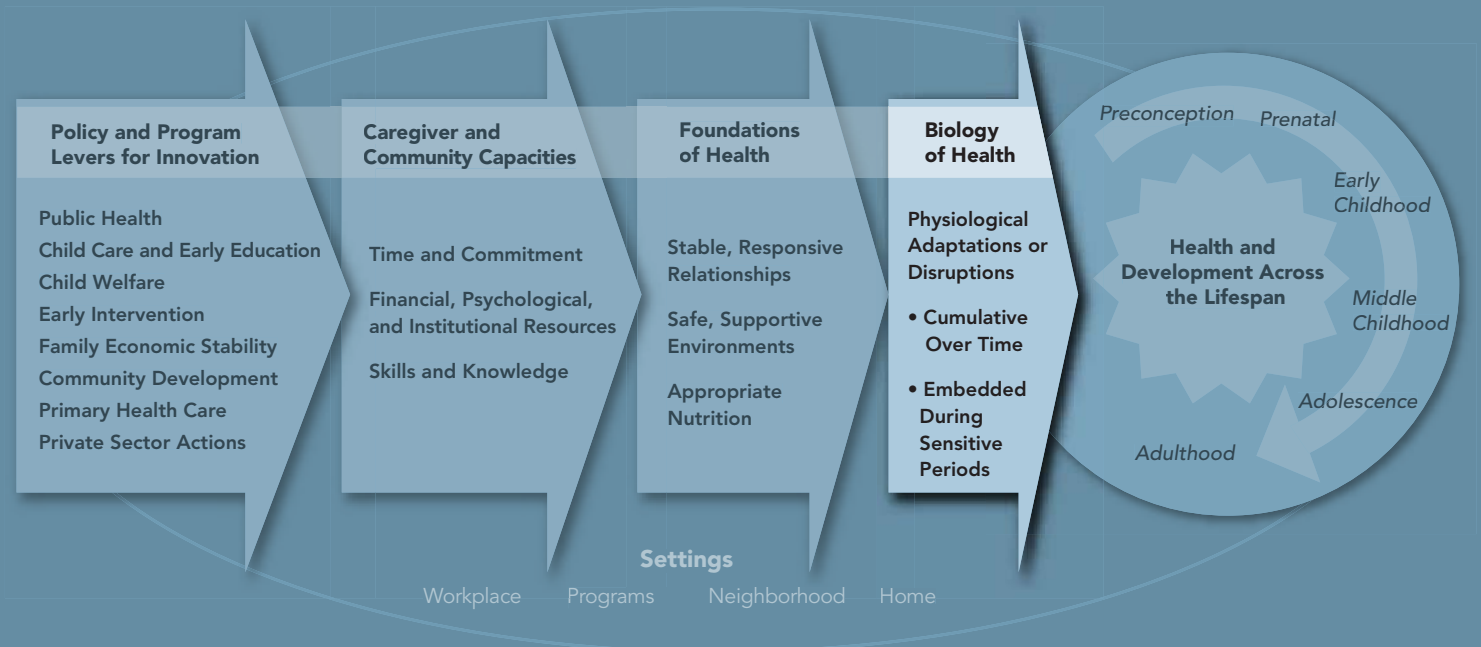


Framework for Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Policies and Programs to Strengthen Lifelong Health



Source: The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2010.

section C

Biology of Health

Early childhood is a time of rapid growth and development for the brain and other biological systems. Many chronic health conditions (e.g., hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes) experienced in adulthood are linked to processes and experiences early in life (in some cases the prenatal period). There can be a lag of many years and even decades before early harm is expressed in the form of overt disease.⁶

The following chapters present the current health status of Peel children and youth, including their mental and physical health, use of health-care services, injuries and mortality. Data are presented regarding risk behaviours among youth, including physical inactivity, smoking and alcohol consumption – behaviours that may begin in adolescence but lead to chronic disease and ill-health later in life.