



PARTNER

Program to Analyze, Record, and Track Networks to Enhance Relationships



first 2000 days
Early Childhood Development Network

The First 2000 Days Early Childhood Development Network Social Network Analysis

An Artifact of our Progress: Fall 2015



first 2000 days
Early Childhood Development Network

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Before You Read the Results:

A Note from the First 2000 Days Network

The process of working with the PARTNER tool and the team at the University of Colorado, Denver has been crucial in informing the development of The First 2000 Days Network. The Network is rooted in an ethos of adaptive learning and continuous improvement, and the results of this report as well as what we've learned from the process of developing and delivering the survey are critical to informing our approach.

We have included some key learnings regarding the process of using the PARTNER tool below, and highly encourage the reader to keep these in mind as you review the survey results. **Any survey is only as good as the survey design, participant engagement and understanding of the context within which the survey was given.**

Lessons learned:

- 1) **Improve setting the context:** This survey was intended to provide insight on the functioning of the Network from the perspective of the 'Backbone' – not an attempt to map the 'whole' network community or the specific networks of each early childhood development (ECD) coalitions in Calgary & area. The "Network" is both the broad ECD community, as well as the Backbone functions of the First 2000 Days Network as an entity. We needed to do a better job of communicating this distinction to the survey participants.
- 2) **Improve survey questions:**
 - a. Include 'don't know' as an option for the relational questions within the survey;
 - b. Allow an opportunity to respond according to individuals within organization AND the organization itself. The first time the Network tested the PARTNER tool as part of prototype in the Thrive By Five Change Lab process we received feedback that just listing organizations was too broad and not accurate in terms of responses (as there may be many personal relationships within that organization) so we adapted this version of the survey to include names of individuals within organizations. For this survey, we received the opposite feedback: that responding to individuals was 1) uncomfortable 2) didn't fully capture the nature of the Network if the individual that was listed in the survey wasn't the person with the relationship to the survey respondent.
- 3) **Data Analysis:** Opportunity to tag individuals with more than one organization or role. Because many people in the Network play multiple roles within the ECD sector and the First 2000 Days Network, it would be valuable to analyze the data from multiple viewpoints, based on the roles people play. For instance, many people who are part of the Backbone function are also staff in other organizations. The data presented here for the Backbone only includes those who are exclusively involved in that function.

Successes:

- 1) Excellent tool for mapping progress toward our goals as a Network.
- 2) Excellent tool for informing strategy and engagement opportunities – continuous improvement is enabled by this data.
- 3) We gathered our first data using 'shared measurement' lens within the Network which is a huge accomplishment toward our development as a [Collective Impact](#) initiative.

Project Background

The First 2000 Days Network ('Network') was created based on the opportunity to increase coordination, collaboration and impact with those working to improve ECD outcomes. The purpose of the Network is to act as catalyst for linking, aligning and leveraging efforts to improve Early Childhood Development outcomes and enable collaborative action.

The fundamental philosophy that guides the Network is a commitment to continuous quality improvement (CQI), fostered by a culture of adaptive learning. As part of the Network's CQI approach, a *Social Network Analysis* was conducted to identify system relationships and develop an evidence base for systems building efforts.

How Stakeholders Participated

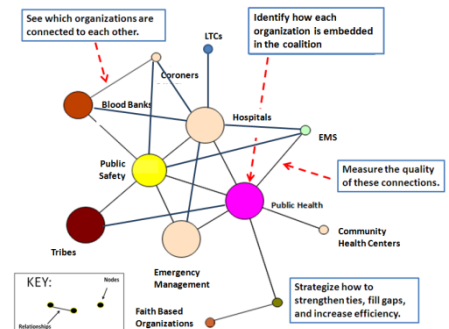
With support from the PARTNER team, the First 2000 Days Network's evaluation team identified members of the early childhood system who were closely involved with the work of the Network's Backbone team, and/or are highly engaged in the ECD system in Calgary and area, and/or are key influencers in the ECD system in Alberta. Those identified were asked to participate in data collection to assess system relationships in relation to the Network as an entity.

The project consisted of the following activities:

- Stakeholder identification (August 2015)
- Survey design, administration, engagement and analysis (September/October 2015)
- Presentation of key learnings based on results to survey respondents (November 2015)

What is PARTNER?

PARTNER was used in this project to collect data and inform a Continuous Quality Improvement process. PARTNER (Program to Analyze, Record, and Track Networks to Enhance Relationships) utilizes Social Network Analysis (SNA), a methodology that focuses on relationships between and among organizations, measuring their strength and quality. The map on the right is an example of a PARTNER network map.



How PARTNER Will Benefit The First 2000 Days Network?

1. **New Capacity:** Community will develop the capacity to conduct future evaluations of their systems using the PARTNER tool.
2. **Personalized Evaluation/Assessment:** Community will have a completed evaluation/assessment at the end of participation, focused on strategic planning.
3. **Narrative Descriptions of Partnership:** These short narratives can be used for reporting and grant writing.

Contact

To get more information, please contact: partnertool@ucdenver.edu. For more information about the PARTNER tool, go to www.partnertool.net.

Summary of PARTNER Survey - General

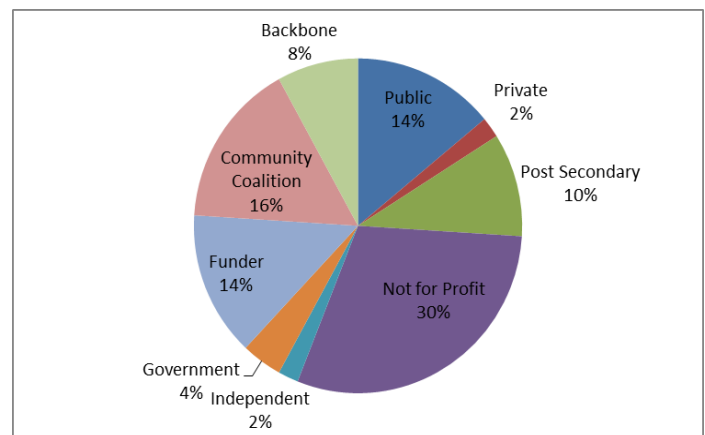
Since 2012, The First 2000 Days Network ('Network') has been strengthening the early childhood system by acting as catalyst for linking, aligning and leveraging efforts to improve Early Childhood Development (ECD) outcomes and enable collaborative action. The Network strives to provide information to the community, bring partners together, coordinate data, and align programs with community partners.

In 2015 using the PARTNER survey (www.partnertool.net), the Network asked members of the community to tell us about their partnerships, their perceptions of the Network, and to share their vantage points of what is happening in the ECD system. The survey was sent to 50 respondents, with a 98% response rate. Those that responded reported that they collectively had 809 partnerships. The average number of partnerships per member of the Network was 16 (out of a possible 49).

Demographic Information

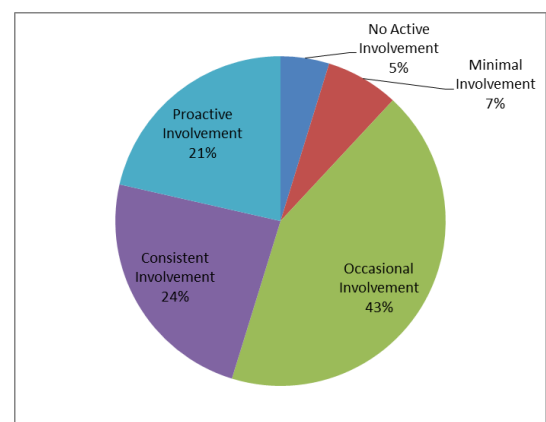
Groups:

The pie chart to the right shows the makeup of the organizations included in the survey. Respondents represented "Not for Profit" (30%), "Community Coalition" (16%), "Public" or "Funder" (14%), "Post-Secondary" (10%), as "Backbone" (8%), "Government" (4%), and 2% as either "Independent" or "Private". All of these organizations had occasional or consistent involvement with The First 2000 Days Network.



Level of Involvement:

The chart to the right shows the makeup of the respondents in terms of 'Amount of Involvement' in the First 2000 Days Network: 43% reported Occasional Involvement, 24% reported Consistent Involvement, 21% reported Proactive Involvement, 7% Minimal, and 5% reported No Active Involvement.



Time In Network:

Respondents were asked: What is the length of time (in months) that you have been interacting with the First 2000 Days Network? Organizations indicated an average of **21.25** months with a range of **5** to **60** months.



Questions to Consider:

Groups: Does the network have all the essential partners at the table? If not, which partners are missing and what can be done to recruit them to the network? Are there any areas where additional/fewer partners would help to strengthen the network?

Level of Involvement: Is there an adequate level of involvement from the members of the network? If yes, what can be done to continue to foster engagement? If not, what steps can be taken to elicit more active involvement from network members?

Time in Network: How long have members been a in their position in the network? What is the range of months? Is there a vast difference in the range or not much? Does the network have a lot of member turnover within the partner organizations? Do the organizations stay the same, but the representatives change? Why is this the case?

Systems Change

How The First 2000 Days is Building a Stronger System:

Respondents told us that 56% of the partnerships they reported are attributed to the activities related to First 2000 Days Network. In fact, respondent told us that 37% of those partnerships were created through First 2000 Days activities and that 19% of those partnerships were strengthened by First 2000 Days activities.

How Partnerships are Strengthening Our System:

Of the 809 partnerships reported in 2015, 52% resulted in information exchange only, while 43% reported that partnerships led to an exchange of resources, improved organizational capacity (30%) and improved services or supports for young children & families (23%) and led to improved efficiency and effectiveness (20%).

What Have We Achieved as a Community:

66% of respondents said that the First 2000 Days Network has been fairly successful at achieving its goal of acting as a catalyst for linking, aligning and leveraging opportunities with the ECD sector. Network member's work contributes to the following five ECD categories: 80% stated Social Competence; 78% stated Communication and General Knowledge; 76% stated Physical Health and Well-Being; and 74% stated either Emotional Maturity or Language and Cognitive Skills.

What Our Partners Said The First 2000 Days Network Has Achieved for the Community:

More than half of respondents agreed that The First 2000 Days Network has made progress on the following goals over the last year: Convening various organizations, agencies and community groups around a shared goal; Improved/increased knowledge and awareness of early childhood issues and community resources and programs to support young children and families among partners; Improved/increased collaboration (e.g. linking, aligning, leveraging) among partners; Increasing its visibility in the community; Providing leadership in bringing community partners together to address identified issues; Improved/increased relationships and trust between partners; Building public engagement to increase support for young children and families; Creating a shared vision for the broader ECD system among partners; and Increasing its visibility at the provincial level.

Resources Exchanged:

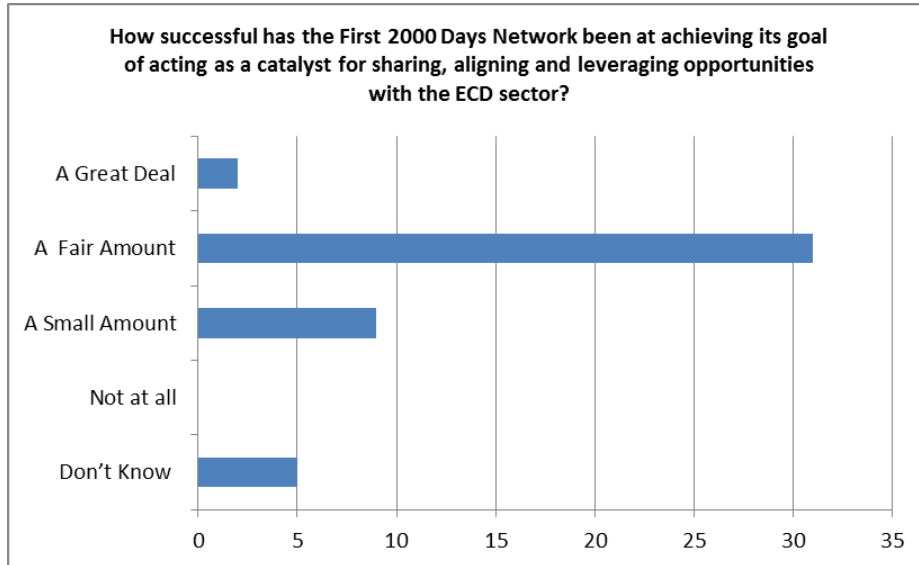
Our partners reported exchanging the following types of resources: Community connections; Knowledge of resources; Support & commitment to engage in systems building; Expertise in early learning; Advocacy and policy change; Expertise in family support & parent education; Leadership in the early childhood field; Services for young children and their families; Training & professional development opportunity; Communications and Facilitation/community convener.

Quality of Relationships Amongst Partners in the System:

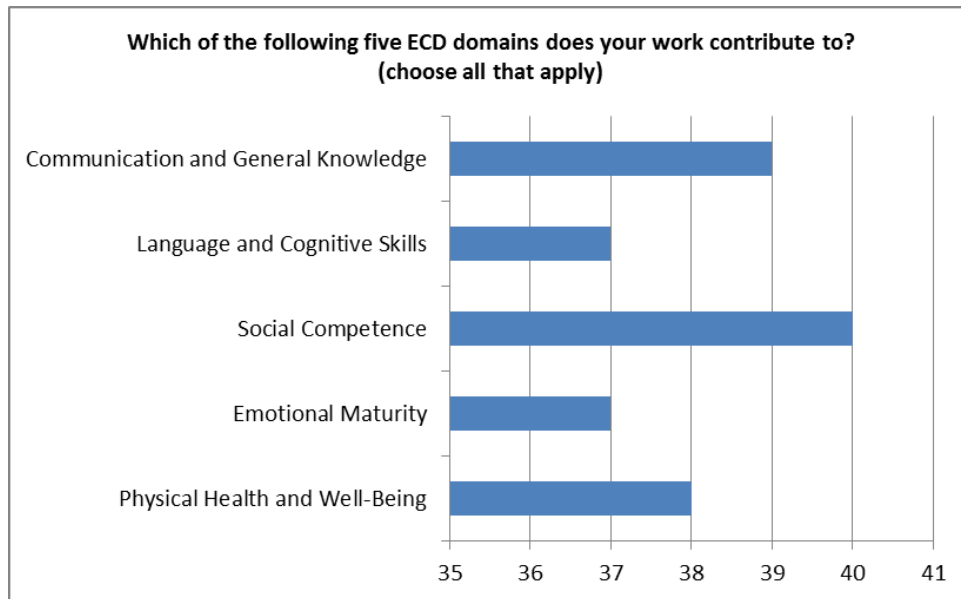
Members of The First 2000 Days Network report high levels of trust among partners and positive perceptions of the value that engaging partners brings to the system. Overall trust scores are 76%, out of 100%, with most organizations reporting a "great deal" of trust and value towards their partners.

Perceptions of Success

Respondents were asked: “How successful has the First 2000 Days Network been at achieving its goal of acting as a catalyst for linking, aligning and leveraging opportunities with the ECD sector?” The majority of the respondents (66%) picked A Fair Amount, while 19% picked A Small Amount, 11% selected Don’t Know and 4% selected a Great Deal.



Respondents were asked: “Which of the following five ECD domains¹ does your work contribute to? (choose all that apply)” 80% of respondents chose Social Competence; 78% chose Communication and General Knowledge; 76% chose Physical Health and Well-Being; and 74% chose either Emotional Maturity or Language and Cognitive Skills.



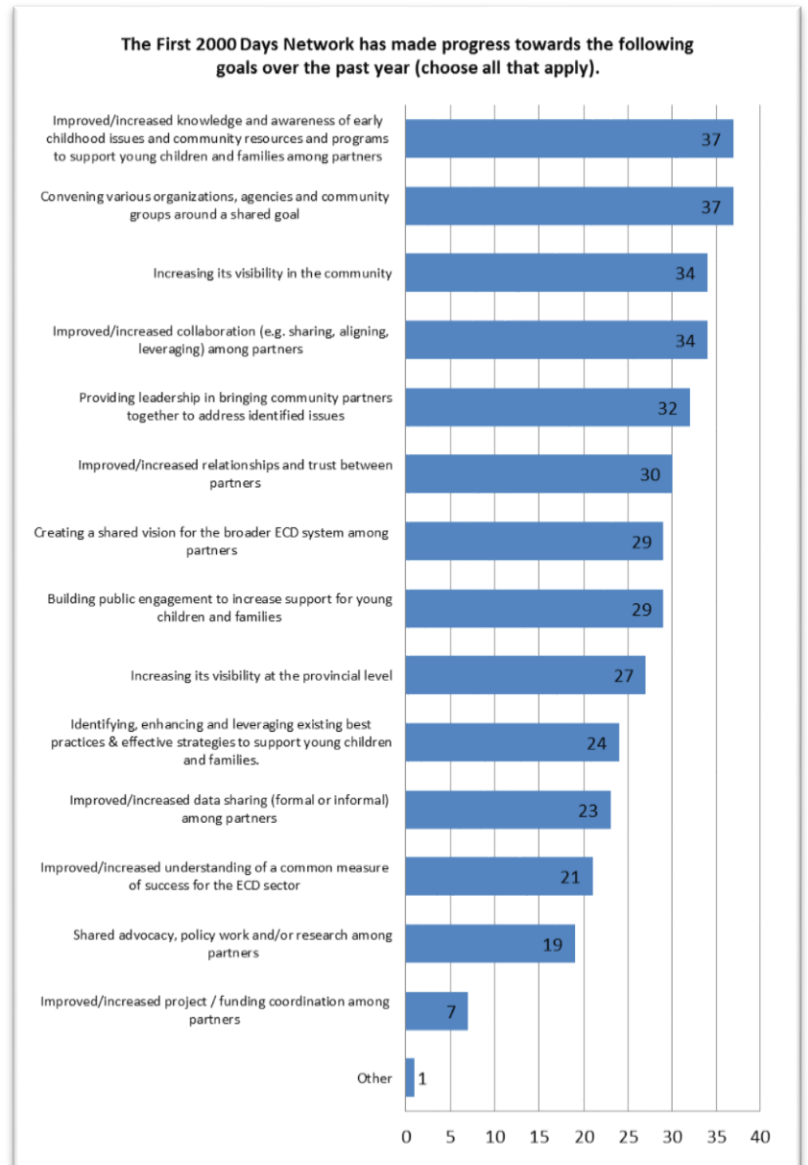
¹ Based on research by the Center for the Study of Social Policy. Strengthening Families Five Protective Factors framework.

Perceptions of System Accomplishments

Respondents were asked: “The First 2000 Days Network has made progress towards the following goals over the past year (choose all that apply).”

More than half of respondents agreed that progress has been made on the following over the last year:

- Convening various organizations, agencies and community groups around a shared goal
- Improved/increased knowledge and awareness of early childhood issues and community resources and programs to support young children and families among partners
- Improved/increased collaboration (e.g. sharing, aligning, leveraging) among partners
- Increasing its visibility in the community
- Providing leadership in bringing community partners together to address identified issues
- Improved/increased relationships and trust between partners
- Building public engagement to increase support for young children and families
- Creating a shared vision for the broader ECD system among partners
- Increasing its visibility at the provincial level

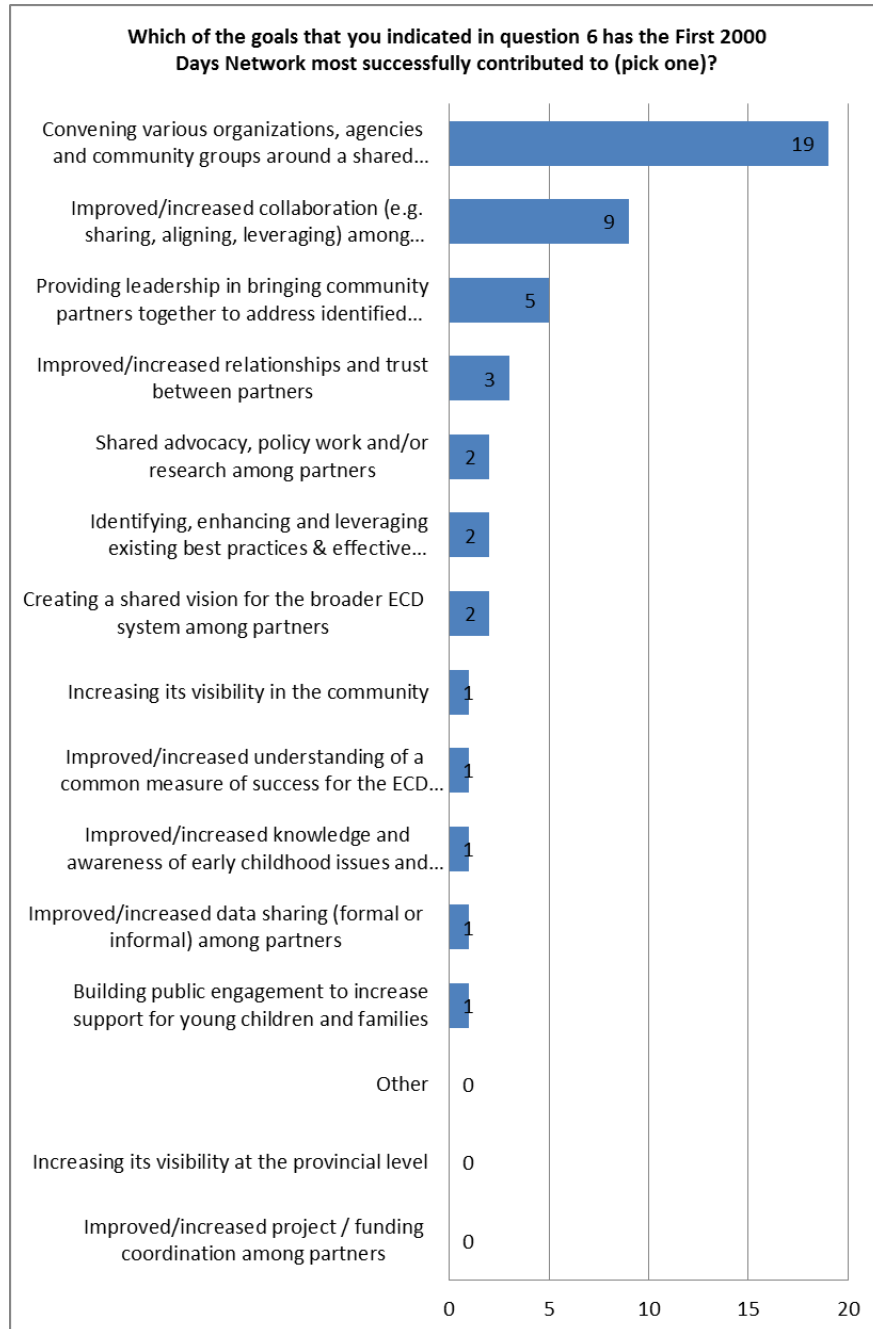


Less than half of the respondents reported that the First 2000 Days Network had achieved:

- Identifying, enhancing and leveraging existing best practices & effective strategies to support young children and families.
- Improved/increased data sharing (formal or informal) among partners
- Improved/increased understanding of a common measure of success for the ECD sector
- Shared advocacy, policy work and/or research among partners
- Improved/increased project / funding coordination among partners
- Other

The respondents were then asked: “Which of the goals that you indicated in question 6 has the First 2000 Days Network most successfully contributed to (pick one)?

Majority of respondents (38%) chose ‘Convening various organizations, agencies and community groups around a shared goal’ as the First 2000 Days Network most successfully achieved goal.



Questions to Consider: Is the Network adequately achieving success at acting as a catalyst for sharing, aligning and leveraging opportunities with the ECD sector? If not, why is this the case? Do members agree with Network leadership on if success has been achieved? If not, how can Network leadership better communicate achievements to membership? What are the top outcomes of this network? What are the top most important outcomes of this network? What characteristics of the network may explain that finding?

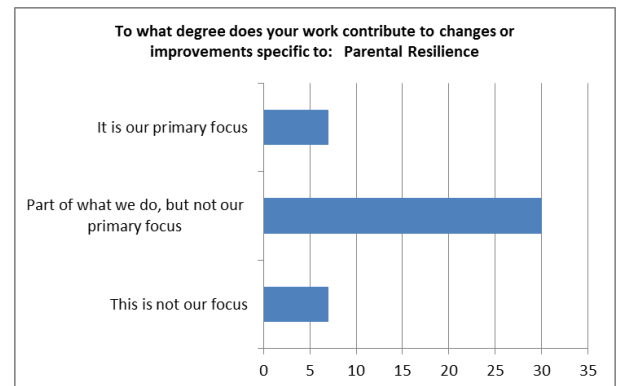
Aligning & Leveraging Contributions: Contributions to Improved ECD Outcomes

In order to get baseline data from participants on their efforts to improve ECD outcomes they were asked to identify how their work contributed in five categories:

1. Perceptions of Change/Improvement Specific to Parental Resilience

To what degree does your work contribute to changes or improvements specific to **Parental Resilience**? *(Parents/Caregivers' ability to manage stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma including general life stressors and parenting stressors.)*

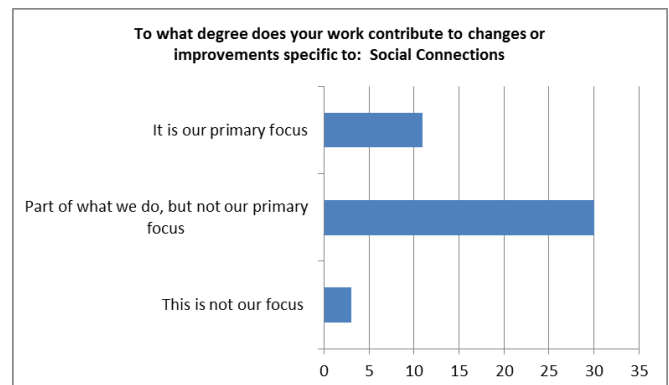
Majority of respondents (68%) chose 'Part of what we do, but not our primary focus', while 16% chose either 'It is our primary focus' or 'This is not our focus'.



2. Perceptions of Change/Improvement Specific to Social Connections

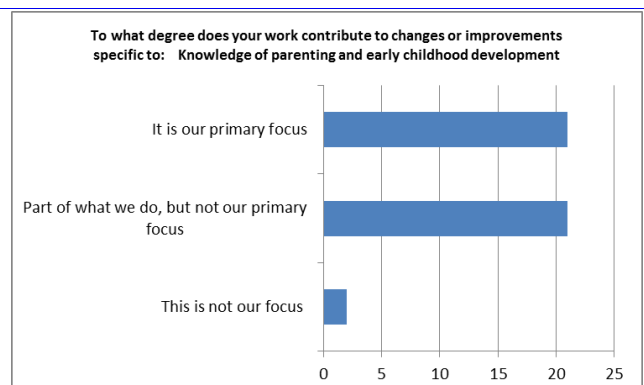
To what degree does your work contribute to changes or improvements specific to **Social Connections**? *(Parents/Caregivers having a sense of connectedness with constructive, supportive people and institutions. This includes having trusting, respected, appreciative relationships and having people who provide emotional, instrumental, informational, and/or spiritual support.)*

Majority of respondents (68%) chose 'Part of what we do, but not our primary focus', 25% chose 'It is our primary focus' and 7% chose 'This is not our focus'.



3. Perceptions of Change/Improvement Specific to Knowledge of Parenting and Early Childhood Development

To what degree does your work contribute to changes or improvements specific to **Knowledge of parenting and early childhood development**? *(Parents/Caregivers' understanding of parenting best practices and developmentally appropriate child skills and behaviors. This includes having accurate and age/stage related information about parental*

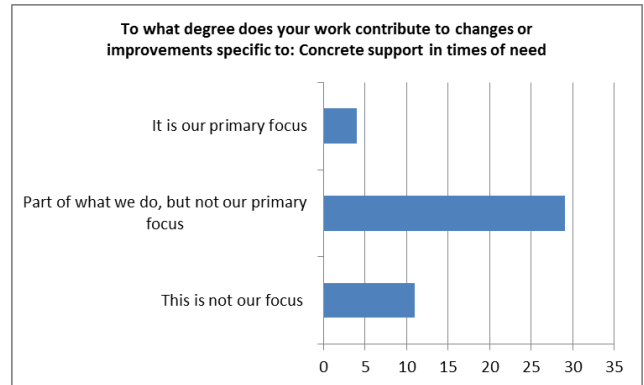


behaviors, appropriate developmental expectations, positive discipline techniques and attending to the individual needs of a child.)

Majority of respondents (48%) chose either ‘Part of what we do, but not our primary focus’ or ‘It is our primary focus’ and 5% chose ‘This is not our focus’.

4. Perceptions of Change/Improvement Specific to Concrete Support in Times of Need

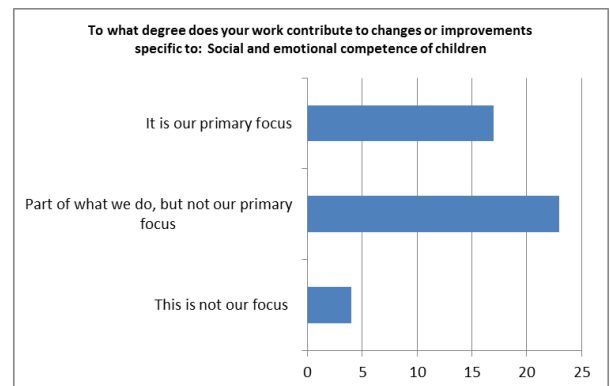
To what degree does your work contribute to changes or improvements specific to **Concrete support in times of need**? (*Parents/Caregivers’ ability to identify, access and receive needed adult, child and family services. This includes parents/caregivers ability to be resourceful, find and receive basic necessities, knowing about relevant services, seeking help when needed, and having financial security to cover basic needs.*)



Majority of respondents (66%) chose ‘Part of what we do, but not our primary focus’, 25% of respondents chose ‘This is not our focus’ and 9% chose ‘It is our primary focus’.

5. Perceptions of Change/Improvement Specific to Social and Emotional Competence of Children

To what degree does your work contribute to changes or improvements specific to **Social and emotional competence of children**? (*Parents/caregivers ability to form secure adult and peer relationships; experiencing, regulating and expressing emotions. This includes the parent being able to have actively support a positive relationship with their child and children’s ability to self-regulate, interact positively with others, use words and language skills, and to communicate emotions effectively.*)



Majority of respondents (52%) chose ‘Part of what we do, but not our primary focus’, while 39% of respondents chose ‘It is our primary focus’, and 9% chose ‘This is not our focus’.

Note: The five categories listed here are taken from the Center for the Study of Social Policy’s research on protective/promotive factors for Strengthening Families. The Network uses this approach to guide the Shared Measurement aspect of the Collective Impact framework.

Network Scores: Density, Centrality, and Overall Trust

The survey respondents said they had many connections to one another. The four most connected respondents have an average of 41 connections per partner, leaving the remaining 46 partners averaging 18 connections per partner. This explains the density score (42%) and the centralization score (59%). Overall, the 50 respondents rated their relationships as trusted between partners, with a high overall trust score of 78%.

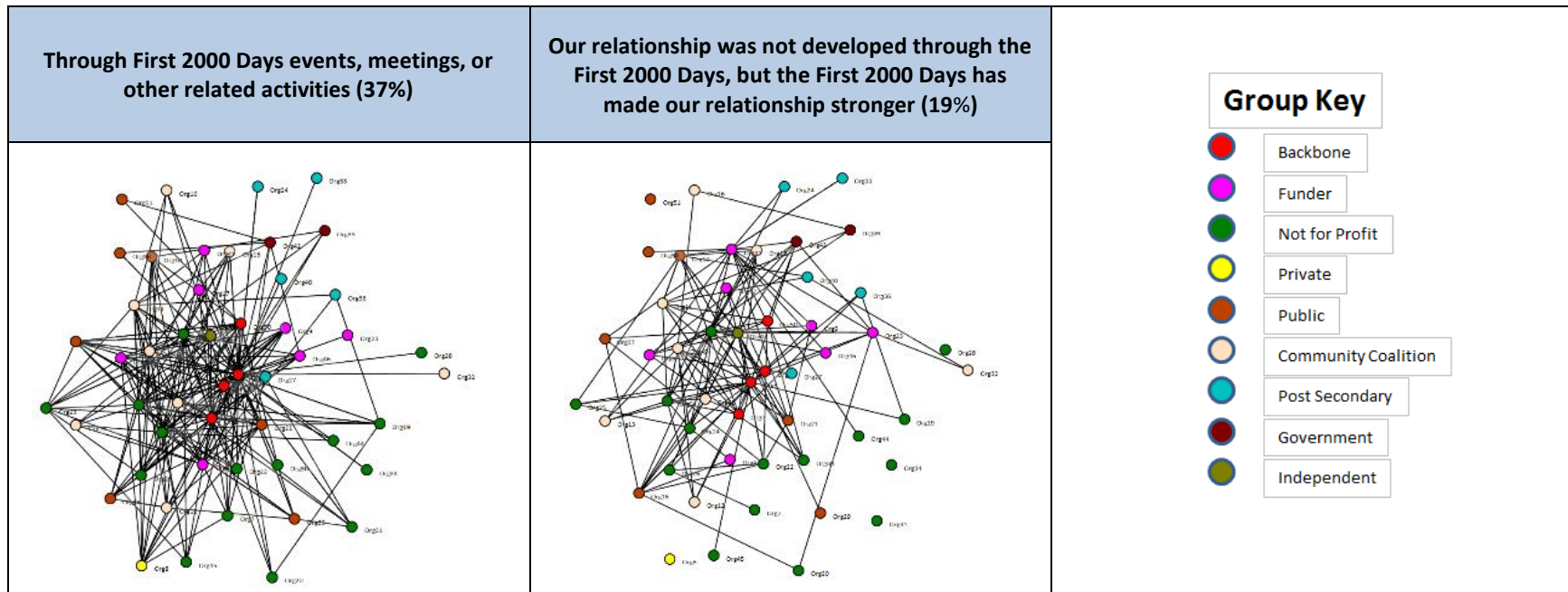
Density	42%	Density: Percentage of ties present in the network in relation to the total number of possible ties in the entire network.
Degree Centralization	59%	Degree Centralization: The lower the centralization score, the more similar the members are in terms of their number of connections to others (e.g. more decentralized).
Trust	78%	Trust: The percentage of how much members trust one another. A 100% occurs when all members trust others at the highest level.



QI Questions to Consider: Density: If your network believes that connecting as many members as possible is an ideal approach, then this score can represent how well you are achieving that goal. However, increasing density is only one strategy among many because relationships do take time. It is important to look at how much density there is relative to how many members present. If there are numerous members it is not feasible to have a high density score because members do not have time to foster many meaningful connections. Centralization: Lower scores indicate a less centralized network (many members at the “center” of the network with equal number of relationships). More centralization indicates fewer points of coordination. In other words, coordination is centralized around only a few members. Trust: How high is the level of overall trust? If it is not what the network is aiming for, what steps can be taken to increase trust among all members?

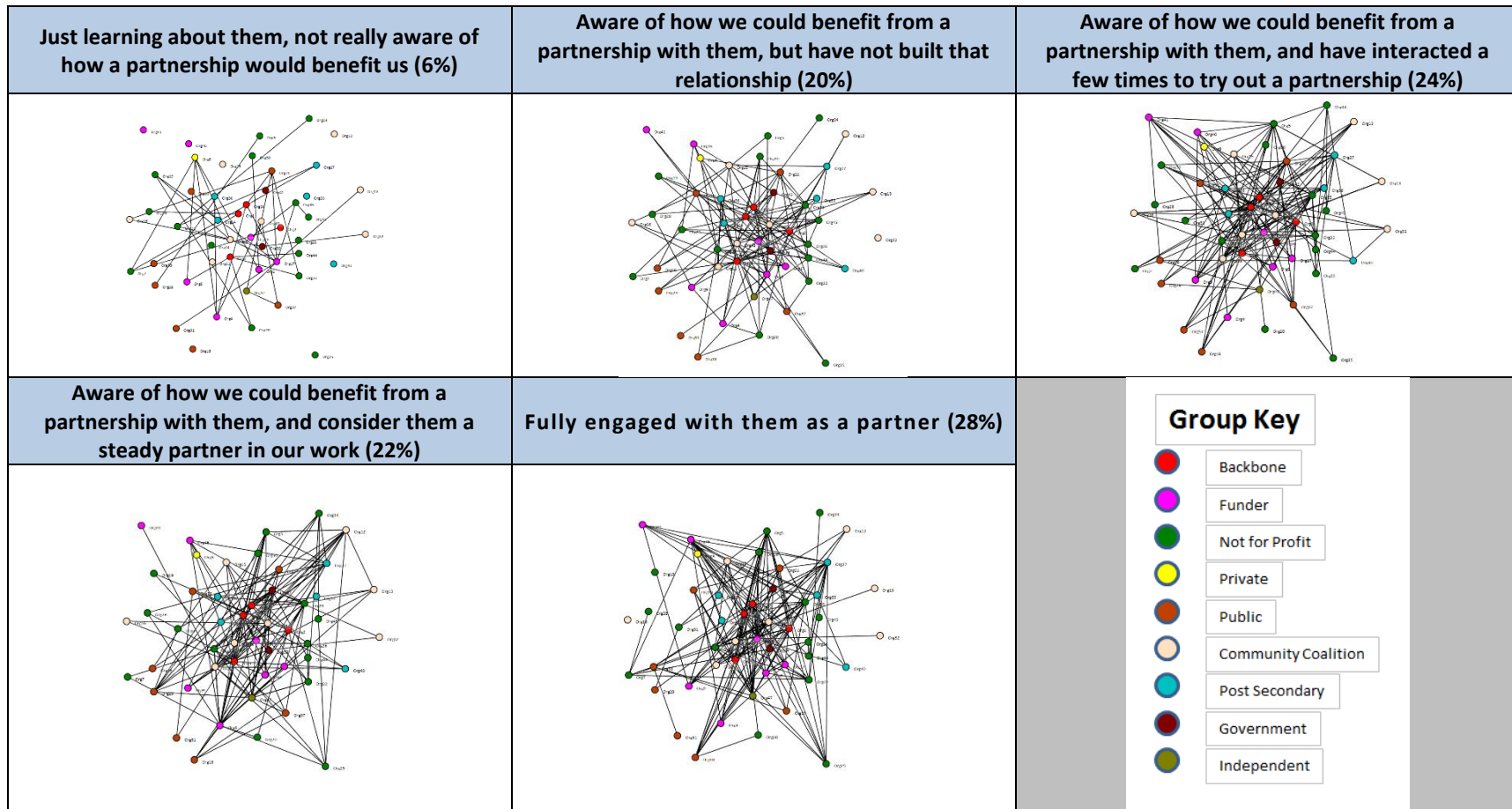
Network Maps – Development of Partnerships

Respondents were asked “Please describe how your relationship with each of these partners was developed [pick all that apply]”. Most respondents (37%) reported that their relationships were developed either through First 2000 Days Network events, meetings, or other related activities or through other community venues/work not related to The First 2000 Days Network. While 19% said their relationship was not developed through The First 2000 Days Network, but they did report that The First 2000 Days Network made the relationship stronger.



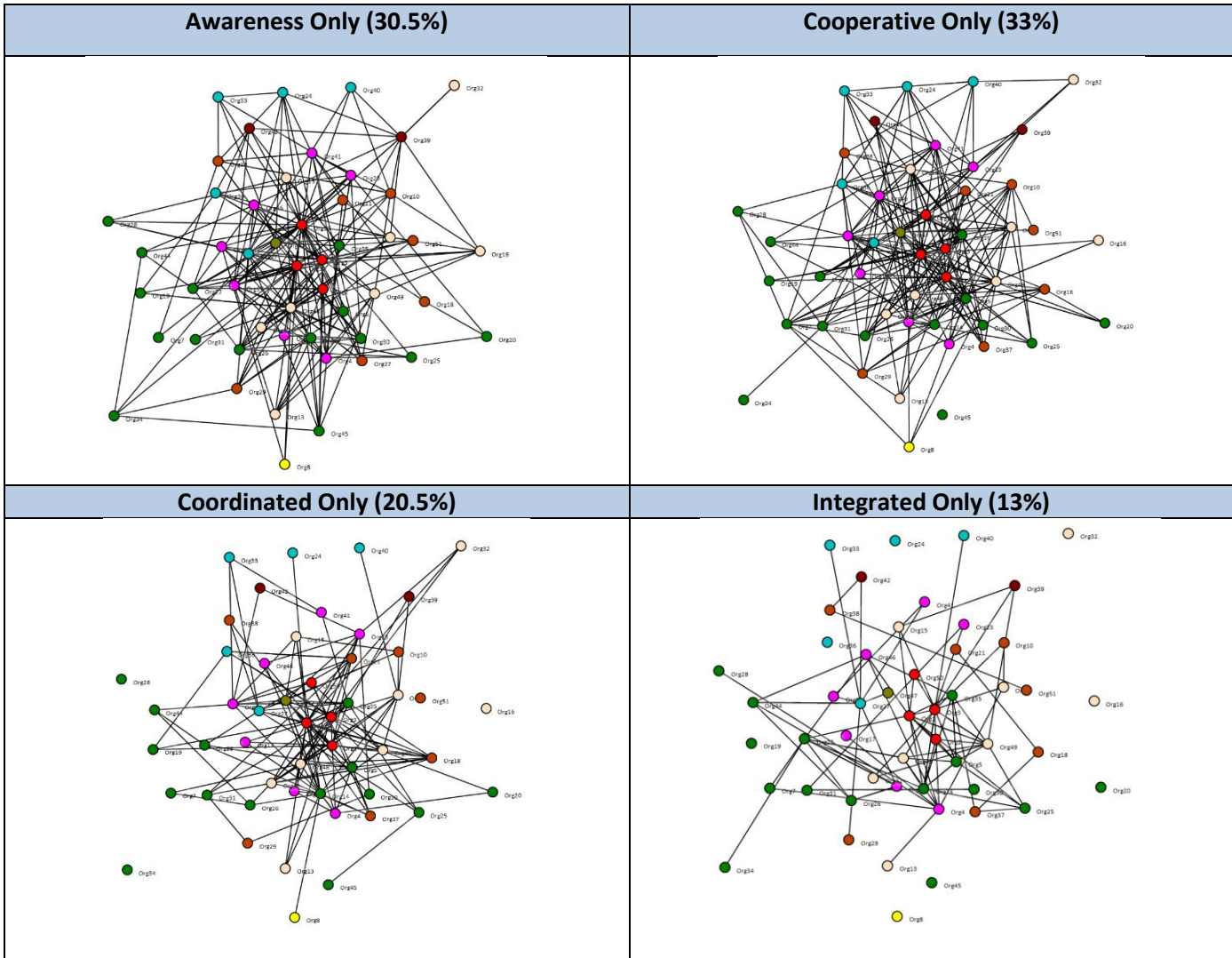
Network Maps – Description of Partnerships

The respondents were asked “How would you describe them as a current or potential partner? [Please pick one]”. Most respondents reported that they are fully engaged with them as a partner (28%). While 24% said they were aware of how we could benefit from a partnership with them, and have interacted a few times to try out a partnership. 22% said they were aware of how we could benefit from a partnership with them, and consider them a steady partner in our work. 20% said they were aware of how we could benefit from a partnership with them, but have not built that relationship. Only 6% of the respondents said that they are just learning about them, not really aware of how a partnership would benefit us.



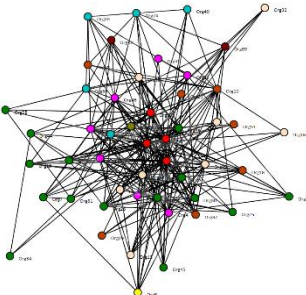
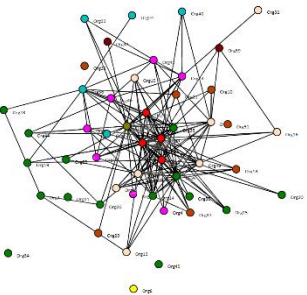
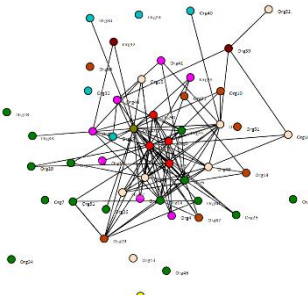
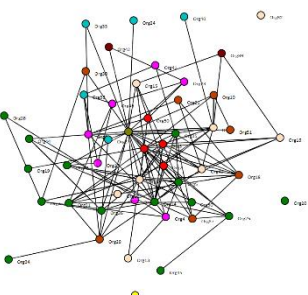
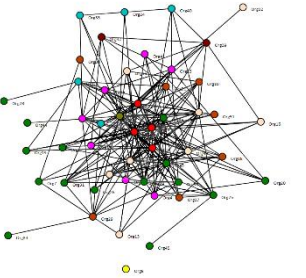
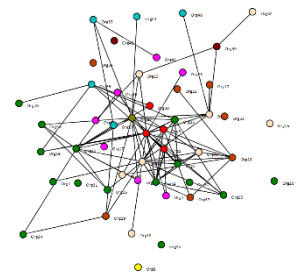
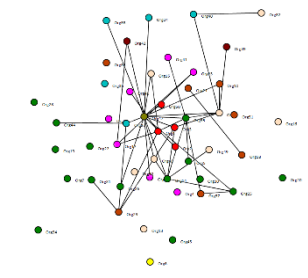
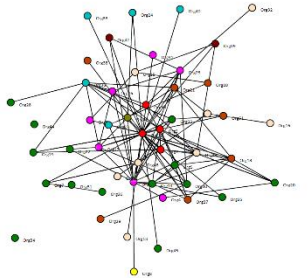
Network Maps – Relationship Intensity

While a small number of connections (13%) identified that they only had integrated connections with partners, most indicated that they only had awareness of other orgs (30.5%), cooperative (33%), or coordinated (20.5%) connections with one another.

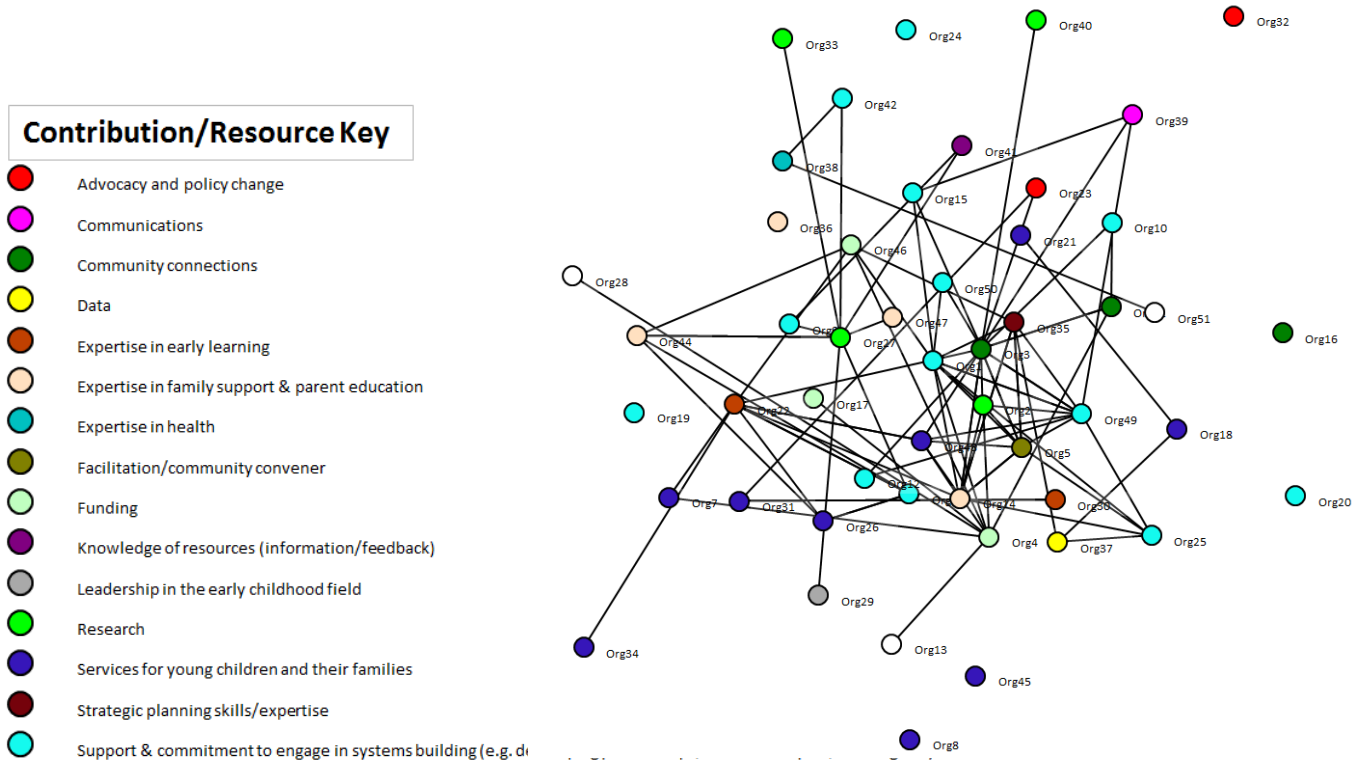


Network Maps: Outcomes of Partnerships

Images below show what the respondents reported that their partnerships enabled them to achieve. They were asked to describe whether each of their partnerships achieved one of the following outcomes. The majority of partnerships are informative only (52%), while 43% reported that partnerships led to an exchange of resources, improved organizational capacity (30%) and improved services or supports for young children & families (23%) and led to improved efficiency and effectiveness (20%).

Informative Only (52%)	Improved our capacity (30%)	Improved efficiency and effectiveness (20%)	Improved services or supports for young children & families (23%)
			
Resource Exchange (42%)	New program development (17%)	Has resulted in systems change (7%)	No Result in any systems change, but we anticipate that it will (18%)
			

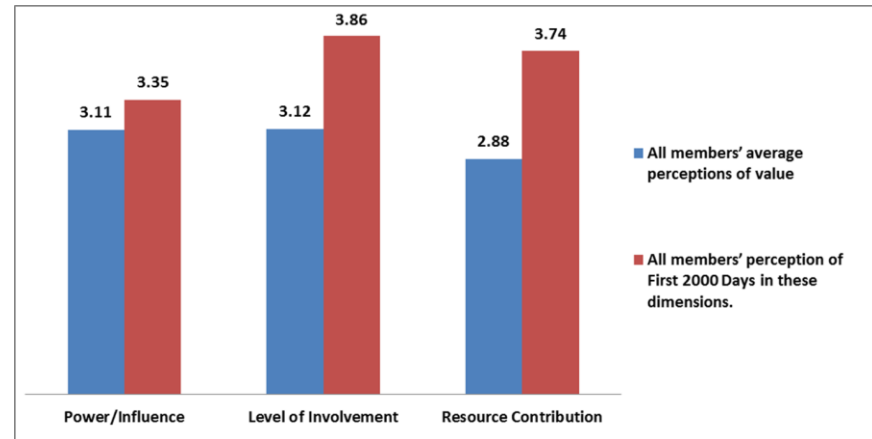
Members Most Important Contributions to the Network



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER. Is the network properly leveraging the most important contributions given to the network from members? What resources are underrepresented? Why is that the case? What new members could be added that could provide these resources? Are there any resources that were represented at all? What steps could be taken to acquire this resource either through a new member or an existing member?

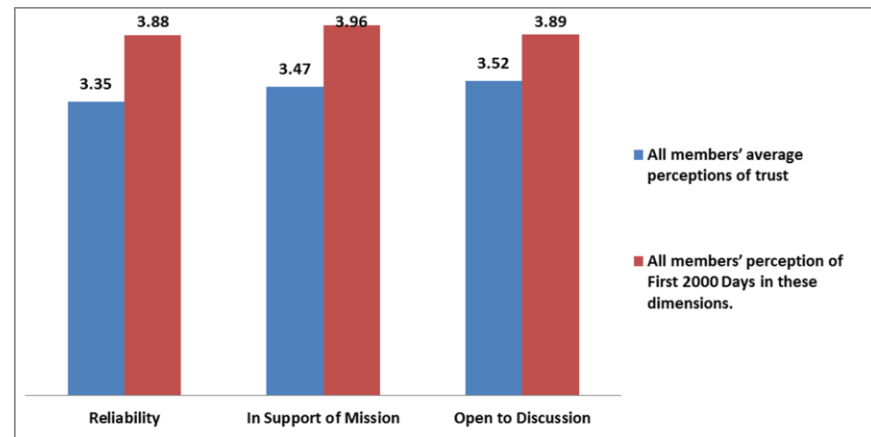
Value Measures

Value measures include power/influence, level of involvement, and resource contributions. Measuring value is important for an effective network to ensure you are leveraging all members' value within the network adequately. Members do not supply value in the same way, some use their power and influence, some donate their time through based on their level of involvement, and some are able to contribute specific resources that the network needs to function. The following chart shows all members' averaged perceptions along the three dimensions of value, then all members' perception of First 2000 Days in the three dimensions of value.



Trust Measures

Trust Measures include reliability, in support of mission, and open to discussion. Measuring trust is important for capacity-building within the network is fundamental for an effective network, including having strong members who work well together, establishing clear and open communication, developing mutual respect and trust, and working toward a shared mission and goals. The following chart shows all members' averaged perceptions along the three dimensions of trust, then all members' perception of First 2000 Days in the three dimensions of trust.



In the First 2000 Days Network, there is a high degree of trust among the members. In almost every category along all dimensions, the perceptions of one another are very high.

Process Quality/Working Together Survey

Process Quality Rating Scale

Overall, the full Process Quality Rating Scale includes 20 questions related to the functioning of a collaborative process. For this evaluation we only used a portion of the scale. The items ask respondents to look at such things as whether the process is “open and credible. We only looked at one subscale of the full Process Quality Rating Scale:

- Authenticity – the openness and sincerity of the process

Scores of 4.25 or higher indicate a “good” collaborative process. Items with lower scores merit some attention and discussion by the network, as well as some possible outside technical assistance. The scoring insures that the 4.25 or higher cut-point for “good” collaborative processes applies to all items no matter their phrasing.

The First 2000 Days Network overall mean score (3.82) for **Authenticity Subscale** is lower than 4.25, so considered not good. Scores in **red** in the table below indicate areas for further examination.

Details of First 2000 Days Network Process Quality-Authenticity Scores:

	Process Quality Questions	Score
#22	Often decisions are made in advance and simply confirmed by the process (Authenticity)	3.63
#23	In the process, some people’s “merits” are taken for granted while other people are asked to justify themselves (Authenticity).	4.34
#24	In the process, strings are being pulled from the outside, which influence important decisions (Authenticity).	3.50

Working Together Scale

The *Working Together Scale* has some overlap with the *Process Quality Scale*, but it looks more at group interactions, norms, motivations for participation, and results of the collaboration. For this evaluation we only used a portion of the scale.

For this evaluation we only look at two components to the *Working Together Scale*:

- The Structure of the Collaboration – looks at Network make-up and operating norms
- The Results of the Collaboration – the ultimate perceived value of the collaborative

Unlike the *Process Quality Scale*, the items in this section of the survey are answered on a scale of 1-4, with a rating of 3.0 or higher signifying a “good” score. Scores that fall below this mark are highlighted for further reflection and discussion by the Network membership.

The First 2000 Days Network mean score for **Working Together** subscale is lower than 3.0, so considered not good. Scores in **red** in the table below indicate areas for further examination.

Details of First 2000 Days Network Working Together Scale Rating Scale:

	Working Together Scale	Score
#25	As a result of participation in this collaboration, my organization, agency, or community group has adopted shared goals developed by the First 2000 Days Network (Results of the Collaboration).	2.89
#26	My organization, agency, or community group has developed or improved programs or services it delivers as a result of participation in the First 2000 Days Network (Results of the Collaboration).	2.73
#27	There are clearly defined roles for the members of the First 2000 Days Network (Structure of the Collaboration).	2.52

Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the process of working with the PARTNER tool and the team at the University of Colorado, Denver has been crucial in informing the future development of The First 2000 Days Network. The information provided in this report, as well as what we've learned from the process will help inform our strategy, development, work plans, engagement and evaluation approaches going forward.

If you would like more information about this report or the First 2000 Days Network, please contact Blythe Butler at: info@2000days.ca