



Building a Movement to Nurture Connection



We have been thrilled with the response to the launch of [Nurture Connection](#) earlier this month. Nurture Connection is a movement to promote strong, positive, and nurturing early relationships and to build healthier, resilient, and more connected communities. As we move into this next stage of development, the teams at [Center for the Study of Social Policy](#) (CSSP) and [Health+ Studio](#) reflect on the journey that got us here and are reminded of the shared values of equity and justice and our

commitment to all children having the strongest start in life, so they are able to achieve their unique, boundless potential.

The Launch Story

CSSP, Reach Out and Read, Nurture Science Program, and Einhorn Collaborative began a collaboration in 2021 with a vision that each and every family and community experiences the transformational power of parent-child emotional connection (EC) and Early Relational Health (ERH).

This vision is bigger than what any one organization (or four) can achieve and requires a network of engaged and committed partners who are connecting, learning, and collaborating towards a shared vision. This started us on a journey to develop a “community of communities” with parents, innovators, influencers, organizations, and advocates to foster a social movement to support greater success of the next generation and to build healthier, resilient, and more connected communities.

We began our work to promote strong, positive, and nurturing early relationships by partnering with parent leaders to guide and lead the work. The ERH Family Network Collaborative (FNC) was established to intentionally partner with parent leaders from a variety of cultural traditions and lived experiences of underrepresented communities. Each of the six parent leaders represent a different constituency group: Black and Brown families receiving home visiting services; tribal community families; parents receiving services in a southern state; Spanish-speaking immigrant families in the NE; fathers of a state fatherhood council; and parent leaders of families with children with special health care needs. These six parent leaders then engage and receive input from ten families in their own communities to bring the insights of 66 families to the mission, vision, and strategies for Nurture Connection.

Along with the FNC, we also leaned on the knowledge and wisdom of the National ERH Network, which is composed of committed parents, practitioners, child health systems,

thought partners, early childhood system builders, and policy and network champions committed to cocreating, innovating, testing, and disseminating strategic activities to advance an ERH frame.

To round out our shared leadership model, we also created a 12-person steering committee to provide strategic leadership and guidance for the initiative. The steering committee is composed of FNC parents, pediatricians, researchers, policy and systems leaders, funders, and nonprofit leaders. The steering committee began with a co-discovery process to better understand the opportunities and barriers that families and communities experience around ERH. This included learning from each member's knowledge and experience as well as conducting a series of virtual listening sessions with other leaders and thought partners, who brought diverse perspectives from various sectors across the US on the topic of ERH and EC. From the co-discovery process we learned:

- Equity and parent partnership moves by the “speed of trust”
- We need to understand who parents trust and begin to engage with those trusted messengers in neighborhoods and communities
- There are a variety of systemic and structural barriers that get in the way of families experiencing ERH
- The term Early Relational Health works for some communities and not others
- The inspiring work that is happening across various communities to support strong, positive and nurturing early relationships.

From this deeper learning and understanding, it was clear that in order to start raising visibility and awareness of this issue we needed to create a bigger tent or movement that welcomes all interested in early childhood and family well-being. The steering committee began to see the importance of connecting individuals, organizations, and communities to learn from one another, leverage each other's work, and collaborate to improve outcomes for young children and their families.

Social movements require the development of strategic messaging, including branding, that uniquely identifies the movement and one that will resonate deeply with a broad range of partners. A couple naming options were generated by our partner, Health+ Studio. The steering committee and the FNC participated in reviewing the naming options within their respective communities. We received considerable and informative feedback during team discernment meetings, that pointed toward a developing consensus for branding the movement, Nurture Connection. Of note, our FNC elevated the challenge of translating Nurture Connection into Spanish, where nurturance, connection and relationships have a deep cultural meaning, inherent to intimate loving relationships. A similar discerning process was utilized as the teams developed the brand narrative and the visual identity, ensuring that these elements of our communication strategy captured the voice and values of the movement.

In parallel, the steering committee and FNC dove deeper into what it means to build a social movement and what Nurture Connection's unique contribution to the field might look like. We coalesced as a group to articulate our vision, mission, and values for the movement and with careful attention to style, content, messaging and visual representations of Early Relational Health, the [Nurture Connection website](#) was born. The steering committee and FNC continued to partner in the website's articulation of the movement's work, vision, and leadership structure as well as a wealth of resources for the field and parents.

As we move into 2023, we are working towards our goals of increasing awareness and visibility of Nurture Connection and growing our engaged and networked community of communities. We will further our strategic priorities of building connection, raising awareness, building understanding, transforming systems, and advancing policy to advance ERH so that all families can experience the joy and lifelong health benefits that come from strong, positive, and nurturing relationships in early childhood.

Parent Perspective

Question: With your involvement in the

ERH/EC movement making, what are you seeing that tells you that a social movement is developing?

Family Network Collaborative

Response: As part of the Nurture Connection movement, parents are feeling seen, heard, and valued. They are involved in the building of the ERH movement as leaders and partners. This is very energizing and feels like a new way of engaging with families. "This is creating a new type of excitement and sparking a fire that we hope grows into a BLAZE."



Updates

Willis, Long, & Friends Nurture Connection
Movement Making to Advance Relational Health and Resilience
Wednesday, February 15
2:00 PM ET

David Willis, MD, FAAP
Senior Fellow
Center for the Study of Social Policy

Dayna Long, MD, FAAP
Pediatrician & Co-Director, UCSF Center for Child and Community Health, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland

Bruce Perry, MD, PhD
Principal of the Neurosequential Network, Adjunct Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University & the School of Allied Health at La Trobe University

Willis, Long, & Friends February 2023: Movement Making to Advance Relational Health and Resilience

This month's Willis, Long, and Friends featured Bruce Perry discussing why such movement-making to advance RH and "resilience" from "what's happened to you" for next generation healing is so important right now.

[Watching the Recording Here](#)

Nurture Connection GEIGER GIBSON PROGRAM IN COMMUNITY HEALTH DULCE An Initiative of CSSP

Promoting Early Childhood Development in Community Health Centers
March 3, 2023 10 AM ET

Sara Rosenbaum, JD
Professor Emerita, George Washington University

Dayna Long, MD, FAAP
Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, UCSF Co-Director, Center for Child and Community Health

Kay Johnson
President, Johnson Policy Consulting

Patsy Hampton
Senior Associate, Center for the Study of Social Policy

David Willis, MD, FAAP
Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of Social Policy

REGISTER AT: bit.ly/ec-development-chc

Co-Hosted by Nurture Connection at the Center for the Study of Social Policy and Geiger Gibson Program in Community Health at George Washington University.



What is Early Relational Health?

Early Relational Health is the state of emotional well-being that grows from the positive emotional connection between babies and toddlers and their parents when they experience safe, stable, and nurturing relationships with each other. ERH is foundational to children's healthy growth and development and parents' sense of competence, connection, and overall well-being. These resilient and enduring relationships also help to protect the family from the harmful effects of stress.

Core ERH Resources

Frameworks Institute. [Building Relationships: Framing Early Relational Health](#). Prepared in collaboration with the Center for the Study of Social Policy. May 2020.

Willis D, Chavez S, Lee J, Hampton P, Fine A. [Early Relational Health National Survey: What We're Learning from the Field](#). Center for the Study of Social Policy. 2020.

Willis D, Sege R, Johnson K. [Changing the Mindset: Foundational Relationships Counter Adversity with HOPE](#). (Blog) Center for the Study of

Webinar: Promoting Early Childhood Development in Community Health Centers

CSSP's Nurture Connection team and George Washington University's Geiger Gibson Program have teamed up to present an information webinar for FQHC's interested in responding HRSA's new 2023 NOFO (HRSA-23-028) for Early Childhood Development (ECD). Sara Rosenblum, Geiger Gibson, Kay Johnson, Johnson Group, Inc., David Willis, MD Senior Fellow CSSP, Patsy Hampton, CSSP Senior Associate and Dayna Long, MD, USCF will discuss immediate opportunities available for responding to the NOFO's requirements to advance developmental and early relational health. Please join us Join us on March 3rd from 10-11 am ET to learn of evidence-based and plug-and-play opportunities to advance sustainable practices in FQHCs.

[Register Here](#)

Register Now for the 2023 HOPE Summit



hopesummit2023.positiveexperience.org/register

HOPE Summit 2023

The HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) National Resource Center is hosting their third annual HOPE Summit on March 29th and 30th. This year, HOPE will be highlighting HOPE in Practice, and the growing national movement to implement the HOPE framework.

The event will feature various workshops led by leaders in their field using HOPE in their own work. Attendees will leave the Summit with concrete examples of how to begin practicing HOPE in their own work with children and their families.

On day two of the summit, HOPE Director, Bob Sege, will host David Willis, along with Wendy Ellis, Corey Best and Nilofer Ahsan, for a virtual panel where they will discuss and answer attendee questions about the Four Building Blocks of HOPE – Relationships, Environment, Engagement and Emotional Growth – and how they relate to their fields in practice.

[Register Here](#)

Social Policy. May 2020.

Perspectives on ERH Video Series

[Perspectives on Early Relational Health Series](#). Center for the Study of Social Policy. 2022.

Center of the Study of Social Policy and Health+ Studio. [How to Communicate Effectively About Early Relational Health: What It Is and Why It Matters](#). 2022.

- **\$500 Seed Money Boosts Parents' College Goals for Kids.** UCSF. February 2023. [Read here.](#)
 - McCray, G., et al. **The creation of the Global Scales for Early Development (GSED) for children 0-3 years: combining subject matter expert judgements with big data.** BMJ Global Health, January 2023. [Read here.](#)
 - Hare, M.M., et al. **A Systematic Review of Infant Mental Health Prevention and Treatment Programs.** Evidence-Based Practice in Child and Adolescent Mental Health. January 2023. [Read here.](#)
 - **CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Data Summary and Trends Report, 2011-2021.** February 2023. [Read here.](#)
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Contact

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[The Center for the Study of Social Policy \(CSSP\)](#), which conceived Nurture Connection, is a national, non-profit policy organization that connects community action, public system reform, and policy change to create a fair and just society in which all children and families thrive. We work to achieve a racially, economically, and socially just society in which all children and families thrive. To do this, we translate ideas into action, promote public policies grounded in equity, support strong and inclusive communities, and advocate with and for all children and families marginalized by public policies and institutional practices.

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