



Lessons in Early Relational Health: A Conversation Between Claudia M. Gold & Junlei Li

Claudia M. Gold, MD, is a pediatrician and writer who practiced general pediatrics for over 20 years and now specializes in Early Relational Health (ERH). She has clinical experience in a broad variety of communities and speaks frequently to both lay and professional audiences. In her latest book, *Getting to Know You: Lessons in Early Relational Health From Infants and Caregivers* (March 2025), Dr. Gold encourages readers to “listen in” and embrace differences as a relational model for building deeper connection, growth, and healing.

“What protects us from being completely paralyzed with fear is to be in relationship with each other in that very immediate way; to be in community and to be in connection in the way that babies call on us to be.

That is the kind of thing that we need in order to have the strength to do whatever we’re going to need to — I hope — get through this unbelievable discord to some kind of repair on the other side. And the only way to keep that hope is to protect ourselves through these moments of really meeting with each other.”

—Claudia M. Gold, MD

Hear more from Dr. Gold, [in this recent conversation](#) with Junlei Li, PhD (who wrote the foreword to *Getting to Know You*) about principles of ERH; the essentiality of centering connection, growth, and healing in relationships; and how discord can be a pathway for relational repair, growth, and healing — both within ERH and this present moment.

Parents Under Pressure: Nurture Connection Parent Leaders Reflect

In November 2024, Nurture Connection's ERH Family Network Collaborative (FNC) discussed the U.S. Surgeon General's "[Parents Under Pressure](#)" advisory report released in August 2024, which highlights the stressors that impact the mental health and well-being of parents and caregivers. Five months later, these sources of stress have only accelerated:

"The well-being of parents and caregivers is directly linked to the well-being of their children. . . If the parents aren't well, the children are not going to be well. Stresses of parents and caregivers today are being passed indirectly, in ways impacting families and the community that we might not think about. If the parents are stressed, if they can't meet their everyday needs, if they can't take care of their own mental health — then that is impacting their families."

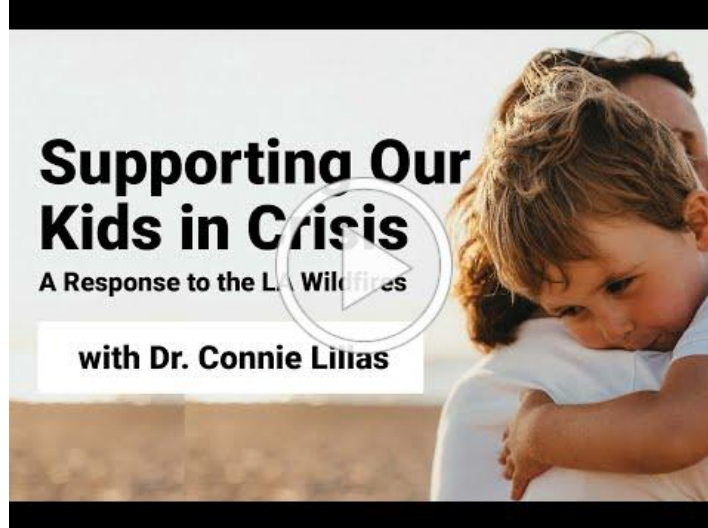


[Read on](#) for more reflections from our FNC parent leaders, who are on the frontline of working with parents and caregivers in their communities.

[Read the Rest of Their Reflections Here](#)

Tuesday, April 22, 2025 marks the 55th anniversary of Earth Day – a time to reflect and take action to protect the planet we all share. With the continued effects of climate change and traumatic events impacting families and communities, the importance of centering relational health and supporting each other is more critical than ever.

Supporting Our Kids In Crisis: A Response to the L.A. Wildfires with Dr. Connie Lillas



Dr. Connie Lillas, RN, MFT, PhD, is the Founder and Executive Director of the NRF Institute, a CA Endorsed Infant-Family & Early Childhood Health Specialist and Reflective Facilitator III/Mentor, and the co-author of *The NeuroRelational Framework*. Below, she shares some reflections below on how relational healing can help individuals and communities move forward:

"Understand that individual differences are what's key here in helping us all reregulate and get back to a place where we can feel calm, safe, and connect to each other . . . We're going to recover together and we're going to learn how to co-regulate each other and our children and get ourselves back to safety. By doing so, we are building resilience through adversity. This is how we grow, and how we become able to survive and to get stronger through the challenges that we have.

I'm a Pasadena resident. We're all in this together. We're going to get through this by being able to co-regulate each other's nervous systems and get back to engaging with each other. Communal living, sharing our homes with each other, being able to provide resources to each other -- all of that helps our nervous systems to be able to recalibrate and come back to feeling that we have some safety in the midst of chaos."

[Hear More From Connie in This Video](#)

Read More About The Intersections of Environment, Climate Change, and Early Childhood:



Climate Change, Young Children, and the Importance of Nurturing Relationships



The Impact of Environment and Climate Change on Early Childhood Development

Explore More



Community Conversation Series:

Honoring Lived Experience of
Families, Caregivers, and
Communities to Advance
Flourishing



***Webinar Recording* Honoring Lived Experience of Families, Caregivers, and Community to Advance Flourishing**

On April 4, 2025, the Center for Early Relational Health hosted their first Community Conversation of 2025 featuring various community partners in meaningful dialogue about an early childhood workforce that centers on those who hold the deepest wisdom for meaningful, lasting change. Learn more about the series [here](#).

Facilitator: Meg McNulty, Executive Director/VP of the Center for Early Relational Health

Panelists:

- Ambrosia Eberhardt, Statewide Family Impact Manager, Parents for Parents Program at Akin
- Dr. David Willis, Nurture Connection Founder & Professor of Pediatrics, Georgetown University Center on Child & Human Development
- Jennifer Hansen, HOPE Champion, Health Programs Specialist, Spokane Regional Health District
- Katie Jessop, LMHC, Glow Children, Launch NW
- Rumyana Kudeva, HOPE Champion, Early Childhood Specialist, Spokane Regional Health District

Watch Here

ENGAGE,
INSPIRE,
ENERGIZE!



2025 NWA Annual Education & Training Conference, April 22-25, 2025



What is Early Relational Health?

Early Relational Health is the state of emotional well-being that grows from emotional connection between babies and toddlers and their parents and caregivers when they experience strong, positive, and nurturing relationships with each other.

ERH is foundational to children's healthy growth and development and parents' and caregivers' sense of competence, connection, and overall well-being. These strong 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](#). 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 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](#)

For four decades, the National WIC Association (NWA) has been at the forefront of advocacy, innovation, and empowering families through WIC. This year's conference takes place April 22-25, 2025 in Las Vegas, Nevada and will explore critical topics such as policy advancements, innovative program delivery, cutting-edge technology, research insights, and communication strategies to enhance service delivery, food package nutrition, shopping experiences, and participant outcomes. With the need for WIC greater than ever, discover tools and strategies to meet the evolving needs of WIC providers and the diverse families they serve.

****On Thursday, April 24th**, be sure to catch Nurture Connection founder **David Willis** and **Jose Romo Ramirez** (Washington State Department of Health) at the Advocacy & Policy Session: "Facilitating Fatherhood within Early Relational Health (ERH): Changing the Narrative in Early Childhood Systems and Supports" (9:50am-10:50am, Miranda 7)**

[Register Here](#)



***Save the Date!* COMBO Playdate on May 3rd, 2025!**

NYC families are invited to a free community event hosted by our partners at the COMBO Initiative: the **COMBO Playdate** is a joyous day of family-friendly activities, tangible resources, and meaningful connection (plus exciting prizes & giveaways)! As part of COMBO's commitment to supporting family health by investing in community health, many activities are specially designed to promote child development and early relationships. **Reserve your free tickets here for the 4th annual Playdate:** May 3rd from 2:00-4:30pm in Washington Heights. All families are welcome!

[Sign Up Here](#)

What We're Reading

- **Getting to Know You: Lessons in Early Relational Health from Infants and Caregivers** by Claudia Gold (Teachers College Press, March 2025). ISBN 9780807786536. [Read here.](#)
- **“The state of healthy parenting in primary care interventions in advancing health equity.”** Damian, A. J., C. Bruner, M. Samudio, M. Schweer- Collins, J. McCrae, K. A. Hails, L. S. Wissow, M. F. Earls, J. D. Smith, C. Berkel, N. Shearman, J. Javier, T. Hemady, D. Dumitriu, T. Barker, C. Bethell, and M. Polfuss. 2025. NAM Perspectives. Discussion Paper, National Academy of Medicine, Washington, DC. [Read here.](#)
- **“Assessing Attachment Classification Difference Between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Children: A Systematic Review,”** S.-L. Tkaczyk, Miller, S., Angus, D., Lawless, A., Paulson, G, & Watt, D. Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology 2025. [Read here.](#)

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