

Top-Notch Villages: Working Together to Help Families Win

Presented by: El Brown, Ph.D.



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 **WHAT IS AN ECOSYSTEM?**

- AN ECOSYSTEM IS MADE UP OF INTERCONNECTED RELATIONSHIPS THAT SHAPE A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING FAMILY, CAREGIVERS, EDUCATORS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS.
- THE PURPOSE OF THE ECOSYSTEM IS TO SUPPORT THE CHILD AND FAMILY.
- ECOSYSTEMS EXTEND FROM THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT TO THE LARGER COMMUNITY.



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 **WHAT IS A VILLAGE?**
(THE MICROSYSTEM)

- THE VILLAGE IS THE **MICROSYSTEM**—THE PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENTS THAT DIRECTLY IMPACT A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT.
- IT INCLUDES PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS, TEACHERS, SERVICE PROVIDERS, NEIGHBORS, AND MORE.
- A VILLAGE IS STRONG WHEN ITS MEMBERS WORK INTENTIONALLY, BUT A TOP-NOTCH VILLAGE ENSURES EVERY CHILD HAS THE SUPPORT THEY NEED TO THRIVE.



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THESE ARE THE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- **LIST** THE PEOPLE A CHILD MIGHT SEE OR INTERACT WITH DURING A TYPICAL WEEK (E.G., BUS DRIVERS, CAFETERIA STAFF, COACHES, NEIGHBORS, RECEPTIONISTS).
- **THINK ABOUT** HOW THESE INDIVIDUALS MAY INFLUENCE A CHILD'S SENSE OF SAFETY, IDENTITY, AND BELONGING.
- **DISCUSS** THE FOLLOWING WITH WHOLE GROUP:
 - WHO HAS REGULAR ACCESS TO THE CHILD—EVEN IN BRIEF MOMENTS?
 - WHAT DO THESE ADULTS MODEL TO THE CHILD THROUGH THEIR PRESENCE AND BEHAVIOR?



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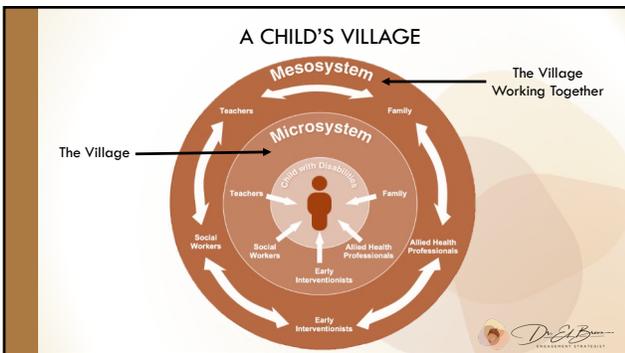
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THE VILLAGE WORKING TOGETHER
(THE MESOSYSTEM)

- THE VILLAGE WORKING TOGETHER IS THE **MESOSYSTEM**—THE RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENTS IN A CHILD'S VILLAGE.
- IT REFLECTS HOW WELL VILLAGE MEMBERS—PARENTS, TEACHERS, SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND OTHERS—COLLABORATE TO SUPPORT THE CHILD AND FAMILY.
- A **TOP-NOTCH VILLAGE** WORKING TOGETHER ENSURES STRONG CONNECTIONS, SHARED GOALS, AND OPEN COMMUNICATION FOR THE SUCCESS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.



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THE VILLAGE WORKING TOGETHER

- **THINK BACK TO THE PEOPLE YOU LISTED IN OUR FIRST ACTIVITY**—THESE ARE THE PEOPLE IN THE CHILD'S VILLAGE.
- **CONSIDER HOW THE PEOPLE IN THE CHILD'S VILLAGE WORK TOGETHER.**
- **DISCUSS HOW THESE ADULTS MAY INTERACT, OVERLAP, OR SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER.**
 1. HOW DO THESE PEOPLE WORK TOGETHER?
 2. WHERE DO YOU ALREADY SEE TEAM WORK OR CONNECTION?
 3. WHERE COULD MORE COLLABORATION HELP?

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 **WHAT IS A TOP NOTCH VILLAGE?**

- A **TOP NOTCH VILLAGE** IS A GROUP OF MISSION-ALIGNED PEOPLE WHO INTENTIONALLY COLLABORATE TO MOVE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FORWARD.
- A VILLAGE IS A COLLECTION OF PEOPLE WITH ACCESS TO A CHILD—A **TOP NOTCH VILLAGE** IS A NETWORK OF PEOPLE WORKING IN ALIGNMENT.
- THE DIFFERENCE IS MISSION ALIGNMENT: NOT JUST BEING PRESENT, BUT BEING PURPOSEFUL IN EVERY INTERACTION.
- MISSION-ALIGNED INDIVIDUALS UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLE, SHARE A COLLECTIVE GOAL, AND OPERATE WITH CLARITY, CARE, AND INTENTION.



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MISSION ALIGNMENT IN ACTION: REFRAMING ROLES

- **MISSION ALIGNMENT** TURNS EVERYDAY TASKS INTO INTENTIONAL ACTS OF SUPPORT AND CONNECTION.
- A JOB TITLE DESCRIBES WHAT SOMEONE DOES—MISSION ALIGNMENT DEFINES *WHY* THEY DO IT.
- WHEN ROLES ARE MISSION-ALIGNED, THEY BECOME PURPOSE-DRIVEN AND CHILD-CENTERED.
- EXAMPLE: A BUS DRIVER BECOMES A *MORNING AMBASSADOR*, CREATING CALM TRANSITIONS AND POSITIVE STARTS FOR BOTH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.



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 **OUR MISSION IS TO MAKE SURE EVERY CHILD FEELS SAFE, SEEN, AND SECURE—SUPPORTED BY ADULTS WHO HELP THEM BUILD CONFIDENCE, FEEL GOOD ABOUT WHO THEY ARE, AND CREATE REAL OPPORTUNITIES TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL SO THEY CAN GROW INTO STRONG, CARING, AND CAPABLE CONTRIBUTORS TO THE WORLD.**

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"JOB TITLE" TO "MISSION ASSIGNMENT"

- **THINK ABOUT** THE PEOPLE AND ROLES WE DISCUSSED EARLIER—THESE ARE THE ADULTS WORKING TOGETHER IN A CHILD'S VILLAGE.
- **REFLECT** ON HOW THOSE INDIVIDUALS COULD BE DESCRIBED THROUGH A MISSION-ALIGNED LENS.
- **REWRITE** EACH ROLE BY FOCUSING ON THE PURPOSE THEY SERVE IN A CHILD'S AND FAMILY'S LIFE—NOT JUST THE TASK THEY PERFORM.
 - USE WORDS THAT SHOW HOW THIS PERSON HELPS THE CHILD OR FAMILY MOVE FORWARD.



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WHEN A VILLAGE IS MISSION-ALIGNED

EVERYONE HAS CLARITY.

- WE EACH KNOW THE PART WE PLAY IN HELPING A CHILD AND FAMILY MOVE FORWARD.

EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES FROM THEIR STRENGTHS.

- WE BRING WHAT WE KNOW, WHAT WE'VE LIVED, AND WHAT WE DO WELL.

EVERYONE IS VALUED.

- EACH ROLE MATTERS. EACH VOICE MATTERS. EACH EXPERIENCE MATTERS.

EVERYONE STAYS CONNECTED TO "WHY."

- EVEN WHEN THINGS GET BUSY OR COMPLEX, THE MISSION BRINGS US BACK TO CENTER.

EVERYONE MOVES TOGETHER.

- WE MAY TAKE DIFFERENT STEPS, BUT WE HEAD TOWARD THE SAME DESTINATION.



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WHAT IS COLLABORATION?

COLLABORATION IS:

- PEOPLE SHARING INFORMATION, INSIGHT, AND OBSERVATIONS.
- COORDINATING EFFORTS TO SUPPORT A CHILD OR FAMILY.
- WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD A SHARED GOAL OR TASK.
- COMMUNICATING IN WAYS THAT HELP EVERYONE UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLE.
- RESPECTING EACH PERSON'S EXPERTISE AND CONTRIBUTION.



IN SIMPLE TERMS: COLLABORATION IS PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER.



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WHAT IS MISSION-ALIGNED COLLABORATION?

MISSION-ALIGNED COLLABORATION IS:

- WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE MISSION IN MIND, NOT JUST THE TASK.
- BRINGING YOUR STRENGTHS AND TALENTS FORWARD BECAUSE A CHILD NEEDS THEM.
- SEEING FAMILY, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS AS CO-LEADERS IN THE CHILD'S GROWTH.
- SHARING KNOWLEDGE SO THE CHILD RECEIVES CONSISTENT SUPPORT ACROSS ALL SETTINGS.
- ASKING, "WHAT HELPS THIS CHILD OR FAMILY MOVE FORWARD?", THEN ACTING ON IT.
- COORDINATING ACROSS ROLES — NOT BECAUSE YOU "HAVE TO," BUT BECAUSE THE CHILD BENEFITS.

IN SIMPLE TERMS: MISSION-ALIGNED COLLABORATION IS ADULTS COMING TOGETHER ON PURPOSE TO MOVE A CHILD FORWARD.




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MISSION-ALIGNED COLLABORATION

PARENT → FAMILY ADVOCATE → OFFICE STAFF → CLASSROOM TEAM → NUTRITION STAFF

- A PARENT LETS THE FAMILY ADVOCATE KNOW THEIR CAR BROKE DOWN AND THEY WILL BE LATE.
- THE FAMILY ADVOCATE COMMUNICATES THIS TO THE OFFICE STAFF SO THE CENTER IS AWARE OF THE SITUATION.
- THE OFFICE STAFF ALERTS THE CHILD'S CLASSROOM TEAM TO PREPARE FOR A LATER ARRIVAL.
- THEY ALSO NOTIFY THE NUTRITION STAFF TO ENSURE THE CHILD STILL RECEIVES BREAKFAST.
- THE CLASSROOM TEAM WELCOMES THE CHILD AND PARENT WARMLY, WITHOUT RUSH, JUDGMENT, OR PRESSURE.

MISSION IMPACT:

- THE CHILD EXPERIENCES EMOTIONAL SAFETY FROM THE MOMENT THEY ARRIVE.
- THE PARENT FEELS RESPECTED, NOT EMBARRASSED.
- THE ENTIRE VILLAGE PRESERVES DIGNITY, STABILITY, AND BELONGING —
- BECAUSE THE MISSION CENTERS PEOPLE, NOT SCHEDULES.



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MISSION-ALIGNED COLLABORATION

TEACHER → MENTAL HEALTH/DISABILITY STAFF → FAMILY ADVOCATE → PARENT → COMMUNITY SUPPORTS → CLASSROOM TEAM

- TEACHER NOTICES THE CHILD IS UNUSUALLY WITHDRAWN OR DISENGAGED.
- TEACHER CONSULTS PRIVATELY WITH MENTAL HEALTH/DISABILITY STAFF, SHARING OBSERVATIONS (NOT ASSUMPTIONS, NOT LABELS).
- MENTAL HEALTH/DISABILITY STAFF LOOPS IN THE FAMILY ADVOCATE, THE PERSON WHO HAS RELATIONSHIP AND TRUST WITH THE PARENT.
- FAMILY ADVOCATE CONTACTS THE PARENT, EXPLAINS WHAT THE SCHOOL IS NOTICING, AND THE PARENT SHARES WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOME.
- PARENT AND FAMILY ADVOCATE IDENTIFY THE NEXT STEP TOGETHER — WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT FEELS HELPFUL, SAFE, AND WELCOME.
- FAMILY ADVOCATE CONNECTS THE FAMILY TO COMMUNITY SUPPORTS (TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, UTILITIES, FOOD, MENTAL HEALTH, CRISIS SERVICES).
- COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROVIDE STABILIZING SUPPORT, EASING THE LOAD ON THE FAMILY.
- FAMILY ADVOCATE DISCREETLY UPDATES THE CLASSROOM TEAM, SO THE CHILD IS WELCOMED WITH UNDERSTANDING AND CALM.
- TEACHER ADJUSTS THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE — MORE PREDICTABILITY, GENTLENESS, CONNECTION, SUPPORT — ENSURING THE CHILD FEELS SAFE AND EMOTIONALLY HELD.



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WHEN THE ECOSYSTEM WORKS

WHEN THE ECOSYSTEM WORKS, CHILDREN:

- WHEN THE ECOSYSTEM WORKS, CHILDREN GROW WITH CONFIDENCE, STABILITY, AND IDENTITY —AND ARE GIVEN THE SPACE, ENVIRONMENT, AND OPPORTUNITY TO GROW INTO THE GREATNESS THEY WERE BORN TO BE.

WHEN THE ECOSYSTEM WORKS, FAMILIES:

- EXPERIENCE DIGNITY, PARTNERSHIP, AND BELONGING — SUPPORTED BY A VILLAGE THAT RECOGNIZES, RESPECTS, AND VALUES THEIR STRENGTHS.

WHEN THE ECOSYSTEM WORKS, THE VILLAGE:

- CREATES THE CONDITIONS FOR COMMUNITIES TO FLOURISH — WHERE SAFETY GROWS, OPPORTUNITIES EXPAND, AND THE CHILDREN WE NURTURE BECOME THE ADULTS WHO CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY AND FOR US.



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WHY WE DO THIS

BECAUSE HE NEEDS US.



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WHY WE DO THIS

BECAUSE THEY NEED US.



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 WHY WE DO THIS

**AND WE ARE ALL
TIED TO THE
OUTCOME**



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DESIGNING A CHILD'S ECOSYSTEM

- USE THE CHART PAPER AND MARKERS AT YOUR TABLE TO CREATE A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF A CHILD'S ECOSYSTEM.
- INCLUDE THE CHILD AT THE CENTER OF YOUR ECOSYSTEM.
- SHOW WHO IS IN THE CHILD'S VILLAGE AND HOW THE VILLAGE WORKS TOGETHER TO SUPPORT THE CHILD AND FAMILY.
- BE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN YOUR ECOSYSTEM TO THE LARGER GROUP:
 1. WHO IS IN THE CHILD'S VILLAGE?
 2. HOW DO THESE ROLES INTERACT TO SUPPORT THE CHILD AND FAMILY?
 3. WHAT COLLABORATION STRATEGIES STRENGTHEN THIS ECOSYSTEM?

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KEY TAKEAWAYS: BUILDING A TOP-NOTCH VILLAGE

- CHILDREN THRIVE WHEN THE ECOSYSTEM WORKS.
- MISSION ALIGNMENT TURNS A VILLAGE INTO A TOP-NOTCH VILLAGE.
- COLLABORATION IS MORE THAN WORKING TOGETHER — IT'S WORKING WITH INTENTION.
- FAMILIES WIN WHEN VILLAGES WORK TOGETHER.
- WE EACH CARRY A PIECE OF THE MISSION.
- A WELL-FUNCTIONING ECOSYSTEM STRENGTHENS THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.



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NEXT STEP

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** FOCUS ON SMALL, INTENTIONAL ACTIONS THAT STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION IN YOUR DAILY INTERACTIONS.
- **FIND CONNECTIONS.** IDENTIFY ONE PERSON IN YOUR ECOSYSTEM YOU CAN BUILD A STRONGER CONNECTION WITH THIS WEEK.
- **COMMIT TO COLLABORATION.** WRITE DOWN ONE SPECIFIC WAY YOU CAN WORK BETTER WITH OTHERS IN THE CHILD'S VILLAGE.
- **REFLECT.** THINK ABOUT TODAY'S DISCUSSION AND CONSIDER HOW YOU CAN APPLY THESE STRATEGIES TO HELP FAMILIES WIN.
- **PRACTICE AND IMPROVE.** CHOOSE ONE STRATEGY FROM TODAY AND TRY IT IN YOUR ROLE. ADJUST AS NEEDED FOR CONTINUED GROWTH.

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Improve

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LET'S KEEP THIS LEARNING PARTY GOING!



CONNECT WITH ME! WE'RE FRIENDS NOW!

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