Insights for Philanthropy

Key learnings from the synthesis of the Early Years Catalyst research

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The Front Project
ARACY

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Early Years™ Catalyst

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Insights for Philanthropy

"Foundations involved in systems change can increase their odds for success by focusing on less explicit but more powerful conditions for change, while also turning the lens on themselves." [1]

1. Introduction and Background

The Early Years Catalyst has been working since 2021 to connect, support and amplify the work of organisations across Australia with the aim of transforming the early childhood development (ECD) system so that all young children and their families thrive. It is an ambitious national collaboration focused on improving outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable children across the country so that they can get what they need, when they need it. The Early Years Catalyst's vision is that by 2030, significantly more children will be thriving in their first 2,000 days and beyond.

Over the past three years, the Early Years Catalyst has sought to strengthen the early years ecosystem through connection, diagnosis, amplification and capacity building. As part of its diagnostic role, the Early Years Catalyst has produced a suite of research documents that seek to better understand the problem and build the evidence base. These are:

- systems mapping process
- systems landscape atlas
- mental models deep dive, and
- evidence for action report.

The findings of this work have been synthesised in the Early Years Catalyst Synthesis Report[2].

This paper has been prepared as a companion piece to that synthesis to enable funders to review their current strategies, policies, practices, and approaches to take aligned actions in support of the early years ecosystem.

It maps out:
- Our desired future state: a society where children and families can thrive, ordered into a series of tangible actions and strategies (also referred to as 'leverage points')
- How identifying your philanthropic role and purpose is key in deciding which actions and strategies you might influence or impact
- Critical focus areas for change building from key insights from the Early Years Catalyst's research.

The research sheds light on where funding could be directed but also on the importance of funders identifying their own role in the system and in doing so "turn[ing]

[1] Kania, J., Kramer, M., and Senge, P. (2018). The Water of Systems Change
[2] Early Years Catalyst (2024). Early Years Catalyst Synthesis Report

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the lens on themselves"[3].

It is a call for information sharing, collaboration between funders, engaged and relational funding approaches and a move to ensure lived experience is at the heart of what we all do. It makes clear that there is no silver bullet for change in the early years system but rather, a collaborative approach is needed that balances the needs across the whole system to move us towards our desired future state where all children can thrive.

2. Interventions that must be made to get to a desired future state

The Early Years Catalyst's work mapped out the ideal future state of the ECD system in Australia. This work was informed by a participatory engagement process involving more than 300 people from across the country with knowledge and insights of the early years system. The comprehensive consultation was supplemented by a rapid review of published position papers and deep dives into prevailing societal and economic ideologies. This process led to the identification of eighteen 'leverage points', organised into four 'clusters'. Leverage points, in system change terminology, refer to places in a system where making change will have impact across the whole system. We expand on this shortly, but it becomes clear there are roles for both philanthropy and government across this lattice of interventions, including around communication, coordination, and

collaboration. If all implemented, these interventions will bring about a truly child and family-centred ECD system – one that prioritises strengthening families, parents, carers and local communities, in a country that recognises that raising thriving children is the work of the whole nation. While in a broad sense we might say that actualisation of Cluster 1 is a precondition for bringing Cluster 2 to life, and so on until Cluster 4, it is also vital to understand that there are many diverse connections and relationships between and across the 18 leverage points.

[3] Kania, J., Kramer, M., and Senge, P. (2018). The Water of Systems Change, FSG

Cluster 1: Communities & families in the driver's seat	Cluster 2: Re-imagining the service system
• **LP 1:** Grant greater decision-making power to the local community level • **LP 2:** Fit-for-purpose funding & commissioning approaches • **LP 3:** Redirect funding flows to support local priorities & responses • **LP 4:** Feedback loops from families & communities to government & service providers • **LP 5:** Amplify family & community voices as partners in program design & delivery • **LP 6:** Recognise families and those with lived experience as 'experts' for the purpose of evidence, policy & decision making	• **LP 7:** Expand the universal service system • **LP 8:** Invest in a proactive & preventative child protection (child thriving) system • **LP 9:** Ensure service systems are staffed by high quality workforces • **LP 10:** Recognise the voice of children in policy & program design

Cluster 3: Shared accountability for children's outcomes	Cluster 2: Re-imagining the service system
• **LP 11:** Reform the culture of measurement & evaluation • **LP 12:** Enforce accountability for outcomes for children & families • **LP 13:** Government to guarantee equitable access to services for all children, regardless of where they live • **LP 14:** Ensure all children and their families have their basic material needs met	• **LP 15:** Create a shift in Australia's socio-cultural identity to become a society that prioritises the wellbeing of all children • **LP 16:** Change our framing/conceptualisation of and approach to 'care' in Australia • **LP 17:** Create a shift in our collective mindsets to recognise First Nations ways of knowing, learning, being and doing and about care • **LP 18:** Create a shift in societal perspectives of disadvantage & difference; free of racism & judgement against disadvantaged children and communities

The Early Years Catalyst's Evidence for Action report[4] identified areas for action (leverage points) that were shown to have potential for real impact. These areas for action are high value opportunities for investing in activities, interventions and initiatives – and while philanthropy is active in many of the areas identified, the analysis has shown where the impacts can be amplified. The below table unpacks these further – delving into associated underlying societal and systemic structure shifts. Broadly the leverage points can be understood as 'interventions' or 'opportunities' for funders.

[4] See: Evidence for Action - Early Years Catalyst

Cluster 1: Communities and families in the driver's seat	
What we will see	The devolution of decision-making to the local level and working in new ways with communities and families
Interventions	• Grant greater decision-making power to the local community level (LP 1) • Fit-for-purpose funding and commissioning approaches (LP 2) • Redirect funding flows to support local priorities and responses (LP 3) • Feedback loops from families and communities to government and service providers (LP 4) • Amplify family & community voices as partners in program design & delivery (LP 5) • Recognise families and those with lived experience as experts for the purposes of evidence, policy & decision-making (LP 6)
Where our thinking needs to shift to ('mental models')	• It takes a village to raise a child and every family needs a local support network • As human beings, we all need a sense of belonging and connection with others, in our families and our communities • Our people are our greatest asset and governments must invest in ways to get the best outcomes for all people in Australia
System structures needed	• Policy development, as well as service design & delivery, is child and family-centred • Incentives for services to work effectively together • Place-based approaches to underpin policy development and service design • Local, integrated universal platforms to facilitate service delivery • Local government to play a prominent intermediary role between communities and State/Federal Governments

Cluster 2: Re-imagining the service system	
What we will see	A re-imagined service system designed and resourced to meet the needs of children and families. Reduced (ideally a lack of) stigma around targeted services, increased strength and confidence on the part of families and parents, and a focus on prevention and early intervention. This new child and family centred system will address chronic workforce and skill shortages
Interventions	• Expand the universal service system (LP 7) • Invest in a proactive & preventative child protection (child thriving) system (LP 8) • Ensure service systems are staffed by highly skilled workforces (LP 9) • Recognise the voice of children in policy & program design (LP 10)
Where our thinking needs to shift to ('mental models')	• Care is not women's work – it is vital work to be shared by us all • Every person in Australia has a right to high quality care, when they need it (through all life stages) • Social capital is our greatest national asset • A strong economy is not built on unpaid and underpaid work • The value we give to different types of work is more nuanced than economic productivity
System structures needed	• Increased focus at all levels on a 'wellbeing economy' • All policy & service development accounts for the complexity and value of care work • High quality care workforces, well qualified and skilled • Long-term and appropriate investment in ECD service systems to ensure staff attraction and retention and quality service delivery • Government policy and investment ensures equity of access to care options for all, regardless of location • Care workforces have professionalised career paths including consistent qualification requirements

Cluster 3: Shared accountability for children's outcomes	
What we will see	All actors within the system taking responsibility and being held accountable for delivering positive outcomes for children and families
Interventions	• Reform the culture of measurement & evaluation (LP 11) • Enforce accountability for outcomes for children & families (LP 12) • Government to guarantee equitable access to services for all children, regardless of where they live (LP 13) • Ensure all children and their families have their basic material needs met (LP 14)
Where our thinking needs to shift to ('mental models')	• Government is accountable for the wellbeing of all children in Australia, and it is its responsibility that systems work for people • Living in poverty is the biggest single influence on a child's development, government can and needs to change that • A long-term, national and bi-partisan commitment is what is required to really change ECD outcomes • If market mechanisms don't work in the social sector, governments need to change them
System structures needed	• Sustained funding is sufficient for ECD systems to both respond to immediate needs and ensure comprehensive prevention and early intervention • Service providers are accountable for delivering evidence based, high quality services • Reimagined universal platforms that ensure service accessibility, availability, quality and responsiveness to need • Government taking holistic oversight and accountability for system outcomes • Government is held to account • Long-term bi-partisan, national reform agenda • Policy development informed by interconnected parts • Family and child-centred policies and programs are the norm • Greater clarity around division of state and federal responsibilities and national consistency and coordination to deliver equity for all children

Cluster 3:	Shared accountability for children's outcomes cont.
System structures needed	• Reform of existing market mechanisms for improved service delivery and outcomes • Increased funding to local implementation and services • Investment in holistic approaches to strengthening families • Investment in prevention and capacity building, not just response • Onus on systems/silos to integrate and coordinate, not on families to navigate

	Cluster 4: Shifting society's perspectives
What we will see	Both enabling and being enhanced by leverage points across the other three clusters, implementation of Cluster 4 will see a transformative shift in the 'mental models' held by our society. Changes in societal perspectives on care, disadvantage, difference and collective responsibility for children's outcomes are not just long-term goals that will require significant work, but also, in their own right, preconditions that need to be enabled in order to shift political mindsets, service design, and program delivery
Interventions	• Create a shift in Australia's socio-cultural identity to become a society that prioritises the wellbeing of all children (LP 15) • Change our framing/conceptualisation of and approach to "care" in Australia (LP 16) • Create a shift in our collective mindsets to recognise First Nations ways of knowing, learning, being and doing and about care (LP 17) • Create a shift in societal perspectives of disadvantage and difference; free of racism and judgement against disadvantaged children and communities (LP 18)
Where our thinking needs to shift to ('mental models')	• Diversity and inclusion make us a stronger and better country • All children and families deserve to belong to well-resourced communities that meet their diverse needs • The measure of our prosperity and success as a society includes the wellbeing of our people, which is not measured in financial terms • We have evolved beyond traditional gender roles, and everyone should be free to choose without stigma, discrimination or disadvantage • Ensuring that women are treated equally in our society does not diminish men • As humans, we live in connection with others and share responsibility for caring, especially for those who are vulnerable & need ongoing cared

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Reflection:

- Looking at your current priorities and funding partners, how do they align with the future state vision clusters of activity? How would you have conversations with your partners about their contribution to these interventions or the broader clusters they belong to?
- How might your current funding practices hold unhelpful mental models in place or challenge these mental models?
- What could you do to align your funding policies and practices to shift these mental models internally or to share and amplify work you are currently engaged in to move towards systems structures needed for the future state?

3. Knowing your role in the system

The Early Years Catalyst's work has reinforced the importance of funders identifying and being intentional about their role in the system (and how they describe it). This also applies to how philanthropy sees its relationship to government: while a focused philanthropic effort in the early years will have significant impact, it is not solely the responsibility of philanthropy to effect change. Many of the opportunities for impact in working towards the future state demand a role for both philanthropy and government at different points in time. As such, it is essential that funders actively consider how they can collaborate with government and what information, connections, tools and support government may need in order to take up, amplify and scale impact in the next phase. Identifying and understanding where you have the most agency, authority, influence, and capability in relation to the desired future state is key for funders seeking to make real change.

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While various frameworks exist that identify and describe the types of roles philanthropy can bring to the systems change table, in its Theory of the Foundation initiative, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA)[5] surmise that philanthropic organisations can be broadly categorised into eight Operating Archetypes (see Appendix A for further detail on the core attributes of each):

- Talent Agency
- Think Tank
- Campaign Manager
- Field Builder
- Venture Catalyst
- Designer
- Underwriter
- Sower.

In addition to these archetypes, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) has outlined four key overarching principles that drive funders. This may offer a useful additional frame when applied to the early years: [6]

- **Giving**: contributions to change through giving
- **Relationships**: contributions to change through relationships
- **Direct contributions** to change in systems by funders themselves
- **Internal**: contributions made through internal changes to organisations and the outlook of individuals in organisations

Many philanthropic bodies are driven by more than one of these principles. Acknowledging which of these guiding principles inform your work, as well as the Operating Archetype/s you identify with, may help shape how you interact with the interventions needed to bring about real change in outcomes for children and families.

Reflection:

- What role(s) do you currently take in the system? Do you contribute through giving, relationships, by directly contributing to change, or by making internal changes within your organisation?
- Based on this, and other principles and activities that shape your work, do you identify with one or more of the RPA Operating Archetypes of philanthropic organisations?
- When reflecting on your chosen role/archetype, how do you see your organisation in relation to government in particular?
- What is your role in relation to catalysing change, supporting innovation and enabling advocacy?
- How might you share information, build relationships or collaborate with government in relation to your areas of focus?

[5] Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (2016). The Theory of the Foundation European Initiative
[6] The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (2018). Philanthropy, Systems and Change.

Lived experience should underpin funding principles, policies and practice

We know that the most compelling social impact happens when lived experience is at the heart. This is true of partner organisations doing the work, but it is also relevant to how funders reflect on their own practice. Redistributing power in this way can be achieved in part through streamlining processes, adapting longer grant periods, enabling learning approaches, broadening board representation and ensuring any support 'Pays What it Takes.'[7] However, as many funders working in this way know, it must also be accompanied by the right internal culture and approach to relationships.

Overall, the research shows that no matter the intervention, the 'type' of system change most required are shifts in system structure, design, power and roles. This points to the type of programmatic and systemic work that could be supported for positive change in the early years, such as working to include the missing voices of 'system beneficiaries' through increasing community level influence as a channel for beneficiaries to be heard. However, taking these perspectives on board may in turn raise provocative questions around how funding decisions – and associated learning and evaluation activities – are currently shaped.

Reflection:

- How does lived experience currently inform your work – whether in the approach you expect of funded organisations or in relation to your own internal processes and culture?

[7] See resources produced by Philanthropy Australia, Social Ventures Australia and the Centre for Social Impact at https://www.philanthropy.org.au/guidance-and-tools/grantmaking-resources/project-overheads-paying-what-it-takes/

Long-term and flexible funding

The Early Years Catalyst's research sheds light on the importance of the specific funding parameters and relationship dynamics to impact – many of which are already being practiced. Most notably, these include grant length, flexibility and trust in the funding relationship. In particular, the research clearly calls for the following:

- Long-term funding of a minimum of 5 years in order to begin to enable systems change and provide the stability needed for organisations to take a long-term view
- Flexible funding that allows organisations to be agile and responsive in their work to change the system. This is particularly pertinent when supporting field catalysts and field building intermediaries that stitch together the different parts of the system to build their capability and connectedness over the long-term, and

- Trust-based funding which conceptualises the role of the funder as one of collaborator and partner that gives agency to the funded organisations and communities.

Reflection:

- What approach do you take to working with the organisations you fund? How do you reflect on and iterate your funding practices?
- How might your current funding features be unintentionally restricting the organisations you support or inhibiting impact? How could your processes be streamlined to make it easier?

Importance of learning and evaluation

When working in a systemic way, the approach to understanding and measuring impact also needs to move towards the longer term. This requires evaluation practices that can comprehend the interconnectedness of the different responses and account for contribution, rather than attribution. While we note that many funders are already working in this way, the research offers a reminder of key features in impact measurement and learning when working for systemic change including:

- Reframing what is measured: moving away from programmatic style deliverables and milestones (that is, from 'outputs' to 'outcomes')
- Allocating evaluation budget: ensuring any grants devote suitable budget and time to evaluating innovative programs in this area - and sharing this widely, and
- Focusing on trust: grounding the funding and impact measurement relationship in trust and learning rather than compliance. This has the potential to open up opportunities to capture evidence about what does not work as well as what does, and in so doing strengthen the wider fabric of the system.

Those wishing to read further on the impact and funding approach specific to field catalysts, may be interested in Catalysing Change at Scale[8] which outlines the features and enablers of effective field catalysts and field-building intermediaries and Insights on Australian field-building intermediaries and their funding journeys towards sustainable impact.[9]

Reflection:

- What drives your learning and evaluation approach at present?
- What is its purpose – for you and for those you fund?
- What assumptions do you hold about the funder role and funded organisations in learning and evaluation?

[8]: Barkley, E. (2023). Catalysing Change at Scale: Features and enablers of effective field catalysts and field-building intermediaries prepared by Clear Horizon for the Early Years Catalyst.
[9] Social Ventures Australia (2022). Insights on Australian field-building intermediaries and their funding journeys towards sustainable impact.

4. Where to act: how funders can support priority action areas

There is a truism that we overestimate what we can achieve in a year and underestimate what we can achieve in five. To create fundamental change is a long-term prospect with short-term compounding activities, enabling all funders to participate – whatever their priorities, timelines and budget.

With this in mind, the Early Years Catalyst explored and assessed the potentially most transformative opportunities with impact (or leverage points) across the system, mapping these over the short (5-10 years), medium (10-20 years) and longer term (20+ years). The full analysis can be found in the Early Years Catalyst Synthesis Report[1]. The following summary presents the key focus areas and actions required to drive significant change in the early years. This approach centres on empowering communities and families, re-imagining service systems, enhancing accountability, and shifting societal perspectives.

Communities and Families in the Driver's Seat	
Activating the voices of children and families:	To effectively transform the early years system, it is essential to increase system-level accountability to outcomes that genuinely matter to children and families. This involves embedding the voices of children and families in processes of defining, assessing, and monitoring priorities and impact. Improving accountability and monitoring mechanisms is crucial to embed these lived experiences within policy processes and decision-making. Philanthropy has a critical role in strengthening appetite for, and influence of, child and family voice through a range of strategies including fostering public dialogue, prototyping and trialling different approaches to centre the voices of children and families and shifting the mental models that limit their impact.

There is an opportunity to improve accountability and monitoring mechanisms that centre children and families' priorities and embed lived experience within policy processes, decision-making and practices. |

Communities and Families in the Driver's Seat	
Strengthening communities at a local level:	There is a need to model and demonstrate place-based approaches to funding, measurement, evaluation, and decision-making. Leveraging interest and effort from government and various interest groups can support these place-based approaches, which provide a vehicle to enable different relationships between government systems and local priorities. Establishing mechanisms to identify local strengths and priorities, direct resources appropriately, and measure local outcomes is vital for success, as is ensuring that learnings from place are fed back into government policy and systems reform processes. Philanthropy has a critical role in the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children, for example, to influence how government funds in place, and to ensure that this is genuinely informed by the voices of local children and families and is responsive to their needs.

Re-imagining the Service System	
Improving universal systems:	Action is needed to expand universal systems like early childhood education and care, aiming to progress outcomes for children and families. Current reform agendas present an opportunity to design these systems to meet needs more equitably (through greater flexibility and responsiveness to the individual needs of families and communities) and to serve as a backbone for integrating broader development supports, like health, allied health and family support. Building greater collaboration across governments, the service sector and service providers and ensuring that the early childhood development system is staffed by high quality workforces are imperative for progressing outcomes.
Keeping children safe and preventing harm:	Reorienting child protection systems to prioritise wellbeing over reactive responses is essential. This requires shifting community attitudes and system approaches to create safe communities. A focus on building strong workforces and shifting mental models around families, disadvantage and racism is critical for transformative change in child protection and wellbeing.

Shared Accountability for Children's Outcomes	
Accountability and monitoring what matters to children and families:	Enhancing accountability and monitoring mechanisms to reflect children and families' priorities is essential. Developing mechanisms through government initiatives, like the Early Years Strategy, can enable children and families to define and monitor progress on outcomes that matter to them. But broader whole of system accountability measures are also important. While momentum is building around a focus on structural accountability, more work is needed to determine the most effective mechanisms to facilitate oversight, monitoring and accountability within and across the systems that shape early childhood development outcomes. Ensuring equitable access and tailored approaches, including place-based, early childhood development-focused, and trauma-informed strategies, is imperative.
Increasing engagement with systems thinking in decision making:	There is a need to increase the use of systems thinking among policymakers and funders. The Early Years Catalyst's work calls for different roles and thinking in decision-making requiring different capacity and processes. The Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children is an important vehicle to strengthen this approach, bringing together both the Commonwealth Government and philanthropy. ARACY are an important stakeholder to support this work through their secretariat role.
Material basics:	Systems must be accountable for addressing the core needs of children and families, like adequate income, secure and affordable housing, nutritious food and reliable transport. Deep effective campaigning alongside policy reform and more targeted evidence building and trials of social policy interventions, like universal basic income and GP social prescribing, are needed.

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Shifting Society's Perspectives

Shifting mental models:

Surfacing and challenging entrenched thinking about childhood, disadvantage, and racism is necessary for system transformation.

It is recommended that action be taken to support actors across the early years system, including government and philanthropy. This will help them better understand and engage with the mental models shaping early childhood development outcomes. It will also help to identify a series of interventions needed to begin to shift them. There are strong examples of this work already happening, such as by Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership and Tasmania's B4 Early Years Coalition. Another example is 'Australia Cares', led by Sydney Policy Lab. These initiatives provide an important opportunity to foster sharing among these pockets and support spaces for diverse collaborations, from local to national level strategies. These collaborations can explore how they could start to nudge and shift these deep mental models and support alternative approaches to develop.

Addressing the pervasive negative impacts of mental models relating to inequity, disadvantage, race and racism on early childhood development outcomes in Australia is urgent work and critical for change.

This approach highlights the critical areas for action and underscores the necessity for strategic investment, sustained commitment, and collaborative efforts across various levels of the early years system. By centring the voices of children and families, re-imagining service systems, enhancing accountability, and shifting societal perspectives, Australia can create a more equitable and effective early childhood development landscape.

5. Communication and collaboration in early years funding

A key learning that has been reinforced by the Early Years Catalyst's research is the importance of funders acting with a knowledge of the whole. Whether that is simply knowing who else is funding in your patch, or more active collective efforts to share and streamline processes and areas of focus, there are opportunities on the horizon to galvanise the early years funding community in pursuit of this shared vision. The below outlines ways that the early years funding community might look to strengthen its collaboration and communication and continue to grow existing efforts in this area.

Priority Area	Details	Current opportunities
Sustain and grow funder community of practice for the early years	The Early Childhood Impact Alliance (ECIA) is already playing a role here and should continue to provide a mechanism through which to share learning and reflection, collaborate and coordinate philanthropic support for the early years. The Investment Dialogue for Australian Children (IDAC) also provides a strong vehicle for increased collaboration and shared strategy development by the philanthropic collective participating, as well as greater alignment with the Commonwealth Government.	Continued support for these movements would be a valuable contribution to the system.
A shared set of values and principles in early years funding approach	This may include prioritisation of lived experience and the perspectives of families and the early years workforce, an agreement to actively pursue ways to put decision making power in the hands of local communities, and taking a long-term view in the way funding is administered.	The recently established IDAC offers a timely opportunity to share and coordinate.[11]

[11] Further information is available at www.investmentdialogue.org.au or by emailing investmentdialogue@aracy.org.au

Priority Area	Details	Current opportunities
Agree an aligned approach to understanding impact	This may include agreeing a collective set of objectives or outcomes framed around the focus areas and intervention opportunities (leverage points) from the Early Years Catalyst's research.

It may also involve funders building on existing efforts to streamline and share reporting processes, for example agreeing to all receive the same report from the funded organisation, rather than prescribing funder specific templates and systems. | The ECIA could continue to play a key role here, helping to forge a shared vision for objectives and impact measurement in this field.

In addition, the funding community coalescing around the IDAC may also form a community of practice through which to develop a shared impact approach. |
| **An independent, centralised research observatory for accountability during implementation of key initiatives and reforms** | An independent observatory role could be established to hold government and decision makers to account when implementing significant initiatives and reforms. This function could facilitate feedback loops between families and the system. This body may investigate the evidence about implementation and operationalising policy initiatives in the early years – including examining 'what doesn't work' and 'what works' but lacks supporting evidence. | The Nexus Centre (a national centre for place-based collaboration) may be able to play a role in this. |

Priority Area	Details	Current opportunities
Pilot pooled/ joint funding	This may also involve leveraging the funder collective coalescing around the IDAC, piloting a fund with shared decision-making structures and reporting, allowing the philanthropic community to act on the recommendations here for a portfolio approach. This could also take up the recommendation to collectively support more place-based responses and service integration, as well as looking to address the range of leverage points or opportunities to impact the system and conditions for change.	The IDAC's intention to create a 'marketplace' could be used to pilot this idea.

Conclusion

In addition to outlining the potential focus areas for funding in pursuit of a future state where all children and families thrive, the Early Years Catalyst's research is a reminder of the impact of not just the "what", but "how" funding is delivered. Most notably, this includes a strong call for mobilising the funding field to work together, whether through sharing information about what and how they are funding and evaluating, or through more formal collective action. It also means flexible long-term funding. If we want to see long-term sustained change in the early years, all aspects of the future state need to be attended to and that requires leaning into the deeper work around shifting power and mental models shaping our current system and its outcomes for children, and an intentionality in the role each funder takes up in the system. Regardless of the role or intervention point, this research calls us to put communities and families in the 'driver's seat' so that we can rebuild a system around their needs and experiences as we build a society where all children and families can thrive.

Appendix A

Operating Archetypes of philanthropic bodies and their core attributes. This content draws from Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisor's 2022 report 'Operating Archetypes: Philanthropy's New Analytical Tool for Strategic Clarity' [12].

	Reason/Value Proposition	Resources/Lead With	Key Capabilities/Skills
Talent Agency	Build promising people and organisations closest to issue	Instinct	Identify potential relationships Visible platform/reputation
Think Tank	Provide research and position papers to policymakers	Data Political philosophy	Problem definition Analysis Develop possible solutions
Campaign Manager	Bring together actors and stakeholders for deeper, sustainable solutions	Convening power	Communication Advocacy Develop possible solutions
Field Builder	Fill gaps and drive advancement	Knowledge	Relationships Vision
Venture Catalyst	Risk capital to give on-ramp to voices and actors that otherwise be unheard or unsupported	Early, flexible funding	Risk-taking/experimentation Assessment and analysis Investment
Designer	Craft and find partners to test models that, if successful, can be copied and scaled	Expertise	Influence Knowledge/expertise
Underwriter	Support causes that are personally important; to leave a legacy	Big bets	Personal conviction Grantmaking
Sower	Desire to have broad-ranging impact across many areas in a broad field or specific geography	Reach	Identifying changemakers Breadth of vision

[12] Tarasov O, Berman M and Karibi-Whyte R (2022) Operating Archetypes: Philanthropy's New Analytical Tool for Strategic Clarity, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Appendix A

	Equity	Response/ Activities	Primary Audience
Talent Agency	Ensure that talent identification does not rely on elite networks	Develop leaders Shine spotlights Convene networks/cohorts	Individual actors
Think Tank	Incorporate frontline voices in defining and problems and appropriate solutions instead of relying on established thought leaders	Study problems Produce research and data Disseminate research via media or director to primary audience (i.e. policymakers)	Policymakers Various institutions Sector leaders
Campaign Manager	Empower leaders closest to the issues of design and coordinate campaign strategies	Awareness-building Advocacy Convene key stakeholders Communicate via media or directly to primary audiences	Issue/initiative-specific stakeholders
Field Builder	Prioritise perspectives and experiences of frontline movements & marginalised communities in supporting/ creating organisations	Advocacy Convening Capacity-building Direct communication with target audiences via various channels	Institutions
Venture Catalyst	Expand both the network of experts and the 'investment' opportunities to include those most affected by the problems	Open competitions Research and analysis Seed grantmaking Convening cohorts of experts and partners	Grantees
Designer	Develop design and implementation processes driven by communities	Engineer interventions and approaches Commission and disseminate research	Implementing partners
Underwriter	Explore how key institutions or their programs can reach and centre marginalised communities	Distribute large sums Partners in grantee communications	Grantees
Sower	Establish robust feedback loops for substantive input in decision-making	Provide large quantity of funding Convene cohorts and networks	Issue/initiative-specific stakeholders

[12] Tarasov O, Berman M and Karibi-Whyte R (2022) Operating Archetypes: Philanthropy's New Analytical Tool for Strategic Clarity, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Appendix A

	Community Served	Relationships/ Alliances	Impact Assessment
Talent Agency	Grantees/fellows	Peer funders Grantees Experts Institutions	Achievements of grantees, including influence
Think Tank	Policymakers and decision makers	Experts Academia	Acceptance, influence and then adoption of research
Campaign Manager	General public People most affected	Peer funders Change agents (frontline groups & communities, opinion leaders, media, policymakers)	Empower leaders closest to the coalition goals (physical entity; policy; opinion shifts) & coordinate campaign strategies
Field Builder	Specific sectors General public Undeserved communities, sectors	Experts and opinion leaders Affected communities Peer funders Academia	Existence and ongoing viability of critical organisations
Venture Catalyst	Broad range of communities and sectors	Intersectional experts Advisors Researchers Peer funders	Funded organisations prove their model, additional capital attracted
Designer	Issue/initiative-specific stakeholders	Experts Opinion/sector leaders Peer funders	Implementers succeed in achieving design objectives
Underwriter	A wide range of cultural, academic or civic institutions	Advisors Experts Peer funders	Key organisation leverage funding to achieve/expand impact over time
Sower	A wide range of undeserved sectors or communities	Advisors Experts Opinion/sector leaders Peer funders	Key indicators of community resilience and wellbeing improve over time

[12] Tarasov O, Berman M and Karibi-Whyte R (2022) Operating Archetypes: Philanthropy's New Analytical Tool for Strategic Clarity, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors