



TOOLKIT

Ecological approach to planning community mapping



This toolkit contains information and resources to guide you with planning community mapping.

If we want to make a difference for children it is important to consider the range of influences on children's developmental outcomes and the wide range of data that we might want to collect to inform our planning.

Using the Ecological Model as a framework

The Ecological Model of Child Development (see Figure 1) is a useful tool to use with your partnership group to help shape to the way we think about the different influences on children and to help plan for community mapping.

When planning for data collection, try using the Ecological Model tool to consider the following questions:

- What do we know to be the risk and protective factors associated within each circle?
- What are the sources of data associated with the risk and protective factors?
- What other sources of information do we know of that would be useful?

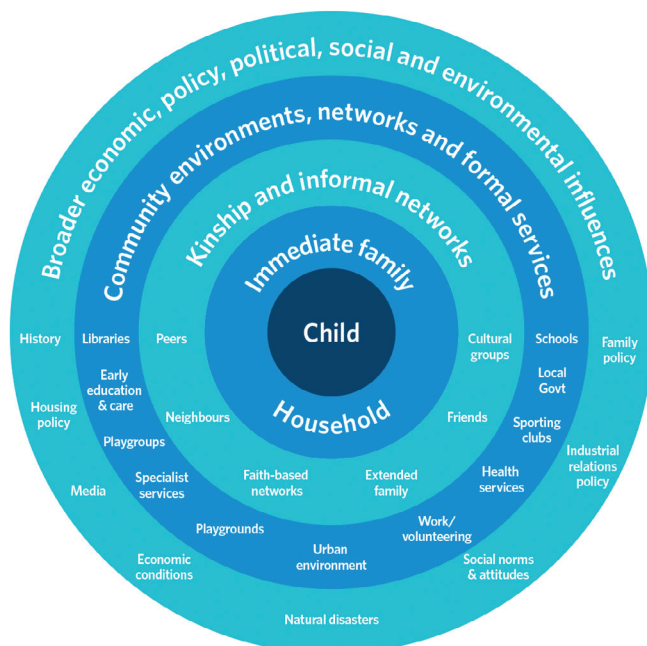


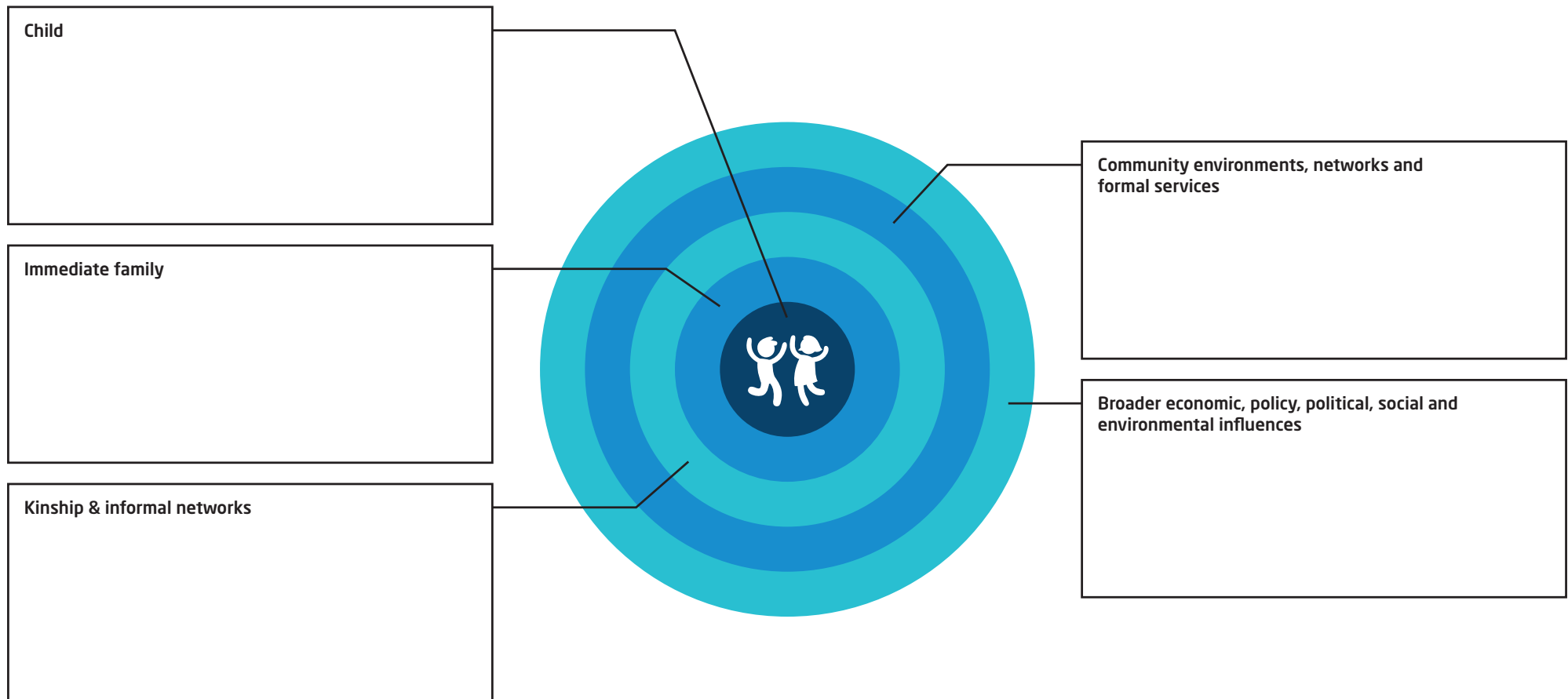
Figure 1. Ecological Model of Child Development (Centre for Community Child Health, adapted from Bronfenbrenner et al., 1979)

Risk and protective factors and potential data sources

Some examples of protective and risk factors on child development, as well as relevant data sources, are listed in the table below.

Ecological Model level	Protective and risk factors	Data sources
Child	Health, nutrition, attachment, opportunities for play and learning.	AEDC results, breastfeeding rates, child and family nurse attendance rates, disability incidence rates, child protection notifications, parent concerns, child activities.
Immediate family	Income, social supports, socioeconomic status, housing.	Employment rate, income levels, family structure, parents' education levels, mental health, drug and alcohol rates, family experiences and stories.
Kinship and informal networks	Social supports, belonging.	Families' support structures, perceived safety of the neighbourhood.
Community environments, networks and formal services	Social connections, access to services, participation in high quality ECEC.	Services available, crime rates, hospital admissions, religion/culture, roads/transport.
Broader economic, policy, political, social and environmental influences	Employment, family friendly policies (parental leave, disability supports).	Political agenda, policy direction.

Template: Ecological Model planning



Worksheet: Planning community mapping

Ecological Model level	What we want to know (Questions)	Existing data sources (Formal/quantitative)	Non-existing data sources (Informal/qualitative)	
			Who to ask	How to ask them
Child				
Family				
Kinship and informal networks				
Community environments, networks formal services				
Broader economic, policy, political, social environments				

Discussion questions: Planning community mapping

- What is community? What is our community? For example, is our community a cohesive community, or is it really multiple communities?
- What is the potential in our neighbourhoods versus our larger community? For example, is there potential in a neighbourhood that is missed when looking at the community more broadly?
- Who are the key contacts in your community? Are they potential bridge builders to opportunities in the community?
- Who are the families, individuals and advocates in our community who could be resources? Are they interested in being resources to others?
- What institutions exist in our community? For example, community colleges, universities, adult education programs, schools, community centres, etc.
- What organisations exist in our community? For example, service groups, associations, social and recreational groups, hobby and interest groups.
- What associations of common interest exist beyond the traditional associations and groups?
- What are the physical facilities available in our community? For example, parks, community space, and recreational facilities.
- What are the places where people like to congregate? For example, particular restaurants, businesses, etc.
- What are the cultural and spiritual resources in our community?

Discussion questions for formal community mapping:

- How will we write up the information about the resources? For example, will we write up a description of the resources ourselves, or ask the resources to define their own information?
- What kinds of community living services or disability-related services exist in our community? Are there already existing information packages available about these services?
- What kinds of community resources are we going to investigate? For example, service agencies, organisations, institutions, local government, individuals, businesses, etc.
- How do we want to go about community mapping? For example, are we going to do it by ourselves with input from others, or involve the stakeholders?
- How will we collect the information? For example, will we interview resources, or visit?
- How can we go beyond establishing a traditional community directory, such as those produced in some communities already? How can we be creative and look towards non-traditional resources?
- How can we build upon existing sources of information? For example, social service directories, lists of organisations, city directories.

The Planning community mapping discussion questions are sourced from Community mapping: Some questions for discussion and related resources, Jamie Robertson, Community Living Services, Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2004. www.communitydevelopment.org.au (formerly known as Community Builders NSW).

For more Platforms information, resources and support visit: www.rch.org.au/ccch/platforms

This resource is designed for use in conjunction with the Platforms Guide. © Centre for Community Child Health.