

# Ecosystem Leverage Points Cheat Sheet

Erin Watson, PhD | [Weaving Change, LLC](https://www.weavingchange.com)




What leverage points at organizational, community, regional, state, and national levels of the ecosystem are helping and hindering your outcomes? Consider the examples below. **More powerful leverage points are listed towards the top of this table.**

	Leverage Point Conditions	Examples	Keywords
PARADIGMS	 <p><b>Mindsets:</b> Beliefs, values, narratives, assumptions, and attitudes that create a way of viewing reality for people who share them</p>	Many in the region do not value the role early care and education plays in child development and the local economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value</li> <li>• Attitude</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Narrative</li> <li>• Feel</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception</li> <li>• Believe</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Assume</li> <li>• Priority</li> </ul>
	 <p><b>Goals:</b> Stated and unstated aims, targeted outcomes, and purpose of organizations, initiatives, and systems - including accountability mechanisms</p>	Local organizations have prioritized outcomes around reducing disparities in child and family outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Targets</li> <li>• Aims</li> <li>• Purpose</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact</li> <li>• Mission</li> <li>• Benchmarks</li> <li>• Measurement</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>
STRUCTURES	 <p><b>Decision-Making:</b> How decisions are made, and who is included/excluded</p>	Few families have influence in local decisions about how programs and policies are designed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions</li> <li>• Power</li> <li>• Input</li> <li>• Influence</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership</li> <li>• Family voice</li> <li>• Behind closed doors</li> <li>• “Never listens to ___”</li> </ul>
	 <p><b>Policies and Practices:</b> Formal and informal policies, practices, protocols, procedures, laws, standards, and norms</p>	Some quality rating standards are not responsive to home-based and/or culturally diverse child care settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies</li> <li>• Standards</li> <li>• Practices</li> <li>• Procedures</li> <li>• Eligibility</li> <li>• Legislation</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laws/regulations</li> <li>• Routine</li> <li>• HIPAA, FERPA</li> <li>• “Not allowed”</li> <li>• “This is how we’ve always done it”</li> </ul>
	 <p><b>Connections:</b> Exchanges of information, referrals, learning, and resources between people and organizations</p>	Data/information is being shared between cross-sector partners and with local families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchanges</li> <li>• Referrals</li> <li>• Network</li> <li>• Coordination</li> <li>• Co-location</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering and sharing of information, data,</li> <li>• Resource sharing</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>
ELEMENTS	 <p><b>Programs and Opportunities:</b> The array, accessibility, and quality of programs (e.g., home visiting), services (e.g., healthcare), and opportunities (e.g., jobs)</p>	Not enough high-quality, affordable child care slots are available to meet the needs of local families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slots/openings</li> <li>• Quality</li> <li>• Cultural responsiveness</li> <li>• Curriculum</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard to get to</li> <li>• “___ is at the wrong times”</li> <li>• In some places but not others</li> </ul>
	 <p><b>Human Resources:</b> People and their skills and knowledge</p>	Cross-sector staff have skills in trauma-informed practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available staff</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> <li>• Credentials</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills/knowledge</li> <li>• “People don’t know how to ___”</li> </ul>
	 <p><b>Natural and Built Environment:</b> Aspects of the natural (e.g., land, water) and built (e.g., buildings, roads, internet) environment</p>	Broadband internet is unavailable within some rural areas of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building space</li> <li>• Physical infrastructure</li> <li>• Housing</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Not enough safe parks”</li> <li>• “We don’t have the technology to ___”</li> </ul>
	 <p><b>Financial Resources:</b> Money and capital</p>	Lack of funds to address the market failure within child care business models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Budget</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial capital</li> <li>• Cost</li> <li>• “Can’t afford ___”</li> </ul>
	 <p><b>Socio-Cultural Artifacts:</b> Information and images embedded throughout the system</p>	Many early educational materials underrepresent diverse children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents</li> <li>• Images</li> <li>• Framework</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research reports</li> <li>• Media/social media</li> <li>• Information</li> </ul>

Adapted from: [Watson & Collins \(2022\)](#), [Foster-Fishman & Watson \(2017\)](#), [Meadows \(1999\)](#), [Stroh \(2015\)](#).

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# Assess Ecosystem Leverage Points Affecting Your Outcome

Leverage Point Conditions		Example Questions	Conditions in your Region
PARADIGMS	 <p><b>Mindsets</b></p>	<p>What shared beliefs, attitudes, values, or assumptions are helping and hindering <i>[your outcome/disparities]</i> - and in what ways? What new mindsets are needed?</p>	
	 <p><b>Goals</b></p>	<p>How are the goals driving the work within regional organizations, agencies, and initiatives helping and/or hindering <i>[your outcome/disparities]</i>? What new goals are needed?</p>	
STRUCTURES	 <p><b>Decision-Making</b></p>	<p>How are decisions made about <i>[your outcome/disparities]</i> within organizations, agencies, and communities? Who is engaged in/excluded from these decision-making processes? How is this situation helping and/or hindering <i>[your outcome/disparities]</i>? What new decision-making processes are needed?</p>	
	 <p><b>Policies and Practices</b></p>	<p>How are current policies, practices, procedures, regulations, and/or laws (and the state of their implementation) within local organizations and regions helping and hindering <i>[your outcome/disparities]</i>? What new policies and practices are needed?</p>	
	 <p><b>Connections</b></p>	<p>How are the current flows and exchanges of information, resources, and referrals between people and organizations helping and hindering <i>[your outcome/disparities]</i>? What new flows and exchanges are needed?</p>	



**Programs and Opportunities**

How is the current array, accessibility, character, and/or quality of programs (e.g., home visiting, early care and education), services (e.g., healthcare, public transit), and opportunities (e.g., jobs) helping and hindering *[your outcome/disparities]*? What is still needed?



**Human Resources**

How is the current availability of people (e.g., staff, family leaders, etc.) and their skills and knowledge helping and hindering *[your outcome/disparities]*? What additional types of people, skills, and knowledge are needed?



**Natural and Built Environment**

How is the current condition of the natural and built environment (e.g., land, water, housing, roads, technology/ internet, etc.) helping and hindering *[your outcome/disparities]*? What is still needed?



**Financial Resources**

How is the current allocation of funding and capital helping and hindering *[your outcome/disparities]*? What is still needed?



**Socio-Cultural Artifacts**

How is the information and images embedded in documents, media, social media, research reports, and public art helping and hindering *[your outcome/disparities]*? What new types of information and images are needed?