



# **A Life Course Framework for Improving the Lives of Disadvantaged Populations**

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**Arnold Chandler | Forward Change**

# About Forward Change

Forward Change is a mission-driven consulting firm that seeks to **improve the life outcomes and opportunities for children, young adults and families** living in low-income disadvantaged communities.

We do this by helping foundations, governments and community organizations **adopt social change strategies that match the best that research has to offer with the on-the-ground leadership in communities.**

# Overview

1. Why we should focus on (Gender) Boys and Men of Color (BMOC)?: **A Gender-Specific Cycle of Intergenerational Disadvantage**
2. A Life Course Framework for Improving the Lives of Disadvantaged Populations: **Interrupting the Cycle**
3. Mapping an Intervention Pipeline from Cradle to Career

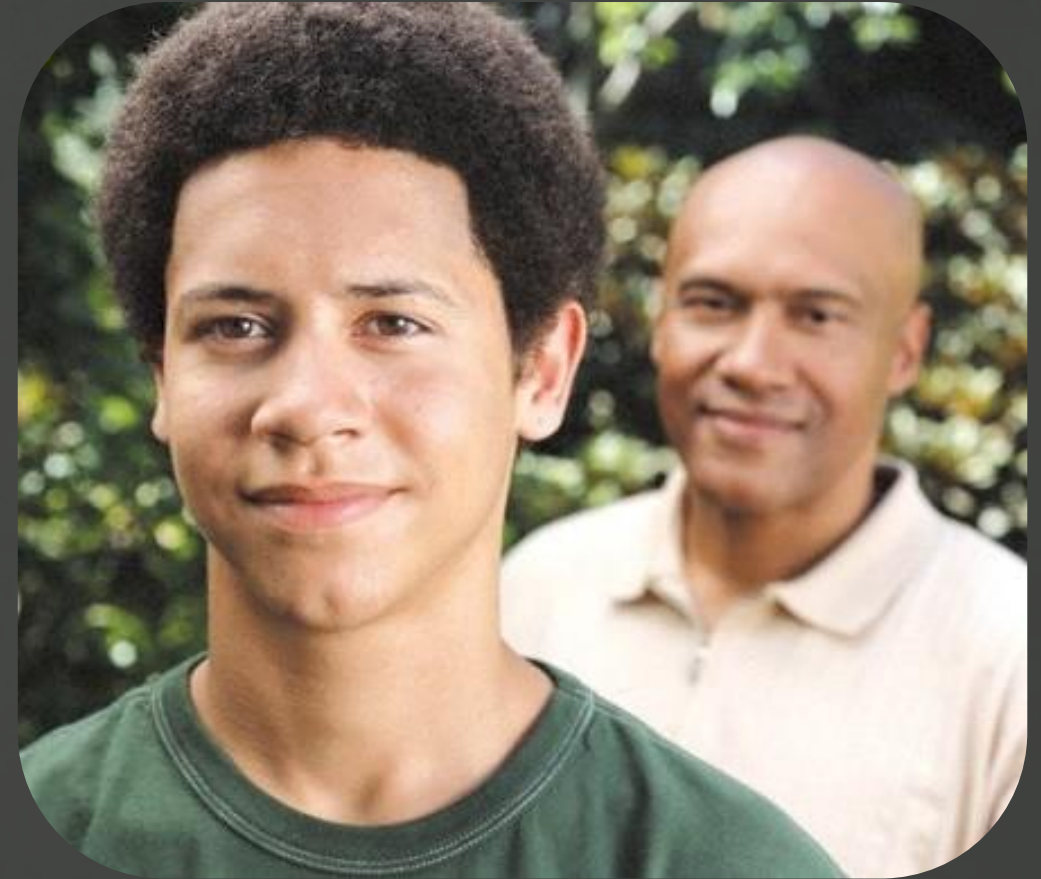
## Things to keep in mind about gender disparities.

1. Girls doing better doesn't mean they're doing well
2. The lives of males and females are inextricably intertwined
3. Disadvantage operates in gender-specific ways

# Why Focus on (Gender) Boys and Men of Color?

# Why Focus on Gender and Race?

- **Gross disparities in particular negative outcomes:** *Violence victimization and offending, crime and incarceration.*
- **Males of color are showing negative or stagnant trends in key opportunity outcomes relative to females:** *Employment and Earnings, High school graduation, college enrollment and completion*
- **A vicious cycle of intergenerational male disadvantage:** *Disadvantaged families are disproportionately more damaging to male educational outcomes than females.*



# Declining Employment and Earnings



# Demand-Side Shifts in Employment



**Declining  
Employment  
and Earnings**

**Technological Change**

**Off-shoring of middle-skill jobs and  
import competition (China)**

**Decline in Unions**

**Suburbanization of low-skilled jobs  
("spatial mismatch")**

**Legal discrimination against felons**

**Illegal Employment Discrimination in  
Low-Wage Jobs**

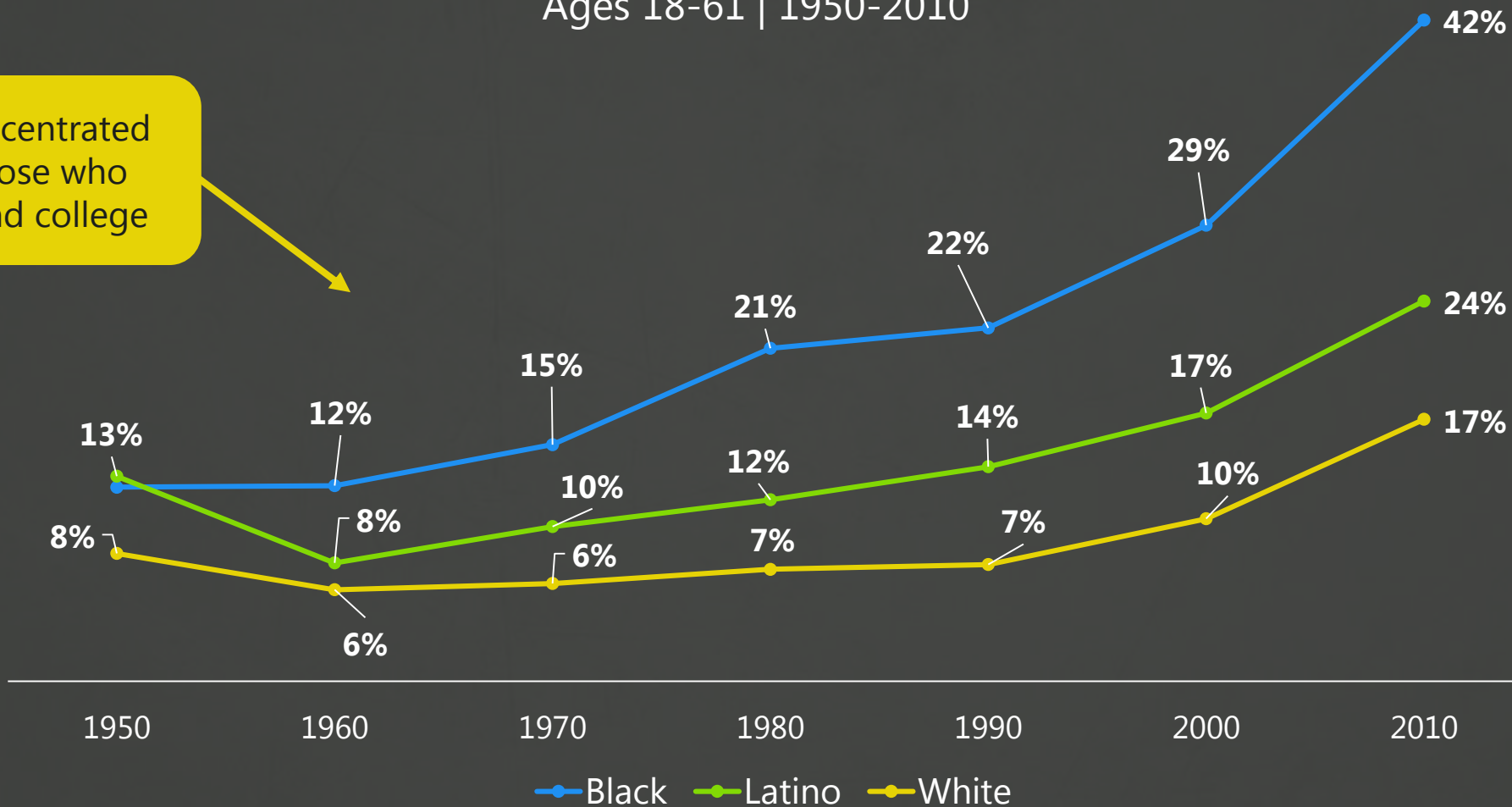


# Declining Male Employment

## Joblessness Among Native-Born Males

Ages 18-61 | 1950-2010

Heavily concentrated  
among those who  
didn't attend college



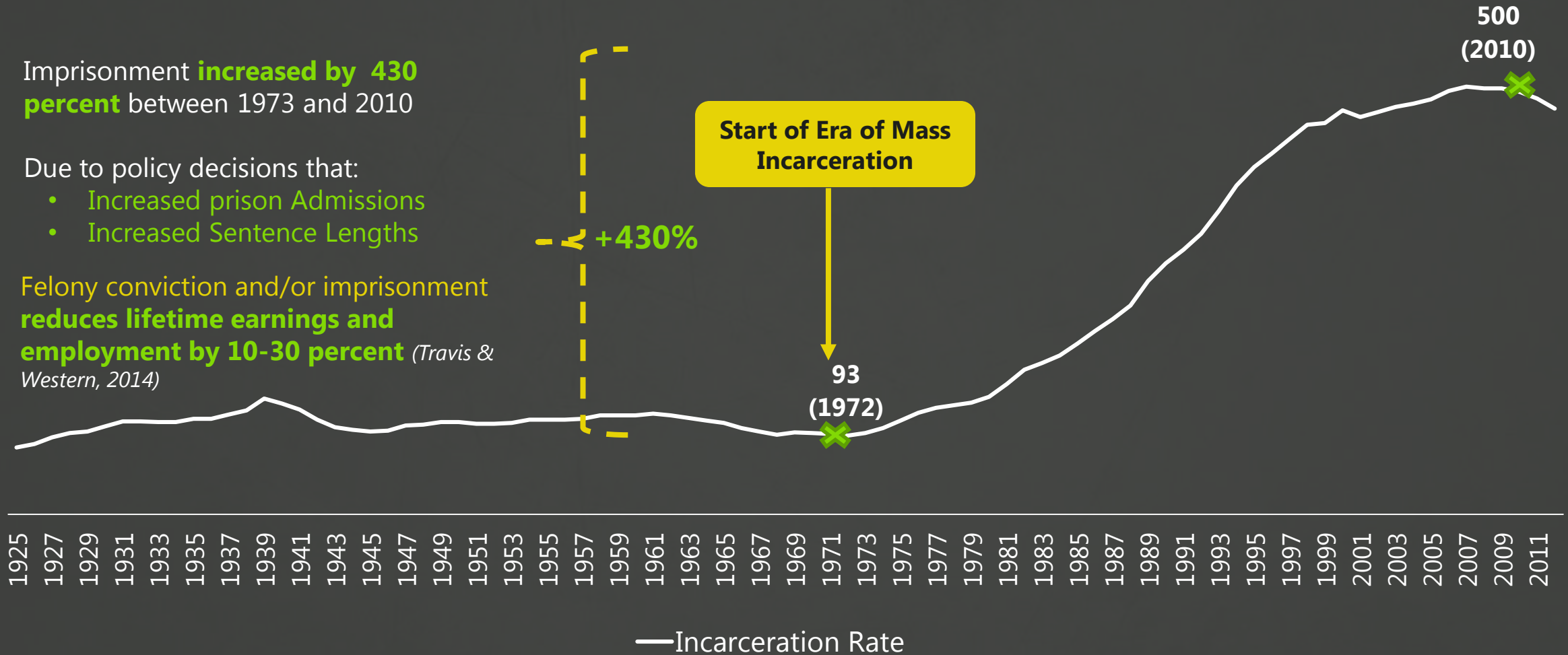
# Mass Incarceration and Declining Employment and Earnings

## Historical Incarceration Rates (1925-2012)

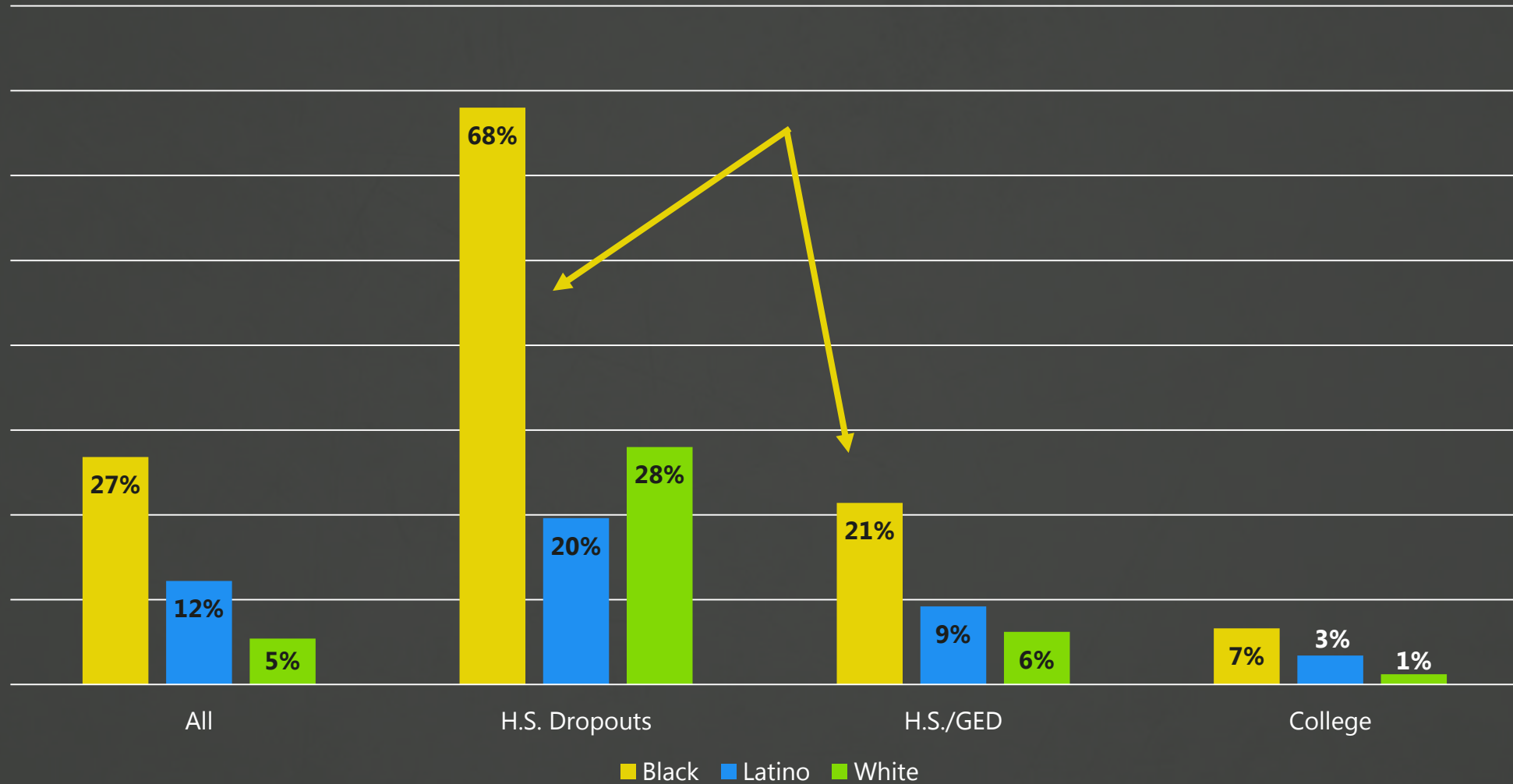
(State and Federal Prisoners per 100K Population)

2.3 million in prisons  
or jails (2012) BJS

- Imprisonment **increased by 430 percent** between 1973 and 2010
- Due to policy decisions that:
  - Increased prison Admissions
  - Increased Sentence Lengths
- Felony conviction and/or imprisonment **reduces lifetime earnings and employment by 10-30 percent** (Travis & Western, 2014)



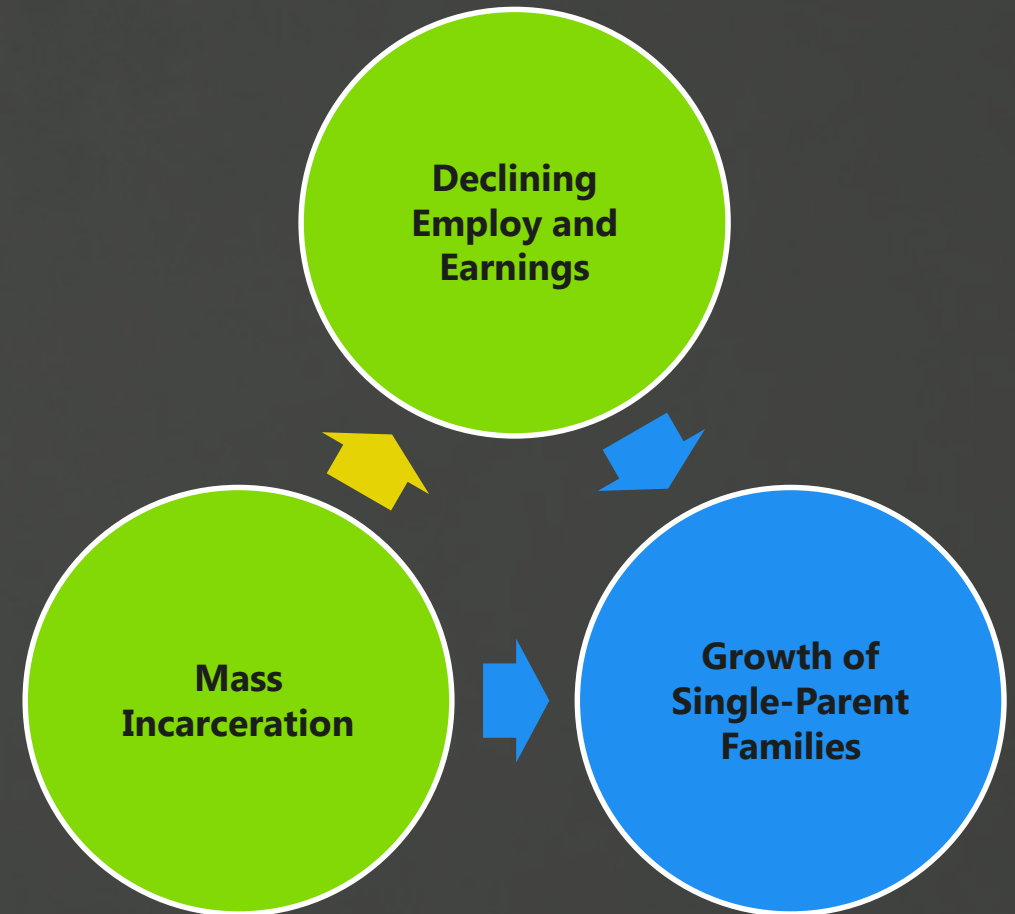
## Lifetime Risk of Imprisonment by Age 35 for Males in 2010 (by Education Level)



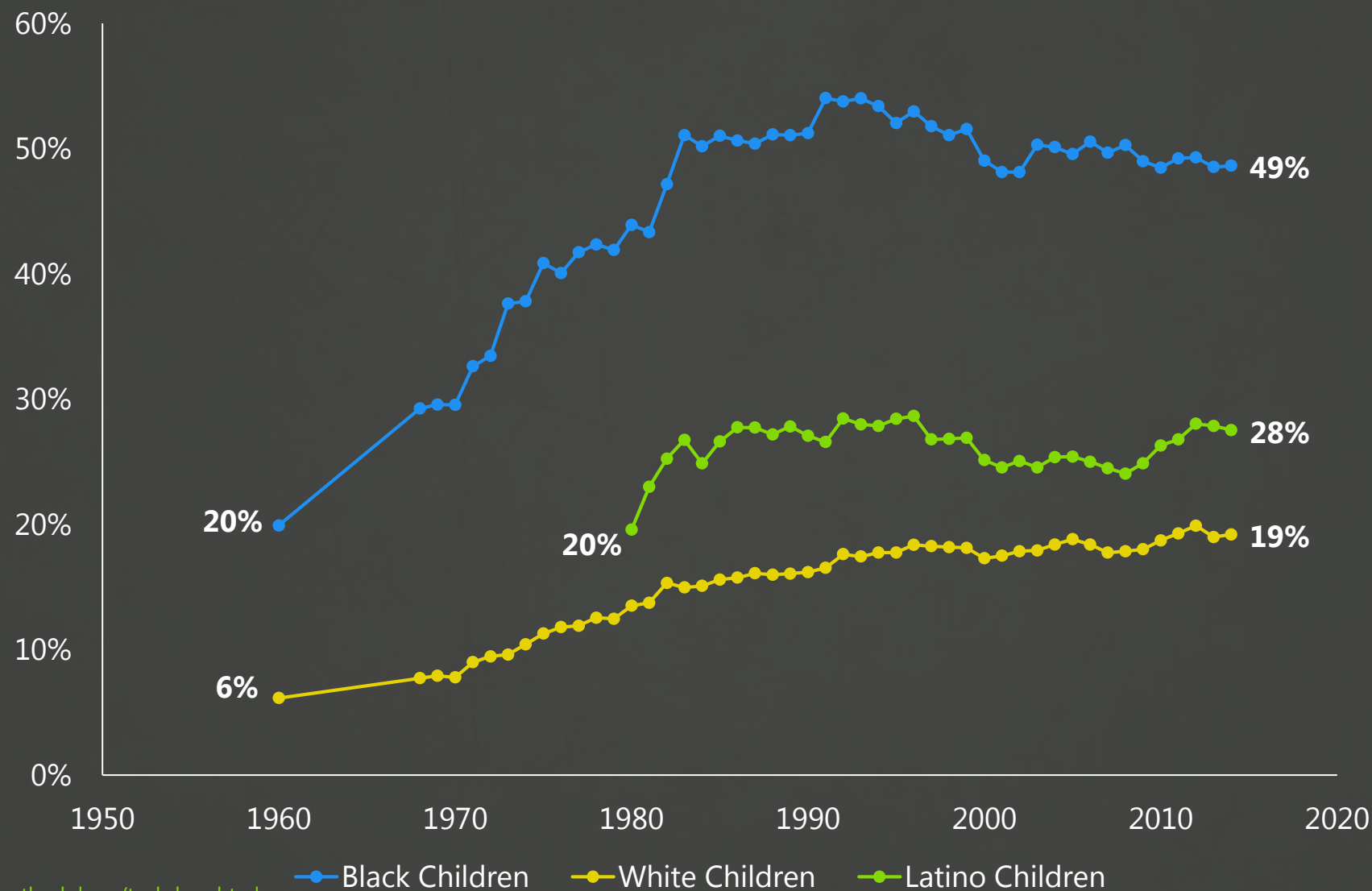
# Rise of Disadvantaged Families

# »»» Rise of Single Parent Families

- The decline in “working class” family in America and the class divide in family formation led by broad economic changes and buttressed by cultural changes (*Cherlin, 2014*)
- Decline of “marriageable males” and imbalanced sex ratios (83 black men for every 100 black women) (*Wilson, 1996, Wolfers et al. 2015*)
- Incarceration reduces male parental involvement post-release (*Travis and Western, 2014*)



## Percentage of Children Living in Single Parent Families (1960-2014)



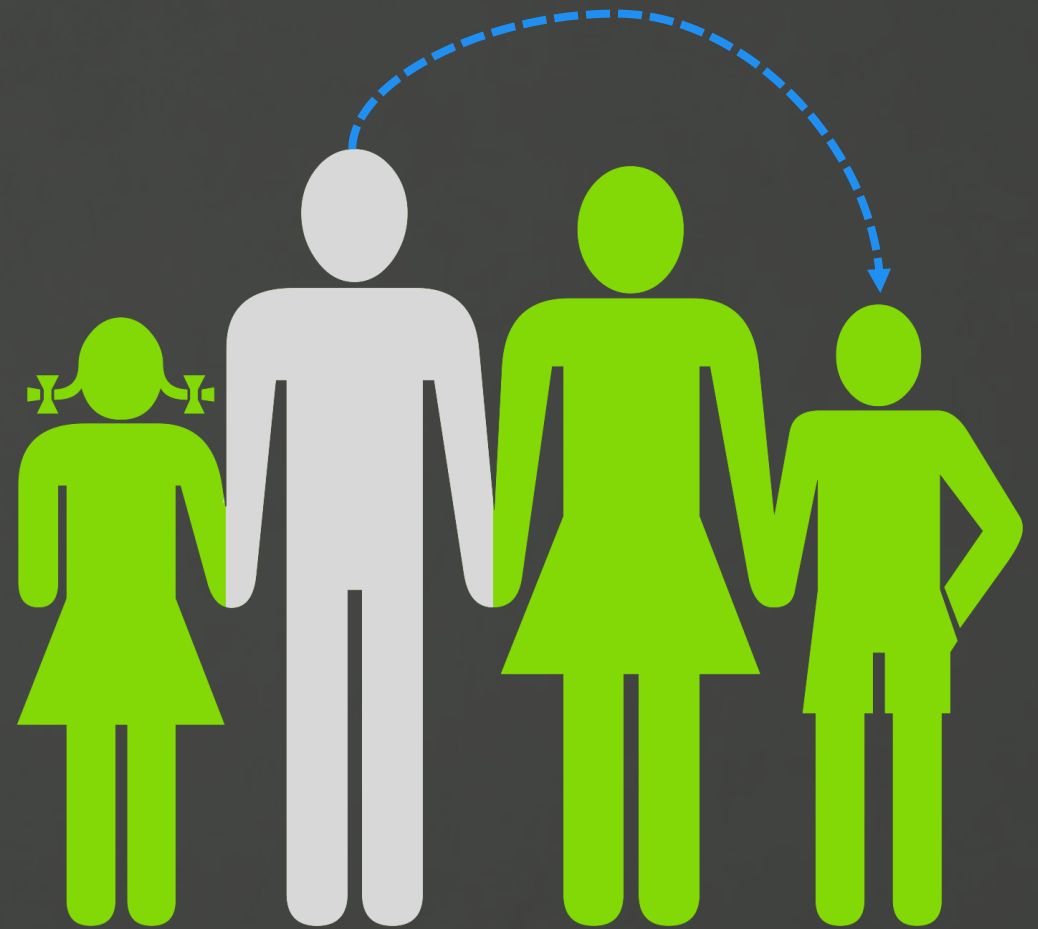


## Gender-Specific Effects of Family Disadvantage on Educational Outcomes

# Gender-Specific Effects of Family Disadvantage on Educational & Employment Outcomes

## Growing up in a single-parent family:

- Reduces college attendance for boys, but not for girls (*Jacob, 2002*)
- Increases juvenile delinquency among boys, but not girls (*Cobb-Clark, 2011*)
- Increases behavior problems significantly more among boys than girls (*Bertrand and Pan, 2011*)
- Causes behavioral and academic outcomes between boys and girls to substantially diverge starting in Kindergarten: Based on a sample of 1 million Florida kids (*Autor, 2015*)
- Causes a reversal of gender gap in the likelihood that males will work compared to girls. Boys raised in single parent families work less than girls as adults: Based on a U.S. sample of 10 million children. (*Chetty, 2016*)



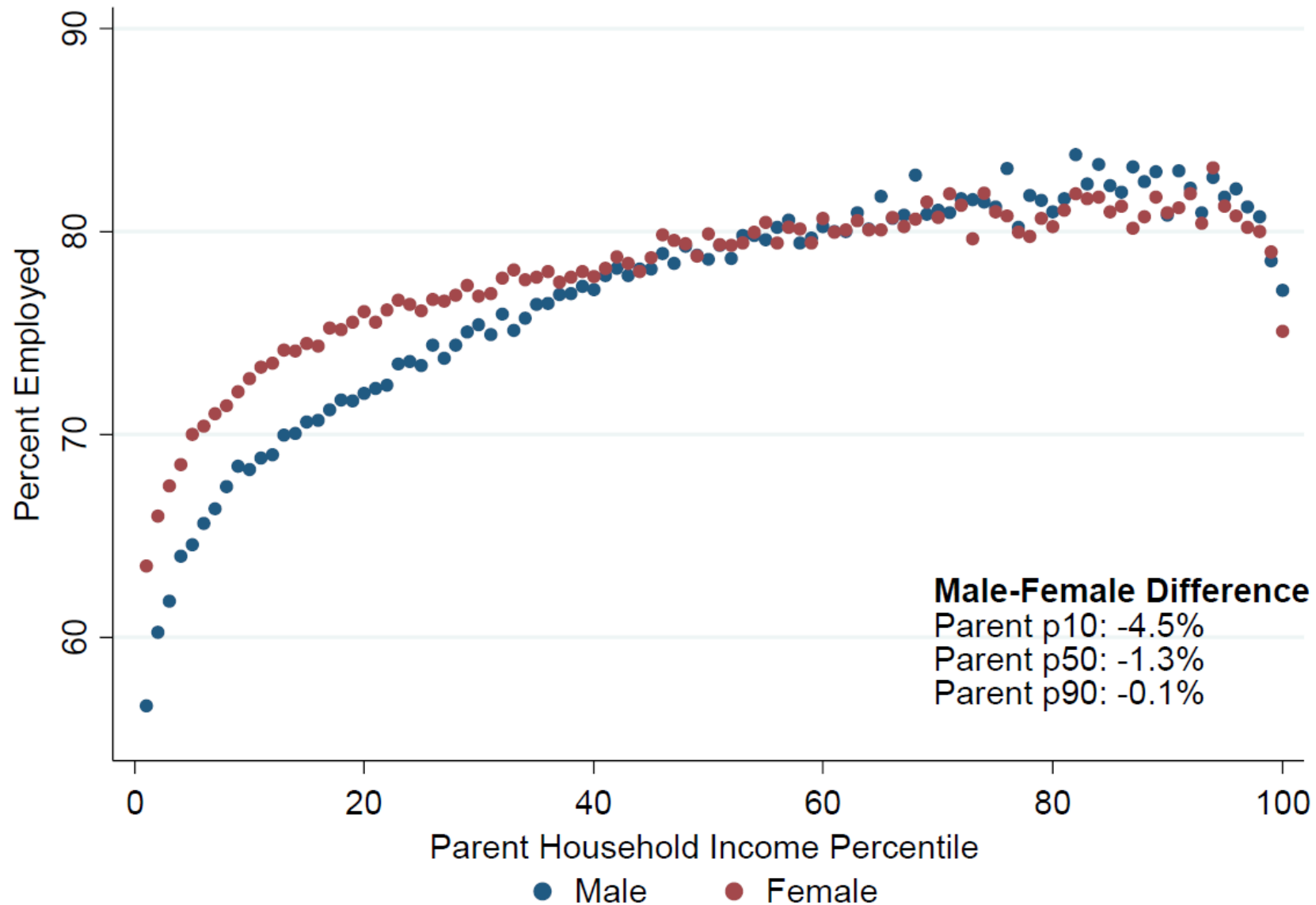
## Children's Employment Rates at Age 30 by Gender and Parent Income Percentile

Married Parent Households



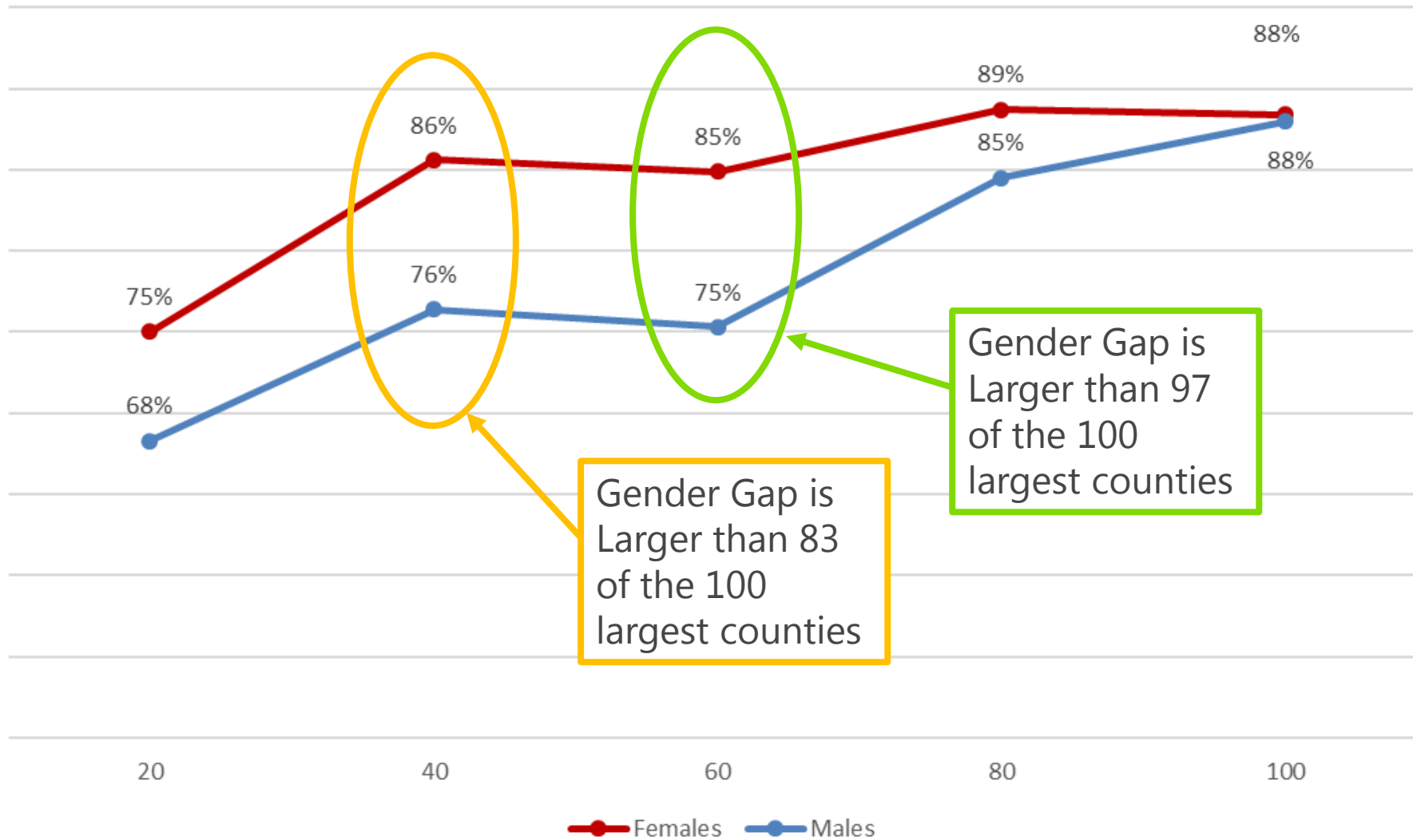
## Children's Employment Rates at Age 30 by Gender and Parent Income Percentile

Single Parent Households



# HARTFORD: Children's Employment Rates at Age 30 by Gender and Parent Income Percentile

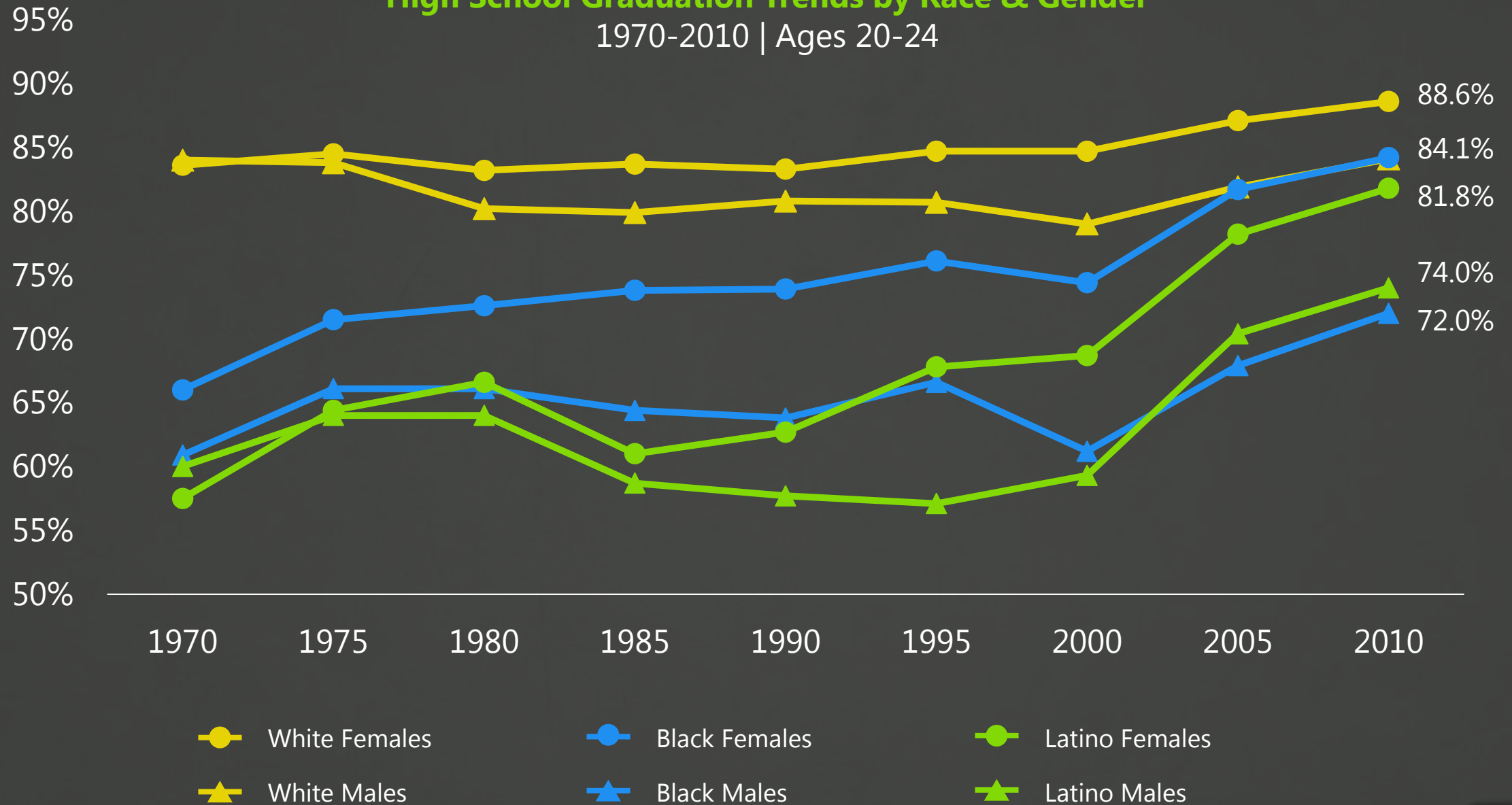
## Single Parent Households



# Stagnant Male Educational Attainment

## High School Graduation Trends by Race & Gender

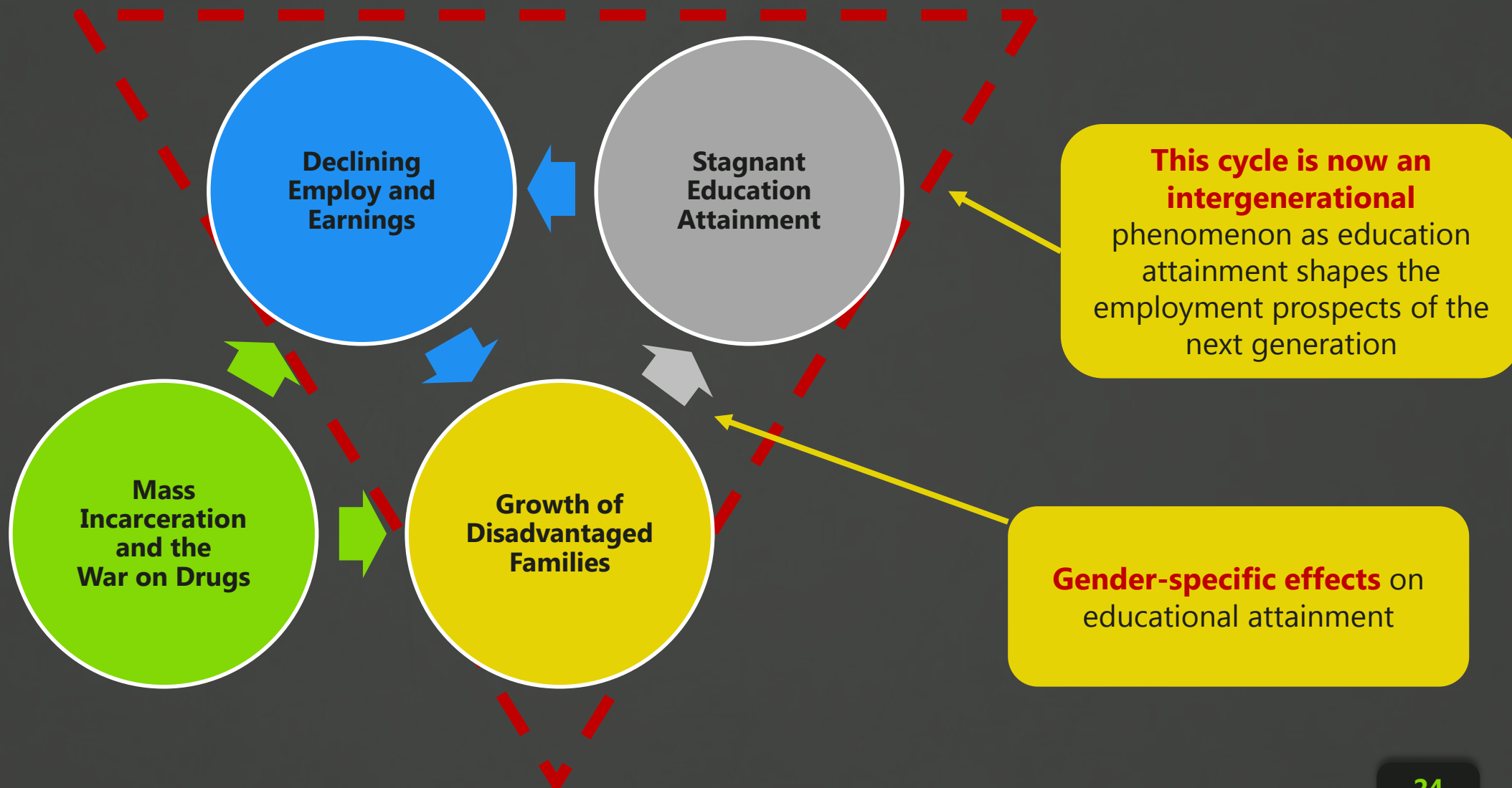
1970-2010 | Ages 20-24





## A Vicious Cycle of Intergenerational Male Disadvantage

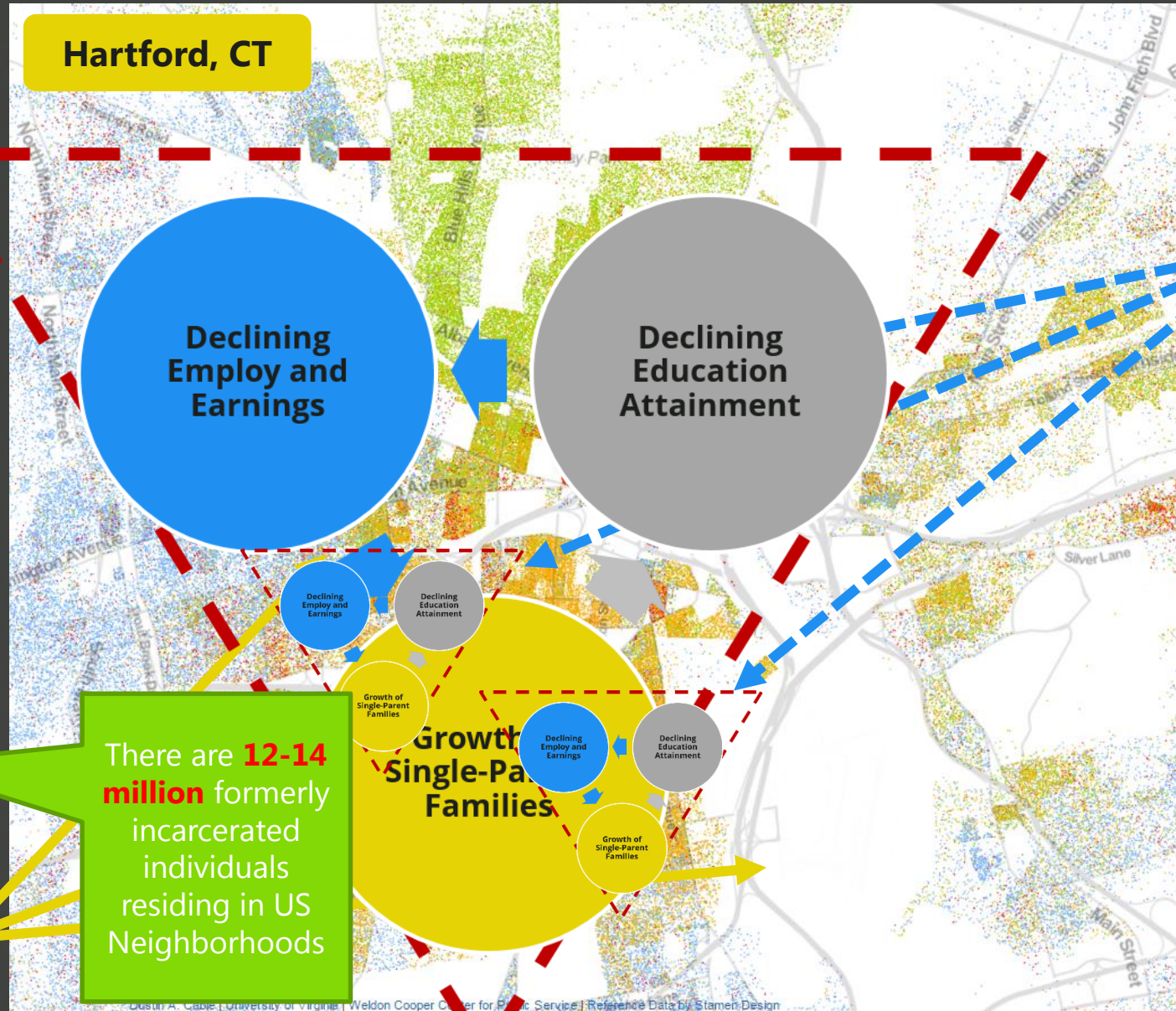
# >>> A Vicious Cycle of Male Intergenerational Disadvantage



- Poor neighborhoods are **over-policed** through aggressive drug enforcement and order-maintenance policing and **under-protected** from violence due to reduced “police legitimacy” and police effectiveness with regard to violent crime
- Mass incarceration is also concentrated** (Clear, 2007)

**Mass Criminalization**  
(War on Drugs and Incarceration)

Hartford, CT

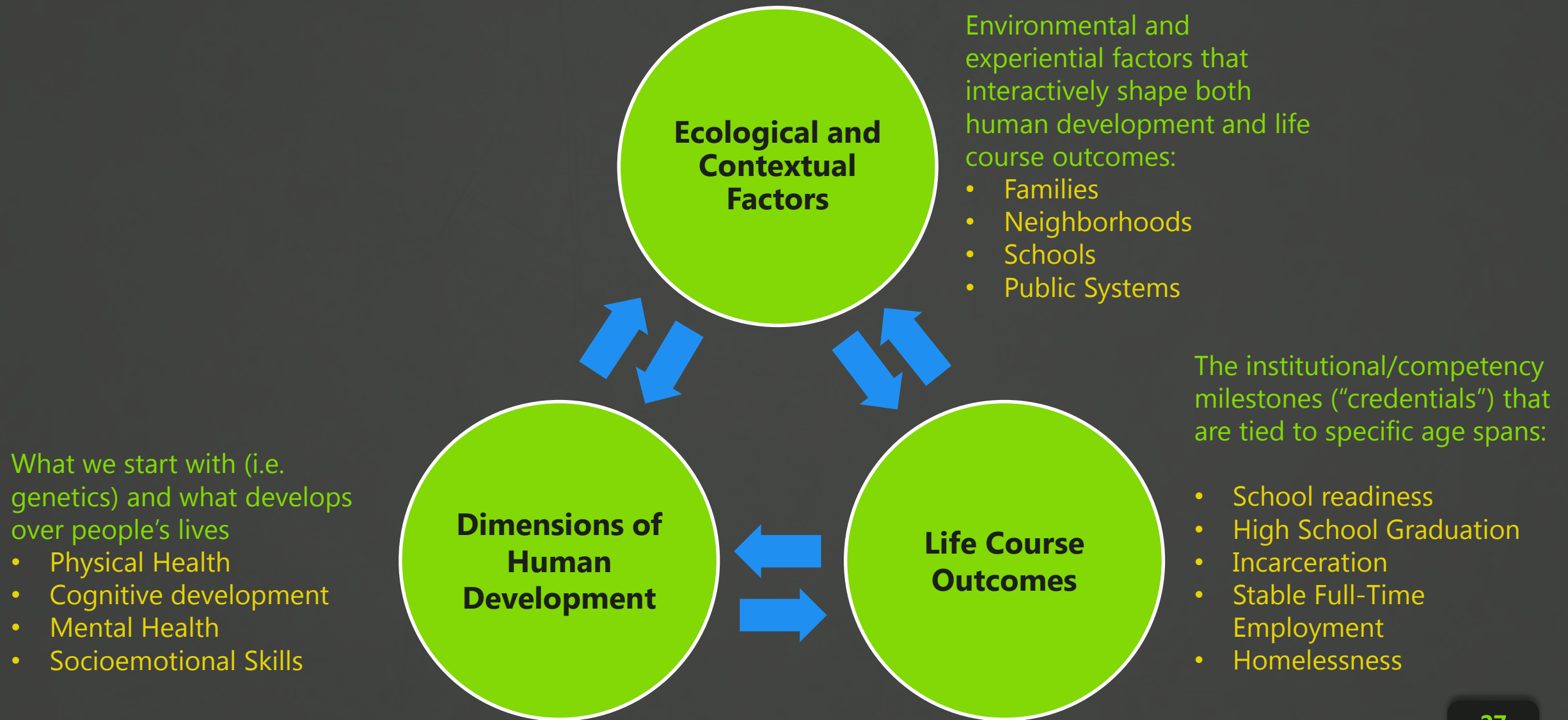


**Rise of concentrated disadvantage**

- The rise of **concentrated poverty and jobless ghettos since the early 1970s** (Wilson, 1996)
- Concentration of negative factors associated with poverty** like crime, violence, poor school quality, drugs, disinvestment (Massey, 2007)

A Life Course Framework for Improving the  
Lives of Disadvantaged Populations:  
**Interrupting the Cycle**

# Overview of Framework Components





# Dimensions of Human Development

**Physical Health:** genetic predisposition; motor visual-auditory dev, morbidity, physical frailty, brain development, **biological embedding of social adversity and toxic substance exposures:** chronic adversity, allostatic load/toxic stress, environmental toxin exposure (e.g. air pollution, lead poisoning, etc.), epigenetics, basal cortisol levels, addiction

**Cognitive Development:** intelligence, information processing, language, numeracy, literacy, **executive functions** (e.g. memory, attention, reasoning, problem solving), mathematical reasoning, scientific thinking, verbal and written communication skills

**Mental Health and Sense of Well-Being:** secure attachment, trauma, happiness/contentment, hope, self-esteem/mastery, stigma stress, mood disorders, schizophrenia, PTSD, psychosis, addiction

**Socioemotional Development:** Emotion and behavior regulation; autonomy; determination; self-monitoring/meta-cognition



**Identity Development:** Self-concept, Self-Awareness, **Mindset**, self-efficacy, racial/ethnic identity, gender identity, sexual identity, cultural orientation/attachment; Sense of Belonging

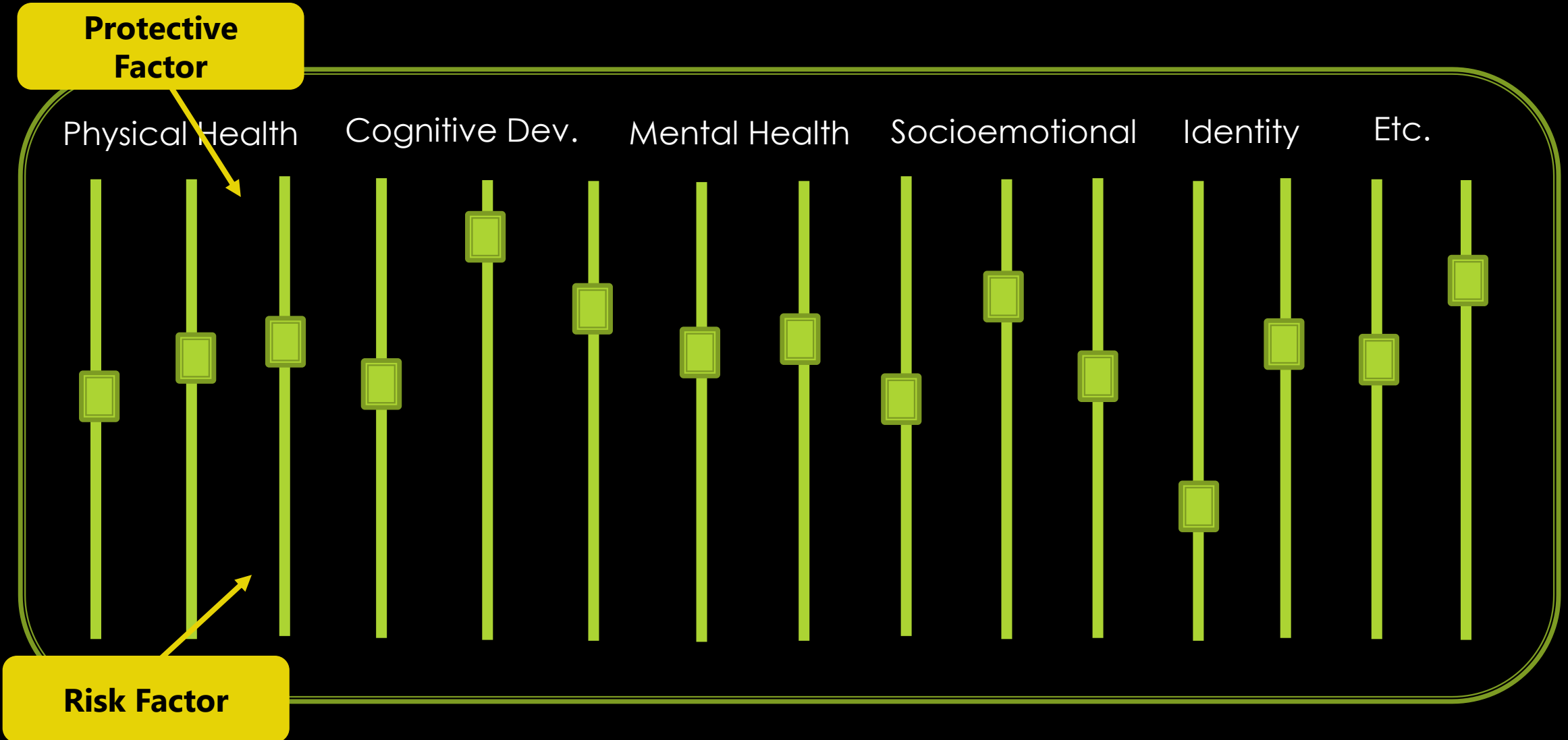
**Declarative and Procedural Content and Cultural Knowledge:** Declarative, procedural and evaluative content and cultural knowledge.

**Meaning-Making/Spiritual Development:** Global and Situational Meaning (e.g. "The Meaning-Making Model") including beliefs, goals, subjective sense of meaning; sense of "life's purpose"; spiritual development and practice and/or religious affiliation and practice

**Moral Development:** conscience and moral agency, moral judgment, **moral reasoning, altruism, empathy, moral action/behavior** (Prosocial behavior), moral emotion, moral character (i.e. virtue, ethics)

**Personality:** Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism

# Dimensions of Human Development





Society, Culture & History  
Institutions and Public Systems  
Place  
Peers, Mentors and Networks  
Schools and Childcare  
Family

ON TRACK

OFF TRACK

0-5

6-11

12-18

19-25

26-35

Physical Health

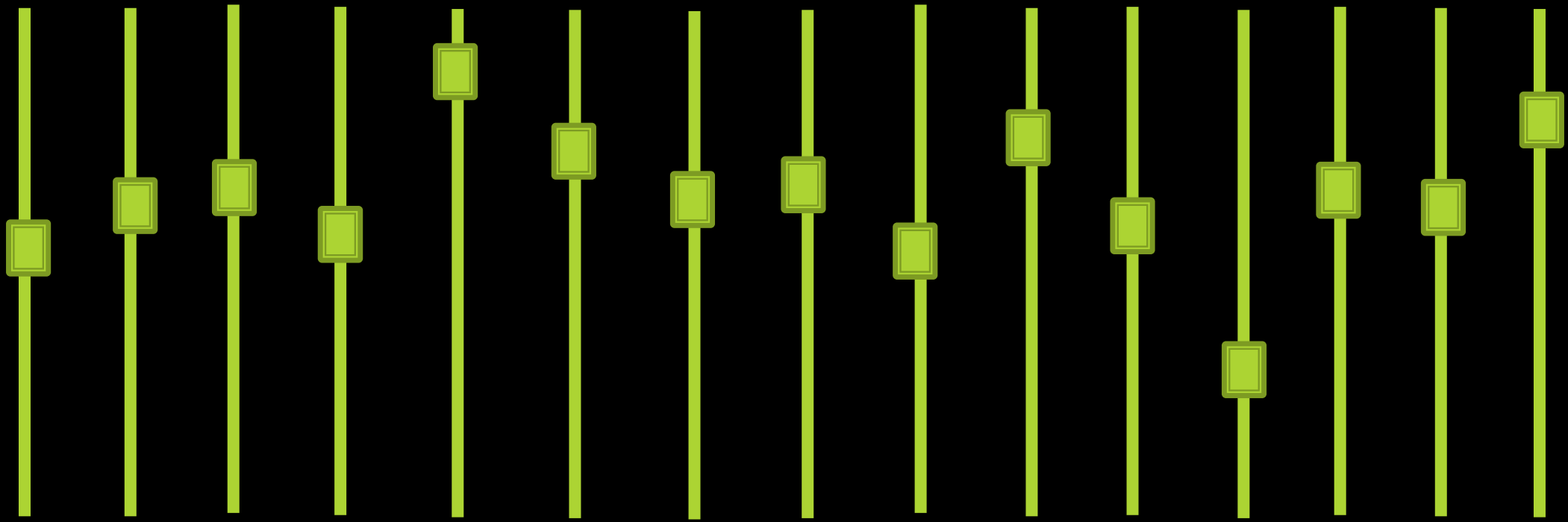
Cognitive Dev.

Mental Health

Socioemotional

Identity

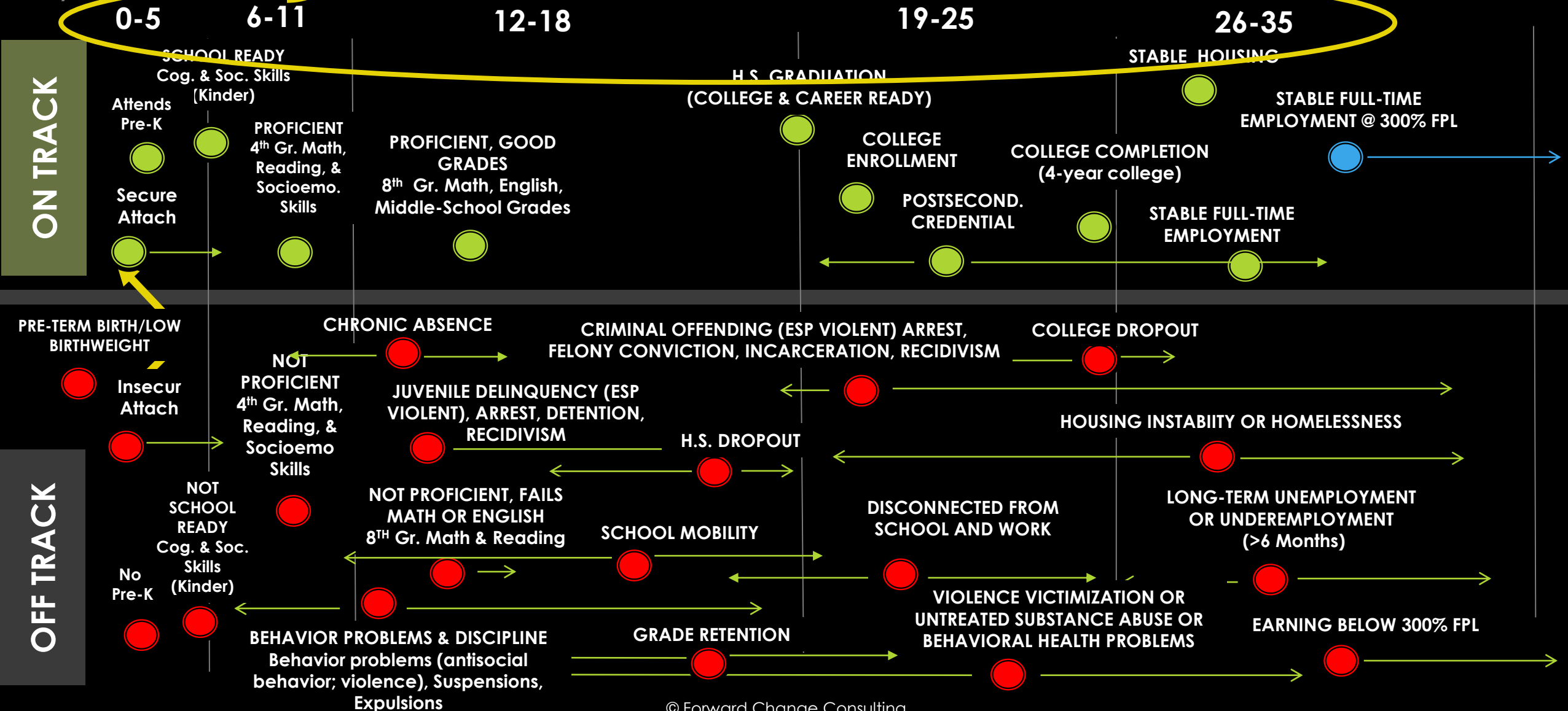
Etc.

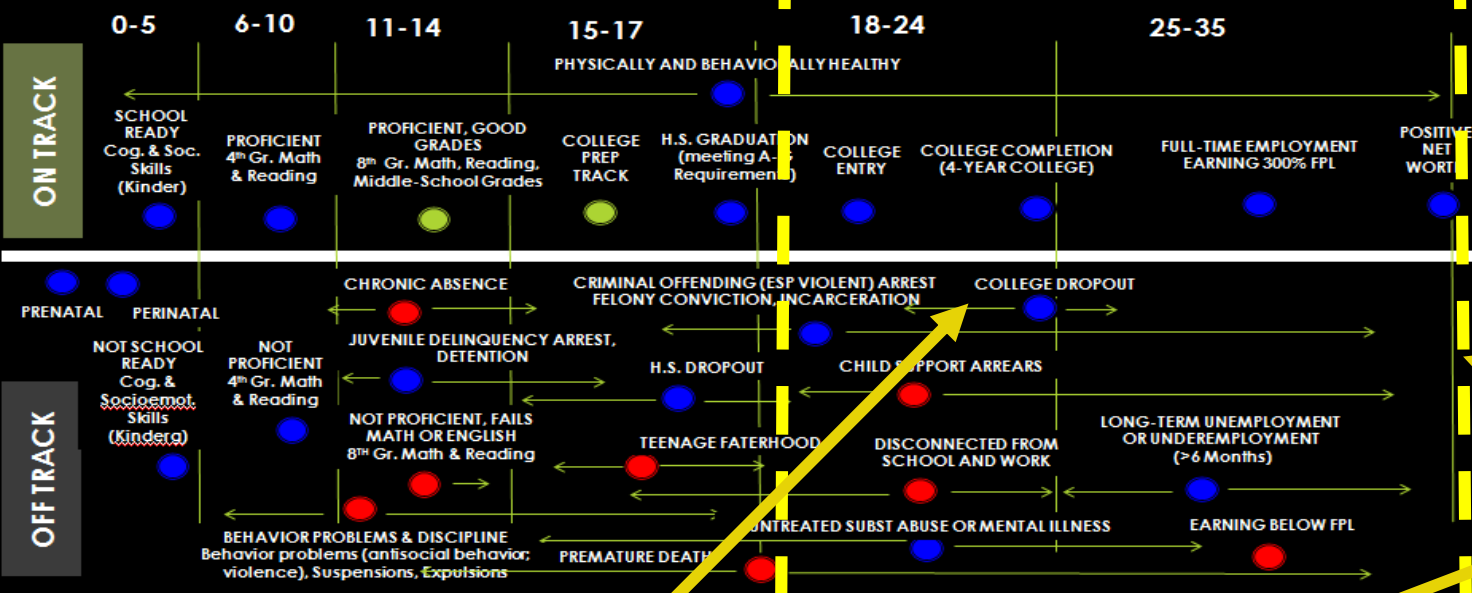


Society, Culture & History  
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Family

## Ecological/Contextual Factors

# Life Course Outcomes



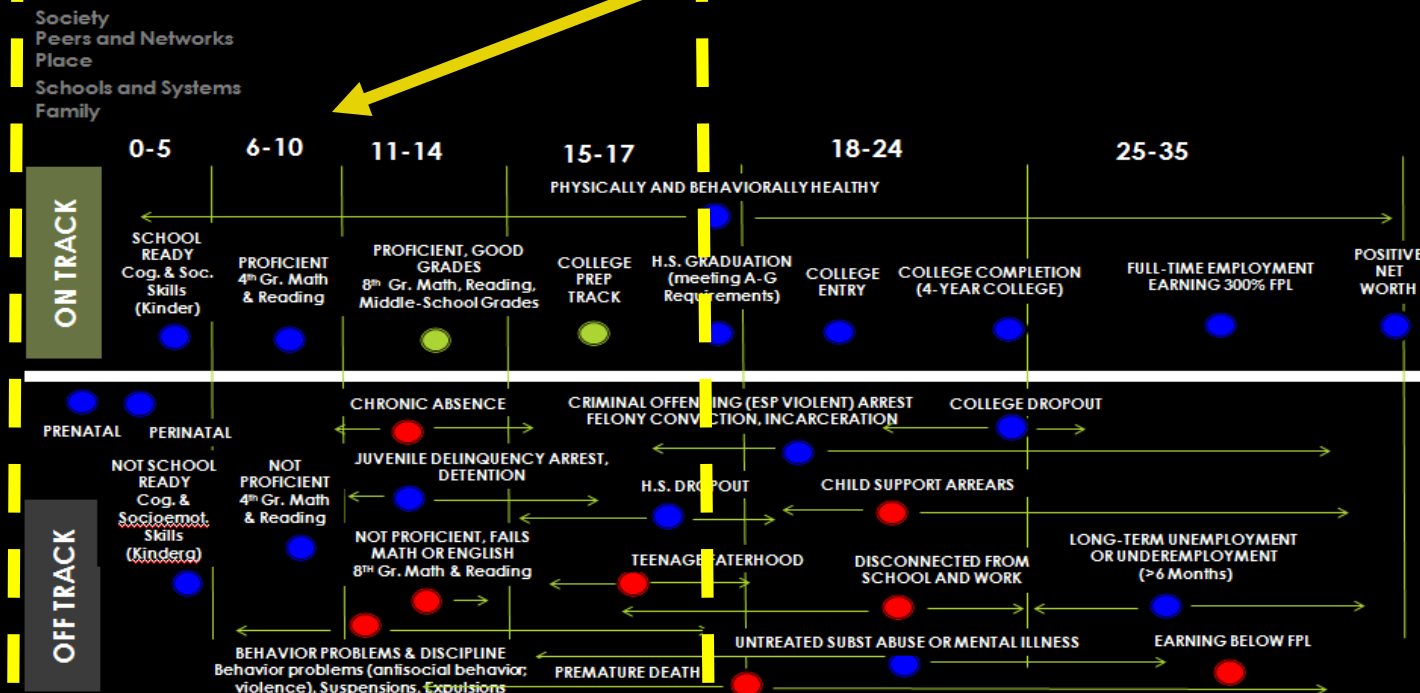


# Generationally Linked Life Courses: Adopt a Two-Generation Approach

## Father's Life Course (or Mother's)

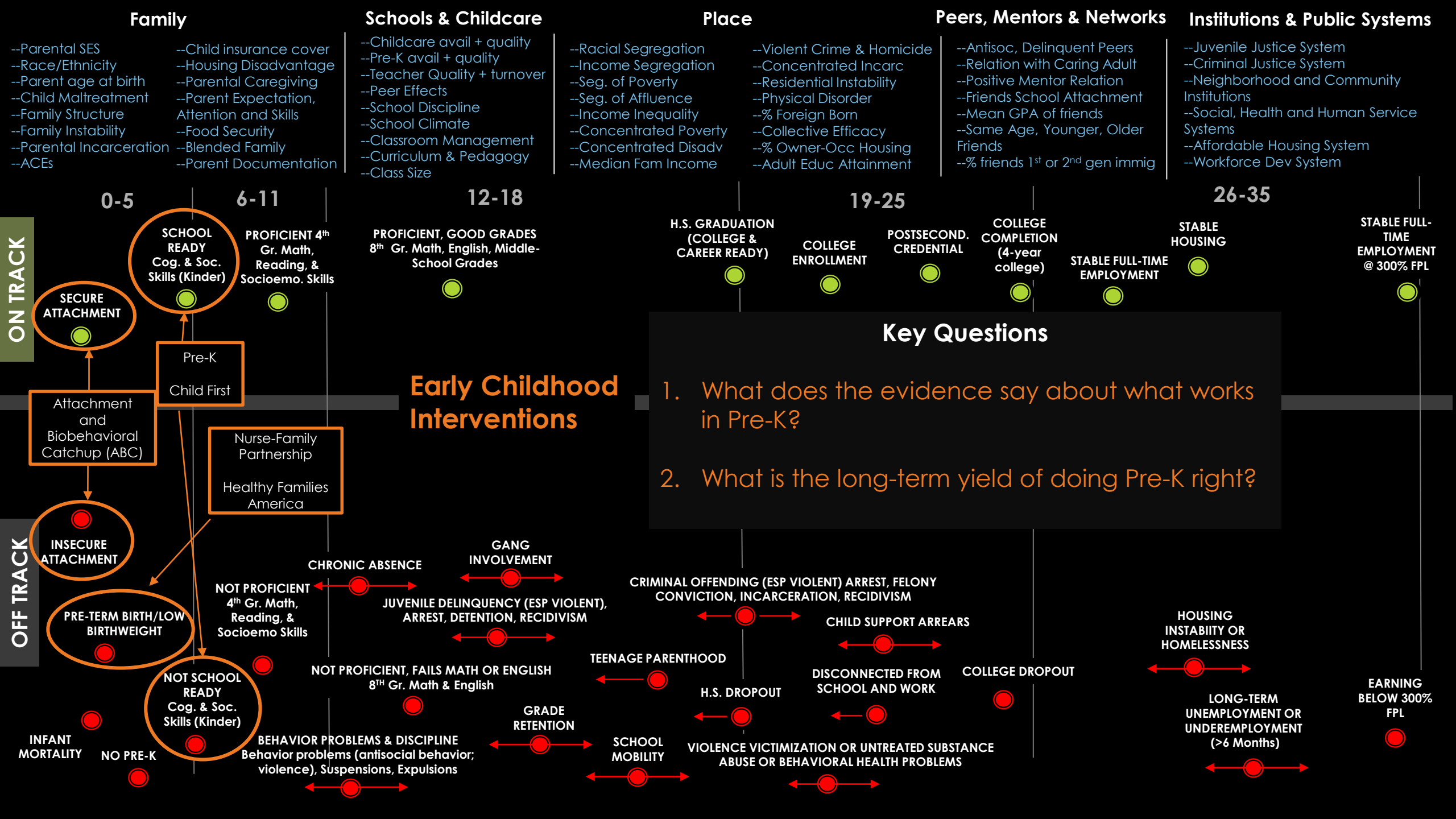
While these are later life course interventions, they have early life course implications for the next generation.

Roughly 65% of black and Latino mothers and fathers have their first child before age 25. By age 30, roughly 85% of these parents have had their first child. They have 2 or fewer kids on average less than 5 years apart. Thus, by age 35, a majority of the next generation has been born. [Martinez et al, 2012]



## Child's Life Course

# Mapping a Cradle-to-Career Intervention Pipeline





# What does the evidence say about what works in Pre-K?

- ▶ **The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects** (April, 2017) offers a consensus statement by leading early childhood researchers published by Brookings and the Duke Center for Family and Child Policy
- ▶ **Top 10 Findings:**
  1. The evidence on the effectiveness of pre-K for improving math and reading skills is strong and consistent
  2. The evidence on effectiveness of pre-K for improving socioemotional skills is neither strong nor consistent
  3. Most studies of pre-k effects do not follow studies for very long. Those that do, find that pre-k effects fade out between the beginning of kindergarten and the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

# What does the evidence say about what works in Pre-K?

## ► Top 10 Findings Cont...

4. Math and literacy focused curricula are much more effective at improving math and reading skills than are whole-child curricula (e.g. The Creative Curriculum, High Scope, Montessori). In fact, school- or center-developed curricula are often as effective as these popular whole-child curricula.
4. The strongest curricula for enhancing socioemotional skills is **Preschool Paths**
6. The deployment of curricula that are successful at improving cognitive skills have **two key ingredients**:
  - **Intensive professional development** for teachers with coaching at least twice a month
  - **Assessments of child progress** to inform and individualize instruction



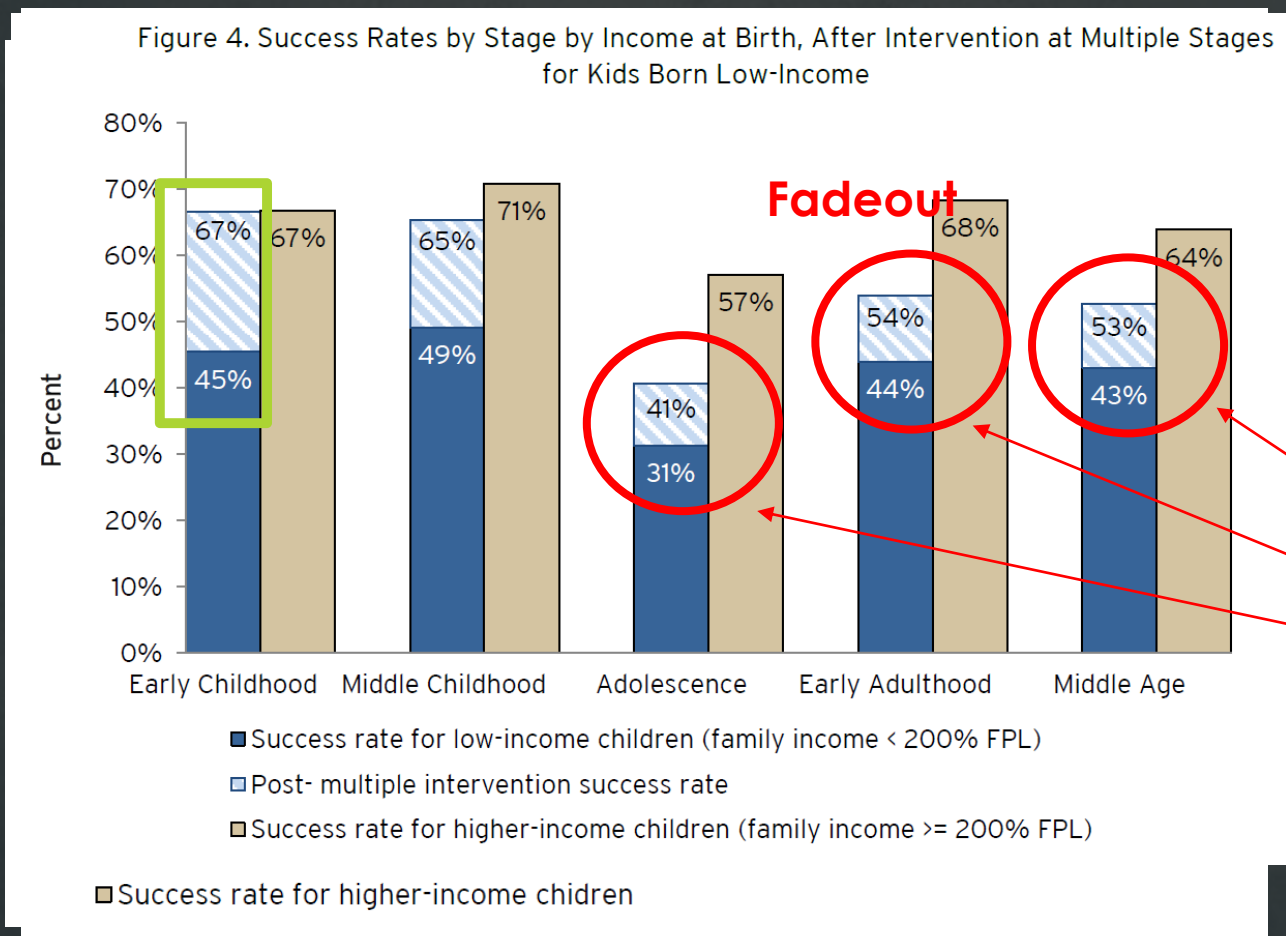
# What does the evidence say about what works in Pre-K?

## ► Key Findings cont...

7. Low-income and Latino children benefit disproportionately from pre-k programs
8. Teacher education, years of experience and staff-child ratios are weak predictors of effective pre-k programming. This raises important questions about what should be the educational requirements for early childhood education workforce.
9. Group size and classrooms tailored to young children with bathrooms and eating areas included in the room are associated with greater effectiveness of pre-k programming
10. Process factors like curriculum, teacher language complexity, student engagement through activities, and positive classroom climate are **strong predictors** of pre-k programming **effectiveness**. These are also hard to standardize and regulate from a policy standpoint.

# >>> What is the long-term yield of doing Pre-K right?

The Social Genome Project can help us answer this question



We need **boosters or charging stations** in adolescence and early adulthood

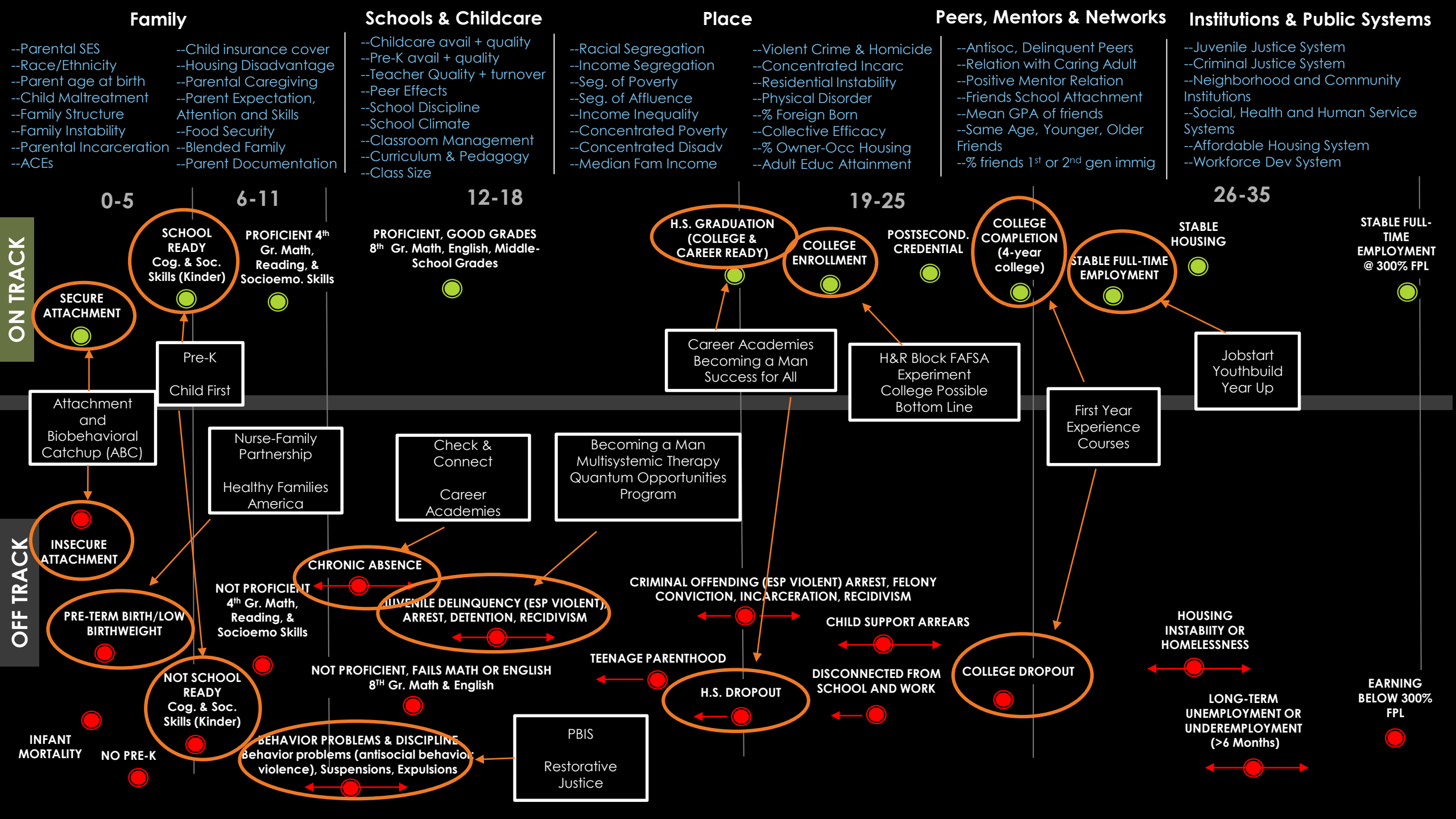
What would happen to later life outcomes if we **equalized early childhood outcomes?**

The simulated effects of evidence-based interventions during these age spans

## Bottom Line

We need interventions from cradle through emerging adulthood to put and keep young people on track to succeed in later adulthood







# Contact

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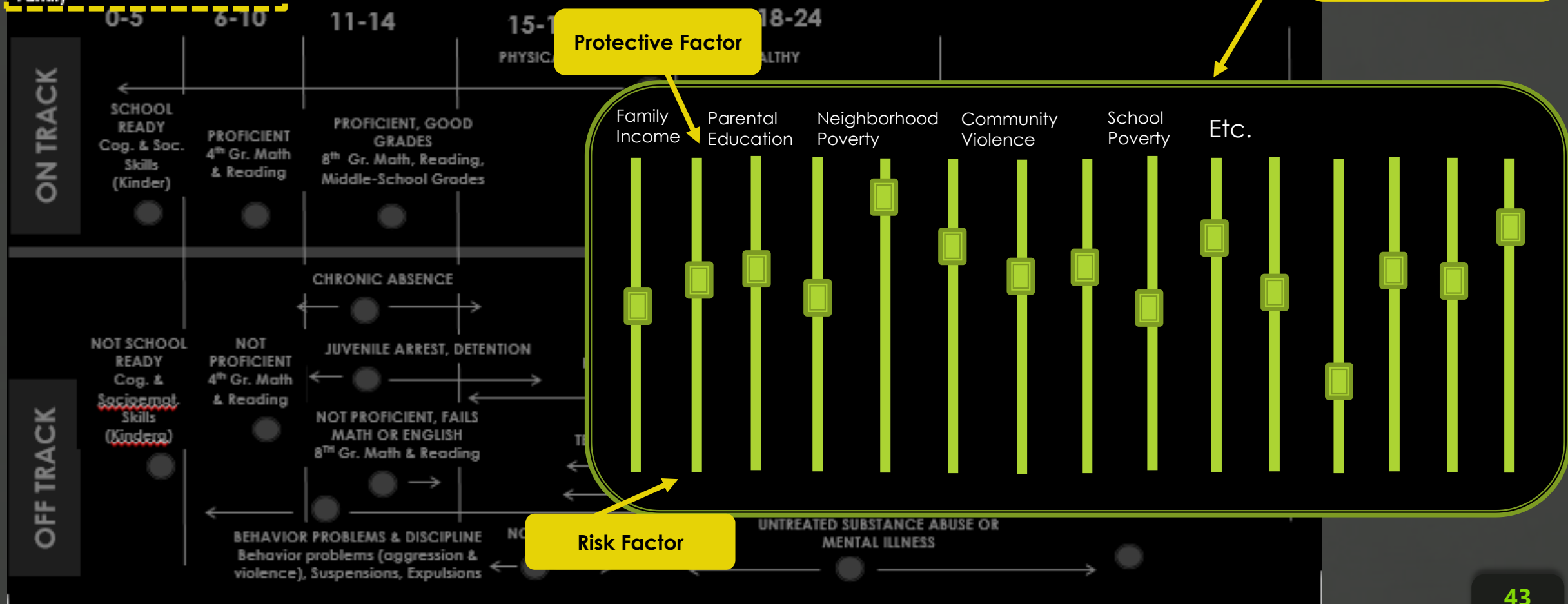
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# Appendix

# Ecological and Contextual Factors

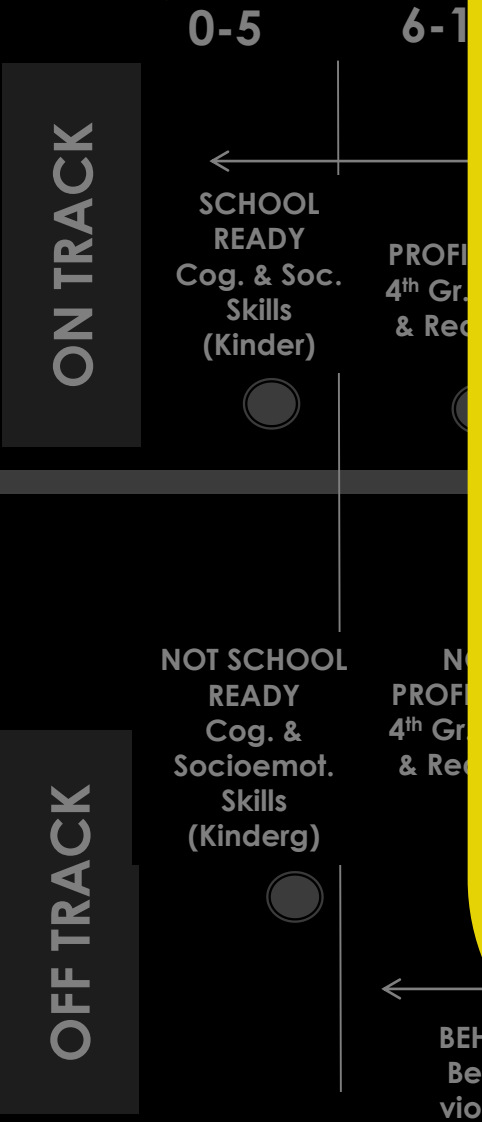
Society, Culture & History  
Institutions and Public Systems  
Place  
Peers, Mentors and Networks  
Schools and Childcare  
Family

Ecological and Contextual Factors can be





Society, Culture & History  
Institutions and Public Systems  
Place  
Peers, Mentors and Networks  
Schools and Childcare  
**Family**



## FAMILY (and kinship networks inc. "fictive kin")

- Race/Ethnicity
- Genetics
- Parental age at child's birth
- Birth order
- Documentation Status
- Incarcerated Parent
- Parental death
- Parental behavioral health problem
- Language spoken at home
- Additional supportive persons (e.g. grandparents, aunts/uncles, fictive kin)

### Family Resources

- Pre-natal and neo-natal care
- Quality of early caregiving
- Food security
- Health insurance

- Parental Income and Wealth
- Parental Education
- Family structure and instability
- Housing stability/instability

### Parental Attention, Expectations, Skills

- Parental attention
- Parental Expectations
- Parenting skills, practices (e.g. harsh parenting) and beliefs

### Parental Social Support, Abuse/Neglect

- Child maltreatment: neglect/abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), domestic violence
- Foster Care Placement
- Parental Social Support (e.g. social networks, extended family)

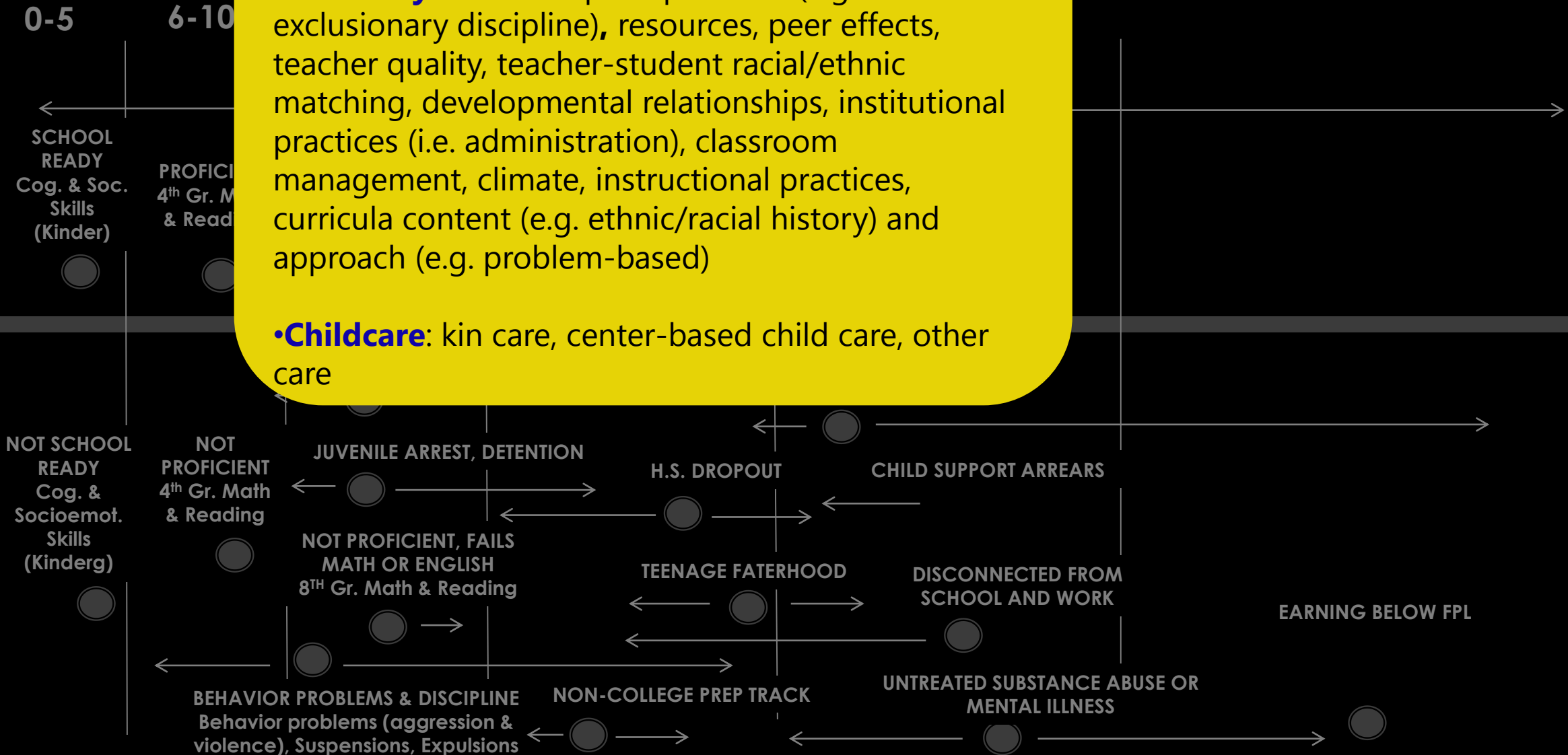
## SCHOOLS AND CHILDCARE

•**School System:** discipline practices (e.g. exclusionary discipline), resources, peer effects, teacher quality, teacher-student racial/ethnic matching, developmental relationships, institutional practices (i.e. administration), classroom management, climate, instructional practices, curricula content (e.g. ethnic/racial history) and approach (e.g. problem-based)

•**Childcare:** kin care, center-based child care, other care

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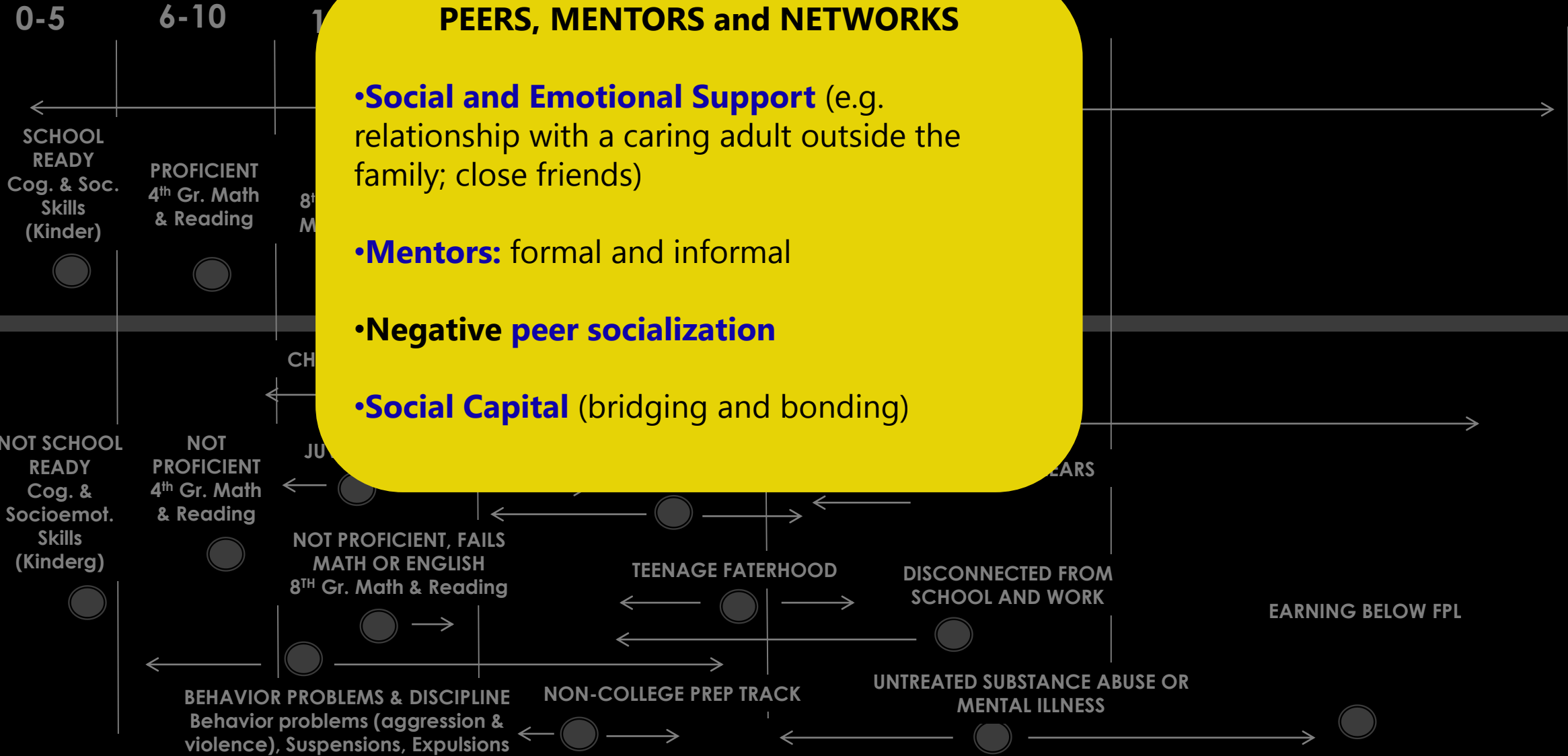
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Society, Culture & History  
Institutions and Public Systems  
Place  
**Peers, Mentors and Networks**  
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ON TRACK

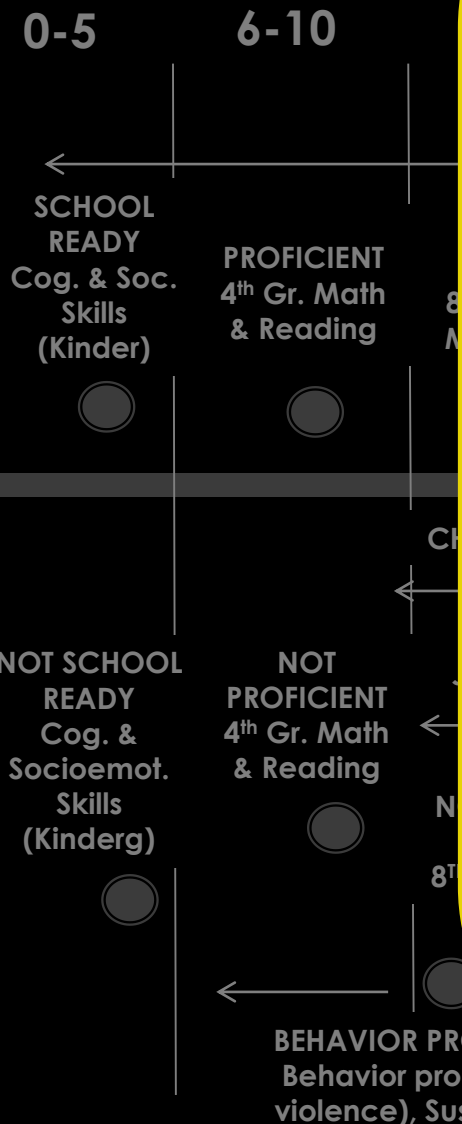
OFF TRACK



Place

ON TRACK

OFF TRACK



## PLACE (Neighborhoods, Places of Routine Activities and Metros)

- **Concentrated Disadvantage** and **Concentrated Affluence**
- **Violence and Crime**  
(victimization and secondary exposure)
- Racial **Segregation**/Social Isolation
- Street culture and underground economy
- Residential instability/"Coercive Mobility"
- **Employment opportunities/Labor Markets**
- **Housing quality/Neighborhood Deterioration** (e.g. uncollected garbage, abandonment)

- **Neighborhood institutional infrastructure** (e.g. CBOs, Nonprofit service providers, organizers)
- **Social capital and community involvement**
- Neighborhood **collective efficacy**
- **Toxic substance** exposure
- **Policing**: place-focused law enforcement practices and tactics (e.g. aggressive street drug enforcement, racial profiling, stop-and-frisk)
- Religious Institutions
- Day care/After School Programs
- Shopping (e.g. supermarkets)
- **Metro-level income and racial segregation, income inequality and intergenerational mobility**

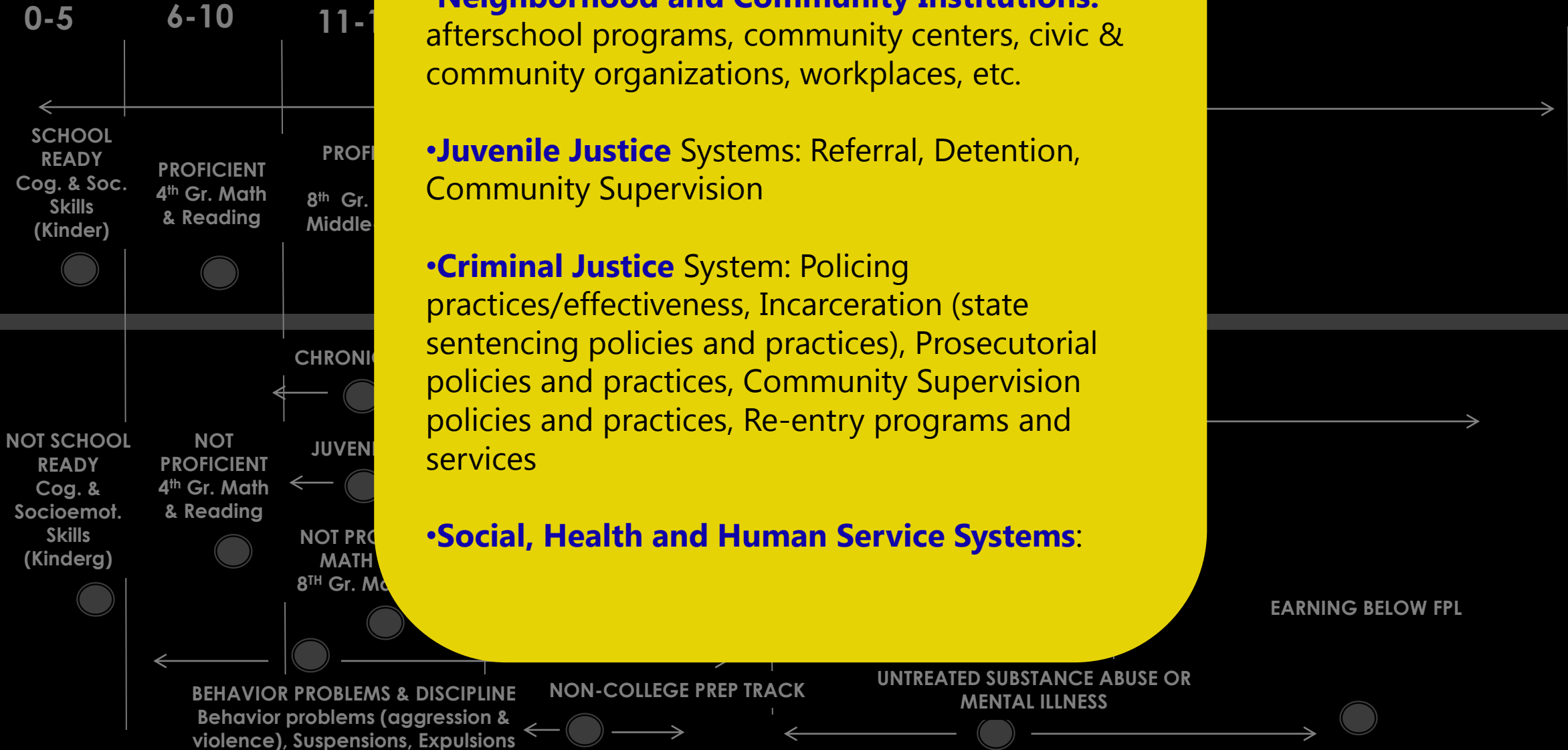
Society, Culture & History  
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## INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC SYSTEMS

- **Neighborhood and Community Institutions:** afterschool programs, community centers, civic & community organizations, workplaces, etc.
- **Juvenile Justice** Systems: Referral, Detention, Community Supervision
- **Criminal Justice** System: Policing practices/effectiveness, Incarceration (state sentencing policies and practices), Prosecutorial policies and practices, Community Supervision policies and practices, Re-entry programs and services
- **Social, Health and Human Service Systems:**

ON TRACK

OFF TRACK



## Society, Culture & History

Institutions and Public Systems

Place

Peers, Mentors and Networks

Schools and Childcare

Family

ON TRACK

0-5

6-10

SCHOOL  
READY  
Cog. & Soc.  
Skills  
(Kinder)

PROFICIENT  
4<sup>th</sup> Gr. Math  
& Reading

NOT SCHOOL  
READY  
Cog. & Socioemot.  
Skills  
(Kinderg)

NOT  
PROFICIENT  
4<sup>th</sup> Gr. Math  
& Reading

OFF TRACK

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS  
Behavior problems (e.g.,  
violence), Suspensions, etc.

## SOCIETY, CULTURE & HISTORY

- **Implicit bias and explicit bias**
- **Market-based racial and gender discrimination:**
  - labor market
  - housing
  - retail
  - financial
- **Legal and law-enforcement discrimination**
- **Educational Discrimination**
- **Legacy of all past forms of discrimination**

### Macro-Trends

- Demographic change (e.g. immigration)
- Rise and Decline in Violence and crime
- Rise in Mass Incarceration
- Rise in Income inequality
- Rise in Income segregation (e.g. concentrated poverty & concentrated affluence)
- Decline in Male Employment and Earnings
- Deindustrialization

### • Political Economy Shifts

- Rise of Neo-liberalism

### • Gender norms: patriarchal forms of masculinity and gender relations



## Key Takeaways from the life course framework for intervention strategy

1. **Changing conditions** (and removing barriers) confronting BMOC through **policy and systems change**
  - Focused on State & Local with some Federal Policy change
  - Tie savings from punishment reform to “reinvestment”
2. Help children become more **resilient** to bad conditions through **applying programs, services and practices** that we know work for males of color
3. **Both are indispensable!**



# Key Takeaways: Intervention Principles

- Must adopt **a life-course approach**:
  - **Early predicts/causes later** through patterns of cumulative advantage/disadvantage
  - **Intervention is necessary across the life course**: early intervention is necessary but not sufficient
  - **Timing Matters**: there are sensitive periods for intervention
  - **History matters**: the legacy of past inequalities shape current realities
  - **Agency matters**: environments shape people and people shape environments
  - **Equifinality**: There are multiple pathways to the same negative outcome (often fewer ones to a positive outcome)
- **Place Matters**
- **Race and Class Matter**
- **Causal Density**: Everything is related to everything else which makes “siloeed” approaches ineffectual
- **Adopt a two-generation approach**: Tying interventions together that change outcomes for children and parents simultaneously
- **Gender-Specificity**: That is “gender-specific” in its analysis of causes, correlates and solutions
- **Support Successful Pathways**: Prevent off-ramp pathways and create recovery pathways
- **Balance social control vs. social support** for producing key outcomes

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