

Child Care Aware of America Leadership Institute 2023

Recognizing Childcare Providers as Early Relational Professionals

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Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

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The infographic consists of four main panels. The first panel on the left is orange and features a brain icon with the text '90% of a child's brain development happens before age 5'. The second panel is white with a child's profile and the title 'The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3', showing '1100 WORDS' for high-income families and '500 WORDS' for low-income families. The third panel is green and states 'INVESTMENT IN EARLY LEARNING \$1'. The fourth panel is pink and states '\$13 IN RETURN'. An equals sign connects the investment and return panels.

90%
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The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3

WORD GAP BY AGE 3

ON AVERAGE

1100 WORDS

500 WORDS

INVESTMENT
IN EARLY
LEARNING
\$1

=

\$13
IN RETURN

These are just half of the story ...

2

90% of a child's brain development happens before age 5

The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3

WORD GAP BY AGE 3

ON AVERAGE

COMMERCIAL CHILDREN HEAR 1100 WORDS

COMMERCIAL CHILDREN HEAR 500 WORDS

INVESTMENT IN EARLY LEARNING \$1 = \$13 IN RETURN

What is our half of the story?

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AAP News Latest News Collections

American Academy of Pediatrics DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

Preventing Childhood Toxic Stress: Partnering With Families and Communities to Promote Relational Health

Andrew Garner, MD, PhD, FAAP^{1,2} Michael Yogman, MD, FAAP^{3,4}
COMMITTEE ON PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH, SECTION ON DEVELOPMENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS, COUNCIL ON EARLY CHILDHOOD

Almost a decade after policy on toxic stress, 'relational' health seen as key approach

Center for the Study of Social Policy
Make Safe Action

Equity & Justice Our Work Publications & Resources About Us

Forging Ahead: AAP calls for Pediatricians to Partner with Families and Communities to Promote Relational Health

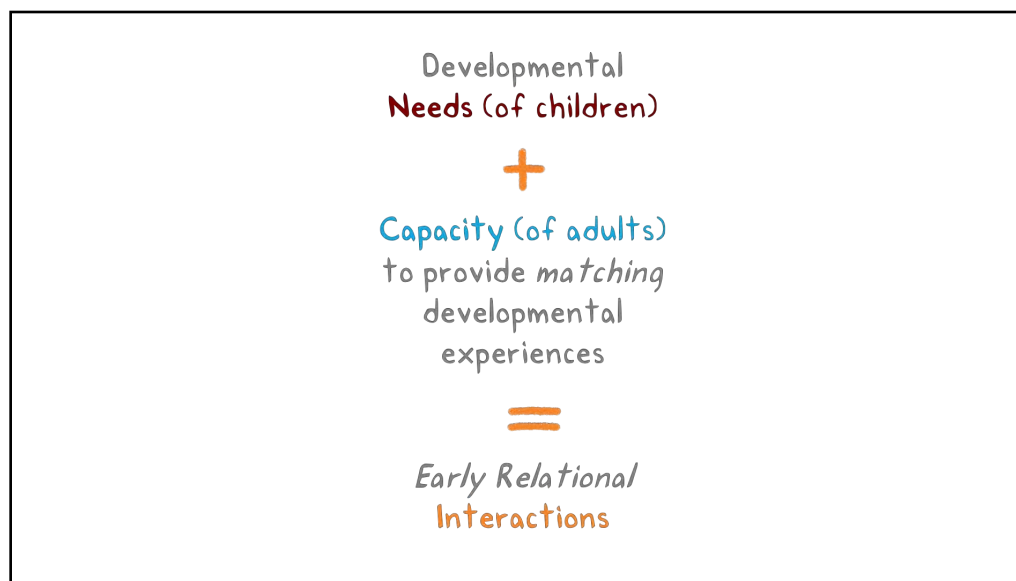
Reach Out & Read

Preventing Childhood Toxic Stress: Partnering with Families on Healthy Development
July 26, 2021

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The screenshot shows the Nurture Connection website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with the following items: Nurture Connection (with a logo), About Us, Why Early Relational Health Matters, Family Partnership, Our Work, and Resources. On the left side, the text "Early Relational Health" is displayed in a large, teal, sans-serif font. The main content area features a teal background with a photograph of a smiling baby. Overlaid on the image is the text "Nurture Connection" in white, followed by a subtitle: "A network that promotes strong, positive, and nurturing early relationships and to build healthier, more connected communities." Below this text is a yellow button with the text "Who We Are".

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Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthen the Foundations of Resilience

Decades of research about resilience... the single most common finding is that children who end up doing well have had **at least one stable and committed relationship** with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.


Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY

7

The High Quality Early Learning Project

HOME ABOUT **VIDEOS** GUIDING QUESTIONS RESOURCES LEARNING & TALKING ABOUT RACISM


COVID-19 & ONLINE LEARNING AT-HOME LEARNING ACTIVITIES CONTACT JOIN OUR MAILING LIST




Going to School During the COVID-19 Pandemic


This video set shares information about how the [Early Childhood Center at Lehman College of the City University of New York](#) has responded to serve its children and families during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

GOING TO SCHOOL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: School Policies and Practices to Stay Safe





Dr. Beverly Falk,
Professor and Director of the Graduate Programs in Early Childhood Education
City College of New York



Meryl Feigenberg
Art Educator and Film Maker

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"tolerable" stress

"toxic" stress

9

Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain

Chronic or traumatic experiences in the **absence of caring, stable relationships with adults**, especially during sensitive periods of early development, can be toxic to brain architecture and other developing organ systems.

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Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain

Research shows that, even under stressful conditions, **supportive, responsive relationships with caring adults** as early in life as possible can prevent or reverse the damaging effects of toxic stress response.

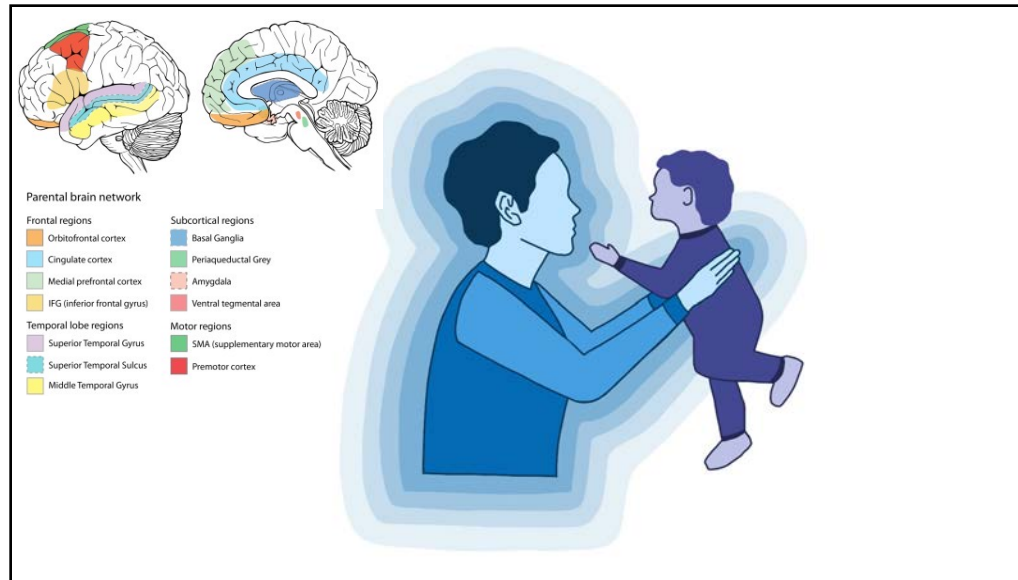
Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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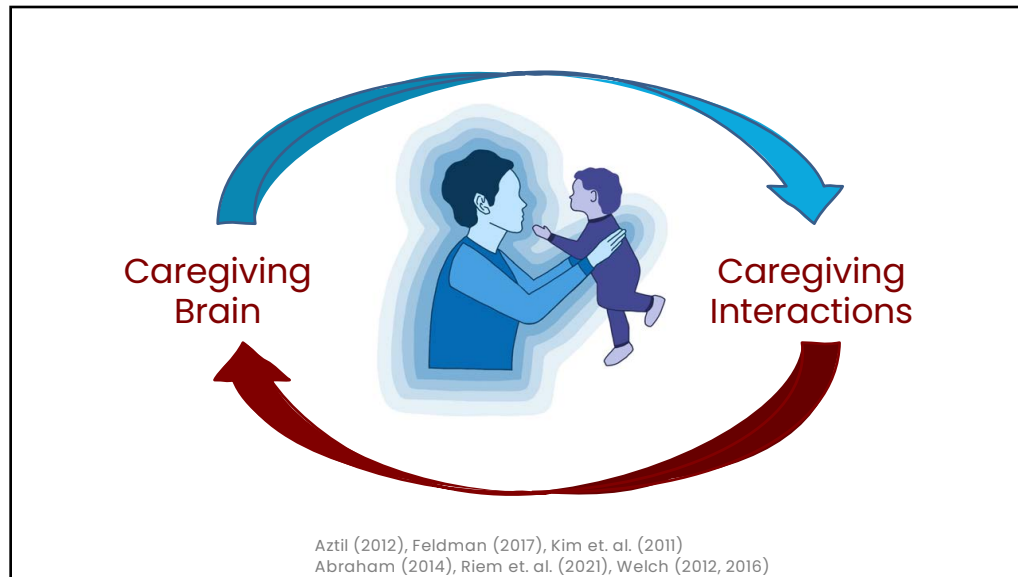
Early
Relational
Health



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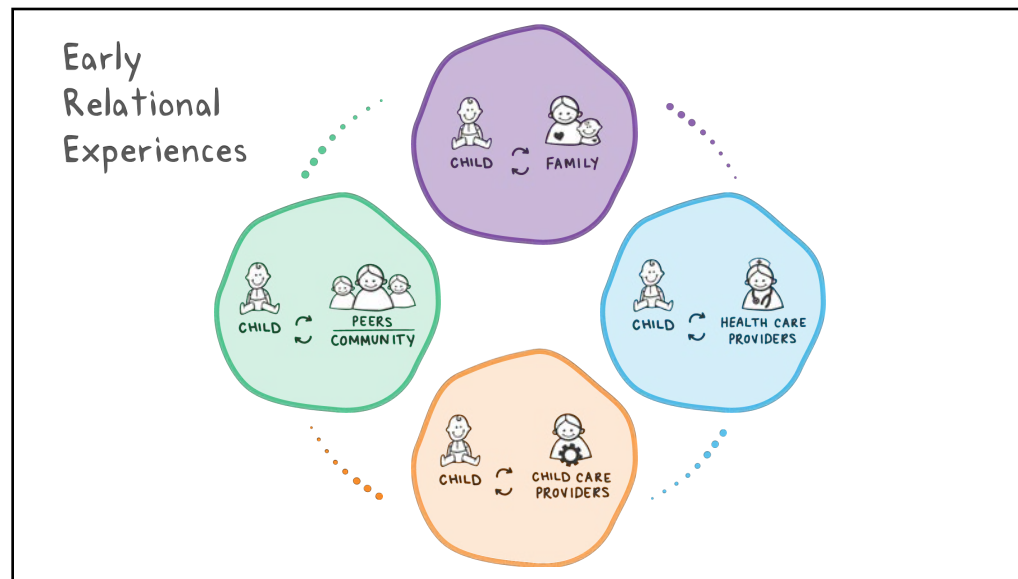
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Promoting early relational health starts with both understanding the relational **needs** of the child and respecting and supporting the relational caregiving **capacity** of the adults.

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Care for the Caregivers

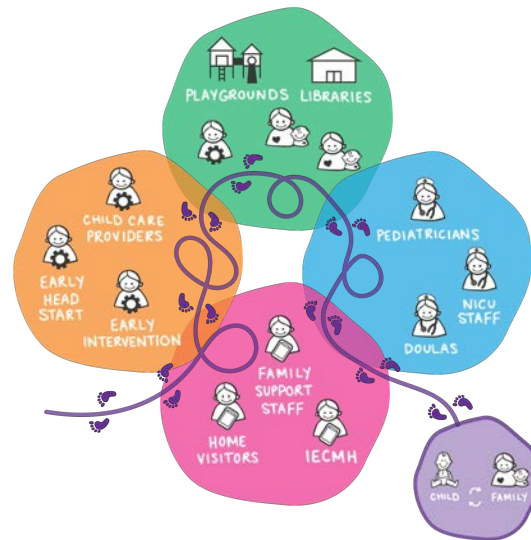
Be as invested in the families and professionals as they are in our children. **We cannot make a lasting impact on children by skipping over the adults in the middle.**

Nonie Lesaux
Stephanie Jones



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Early Relational Supports



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"Safe, Stable, and Nurturing Relationships (SSNRs) are promoted in safe, stable, and nurturing families that have access to safe, stable, and nurturing communities with a wide range of resources and services."

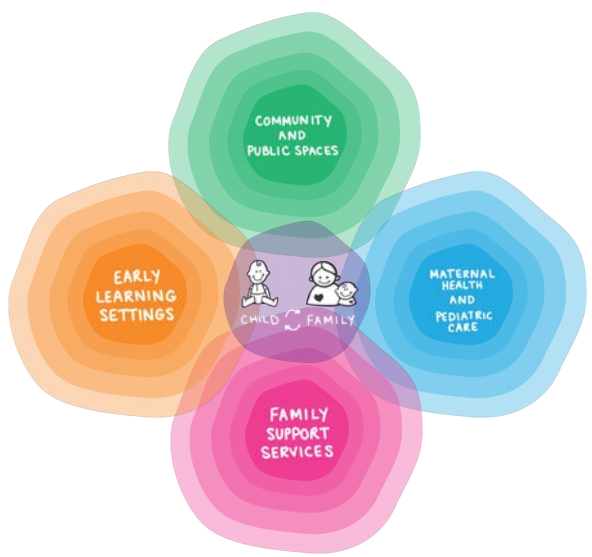
Andrew Garner, MD, PhD, FAAP, Michael Yogman, MD, FAAP

Preventing Childhood Toxic Stress: Partnering With Families and Communities to Promote Relational Health

American Academy of Pediatrics 2021 Policy Statement

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Early
Relational
Ecosystem



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The infographic consists of four panels. The first panel shows a brain with the text '90% of a child's brain development happens before age 5'. The second panel, titled 'The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3', shows a child's profile with '1100 WORDS' for 'ON AVERAGE' and '500 WORDS' for 'ON AVERAGE' (likely a typo for 'ON AVERAGE'). The third panel is a green box with 'INVESTMENT IN EARLY LEARNING \$1'. The fourth panel is a pink box with '\$13 IN RETURN'. An equals sign is placed between the third and fourth panels.

But how do you quantify relational health?

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What counts cannot always
be counted,

What can be counted does
not always count.

Attributed to Albert Einstein

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What really counts?

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Healthy human development depends on
healthy human relationships.

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The power of human relationships comes from **simple, everyday interactions**

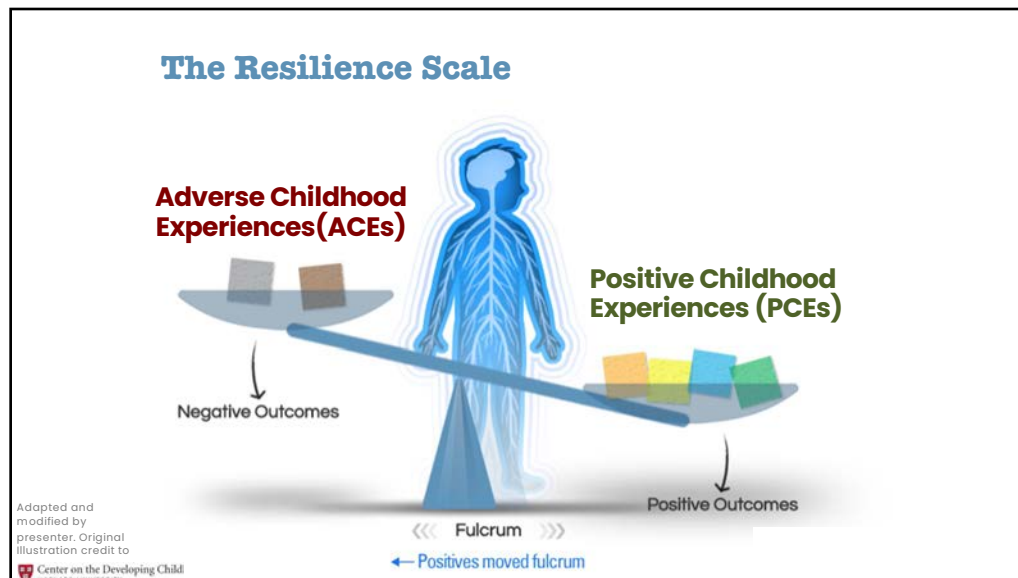
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Our early childhood practices, programs, or policies can help children and families grow **if and only if** we encourage, enrich, and empower the **human interactions** around them.

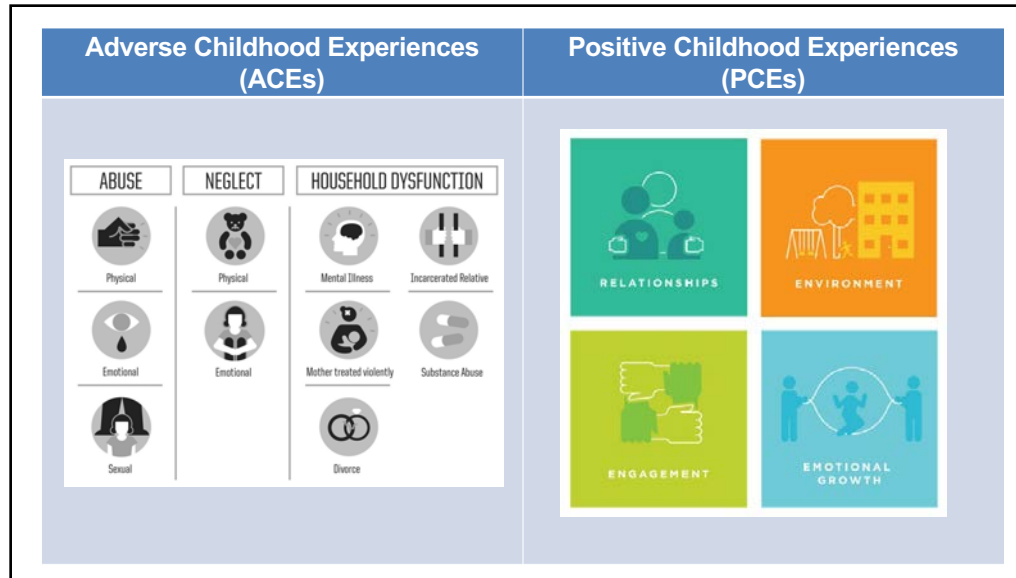
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Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) **Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)**

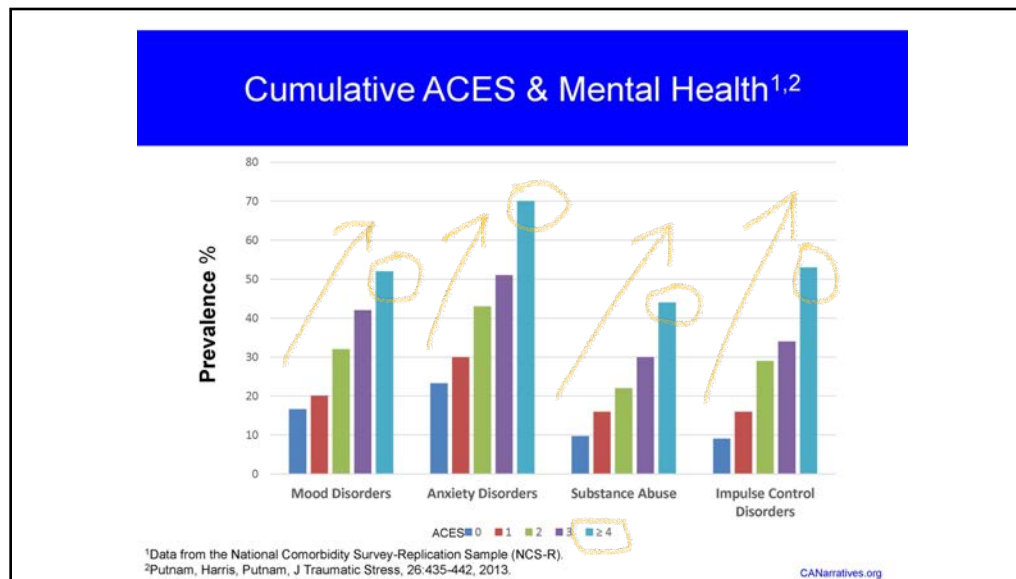
27



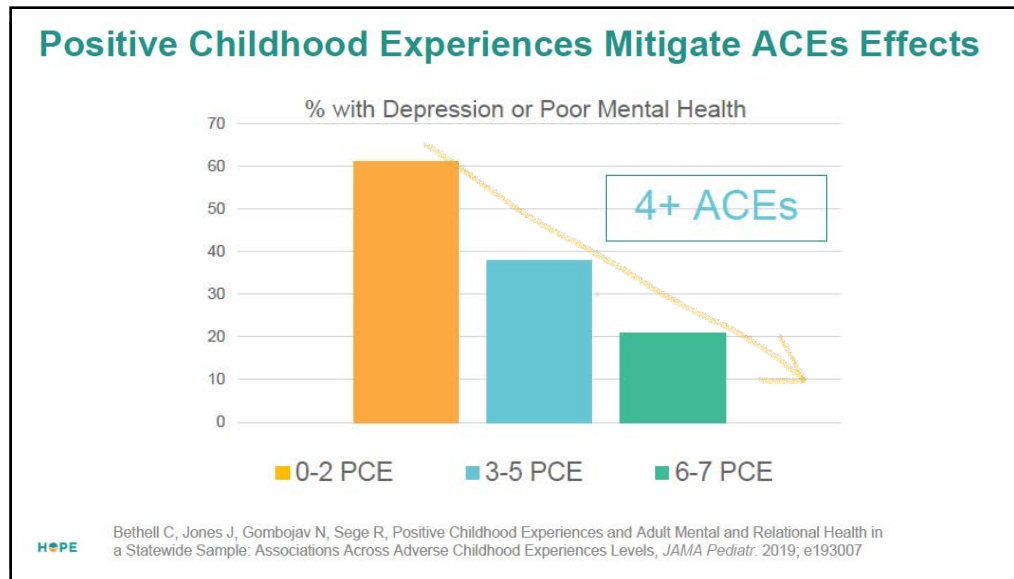
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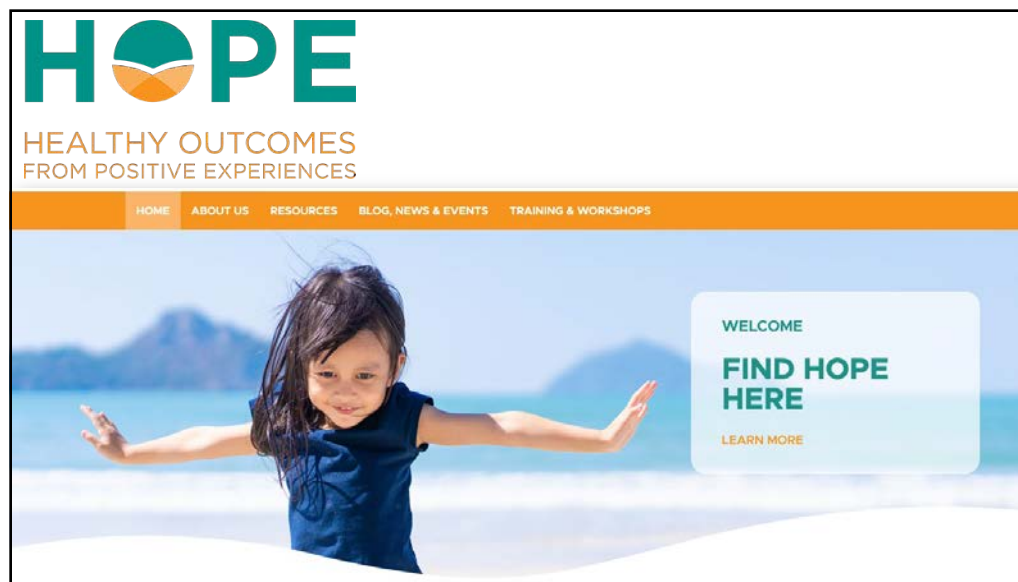
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Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)

- **safe and protected** by an adult in their home;
- able to **talk to their family** about feelings;
- their **family stood by them** during difficult times;
- enjoyed participating in **community traditions**;
- a sense of **belonging** in school
- supported by **friends**
- had **at least 2 nonparent adults** who took genuine interest in them

Bethell, C., Jones, J., Gombojav, N., Linkenbach, J., & Sege, R. (2019). *Positive childhood experiences and adult mental and relational health in a statewide sample: Associations across adverse childhood experiences levels.* *JAMA Pediatrics*, 173(11), e193007–e193007.

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90% of a child's brain development happens before age 5

The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3

WORD GAP BY AGE 3


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Early Relational Health can be our half of the story.

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Early Relational Health

A Review of Research, Principles, and Perspectives

Interviewees

LaVonia Abavana
Community Advocate & Parent Leader | New Jersey

Erasma Beras-Monticciolo, MPA
Co-Founder & Executive Director | Power of Two

Carl Boyd
Family Advocate | New Jersey

Neil Boris, M.D.
Research Liaison & Medical Director | Circle of Security International

Montia Brock, LPC, NCC, IMH-E
Family Interventionist | Family Check-Up Program at the Center for Parents and Children

Damali Campbell, M.D.
Physician in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Addiction Medicine | University Hospital in Newark

Gloria Cruz
Advocate and Mother | New Jersey

David Ellis
Executive Director of the Office of Resilience | New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Andrew Garner, M.D., Ph.D., FAAP
Primary Care Pediatrician and Clinical Professor | Case Western Reserve University

Anne Gill, Ph.D.
Co-Director | Family Check-Up Program at the Center for Parents and Children

Kaitlin Mulcahy, Ph.D., LPC, IMH-E
Director | Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health at Montclair State University

Cynthia Osbourne, Ph.D.
Founder and Executive Director | The Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center

Usha Ramachandran, M.D., FAAP
Pediatrician and Medical Director | Reach Out and Read NJ

Jessie Rasmussen
President | Buffet Early Childhood Fund

Martha Welch, M.D., DFAPA
Director | Nurture Science Program at Columbia University Medical Center

David Willis, M.D.
Senior Fellow | Center for the Study of Social Policy


Joshua Sparrow, M.D., DFAACAP
Executive Director | Brazelton Touchpoints Center

Mariel Benjamin, LCSW
Director of Programs | Mount Sinai Parenting Center

Blair Hammond, M.D.
Pediatrician, Co-Founding Director and Director of Medical Education | Mount Sinai Parenting Center

Geoff Nagle, MSW, MPH, Ph.D.
Chief of External Impact | Clayton Early Learning

Robert Sege, M.D., Ph.D.
Director the Center for Community-Engaged Medicine | Tufts University Medical Center



Just Released 10.2023

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PRINCIPLE 1:
Trust Parents

Effective early relational health interventions trust that all parents want to, are capable of, and strive to provide the care their children need. We can build early relational health by trusting adult caregivers. Developing such trust moves us from a focus on what parents do not know to what they do know. When parents and families have the desire or capacity, we can find out what children need and what resources and supports can grow that capacity.

PRINCIPLE 2:
Focus on Simple, Everyday Interactions

Simple, everyday interactions between young children and their caregivers are the essential building blocks of early relational health. The importance of the small moments, whether during a play session or a therapeutic intervention, we can serve as catalysts for the processes between caregivers and children.

PRINCIPLE 3:
It Takes a Village to Raise a Child

All caregivers need and benefit from early relational health supports and resources. As it takes a village to raise our children, no family can or should have to do it alone. All families and children grow from early relational health and can use support from familial, community, and professional resources.

PRINCIPLE 4:
Meet Families Where They Are

Meeting families “where they are” means understanding and removing the barriers that prevent them from seeking and using supports and resources. Families do not need one-size-fits-all interventions. They have different needs, at different times, in different places, with different people. A robust system to promote early relational health would identify and meet families at geographical, logistical, and developmental touchpoints.

PRINCIPLE 5:
Build Parallel Relationships

Support for parent-child relationships requires parallel parent-professional relationships, which in turn require parallel professional-professional partnerships. A child needs trusted, reciprocal, and responsive relationships to grow in a healthy way, as does the parent and caregiver and the professionals who support them. To build a community of early relational health, we can envision and improve the relational supports for children, families, and professionals.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE
Embedding Equity within Early Relational Health

Equity is both the process and the aim for early relational health work. Equity of participation, resources, supports, and opportunities are both goals and processes for early relational health initiatives. We cannot improve outcomes for children without hearing the voices and meeting the needs of their adult caregivers, and we cannot strengthen our families without building the capacity of our communities.




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The foundation of human development begins in **early childhood**.

The foundation of physical, behavioral, and mental health is **relational health**.

Childcare providers are **early childhood + relational health professionals**.

Therefore, childcare providers are *foundational*.