



A Life Course Framework for Improving the Lives of Boys and Men of Color

Arnold Chandler | Forward Change Consulting

About Forward Change

Forward Change is a mission-driven consulting firm that seeks to **improve the life outcomes and opportunities for children, young adults and families living in low-income disadvantaged communities.**

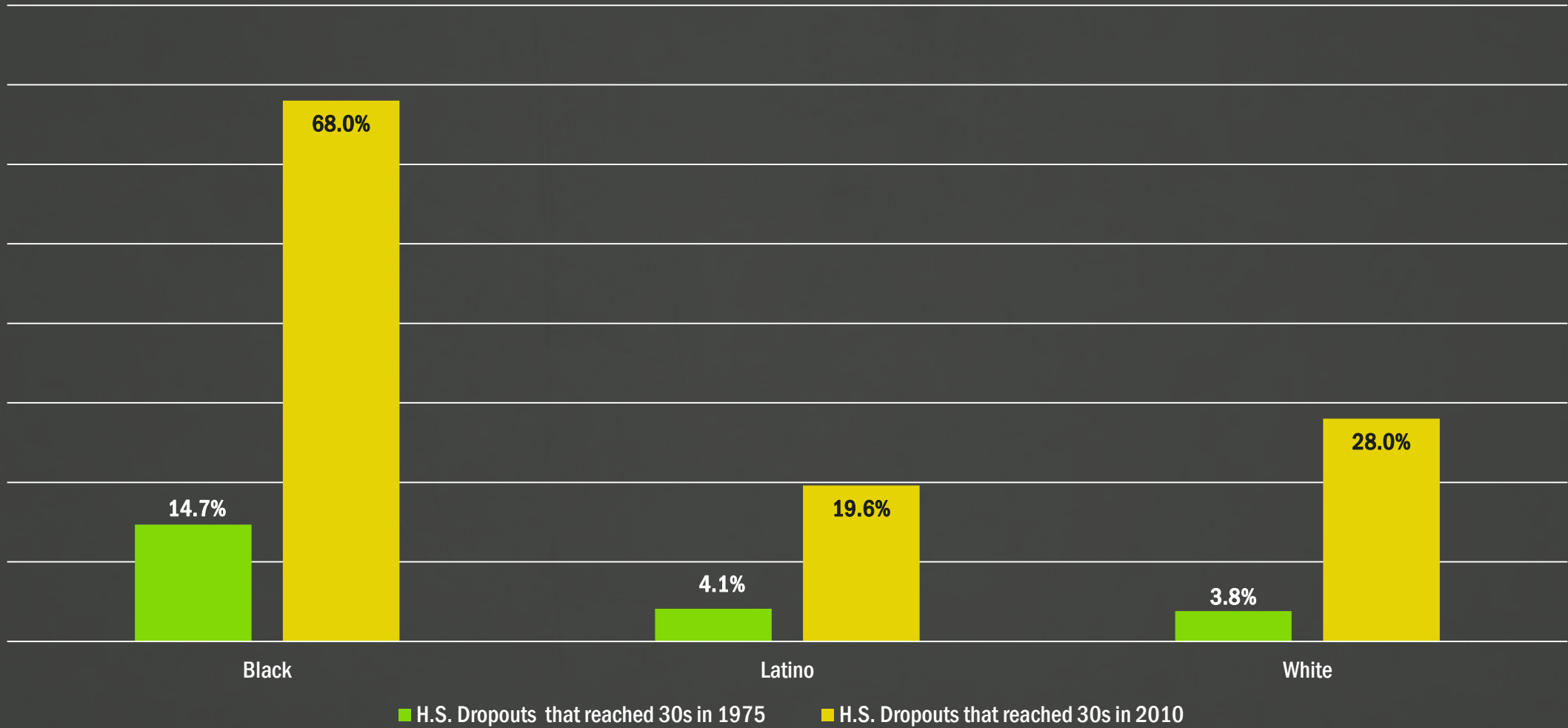
We do this by helping foundations, governments and community organizations **adopt social change strategies that match the best that research has to offer with the on-the-ground leadership in communities.**

Presentation Overview

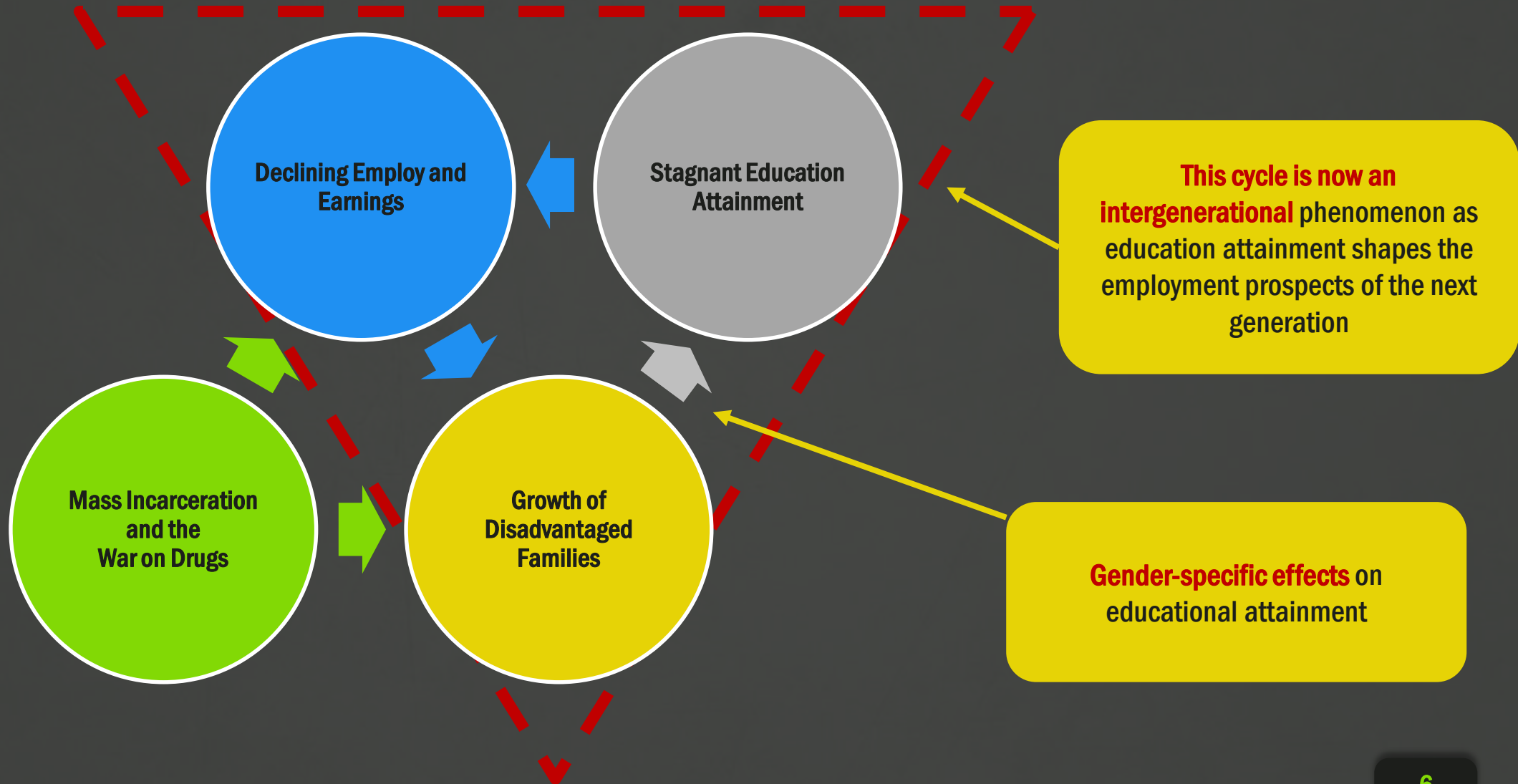
- 1. Why a Focus on (Gender) Boys and Men of Color (BMOC)?: A Gender-Specific Cycle of Intergenerational Disadvantage**
- 2. A Life Course Framework for Improving the Lives of Disadvantaged Populations: Interrupting the Cycle**

Why Focus on Boys and Men of Color?

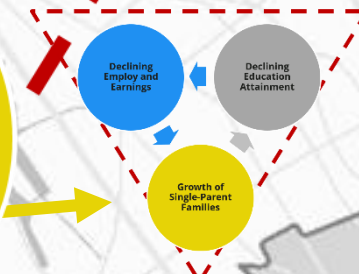
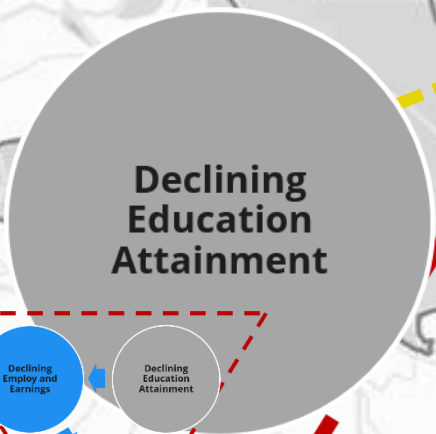
Change in Lifetime Risk of Imprisonment Male H.S. Dropouts by Age 35 | 1975 vs. 2010



>>> A Vicious Cycle of Male Intergenerational Disadvantage



Oakland, CA



Rise of concentrated disadvantage

- Poor neighborhoods are **over-policed** through aggressive drug enforcement and order-maintenance policing and **under-protected** from violence due to reduced “police legitimacy” and police effectiveness with regard to violent crime
- **Mass incarceration is also concentrated** (Clear, 2007)

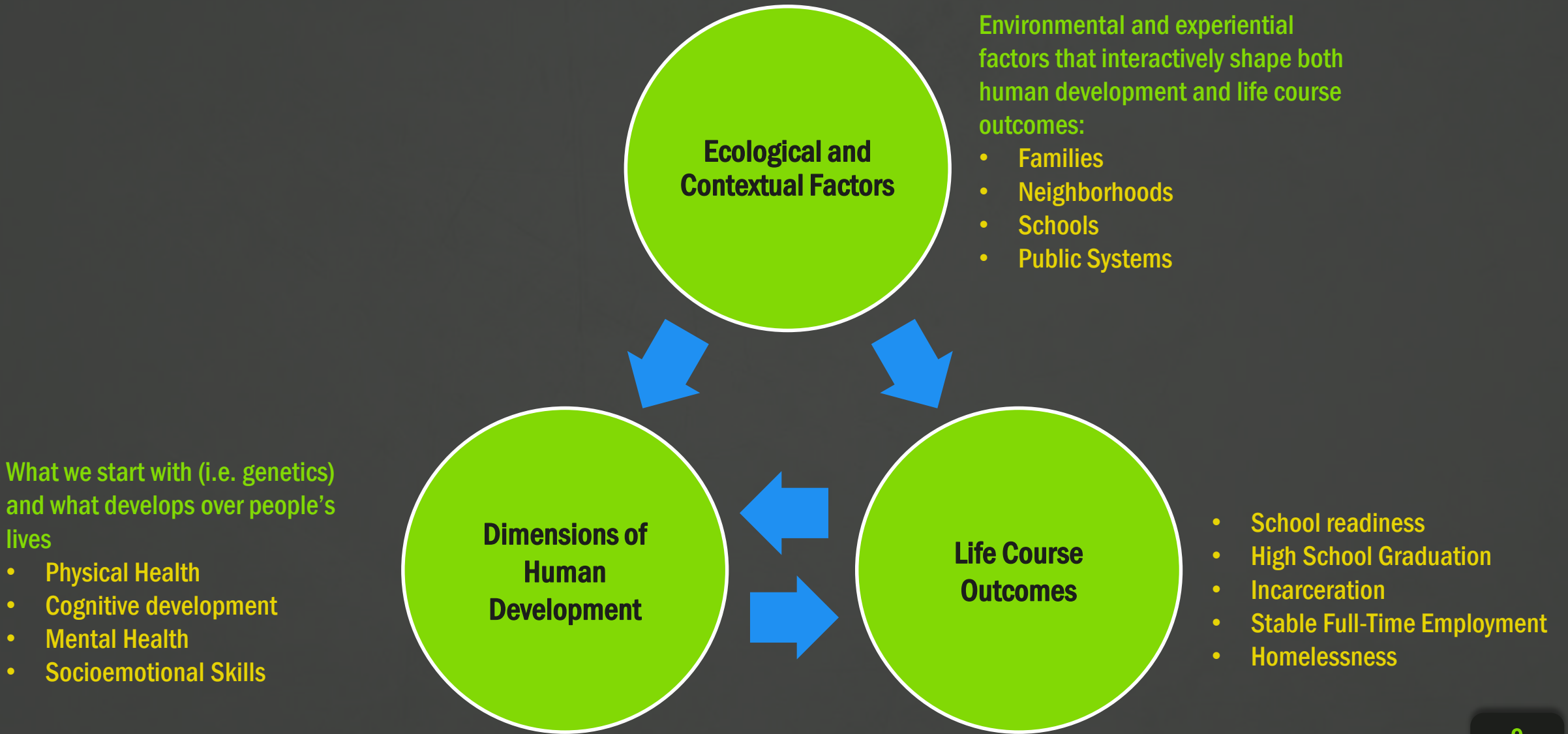
Mass Criminalization (War on Drugs and Incarceration)

There are 5-10 million formerly incarcerated individuals residing in US Neighborhoods (cited in Kirk)

- **The rise of concentrated poverty and jobless ghettos since the early 1970s** (Wilson, 1996)
- **Concentration of negative factors associated with poverty** like crime, violence, poor school quality, drugs, disinvestment (Massey, 2007)

A Life Course Framework for Improving the
Lives of Disadvantaged Populations:
Interrupting the Cycle

Overview of Framework Components



Dimensions of Human Development

Physical Health: genetic predisposition; motor-visual-auditory dev, morbidity, brain development, **biological embedding of social adversity and toxic substance exposures:** chronic adversity, allostatic load/toxic stress, environmental toxin exposure (e.g. air pollution, lead poisoning, etc.), epigenetics, basal cortisol levels

Cognitive Development: intelligence, information processing, language, numeracy, literacy, **executive functions (e.g. memory, attention, reasoning, problem solving)**, mathematical reasoning, scientific thinking, verbal and written communication skills

Mental Health and Sense of Well-Being: **secure attachment**, trauma, happiness/contentment, hope, self-esteem/mastery, stigma stress, mood disorders, schizophrenia, psychosis

Chronic Stress
HPA-Axis Dysregulation
Allostatic Load
Impairs Working Memory
Hijacks Stress Response

Socioemotional Development: Emotion and behavior regulation; autonomy; determination; self-monitoring/meta-cognition

Identity Development: **Self-concept**, Self-Awareness, **Mindset**, self-efficacy, gender identity, sexual identity, cultural orientation/attachment

Content and Cultural Knowledge: Declarative, procedural and evaluative content and cultural knowledge.

Moral Development: conscience and moral agency, moral judgment, **moral reasoning, altruism, empathy, moral action/behavior** (Prosocial behavior), moral emotion, moral character (i.e. virtue, ethics)

Personality: Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism

Dimensions of Human Development

Protective Factor

Physical Health

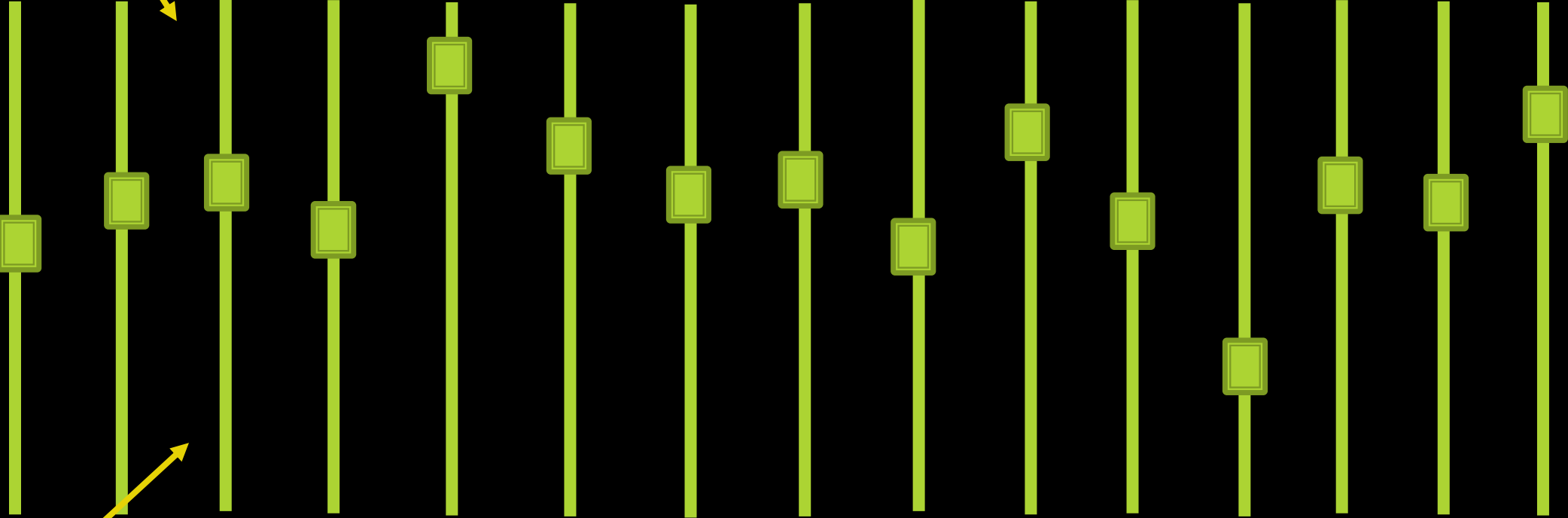
Cognitive Dev.

Mental Health

Socioemotional

Identity

Etc.



Risk Factor

Society, Culture & History
Institutions and Public Systems
Place
Peers, Mentors and Networks
Schools and Childcare
Family

0-5

6-11

12-18

19-25

26-35

ON TRACK

OFF TRACK

Physical Health

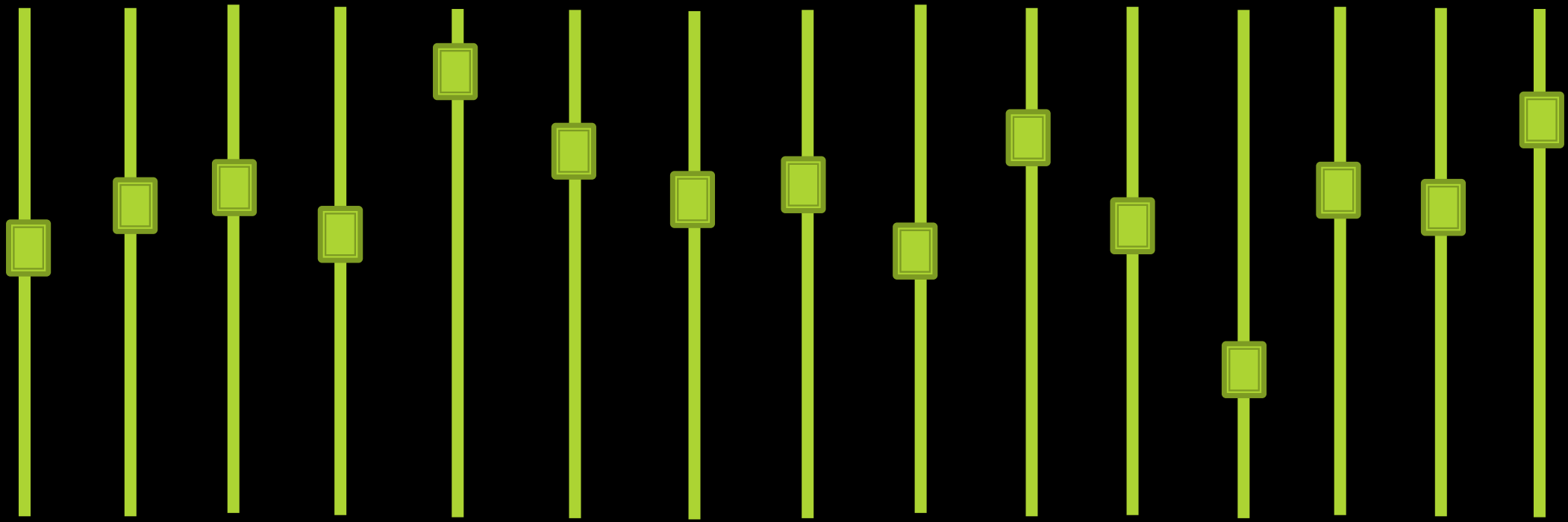
Cognitive Dev.

Mental Health

Socioemotional

Identity

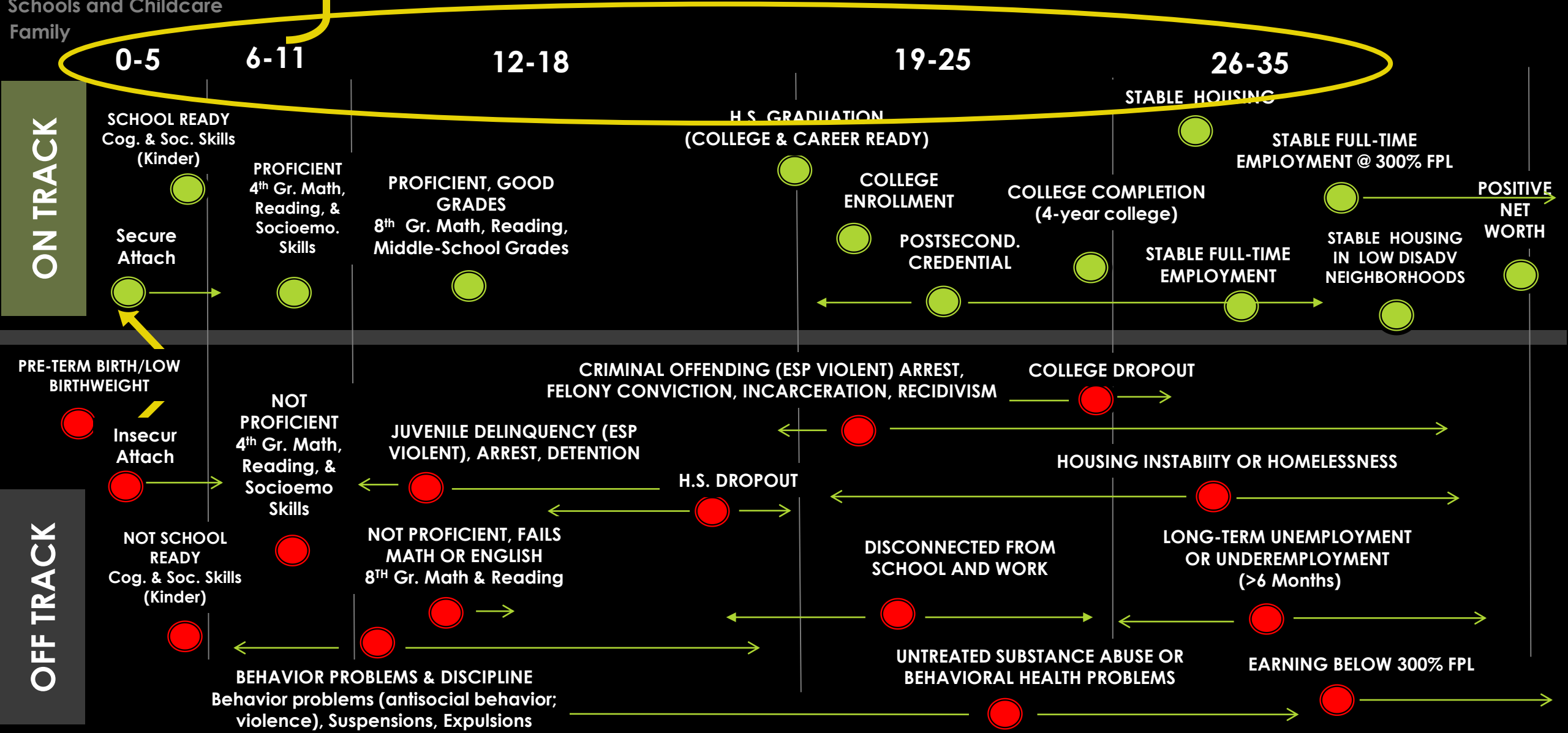
Etc.



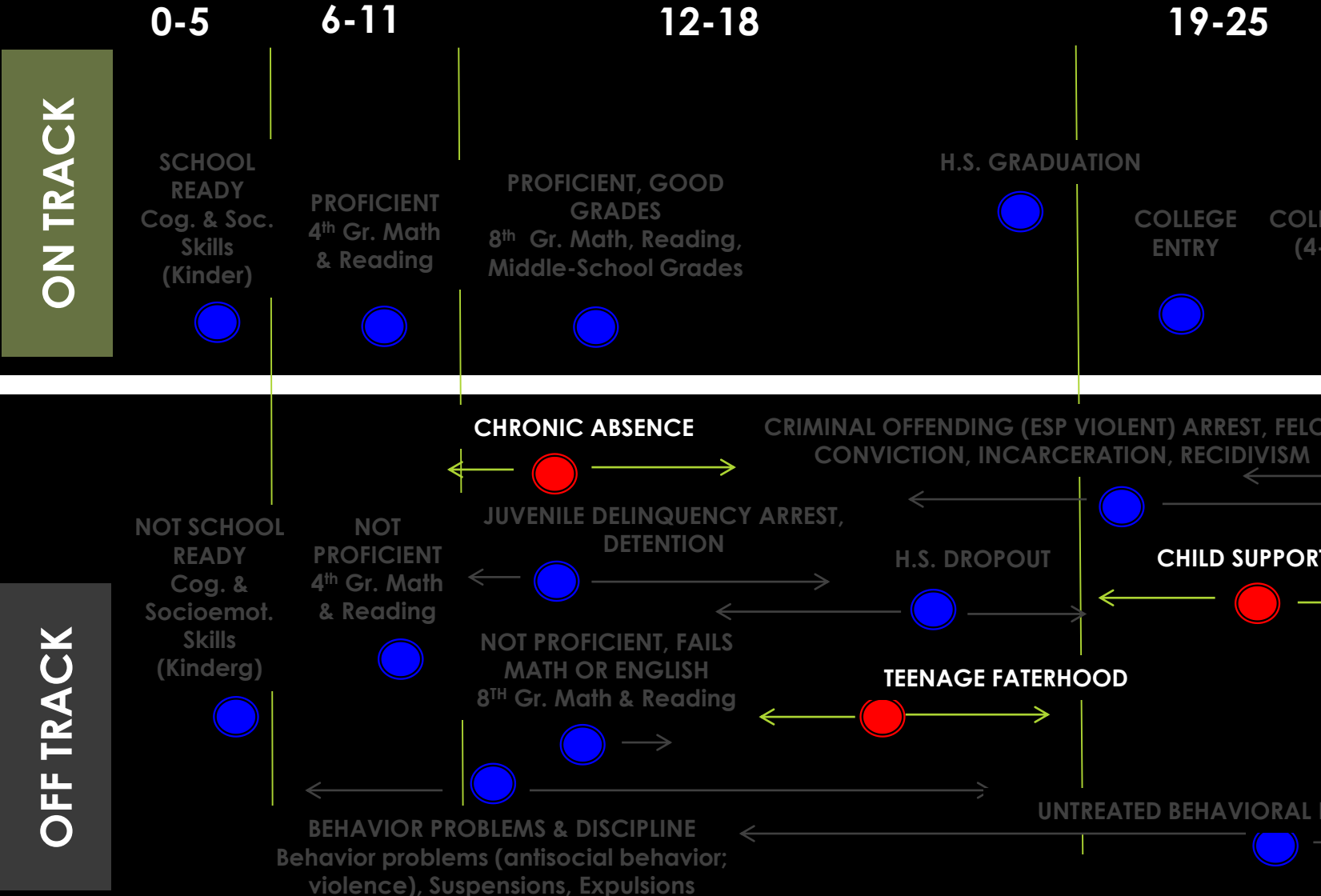
Life Course Outcomes

Society, Culture & History
 Institutions and Public Systems
 Place
 Peers, Mentors and Networks
 Schools and Childcare
 Family

Ecological/Contextual Factors



Life Course Outcomes



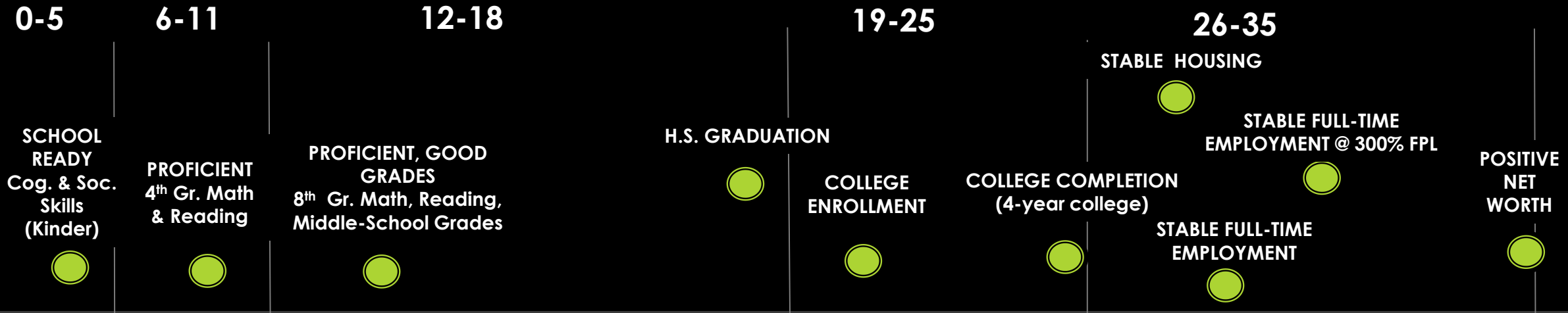
Key Themes:

- **Earlier life outcomes affect later ones.**
- There is a need for interventions across the life course, not just early ones. **Early intervention is necessary, but not sufficient.**
- There are **“sensitive”** developmental periods for intervention
- **“Causal Density”**: Everything is related to everything else which makes “siloed” approaches ineffectual

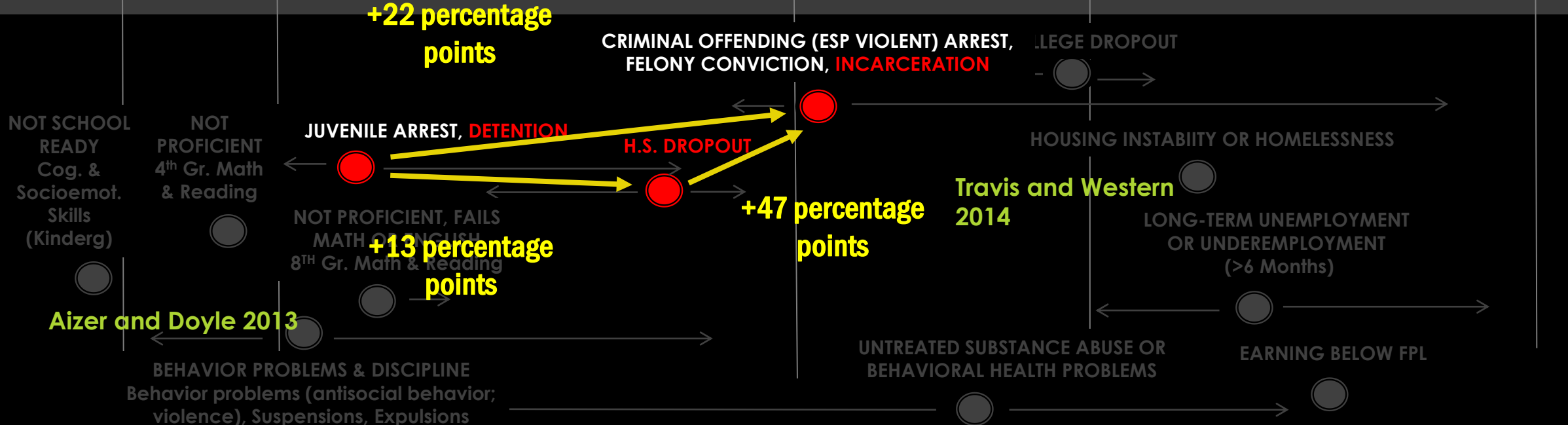
Society, Culture & History
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Life Course Outcomes

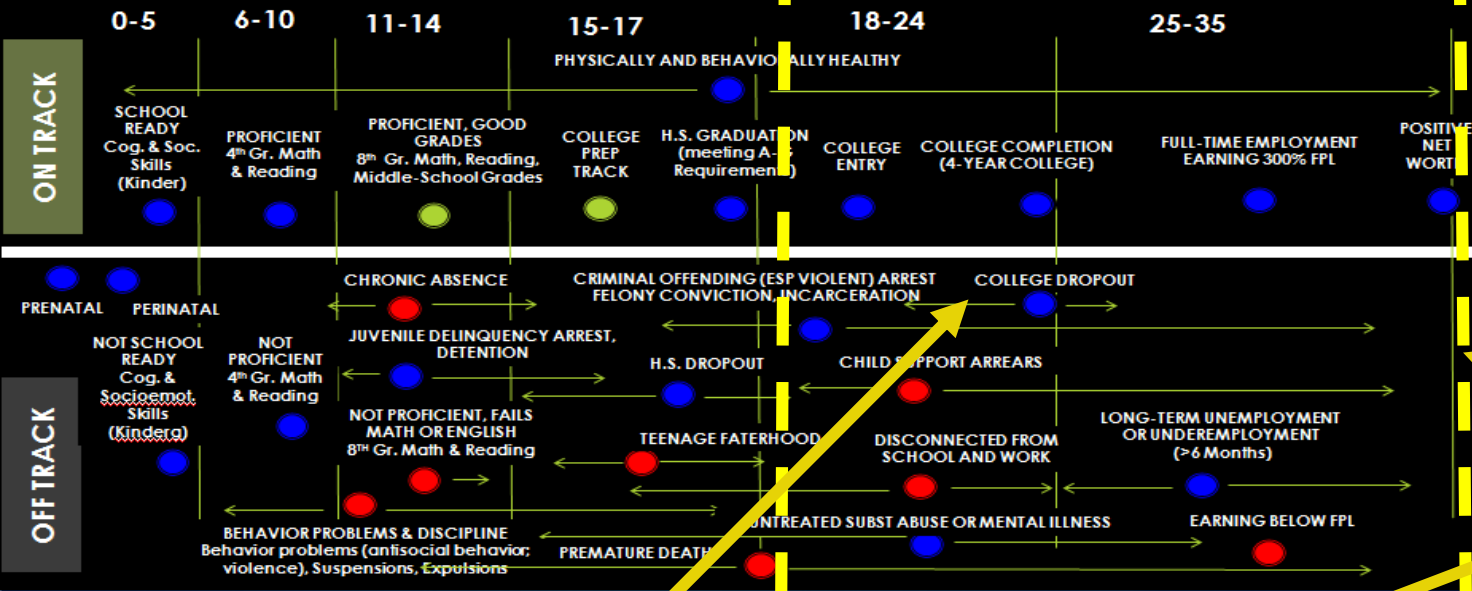
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Society
Peers and Networks
Place
Schools and Systems
Family

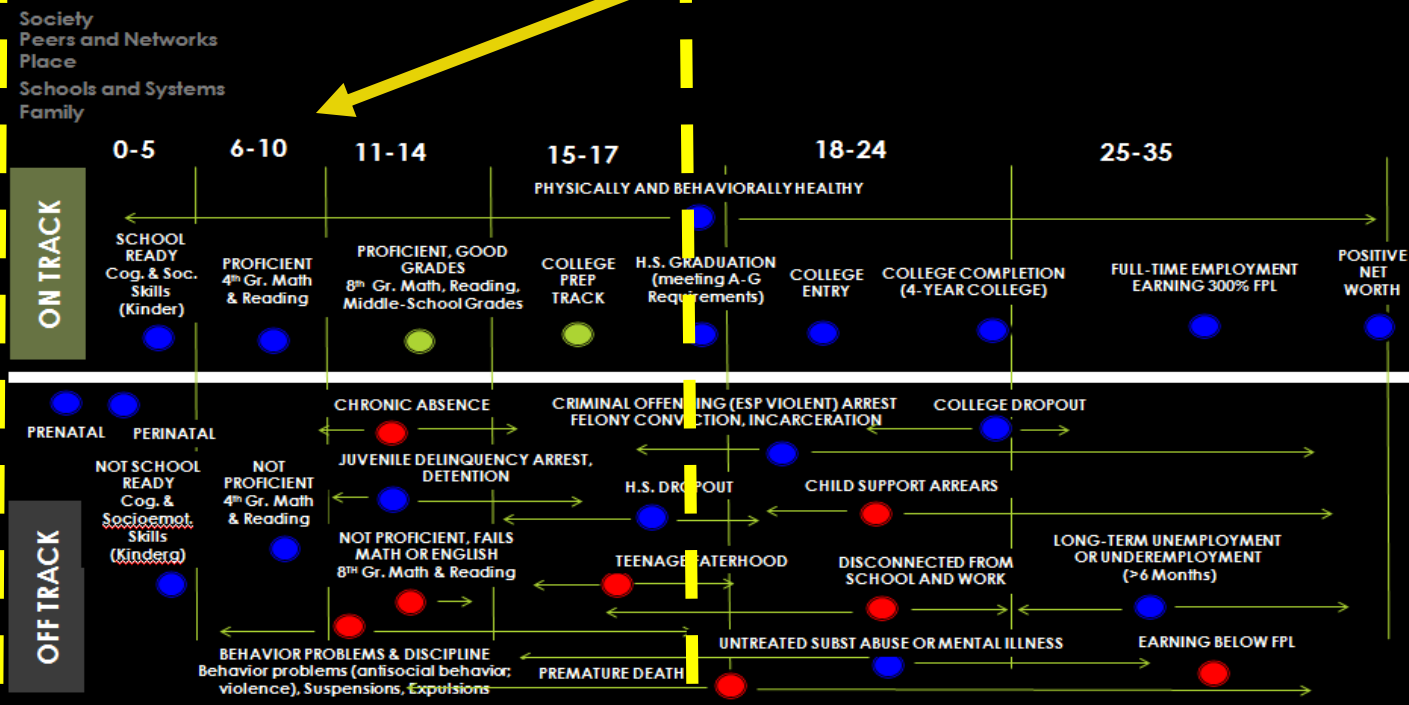


Generationally Linked Life Courses: Adopting a Two-Generation Approach

Father's Life Course (or Mother's)

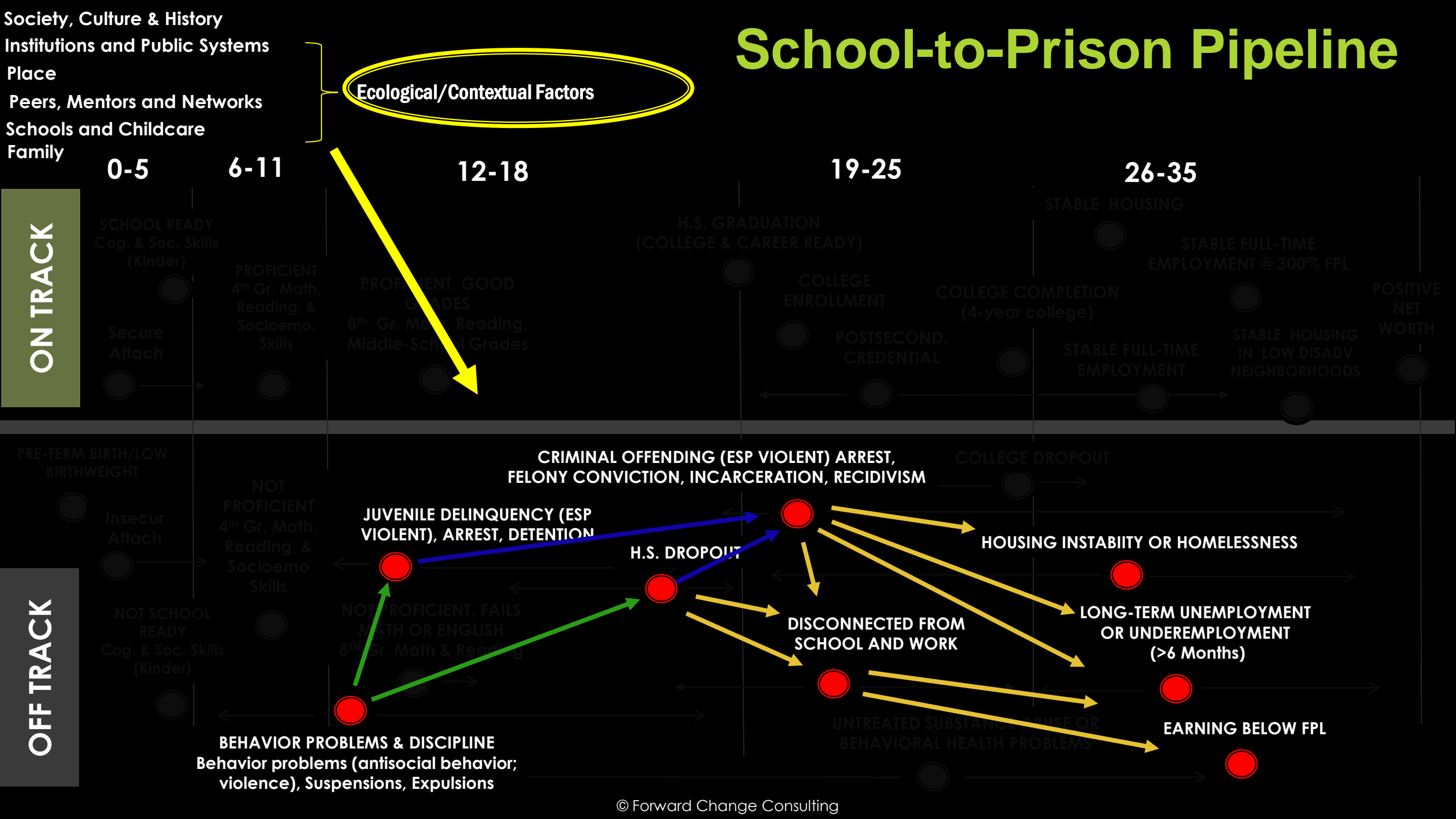
While these are later life course interventions, they have early life course implications for the next generation.

Roughly 65% of black and Latino fathers have their first child before age 25. By age 30, roughly 85% of these fathers have had their first child. These fathers have 2 or fewer kids on average around 5 years apart. Thus, by age 35, a majority of the next generation has been born. [Martinez et al, 2012]



Child's Life Course

School-to-Prison Pipeline



Key Takeaways from the life course framework

The vicious intergenerational cycle described is not inevitable, but rather is the product of both policy decisions and structural forces: At every step, policy and resource decisions were and are being made that can either amplify or dampen the impact of big, impersonal forces like structural shifts in the economy. **We can interrupt this cycle!**

1. Must adopt a **life-course approach**
2. Focused on **two generations** (intergenerational)
3. That is “**gender-specific**” in its analysis of causes, correlates and solutions
4. **Changing conditions** (and removing barriers) confronting BMOC through **policy and systems change**
5. Helping BMOC become **more resilient** to bad conditions through applying **programs, services and practices** that we know **work for males of color**
6. Pursued through **multi-issue collaboratives**



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Citations

Todd Clear (2007) *Imprisoning Communities: How Mass Incarceration Makes Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Worse*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Douglas S. Massey (2007) *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System*. Russell Sage Foundation

William Julius Wilson (1996) *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. Knopf Doubleday