Idaho Children's Trust Fund 27th Annual Training Institute

Finding Our Shared Active Ingredient in Early Relational Health

Junlei Li, Ph.D.

Saul Zaentz Chair in Early Childhood Education
Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

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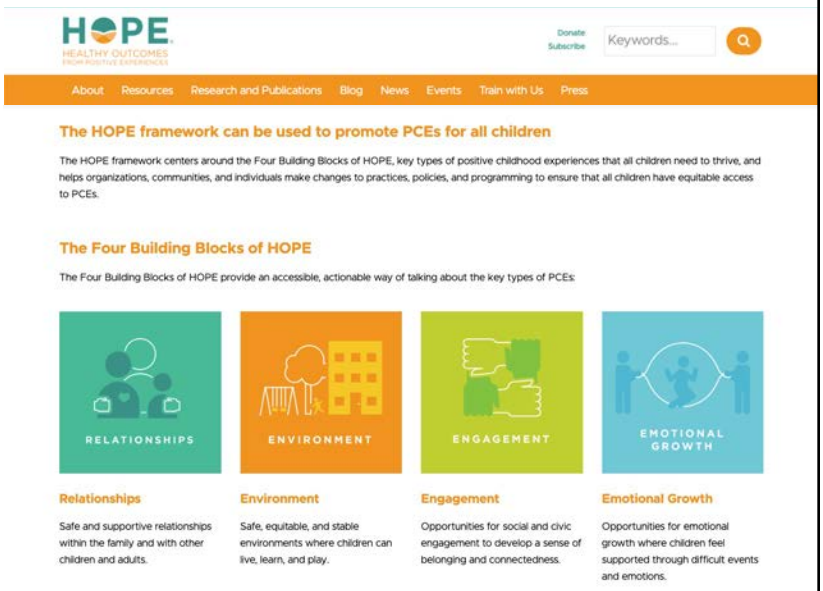
HOPE
HEALTHY OUTCOMES FROM POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Dr. Bob Sege
Director, Center for Community-Engaged Medicine, Tufts University



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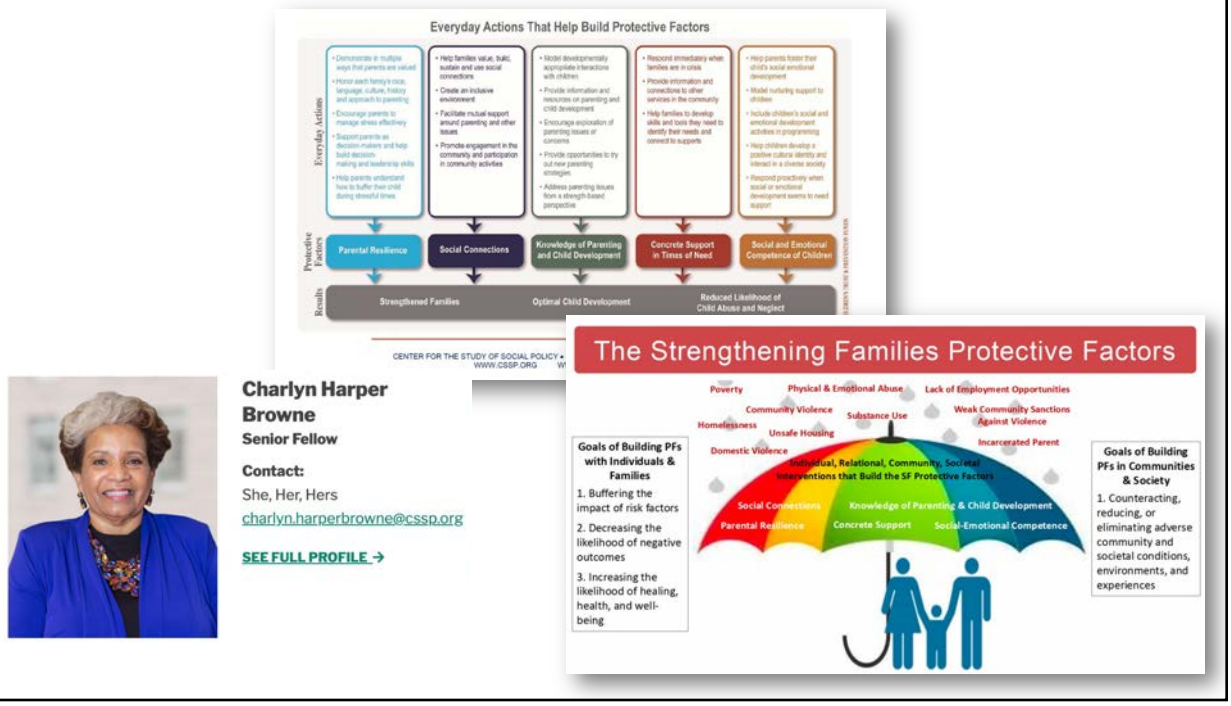

Charlyn Harper Browne
Senior Fellow

Contact:
She, Her, Hers
charlyn.harperbrowne@cssp.org

SEE FULL PROFILE →

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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.

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

at least one

stable and committed relationship

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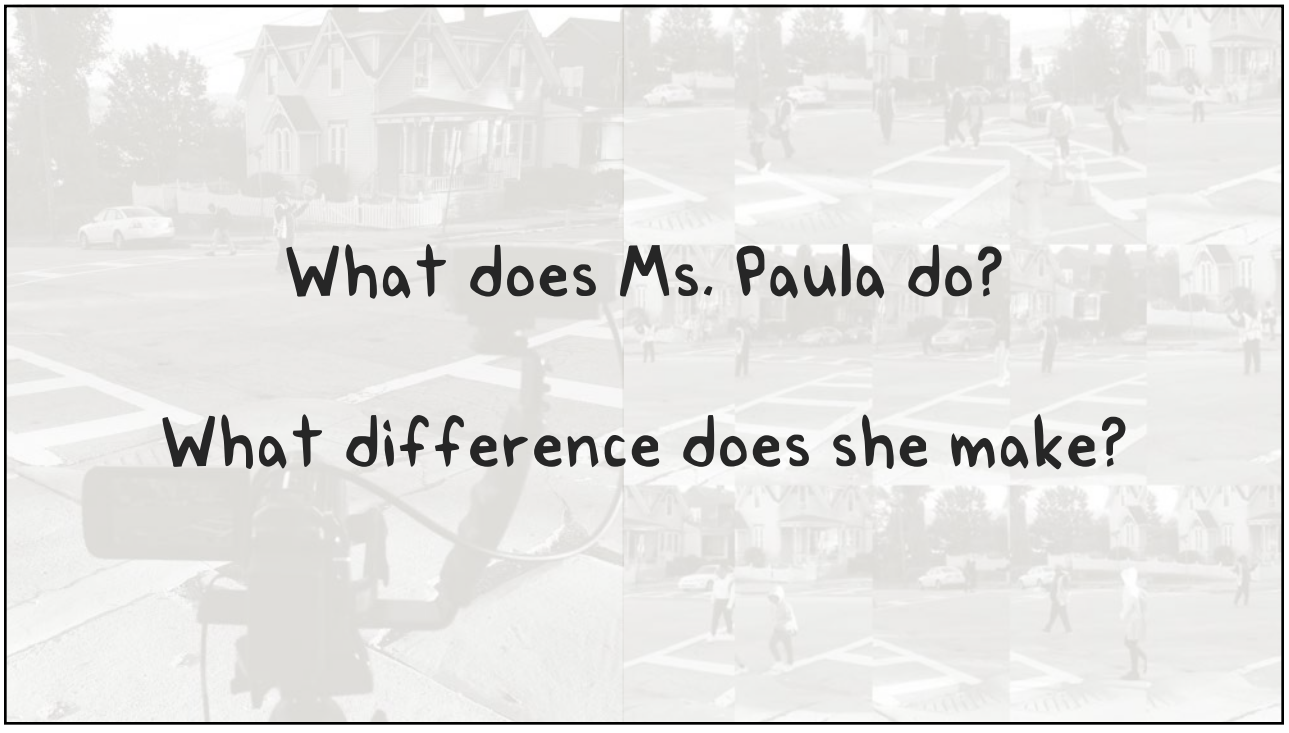
From a Foster Care Case Worker

"I agree with everything you said about the importance of relationships ...

That is why I am thinking about quitting my job."

7



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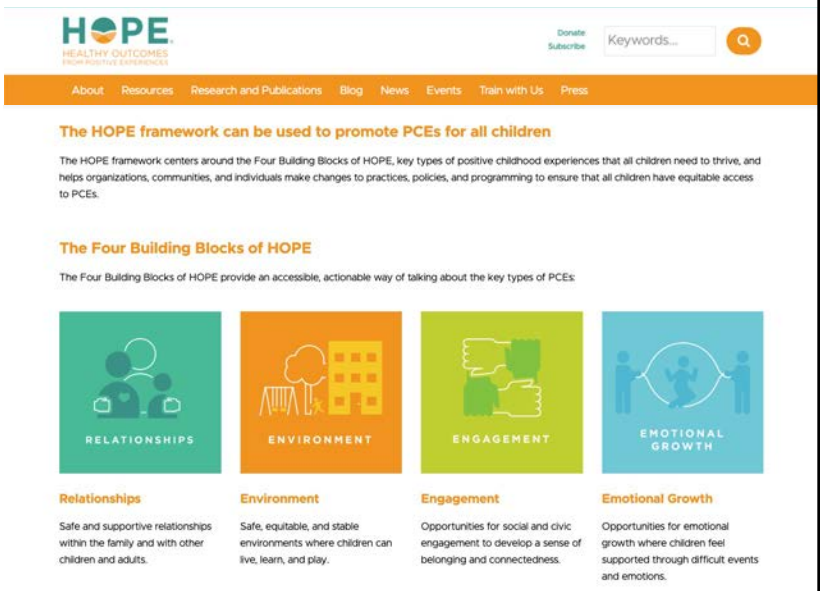

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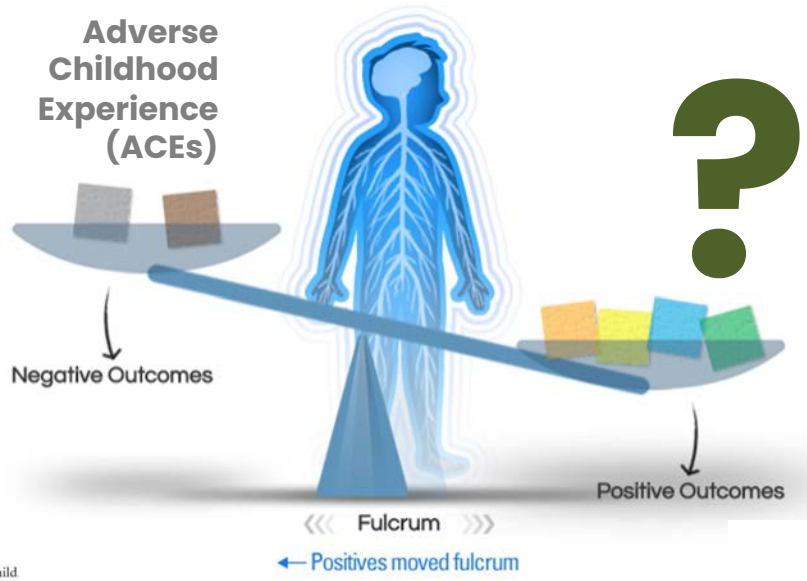
The Resilience Scale



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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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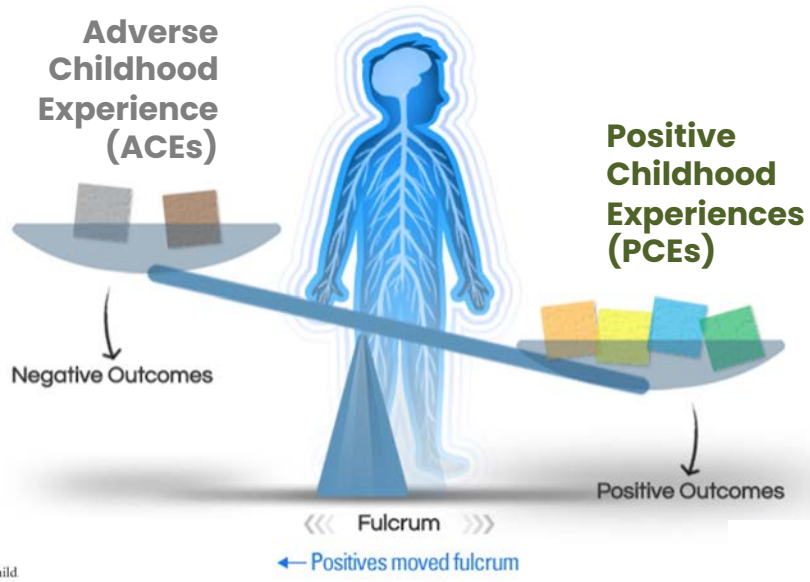
The Resilience Scale



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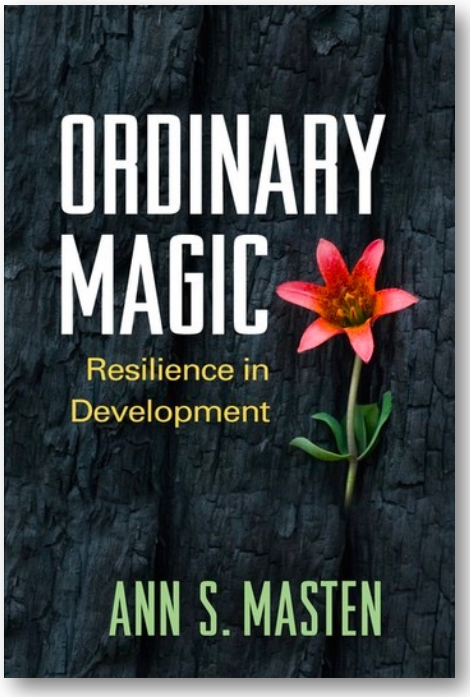
Physical, behavioral, and mental health depend on the **health of our relationships**.

14



"The biggest surprise (from the study of resilience) was the *ordinariness* of the phenomenon.

Most of the time, the children who make it have *ordinary* human resources and protective factors in their lives."

Ann Masten (2014)

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What does Ms. Paula do?

"Have you had **at least 2** nonparent adults who took genuine interest in you?"

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Physical, behavioral, and mental health depend on the **health of our relationships**.

Early Relational Health

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POLICY STATEMENT Organizational Principles to Guide and Define the Child Health Care System and/or Improve the Health of all Children

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,[a,b] Michael Yogman, MD, FAAP[c,d]
COMMITTEE ON PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH, SECTION ON DEVELOPMENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS, COUNCIL ON EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Why Early Relational Health Matters
Family Partnership
Our Work
Resources
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Early Relational Health
A Review of Research, Principles, and Perspectives
April 2024
Putting Principles into Action:
Building an Early Relational Health Ecosystem
Charlyn Harper Browne, Junlei Li, Cailin O'Connor, Jenna E. Russo, and David Willis
Early Relational Health: A Review of Research, Principles, and Perspectives
Research
Author: Harvard Graduate School of Education
https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ · September 2023
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Putting Principles into Action: Building an Early Relational Health Ecosystem
Communication, Research
Author: Nurture Connection
April 2024
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NATIONAL ACADEMIES Sciences Engineering Medicine
About Us
Events
Our Work
Publications
Topics
The Early Relational Health Determinants of Future Health and Wellbeing
About
Publications
Description
Committee
Sponsors
Past Events
Contact
The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine will convene an ad hoc committe
experts to conduct a consensus study on early relational health (ERH) for infant, child, and famil
wellbeing. The committee will outline future directions for research and policy and practice opti
advance ERH across health care, childcare, education, and other community settings.
Publications
Early Relational Health
2025
Early Relational Health: Building Foundations for Child, Family, and Community Well-Being
Early relationships are foundational for lifelong health, learning, and well-being. Mutual, meaningful, and affirming moments of connection in the youngest relationships support brain development, resilience, and social-emotional growth. These experiences, known as early relational health (ERH), can also buffer the impacts of adversity and help create pathways toward thriving children, families, and communities.
Read Full Description
NATIONAL ACADEMIES Sciences Engineering Medicine
Early Relational Health
Building Foundations for Child, Family, and Community Well-Being
Consensus Study Report

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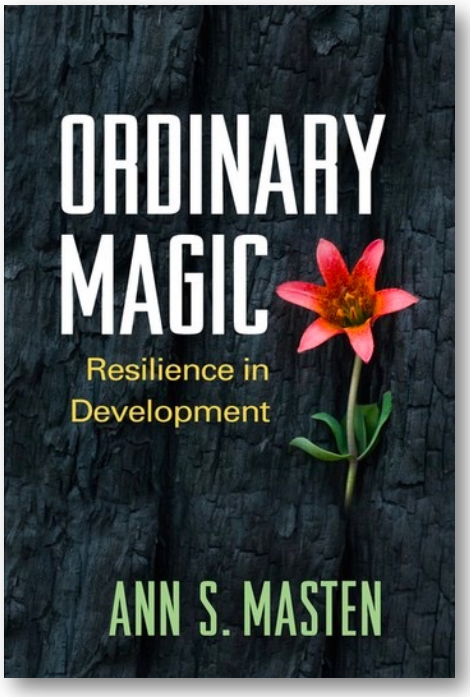

"The biggest surprise (from the study of resilience) was the *ordinariness* of the phenomenon.

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Ann Masten (2014)

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#1. What does the child need?

#2. What does the caregiver provide?

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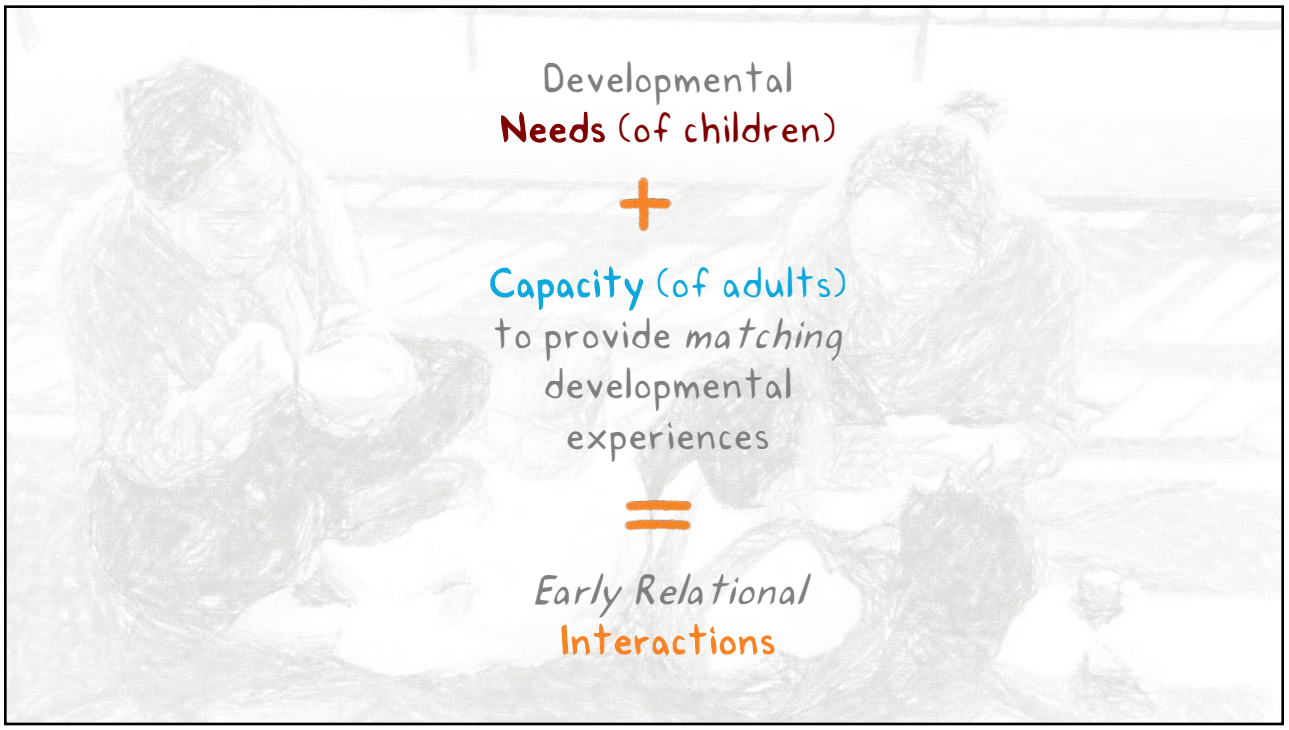
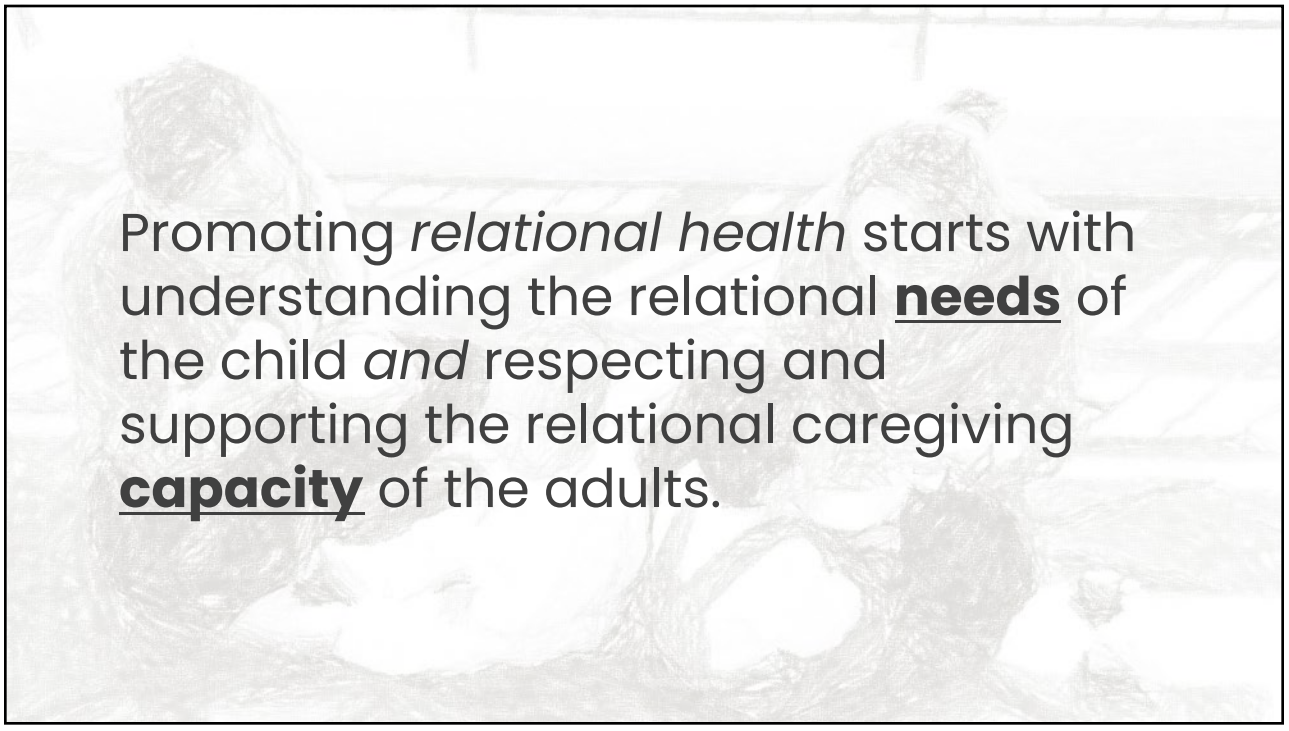

Developmental
Needs (of children)
+
Capacity (of adults)
to provide matching
developmental
experiences
=
Early Relational
Interactions

23


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

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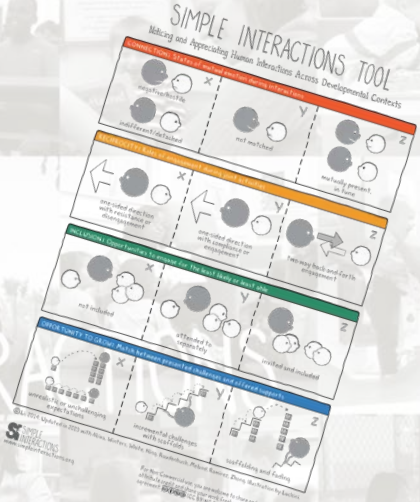
www.simpleinteractions.org

simple, ordinary interactions

are the basic building blocks of healthy, developmental relationships



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Communities of "Relational Practice"

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What Might Be Positive Family Experiences?

- **safe and protected**.
- able to **talk** about feelings;
- have people **stand by them** during difficult times;
- participate in **community traditions**;
- feel a sense of **belonging**;
- feel **supported**;
- have people who take **genuine interest** in them.

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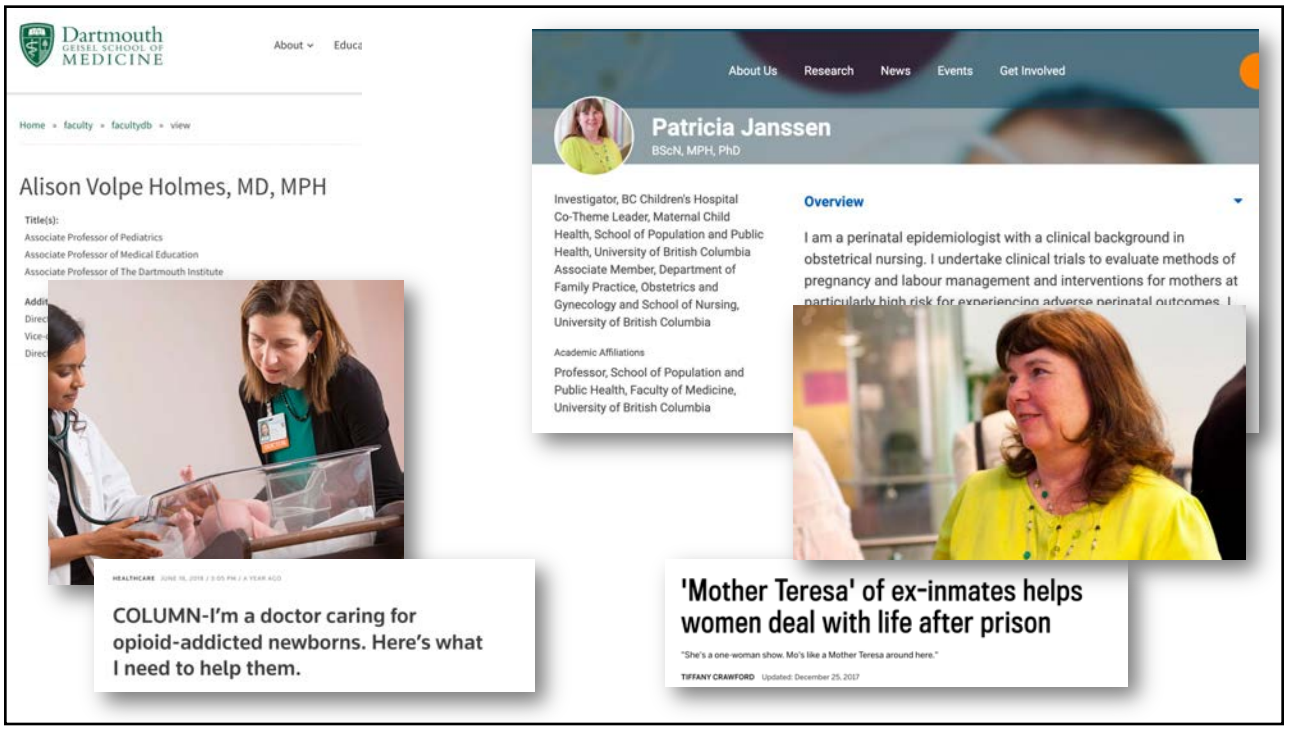

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Rooming-in care for infants of opioid-dependent mothers

Implementation and evaluation at a tertiary care hospital

Adam Newman MD CCFP FCFP Gregory A. Davies MD FRCSC FABOG Kimberly Dow MD FRCPC
Belinda Holmes MSW RSW Jessica Macdonald Sarah McKnight MD Lynn Newton RN(EC) MEd IBCLC

Table 1. Neonatal outcomes

OUTCOMES	NICU GROUP (N = 24)	ROOMING-IN GROUP (N = 21)	*P* VALUE
Infants requiring morphine, n (%)	20 (83.3)	3 (14.3)	<.001
Mean (SD) LOS, d	24.8 (15.6)	7.9 (7.8)	<.001

LOS—length of stay, NICU—neonatal intensive care unit.

Canadian Family Physician • Le Médecin de famille canadien | VOL 61: DECEMBER • DÉCEMBRE 2015

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How moms and babies rooming together can help combat opioid dependency

Babies born to opioid-dependent mothers are typically whisked away to intensive care units and given morphine. But an innovative program is seeing shocking results with far simpler treatment

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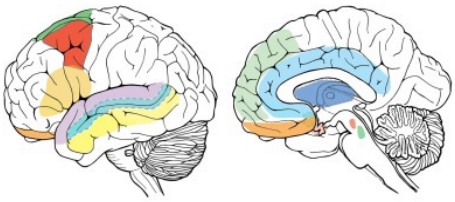

Parental brain network

Frontal regions
- Orbitofrontal cortex
- Cingulate cortex
- Medial prefrontal cortex
- IFG (inferior frontal gyrus)

Temporal lobe regions
- Superior Temporal Gyrus
- Superior Temporal Sulcus
- Middle Temporal Gyrus

Subcortical regions
- Basal Ganglia
- Periaqueductal Grey
- Amygdala
- Ventral tegmental area

Motor regions
- SMA (supplementary motor area)
- Premotor cortex

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Aztil (2012), Feldman (2017), Kim et. al. (2011)
Abraham (2014), Riem et. al. (2021), Welch (2012, 2016)

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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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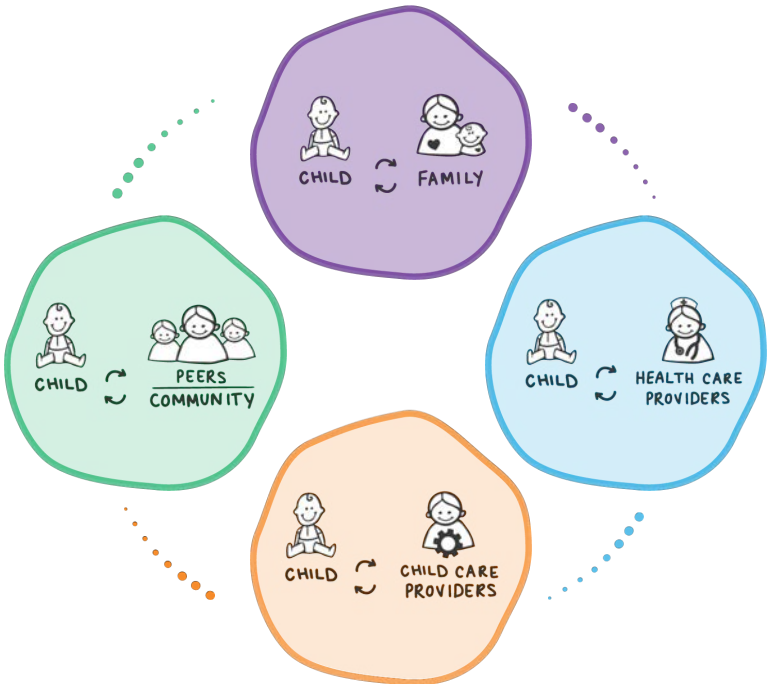
early relational experiences



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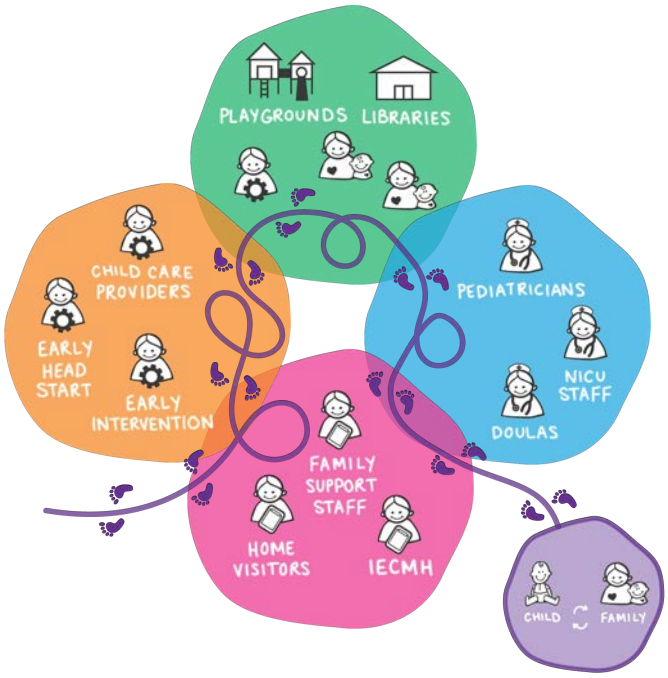
early relational supports



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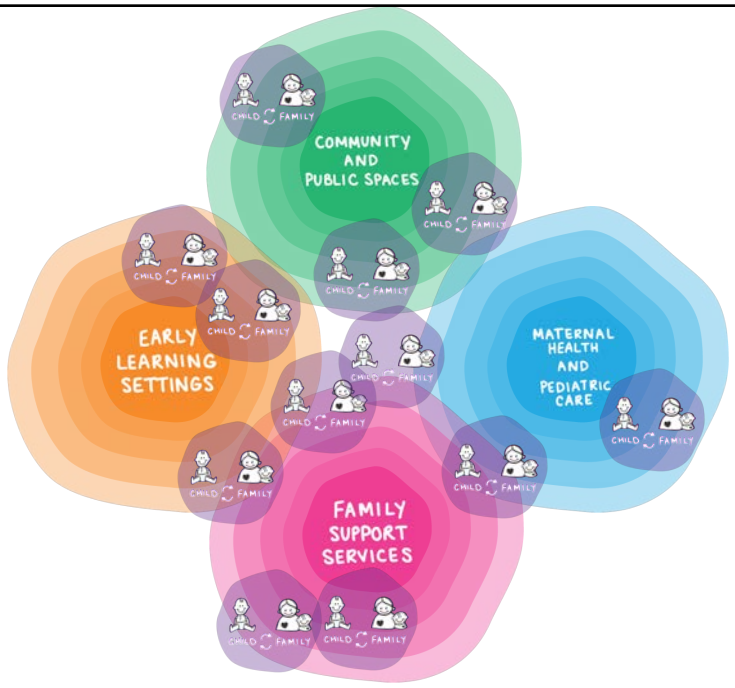
early relational ecosystem



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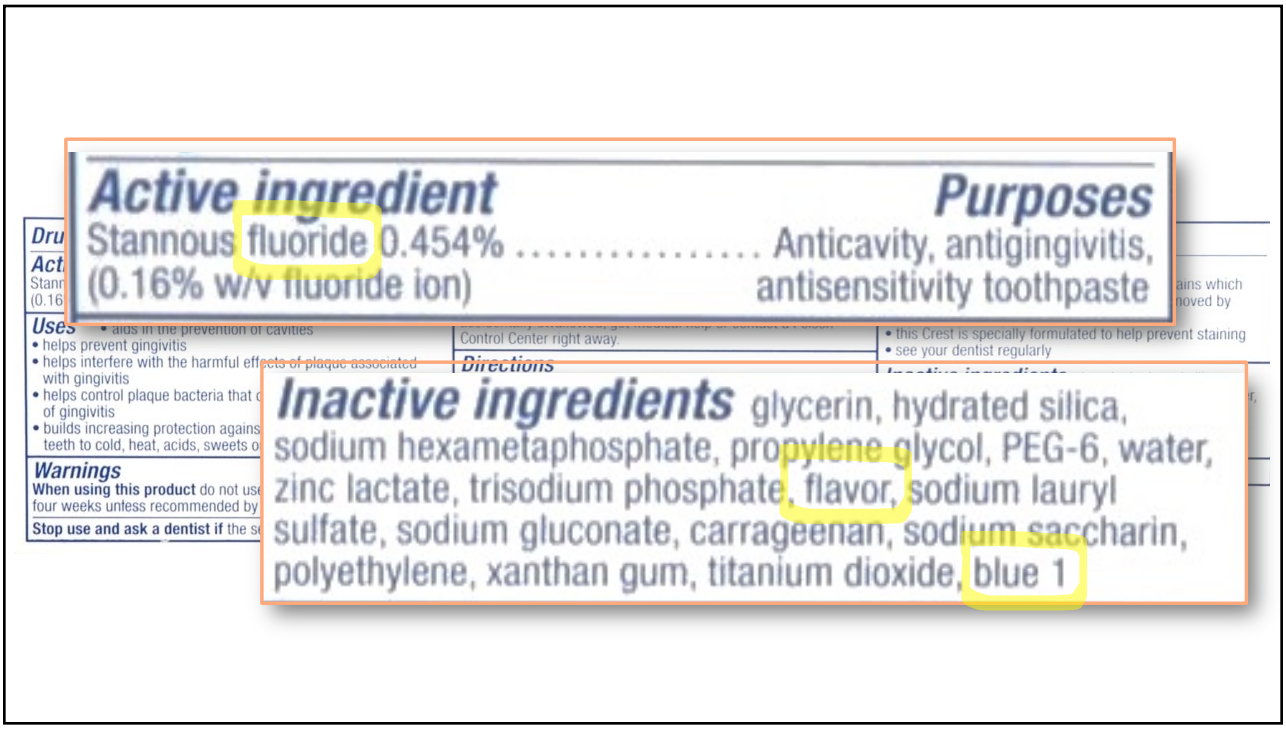

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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
What is Our Shared Active Ingredient?
ACTIVE INGREDIENT:

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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
ACTIVE INGREDIENT:
Human Relationships

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The (practice, program, or policy) can help children learn and grow **if and only if** it encourages, enriches, and empowers the **human relationships** around the child.

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ASK THE RELATIONAL QUESTION

How do our _____ help to
(Practices, Programs, Policies)

encourage, **enrich**, and **empower**

healthy and developmental relationships around children, families, and helpers?

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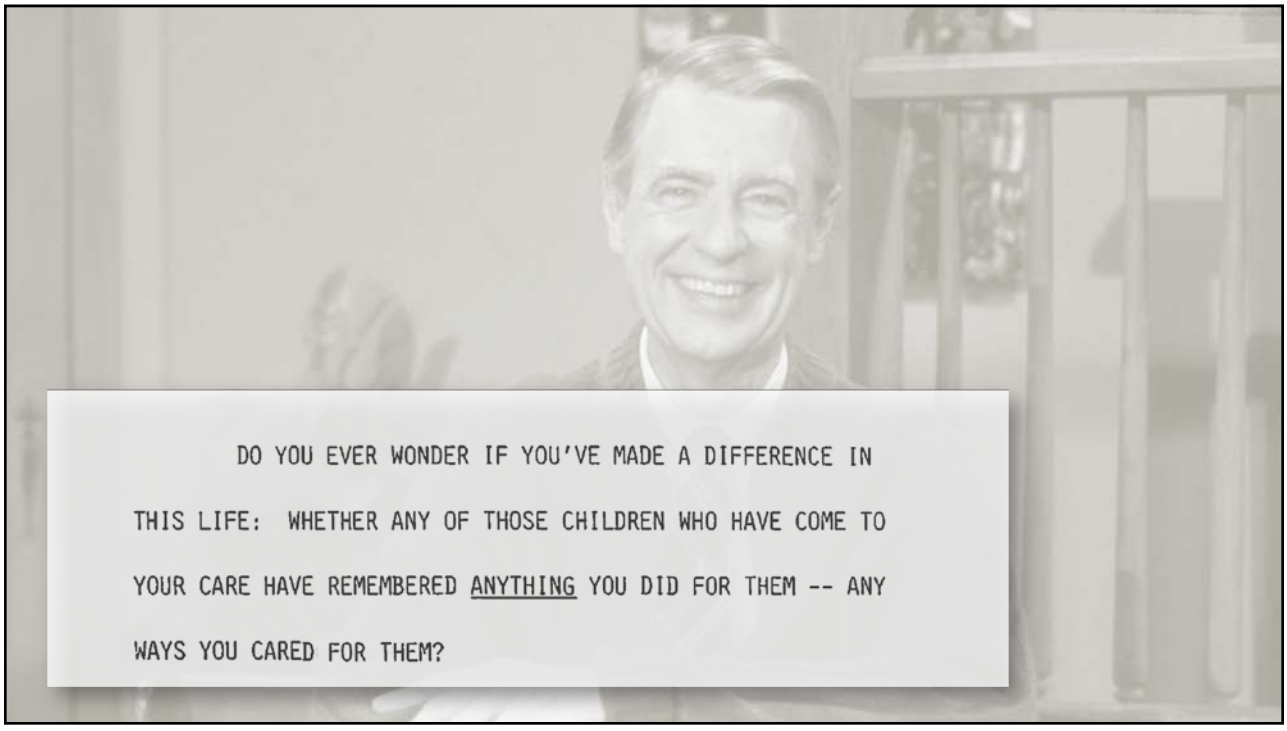
From a Foster Care Case Worker

"I agree with everything you said about the importance of relationships ...

That is why I am thinking about quitting my job."

45



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"How do you know you've made a difference in your work: whether any of the **children**, **families**, and **providers** who have come to you have been impacted by the ways you cared for them?"

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Physical, behavioral, and mental health depend on the **health of our relationships**.

Promoting **relational health** begins with understanding and supporting **both** the children and the adults.

Our collective work across professions can build the **early relational foundation** for the **well-being** of all children, families, and communities …

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Care for the Caregivers and Help the Helping Professionals

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

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

SAUL ZAENTZ Early Education INITIATIVE

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Our collective work across professions can build the **early relational foundation** for the **well-being** of all children, families, and communities … *and of the helping professionals*.

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