Home visiting programs are free
 - More than 270,000 families received home visiting services in 2022
- 27 program models are considered “evidence-based”
 - Even more models are emerging, culturally adapted, etc.
- Home visiting programs all focus on:
 - Caregiver health and well-being
 - Promoting healthy child development
 - Improving parent-child interactions
 - Coordinating and connecting families to additional resources

Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education



- Child Find: every state has a responsibility to look for, find, and evaluate all children with special needs
- Early intervention helps young children meet developmental milestones
- Early intervention includes care coordination and connects families to additional social service supports



3

Common Challenges Newcomers Experience

When Accessing Early Childhood Programs

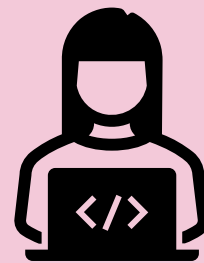


- Children in immigrant and refugee families are **less likely to be enrolled** in publicly funded early childhood programs than children in non-immigrant families
- High-quality programs that support **whole family well-being** have similar missions and goals as resettlement case management

Barriers to Accessing Early Childhood Services



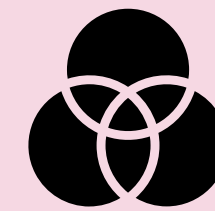
Language and communication barriers



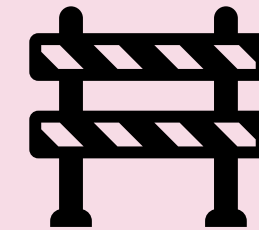
Complex application systems



Lack of family awareness of programs or benefits



Cultural differences and trust



Early childhood system barriers

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What barriers most significantly impact the newcomer families you work with in accessing early childhood services?

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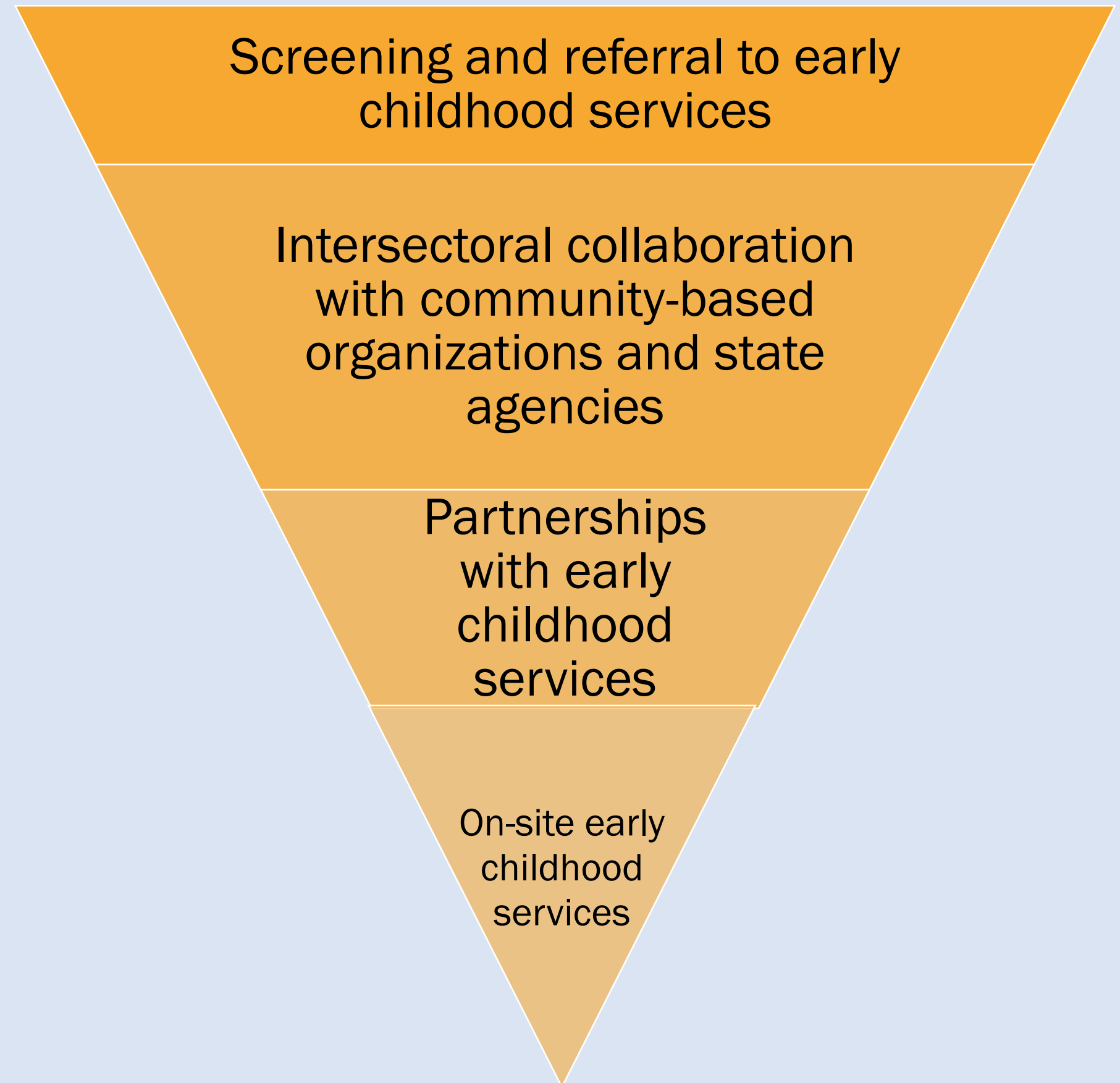


4

Strategies to Promote Access

to Early Childhood Services

Approaches to Increasing Collaboration and Access





Program Highlight

Family Services Association, Texas

Richard Davidson, Chief Operating Officer



Family Service believes that early childhood education is a great tool for acculturation and meeting child and family needs in their new country.



Early Head Start & Head Start

Important to design your recruitment strategies/services around immigrant populations' cultures and values (e.g., Iraqi vs. Afghan values)

Strategies to Increase Access



1. Partner with existing immigrant service providers (e.g., Catholic charities)
 - Partnership is not always easy, but essential
2. Integrate services with partners to reach immigrant families
3. Address entire families' needs to build trust
 - Address concerns and strengthen family relationships with their new community



Our secret: Hire immigrant parents!

This often requires special training and education services for parents, but results in greater child and family enrolment and trust.



Program Highlight

IRCO Early Learning, Oregon

Danita Huynh, Director Early Learning Home Visiting and
Preschool Services

Early Learning Home Visiting Services at IRCO



- In 2024: expanded culturally-specific home visiting programs
- 55 parent educators across 20 different languages
- Evidence-based curricula
 - Growing Great Kids, Parents as Teachers, Nurturing Families, Early Learning Second Steps
- Three screenings; ASQ 3 & ASQ SE 2; adapted Life Skills Progression scales; adapted Parenting Practice Survey



ASQ Screening

How do we adapt?



1. Hire from the community.





2. Collaborate with Early Intervention

*Multnomah Early
Childhood Program
(MECP)—David Douglas
School District*

- Provides early intervention and early childhood special education services to children from ages 0-5
- Serves families in all eight school districts (Multnomah County)
- Designs services individually to address the special needs of young children with developmental delays or disabilities
- **Offers all services free of charge to eligible children**

3. Collaborate with Local Work Groups

All Ready Network



- Serves as a community partner on projects to improve engagement with families in early childhood screening and assessment
- Aims to strengthen everyone's understanding, ensuring cultural and linguistic responsiveness in family engagement
- Encourages parent-educators to apply cultural wisdom in their approaches and strategies for building trust with families
- Strengthens how we screen or measure the health and wellness of children in our community

4. Provide “TTS” (Timing, Training, and Support)





4

Strategies to Improve Access

Reflections on Program Highlights



Key Points from Program Highlights

- Early childhood services provide two-generation strategies to lift up whole families
- The refugee resettlement process is not very focused on young children—yet this is a high-impact opportunity for the whole family
- Well-designed, high-quality early childhood programs are uniquely positioned to provide culturally responsive support to refugee families

Strategies & Opportunities



1

Promote strong partnerships and connections with early childhood programs

2

Provide information and referrals to families with warm hand-offs

3

Offer trainings and education to programs in your community

4

Raise awareness of and advocate for families with young children



5

Panel Discussion



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Recommended Resources

- Evidence Summary: [What Works to Increase Refugee and Immigrant Families' Access to Early Childhood Services?](#)
- Blog: [Strategies and Tips for Refugee Service Providers to Promote Access to Early Childhood Programs](#)
- Information Guide: [Helping Families Who Are Refugees Access Early Childhood Services: Guidance for Refugee Service Providers](#)

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