

Positive Notes

The Early Relational Health Movement Newsletter



[New NASEM Report Puts Early Relational Health on a National Stage](#)

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) recently published the consensus study report [Early Relational Health: Building Foundations for Child, Family, and Community Well-Being](#).

This is an exciting moment for our field — it's an acknowledgment of the hard work that's been done to date, and also a stake in the ground for what we hope is an accelerated and more universal shift from "transactional" healthcare to relational healthcare, supporting more families and communities to flourish and thrive.

Further, the report includes the first-ever published recognition that Early Relational Health (ERH) is comprised of a multitude of constructs, such as safe attachments, emotional availability, and family resilience and connection. This recognition is a direct appeal for more cross-sector collaboration and research to understand how these constructs individually and synergistically map onto life-course outcomes.

NASEM's landmark recognition of ERH is a clear validation of — and a major boost to — the work so many are leading in early childhood ecosystems across communities, including members of the Nurture Connection's National ERH Network. The work of centering Early Relational Health in systems, communities, and families is reshaping the health and well-being of children across the country.

"With the new National Academies report and the AAP's earlier statement about relational health, we're seeing an exciting paradigm shift in health systems, public policy, and community service.

There's a recognition of the importance of partnering with families and communities to reimagine child and community services — with ERH at the core."

—David W. Willis, MD, FAAP,
Founder & Director, Nurture Connection

Chair of the NASEM Committee on the Early Relational Health
Determinants of Future Health and Well-Being

[Read More About the Report Here](#)

Parent Leadership Spotlight: Reflections from the 2025 Nurture Connection Parent Survey



As part of Nurture Connection's parent partnership commitment, the network [just completed its 2025 Parent Survey](#), which gathered feedback from parents who are part of the Nurture Connection Family Network Collaborative (FNC).

This survey — conducted in English and Spanish — aimed to understand parents' (children aged 0–3) familiarity with and understanding of ERH, as well as the value they see in ERH for their families and communities.

Key Takeaways

- The 2025 Nurture Connection Parent Survey shows that families are embracing Early Relational Health (ERH), with many expressing motivation to share their experiences centering ERH with other parents and caregivers.
- Nurture Connection parent leaders designed and implemented the survey, engaging parents and caregivers who represent diverse communities and experiences.
- A key learning to emerge from the survey is that a parent-to-peer approach is highly effective for spreading ERH concepts to families.

“Our response rate was so high, because of the relational aspect. A parent-to-parent-peer relationship is a bit different than a parent-to-professional relationship, so we feel that the trust that we’ve built with these families throughout the years is one of the reasons we got such a great response.”

—FNC Parent Leader

[Explore More Reflections from the 2025 Parent Survey](#)

Upcoming Webinar:



GLR PARTNER WEBINARS



OCTOBER 28
3–4:30 PM ET

⇒ Building the Bridge: How Early Relational Health Fuels Early Learning and Third-Grade Reading Success

[Building the Bridge: How Early Relational Health Fuels Early Learning and Third-Grade Reading Success](#)

Join The Center for Grade Level Reading on Tuesday, October 28, 2025 from 3–4:30 p.m. ET, for a conversation exploring evidence-based opportunities for practice, policy, and research to strengthen supportive relationships.

Nurture Connection founder and director, David Willis, MD, FAAP, will engage with co-authors of *Early Relational Health: Building Foundations for Child, Family, and Community Well-Being*, a new report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, in a discussion of how asset-based approaches, family and community leadership, workforce supports, and cross-sector collaboration can promote ERH across health, education, and social systems.

Hear from experts, practitioners, and community leaders as they reflect on how these insights shape their work with families and strengthen the continuum from early nurturing and supportive interactions to early learning and early school success. [Register at this link.](#)

Explore More



[*New* Webinar Recording: The Power of Codesign in Research - Centering Parent Voices to Learn About Parent-Child Relationships](#)

Nurture Connection hosted an exciting conversation on Tuesday, October 21st, 2025 about the power of codesign in Early Relational Health (ERH) research by centering parent voices. Presenters shared reflections on the codesign process of developing an exciting new large-scale co-design study, and emerging themes from its preliminary findings. [Watch Here](#)



[*New* Webcast Recording: NASEM Report Release Webinar - Early Relational Health: Building Foundations for Child, Family, and Community Well-being](#)

On Wednesday, October 22nd, 2025 the National Academies' Board on Children, Youth, and Families shared key findings from a new report, *Early Relational Health: Building Foundations for Child, Family, and Community Well-being*. [Watch Here](#)

What We're Reading . . .

- **Raising AI: An Essential Guide to Parenting Our Future.** De Kai, MIT Press (2025). ISBN 9780262049764. [Read here.](#)
- **Mapping the Influence of Infant–Parent Relational Quality on Life Course Relationships: A Scoping Review of Prospective Cohort Studies.** Painter, F., Harverson, J., King, G., et al. *Clin Child Fam Psychol Rev* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-025-00527-5>. [Read here.](#)
- **The Right Brain and the Origin of Human Nature.** Allan Schore. Norton Professional Books (2025). ISBN 9781324082958. [Read here.](#)

- Indigenous infant development: Reconciling the past and grounding future praxis in Indigenous worldviews and strengths-based approaches. Richardson, M., Waters, S.F., Tsethlikai, M., Sarche, M. *Infant Behavior and Development*, Vol. 80 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2025.102120>. [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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