

Connections Matter

Early Relational
Health Newsletter



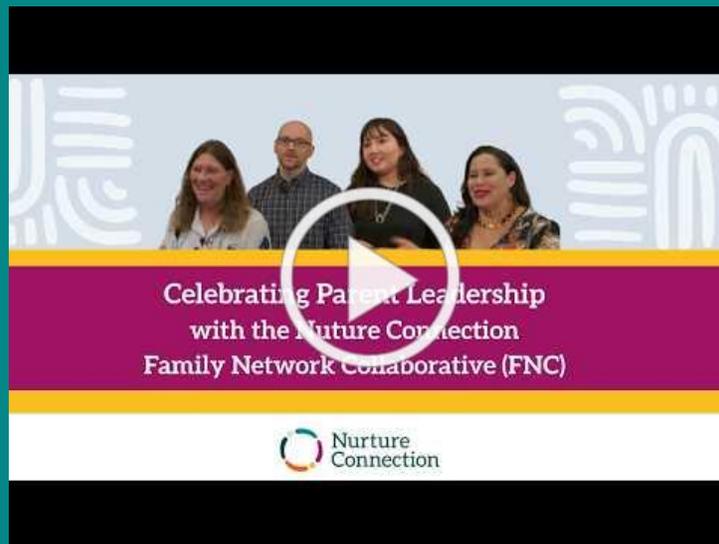
“We Wouldn't Be Here Without the Voices of Families”: Celebrating Parent Leadership and Joy at Nurture Connection

Partnering with families and parents in our Family Network Collaborative to promote early relational health is not just important. It's essential.

This February, we celebrate three years of Nurture Connection – and honor the critical advocacy role that parent leaders play in advancing early relational health (ERH) by connecting directly with families and communities.

As part of National Parent Leadership Month, [read more](#) about the amazing work of the Nurture Connection Family Network Collaborative (FNC), and how this framework of parent-led partnership continues to help us keep family voices at the forefront.

[Read More Here](#)



Hear more from Nurture Connection Family Network Collaborative (FNC) parent leaders [in this video](#), as they share their reflections and insights on the meaning of early relational health (ERH). They also discuss what motivates their work and offer advice for other parent leaders dedicated to advancing ERH and the transition from transactional care to relational care.

[Watch Here](#)

[“It’s Really About Inheriting the Concern”: Championing ERH and Parent Leadership with Randall Baylor](#)



This month, Nurture Connection is excited to welcome a new parent leader to our Family Network Collaborative (FNC) — Randall Baylor! Born, raised, and currently residing in the District of Columbia, Baylor is a father of two and represents Black and Brown fathers of children between the ages of zero and three in the Washington, D.C., area. He also serves as a program manager for community mental health as part of the Early Childhood Innovation Network (ECIN) at Children’s National Hospital.

“Primarily the work that I’ve done has been centered around youth advocacy, community engagement . . . finding really unique ways of bridging the gap so families get connected and stay connected to services and supports that are most meaningful,” he says:

“I look at it as walking together through these journeys . . . coming up with ways to positively combat whatever’s going on together and remaining unified.”

**—Randall Baylor, Parent Leader,
Nurture Connection Family Network Collaborative (FNC)**

[Read on](#) to learn more about Baylor’s journey into Early Relational Health (ERH) advocacy as a parent leader.

[Read More](#)

Join Us on March 3rd! The Neuroscience of Kindness



The Neuroscience of Kindness

📍 West End Labs (NYC)
or join virtually

📅 March 3, 2026



Register Here:
events.nyas.org/kindness26



What happens in the brain when we act with compassion—and how can nurturing kindness improve individual and societal well-being?

Nurture Connection is proud to co-sponsor the Neuroscience of Kindness conference and bring together leading researchers, clinicians and public health experts to explore the scientific foundations of connection and social bonding.

Where: West End Labs (NYC) - or join virtually!

When: March 3, 2026

This [one-day event](#) will examine how kindness develops across the lifespan, the evolutionary roots of cooperation, and the measurable effects of compassion and altruism on physical and mental health. Participants will also discuss practical strategies for cultivating kindness in communities, workplaces, and institutions, and how doing so may represent an urgent public health priority.

Join scientists, clinicians, educators, and policymakers for a day of discovery and dialogue about how understanding the neuroscience of kindness can shape a healthier, more connected world.

[Register Here](#)

Explore More



[ERH in the Headlines: Childhood Trauma Doesn't Have to Be a Lifelong Curse \(NYT\)](#)

What if the most powerful intervention we could offer our families wasn't a prescription, but a relationship? Nurture Connection Steering Committee member, Dr. Dayna Long, MD, FAAP, paints a true vision of health, wellbeing, flourishing, and joy in her work at UCSF BLOOM, a clinical primary care program rooted in ERH that serves children ages 0–5 and their families with the understanding that healing, growth, and resilience begin in relationship.

[Read More Here](#)

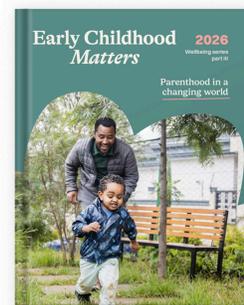
[A Predictor of a Good Social Life? Your Parents.](#)

A decades-long study suggested that close relationships with family members during teenage years could lead to a rich network of friendships in adulthood.



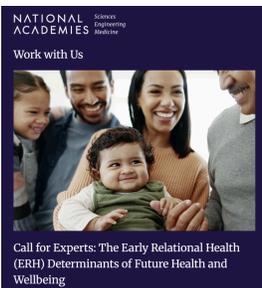
[ERH in the Headlines: A Predictor of a Good Social Life? Your Parents. \(NYT\)](#)

A decades-long study suggested that close relationships with family members during teenage years could lead to a rich network of friendships in adulthood. What does this mean for ERH? As Dr. David W. Willis, MD, reflects, if we continue to invest in strengthening the relational health and wellbeing of children, parents, and families through everyday connection, "the hope is that there will be meaningful payoff for generations." [Read More Here](#)



[Early Childhood Matters: Parenthood in a Changing World](#)

This latest 2026 edition of Early Childhood Matters brings together perspectives from scientists, economists, artists, innovators, and leaders across government and civil society, to make the case for investing in parents and parental wellbeing. [Read More Here](#)



[Call for Experts: The ERH Determinants of Future Health and Wellbeing \(NASEM\)](#)

The National Academies is seeking suggestions for experts to serve on an ad hoc committee informing a new consensus study on early relational health (ERH). The committee will assess practices and implementation strategies that support cross-sector early childhood systems change, including approaches to scale-up and sustainability, and will identify federal and state policies, programs, and research priorities needed to advance and sustain ERH. To be considered, please submit your nomination by **March 8th, 2026**. [Learn More Here](#)

What We're Reading . . .

- "Experts Across New Jersey Celebrate Passage of Landmark Legislation Expanding Preventative Behavioral Support for Children." Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Jan. 26, 2026. [Read here.](#)
- "Mental health service utilization in a novel insurance-based Ob/Gyn integrated model for women across the lifespan." Lavallée, A., Babineau, V., D'Antonio, K., Werner, E., Drysdale, A. T., Osbourne, M., Grubb, M., Moise, N., Reuveni, I., Zhang, Z., Lee, S., Dumitriu, D., D'Alton, M., & Monk, C. (2026). Archives of women's mental health, 29(1), 5. doi:10.1007/s00737-025-01652-4. [Read here.](#)
- "Family Connection in Adolescence and Social Connection in Adulthood." Whitaker RC, Dearth-Wesley T, Herman AN, Jordan MC (2026). JAMA Pediatr. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2025.5816. [Read here.](#)
- "Thrive Center 2024–2025 Annual Report: Innovation, Research & Community Impact." Thrive Center for Children, Families, and Communities (2026). [Read here.](#)
- "The quality of early relational health modifies the effect of early life stress on child emerging psychopathology." Warmingham, J., Lavallée, A., Curtin, P., Owen, J., Fuller, K., Nakua, H., Hendry, H., Lanoff, M., Gigliotti, A., Russo, J., Chaves, V., Arduin, E., Shearman, N., Ahmed, I., Battarbee, A., Firestein, M., Hussain, M., Kyle, M., Marsh, R., Tita, A., Varner, M., Xu, R., Stockwell, M., Monk, C., Dumitriu, D. medRxiv 2026.01.23.26344636; doi:10.64898/2026.01.23.26344636. [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

Core ERH Resources:

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. [Early Relational Health: Building Foundations for Child, Family, and Community Well-Being](#). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. 2025.

Willis D, Bethell, C. [Child Flourishing: A Critical Indicator for Early Relational Health](#). Nurture Connection. 2024.

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.

Frameworks Institute. [Building Relationships: Framing Early Relational Health](#). May 2020.

overall well-being. These strong and enduring relationships also help to protect the family from the harmful effects of stress.

Learn more about the [science of ERH](#) and find additional resources on our [website](#).



If this newsletter was forwarded to you by a colleague and you would like to subscribe, please click [here](#).

Contact

nurtureconnection@georgetown.edu



Nurture Connection | 2115 Wisconsin Ave NW | Washington, DC 20007 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!