

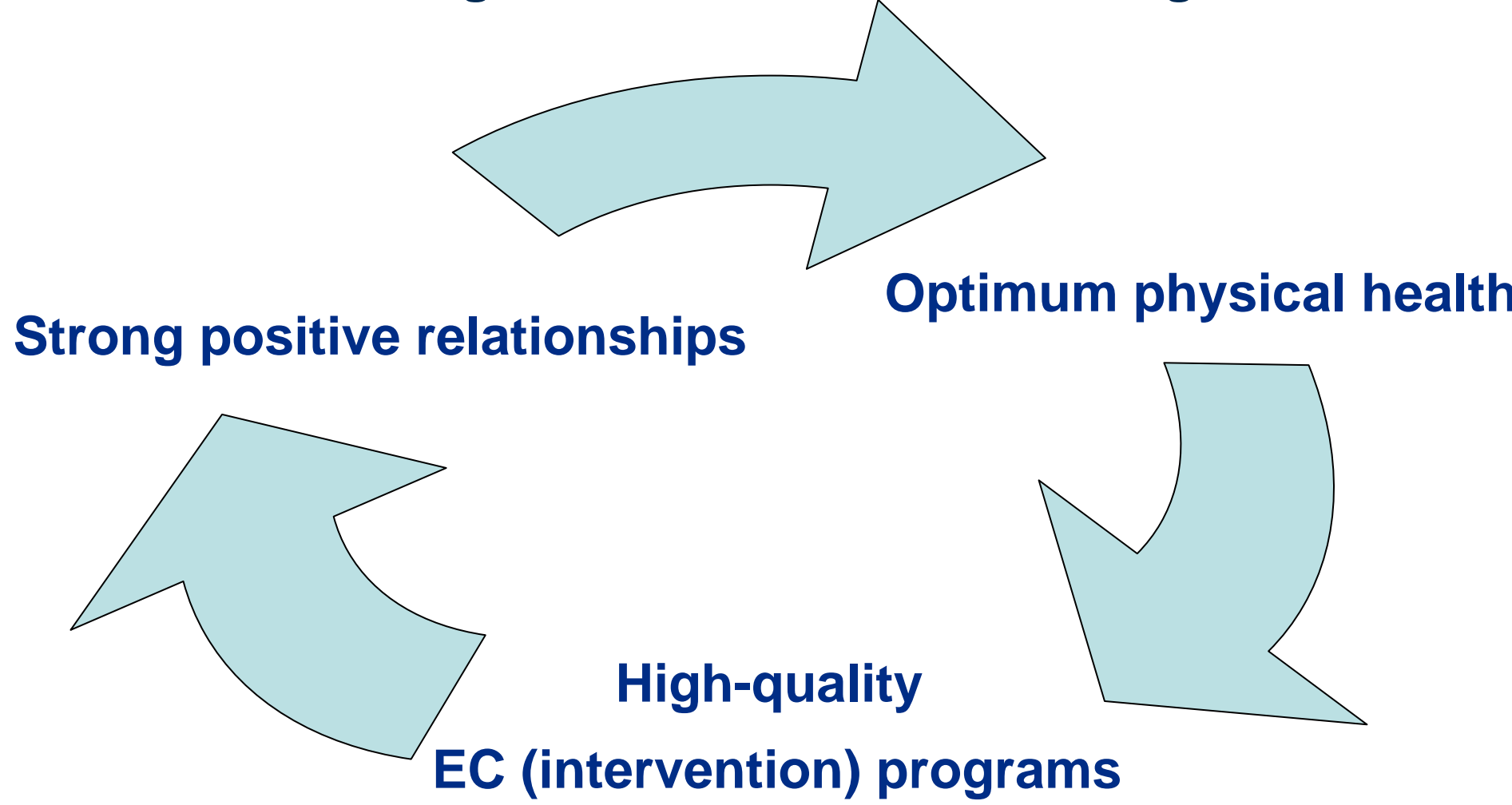


# Childhood wellbeing identity and sense of community in an effectiveness era (Abridged version)

Collette Tayler

- 1 What is thought to be childhood well-being?*
- 2 What problems are we trying to resolve?*
- 3 Converging and diverging interests....how best to invest?*

# 1 What is thought to be childhood well being?



# Evidence - Developmental Science

*Conception to age 5 foundational in development of:*

- brain and neurological structuring
- relationship - emotion and cognition  
emotional regulation, emotional security and sense of agency
- physical health (preventative ...diabetes, cardio-vascular disease, depression)

***The foundation of social and human capital***

## **Evidence – Educational Science**

*Early intervention programs improve children's cognitive development and behavioural well-being and build resilience to adverse outcomes*

RCT studies USA (Perry/HighScope, CPC, Abecedarian)

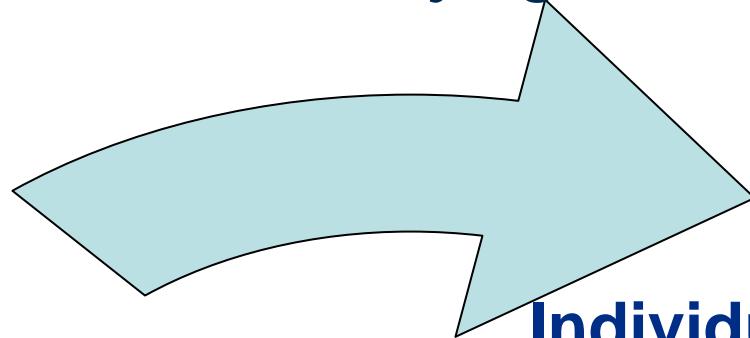
*Preparing for School* study, Australia (Thorpe et al)

*Effective Provision of Preschool Education* study (EPPE, UK)

***Quality underpins positive effects***

2

***What problems are we trying to resolve?***



**Individual and  
community participation**

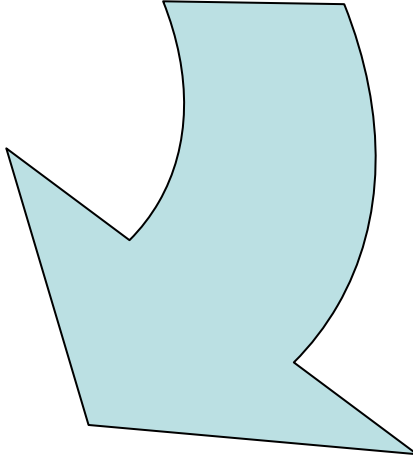
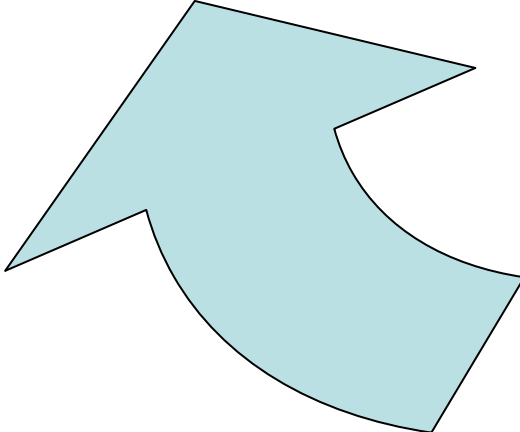
**Individual and community  
capacity building**

***QUALITY  
PROGRAMS***

**Accountabilities**

**Measuring impact**

**Targeting investments**



**...in a mixed market economy**

# Case evidence - Queensland Childcare and Family Support Hubs Study (2003-2007)

Mission: **Increase** access to local services and **community capacity** by building parents' social networks, linking families with local support (child care, child/family programs, child safety/health, community activities), using engagement strategies that are culturally relevant to the community

# Hubs Study

**Pay-offs of multi-participants:** Expressed dimensions of social capital, sense of community and wellbeing were significantly different for the parent and child participant groups. Parents experienced an overall reduction in social capital, whereas their sense of community and well being was constant over the course of the study. Concurrently children's well being increased significantly and their social capital, although recording a significant decrease between stage 1 and 2, did not significantly change from stage 1 to 3.

**Focus & sense of purpose counts:** Parent and child reports of children's wellbeing increased, verifying the effort placed by Hub staff on supporting children's development.

# Child well being = policies encouraging variation

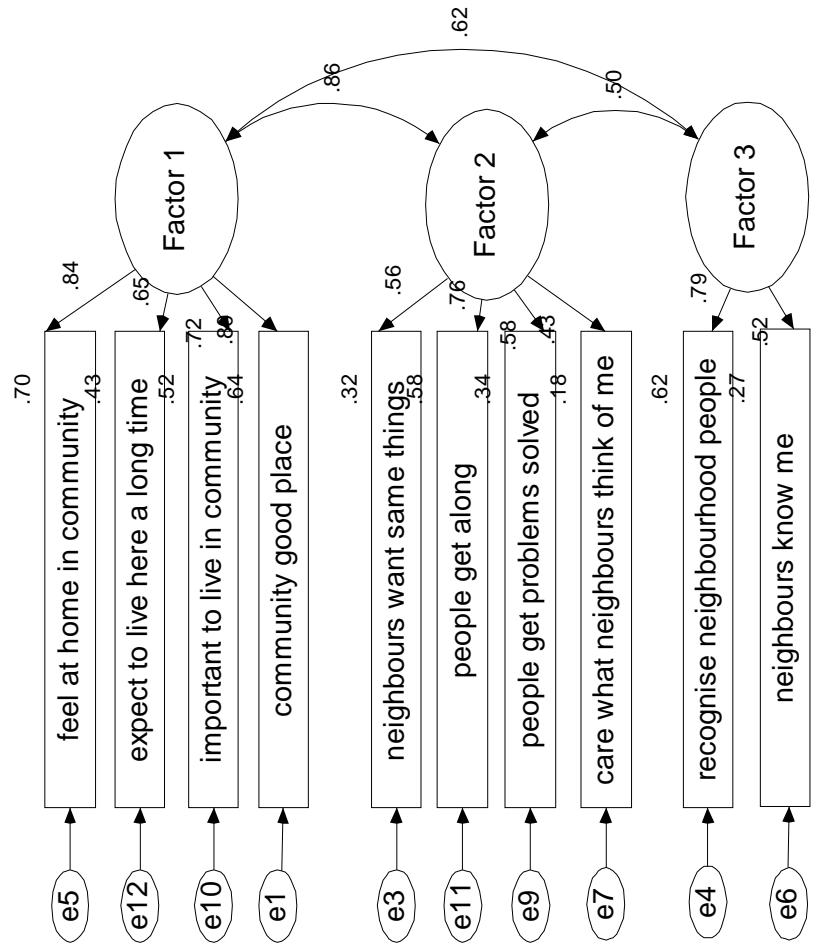
A key outcome was confirmation that these **Hubs are acting independently in their own communities**, addressing local needs and pursuing outcomes seen by the community to be important to child and family well being.

As specific and common community capacity-building targets did not exist between the Hub sites **there was no common outcome framework for evaluating the broad integrated services policy initiative** for its effectiveness as a strategy. This is not to suggest that the strategy was misplaced. Indeed, the positive outcomes regarding children's well being and the lessons from Hub Coordinators regarding implementation of services in rural and regional areas serve well to inform the subsequent Department strategies.

**Uphold the principle of subsidiarity  
Dilemmas in measuring and accounting?**

# Measures of 'sense of community' ...the degree to which individuals are affectively connected to others (feeling of belonging)

Chi Square = 152.972, p = .000, df = 32



HUBS Combined 3 Factor Solution x EFA  
Standardized estimates

- Needs fulfilment
- Group membership
- Influence
- Emotional connection



Place attachment  
 Alliance  
 Connectedness

## ***Converging and diverging interests.... how best to invest?***

Queensland ***Preparing for School*** Study (2003-2004)

*Teachers and Teacher Aides*

*Parents*

*Children deemed “at risk”*

*Politicians*

*Government and legal bureaucracy and university*

*Regardless of program where there was **greater connection** between families and schools, the children made sig. better progress in social development and adjustment to school*

*Queensland Prep Study. Thorpe et al 2004*