

Tips and Tricks for Getting Started: Early Childhood Shared Message Bank

New to the Shared Message Bank or unsure of how exactly to begin using it? This tip sheet can help! You can find the Shared Message Bank at www.earlychildhoodcoloradopartnership.org. Click “Shared Message Bank” on the top menu.

- 1) **Brush up on your research!** If you haven't been exposed to a training on the research-based frames and messages on the Shared Message Bank, it is helpful to read the “Talking Toxic Stress” brief compiled by FrameWorks Institute. This will provide very helpful and salient background on the research supporting the Shared Message Bank and will be a great guide for crafting your own messages. You can find it under the section “How to Use the Shared Message Bank.”

It is not a script, but a guide to help organizations ensure that we are all aligned in how we are talking about early childhood development, toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences.

It's important to note the Shared Message Bank is informed by a FrameWorks research brief developed specifically for this project. Many questions about the terms, assumptions and data behind the key messages are explained in the FrameWorks brief. We recommend those using the shared messages bank become familiar with the FrameWorks research brief, “Talking Toxic Stress and Resilience in Colorado.”



- 2) **Take a look at the Key Message “buckets” and become familiar with the topline messages.** Consider what you want to communicate and in what modality (social media, talking points, website, invitation, etc.):
 - The importance of investing in young children and families
 - Supporting caregivers with tips and information on building strong brains
 - Highlighting how early childhood adversity and toxic stress can impact healthy development for children
 - Ways to support children, families, and communities to be resilient in the face of adversity and stress
 - The impact of strong early childhood social emotional and mental health

Key Messages

All Together For Prosperity

Colorado prospers when our kids thrive because they are our future workforce, leaders and community members. No matter where they live in our state – the plains, mountains, rural areas or urban centers – children need high-quality support for development. We need a broad base of participation to obtain civic, social and economic well-being in Colorado.

Positive Parenting Works

Services and policies that help strengthen families, prevent abuse and neglect, aid caregivers struggling with adversity, and promote positive interactions within families and caregivers help kids develop their potential.

Resilience Is Built

Supportive environments, relationships and community interventions can help kids exposed to toxic stress counterbalance the negative effects and become productive citizens. Investing in intervention and supportive programs to promote resilience helps kids develop their potential.

A Strong Foundation for Mental Health Begins Early

Positive mental health provides a foundation of stability that supports all other aspects of healthy development. Children's ability to thrive begins to take shape prior to birth and is impacted just as much by their social and emotional development as it is by their physical development. Practices, policies and services that promote positive early childhood mental health help ensure a child's success.

Metaphors to Support Key Messages

Metaphors make something that is hard to understand easier to understand by comparing it to something concrete and familiar.

Brain Architecture	Serve and Return	Toxic Stress	Resilience Scale	Levelness
The story you're telling... Brain development is a lot like building a house. The basic architecture of the human brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and	The story you're telling... Brains are built through back-and-forth interaction, much like a game of tennis, ping pong or volleyball. Healthy development occurs when young	The story you're telling... Chronic, severe stressors can cause a response that is toxic to the developing brain and has long-term effects on health and wellness. Supportive relationships	The story you're telling... A positive outcome is like a scale tipped to one side. It can be influenced by counterbalancing weights and adjusting the balance point.	The story you're telling... Just as the levelness of a table is what makes it functional, the mental health of children is what enables them to function well in all areas of life.

3) **Review research-based metaphors:** these metaphors are meant to be woven into messages to boost their power. For example, when communicating about the importance of strong early childhood development, using brain building metaphor can help the average individual in an audience grasp the basic concepts of strong development in a more simplified way.

Pro tip: Come back to these metaphors after you've identified audience and Key Message Bucket and see where you might be able to bolster your message with "metaphor power."

4) **Identify your audience:** Messages are broken down by Key Message buckets (see above) and organized via various audiences. Once you've identified your audience, you can click on that audience of choice and then see all the messages catered to that audience.

Pro tips: It is often tempting to choose multiple audiences for one message, but stick to one audience group for each message.

While limiting your audience, it is possible to use messages from multiple Key Message Buckets – consider beginning with and "All Together for Prosperity" message to maximize your message and start off strong.

Audience-Specific Messages

All Target Audiences Business Community Members and Groups Community Resources/Services Educators Health Care Providers

Parents and Caregivers

Parents and Caregivers – Together for Prosperity

All kids, no matter where they live in our state – the plains, mountains, rural areas or urban centers – need high-quality caregiving for their development. We all have a role to play in helping parents and caregivers prepare Colorado's kids for the future. Colorado prospers when our kids thrive because they are our future workforce, leaders and community members.

[Learn more](#)

Parents and Caregivers – Resilience Is Built

There are interventions and supportive programs to help parents and caregivers counterbalance the negative cognitive effects of prolonged and significant adversity. These can help parents and caregivers plan for their families and build nurturing, strong, healthy relationships.

[Learn more](#)

Parents and Caregivers – Positive Parenting Works

Every day parents and caregivers impact Colorado's next generation from pre-conception forward. Sometimes the issues parents and caregivers face hinder Colorado's kids, especially in early childhood. Parents and caregivers need to be supported and engage themselves

Parents and Caregivers – A Strong Foundation for Mental Health Begins Early

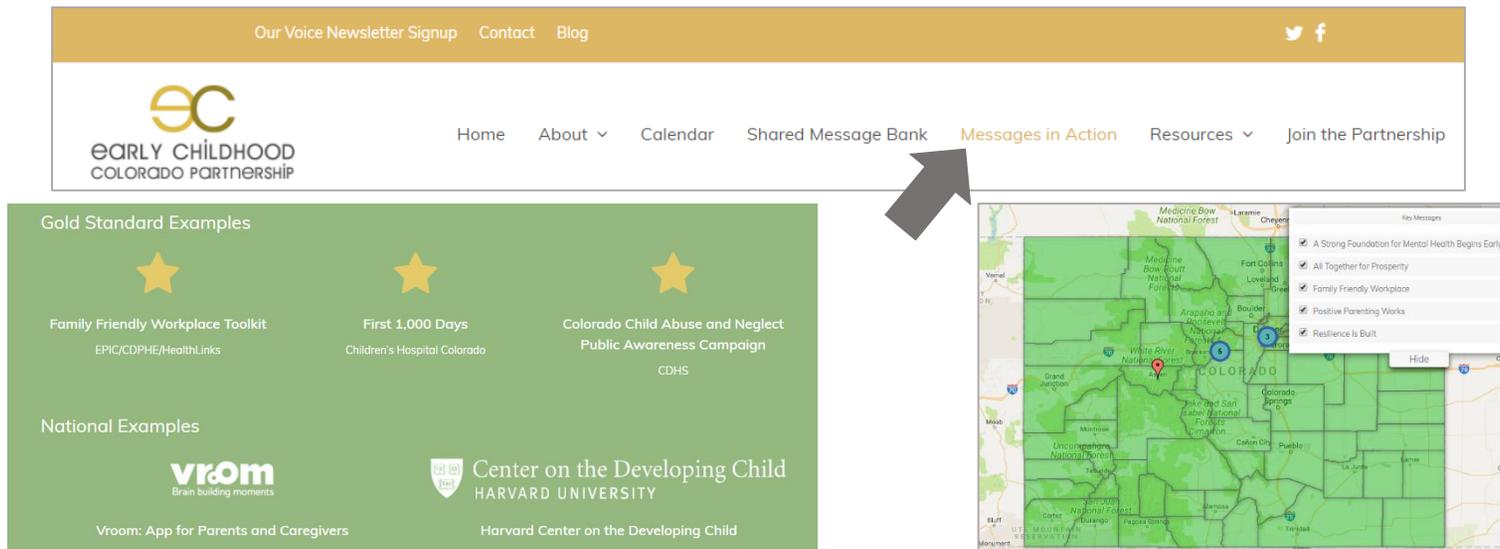
Building a healthy human brain is a process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood. A strong foundation early on increases

5) **Cater the messages to your needs!** The framing and research that serves as the basis for the Shared Message Bank has been tested with a broad range of individuals and communities from many backgrounds. Yet, it's YOU who knows your community best and can translate these messages in the tone and voice that most resonates with your community.

Pro tip: If you're just starting out and find it challenging to cater messages to your organization or community, you are free to copy and paste messages without changing them from the Shared Message Bank. Consider reaching out to the Mentor Team (see below) for ways to customize your messages.

Community Example: Grand Beginnings Early Childhood Council felt the term "prosperity" did not resonate in their community, but wanted to align prosperity as a value with their need for quality child care. They came up with the following tagline to bring both together and it resonated well with community members: "Everyone depends on someone who depends on child care."

6) **Get inspired! Take a look at Gold Standard Examples and the Messages in Action Map** to see what others have done. You can find many examples; from large-scale campaigns, to improvements in organizational messages, across a range of audiences and Key Messages.



7) **Reach out for support.** Members of the Shared Message Bank Mentor Team have content and communication expertise, and can provide tips and feedback on your work. Reach out to earlychildhood@civikkanopy.org to get other sets of eyes on your ideas.