

Bright Futures Roadmap: Ripple Effects Mapping

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT



Butler Institute for Families
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER



Background

The Bright Futures Roadmap (Roadmap) initiative is a community-wide strategy developed in 2019 to support the health and well-being of children and their families in Jefferson County. Roadmap work is grounded in the vision that *all families have the support they need to promote their child's health and well-being for sustained success in school and in life.*

The Bright Futures Roadmap initiative identified four cornerstones of their work including:

1. Quality Early Care and Education
2. Family Support and Home Visiting Programs
3. Access to Mental Health Consultation and Support
4. Screening, Assessment, and Referrals

Organizations across the early childhood system in Jefferson County are partnering on Roadmap work to support children and families in their community, currently focusing on the first three cornerstones. One key organization, Triad Bright Futures (TBF), coordinates the Roadmap work.



Evaluation Approach

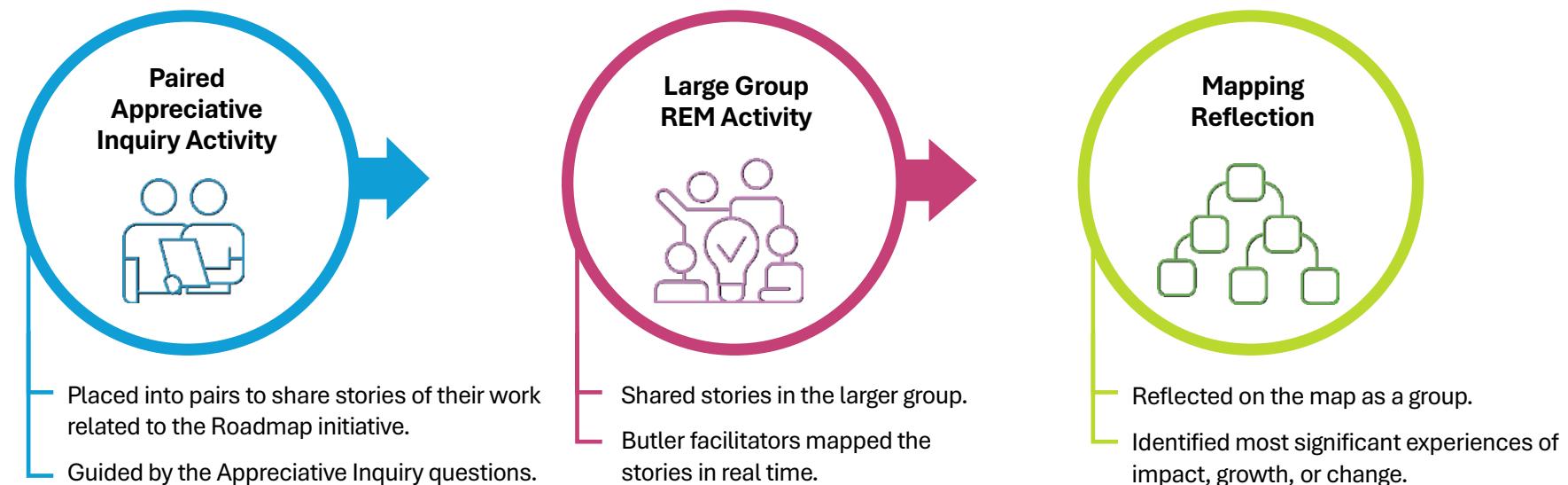
On November 13, 2025, facilitators from the [Butler Institute for Families](#) at the University of Denver conducted an in-person Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) session with Roadmap partners to capture their experiences and stories of impact from working on the Bright Futures Roadmap initiative. Nineteen partners from cornerstones 1, 2, and 3 were invited to participate, and fourteen partners, with representation from all three cornerstones, participated in the REM session. REM participants held a range of roles within their organizations, including supervisor, coordinator, home visitor, family navigator, manager, and leader at the director, owner, and vice president levels. Participants had been at their organization for just over 6.5 years on average. All

participants identified as female, and their average age was 47 years. Racially and ethnically, REM participants identified as White or Hispanic.

What Is REM?

REM is a participatory and strengths-based interactive evaluation approach that aims to illuminate diverse stakeholder perspectives and reveal an initiative's anticipated and unanticipated outcomes.¹ REM celebrates an initiative's accomplishments through a process that combines Appreciative Inquiry, mind mapping, group story sharing, and qualitative data analysis to gather stories of the initiative's impact. Throughout the session, a REM mapper captures participants' stories and reflections on a mind map, a tool used to visualize and organize information and ideas. The REM mind map is generated in real time to demonstrate connections and relationships. The REM session consists of three components (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. REM Session Process Steps



¹ Chazdon, S., Emery, M., Hansen, D., Higgins, L., & Sero, R. (2017). *A field guide to Ripple Effects Mapping*. Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute, University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. <https://ucanr.edu/sites/CEprogramevaluation/files/317076.pdf>

The following **Appreciative Inquiry** questions were used during the Bright Futures Roadmap REM session to help participants generate stories about their work on the initiative:

- What aspect of the Bright Futures Roadmap initiative are you most proud of? What did you/your cornerstone group do exceptionally well?
- What impact/change do you see that has occurred because of the work of the Bright Futures Roadmap initiative?
- What has been particularly positive/memorable about your time being involved with the Bright Futures Roadmap initiative? What stands out in your time?

Bright Futures Roadmap REM Participants



Analysis

Following the in-person REM session, the Butler team used XMind software to create a digital map based on the hand-drawn mind map generated during the session (see Figure 2). The Butler team then sent the updated digital XMind map to the REM participants, allowing them to review and confirm that the map accurately reflected their group's conversation and make any revisions. The digital XMind map is in Appendix A.

The Butler team then identified themes from the XMind map by grouping the impacts, ripples, and stories that participants identified into broad, meaningful categories.

Results

Five key themes emerged from the BFR REM session:

1. Partnering With Families in the Community:

This theme highlights how the Roadmap initiative worked *with* families instead of *for* them, intentionally creating and expanding services so community members felt included and supported. This theme was particularly important for Latino families who can often be excluded due to language barriers. The Maternal Child Health Leaders for Equity Program is one example of how Roadmap has partnered with families to build their capacity for community engagement.

Figure 2. REM Session Process Steps: Bright Futures Roadmap REM Session Hand-Drawn Mind Map of Participants' Stories



2. **Facilitating Collaboration:** This theme recognizes TBF as the convener/enhancer of the Roadmap work. Partners appreciated TBF's guidance in developing shared goals and a shared vision and how TBF provided opportunities for partners to collaborate and coordinate.
3. **Creating Accessible Resources and Supports for Children, Families, and Early Childhood Professionals:** This theme celebrates how the Roadmap initiative facilitated the creation of resources and supports that children, families, and early childhood professionals can easily find and use. These resources include the mental health consultation resource map and the ECE provider wellness resource page, which families and professionals can use to help them find community resources that meet their needs.
4. **Fostering Collective Learning and Community Among Professionals:** This theme reflects on the opportunities that the Roadmap initiative created for professionals to build relationships and share expertise to improve their practice. The relationship building that the Roadmap initiative supported led to more trust between professionals, which in turn helped them to better meet families' needs with more information about community services and resulted in more referrals and warm handoffs.
5. **Promoting Inclusive Services:** This theme illustrates how the Roadmap initiative promoted culturally- and linguistically-inclusive services to better meet the needs of diverse families in Jefferson County. The initiative also included more programs and services, which opened the door for greater distribution of power and decision-making among community organizations and increased community awareness of a variety of services for children and families.

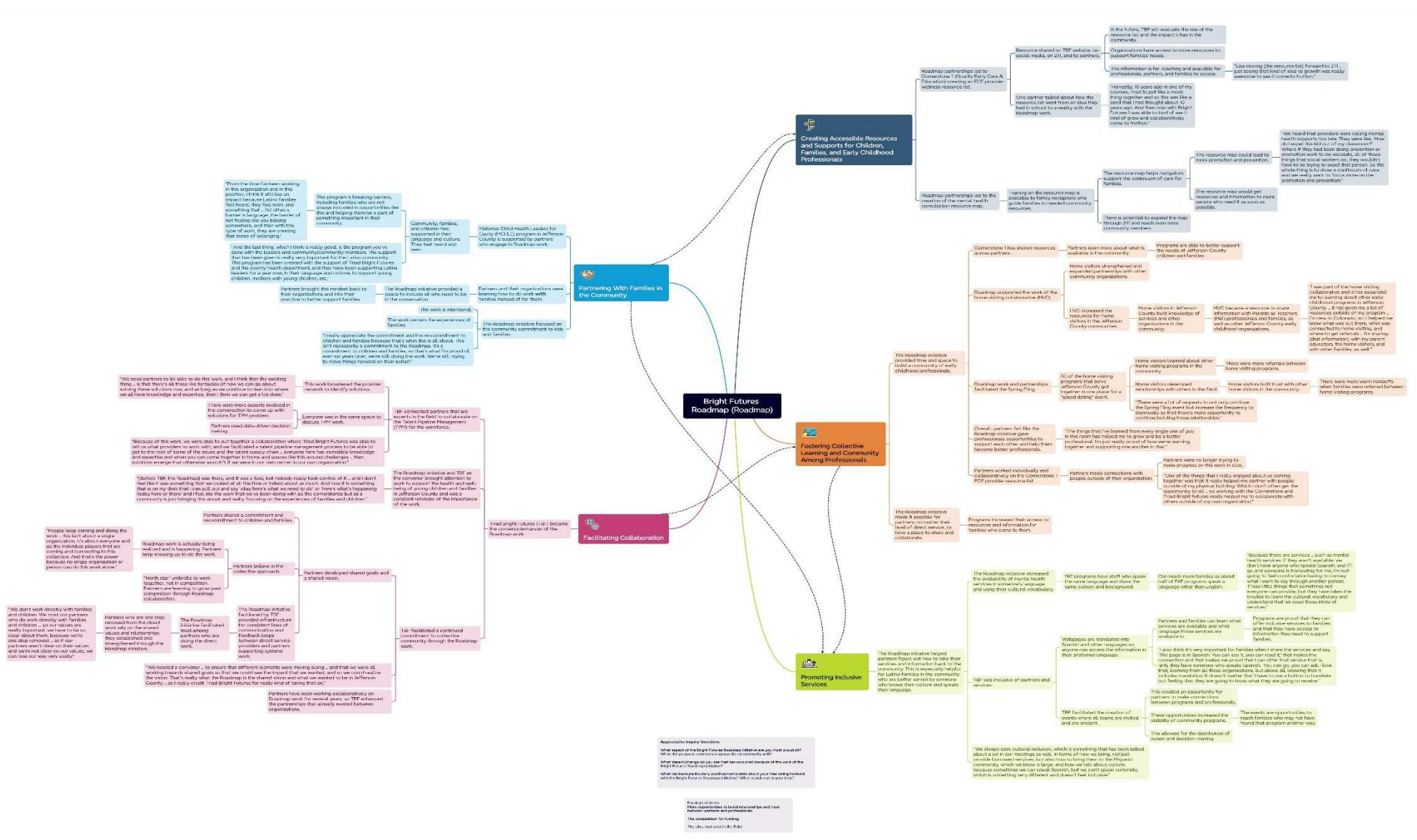
In summary, Bright Futures Roadmap partners, with guidance from TBF, have maintained their commitment to putting the needs of children and families first by partnering with families and professionals in the community to create accessible services and resources that they need. The Roadmap initiative has promoted inclusivity across partners and families, so those who need services and deliver services are working together to ultimately support the health and well-being of children and families.

REM maps of the key themes' summary, the full themes, and individual theme branches are provided below in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Summary of Key Themes Map From the Roadmap Initiative REM Session



Full Thematic Map From the Roadmap Initiative REM Session ([Appendix B](#) for an accessible Word version of the map)



Key Theme 1: Partnering With Families in the Community

"From the time I've been working in this organization and in this position, I think it still has an impact because Latino families feel heard, they feel seen, and something that ... [is] often a barrier is language, the barrier of not feeling like you belong somewhere, and then with this type of work, they are creating that sense of belonging."

"And the last thing, which I think is really good, is the program you've done with the leaders and community/community members. The support that has been given is really very important for the Latino community. This program has been created with the support of Triad Bright Futures and the county health department, and they have been supporting Latina leaders for a year now, in their language and culture, to support young children, mothers with young children, etc."

Partners brought this mindset back to their organizations and into their practice to better support families.

The Roadmap initiative provided a space to include all who need to be in the conversation.

Partners and their organizations were learning how to do work *with* families instead of *for* them.

The work is intentional.

The work centers the experiences of families.

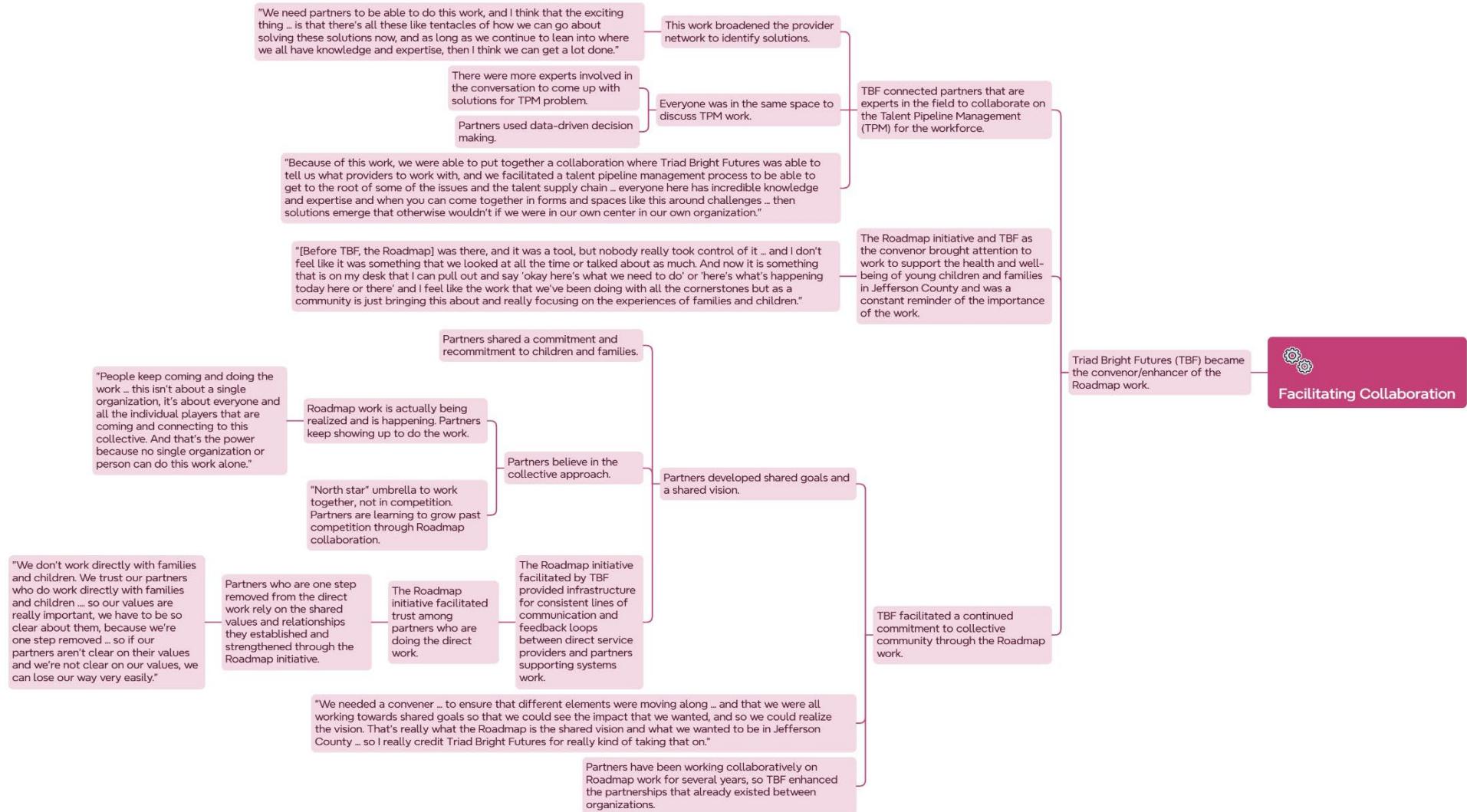
The Roadmap initiative focused on the community commitment to kids and families.

"I really appreciate the commitment and the re-commitment to children and families because that's what this is all about. This isn't necessarily a commitment to the Roadmap, it's a commitment to children and families, so that's what I'm proud of, even six years later, we're still doing the work. We're still trying to move things forward on their behalf."

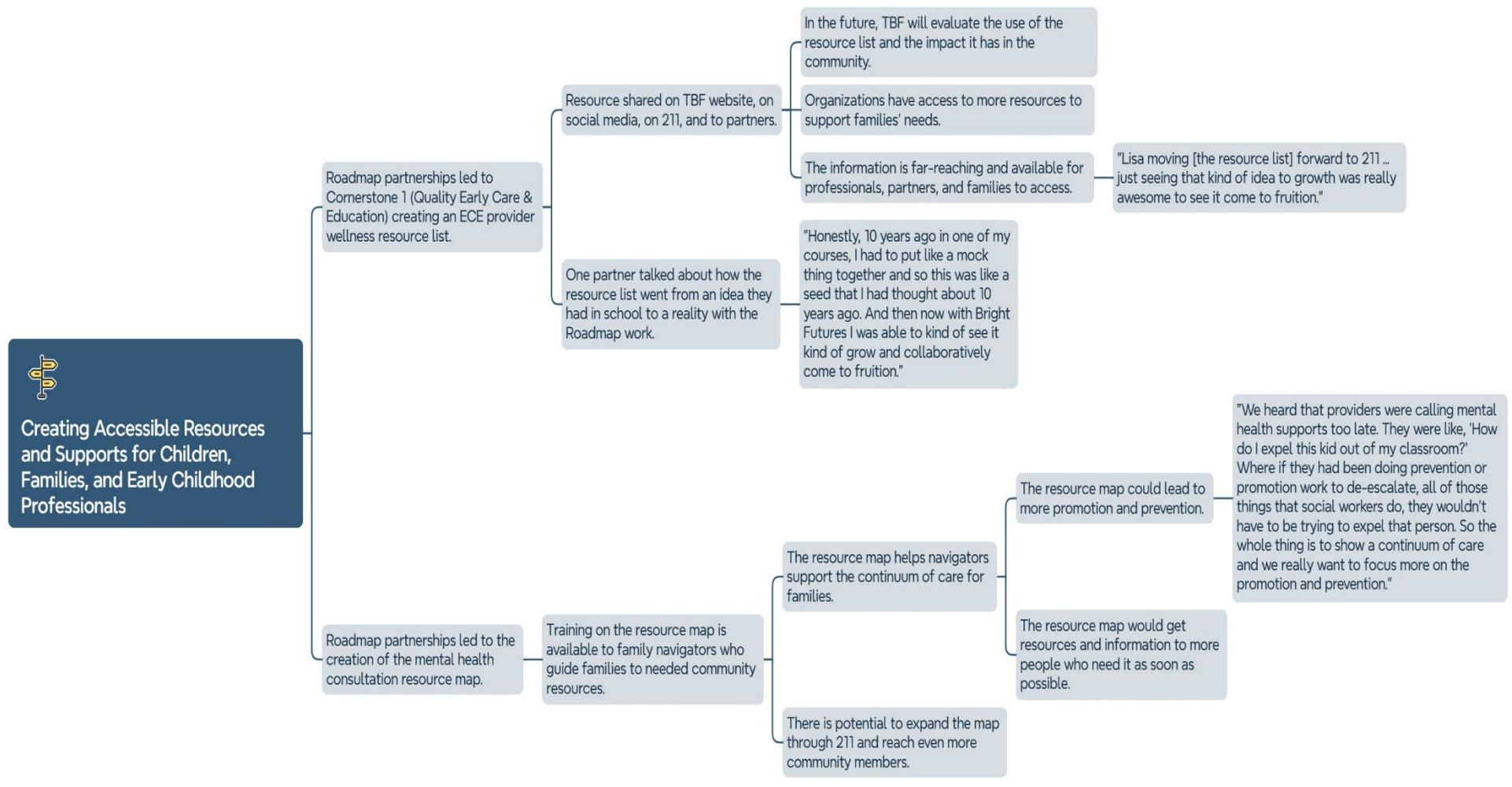


Partnering With Families in the Community

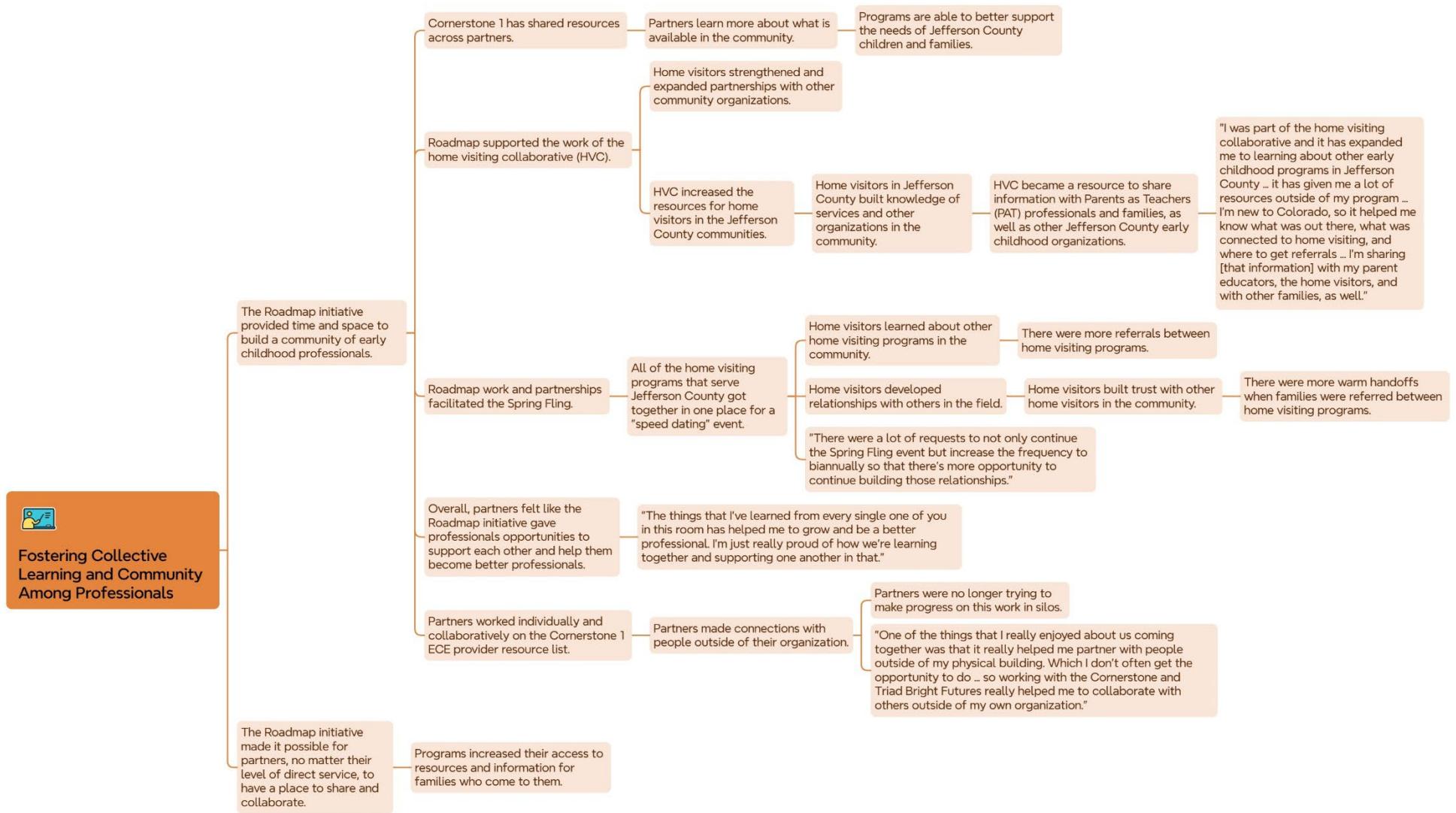
Key Theme 2: Facilitating Collaboration



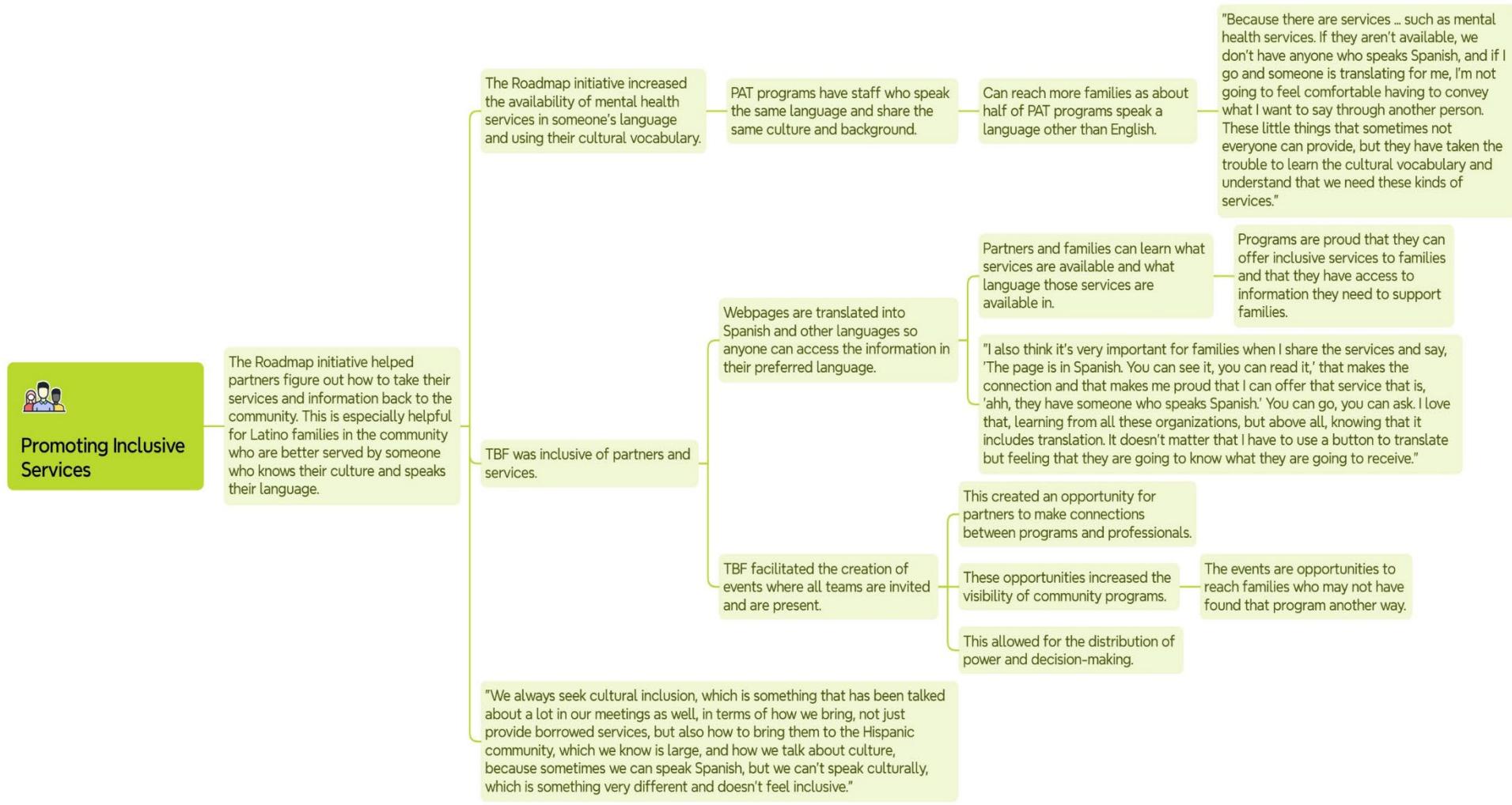
Key Theme 3: Creating Accessible Resources and Supports for Children and Families



Key Theme 4: Fostering Collective Learning and Community Among Professionals



Key Theme 5: Promoting Inclusive Services



Parking Lot Items

Parking lot items are topics that partners raised during the REM session that are potential places for improvement. Parking lot items that participants brought up included:

- More opportunities to build relationships and trust between partners and professionals
- The competition for funding
- The silos that exist in the field

Partners thought that one of the Roadmap initiative's greatest strengths was the space it provided for relationship building and only wished for more chances to meet and work with other early childhood professionals and organizations. The current funding landscape is also a challenge, causing organizations to compete against each other instead of collaborating. Finally, work can often happen in silos, so the Roadmap initiative is critical to breaking down silos and promoting collaboration across early childhood organizations.





Appendices

Appendix A: In-Person Roadmap Initiative REM Session Digital Map



Appendix B: Microsoft Word Version of Full Thematic Map From the Roadmap Initiative REM Session

Bright Futures Roadmap (Roadmap)

Creating Accessible Resources and Supports for Children, Families, and Early Childhood Professionals



Roadmap partnerships led to Cornerstone 1 (Quality Early Care & Education) creating an ECE provider wellness resource list.

Resource shared on TBF website, on social media, on 211, and to partners.

- In the future, TBF will evaluate the use of the resource list and the impact it has in the community.
- Organizations have access to more resources to support families' needs.
- The information is far-reaching and available for professionals, partners, and families to access.

"Lisa moving [the resource list] forward to 211 ... just seeing that kind of idea to growth was really awesome to see it come to fruition."

One partner talked about how the resource list went from an idea they had in school to a reality with the Roadmap work.

"Honestly, 10 years ago in one of my courses, I had to put like a mock thing together and so this was like a seed that I had thought about 10 years ago. And then now with Bright Futures I was able to kind of see it kind of grow and collaboratively come to fruition."

Roadmap partnerships led to the creation of the mental health consultation resource map.

Training on the resource map is available to family navigators who guide families to needed community resources.

- The resource map helps navigators support the continuum of care for families.
- The resource map could lead to more promotion and prevention.

"We heard that providers were calling mental health supports too late. They were like, 'How do I expel this kid out of my classroom?' Where if they had been doing prevention or promotion work to de-escalate, all of those things that social workers do, they wouldn't have to be trying to expel that person. So the whole thing is to show a continuum of care and we really want to focus more on the promotion and prevention."

- The resource map would get resources and information to more people who need it as soon as possible.
- There is potential to expand the map through 211 and reach even more community members.

Fostering Collective Learning and Community Among Professionals



The Roadmap initiative provided time and space to build a community of early childhood professionals.

Cornerstone 1 has shared resources across partners.

- Partners learn more about what is available in the community.
 - Programs are able to better support the needs of Jefferson County children and families.

Roadmap supported the work of the home visiting collaborative (HVC).

- Home visitors strengthened and expanded partnerships with other community organizations.
- HVC increased the resources for home visitors in the Jefferson County communities.
 - Home visitors in Jefferson County built knowledge of services and other organizations in the community.
 - HVC became a resource to share information with Parents as Teachers (PAT) professionals and families, as well as other Jefferson County early childhood organizations.

"I was part of the home visiting collaborative and it has expanded me to learning about other early childhood programs in Jefferson County ... it has given me a lot of resources outside of my program ... I'm new to Colorado, so it helped me know what was out there, what was connected to home visiting, and where to get referrals ... I'm sharing [that information] with my parent educators, the home visitors, and with other families, as well."

Roadmap work and partnerships facilitated the Spring Fling.

- All of the home visiting programs that serve Jefferson County got together in one place for a "speed dating" event.
 - Home visitors learned about other home visiting programs in the community.
 - There were more referrals between home visiting programs.
 - Home visitors developed relationships with others in the field.
 - Home visitors built trust with other home visitors in the community.
 - There were more warm handoffs when families were referred between home visiting programs.

"There were a lot of requests to not only continue the Spring Fling event but increase the frequency to biannually so that there's more opportunity to continue building those relationships."

Overall, partners felt like the Roadmap initiative gave professionals opportunities to support each other and help them become better professionals.

"The things that I've learned from every single one of you in this room has helped me to grow and be a better professional. I'm just really proud of how we're learning together and supporting one another in that."

Partners worked individually and collaboratively on the Cornerstone 1 ECE provider resource list.

- Partners made connections with people outside of their organization.
 - Partners were no longer trying to make progress on this work in silos.

"One of the things that I really enjoyed about us coming together was that it really helped me partner with people outside of my physical building. Which I don't often get the opportunity to do ... so working with the Cornerstone and Triad Bright Futures really helped me to collaborate with others outside of my own organization."

The Roadmap initiative made it possible for partners, no matter their level of direct service, to have a place to share and collaborate.

Programs increased their access to resources and information for families who come to them.

Promoting Inclusive Services



The Roadmap initiative helped partners figure out how to take their services and information back to the community. This is especially helpful for Latino families in the community who are better served by someone who knows their culture and speaks their language.

The Roadmap initiative increased the availability of mental health services in someone's language and using their cultural vocabulary.

- PAT programs have staff who speak the same language and share the same culture and background.
 - Can reach more families as about half of PAT programs speak a language other than English.

"Because there are services ... such as mental health services. If they aren't available, we don't have anyone who speaks Spanish, and if I go and someone is translating for me, I'm not going to feel comfortable having to convey what I want to say through another person. These little things that sometimes not everyone can provide, but they have taken the trouble to learn the cultural vocabulary and understand that we need these kinds of services."

TBF was inclusive of partners and services.

- Webpages are translated into Spanish and other languages so anyone can access the information in their preferred language.
 - Partners and families can learn what services are available and what language those services are available in.
 - Programs are proud that they can offer inclusive services to families and that they have access to information they need to support families.

"I also think it's very important for families when I share the services and say, 'The page is in Spanish. You can see it, you can read it,' that makes the connection and that makes me proud that I can offer that service that is, 'ahh, they have someone who speaks Spanish.' You can go, you can ask. I love that, learning from all these organizations, but above all, knowing that it includes translation. It doesn't matter that I have to use a button to translate but feeling that they are going to know what they are going to receive."

- TBF facilitated the creation of events where all teams are invited and are present.
 - This created an opportunity for partners to make connections between programs and professionals.
 - These opportunities increased the visibility of community programs.
 - The events are opportunities to reach families who may not have found that program another way.

- This allowed for the distribution of power and decision-making.

"We always seek cultural inclusion, which is something that has been talked about a lot in our meetings as well, in terms of how we bring, not just provide borrowed services, but also how to bring them to the Hispanic community, which we know is large, and how we talk about culture, because sometimes we can speak Spanish, but we can't speak culturally, which is something very different and doesn't feel inclusive."

Facilitating Collaboration



Triad Bright Futures (TBF) became the convenor/enhancer of the Roadmap work.

TBF connected partners that are experts in the field to collaborate on the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) for the workforce.

- This work broadened the provider network to identify solutions.

"We need partners to be able to do this work, and I think that the exciting thing ... is that there's all these like tentacles of how we can go about solving these solutions now, and as long as we continue to lean into where we all have knowledge and expertise, then I think we can get a lot done."

- Everyone was in the same space to discuss TPM work.

- There were more experts involved in the conversation to come up with solutions for TPM problem.
- Partners used data-driven decision making.

"Because of this work, we were able to put together a collaboration where Triad Bright Futures was able to tell us what providers to work with, and we facilitated a talent pipeline management process to be able to get to the root of some of the issues and the talent supply chain ... everyone here has incredible knowledge and expertise and when you can come together in forms and spaces like this around challenges ... then solutions emerge that otherwise wouldn't if we were in our own center in our own organization."

The Roadmap initiative and TBF as the convenor brought attention to work to support the health and well-being of young children and families in Jefferson County and was a constant reminder of the importance of the work.

"[Before TBF, the Roadmap] was there, and it was a tool, but nobody really took control of it ... and I don't feel like it was something that we looked at all the time or talked about as much. And now it is something that is on my desk that I can pull out and say 'okay here's what we need to do' or 'here's what's happening today here or there' and I feel like the work that we've been doing with all the cornerstones but as a community is just bringing this about and really focusing on the experiences of families and children."

TBF facilitated a continued commitment to collective community through the Roadmap work.

- Partners developed shared goals and a shared vision.
 - Partners shared a commitment and recommitment to children and families.
 - Partners believe in the collective approach.
 - Roadmap work is actually being realized and is happening. Partners keep showing up to do the work.

"People keep coming and doing the work ... this isn't about a single organization, it's about everyone and all the individual players that are coming and connecting to this collective. And that's the power because no single organization or person can do this work alone."

- "North star" umbrella to work together, not in competition. Partners are learning to grow past competition through Roadmap collaboration.
- The Roadmap initiative facilitated by TBF provided infrastructure for consistent lines of communication and feedback loops between direct service providers and partners supporting systems work.
 - The Roadmap initiative facilitated trust among partners who are doing the direct work.
 - Partners who are one step removed from the direct work rely on the shared values and relationships they established and strengthened through the Roadmap initiative.

"We don't work directly with families and children. We trust our partners who do work directly with families and children ... so our values are really important, we have to be so clear about them, because we're one step removed ... so if our partners aren't clear on their values and we're not clear on our values, we can lose our way very easily."

"We needed a convener ... to ensure that different elements were moving along ... and that we were all working towards shared goals so that we could see the impact that we wanted, and so we could realize the vision. That's really what the Roadmap is the shared vision and what we wanted to be in Jefferson County ... so I really credit Triad Bright Futures for really kind of taking that on."

- Partners have been working collaboratively on Roadmap work for several years, so TBF enhanced the partnerships that already existed between organizations.

Partnering With Families in the Community



Maternal Child Health Leaders for Equity (MCHLE) program in Jefferson County is supported by partners who engage in Roadmap work.

Community, families, and children feel supported in their language and culture. They feel heard and seen.

- This program is breaking barriers, including families who are not always included in opportunities like this and helping them be a part of something important in their community.

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