Development can be disrupted. Exposure to chronic adversity and trauma can lead to toxic stress, which can adversely impact children's brain development and diminish academic outcomes. In spite of these challenges, developmental science also recognizes the phenomenon of brain plasticity and the malleability of development, which makes it possible to intervene in the course of development.

Principles of Effective Practice

Developmental science illuminates risks to child development and learning, as well as opportunities for meaningful intervention. The literature on development makes clear that: (1) protective factors can be bolstered while risk factors can be addressed, essentially making it possible to tilt a child's negative developmental trajectory in a positive direction; and (2) child development is influenced across contexts that include home, school, and community.

So what does this imply for practice? Decades of scholarship from diverse fields emphasize the importance of systemic, comprehensive approaches to student support aimed at meeting the needs of the "whole child." Across the nation, approaches to "wraparound," "comprehensive services," "full service schools," "community schools," "Promise Neighborhoods," or "collective impact," are pursuing this aim. More recent scholarship asserts that because of the dynamic influences on child development and readiness to learn, effective approaches to intervention must tailor to the heterogeneity of variations – or differences – across children and across time. In short, the research suggests that to be an effective intervention, student support should be: Customized, Comprehensive, Coordinated and Continuous.

Customized

- **Individualized:** Optimize each student's healthy development and readiness to learn
- **Universal:** Assess each student's strengths and needs

Comprehensive

- **Whole child:** Assess each student's strengths and needs across all developmental domains – academic, social-emotional, health, and family.
- **Multi-tiered:** Evaluate the intensity of support required in each domain – from preventive to intensive – which may differ for each child in each domain.

Coordinated

- **Intentional:** Through a culturally sensitive lens, and in collaboration with teachers, students, and their families, match each student with resources and opportunities aligned with the domains and intensities of their individual needs and strengths in order enhance protective factors and mitigate risk factors. Because of the diversity of student needs and strengths, high quality matches likely require connections to resources located in the school and in the community.
- **Organized:** Collect and organize information about school- and community-based resources to increase efficiency and quality of match between child and resources and opportunities. Establish ongoing, reciprocal communication and information sharing, consistent with privacy laws, regarding student needs and progress.

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