First 2000 Days Network

Summary of PARTNER findings

September 2018
Purpose statement

The First 2000 Days Network acts as a catalyst for linking, aligning and leveraging efforts in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) system to enable collective action toward improving ECD outcomes.
"As a catalyst for linking, aligning and leveraging efforts in the ECD system the First 2000 Days Network builds capacity at the individual, organizational, community and systems levels. These efforts are guided by common quality standards for improved outcomes for children & families and an adaptive learning culture. This approach supports and is supported by stronger relationships, behaviour change and collective action at all levels which ultimately contributes to systems change and improved outcomes for children and families."
Project Background

• In 2018, the First 2000 Days Network asked Visible Network Labs to conduct a “Time 2” Social Network Analysis.

• This project focused on the following questions:
  • What is the quality of relationships and collaboration amongst individuals in the Network?
  • How would individuals assess the quality of the processes the Network supports?
  • How do these relationships contribute to outcomes within the Network and for Network partners?
  • What outcomes has the Network contributed to within the ECD sector?
Methods

- With feedback from leadership within the backbone of the Network
- Individuals were asked the 19 validated PARTNER survey questions, and 10 additional questions.
- The survey was distributed to 62 individuals, 46 responded (74% response rate)
- Partners were asked to answer questions about the people that they work with in the First 2000 Days Network
What is a social network analysis?

- Collects data on who is connected to whom
- How those connections vary and change
- Focus on patterns of relationships
Focus on Systems Outcomes

Network (Systems) outcomes are different from population or client outcomes; Rather, intermediary outcomes that reflect the way that organizations interact, share resources, and implement work (Process Outcomes)

- Partnerships for Systems Building
  - Convening Stakeholders
  - Needs Assessments
  - Leveraging Resources

- Systems Outcomes
  Perceptions of:
  - Value, Trust, Authenticity
  - Goals, Outcomes, Process
  Measures of:
  - Coordination, Efficiency, Redundancy
  [Among Organizations]
  [Set in Community Context]

- Children & Family Outcomes

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Top ten findings from the PARTNER results
Finding 1: The Network has built many, strong relationships

- **62** individuals were invited to take the survey. **46** people responded.
- These individuals described **458 partnerships** with the First 2000 Days Network partners, listed in the survey.
- **75% of respondents** said the Network has strengthened their relationships with these individuals “a great deal” or a “fair amount.”
Finding 2: The Backbone and Backbone affiliates contribute significantly to the number of relationships within the Network. They are essential in connecting various “nodes” to the broader group.
Finding 3: There are consistently high quality perceptions of value and trust in the Network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Network Value and Trust Scores</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Network scored 80% in how much members value one another. A 100% occurs when all members value others at the highest level.</td>
<td>The Network scored 92% in how much members trust one another. A 100% occurs when all members trust others at the highest level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Value</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>Overall Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power/Influence</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Involvement</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>In Support of Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Contribution</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>Open to Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*scores above 3 are considered good.*
Finding 4: The Network is below the threshold for “high quality” in terms of participants’ perceptions of the Network’s authentic power in the sector and clearly defined roles within the Network. In contrast, the Network has successfully influenced the nature of participant’s work and there is strong evidence of adaptive learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Quality</th>
<th>Working Together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authenticity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Results and Structure of the Network</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often decisions are made in advance and simply confirmed by the process.</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the process, some people’s “merits” are taken for granted while other people are asked to justify themselves.</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the process, strings are being pulled from the outside, which influence important decisions.</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores of 4.25 or higher indicate a “good” collaborative process. We change our plans based on what we’re learning, changes in the environment and the people involved. *Scores of 3.0 or higher signify a “good” score.
Finding 5: The Network is reaching and impacting many families and children

Respondents reported reaching a total of **292,347 families** and **230,272 children** over the course of a year.

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Finding 5: The Network is reaching and impacting many families and children

87% of respondents said that being part of the Network enabled them to positively impact children and families.
Finding 6: The First 2000 Days Network has contributed significantly to participants capacity to share, link, align, and leverage; impact children and families; and understand and respond to their contexts.

- Make meaningful connections with other individuals and organizations (96%)
- Share information meaningfully with other individual and organizations (89%)
- Positively impact children and families (87%)
- Align your work with other individuals and organizations (80%)
- Leverage your own or others’ work (78%)
- Assess the opportunities and challenges related to ECD in your context (71%)
- Respond to the opportunities and challenges related to ECD in your context (69%)
Finding 7: Over the past two years, the First 2000 Days Network has made significant progress towards many of its goals.

- Support capacity build among Network participants
- Identify and act on opportunities for collaboration and collective action
- Connect existing early childhood development initiatives to better coordinate action and share learnings
- Be a sustainable, respected, influential voice for Early Childhood Development in Alberta
- Facilitate access to and highlight quality early childhood information and resources
- Build high quality relationships among network participants
- Support, inform, advocate and participate in key discussions in order to build public will and advance research and policy re: ECD
- To support intentional, facilitated capacity building to promote alignment within people’s everyday work
- Co-convene thought leadership events or workshops
- Build capacity around a shared measurement process, based on a common quality standard
- Learn from, assess and map the Network to inform high quality Network development
Finding 8: There has been an improvement in the strength of relationships comparing cohort 1 and cohort 2 of the Strengthening Families pilots. In both cases, these connections are strengthened significantly through relationship to the Backbone.
Finding 8: There has been an improvement in the strength of relationships within between cohort 1 and 2 Strengthening Families pilot. In both cases, these connections are strengthened significantly through relationship to the Backbone.
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Finding 9: Despite the fact that the Strengthening Families pilots are intentionally about aligning participants’ practice, reports of alignment amongst participants is mixed.

There is an opportunity to be more explicit about this part of the strategy to increase intentionality around alignment and the ability to leverage the experience.

Response to: “I have worked with this person to meaningfully **align** our individual or organizational practices. We are intentionally working together to share our definitions of improved practice and learn from one another.”
Finding 10: The Backbone and CCI demonstrates high quality collaboration, strong relationships and network, and high process quality.

It is worth considering the characteristics of the Backbone and the CCI and their development that enable this network strength.
Communities everywhere are leveraging the strength of cross-sector interorganizational networks to solve social problems. In our work with hundreds of networks, the First 2000 Days Network stands out as a model for both their implementation and evaluation practices. The leadership is exceptionally strong, especially the First 2000 Days Network’s commitment to data-driven management of the network and management as the backbone organization.

In our evaluation of the network, the members attribute the network to making a difference in the lives of children and families, building their own organizational capacity and even reflect personal growth and learning.

We have evaluated hundred of networks and this is truly a high quality and high functioning network. Working with the First 2000 Days Network enhances our own learning on network science and network leadership.

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Questions/comments?

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