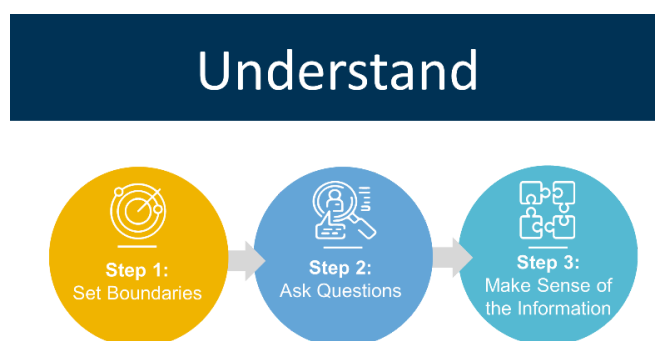
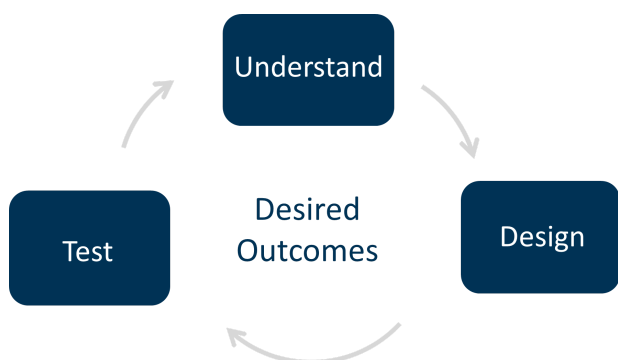


Ecosystem Mapping Planning Worksheet

ECDAN Masterclass Session 4

Erin Watson, Ph.D. | [Weaving Change](#)

This worksheet helps you plan out the 3 steps for mapping out leverage points within an early childhood development ecosystem. This mapping is part of an ongoing “understand-design-test” cycle informing learning and action to improve the lives of children and families.



Planning Questions	
Step 1: Set boundaries Set boundaries around the outcomes, locations, populations, and goals you want to focus on mapping out.	a) What ultimate outcome(s) for children and families do you want as the focus of your ecosystem map? (e.g., children are safe, well nourished, etc.) b) Which groups of children/families are currently experiencing the greatest inequities related to this outcome(s)? c) Which geographic location do you want to focus on for this ecosystem map? d) What goal(s) do you want to focus on for this ecosystem map related to improving the outcome(s) for the families you identified? (e.g., quality, accessible early childhood

	<i>education and care; healthy, accessible food and nutrition; household resources to help children grow and develop; etc.)</i> e) Which sectors, settings, and actors are most relevant for this ecosystem map?
 Step 2: Ask questions Gather information about how the ecosystem is affecting your goals from relevant perspectives and data sources.	a) What do you already know about how the ecosystem is helping and hindering your goal(s)? Use this cheat sheet to consider different aspects of the ecosystem. b) Given what you already know, what questions do you still have about how the ecosystem is affecting your ecosystem goal? See cheat sheet p. 2 for examples. c) Which perspectives or data sources can help answer your questions? d) What feasible, culturally responsive methods can you use to gather the information you need?
 Step 3: Make sense of the information Map out causal connections between themes and prioritize leverage points to address with your strategies.	a) Who will you engage – and how - in theming the ecosystem information you gathered and mapping out causal connections? b) Who will you engage – and how - in reviewing and verifying your ecosystem map? c) Who will you engage – and how - in analyzing and prioritizing ecosystem leverage points to address with your strategies? d) How will you communicate your ecosystem map and priorities with relevant partners and audiences?

Helpful Resources:

Barbrook-Johnson & Penn (2022). *Systems Mapping: How to build and use causal models of systems*. Palgrave Macmillan: Switzerland. Found here: <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/id/0efc13b7-8396-4881-8081-3b026b913c10/978-3-031-01919-7.pdf>

- Kim, D.H. (2000). Systems Archetypes: Diagnosing systemic issues and designing high-leverage interventions.
https://thesystemsthinker.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Systems-Archetypes-I-TRSA01_pk.pdf
- Meadows, D.H. (2008). *Thinking in systems: A primer*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.
- Stroh, D. P. (2015). *Systems thinking for social change: A practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences, and achieving lasting results*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.
- Watson, E. R., & Collins, C. R. (2023). Putting the system in systemic racism: A systems thinking approach to advancing equity. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 71(3-4), 274-286.