

Colorado LINKS for Mental Health
Behavioral Health Action Plan for Children and Youth
June 1st, 2007



The LINKS Action Plan: The LINKS initiative, supported by a two year federal grant, is designed to promote partnerships among state agencies and key stakeholder groups by weaving together existing efforts to create a more coordinated continuum of behavioral health services and supports for Colorado children, youth, and families. The Action Plan was developed in partnership with over 250 stakeholders from around the state who identified key priority areas, outcomes, and activities to undertake together. Colorado's Action Plan belongs to the many groups already working on child and youth behavioral health issues in Colorado. Now is the time for new partners to step forward and make commitments to achieving the outcomes in the Behavioral Health Action Plan for Children and Youth.

What is in the plan? The eight outcomes in the plan align with activities already underway by many groups involved in the behavioral health system for children and youth in Colorado. The outcomes fall into three priority areas:

- Integration of Efforts;
- Partnerships with Families and Youth; and
- Creation of Innovative Budget, Funding, and Finance Strategies.

The outcomes and activities under each priority area are intended to incite shared actions in pursuit of improved outcomes for children, youth, and their families. They are the “blueprint” for coordinated and sustainable partnerships.

Behavioral health is defined as both the mental health and co-occurring issues experienced by children and youth with complex needs, including substance use/abuse, developmental disabilities, and physical health needs. Achieving successful outcomes with children, youth, and their families requires addressing not only their mental health needs, but the co-occurring issues as well.

Who should be involved? The LINKS initiative seeks planning groups, agencies, and community partners who wish to take the lead or participate in the implementation the outcomes in the plan. Families and youth have partnered in the development of the action plan and must also be involved in its implementation. Thus, groups that take the lead are strongly encouraged to engage families and youth on their planning boards, if they do not already have representation.

Who has led the initiative? Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment; Colorado Department of Human Services; Colorado Department of Education; Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing; Colorado Department of Public Safety; Prevention Leadership Council; Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council; Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health ~ Colorado Chapter; Colorado System of Care Collaborative; Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council; and Center for Systems Integration.

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What comes first? Throughout the process of developing Colorado’s Behavioral Health Action Plan for Children and Youth, participants emphasized the importance of engaging state leadership in the proposed activities. As the eight outcomes require the investment of state leaders, the first activity for all outcomes is the same: to fully engage state leadership in not only supporting the development of a coordinated and effective behavioral health system for children and youth, but also to participate in its design and implementation.

First Activity for All Outcomes: Secure leadership and buy-in from Governor’s Office, Office of the First Lady, and State Departments

Activity A: Secure leadership and buy-in from Governor’s Office, Office of the First Lady, and state Departments

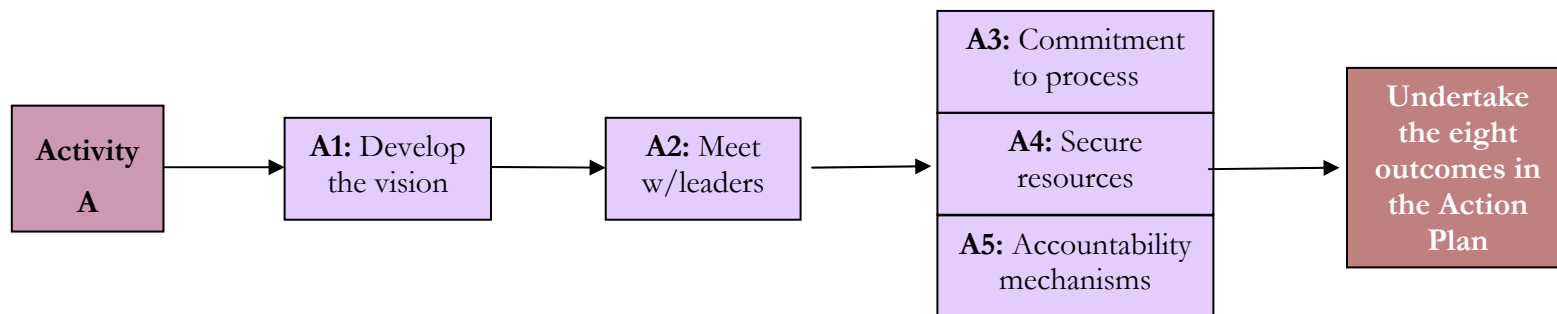
Action A1: Develop a concrete vision and plan of action for the three priority areas and accompanying outcomes

Action A2: Meet with the Governor’s Office, the Office of the First Lady, and Department leadership to elicit commitment to the action plan

Action A3: Ask Department leadership to inform their staff of their commitment to this process

Action A4: Work with leadership to secure resources to undertake the action plan, as needed

Action A5: Identify, in partnership with leadership, a body to serve as the accountability mechanism for implementation of the action plan



What comes next? In the pages to follow, the eight outcomes and the activities to achieve them are described in detail. For more information about how you, your planning group, or organization can become a partner or leader in these important efforts, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest and participation in this important effort!

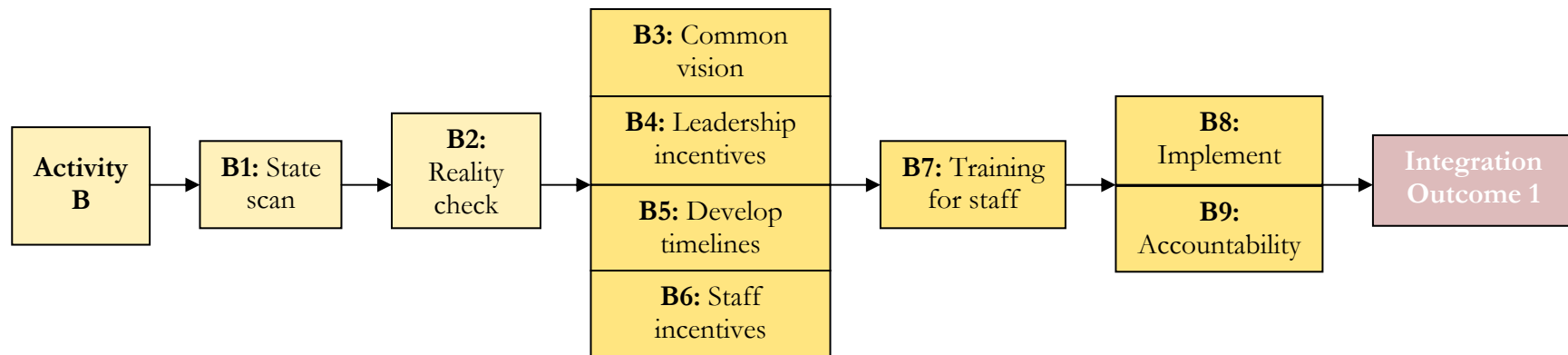
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Integration of Efforts Outcome 1: Streamline practices across state agencies / Increase interdepartmental coordination.

Activity A: Secure leadership and buy-in from Governor’s Office, Office of the First Lady, and state Departments (see page 2)

Activity B: Develop and implement streamlining processes for state Departments

- Action B1: Work with participating Departments to: identify mandates of what different agencies have to accomplish, expertise available in each agency, outcomes prioritized by the agencies, and successes or key activities that helps agencies to accomplish their desired outcomes
- Action B2: Engage interagency groups, families and family organizations, and others to do a “reality check” on the information collected
- Action B3: Bring the agency leadership together to establish a common vision, align outcomes, and develop partnerships, drawing on each others’ expertise and the information gathered. E.g. Changes in institutional level practices in Departments and Divisions.
- Action B4: Work with agency leadership to develop incentives and sanctions at the systemic level that are consistent across all partners.
- Action B5: Bring together staff who can implement the partnership changes to develop a timeline and responsibilities
- Action B6: Work with staff to develop incentives and sanctions at the staff level that are consistent across all partners. E.g. How middle management and line staff can include interagency partnership in their basic job duties.
- Action B7: Provide education and training for staff on the avenues for potential partnership to successfully reach shared outcomes.
- Action B8: Implement streamlining practices at Department, Division, and staff level
- Action B9: Develop an accountability mechanism that includes capacity to monitor, leadership in the effort, incentives, sanctions, and quality assurance



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**Integration of Efforts Outcome 2:
Help local communities develop specific integrative practices & engage “unusual suspects.”**

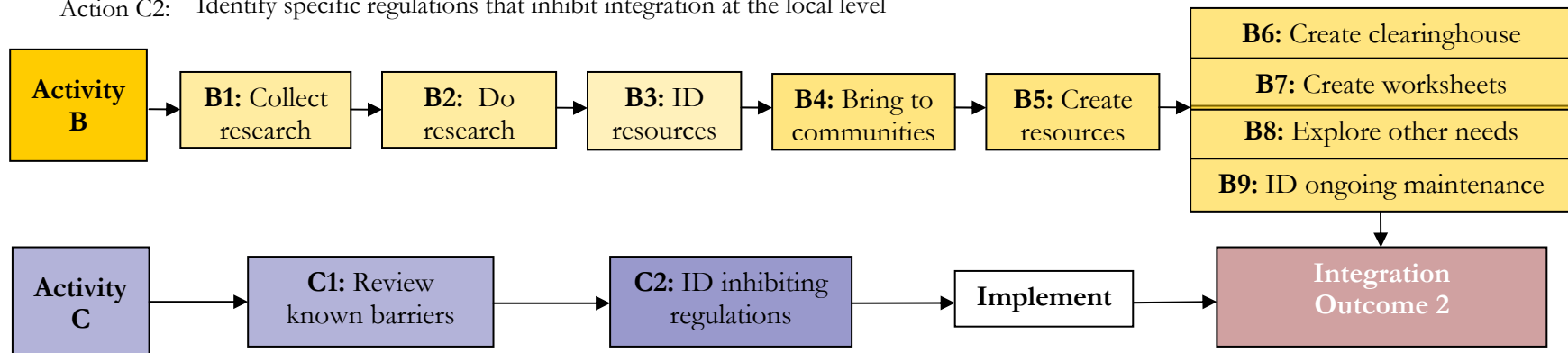
Activity A: Secure leadership and buy-in from Governor’s Office, Office of the First Lady, and state Departments (see page 2)

Activity B: Develop resources for local communities to undertake integration efforts

- Action B1: Collect existing research on what is working in Colorado and nationally
- Action B2: Conduct additional research ONLY if there are significant gaps
- Action B3: Identify existing resources and resource gaps to support Colorado community’s integration efforts (toolkits, training curricula)
- Action B4: Bring the range of possible resources to local communities; have them prioritize what would be most helpful. Identify resources they already use, including in efforts like HB1451
- Action B5: Create the resources that do not yet exist, but are prioritized by local communities. Secure access to resources that already exist.
- Action B6: Create a clearinghouse of prioritized tools, including information on which communities are already using which tools, creating a “mentoring” opportunity between communities.
- Action B7: Create “worksheets” that have lessons learned from existing efforts, such as HB1451 (Collaborative Management Program), Systems of Care pilots, etc. This may require doing additional work with the projects, such as an evaluation of HB1451
- Action B8: Explore whether resources should be secured to develop a technical assistance, facilitation for local community planning efforts, or train the trainer programs
- Action B9: Identify a group/agency responsible for ongoing maintenance of the clearinghouse and updates with new tools

Activity C: Address regulations that are barriers to local level integration

- Action C1: Review existing research collected on barriers to local level integration
- Action C2: Identify specific regulations that inhibit integration at the local level



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Partnerships with Family and Youth Outcome 1: Involve families and youth in direct service delivery

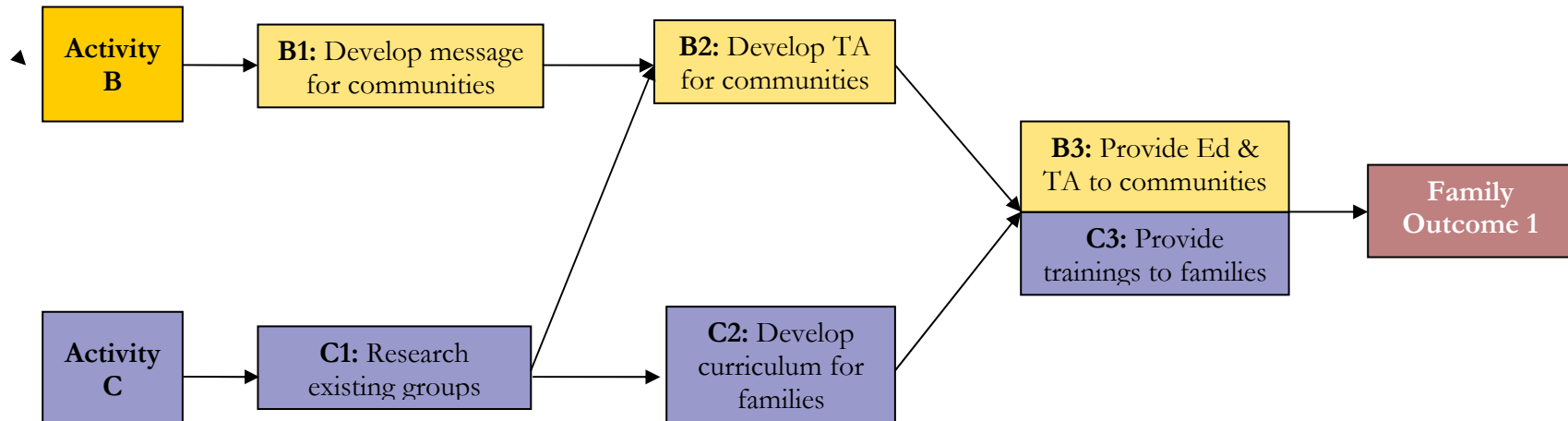
Activity A: Secure leadership and buy-in from Governor's Office, Office of the First Lady, and state Departments (see page 2)

Activity B: Educate providers on the value of family and youth involvement in direct service delivery

- Action B1: Develop a message for local communities on the value of family and youth involvement in direct service delivery (including cost effectiveness, models/examples like TSOC)
- Action B2: Develop or identify and adapt technical assistance or other supports to help local communities implement family and youth involvement in direct service delivery
- Action B3: Provide education, technical assistance, and other supports to local communities, including training on wraparound

Activity C: Educate families on how to participate meaningfully

- Action C1: Research existing groups and models to learn about creative ways of engaging and training families and youth, including peer-to-peer model.
- Action C2: Develop or identify and adapt training curriculum for families and youth.
- Action C3: Provide trainings to families and youth.



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Partnerships with Family and Youth Outcome 2: Involve families and youth in state and local boards, planning groups, and policymaking.

Activity A: Secure leadership and buy-in from Governor's Office, Office of the First Lady, and state Departments (see page 2)

Activity B: Recruit, train, and support families and youth

- Action B1: Identify where family training and leadership opportunities exist
- Action B2: Identify which communities/pilots already have family involvement underway
- Action B3: Identify technical assistance needs at local level – building on any current work that has already identified these needs (in areas of recruiting, training, and providing ongoing support to families and youth on boards)
- Action B4: Develop and/or identify and build upon curriculum for family and youth involvement trainings
Develop a mechanism to provide families and youth with the skills and training they need (e.g. a training in partnership with existing family advocacy organizations).
- Action B5: Host authentic family involvement trainings in communities that include such things as how to not take things personally, earn respect, be heard, etc.

Activity C: Recruit, train, and support state agencies and boards

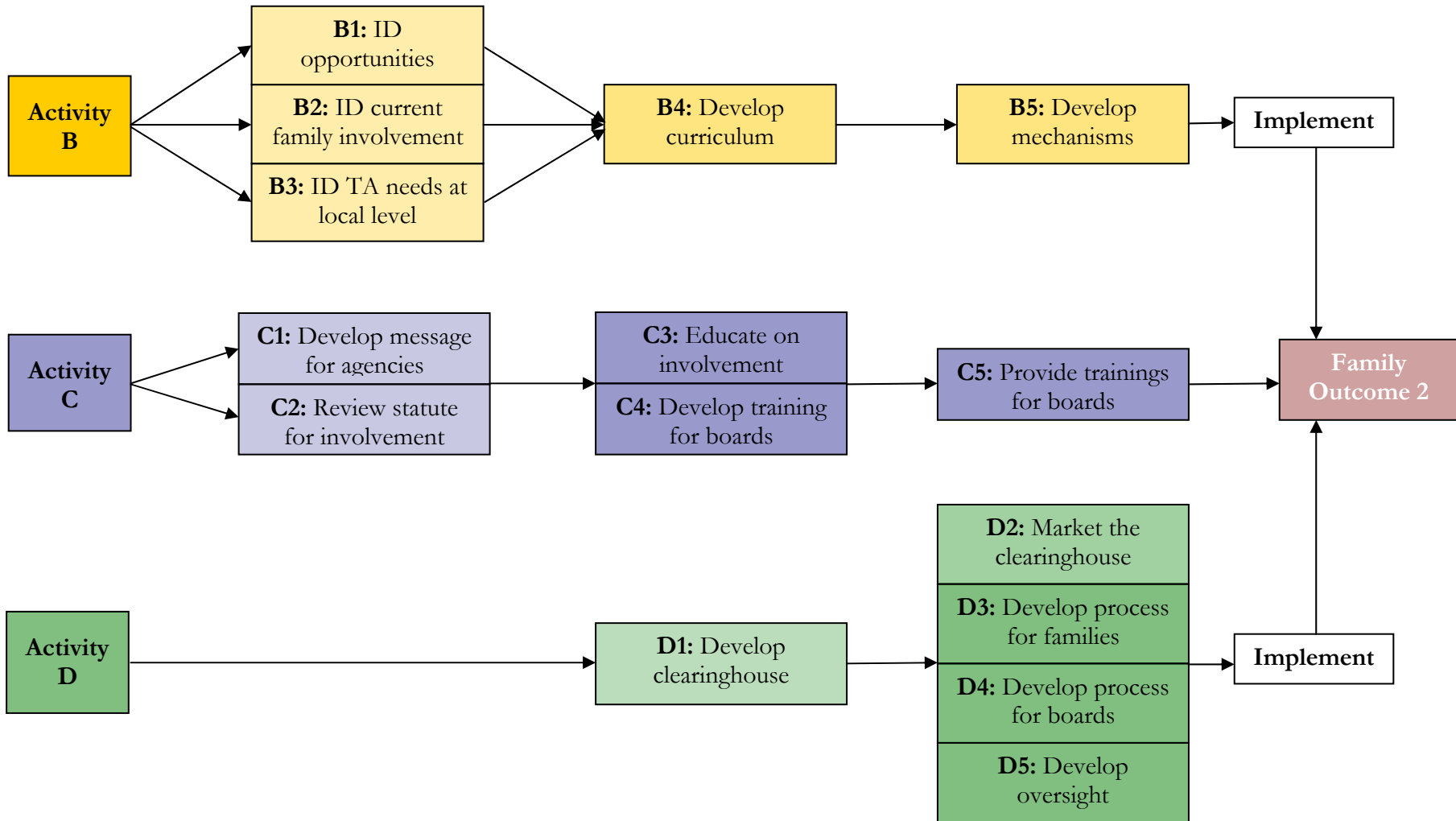
- Action C1: Develop a message for State agencies regarding the value of family and youth involvement. Tie it to the needs of communities and funding.
- Action C2: Review statute to determine which boards are encouraged or mandated to have involvement from family, youth, and/or community
- Action C3: Educate state, community, families and youth about how involvement saves money and benefits each party.
- Action C4: Develop a training for boards on how best to maintain involvement (including concepts like convenient meeting times, stipends, child care, orientations, meaningful role, etc)
- Action C5: Provide the training for boards at local and state level

Activity D: Connect families and youth to state agencies and boards

- Action D1: Develop a clearinghouse of boards, committees, and councils working on kids' mental health and co-occurring needs.
- Action D2: Market the clearinghouse to family organizations, families, and systems
- Action D3: Develop a process to support family and youths in finding a board that is a good fit for them
- Action D4: Develop a process to support boards, committees, and councils in identifying a family member that is a good fit for the issues they are addressing
- Action D5: Develop some form of oversight or review to prevent “sabotage” of the effort or of the participation of a specific family or youth on a board

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**Partnerships with Family and Youth Outcome 2, Continued:
Involve families and youth in state and local boards, planning groups, and policymaking.**



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Partnerships with Family and Youth Outcome 3: Develop a continuum of supportive services at the local level.

Activity A: Secure leadership and buy-in from Governor's Office, Office of the First Lady, and state Departments (see page 2)

Activity B: Identify services already available

Action B1: Develop an approach for mapping services at the state and local level

Action B2: Map services available at the state level

Action B3: Support local communities mapping services available at the local level

Action B4: Create a central library of information based on the mapping efforts

Activity C: Improve access to services already available

Action C1: Expand eligibility requirements in state funded services to include siblings and families

Action C2: Identify ways to support local community implementation of co-located service models, wraparound, support groups, dual diagnosis treatment, and continuums of services

Activity D: Assist local communities in developing and implementing their continuums of supportive services

Action D1: Identify local community needs in terms of technical assistance, toolkits, models, etc.

Action D2: Develop or identify and adapt tools to align with needs of local communities

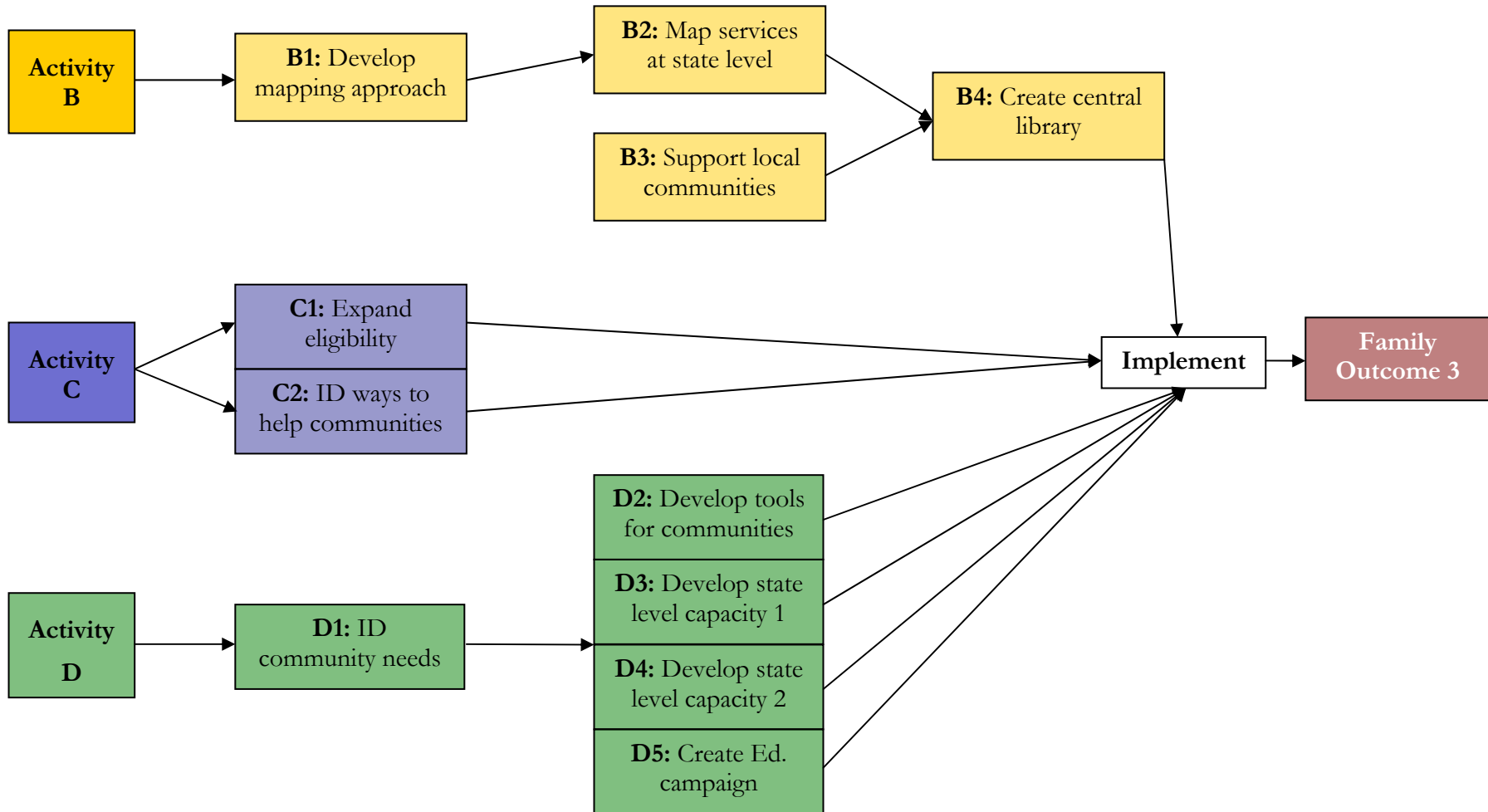
Action D3: Develop state level capacity to provide education and technical assistance on these tools

Action D4: Develop state level capacity to evaluate current models in local communities attempting to provide a continuum of supportive services

Action D5: Create an education campaign to inform communities, parents, teachers, students, and others on mental health and co-occurring issues – focus on reducing stigma in schools

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**Partnerships with Family and Youth Outcome 3, Continued:
Develop a continuum of supportive services at the local level.**



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**Innovative Budgets, Funding, & Finance Strategies Outcome 1:
Develop long-term, consistent, and flexible funding streams.**

**Innovative Budgets, Funding, & Finance Strategies Outcome 2:
Align funding to produce long-term wellness, including universal and prevention services.**

**Innovative Budgets, Funding, & Finance Strategies Outcome 3:
Help local communities to implement public and private integrated, braided, and blended funding models.**

Activity A: Secure leadership and buy-in from Governor's Office, Office of the First Lady, and state Departments (see page 2)

Activity B: Research financing reform options

- Action B1: Conduct a literature review and key stakeholder interviews to find out what models or existing practices are already underway in Colorado that can be built upon or enhanced. Include identifying challenges and lessons learned.
- Action B2: Conduct or collect a national literature review and key stakeholder interviews to find what models or innovative practices exist outside Colorado for local communities and the state.
- Action B3: Develop a concrete list of models and barriers to inform financing reform efforts.
- Action B4: Identify existing state funding streams where accountability can be changed from process oriented to outcome oriented
- Action B5: Identify existing state funding streams (including grants to local communities) where prevention and early intervention can be prioritized
- Action B6: Identify examples of outcome oriented accountability mechanisms from Colorado or other states
- Action B7: Find concrete Colorado or outside of Colorado data on the cost- and outcome-effectiveness of integrated financing models.

Activity C: Begin reform through developing and disseminating a common message

- Action C1: Take findings of the research to develop a common message on the models for integrating financing and outcomes (including cost effectiveness)
- Action C2: Disseminate common message to key stakeholders, including JBC, Department directors, Governor's Office, and other leaders.
- Action C3: Work with leadership and staff to determine next steps for implementing meaningful budget, funding, and financing changes.

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Innovative Budgets, Funding, & Finance Strategies Outcome 1, Continued:
Develop long-term, consistent, and flexible funding streams.

Innovative Budgets, Funding, & Finance Strategies Outcome 2, Continued:
Align funding to produce long-term wellness, including universal and prevention services.

Innovative Budgets, Funding, & Finance Strategies Outcome 3, Continued:
Help local communities to implement public and private integrated, braided, and blended funding models.

