

Positive Notes

The Early Relational Health Movement Newsletter



ERH in Action: Promoting Teen Parents' Relational Health with GLOW Children

Katie Jessop, MA, a Registered Circle of Security Parenting Facilitator and former licensed mental health counselor (LMHC) in Spokane, Washington, clearly recalls the epiphany she had when she first heard the term “early relational health.” She realized that her mental health therapy work fit into a larger framework that connected experts across fields:

“I remember thinking, ‘Oh, this is the underpinning for all the things that we’ve been trying to underpin.’ We now have this platform, and we can all bring our different bits. It all makes sense within the ERH structure.”

Jessop is the cofounder, former executive director, and current community outreach program director of [GLOW Children](#) Early Learning Center (ELC). In the beginning, GLOW provided a safe and healthy early education program primarily for children whose parents attend Lumen High School. GLOW Children and Lumen High School were both created at the same time and with the same purpose: to serve teen parents. Since then, GLOW has expanded its mission to serve other families from the broader community, many of whom have extra barriers to accessing high-quality early learning centers. GLOW Children ELC and Lumen High School have the shared mission of providing safe and healthy early education for children and often work together for the best interests of the community.

From fostering a thoughtful program design process that includes many community partners, to implementing a strong set of core values, GLOW Children is lighting the world with their relationship-forward approach.

“Everything about being a human who feels deeply and does good work has sharp edges — and joy.”

—Katie Jessop, GLOW Children

[Read More Here](#)

Exploring Respect and Dignity as Lenses for Relational Connection: Nurture Connection's Parent Leaders Reflect



As an Early Relational Health (ERH) field catalyst, Nurture Connection believes in promoting equitable access to Early Relational Health supports and resources for all children, families, and communities. Children's earliest and most formative relationships happen within their families and the broader social context of the communities that surround them. This requires recognizing the importance of individuals' and communities' social, cultural, political, ecological, and spiritual identities. It also means supporting families to strengthen their basic relational capabilities, particularly within the cultural context of relationships.

Our [equity mandate](#) was the impetus behind the Nurture Connection Family Network Collaborative (FNC). The FNC parent leaders represent a diversity of experiences and cultural traditions and the wisdom and lived experiences of families that they bring to the FNC, to guide Nurture Connection's catalytic efforts. It was in this spirit of being led by parent partnership that the FNC leaders came together [in a recent conversation](#) to explore how the concepts of "respect" and "dignity" show up relationally for families and communities. There was also a recognition by the group that the concepts of dignity and respect are particularly crucial in our society right now because we're facing unprecedented challenges that directly threaten the foundations of human connection and social cohesion.

[Read More Here](#)

Nurture Connection 2025 Survey: Early Findings

In July 2025, Nurture Connection surveyed our national network of Early Relational Health (ERH) champions and partners, to help guide our efforts to advance ERH and promote strong, positive, and nurturing early relationships. Through this survey, we hoped to better understand the evolution of awareness, policy, and practice related to ERH, and to identify new opportunities for advancing ERH in the early childhood field. We saw great engagement, with high-quality insights and suggestions from survey participants (totalling 360 respondents across 46 states and territories!).

Some key takeaways so far:

- Knowledge and usage of the term Early Relational Health appear to be growing; 80% of respondents said they noticed people becoming *more familiar* with the term “Early Relational Health” and 62% of respondents using this term in their work or community engagement.
- 75% of respondents felt that Nurture Connection was having the greatest impact by expanding the knowledge base, and sharing information and resources.
- Early Relational Health “bright spots” abound – from cross-sector collaboration, professional training, and workplace development to parenting and caregiver engagement.
- Despite the political uncertainty ahead, respondents were determined to continue doing the work in new and creative ways, with policies like paid family leave cited as opportunities that are most likely to have a substantial impact on improving ERH.

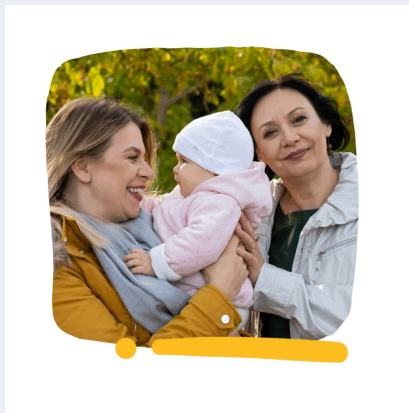
A full analysis and report of the survey findings are still forthcoming – thank you again to everyone who participated in this effort, and stay tuned for more!

Explore More



[Additional Reflections from the Power of Codesign in Research: How Parent Partnership Supports Practice Transformation](#)

In June 2025, Nurture Connection hosted a conversation about the power of codesign and how parent partnership can support practice transformation in early childhood ecosystems. [Discover key takeaways and more.](#)



[Early Opportunity Zones: Communities Bringing It All Together for Young Children and Families](#)

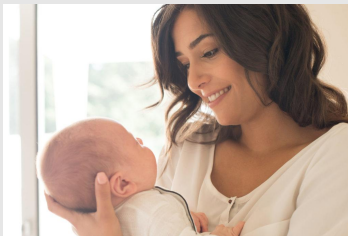
“Every child deserves the very best beginning to life, a family, and a community that values relationships and supports nurturing care.”

Joan Lombardi reflects on the importance of building “zones” of early opportunity for young children and families across the country. [Read more here.](#)

What We're Reading . . .

- ***Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economies.*** Scharmer, Otto & Kaufer, Katrin. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2013. ISBN 978-1-60509-926-2. [Read here.](#)
- ***Paternal Perinatal Depression, Anxiety, and Stress and Child Development: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.*** Le Bas G, Aarsman SR, Rogers A, et al. JAMA Pediatr. 2025;179(8):903–917.

- **State of American Men 2025.** Gupta, T., Barker, G., & Lewis, C. (2025). Equipundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice. [Read here.](#)
- **CERH News - Issue #1** . Columbia Center for Early Relational Health (Summer 2025). [Read it here](#), and [sign up for future quarterly newsletters](#) from CERH!
- **Five years of parent voices show how difficult it is for families with young children to meet basic needs and how this is associated with emotional distress in parents and children.** RAPID Survey Project, Stanford University (June 27, 2025). [Read here.](#)
- **Communicating Now: Framing for Health Equity.** Sweetland, Julie & Connolly, Nico, FrameWorks Institute (May 27, 2025). [Read here.](#)



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 Is and Why It Matters](#). 2022.

Find additional resources on our [website](#).

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